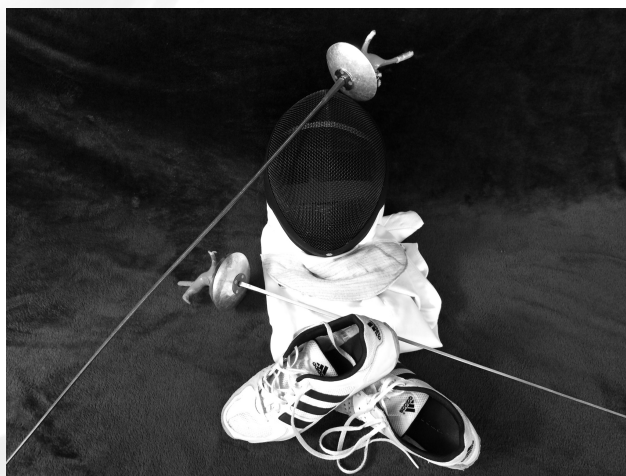


FENCING HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

All you need to know to start your
child in the Olympic sport of Fencing



Patricia Szelle Cannon



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the wonderful Olympic sport of fencing. While certainly not as popular in the United States as basketball or football, you may be amazed to learn that the United States Fencing Association (USFA) has more than 35,000 members (as of 2015) organizing competitions all over the country. You made an awesome decision for your child by introducing him/her to this exciting sport that teaches discipline, focus, mental preparation, strategy and tactics.



ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

I founded the Cannon Fencing Academy (CFA) to build a premier fencing club in the Cincinnati area and create a club of my dreams. For me, coaching fencing is not a job, but a very exciting task to create a positive environment for children: a place where I would be proud to take my own children—and I do! Two of my children are currently fencing at CFA.

Why did I decide to gather information for this handbook? It's because fencing is not well understood in the United States, I realized that new parents need a one-stop resource to educate them on the sport. Here's the longer answer...

At my academy, I provide a parent orientation every 6 months to educate parents who are new to the sport. Due to the fact that fencing is such a unique sport, parents have very little understanding of the sport prior to the orientation.

On top of that...

- The rules are complex
- Existing information is scattered across countless sites and new parents often don't know where to begin
- Comprehensive sources may be overwhelming for new parents (e.g., the Athlete Handbook of USFA is a great resource later on, but likely too advanced to start)

Hopefully, when you leave the orientation, you are relieved and feel much more comfortable in supporting your child as he/she trains. This handbook combines all of the introductory information and commonly asked questions in one place. I haven't invented this information; I've simply compiled what's out there into one brief resource.

This handbook covers the basics of fencing (including terminology, ratings, and major fencing organizations), fencing competitions (why to compete, what to expect), and the equipment needed for fencing just to name a few.



ABOUT CANNON FENCING ACADEMY (CFA)

CFA was founded to promote the Olympic sport of Fencing in the greater Cincinnati, OH area. CFA practices at Mars Hill Academy's facility. Mars Hill Academy is a private Christian school in northern Cincinnati. I founded CFA in June 2015 after I moved to Cincinnati to follow my husband's job. I built a very successful foil program in Columbus (Columbus Fencing & Fitness) before settling in Cincinnati with my family.



To learn more about CFA, visit

<http://CannonFencingAcademy.com>

or check us out on Facebook at

 <https://www.facebook.com/CannonFencingAcademy>

CFA Program Methodology

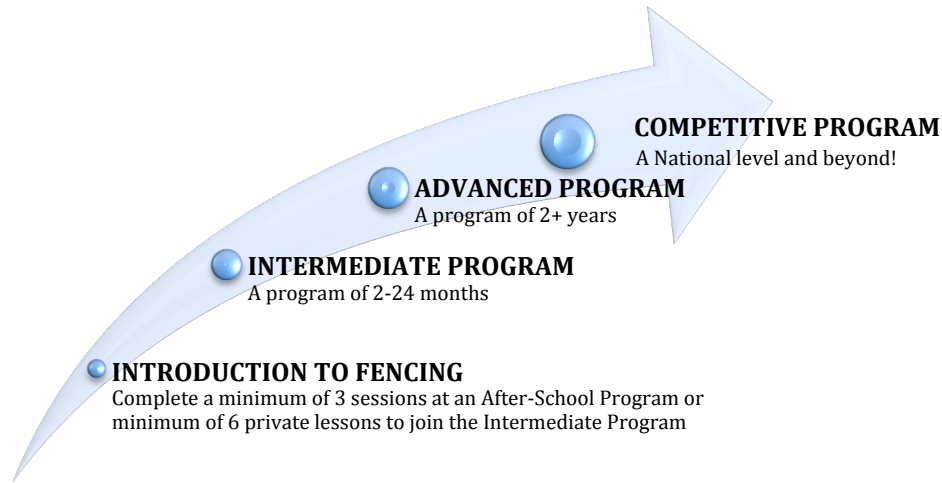
Cannon Fencing Academy is a foil academy. Composed of 4 levels, from beginners to competitive fencers, each level develops areas, such as:

- Physical condition and endurance
- Agility, eye-hand-foot control and balance
- Fencing skills, such as foot and blade work and techniques
- Ability to see, understand and direct a fencing bout
- Social and sportsmanship skills
- Strategic and tactical skills
- Self control, confidence and mental skills
- Competitive performance

Each level length of CFA fencing lessons program individually varies for each athlete depending on fencer's physical, mental or technical condition.

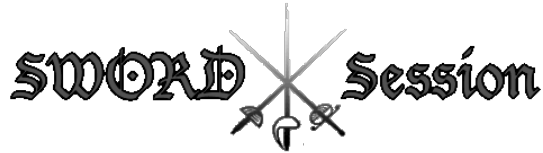


The following chart illustrates the progression of the program:



SWORD Sessions

SWORD SESSIONS are held monthly!



Each session is held on a Saturday usually in the afternoon.

Why travel to a tournament when you can get all the competition you need at the SWORD SESSION! This session is designed to provide fencers with open fencing opportunities and have a chance to face fencers from other clubs in the area without pressure from tournaments. The session also offers technique and strategy clinics lead by Coach Cannon.

Check out more information about upcoming sessions at:
<http://www.cannonfencingacademy.com/sword-sessions.html>

Contact Information:

Address: 4230 Aero Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45040
Phone: 513-818-BOUT (2688)
Cell: 614-537-1023
Email: patriciacannon@cannonfencingacademy.com



WHAT IS FENCING?

The modern Olympic sport requires fencers to be of the fittest of athletes and have levels of skills, which require many hours of dedicated training.

In learning the skills of attacking and defending with either the foil, épée or sabre fencers develop good coordination, balance and flexibility which makes fencing training an ideal means of keeping fit for all ages, sexes and abilities. The fencer tries to “touch” the opponent while not allowing the opponent to “touch” him/her. A touch means contacting your opponent with your weapon.

The Sport Weapons

All weapons are fenced on a long rectangular strip, and electronic scoring aids are normally used to assist in the detection of touches. The rules governing these three weapons are determined by the FIE (Federation Internationale d'Escrime). Briefly, the FIE weapons are described as follows:

The Sport Weapon of Foil: Descended from the 18th century small sword, the foil



has a thin, flexible blade with a square cross-section and a small bell guard. Touches are scored with the point on the torso of the opponent, including the groin and back. Foil technique emphasizes strong defense and the killing attack to the body.

The Sport Weapon of Épée: Similar to the dueling swords of the late 19th century, épées have stiff blades with a



triangular cross section, and large bell guards. Touches are scored with the point, anywhere on the opponent's body. Unlike foil and sabre, there are no rules of right-of-way to decide which attacks have precedence, and double hits are possible. Épée technique emphasizes timing, point control, and a good counter-attack.

The Sport Weapon of Sabre: Descended from dueling sabres of the late 19th century, which were in turn descended from






naval and cavalry swords, sabres have a light, flat blade and a knuckle guard. Touches can be scored with either the point or the edge of the blade, anywhere above the opponent's waist. Sabre technique emphasizes speed, feints, and strong offense.

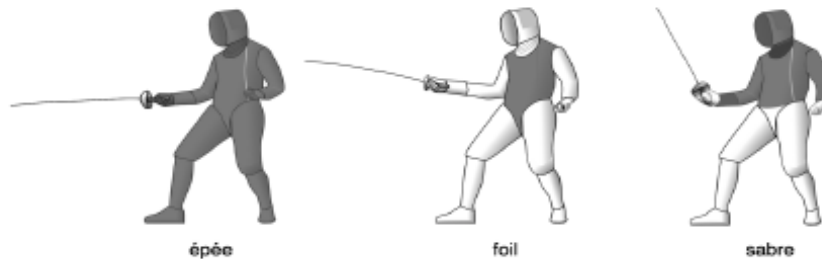


The 3 main ways weapons differ are:

- Target area
- The way touch is scored—with point or side of the blade (thrusting or cutting)
- Right-of way – yes or no

The following table summarizes the major differences between the three weapons.

