

# **USA Fencing: Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Athlete Assistive Technology**

## **Accommodation Policy**

### **Background and Sample Scenarios**

**One way communication.** The way these devices work are very specific: Tier 1 devices aids are *receive ONLY*, Tier 2 devices (microphones, DM/FM systems) microphones are *transmit ONLY*. This permits communication, but only in one directionone way to provide the fencer commands, safety and bout awareness. At no time is there a way for the DHH fencer able to send a communication back to the coach/ref/helper to actively direct or communicate during a bout. Multiple Tier 2 devices may be on at the same time. For example, a coach and a ref may both wear Tier 2 devices that communicate with a Tier 1 device at the same time.

#### **Sample day/interaction:**

**Arrival to a tournament.** Cindy is a DHH fencer. She wears hearing aids. She comes to a tournament with two DM/FM systems - one for her coach, and one for her strip referee. At or after armory check, she checks in with the registration desk, bout committee or tournament director. She shows her USA Fencing DHH certification letter and her DM/FM systems.

**Day of fencing event.** Cindy checks in at the registration table for her event, and confirms with the registration staff that she is both checked in and notes her DHH certification status. Once confirmed, she finds her coach, and gives her coach one of the DM/FM system. She tests the audio with her coach, and proceeds to warm up, dress out and follow instructions to her assigned pool strips.

**At assigned pool.** At pool fencer name confirmation and equipment check stamp review, she introduces herself, and shows the strip ref the DM/FM system. She shows the ref how to mute and unmute his mic (if that functionality is available. Not required for referee). She also explains to the ref that her coach will be wearing a system too. She shows the ref that the coach's system can be muted and unmuted (*this is required*). She asks the ref to please make sure to use the system when she is called to strip, on deck, or called for equipment check. She does a sound check with the ref to make sure she can hear his commands and voice.

**During bouts.** Cindy is called to strip. Her coach uses the system to say "Good luck!", and

then mutes his microphone, showing the indicator to the ref for visibility. The ref checks that the coach's mic is muted. The ref makes sure his mic is on.

**Referee interaction.** Cindy loses her touch. She doesn't understand why she didn't have right of way. She asks the ref what happened. The ref, still using the mic, explains.

**After point is awarded.** As she walks back to her starting position/on guard line, Her coach briefly unmutes his mic and says "It's ok, shake it off", and turns mute back on.

**After bout.** After the bout is over, the strip ref takes off his mic, and hands it to Cindy. Her coach unmutes his mic. Cindy walks away, talking with her coach about strategy and what to do in her next bout.

**One minute break (direct elimination).** The bout continues until the one minute break. At this point, her coach unmutes, walks up to her, and gives her tactical advice and emotional support. He ends with "You got this", and mutes his mic. Cindy finishes by winning her bout.

**Off-strip.** Interaction between DHH fencer and coach is unrestricted, with the Tier 2 device returned by the referee after the pools or DE bouts are over.

### **Sample scenarios:**

- *Calling names for pool and DE strip assignments and equipment check*
- During pool fencing orders
  - 1 and 2 up, 3 and 4 on deck
- Start/end of a bout
  - En garde, ready, fence - pret/allez - halt (and award point)
  - Order of the bout and award of the touch
  - End of bout (5, 10,15)

- Asking for referee/official for clarification/questions
  - Why a touch was awarded
  - Questions about an award
  - What was called and why
  - Right of way clarification
  - Card - if it was issued, why?
  - Advocating for their point
- Between pools (off strip), prior to pools results, tableau release and/or DE 1 minute break (on strip)
  - \*Authorized and allowed coach communication and contact - as with any other fencer
  - *Example exchanges such as:*
    - “You can do this, good luck!” (as bout is about to start, from coach to fencer)
    - “They’re counter attacking, finish your attacks” (during 1 min break, from coach to fencer)
    - “Great job, you did well!” (as bout is over)