



USA
FENCING

2026-27

OPERATIONS MANUAL



USA
FENCING

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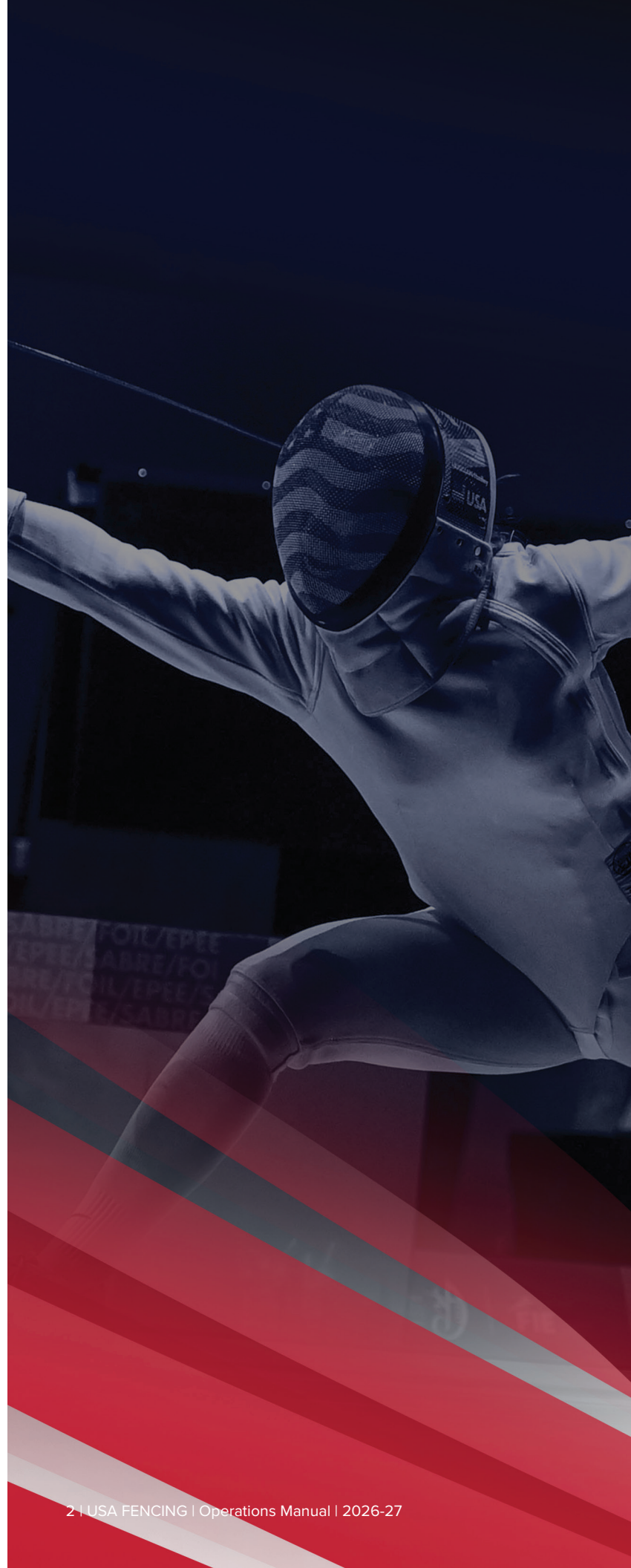
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Published | August 2026



ABOUT USA FENCING

USA Fencing, formally known as the United States Fencing Association, is a nonprofit corporation formed under the laws of the State of Colorado. The Internal Revenue Service has recognized the organization as a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization, and contributions qualify as charitable deductions for the donor to the extent permitted by law. Information about such contributions may be obtained from the National Office.

USA Fencing is the official governing body for amateur fencing in the United States. The Federation International d'Escrime (FIE), the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and other organizations recognize its exclusive jurisdiction. It is the officially designated National Governing Body (NGB) of fencing by the USOPC.

USA Fencing is the sole representative of U.S. Fencing to the FIE – the governing body for all official international fencing competitions including the World Fencing Championships and the fencing competitions at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Any U.S. fencer wishing to participate in official international competitions must have an FIE license secured by USA Fencing and be entered into each event by USA Fencing.

The governance of the organization is specified in USA Fencing Bylaws and is located [here](#) on USA Fencing website.

USA FENCING'S MISSION STATEMENT

To grow and promote the sport of fencing in the United States, honor its rich traditions and achieve sustained competitive international excellence.

USA FENCING'S VISION

To inspire a lifetime enriched by fencing

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This manual serves to assist the Divisions, also referred to as administrative units in USA Fencing's Bylaws, to understand their responsibilities and how to manage qualifying tournaments and local competitions.

This edition of the Operations Manual is a major revision from the last updated version in 2019. This version incorporates procedural changes of USA Fencing that have occurred since the 2019 edition, as well as adjustments to the resources made available in this document to help it best achieve its intended purpose. The manual will be updated as necessary in accordance with the actions of the USA Fencing Board of Directors and on the basis of recommended corrections and/or modifications. Certain Appendices in this version are works in progress. Revisions will be noted by the date provided.

This Operations Manual augments the rules, standards, and procedures set forth in each Division's Bylaws and Division Operating Guide and is to be used along side the Athlete Handbook.

Unless otherwise explicitly provided, references in this Operations Manual to other documents and publications should be construed to mean the current versions of those materials at the time of the application of the provision in question.

Suggestions to enable this manual to be more user friendly are welcome and can be forwarded to information@usafencing.org

The Operations Manual is the property of USA Fencing and is available on the USA Fencing website, Resources Tab/Documents: www.usafencing.org. Permission is granted for reproduction of any portion of this book.