Weapon	Appearance	Touches	Target Area	Right-of-Way
FOIL		Thrusting weapon where touches are scored only with the tip	Torso (including back), neck, and groin	Yes
ÉPÉE		Thrusting weapon where touches are scored only with the tip	Tip of the toe to the top of the head - entire body	No
SABRE		Cutting weapon - touches are scored mainly w/ the side of the blade but can use the tip as well	Above waist everywhere including head, arms and back	Yes



Basic Fencing Terminology

En Garde: French for "on guard"; spoken at outset to warn the participants to take a defensive position.

Advance: The 'advance' is the basic forward movement. The front foot moves first, beginning by lifting the toes. Straighten the leg at the knee, pushing the heel out in front. Land on the heel, and then bring the back foot up to en garde stance.

Retreat: It is a basic backwards movement. Rear foot reaches backwards and is firmly planted, then front leg pushes body weight backwards smoothly into 'en garde' stance.

Lunge: The most basic and common attacking movement in modern fencing. The actions of the hand/arm/blade are considered separately from this discussion. From en garde, the front heel pushes out by extending the front leg from the knee.



This means that the front foot must move forward prior to the body weight shifting forward. As the front leg extends, body energetically push erects forward with the rear leg. Rear arm extends during forward motion as a counterbalance. One must land on the front heel and glide down into final position, with front shin perpendicular to the ground, and both heels on the floor. During this action, the torso should remain relatively erect, and not be thrown forward.

Weapon: A sword that could be either a foil, sabre or épée.

Blade: The hitting part of a weapon from the guard to the point.

Grip: The handle of a weapon.

Guard: The part of a weapon between the blade and handle that protects the hand.

Point: The end of the blade that is not sharp but looks like a button (in foil and épée).

Strip: The field of play where a fencing bouts occur.

Attack: The initial offensive action made by extending the sword arm and continuously threatening the valid target of the opponent.

Parry: A motion to deflect or block the opponent's blade.

Riposte: An answering attack after a parry or a repositioning the point on target after gaining right-of-way by parrying someone's blade.

Right-of-Way: Priority or "right of way" is the method used in foil and sabre fencing to determine which fencer receives the point if both fencers land a valid hit at the same time.

Touche: An acknowledgment of a hit by one's opponent.

Touch: A point that is being scored by a fencer.

Bout: Refers to a match between two fencers in a competition.

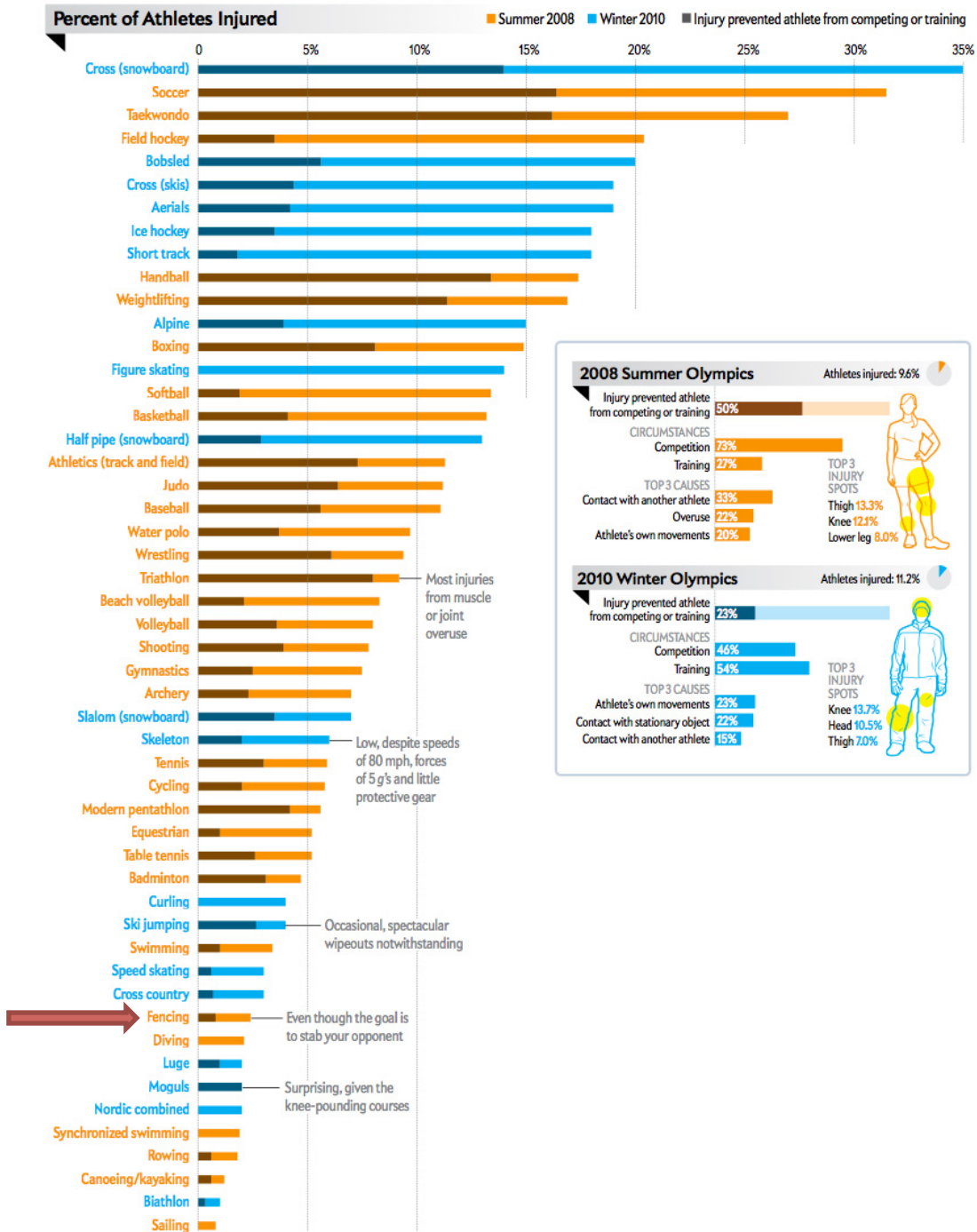
Is Fencing Dangerous?

As a parent, it is certainly understood that it sounds scary to put your child into a sport where the objective is to stab each other with a sword! However, the proven answer is "No." Fencing is actually one of the safest sports you can choose for your child.

A few misconceptions:

- The blade is not sharp
- The hits are partially absorbed by the flexibility and bending of the blade
- The point of the weapon is flat with a small spring inside the point
- Fencers wear protective gear especially designed for the sport

While fencing is a contact sport, it is distinctively gentle on the body. The sport demands no direct body contact between competitors. It is called a contact sport mainly because it requires the graceful contact of blades. Fencing has one of the lowest injury ratings among all sports. Imagine teaching your children combat skills, discipline, and competition, without having to worry about concussions or sprained ankles, or worse injuries that could affect them the rest of their lives.



Reference: Olympic sports injuries statistics (Source: Lars Engebretsen, University of Oslo)



Why Fencing?

Fencing is a unique sport. In many ways fencing appeals to children who may not be attracted to other sports for a variety of reasons. With its rapid footwork and finesse your child will build stamina, strength, and coordination. Coordination is gained upper body with lower body as well as eye with the hand. Fencers will start to understand timing and tempo from the first time they enter a fencing gym.

In fencing, **physical qualities such as weight, height, and build are not as important** than in many conventional sports in the United States. In fact, fencing is the only contact sport without weight classifications. Success is much more dependent on the amount of training, discipline, and focus exhibited by the fencer.

Another benefit to the sport's lack of emphasis on the competitor's size and strength is that **a young teenager can compete against adults**. If your child has a competitive nature, he/she can earn a rating that allows him/her to compete at the Division 1 level at age 13. Also, on a local and regional level **genders can compete against each other** across all age groups. Although genders are typically separated at the national level, male and female fencers train together every day at most fencing clubs in the world.

Also, fencing is a **lifetime sport**. High-impact sports are tough on the body and become increasingly difficult and dangerous as we get older. Sports like golf and tennis are often encouraged so that people can continue to compete and stay active as they grow older. Fencing is one of those lifetime sports where fencers can compete and represent their country at Veteran World Championships even when they are 70 years old. Introducing your child to fencing today could give him/her a lifelong passion and a way to stay active for years to come.

