

STARTING A COLLEGE FENCING CLUB



USA
FENCING

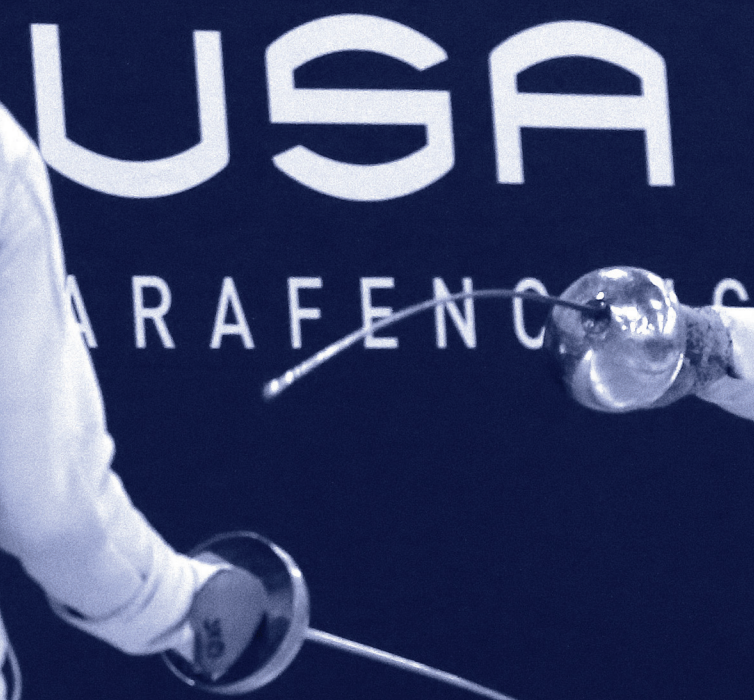


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INTRODUCTION

Starting a fencing club at the collegiate level opens the door for students to explore fencing recreationally or competitively. Clubs provide an inclusive environment that can attract both beginners and experienced fencers. This manual will walk you through the steps of forming a successful club, from early planning to long-term sustainability.

This document was created by USA Fencing and the US Association of Collegiate Fencing Clubs (USACFC). In 2024, USACFC became an autonomous subdivision of USA Fencing, offering benefits such as USA Fencing Club Membership and Access Memberships for USACFC team's collegiate fencers through member dues. If your club is interested in becoming a part of USACFC, please reach out to officers@usacfc.org.