Version August 2026

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Revisions to Operations Manual
Publish Date: August 2026

CHAPTER	SECTION	CHANGE/UPDATE	CHAPTER

CHAPTER 1

DIVISIONS

AFFILIATED UNITS - DIVISION SPECIFICATIONS

For the purpose of administering its local affairs and conducting competitions for USA Fencing members, the United States is divided into 68 Divisions [See Appendix G for the current list of Divisions]. The first Divisions were established on March 20, 1892, in Nebraska and New England.

The boundaries of a Division must follow either established political or geographic boundaries; a Division may be made up of several non-contiguous political or geographic entities. For example, a Division could be defined as being comprised of several states, one state or contiguous counties within one or more states. USA Fencing members who reside in an area not currently within the boundaries of any Division or who reside outside the United States or are members of the Armed Forces may be considered unaffiliated.

Petitions for the establishment of a new Division or for the partition of an existing Division must include an acceptable description of the boundaries of the anticipated new Division.

See the Appendices for Guidelines for Forming a New Division. Contact USA Fencing Director of Operations at the National Office for the latest edition of the Division Operating Guide. The Division Operating Guide is also available at www.usafencing.org, under Membership/Division Resources.

Divisions must have USA Fencing Approved By-laws and Division Operating Guides to be in good standing, and must have an up to date financial report.

Members of USA Fencing should have reasonable access to Division records in the spirit of openness and transparency. USA Fencing Board of Directors recommends that members initially inquire of their Division officers before requesting such documents from the National Office. It is also recommended that Divisions post such information to their web-sites.

DEFINITION OF DIVISION MEMBERSHIP

A fencer must identify to which Division the member will belong. A fencer may be a member of the Division:

- In which the fencer resides; OR
- In which the fencer's club is located, OR
- In which the fencer is a resident student at a school (i.e., not a day student).

The Division for the member becomes the place from which the member can qualify for the Junior Olympic Fencing Championships and the associated qualifying competitions for USA Fencing National Championships.

A fencer may change Division membership if the fencer moves to a place that is located in another Division. Such change will affect the Division from which the fencer can then qualify for any national championship tournament. A fencer, who resides at a school located in another Division, must decide when submitting the membership application whether to represent the Division where his/her home (residence) is located or the Division where his/her school is located. Contact information@usafencing.org if you need to adjust your Division.

If a member reports a change of address, the member must notify Membership Services if the Division needs to be changed.

RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP

All individual members who are in good standing shall be entitled to exercise all rights reserved to the membership class to which they belong, subject to the limitations of the bylaws and to such regulations and limitations as the board of directors may from time to time lay down with respect to particular categories of competitions. All rights and privileges of membership shall cease upon death, resignation, expulsion, suspension or failure to pay dues. For more information on USA Fencing membership types, click [here](#).

Once the membership has been satisfactorily processed, the individual will receive a membership number.

VOTING PRIVILEGES

All individual members, in eligible membership categories, in good standing, who have paid their dues (membership processed and fee collected), as specified by the board of directors, at least 60 days prior to the start of the election and who have attained their 18th birthday as of that date shall have the right to vote on all matters that may be voted on by USA Fencing and its member Divisions. In addition, these members may hold any office to which they may be elected or appointed. A person is considered a member when USA Fencing National Office satisfactorily processes the membership application and associated fees. Members whose applications are incomplete, e.g., missing required signatures, will not be considered in good standing until all information has been completed, signatures have been obtained and fees have been collected.

Members must inform USA Fencing Membership Services of their date of birth and U.S. citizenship, if not noted on their membership application, on or before February 1st of the current membership year or stated in writing that they have, or will attain their 18th birthday as of that date to be eligible to vote in any USA Fencing election.

MEMBERSHIP EXTENSION POLICY

A new member or a first time membership upgrade (individuals only), whose individual one-year dues are paid between April 1 and July 31 shall be entitled to membership through the next membership year without the payment of additional dues.

POLICY ON DIVISION E-BLASTS

Division officers are able to communicate with their division members via the division officer portal within their membership account. USA Fencing does not provide personal contact information to division officers, including email addresses, phone numbers and physical mailing addresses.

These e blast may only be used for official Division business. Use of these eblasts for third party solicitation purposes is prohibited.

1) Division Use of Email Blasts

- These email blasts may only be used only for official Division business.
- These email blasts cannot be used for third party solicitation purposes.

2) Members may choose to opt out of electronic communications.

CHAPTER 2

DIVISION FINANCIAL PRACTICES

FINANCIAL REPORTING

All required financial reports, officers' reports, and Division governing documents must be filed with USA Fencing National Office by their specified due dates. Divisions must remain in good standing by submitting complete and timely reports. Failure to submit required documentation will result in forfeiture of membership rebate payments and may impact the Division's sanctioning authority. Division funds are considered USA Fencing funds. Divisions function as administrative units of the national organization and are accountable to USA Fencing for the use and stewardship of all funds. Division bank accounts must be used solely for USA Fencing-related purposes, and Division officers serve as fiduciaries of those funds on behalf of the organization.

DIVISION FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Divisions may incorporate or not, as they prefer. USA Fencing does not advocate for divisions to incorporate but USA Fencing does not prohibit it. Divisions may, but are not required, to obtain their own FEIN either as a corporation or as an unincorporated association (but doing so does not change the division's relationship, duties, etc., to USA Fencing). The use by a division of USA Fencing's FEIN is prohibited. The use of a personal SSN to open a division bank account is inappropriate and to be avoided. Regardless of the status of divisions as incorporated or not, 501(c)(3) approved or not, with their own FEIN or not, they remain obligated annually to report to USA Fencing their financial information, and to do so on time, accurately, and completely, or they will face sanctions. These could include forfeiture or impounding of their dues share, curtailment of the ability to sanction tournaments, limitations on qualification to championships, or other measures that could eventually end in revocation of a division's charter.