Lastly, **fencing looks great on college applications and resumes!** For a great reason fencing is referred to as "physical chess" and colleges see a fencer as someone who is not only athletic, but also mentally tough, focused, disciplined, and a strategic thinker. And again, fencing is unique! How many children have baseball, basketball and football listed on their resumes? Now how many list fencing?

Fencing Organizations

Most fencing clubs in the United States are members of the United States Fencing Association (USFA). The USFA ties into international and Olympic organizations. Here are the major fencing organizations:



Fédération Internationale d'Escrime (FIE) (International Fencing Federation):

- Governing body of international fencing
- Provides input and guidance for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for fencing
- www.fie.ch



United States Fencing Association (USFA):

- Governing body of national fencing
- Governed by FIE and provides input and guidance for the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) for fencing
- www.usfencing.org



Within your area, USFA members are broken down into regions (multi-state) and divisions (one or more for each state). In Cincinnati we are located in the Southwest Ohio division.

USFA Membership Requirements

CFA requires mandatory USFA membership for all fencers. The main reason is that the CFA purchases group insurance from USFA and USFA requires all fencers, even beginners, to have at least a non-competitive membership for any fencing-related classes and activities. For individuals, USFA membership includes secondary insurance for the fencer.

Membership is yearly, with the USFA year going from August 1 to July 31. USFA provides different levels of membership based on competition level. Current prices are listed below, but they are subject to change (as of May 2016):

Membership Benefits For All Annual Membership Types:

- US Fencing Membership Card
- Online membership profile
- Discounts with Participating Vendors
- Secondary Medical/Accident insurance

Upgrade from non-competitive to competitive at anytime by paying the difference. Note that it's very important to specify the correct division when registering with USFA. Divisions use USFA information to check the validity to fence at different qualifying events.



Description	Price	Membership Benefits	# of Years	Membership Period
US Fencing--Competitive	(1 yr-\$70)	All benefits as specified above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to compete in local, division, regional, and national-level competitions • Right to vote (within established rules) • American Fencing Magazine-Quarterly Subscription • Other periodicals and electronic news releases from the Association 	1	Aug 1 2015 - Jul 31 2016
US Fencing--Life	(Lifetime-\$1200)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All benefits as specified for competitive; valid for life •Upgradeable to Professional membership for any specific year 	99	Dec 27 2015 - Dec 31 2099
US Fencing--Life Installment	(Lifetime-\$120)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All benefits as specified for competitive; valid for life 	1	Aug 1 2015 - Jul 31 2016
US Fencing--Supporting (Non-Competitive)	(1 yr-\$25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All benefits as specified for Competitive with the exception of Right to Compete. 	1	Aug 1 2015 - Jul 31 2016
US Fencing--Non-Competitive	(1 yr-\$10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Includes secondary accident and medical coverage •Does not include the right to vote or compete •Membership is upgradeable 	1	Aug 1 2015 - Jul 31 2016
US Fencing--Commercial	(1 yr-\$500)	Please contact the National Office for current programs and benefits	1	Aug 1 2015 - Jul 31 2016
US Fencing--Magazine Subscription, Domestic	(1 yr-\$25)	Magazine Subscription <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •American Fencing Magazine-Quarterly Subscription •Other periodicals and electronic news releases from the Association 	1	Aug 1 2015 - Jul 31 2016
US Fencing--Magazine Subscription, Foreign	(1 yr-\$37)	Magazine Subscription <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •American Fencing Magazine-Quarterly Subscription •Other periodicals and electronic news releases from the Association 	1	Aug 1 2015 - Jul 31 2016
US Fencing--Collegiate Competitive	(1 yr-\$40)	Individual must meet the following requirements in order to be eligible for this membership type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Individual must be listed as a member on an approved roster submitted by a College/University fencing club with a current USFA Affiliate or Club membership (please verify with club before purchasing membership); OR •Individual must be a member of an NCAA fencing program All benefits as specified above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Right to compete in local, division, regional, and national-level competitions •Right to vote (withing established rules) •American Fencing Magazine - Quarterly Subscription •Other periodicals and electronic news releases from the Association 	1	Aug 1 2015 - Jul 31 2016

USFA Safe Sport Policy

Like the majority of sports organizations in the U.S. that work with children, USFA enforces a very important safety policy designed to protect your children and help you rest easy that your children are in good hands while participating in fencing activities. The policy works to ensure your children are with safe adults, but also protects against other forms of abuse such as bullying and hazing. The policy includes background checks, education, awareness, and strict guidelines.

One important aspect of the policy is that all USFA member clubs can only employ USFA professional members as coaches, administrators, referees, or any adult that works with children. These professional members are required to undergo a background check.

For all details on this policy, **visit this section of the USFA website:**

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/892379-safe-sport>



RATINGS, POINTS, AGE BRACKETS, DIVISIONS

Fencer Ratings

First, every fencer registered with USFA is either marked as “unrated” or has a rating meant to indicate the fencer’s quality and consistency in the sport. The rating consists of a letter that designates quality and a year that designates how recently the rating was earned. The letters go from U for “Unrated” and then from A to E with “A” being the highest and “E” being the lowest official rating. The letter is followed by the year that the fencer earned or “re-earned” that rating. For example, a rating of A2015 means that the fencer has the highest letter rating and most recently earned that rating in 2015.

All fencers that have never earned a rating in the United States will start with a rating of “U.” Even if a national champion from another country moves here, he/she will be given a “U” rating until a higher rating is earned! Once a rating is earned, it is valid for four years and cannot go down during that time. After four years, it goes down one level if not re-earned. A rating can go up in one day!



These ratings are also referred to as “classifications.” If a fencer chooses to compete with multiple weapons, the fencer has a specific rating for each weapon.

Fencers earn a rating by competing in USFA-sanctioned competitions. Depending on the size of the competition and the quality of participants (according to the ratings of each fencer), fencers can earn a rating by placing at a certain level within the competition. The table below clarifies how ratings are awarded at tournaments.

For the latest table, **visit the following link on the USFA website:**
<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/698401-classification-chart>

FENCING HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS



COMPETITION RATING	MINIMUM NBR COMPETITORS	RATED FENCERS REQUIRED	RATED FENCERS MUST FINISH	CLASSIFICATIONS AWARDED
GROUP E1	6	NONE	NA	1 -> E
GROUP D1 Changed per BOD 7/09	15	4 E's (or higher)	2 E's (or higher) in top 8	1 -> D 2-4 -> E
GROUP C1	15	2C's & 2 D's & 2 E's (or higher)	2C's & 2D's (or higher) in top 8	1 -> C 2-4 -> D 5-8 -> E
GROUP C2	25	4 D's & 4 E's (or higher)	4 D's (or higher) in top 8	1 -> C 2-4 -> D 5-8 -> E
GROUP C3	64	24D's & 12 E's (or higher)	4 D's in top 8 & 4 E's (or higher) in top 12	1-4 -> C 5-8 -> D 9-16 -> E
GROUP B1	15	2B's & 2C's & 2 D's (or higher)	2 B's & 2 C's (or higher) in top 8	1 -> B 2-4 -> C 5-6 -> D 7-8 -> E
GROUP B2	25	2B's & 2C's & 2 D's (or higher)	2 B's & 2 C's (or higher) in top 8	1 -> B 2-4 -> C 5-8 -> D 9-12 -> E
GROUP B3	64	24C's & 12 D's (or higher)	4 C's in top 8 & 4 D's (or higher) in top 12	1-4 -> B 5-8 -> C 9-16 -> D 17-32 -> E
GROUP A1 Changed per BOD 7/07	15	2A's & 2B's & 2 C's (or higher)	2 A's & 2 B's (or higher) in top 8	1 -> A 2 -> B 3-4 -> C 5-6 -> D 7-8 -> E
GROUP A2	25	2A's & 2B's & 2 C's (or higher)	2 A's & 2 B's (or higher) in top 8	1 -> A 2-4 -> B 5-8 -> C 9-10 -> D 11-12 -> E
GROUP A3	64	24B's & 12 C's (or higher)	4 B's in top 8 & 4 C's (or higher) in top 12	1-4 -> A 5-8 -> B 9-16 -> C 17-24 -> D 25-32 -> E
GROUP A4	64	12 A's & 12 B's & 12 C's (or higher)	4 A's in top 8 & 4 B's (or higher) in top 12	1-8 -> A 9-16 -> B 17-24 -> C 25-32 -> D 33-48 -> E

Division I NAC and National Championships are always Group A4 competitions.

Division I-A National Championships are always at least Group A3 competitions.

Division II NAC and National Championships are always at least Group B3 competitions.

Division III NAC and National Championships are always at least Group C3 competitions. Changes in classifications are allowed at USFA sanctioned individual competitions that are restricted to Veterans and to Junior fencers.