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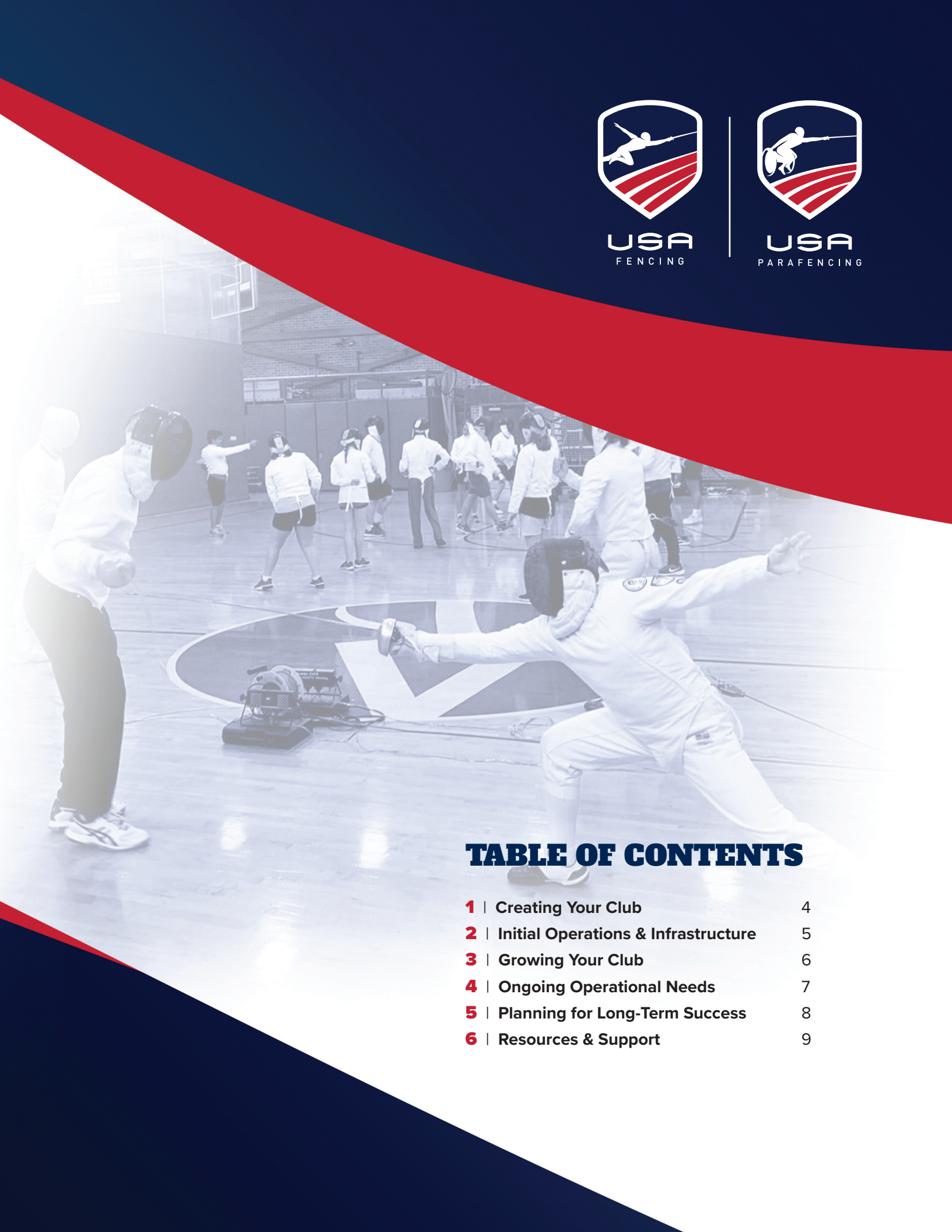


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1

CREATING YOUR CLUB

1.1 Understand Your College Requirements

Every school's process is different. Typically, you will need to contact your college's Office of Student Life, Student Activities, or Student Organization Office. They will provide you with specific requirements for registering a student organization.

Common elements include:

- A minimum number of student members (usually 5–10)
- A faculty or staff advisor to serve as an administrative contact
- A written constitution or bylaws
- An executive board with designated officers and responsibilities, such as President, VP, Treasurer, and Safety Officer

1.2 Special Interest Club Formation

Starting as a Special Interest Club is a common and accessible path.

These clubs typically:

- Focus on social or recreational goals, rather than formal athletic competition
- Host weekly practices or intro events
- Build community among fencers and promote the sport on campus

Initial Setup Includes:

- Electing officers and defining responsibilities
- Writing and submitting bylaws with purpose, roles, affiliations, finances, and responsibilities
- Holding regular meetings and recruiting new members

1.3 Transitioning to Club Sports / Recreational Status

If the club wishes to enter formal competition, it may transition to a Club Sport under your school's Campus Recreation Department.

This often includes:

- Petitioning to become a Club Sport
- Declaring the intent to compete against other schools
- Following stricter rules around budgeting, travel, safety, and coaching

Additional Considerations:

- Appointing a certified coach
- Budgeting for travel and tournaments
- Fundraising
- Additional equipment, e.g. scoring equipment
- Representing your school officially at outside events
- Establish competition squad selection procedures If no procedures have been previously established.