Division Resource Spending Guidelines can be found on the USA Fencing Website, www.usafencing.org/divisions

REBATE OF SHARE OF DUES

USA Fencing shares a portion of membership dues with Divisions in good standing. Rebates will only be issued to those Divisions who are in good standing and that have filed the required financial reports, (from the Division Treasurer) and Division reports indicating current officers. Rebates will be processed electronically and will be issued quarterly. Rebates will be owed at the amount of \$3 per individual competitive-eligible membership class purchase during a given quarter (unsure on wording)

ARREARS

All dues received by USA Fencing National Office shall be accounted for by USA Fencing. Before an administrative unit is eligible to receive any payments, a satisfactory financial report must first be filed with USA Fencing National Office for the previous membership year. That portion of dues not reserved to administrative units of USA Fencing shall be deposited to the national account of USA Fencing for general USA Fencing purposes.

GROUP EXEMPTION

USA Fencing offers its Divisions the opportunity to take part in the group exemption process with the Internal Revenue Service in accordance with the program outlined below. Participation will be on a voluntary basis, and will require compliance with existing regulations. For more information, email finance@usafencing.org

All Divisions participating in the group exemption process are required to obtain a distinct Tax Identification Number. A Division that fails or elects not to comply with the above implementation procedure will not be afforded the advantages of this program.

The advantage to participating in this program is that it allows corporations and other sponsors to make tax-deductible donations to the Division. It is also possible to obtain state sales tax exemption once a Division is federally exempt (under the group exemption of USA Fencing).

CHAPTER 3

COMPETITIONS

SANCTIONED COMPETITIONS

A USA Fencing sanctioned competition refers to a competition that has been authorized by a USA Fencing-designated representative that is responsible for the operation of the competition. Sanctioned competitions must be conducted in accordance with the USA Fencing Rulebook, Athlete Handbook, specific directives such as the Region Tournament Operations manual and related modifications as specified in this Operations Manual.

Sanctioned competitions may not restrict entry to fencers from a specific club or by any other criteria other than age, gender, Division membership, or rating. Only tournaments operated in conjunction with an interscholastic institution or association, such as a high school state athletic association or collegiate athletic conference, may set restrictions on fencers eligible to compete in the competition based on attendance of a specific academic institution. Nothing in this document should be understood to contradict the USA Fencing Rulebook. USA Fencing safety requirements must be followed at all sanctioned competitions.

All USA Fencing-sanctioned local and divisional competitions must be listed on USA Fencing's membership and events system. USA Fencing Member Clubs and Divisions should submit local event sanction requests through their respective manager portals.

COMPETITOR RIGHTS & RESTRICTIONS

1) Membership types that include competitive privileges may participate in sanctioned competitions. Foreign fencers may fence in USA Fencing competitions, except for competitions that are solely for the purpose of qualifying fencers for National Championships and the National Championships themselves (e.g. Divisional Junior Olympic and Division II/III/Y14 qualifiers.) For a full list of membership types and those that include competitive privileges, please [click here](#).

2) Competitive members of USA Fencing may participate in foreign competitions when such competitions are organized by or under the

sponsorship of a National Fencing Federation that is a member of the FIE. Members may also compete in international collegiate or scholastic competitions organized by a group recognized by the FIE, USA Fencing or the National Fencing Federation of the country in which the competition is held, or the IOC. In order for competitive members to compete in FIE sanctioned competitions, those members also must have an FIE License for the current season.

3) Members with Access Memberships are only permitted to compete in Local and Divisional sanctioned competitions. In order for these individuals to participate in Regional and National Competitions, they must upgrade their membership to a full competitive membership.

4) Members may only compete in competitions if they meet the entry requirements, which may include age, gender, points or rating restrictions. See the current edition of the Athlete Handbook for specific age classification eligibility criteria.

5) Members may earn ratings at sanctioned competitions that meet the criteria specified by the Event Classification Chart found in the Athlete Handbook.

TYPE OF COMPETITIONS

Open: An open competition is one in which the only restriction is that the athlete be at least 13 years old as of January 1st of that season or on the National Junior Point Standings at the close of entries.

Closed: A closed competition is one in which eligibility is limited on the basis of Division membership. In a closed competition, athletes must meet the minimum age requirement of 13 years old as of January 1st of the season or be on the National Junior Point Standings.

Restricted: A restricted competition is one in which the eligibility of competitors is limited on the basis of classification, rank, age, rating, points or academic status.

Mixed (Co-ed): A mixed (or co-ed) competition is a competition in which members of both genders may compete. Any competition which serves as a qualifier for the national championships, or where

regional or national points may be earned, may not be held as a mixed competition, unless otherwise specified in the Athlete Handbook or Rules of Competition. Youth regional competitions may be mixed if there are five or fewer competitors of one gender in a specific youth category (Youth-14, Youth-12 or Youth-10).

Team: A team competition is a competition between groups of two or more fencers. Ratings may not be earned at team competitions.

LOCAL & DIVISION COMPETITIONS

Divisions may, under their auspices, sanction competitions within their territorial boundaries that are organized by current USA Fencing member clubs, individuals or other organizations who must have proper insurance coverage for the event, and for which the Division ensures that such competitions are conducted in accordance with the current USA Fencing Rulebook and operating procedures. These competitions must be included in the official schedule of Division competitions to be sanctioned.

The official Division schedule should be published on a public website, and/or printed and mailed or emailed to the members of the Division.