Division, Section and Regional Youth and Cadet Competitions must meet or exceed criteria for C1 to award changes in classification. (BOD, July '02, July 03).

The USFA does permit classification changes at mixed competitions without regard to gender of fencers.



National & Regional Points

In addition to the ratings USFA also awards points to fencers at specific tournaments. These points are then used for seeding in competitions, qualification for national championships, and to assemble teams for international events, such as world cups or world championships. Most national events are “points events” and if your child places at a certain level, he or she will be awarded points to add to his/her running total. National points standings are maintained on the USFA website.

Here is a link with FAQ that also contains a link to the standings:

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/698462-point-standings-faq>

Regions also maintain a separate point total for regional points.

Age Brackets & Divisions

Fencers are grouped into categories based on age, but a young fencer can often compete with the older fencers.

Here are some main points:

Most ages are eligible to fence in more than one bracket depending on the child’s skill and comfort levels. For example, an 11-year-old can compete in the Y12 tournaments, but also has the option to compete in the Y14 tournaments for more challenging competition.

“Age” is determined by birth year and the year in which the current fencing season begins. The fencing season is from Aug 1 through July 31, but age is still based on birth year. For example, in the 2015-2016 season, a child that turned 13 on January 1, 2016 or after will be considered “12” for the entire season because the fencer was 12 when the season started. Therefore, the child can compete in the Y12 and Y14 tournaments for the entire season.

Seniors is the major age category, which is reached at age 13. This bracket is further split into divisions based on level of competition. The Division 1 Senior fencers compose the U.S. National team.

While this information isn’t expected to change frequently, for the latest information, **visit the following link on USFA’s website:**

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/698393-age-and-classification-eligibility>



2015-2016 Age/Classification Eligibility

A. For 2015-2016 Local/National Tournaments & Junior Olympic Fencing Championships (Excluding July Challenge, USA Fencing National Championships & Nationals Qualifying Tournaments through Regions and Divisions)

CATEGORY	DIVISION I	DIVISION II	DIVISION III	WHEELCHAIR	VETERAN (40 & Older) / VETERAN TEAM	VETERAN 40-49	VETERAN 50-59	VETERAN 60-69	VETERAN 70 & Older	JUNIOR / JR TEAM	CADET	YOUTH 14	YOUTH 12	YOUTH 10
CODE	DV1	DV2	DV3	CHR	VET/VTM	V40	V50	V60	V70	JR/JTM	CDT	Y14	Y12	Y10
BIRTH YEARS	Born 2002 or earlier	Born 2002 or earlier	Born 2002 or earlier	Born 2002 or earlier	Born 1976 or earlier	1967-1976	1957-1966	1947-1956	Born 1946 or earlier	1996-2002	1999-2002	2001-2004	2003-2006	2005-2008
CLASS	A, B, OR C	C, D, E OR U	D, E OR U	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

B. July Challenge, USA Fencing National Championships & Associated REGIONAL & DIVISION Qualifying Competitions ONLY

CATEGORY	DIVISION I	DIVISION II	DIVISION III	WHEELCHAIR	VETERAN 40-49	VETERAN 50-59	VETERAN 60-69	VETERAN 70 & Older
CODE	DV1	DV2	DV3	CHR	V40	V50	V60	V70
BIRTH YEARS	Born 2002 or earlier	Born 2002 or earlier	Born 2002 or earlier	Born 2002 or earlier	1967-1976	1957-1966	1947-1966	Born 1946 or earlier
CLASS	A, B, OR C	C, D, E OR U	D, E OR U	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

CATEGORY	JUNIOR	CADET	YOUTH 14	YOUTH 12	YOUTH 10	SENIOR TEAM
CODE	JR	CDT	Y14	Y12	Y10	STM
BIRTH YEARS	1997-2003	2000-2003	2001-2004	2003-2006	2005-2008	Born 2002 or earlier
CLASS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

EXCEPTION TO AGE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (All other qualification criteria remains):

- Youth 12 – A fencer born after 2006 can fence in Youth 12 IF the fencer is on the National Youth 10 point standings at the time of the entry deadline for that tournament.
- Youth 14 – A fencer born after 2004 can fence in Youth 14 IF the fencer is on the National Youth 12 point standings at the time of the entry deadline for that tournament.
- Cadet (through JO's) – A fencer born after 2002 can fence in Cadet local and regional competitions, NAC Cadet tournaments and Junior Olympic Cadet Fencing Championships and qualifying tournaments IF the fencer is on the National Youth 14 point standings at the time of the entry deadline for that tournament.
- Junior (through JO's) – A fencer born after 2002 can fence in Junior local and regional competitions, NAC Junior and Junior Olympic Junior Fencing Championships and qualifying tournaments IF the fencer is on the National Cadet point standings at the time of the entry deadline for that tournament.
- Cadet (After JO's) – A fencer born after 2003 can fence in Cadet competition for the 2016 July Challenge IF the fencer is on the National Youth 14 point standings at the time of the entry deadline for that tournament.
- Junior (After JO's) – A fencer born after 2003 can fence in Junior competition for the 2016 July Challenge IF the fencer is on the National Cadet point standings at the time of the entry deadline for that tournament.
- Division I – For national (e.g., NAC) competitions, those born after 2002 must be on the National Junior point standings; for the 2016 July Challenge for Division I, those born after 2003 must be on the National Junior point standings.
- Division IA, II, III – For all local, regional (including ROC) and national (e.g., NAC) competitions, those born after 2002 must be on the National Junior point standings; for the 2016 National Championships and qualifying competitions for Division IA, II, III; those born after 2003 must be on the National Junior point standings.



Event Abbreviations

When you search for tournaments and events online, such as on askFRED.net (more on this later under Competitions), you will notice certain abbreviations that explain the types of events at the tournament.

Events are abbreviated in the following format:

[Age Bracket] [Rating] [Gender] [Weapon]

Gender is abbreviated using the first letter, or an X for co-ed (mixed):

Mens

Womens

MiXed

If age is not specified, Senior is the default age bracket. Rating is also often left out because the event does not require a specific rating. Here are some example event abbreviations:

Y10MF: Y10 Men's Foil

Y10XF: Y10 Mixed Foil



FENCING - AN NCAA SPORT WITH SCHOLARSHIPS

Having fencing listed as an interest on your child's college application could "make the difference between going to a 'good' college or university and a 'great' college or university." Fencing gives that extra advantage when applying to higher education. Of course academia is important, but fencing gives the impression that the student is well-rounded on a whole additional level than most sports.

Often referred to as "physical chess," fencing is one of the few sports that exhibits a combination of physical ability, mental sharpness, and strategic thinking – and colleges eat this up.

For example, Columbia University welcomes fencers with open arms by stating on their website that... "The fencer is unique. The fencer brings experiences that enrich the college, just as an accomplished poet or violinist do. This is the type of person the Admissions Directors like to have represented in their stacks of applicants. Being a fencer is a distinct advantage for the college applicant."

Division I Fencing Schools

Independents

1. United States Air Force Academy (Air Force)
2. Cleveland State University
3. University of Detroit Mercy
4. Fairleigh Dickinson University (women only)
5. Lafayette College
6. Northwestern University (women only)
7. New Jersey Institute of Technology
8. Ohio State University
9. Pennsylvania State University
10. Sacred Heart University
11. Stanford University
12. St. John's University, New York
13. Temple University (women only)

Ivy League

1. Brown University
2. Columbia University (w/Barnard College)
3. Cornell University (women only)
4. Harvard University
5. University of Pennsylvania



6. Princeton University
7. Yale University

Atlantic Coast Conference

1. Boston College
2. Duke University
3. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
4. University of Notre Dame

Division II Fencing Schools

1. University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego)
2. LIU Post (women only)
3. Queens College, New York (women only)
4. Wayne State University

Division III Fencing Schools

1. Brandeis University
2. California Institute of Technology
3. City College of New York (women only)
4. Drew University
5. Haverford College
6. Hunter College
7. Johns Hopkins University
8. Lawrence University
9. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
10. New York University
11. Stevens Institute of Technology
12. Tufts University (women only)
13. Vassar College
14. Wellesley College (women only)
15. Yeshiva University

For more information on College Fencing and Scholarship Opportunities visit:
<http://www.scholarshipstats.com/fencing.html>

Fencing is one of the few sports that has longevity throughout college and beyond. 32% of male fencers and 38% female fencers who competed in high school will continue to compete on a college level with a partial or full scholarship. Compare that to football that only sees about 7.8% of its students continue with the sport in college or the 5.9% (male) and 6.3% (female) in basketball.