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INITIAL OPERATIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE

Your club must manage logistics effectively to remain active and functional. Key components include:

Facilities:

- Reserve practice space on campus or at local fencing clubs
- Ensure consistency in practice times and availability

Equipment:

- Start with shared gear or student-owned gear
- Maintain and store equipment properly
- Equipment repair

Documentation:

- Maintain rosters and attendance records
- Track waiver completion and emergency contact info
- Maintain club eligibility with university
- Maintain eligibility with USA Fencing
- Procedures for competition participation when spots are limited
- Travel docs
- Budget workbooks

Additional Officers and Roles:

- Armourer
- Team captain/squad captains
- Travel coordinator



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GROWING YOUR CLUB

3.1 Marketing & Promotion

Promoting the club builds visibility and attracts new members.

Strategies include:

- Participating in university organized events
- Hosting beginner nights and demonstrations
- Creating a presence at club fairs and orientations
- Advertising through flyers, newsletters, and social media
- Group engagement through online platforms e.g. discord, whatsapp group
- Creating bios and photos for members on your school website
- Using word-of-mouth and peer recruitment
- Volunteering and charitable actions
- Social activities

3.2 Fundraising & Finances

Building a budget and generating funding are vital for sustainability.

This includes:

- Apply for student activity funding
- Set member dues to cover equipment and travel
- Host fundraisers such as tournaments or merchandise sales
- Ensure that all finances are tracked appropriately in accordance with University regulation and GAAP. Track all income and expenses in a spreadsheet or budget system



ONGOING OPERATIONAL NEEDS

4.1 Coaching & Instruction

A coach helps structure practices, develop skills, and prepare students for competition.

Consider:

- Hiring a local coach with experience training college athletes; Connecting with a local club for open fencing or sponsorship. USAFencing “Find a Club” feature: [Clubs - USA Fencing](#)
- Ensuring the coach is SafeSport-compliant and a USA Fencing member
- Supporting new fencers through seasonal programming

4.2 Compliance & Risk Management

- Collegiate clubs must prioritize safety and compliance:

This means:

- Complete all liability waivers required by your university
- Keep updated emergency contact info for all members
- All equipment must be in good working order
- Follow the rules for appropriate kit to participate.
- Review USA Fencing rules and safety standards annually
- If you are looking to join USA Fencing (USAF) and/or US Association of Collegiate Fencing Clubs (USACFC), SafeSport training is required for coaches and club leaders, please contact USA Fencing or USACFC for more details.

4.3 Competition Pathways

- Clubs may compete in local, regional, or national events.

Options include:

- Local meets with nearby colleges
- Regional collegiate conferences
- USACFC National Championships

4.3.1 Planning Competitions

Recommendations:

- Obtain venue
- Create a tournament committee - to handle tournament organization
- Hire and assign referees and bout committee staff
- Coordinate travel, fees, and registrations

Referees:

- Train student referees or partner with local officials
- Request a Referee Form from USA Fencing

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PLANNING FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Your club's success depends on smooth leadership transitions.

Specifically:

- Elect new officers annually
- Document responsibilities, passwords, financial information, and contacts
- Develop training for underclassmen to learn leadership roles (shadowing / assistant to position)
- Develop a shared drive or handbook to ease onboarding
- Celebrate and thank outgoing leaders to boost morale

Consider:

- Set sustainment / growth goals for incoming officers
- Identify what you wish you could learn e.g. refereeing, coaching, armory, tournament organization
- Work with coaches or school administration to develop ongoing mentorship and leadership consistency



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RESOURCES & SUPPORT

For further information please see the links below. If you have any questions regarding this “starting a college club” document or the partnership between USAF and USACFC please reach out to officers@usacfc.org and/or information@usafencing.org.

- USA Fencing: www.usafencing.org
- USACFC: www.usacfc.org
- SafeSport Compliance: www.usafencing.org/safesport
- Athlete Handbook and Rulebook: www.usafencing.org/rules-compliance
- Find Local Referees: airtable.com/appRMFix5QOBWCqKB/shrjWYk1IXtQ8F6zG
- Absolute Fencing Club Discounts: www.absolutefencinggear.com/clubdiscount



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