Competition announcements must include the following information:

1. The name and address of the competition venue;
2. The organizer name and contact information (phone or email address);
3. The date and starting time for each event at the competition;
4. The website where registrations must be made for the competition, including the deadline for registration and whether “walk-on” entries will be allowed at the door;
5. And any restrictions on entries for each event based on age, gender, points, classification, or other allowed category.

DIVISION QUALIFIER COMPETITIONS

Divisions have the responsibility to hold annual competitions to qualify fencers for the Junior Olympics and Division II, III, and Youth-14 National Championships. Qualifying competitions are restricted to members of the Division and must adhere to the rules governing qualifying competitions including the age and gender of the participants, citizenship requirements, and classification restrictions. Complete details on the requirements for qualifying competitions, as well as the current qualification paths, can be found in the Athlete Handbook. Qualifier competitions must be scheduled no later than the deadline set by the National Office for the submission of qualifying competition results. Members of the Division must be notified at least four weeks prior to the date of the qualifying competitions. Qualifying competitions should not be scheduled on weekends that conflict with North American Cups (NACs), Super and Regional Youth Circuits (SYCs & RYCs), Super and Regional Junior and Cadet Circuits (SJCCs & RJCCs), and Regional Open Circuits (ROCs). It is also recommended that these competitions not be scheduled in conflict with major religious holidays.

Qualifier competitions must have at least one referee with a rating of R1 or higher present in order to achieve some minimum quality assurance.

In the event that the number of entries for a qualifying competition is equal to or less than the number of authorized qualifiers, the qualifying competition need not be held and all entrants shall be qualified for that event at the National Championships.

For Y14, Division 2 and Division qualifiers, Qualification places must be determined regardless of the format used; the number of qualifiers is not increased due to ties. Information regarding tie breakers can be found in the Athlete Handbook under section 2.6.

REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

USA Fencing has established several regional circuits that provide athletes with a competition experience at a level between local and national competitions. These competitions also serve as qualification paths to national-level events. See the Athlete Handbook for complete details on the regional programs and the age, points and classification restrictions for each circuit.

The National Office may award regional tournament bids within your division. The responsibility for the regional event belongs to the regional event organizer and not the division, unless the division is the organizer of the regional event.

NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS & CHAMPIONSHIPS

National tournaments are a series of large competitions hosted and sanctioned directly by USA Fencing. These events are organized and operated by the USA Fencing National Office, not the division.

All national competitions provide competitions for both genders in all three weapons. The rules governing the national championships are described in Chapter 8 and the Athlete Handbook.

CHAPTER 4

TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT

The organization of a competition or tournament is the responsibility of an organizing committee appointed or approved by the appropriate USA Fencing sanctioning body. The organizing committee provides for the physical facilities, necessary equipment, supplies, personnel and awards to ensure the smooth running of the tournament. This organizing committee is normally referred to as the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). Local events are run by an ad-hoc group created by a club or Division holding a local competition. At minimum, the tournament Officials are the Bout Committee Chair, Head Referee (Referee Assigner), and Head Technician; each has specific responsibilities and each of these may have additional staff depending on the size of the tournament. These individuals may serve in more than one such capacity.

Results from all sanctioned tournaments must be submitted electronically to the Division Secretary or Chair via the results upload process within USA Fencing's membership and events system. Results will then be approved by Division Officers prior to being posted. Tournaments may be run on specific tournament software to assist with seeding and round creation, and is required for all regional-level competitions and higher.

BOUT COMMITTEE COMPOSITION FOR REGIONAL & LOCAL TOURNAMENTS

The Bout Committee for competitions other than national tournaments will consist of three persons: the Bout Committee Chair and two others familiar with the rules of USA Fencing and the conduct of USA Fencing competitions. The persons serving on the Bout Committee for local or regional tournaments should represent different clubs or Divisions, respectively, when possible. These individuals shall be named prior to the start of the tournament.

Any member of the Bout Committee who is a competitor or team captain may not participate in the seeding of pools or selecting the format for the competition in which he or she is involved.

The chair of the Bout Committee for local and regional tournaments is responsible for review of plans and programs set up by the local organizing committee, the conduct of the competition, assignment of referees, format of the competition, seeding of pools, and direct elimination operation and maintenance of discipline. At local tournaments, a separate person may be named as referee assigner. At regional tournaments and higher, a dedicated referee assigner is required. This person should be at minimum an R1 rated referee who is not a participant in any of the competitions in the tournament.

BOUT COMMITTEE DECISION MAKING PROCEDURES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bout Committee, under the direction of its chair, has the ultimate authority for conducting a competition. It is in charge of all personnel, competitors, officials and other persons present, including spectators. The Bout Committee Chair shall enforce all organizational policies in accordance with the USA Fencing Rulebook, Codes of Conduct, FenceSafe and MAPP policies and may remove spectators or competitors from the venue, including issuing a black card, in accordance with the current USA Fencing Rulebook.

USA Fencing staff reserves the right to remove people from the venue for rule infractions, Code of Conduct violations and/or FenceSafe policy related violations.

In the event that the automated systems used for athlete seeding and pool assignment are unavailable, the seeding rules that will be followed for each of the competitions in the tournament shall be posted on each format used to announce the tournament at least one week prior to the start of the tournament. These seeding rules shall ensure all athletes are treated in a fair and judicious manner.

The Bout Committee has no power to amend the rules of USA Fencing. In emergency cases it may change the manner in which the competition or competitions will be conducted after consultation with the National Office. In all such cases, a report of the action taken must be submitted to the Tournament Committee and National Office.

The Bout Committee can request the presence of the head tech in matters dealing with apparent

equipment problems or questions regarding conformity of equipment.