College Fencing & Scholarship Opportunities



42 schools sponsored varsity level fencing teams during 2013:

Division	Number of Schools	Number of teams		Varsity Athletes *		Average team size		Athletic Scholarships limit per team **		Average Athletic Scholarship ***	
		Men's	Women's	Men	Women	Men's	Women's	Men	Women	Men	Women
NCAA I	24	20	24	371	411	19	17	4.5	5	\$ 11,312	\$ 12,904
NCAA II	3	2	3	29	36	15	12	4.5	4.5	\$ 3,802	\$ 5,102
NCAA III	14	12	14	246	223	21	16	-	-	-	-
Other	1	1	1	5	7	5	7	-	-	-	-
Totals	42	35	42	651	677	19	16				

* These statistics report student athlete participation at the collegiate varsity level and do not reflect school club and intramural sports teams. Athletic scholarships are not awarded for participation in either club or intramural sports.

** Fencing is an equivalency sport for NCAA scholarship purposes, so partial scholarships can be awarded to meet the limit per school. For example, an NCAA Division II school can award 9 female fencers each a 1/2 scholarship and still meet the limit of 4.5 per school. See our page on [scholarship limits](#) for more information.

*** Athletically based student aid is the average per participating student athlete for ALL varsity sports sponsored by the specific school. Some athletes receive full awards, some receive partial and many receive none. Additionally some sports within a school may be fully funded, some partially and some sports provide no athletically based student aid. Private schools generally have higher tuition than public schools and the average award will reflect this. These averages are strictly for athletically related student aid and do not include academically based and other financial assistance that all students - including athletes - may qualify for.

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Chances of a high school athlete competing in College Fencing *	Men	Women
Number of High School fencing participants	1,925	1,771
Number of College fencing participants	622	674
% of high school players competing in college	32.3%	38.1%

* See our page on the [chances of a High School Athlete competing in College](#) for more information



COMPETITIONS

So far this handbook talked about both training and competition. Let's go further into this topic and discuss the difference between the two and the reasons to participate in competitions. There will be more coming up on information about how competitions are organized, what to expect, what to bring, and how to prepare.

Why compete?

When your child joins a CFA, he/she will join classes/private lessons and will be taught to fence. Your child will practice skills, technique, and also spend time "competing" against classmates in a training environment. Training alone provides many of the benefits to joining a sport and fencing in particular. Participating in competitions means that you are attending tournaments and competing against fencers outside of your club. The main factors to consider when deciding whether to compete are **desire, budget, and time commitment**.

Competing does create additional costs and requires much more time, including traveling to tournaments. Local competitions are not that expensive, both in registration and travel costs. National competitions typically require airfare and accommodations and have more expensive registration.

Again Why Compete?

First of all, it's a lot of fun! Traveling to competitions, preparing for bouts, going to dinner with the club after the day is done: these are memories that your child will hold onto forever.

Second, competing teaches invaluable life lessons. I have a strong belief that all children should compete in a sport. Some of the life lessons your child will learn from fencing competitions:

- Discipline
- Mental preparation
- Self-esteem
- Focus – TRAIN THE BRAIN!
- Strategy
- How to set goals and make plans to meet them
- How to handle success with graciousness and overcome failure with poise
- How to deal with fear of failure

I believe one of the biggest benefits in the above list is focus (TRAIN THE BRAIN!). Competing in a sport, and particularly fencing, forces your child to be focused and ready for a very short moment. Fencing bouts can be over quickly and you either



win or you lose. If you're not focused, your opponent may overtake you before you get your head in the game. Do you know that fencers are the fastest decision makers of all athletes?...it is because of the nature of the sport. We need to make decisions in split of a second and then physically execute the decided plan/strategy flawlessly in order to earn the touch!

What is a Tournament?

A tournament is composed of one or more events. An event is for a specific category or categories of fencers that are competing against each other and can be split by age, division, classification, weapon, or gender. A tournament can span across many age groups and levels of competition, or can be for just one category with one event. Here's an example to clarify:

One RYC tournament can cover all 3 weapons, both genders, and 3 age categories: in this case, that tournament would have 18 events.

$$3 \text{ Weapons} * 2 \text{ Genders} * 3 \text{ Ages} = 18 \text{ Events}$$

Organizers try to plan such that fencers can participate in multiple events throughout the day without conflicts, but at times you may have to decide between two events.

Typical event fees are \$50-80 per National event and less for other events. Event fees will vary greatly depending on location, size of the event, level of the event, and other factors.

Types of Competitions

Fencing competitions vary in size, location, type, qualification process, and more. Note that the USFA is continuously improving the way competitions are run and the respective qualification paths. Therefore, keep in mind that the information presented in this section is current at the time of writing, but the latest information is always available in the official USFA documentation (www.usfencing.org).

National Championships

National Championships are held once a year at three different levels: Division I, Junior Olympics (Juniors and Cadets), and Summer Nationals (all other divisions and age categories). They are only open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

The Division I National Championships is typically in April and is the final National-level event where fencers can qualify for the National Team to go to the World Championship: it is the final chance to earn national points. This event is invitation only and typically includes the top 64 fencers in each weapon category.



The Junior Olympic Championship is Presidents Day Weekend (the 3rd weekend in February) and is the final National-level event for this age group where fencers can qualify for the World Championship team for Juniors and Cadets: it is the final chance to earn national points. Fencers must qualify via Divisional Juniors qualifiers or auto-qualify by national points.

Summer Nationals are typically the end of June through the beginning of July and last for about 12 days. Fencers qualify differently based on the age category:

Y10 qualifies by being on either the national or regional Y10 point standings (must have earned either national or regional points through previous competitions).

Y12 qualifies by either (1) being in the top 50% for Y12 regional points, (2) being on the Y12 national point standings, (3) being in the top eight of the Y10 national point standings, or (4) being in the top four of the Y10 regional point standings.

Y14 qualifies by either (1) being on the Y14 national point standings, (2) being in the top 25% for Y14 regional points, (3) being in the top 16 of the Y12 national point standings, (4) being in the top eight of the Y12 regional point standings, or (5) placing in the top 25% in the Y14 Division qualifying competition for the current season.

North American Cup (NAC)

North American Cups (NACs) are held a couple of times a year during fencing season. They cover all divisions and ages and each NAC focuses on a subset of categories. No qualification or U.S. citizenship is required, only eligibility by age and division.

Regional Open Circuit (ROC)

The Regional Open Circuit (ROC) consists of open Senior and Veteran regional competitions throughout the country. The ROC is the qualifying path for Division II, III, IA, and Veteran championships. The top eight finishers qualify for Division IA and the top 10% qualify for Division II.

Super Youth Circuit (SYC)

The Super Youth Circuit (SYC) consists of national events for all Youth fencers (Y10, Y12, and Y14). These events are held about once every month throughout the country. The SYC is one of the qualifying paths for the youth Summer Nationals.

Regional Youth Circuit (RYC)

The Regional Youth Circuit (RYC) consists of national events for all Youth fencers (Y10, Y12, and Y14). The frequency of these events depends on region. The RYC is one of the qualifying paths for the youth Summer Nationals.



Open Competitions

There are also open competitions in each region in addition to the circuits and championships. Open competitions are held by divisional/regional committees or local clubs and can be sanctioned by USFA (meaning rankings can be earned with particular finishes).

Internal Competitions

Clubs often hold internal competitions so that fencers can get more practice. These events are held at the hosting club and typically include only fencers from the club.

Friendly Competitions

In our area, CFA sponsors the monthly SWORD Sessions - visit Cannon Fencing Academy's website at www.cannonfencingacademy for more information on upcoming SWORD Sessions. These sessions include clinics as well as friendly competition, meaning no medals nor points or ratings are earned at these events.

National Points

All events at NACs, JO Championships, and National Championships are points events except for Division IA, II, and III and team events.

For details on how points are awarded based on placement, **review USFA's FAQ here:**

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/698462-point-standings-faq>

When certain tournaments in this section mention auto-qualifying based on national points, that qualification is based on an accumulation of points throughout the fencing season. **USFA maintains the current points standing list at:**

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/695476-current-point-standings>

How to Find a Competition

The fencing community in general is very organized and well informed. As a parent, you know this is great news! You can generally find details on tournaments in one of two places.

First, **askFRED.net** has information on all local and regional tournaments (all local, RYCs SYCs, and ROCs). In this case, FRED stands for Fencing Results and Events Database. Results are also posted online after tournaments for easy viewing! This site also has a database of other fencing events, such as clinics and camps. Note, our region is Southwest Ohio when you do your searches for closes tournament, clinics and camps!