POST-TOURNAMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Division Secretary or Chair shall receive and validate all sanctioned local tournament results including referee usage within 72 hours of the tournament completion. The tournament report shall be forwarded to the National Office for classification updates and to ensure USA Fencing rules and regulations were followed via the results upload process within USA Fencing's membership and events system. The specific requirements for submission are determined by the National Office but may include an electronic record of final results, round results, and referee utilization report. A report of any black cards shall be filed with the National Office. Any significant medical withdrawal, especially any requiring EMT intervention or transportation to a hospital, should also be filed with the National Office.

PROTESTS

The Bout Committee is not a parliamentary body that makes administrative decisions by majority vote. However, on questions properly brought to it on appeal, the Bout Committee decides by majority vote. In such cases, each person constituting the Bout Committee has one vote. In case of a tie in the vote, the decision of the referee stands when the protest deals with the decision of the referee during a bout.

Any person involved, directly or indirectly, in the protest, or with a conflict of interest in the protest, must remove him or herself from hearing the protest. If a person needs to remove him or herself, a replacement or replacements will be named by the RC head referee or the TC rep. The Bout Committee must resolve all conflict of interest issues before hearing the appeal.

An athlete representative, if present and not of the same club or school affiliation as the protesting fencer nor involved in the same competition, may be requested by the protesting athlete, in a non-voting capacity, to participate in the deliberations of the Bout Committee as an advocate for the athlete.

ON-STRIP PROTESTS

If the protest is lodged at the strip with the referee, the fencer can appeal to the Bout Committee in accordance with t.172-174 of the Fencing Rules. This appeal must be made:

- a) in individual events, by the fencer,
- b) in team events, by the fencer or the team captain

It should be made courteously but without formality, and should be made verbally to the referee immediately and before any decision is made regarding a subsequent hit.

Initially, the head referee will determine if the protest is valid and reviewable. For points of fact, the decision of the referee is final. For other protest, the full Bout Committee will convene at the strip. After deliberation, the decision of the Bout Committee is final and there is no further appeal permitted. There is no appeal of the Bout Committee when it is the appellate body for a referee decision. Once the fencer unhooks, or continues to fence an additional touch, there is no longer an opportunity for a protest.

If a fencer or team disagrees with an action of the Bout Committee, not in its appellate (appeal) capacity, the individual or team can appeal the decision of the Bout Committee to the Jury of Appeal.

JURY OF APPEAL

The Jury of Appeal is responsible for hearing a protest against a decision of the Bout Committee, when that decision has been made by the Bout Committee in other than its appellate (appeal) capacity. The decisions of the Jury of Appeal are final.

A member of the Jury of Appeal must excuse himself or herself if he or she is personally involved or if, by reason of his or her affiliation, he or she is confronted with a potential conflict of interest; no proxy votes are permitted.

Whatever juridical authority has taken a decision prior to the Jury of Appeal, this decision may be subject to review by the Jury of Appeal, but only once. No decision on a question of fact can be

the subject of an appeal (cf. t.122.1/2). An appeal against a decision only suspends that decision when it can be judged immediately.

Every appeal must be accompanied by the deposit of a guaranty of \$100; this sum may be confiscated for the benefit of the Bout Committee if the appeal is rejected on the grounds that it is 'frivolous'; this decision will be taken by the juridical authority responsible for hearing the appeal.

JURY OF APPEAL PROCEDURE

The Jury of Appeal at a national competition shall be composed of one member each from the following groups, if present and unaffiliated:

- Tournament Committee
- Referee Commission
- Athlete Advisory Group
- National Coaches Representative
- National Office Representative

The Jury of Appeal shall elect a chair from among its members to deliver the decision.

At the beginning of each national tournament, the Tournament Committee representative shall compile a list of all those eligible to serve on the Jury of Appeal, consisting of no more than one representatives and one alternates from each of the above groups, chosen from those who will be in attendance at the tournament. A member of the Bout Committee whose decision is being appealed may not serve on a Jury of Appeal. This list will be posted at registration and at the location of the bout committee throughout the tournament.

The Jury of Appeal at a Division sanctioned competition shall be composed of one member of the Division's board of directors or designate, one designated referee with a rating of R1 or higher, and one athlete or one coach not otherwise represented. A member of the Bout Committee may not serve on a Jury of Appeal. The chair for a Divisional competition shall be the chair of the Division unless the Division chair is also a member of the Bout Committee. In the absence of the Division chair, the Jury of Appeal shall elect a chair from among its members.

The Jury of Appeal for regionally sanctioned competitions shall be composed of one nationally trained bout committee member or member of a Division board of directors, one designated referee with a rating of 5 or higher, and one neutral coach or athlete not otherwise represented.

During its deliberations, the Jury of Appeal shall have the right to consult with advisors (e.g., technical or legal experts) as it sees fit. Such advisors are not required to be voting members of the Jury of Appeal.

Each member of the Jury of Appeal, including the chair, shall deliberate and then cast one vote. All decisions of the Jury of Appeal are decided by majority vote. In the event of a tie vote, the decision of the Bout Committee stands. In all cases, the record of the action taken and the reason therefore must be filed with the National Office.

TOURNAMENT OPERATIONS – THE VENUE

A tournament's location should be announced well in advance of the scheduled competition date. Any changes to location or schedule must be communicated to all competitors.

The tournament venue includes all space inside of a facility including the competition floor, observation areas, restrooms, meeting rooms and all other spaces physically connected to any of the above or contracted in the venue agreement. Exclusions from the venue will be enforced in all of the above areas.