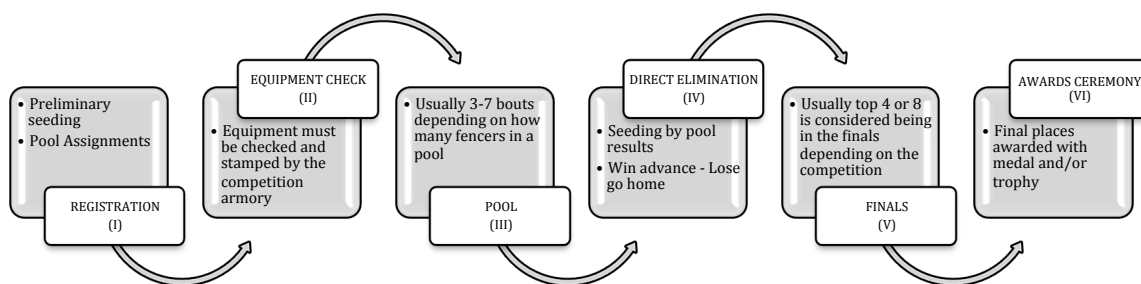


The **official site of USFA (www.usfencing.org)** has information on all national tournaments. Here is a table listing the national competitions for Y10 through Juniors for the next several years. This information was sourced from www.usfencing.org under Events > National Events, where you can always find a full and current listing.

What to expect

Here is what you can expect throughout the day or days if you're attending. The following graphic provides an overview for each part of the tournament, and is followed by more detailed descriptions.

Tournament Overview



I. Registration

When you arrive at a tournament, you must check in with your child at the venue or event administration. This group is called the “bout committee.” They will check that you have paid fees that your USFA membership is current and the right type (it must be competitive and valid for the current season) and possibly accept payment (depends on the tournament whether you pay day of or ahead of time). The bout committee is also who you should visit if you encounter any issues throughout the day. Every tournament has a registration close time, at which point no more entries are allowed. Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to registration for local events to allow for parking, registration, gearing up, and warming up. The



events will start shortly after registration close.

After registration closes and the bout committee confirms the attendees, you will receive your child's pool assignment, which is based on initial seeding. The initial seeding algorithm varies based on the tournament, but the intent is to create even pools for a fair competition. Depending on the tournament, the bout committee may use a combination of rating and national points for seeding. However, it is time-consuming to look up national points for each competitor, so some local tournaments will not use this criterion. At national-level events, a preliminary seeding is used that is based on the same set of criteria as typical tournament initial seeding, but assumes all preregistered fencers will participate. All national-level tournaments use national points for seeding.

The bout committee will have a location to post seeding, pool results, and other competition information. Locate this spot (usually a wall, whiteboard, or TV monitor), as this is where you will need to go after all pools have completed to check pool results and final seeding before Direct Elimination. If you're not sure where the information will be posted, ask fellow competitors, experienced parents, any coach, or the bout committee.

For the time between registering and the start of pools, your child should be warming up. First, your child should warm up using routines learned at practice that include running, stretching, and footwork exercises. It's expected and normal for fencers to warm up on empty strips and does not require permission; just ensure that you do not disturb anyone. If it's empty, go for it! If your child is without teammates, encourage him/her to find a warm-up partner by asking someone else.

II. Equipment Check

Depending on the size of the tournament, they most likely will check your child's equipment; so always bring all equipment to registration (all weapons, gloves, mask, lame, all body cords and mask cords). This needs to get done before the tournament starts right after registration. The equipment checkpoint always administers a stamp or some kind of mark on the equipment for the referee to know that that particular stamp/mark was assigned that day for the tournament.



III. Pools

Your child will be assigned to a pool and will fence each competitor in the pool. Each child will have 3-7 bouts in pool, depending on the size of the pool (4-8 fencers). The optimal pool size is 6-7 fencers. Each pool will be assigned a referee. Typically each pool competes on one strip with one referee. However, sometimes, usually to move things along more quickly as the day progresses, the pool may expand to two or even three strips with additional referees. For example, if another pool has already finished and yours has not, that pool's referee may come over to help your pool finish faster so they might start double stripping.

The referee will call a fencer to the strip or notify the next fencer that he/she is on deck by either name or number. According to rules the referee should call the fencers by their assigned numbers in the pool so make sure that your child knows what number they are when the referee checks all equipment marks at the beginning of the pool. If your child is missing equipment markings, the referee will administer a yellow card to the fencer and provide the fencer with ample time to get the equipment checked for the pool.

When your child arrives at the strip for his/her bout, he/she should come with all equipment to show to the referee. The referee will ensure that women have a chest protector and underarm protector and that men have an underarm protector. The referee will also check foils hold the appropriate weight, which means that the tip of the weapon can withstand a force of 500g without registering a touch. Weapons and cords break all the time, so always have (and by rules you must have) a spare weapon and cords next to the strip to avoid unnecessary delays and penalties. If a weapon is replaced mid-bout, the checks are repeated.

During pools, each bout is the first to five touches up to three minutes net fencing time. A good rule of thumb is that the average length of the bout will be twice the net time when the opponents are of similar skill. Of course, you will at times encounter medical breaks or equipment changes that cause a pool to take longer than expected.

Also note that sometimes the event will have more pools than strips, which means the pools will be "double flight." This just means that one pool will have to finish before the other can start. Without double flight, pools typically finish in 1-2 hours; with double flights, expect four or more hours. Be prepared to wait it might be a long day! Direct Elimination will not begin until all pools are finished.



Between each bout, please **encourage your child to put on warm up jacket and pants over their fencing gear!** This ensures that their muscles stay warmed up and stretched between bouts and they do not get hurt. I realize this is a hard task since every fencer says that they are so hot that the last thing they want to do is add more layers. However, in order to stay injury free I encourage you to reinforce this with your child. CFA has team warm ups you can purchase so when we go to tournaments we look like a team! If you are interested in a warm up set please contact your coach.

When the pool is finished, the referee will ask every fencer to verify the scores and sign near his/her name. Please make your child double-check the scores before signing the score sheet!

Referees are human and might make mistakes. If your child thinks he/she has caught a mistake, make them politely point it out to the referee. Usually the referee will immediately realize the mistake and agree, or call over the other fencer to verify the correct score. If the referee doesn't remember the mistake and the opponent does not agree to the change, the referee will not change it. For this reason, it is wise to check the score sheet after each bout fenced so mistakes can be caught sooner when the referee's and the opponent's memories are still fresh about the score. After signing the pool sheet, please encourage your child to thank the referee and shake hands. A small "thank you" goes a long way! Trust me, I have been a referee myself (on the domestic national and international arena) and most of us are there because we love the sport, take days off of work and want to help out so...yes referees make mistakes by calling touches wrong sometimes but most of the time it is not done intentionally. This is why, if your child represents CFA at the tournament, **the expectation is that all CFA members are polite and gracious fencers on and off the strip!**

Pay close attention to the schedule and the competition location; some bouts are quick and the competition will continue as bouts finish. Always be aware of the status of your pool and make sure your child is ready to go when it's his/her turn to fence. Most importantly, don't leave the venue when pools are finished, you're most likely not done! In most events, 100% of fencers advance to Direct Elimination. Typically it takes 20-40 minutes to start DE after completion of pools and some pools may take longer to finish than others. After your child's last bout in pools is often a good time for: A small meal — but make sure to keep it light and healthy!...Enough to give the fencer energy, but not weigh them down for DE (e.g., muffin, energy bar, dry food). **NO DONUTS PLEASE!**

A t-shirt change—nothing like a fresh, dry t-shirt to revive your child for DE!



IV. *Direct Elimination (DE)*

The fencers will be seeded in one list for all pools based on pool results. The seeding at this point is based on

- (1) percentage of wins in pool, and if that is equal then
- (2) the higher indicator (the difference between the total number of touches scored and total number of touches received in pool), and if that is equal, then
- (3) the total number of points scored. If all of these are equal,
- (4) the assignment will be random

The list will then be used to populate a DE table of 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, and 512 (yes...believe it or not this big of a table has been used at Summer Nationals before!) fencers, going from worst record to best record. The higher seeded fencers might get a “bye” in the first round (i.e., a free trip to the next round) depending on the total number of fencers (e.g., if there are 28 fencers in the event, the top 4 seeds will get a “bye” to account for the difference from 28 to 32).

Information will be posted in the same place where initial seeding and pool assignments were posted so that you know where your child should be for the first round of DE. As the name implies, DE is single elimination: one loss and you are finished (no check out). If you win, you advance to the next round and have another bout.

Most fencers head home after being eliminated. People have busy schedules and are tired after a long day, but if your situation allows, I encourage you to stay and watch your child’s teammates that are still competing. While your child may be down after losing, watching teammates can instill a sense of belonging and help the child value the team’s performance as well as individual performance. Maybe your child had a rough day, but that doesn’t mean he/she can’t cheer as a teammate has a great one, and then still head home with a positive feeling. It can also create a stronger bond between your child and the more experienced fencers in the club not to mention that your child might just learn new moves, actions, strategies/tactics from watching other fencers fence at a higher level than where they are.