Each tournament must post the following information in a publicly visible space or online:

- Name of the Bout Committee chair
- Name of the head referee
- Event seeding
- Round results
- Final results

The facility at which USA Fencing sanctioned competitions/tournaments are held must have proper insurance coverage for the duration of the tournament. Consult with USA Fencing Membership Services for details on proper insurance coverage.

Sanctioned competitions must adhere to the following guidelines for their strip dimensions:

1. Local and Division Qualifier Competitions: Strips need to be at least 1 meter wide and 12 meters long, with adequate run-off. Grounded strips are preferred but not required. Scoring apparatus can be located at a reasonable position along the strip, ensuring clear visibility for the referee's line of sight to the fencing; with placement at the center of the strip optimal. The final two meters of the strip must be clearly marked. In regards to the run-off, if the facility does not have the means for exact compliance, accommodations must be made in how the strip usage is handled. For example, if there is insufficient room for the proper length of the strip, then the fencer must be given opportunity in use of the strip to have an equivalent amount of strip during the bouts.

REGISTRATION POLICIES

Registration for a tournament event is considered final only when all necessary fees have been paid and a valid competitive-type membership is verified or completed. It is recommended for tourna-

ments to have an on-site computer to expedite new membership registrations and processing of tournament results. Fees may include a tournament registration fee, a tournament sanctioning fee, an administrative processing fee, and a per-event fee.

Each tournament must post deadlines for tournament entry and the associated fee schedule. A late fee may not be enacted any earlier than is reasonable for tournament planning and preparations. On-site registrations are allowed at the discretion of the tournament organizer. The policy for on-site registrations must be posted in advance.

Tournaments must post the date that ratings and ranking information is considered final. No changes to ratings or ranking may be processed after this date.

In situations where athletes are exempt from an initial round based on initial seeding, the date that selection will be made must be published in advance, and only individuals with confirmed registrations will be considered.

SCHEDULING GUIDELINES

To assist in scheduling, the following estimates should be taken into considerations when forming an event schedule:

Average Bout Timing in Minutes

	SINGLE POOL BOUT	POOL OF 7	15-TOUCH BOUT	TEAM MATCH
FOIL	6.5	120	15	60
EPEE	6.5	120	15	60
SABRE	3	60	8	30

When running a multi-event tournament, having an appropriate number of strips should be the primary planning consideration for any tournament schedule. Use the following formula to get a strip estimate quickly:

Number of strips needed = Estimated number of competitors per day / 14

Tournaments using this formula should complete no later than 7 p.m. if started by 9 a.m. If tournaments cannot provide the appropriate number of

strips for pools, double flighting may be needed. Whenever possible, announce to the athletes when the second flight of pools will begin. This can be planned for using the average bout timetable above. If a second flight time is announced, it must be adhered to. Fencing may not begin before the announced flight time unless agreed to by all competitors.

Armory staff should be available at least one hour prior to the close of check-in to conduct safety and weapons check as needed.

SEEDING & POOL LAYOUT

Reference the Athlete Handbook for specific seeding criteria by event type.

For event formats that use a points list for seeding, the date that points list is considered final must be published in the tournament information.

For pool layouts, club affiliations and divisions for each competitor will be used for possible conflict resolution in initial pool rounds. For International fencers, club affiliation is resolved first, then country may be used.

Referees should be assigned to pools to minimize Division and club conflicts wherever possible.

Using two strips simultaneously to run a pool, called double stripping, is permitted in all weapons for pools of seven people. Foil and epee pools of six may be double stripped. Sabre pools of six, and smaller pools in all weapons, may not be doubled stripped.

SCORING

A record of all bout scores must be kept. Sanctioned events must submit results electronically to the National Office. The original score sheets must be kept for a period of 48 hours after the conclusion of the event. Electronic results should be kept for at least one year.

All competitors should be allowed the opportunity to review a final pool scoresheet, and any direct elimination scoresheet. The competitor must sign the scoresheet to indicate they have reviewed the scores and agree that they are correct.

Between any round, competitors must be allowed a sufficient period of time to review the round results before a new round may begin. For national tournaments, competitors must be allowed 15 minutes to review results. For regional tournaments, 10 minutes must be given. For local tournaments, five minutes.

If a scoring protest is brought, the Bout Committee should review the scoresheet. If the score was incorrectly recorded from the scoresheet, it must be corrected immediately. If the score was recorded correctly from the scoresheet, but the competitor is

protesting the recorded score, the two competitors in the bout should be brought together along with the referee. The referee or Bout Committee should attempt to gain consensus between the fencers on the correct score. If no consensus can be reached by the end of the review period, the score recorded on the scoresheet will stand.

Competitors must protest scores by the end of the review period. No scores can be changed after the expiration of the review period. In individual completion, only the competitor may protest a score. In team competition, only the team captain may protest a score.

At the conclusion of a direct elimination bout, the bout scoresheet may be given to the competitor to return to the Bout Committee. It is the responsibility of the competitor to return the bout scoresheet immediately to the Bout Committee table without delay. Any bout rest period begins at the conclusion of the previous bout, not when the bout slip is returned to the Bout Committee. If any score sheets are given to the competitor at the Bout Committee table, they must be taken to the appropriate referee without manipulation or delay. Deliberately altering any scoresheet without consent of the referee and opponent is considered manifest cheating and will be penalized with a black card.

Final results should be posted in the venue, or online. Protests of final round scoring must be made within 24 hours of the conclusion of an event. Scoring changes that impact final placement must be made prior to the awards ceremony and posting of final results.