DE bouts are 15 touches with three periods that are each three minutes long. The fencers have a one-minute break between periods. Note that for Y10 and Veterans, DE is 10 touches over two periods of three minutes each. Also, for Y10, the fencers are given a break after five touches regardless of the amount of time passed.



V. Finals

If your child advances far enough in the DE bracket, he/she will be given a “finals sheet” to fill out. This information will be used at the awards ceremony to announce your child and introduce him/her to the audience. At local events, the first four places are considered “finals”. At national events, the first eight are considered “finals”.

VI. Award Ceremony

Lastly, it's time for the awards ceremony! If the event is USFA-sanctioned, ratings are also awarded at the end of the competition. If it is a national-level event, then respective national points are also earned. Generally fencers will not compete for 3rd place, so the awards are 1st, 2nd, and two awards for 3rd). Even at local events of a reasonable size, it is an accomplishment to place in the top four or eight.



What to bring

First and foremost, bring full fencing gear, but also bring the following to competition to help your child succeed and be more comfortable:

1. 3 t-shirts (1st to start, 2nd to have fresh shirt going into DE, and 3rd to take off wet shirt before departure)
2. Warm-up jacket and pants (preferably CFA Warm up set!)
3. Water
4. Food

Even if it's not cold out, your child will get very warm fencing in full gear. It's not healthy to go from warm temperatures to cooler temperatures rapidly, and definitely not good for the muscles. So please make your child wear warm-ups outside while they are cooling off their body temperatures.

In addition to the basics covered above, you will likely want to keep a kit of additional items that will come in handy:

1. Tool kit to fix equipment (more on this during Armory Clinics!)
2. Tape for foil
3. First aid kit with Band-Aids
4. Icepack



What to Eat

You're a parent, so you know that it's important what your child puts into his/her body. It's even more important when the child is competing in athletic events. Here are a few quick recommendations:

Before:

- Avoid new foods for two days prior to competition to avoid upset stomachs
- Last big meal: at least 6-7 hours before the event (typically dinner the night before)
- Choose something healthy and balanced: not a good time for pizza night!

During:

- Goal: to stay light on the feet, yet energized; well-balanced on essential elements; and properly hydrated
- Breakfast: carbs (bagel, toast, cereal); at least 2-3 hours prior to event start
- Periodically have small snacks throughout the day: carbs (cereal snack, bagel, pretzels, toast)
- Drink frequently (i.e., after every bout), but no more than a cup of water at a time to avoid heaviness in the stomach

After:

- Drink a lot of water, eat a lot of carbs and vitamins/minerals, and celebrate!



BASIC FENCING RULES

Competitive fencing means that two fencers compete in a bout each with a foil in their dominant hand. The fencers score points by hitting an opponent's target area: another word for the hit is a touch. The objective is to either score a certain number of points before your opponent, or to have more points than your opponent when the time limit expires.

Like most sports, fencers are expected to follow certain rules. To start, the fencers go to the strip fully dressed in their fencing gear other than their masks. In foil they test their weapons by touching each other's target areas in order to make sure the electronic scoring equipment is connected and functioning correctly. They then take their positions at their respective starting lines. The fencers salute each other, the referee, and the audience. A fencing salute is not the same as a military salute; it involves raising the sword to a vertical position and then lowering it.

The referee will signal the fencers to get ready by saying "En garde!" ("On guard"), and the fencers then put on their masks and assume the appropriate starting stance. In the United States, the referee may continue in English, but it's not uncommon to hear French. The referee will either say "Prêt?" or "Ready?" and the fencers may respond, "Yes," or may simply assume the starting position to indicate they are ready. The referee then says "Allez!" ("Go") or "Fence!" A typical bout is the first to five points up to three minutes net time. The timer starts every time the referee says "Fence!" and stops every time the referee says "Halt!" If that total time reaches three minutes before a fencer scores five touches, the bout is over. To complete the bout, the fencers again salute each other and shake hands with their unarmed and ungloved hands.

Of course, sometimes the score is tied when the time runs out. In that case, the bout goes into overtime and extended for one minute. The first fencer to score wins the bout. Prior to the start of the extra minute, the referee flips a coin to randomly assign priority to one fencer, which means that if at the end of one minute neither fencer has scored to break the tie, that fencer wins.

The referee may stop the action for a variety of reasons: a touch has been made, a penalty needs to be assessed, the situation has become unsafe, and a few other reasons that fencing cannot reasonably continue. A fencer can also request that the referee stop the action by raising her weapon and tapping the strip with her front leg. The referee stops the action by saying "Halt!" and then explains why, and awards points or assesses penalties as needed. If a touch is scored, the fencers return to their starting positions. If the action is stopped for another reason, the fencers remain in position, or may be asked to back up slightly to ensure

FENCING HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS



appropriate fencing starting distance and a fair start. Appropriate fencing starting distance is when both fencers extend their arms without their blades overlapping.

Points are generally assessed with the help of electronic scoring machine: meaning that the weapons and target areas can register touches and lights indicate to the referee, fencers, and spectators what has happened.

Penalties (see Offenses and Penalties chart below for all penalties) are assessed for actions such as delaying the bout, making bodily contact with the opponent, failing to complete proper equipment inspections, or not following procedures such as salutes. Penalties result in the fencer being “carded” by the referee with either a yellow, red, or black card. A yellow card is a warning, a red card results in a point to the opponent, and a black card results in disqualification from the tournament and possibly expulsion from the venue or even suspension from future tournaments. Multiple penalties can add up; for example, a second yellow card penalty results in a red card. One important penalty to understand is that if a fencer steps off strip on his own end, the opponent is awarded a point. In other words, if a fencer is pursued to his end of the strip, he cannot avoid a touch by going off strip without being penalized.

You might be wondering what happens if a fencer disagrees with the referees call. Well, the fencers can address the referees after “Halt” and before “Fence” to clarify a call, and they should always do so with the utmost honor and respect. However, **arguing with the referee over a call is unacceptable, for fencers and for parents – especially if you are representing CFA at a particular tournament.** Moreover, any rudeness to fencing officials can result in severe punishment, including an immediate black card. The USFA recently strengthened these rules to purify the behavior of the fencers, a change very welcome by the fencing community.

Another important and often confusing aspect of fencing is the concept of “right-of-way”. Priority or “right of way” is the method used in foil and sabre fencing to determine which fencer receives the point if both fencers land a valid hit at the same time.



Offenses and penalties

t.120 Schedule of Offenses and Penalties.

This table is intended to be a convenient summary: it is not a substitute for the full texts of the articles concerned, which should be consulted in any case of doubt.

Offense	Article	Penalties		
Fencer or team member not present upon 1 st and then second call. If still not present at 3 rd call Elimination from the competition.	t.86.5	1 st call - Yellow	2 nd call - Red	3 rd call - Elimination
1 st Group	Article	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	≥3 rd
Leaving the strip without permission	t.18.6	Yellow	Red	Red
Corps à corps to avoid a touch *	t.20.3; t.63.2			
Turning the back to the opponent *	t.21.2			
Covering/substitution of valid target *	t.22; t.49.1; t.72.2			
Touching/taking hold of electrical equipment*	t.22.3			
Crossing the side of the strip to avoid being touched*	t.28.3			
Delaying the bout	t.31.2			
Clothing/equipment not working or not conforming; absence of second regulation weapon or bodycord	t.45.1/2; t.45.3.a.ii; t.86.4			
Placing the weapon on the strip to straighten it	t.46.2; t.61.2; t.70.5			
Bending/dragging weapon point on conductive strip (F,E)	t.46.2; t.61.2			
Grounding the weapon on the metallic vest (F) *	t.53.3			
In sabre, touch scored with the guard*; any forward movement crossing the legs or feet *	t.70.3, t.75.5			
Refusal to obey the Referee	t.82.2; t.84			
Hair not conforming	t.86.2			
Jostling, disorderly fencing*; taking off mask before the Referee calls "Halt"; undressing on the strip	t.86.3; t.87.2/7/8			
Abnormal fencing action*; touches with brutality or made during or after a fall *	t.87.2			
Unjustified appeal	t.122.2/4			
Entering the Strip Enclosure without the Referee's permission +	t.92.6			



2 nd Group	Article	1 st	2 nd	≥3 rd
Using the non-weapon arm or hand *	t.22.1	Red	Red	Red
Interruption of bout for claimed injury/cramp not confirmed by doctor	t.33.3			
Absence of equipment control mark *	t.45.3.a.i			
Absence of name on back, absence of national colors where required	t.45.4.a, t.45.4.b.ii			
Deliberate touch not on opponent*	t.53.2; t.66.2			
Dangerous, violent or vindictive action, blow with guard or pommel *	t.87.2; t.103; t.105.1			
3 rd Group	Article	1 st	2 nd	
Fencer disturbing order on the strip	t.82.3; t.83; t.96.2	Red ⁴		
Dishonest fencing *	t.87	Red		Black ¹
Offense against publicity code	Publicity Code			
Any person not on strip disturbing order	t.82; t.83; t.96.3; t.118	Warning ⁴		Black ³
Warming up or training without wearing conforming fencing clothing and equipment	t.15.2	Warning		Black
Anti-sporting behavior	t.87.2			
4 th Group	Article	1 st Offense		
Fencer equipped with electronic communication equipment permitting him to receive communications during the bout ¹ or ²	t.43.1.f; t.44.2; t.45.3.a.vii	Black		
Falsified weapon inspection marks, intentional modification of equipment	t.45.3.a.iii-vi			
Manifest cheating with equipment ²	t.45.3.a.vi			
Refusal of a fencer to fence another competitor (individual or team) properly entered	t.85.1			
Offense against sportsmanship ¹ or ²	t.87.2; t.105.1			
Refusal of fencer to salute opponent, the referee and the audience at the beginning or at the end of the bout	t.87.3			
Profiting from collusion, favoring an opponent ¹	t.88; t.105.1			
Deliberate brutality ¹	t.105.1			
Doping ²	t.127			
*	Annulment of any touch scored by the fencer at fault			
+	Special Yellow Card for the whole team and valid for the whole team match. If, during the same team match, a fencer commits an offence of the 1 st group the Referee penalises with a Red Card each time.			
Yellow Card	Warning (valid for bout, whether one or several encounters). If a fencer commits an offense in the First Group after having been penalized with a Red Card, for whatever reason, he or she receives a further Red Card.			
Red Card	Penalty Touch			
Black Card	Exclusion from competition. A fencer only receives a Black Card in the Third Group if he or she previously committed an offense in this Third Group (demonstrated by a Red Card).			
1)	Exclusion from competition	2)	Exclusion from tournament	
3)	Expulsion from venue	4)	In serious cases, the referee may exclude/expel immediately	



EQUIPMENT

Like most sports, fencing has specialized equipment that is required to ensure safety. Some equipment requirements are more specific at competitions vs. in non-competitive arenas.

In Ohio we do not have any store options to purchase specialized fencing equipment so we are forced to order from online companies. Here are a couple of options:

- Absolute Fencing Gear (www.absolutefencinggear.com)
 - CFA partners with Absolute Fencing Gear for the following reasons:
 - a. Faster service (shipping)
 - b. Well known sizing
 - c. Proven quality
- The Fencing Post (www.thefencingpost.com)
- Alliance Fencing Equipment (www.alliancefencingequipment.com)
- Fencing.net (www.fencing.net)

Beginner Fencer

At CFA, basic dry equipment is handled the following way:

A fencer starting out will use his/her equipment by the 3rd or 4th private lesson. Coach will help determine size and order equipment for the fencer at the first lesson. Equipment usually arrives between 2-3 business days from the time of order.

Basic dry equipment security deposit:

- \$172 /male fencer security deposit*
 - mask, jacket, glove, underarm protector, and dry** foil
- \$196 /female fencer security deposit*
 - mask, jacket, glove, underarm protector, plastic chest protector, and dry** foil

* Security deposit for equipment is due at the first fencing session. The monthly rental fee is \$43/male fencer and \$49/female fencer. If fencer does not want to continue before the first 4 months, a proportionate amount will be refunded if all equipment is returned in working condition. At the end of 4 months the fencer owns his/her basic dry equipment!

**Dry means non-electric

Intermediate Fencer

At this level, hopefully, fencers only need to purchase the electric fencing accessories to accompany their dry equipment they already have from the Beginners Program so the cost for the electric equipment is \$187. This includes:



- Lame (electric vest)
- 2 electric foils
- 2 body cords
- 2 mask cords

CFA coach can help choose fencing gear and order equipment, so it will be best tailored to the fencer's needs and budget.

Advanced Fencer

Every advanced level fencer has his/her own fencing equipment, including at least 2 sets of electric weapon, 2 sets of body cords, 2 sets of mask cords, electric bib mask and a lame with the fencer's name stenciled on the back. By this time the fencer should also have fencing pants and shoes in his/her repertoire of fencing attire.

CFA coach can help choose fencing gear and order equipment, so it will be best tailored to the fencer's needs and budget.

Competitive Fencer

Every competitive fencer should have his/her own fencing equipment, including a large fencing bag with wheels, to accommodate travel to tournaments reached by airplane.

Anytime fencer needs new or replacement equipment, CFA coach can help choose fencing gear and order equipment, so it will be best tailored to the fencer's needs and budget.



COACHING

At CFA the goal is to help all fencers achieve their goals, both personal and competitive. As part of the CFA team, I ask that you consider these policies.

CLUB REPRESENTATION AND COACHING

The following apply to all of CFA fencers, both local and national. Any fencer is welcome to fence at CFA open fencing sessions or to take classes or clinics at CFA (with payment of the appropriate fees).

TRAVEL TOURNAMENTS AND COACH'S EXPENSES

CFA charges a fee to fencers for coach's travel, and require that all fencers traveling to a tournament split all the coach's travel expenses among them. The standard coaching fee is \$50 per event fenced for any tournament. For example, if a fencer fences Y12 and Y14 foil at a youth NAC, the coaching fee will be \$100.

Traveling expenses include airfare, lodging, and a \$40 per diem, which helps cover food, taxis, etc.

Expected coaching fee per fencer can be determined by the time of the tournament's entry deadline.

Youth, Cadet, and Junior fencers need to consult with their coach about attending their first RYC, SYC, NAC, or Summer Nationals. Fencer should always consult their coach regarding the appropriateness of the tournament and which events to fence before registering for an RYC, SYC, NAC, or the Summer Nationals. The coach will set coaching priorities for each day's events. Despite best efforts, not everyone will get equal time at every tournament. In general, fencers new to a particular level of competition will get more attention in the warm-up and pools. More experienced fencers will get more attention in the DE's. CFA coach is experienced and knowledgeable and will do her absolute best to set priorities in the best interests of the fencers at any given tournament.



CONCLUSION

CFA hopes that this handbook has been informative and helpful! As parents of athletes, I know how confusing it can be to learn a new sport and commit yourself to being supportive of your children as they work through the challenges and triumphs of athletic competition. However, the benefits to your child of starting a competitive sport are countless and in my opinion, something that every child should have the opportunity to pursue.

I commend you for taking the time to read this handbook in support of your child and hope that your child loves fencing as much as I do and that this handbook has helped prepare you for the road ahead!

See you on the strip!



REFERENCES

Cannon Fencing Academy site:

<http://CannonFencingAcademy.com>

SWORD Sessions

<http://www.cannonfencingacademy.com/sword-sessions.html>

Scientific American site:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/leg-head-injuries-frequent-at-olympics/>

FIE English site:

www.fie.ch (world fencing news)

USFA website:

www.usfencing.org

USFA Membership Pricing

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/698114-membership>

USFA Safe Sport Policy:

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/892379-safe-sport>

USFA Classification Chart:

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/698401-classification-chart>

USFA Point Standings:

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/698462-point-standings-faq>

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/695476-current-point-standings>

USFA Classification Eligibility:

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/698393-age-and-classification-eligibility>

List of NCAA Fencing Schools:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_NCAA_fencing_schools

askFRED.net:

- database of all local and regional tournaments (all local, RYCs SYCs, and ROCs), clinics, and camps; also results from posted tournaments.

College Fencing and Scholarship Opportunities:

<http://www.scholarshipstats.com/fencing.html>

The Basics of Competition:

http://assets.ngin.com/attachments/doccmnt/0033/8434/Basics_of_Competition.pdf

USFA Athlete Handbook:

<http://www.usfencing.org/page/show/695206-athlete-handbook> (the most comprehensive manual for U.S. fencers, parents, coaches, referees, and club officials)

USFA Offenses and Penalties Chart:

http://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0085/5877/USA_Fencing_Penalty_Chart_9-15.pdf

Equipment:

www.absolutefencinggear.com

www.alliancefencingequipment.com

www.thefencingpost.com

www.fencing.net

Fencing.net:

- blog and forum are great resources, and also a website for fencing equipment

Other good fencing blogs:

Academy of Fencing Masters blog:

<http://academyoffencingmasters.com/blog/>

The Fencing Coach:

<http://thefencingcoach.com>

The Fencing Athlete:

<http://thefencingathlete.com> (more advanced fencing blog from A-rated top U.S. fencer)

Race Imboden's blog:

<http://fencingxwww.havefoilwilltravel.com> (a fun mix of fashion, travel, and some fencing and sport musings)