MEDICAL WITHDRAWS, NO SHOWS, ELIMINATIONS & EXCLUSIONS

There are three types of removal from competition:

- **Medical:** leaving the competition due to a medical issue. If the competitor has completed all of their pool bouts, they will maintain their place in the final results. For documentation purposes, the Bout Committee should receive a report from the medical staff.
- **No Show/Elimination:** the competitor abandons the competition after three calls, with the second call done over a loud speaker system. If the competitor fails to appear for their pool

round, the competitor will be recorded as a scratch and not included in the final results. If the competitor fails to appear for a Director Elimination (DE) round, the competitor will maintain their place in the final results as if they had lost the bout.

- **Black Card/Exclusion:** the competitor is issued a black card. The competitor will be removed completely from the final results and replaced by “Fencer Excluded”. Fencers placing below the competitor will not move up in place. Excluded competitors will not earn ratings, points, nor qualifications even if their final placement would otherwise entitle them to these.

If a competitor is removed during a pool round prior to completing the pool for any reason, the bouts fenced will be nullified as if never fenced. If the competitor completes the pool, but withdraws prior to the direct elimination, the results from the pool round will be recorded and the competitor will be removed from the direct elimination table by giving their opponent a bye into the next round.

RUNNING AN EFFICIENT DIRECT ELIMINATION TABLE

Direct elimination tables are most efficiently run with a dedicated member of the bout committee or referee cadre handing bout score sheets to referees at the strip instead of referees returning to the bout committee after each bout. This position is called a pod captain.

The pod captain should position themselves near a strip, and competitors should be told to report to that position when posting the direct elimination table.

As fencers return their bout score sheets to the Bout Committee, the winning fencer is confirmed and placed on the score sheet of their next bout. If both competitors are determined, the score sheet is given to the competitor to return to the pod captain.

VIDEO REPLAY

Video replay is optional for all local and regional tournaments. The following criteria are used for scheduling video replay at national tournaments:

Guaranteed from the round of 16:

- Division I, Junior, Cadet

Guaranteed from the round of 8:

- Y10, Y12, Y14, Vet 50, Vet 60, Vet 70

Guaranteed from the round of 8:

- Division IA, Division II, Division III, Vet 40, Vet 80, Vet Combined

Guaranteed for the Gold/Bronze:

- Teams

Referee Requirements [Click Here](#)

MEDICAL STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional and national tournaments are required to have on-site medical staff. It is highly recommended for local tournaments.

Regional tournaments must have at least one staff member available, and national events must have at least two staff members. The following is a list of recommended certifications for medical staff:

ATC - Unrestricted certification/license (Certified Athletic Trainer)

- Must be overseen by a licensed physician (MD/DO/DC) and/or Physicians' Advisory Board

DC - Unrestricted medical license (Doctor of Chiropractic)

- Must obtain (DACBSP) Diplomate American Chiropractic Board of Sports Medicine Physicians
- Minimal requirements are Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician (CCSP) - within good standing as well as working toward completion of DACBSP.
- And/or Dual-credentialing - DC, ATC

DPT/PT - Unrestricted license (Physical Therapist or Doctor of Physical Therapy)

- Must obtain (ABPTS) American Board of Physical Therapy Specialist in Sports Medicine
- Must be overseen by a licensed physician (MD/DO/DC) and/or Physicians' Advisory Board
- Dual Credentialing - DPT/PT, ATC

MD/DO - Unrestricted medical license (Medical Doctor or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine)

- Must obtain (ACGME) Graduate Medical Education in Sports Medicine
- And/or completion of Sports Medicine Fellowship at sponsoring institutions

- The sponsoring institution must also sponsor an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) - accredited residency program in sports medicine

PA - Unrestricted license (Physician Assistant)

- Must have Dual Credentials - PA, ATC
- Must be overseen by a licensed physician (MD/DO/DC) and/or Physicians' Advisory Board

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT SCHEDULING CRITERIA

National tournament scheduling applies the following criteria when creating tournament day schedules. Only group 1 criteria are required, but group 2 and 3 are applied when possible.

Group 1: Mandatory Criteria

- For any one weapon, the Div I, Junior, and Cadet competitions must not be held on the same day.
- For any one weapon, competitions in immediately adjacent age groups (e.g., Y14 and Y12) must not be held on the same day.
- For any one weapon, team and individual competitions in the same (NACs or Junior Olympics) or adjacent (Summer Nationals) age-levels must not be held on the same day.

Group 2: Highly Desirable

- The projected lengths of the first and last days of competition should be shorter than those of intervening days.
- Each day should include a balance of right of way weapon and épée competitions. If large foil and sabre events must be held on the same day, their start times should be separated as much as possible. If two sabre events are held on the same day, their numbers should be relatively small and their start times separated as much as possible.
- (Junior Olympic Championships) A day of rest should be scheduled between Junior and Cadet competitions in the same weapon.
- A day of rest should be scheduled between Junior and Division I competitions in the same weapon.
- (Summer Nationals) For any one weapon, competitions in adjacent age groups should not be widely separated.

- Scheduling of the first competition of the first day should take into consideration the demands of that competition on weapons control.
- For any one weapon, same day scheduling of individual and team competitions should be avoided when it is possible that a fencer could fence in both competitions.
- Team competitions should be scheduled for after the individual competition in the same category.
- For any one weapon, same day scheduling of Youth 14, Cadet, and Junior and open team competitions should be avoided.
- For any one weapon, same day scheduling of Veterans and Division IA competitions should be avoided.
- Whenever possible Youth 10 events should be scheduled early in the day.
- For any one weapon, Division II and Division III same day scheduling of competitions should be avoided.
- The day on which a competition is scheduled should be rotated through the days of the week for any one weapon and age group.

Group 3: If Possible

- If there is a shortage of referees in a given weapon, the last day should include only smaller competitions in that weapon.
- Coaches' timely requests to hold training camps before or after competitions should be honored whenever possible.
- Membership and board meeting needs should be considered when developing schedules for Summer Nationals and the Junior Olympic Championships.
- Competitions in the same age group and gender but in different weapons (e.g., Y14ME and Y14MF) should not be held on the same day.
- Schedules should accommodate those single weapon fencers who wish to fence in multiple weapons for team selection competitions.

If one weapon is inconvenienced during one season (competitions scheduled on multiple weekdays, or with repeated early or late starts, for example), special attention should be paid to scheduling that weapon the following season.

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL ENTRY INFORMATION

ELIGIBILITY

Please refer to the Athlete Handbook for the current event eligibility criteria.

GENERAL

National competitions may impose a “No Show” fine for fencers that fail to appear for their event. See the No Show Fine policy found in the current version of the Athlete Handbook.

A fencer who has entered a local, Divisional, or regional competition but has failed to pay the required entry fee, and has either participated in the competition or failed to withdraw from the competition in a timely fashion, shall be liable to the appropriate organizing committee for the amount of the entry fee and shall be ineligible to enter any subsequent competition until restored to good standing by payment of the amount due.

It is the responsibility of the fencer to ensure that an entry form/online entry for a competition is filed in accordance with the organizing committee’s regulations for that competition.

Unless otherwise specified, USA Fencing Rules for Competition govern USA Fencing competitions and it is the responsibility of each fencer to be familiar with them (Athlete Handbook, USA Fencing Rules for Competition then Operations Manual).

It is the responsibility of the fencer to possess the necessary equipment to compete in accordance with the rules of USA Fencing.

REPRESENTATION IN USA FENCING TEAM COMPETITIONS

Please refer to the Athlete Handbook for specific information on club representation and affiliation and team events.

DENIAL OF ENTRY

The entry from a member, who is not in good standing because of arrears in dues or entry fees, because of disciplinary penalties in effect, or otherwise, shall be rejected.

CHAPTER 6

EVENT RATINGS

RATINGS

Each USA Fencing sanctioned competition is grouped on the basis of the strength and number of participants present. Ratings may only be earned at tournaments where electrical apparatus for the scoring of touches is used.

COMPETITIONS ELIGIBLE FOR CLASSIFICATION

All USA Fencing sanctioned competitions are eligible to award ratings if they meet the criteria specified in Chapter 2 of the [Athlete Handbook](#).

CHAPTER 7

COMPETITION PROCEDURES

SEEDING

Please refer to Chapter 2 of the Athlete Handbook for more information on seeding both individual and team events.

NATIONAL RANKINGS

Please refer to Chapter 2 of the Athlete Handbook for more information on how rankings are used for seeding; Chapter 3 of the Athlete Handbook discusses how points are awarded.

DIVISION & REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

In Division competitions, seeding must use the national rolling point standings within each classification or it can use just the classification, letter and year, for seeding.

After the first round, seeding is based on the results of the promoted fencers from the previous round.

CLUBMATES

In all domestic competitions, fencers representing the same club, division, and country are to be separated as much as possible by applying the rules regarding the separation of fencers representing the same country as specified by the FIE Rules for Competition. For purposes of USA Fencing, the

separation for club or school representation takes precedence over separation for Division representation, followed by nationality. In separating teammates, it is important to swap fencers at the same level, primarily with the same classification. Note, however, that ranked fencers may not be swapped – they must maintain their positions even if there are club mates among the ranked fencers in the pool.

LOCAL COMPETITION FORMATS

In local competitions, there are a number of variations that can be used to benefit the level of fencers in that Division, both in individual and team competitions. For competition formats that are approved for use during sanctioned tournaments that are NOT qualifying competitions, see the Athlete Handbook.

Whatever format the Division decides to use, it must be announced and posted before the start of the competition.

FORMATS FOR QUALIFYING COMPETITIONS

Division qualifier competitions for Summer Nationals and the Junior Olympic Championships must be run using one of the approved formats specified in the Athlete's Handbook.

Once entries close for a competition and the total number of competitors present is known, the BC Chair will determine how many pools of what size will be established for the first round. The pools so determined must have at least five fencers in each and preferably will have no more than seven. In cases where the pools will not all be the same size only two different sizes are allowed, e.g., five- and six-person pools, six-and seven-person pools. If there are less than ten fencers registered, those fencers can be placed in one pool and can be fenced on two strips.

In all qualifying competitions the first choice for determination of the number of pools is that each pool contains seven fencers; the second choice is that each pool contains six fencers. When neither of these options is possible, given the number of fencers, the pools should be a combination of seven-person pools and six-person pools, with the

top seeded fencers in the larger pools. The top seeded fencers are not moved; instead the fencers seeded lowest are moved to meet this priority in pool size distribution. In doing so, club conflicts must be avoided to the extent possible.

Once the fencing in the pool round has started, no changes can be made to any pool even if a pool falls below the size of the smaller pools in the round due to an unexpected withdrawal (i.e., black card or medical withdrawal) of one or more of the fencers. For events where the pool round is conducted in multiple flights, changes may be made to a pool up until the start time for its respective flight.

CHAPTER 8

GENERAL ENTRY INFORMATION

GENERAL

Please refer to Chapter 2 of the Athlete Handbook for more information on the various Championships conducted by USA Fencing.

COMPETITIVE FIELDS

For individual championship competitions, there must be at least six fencers entered at the regular fee entry deadline for the competition to be held, with exceptions only for Veteran age categories. Less than six fencers will be the basis for consideration of cancellation of that competition. For team championship competitions there must be at least two teams entered by the regular entry deadline for the competition to be held; otherwise, it will be canceled. An exception to this rule at this time is parafencing competitions.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR QUALIFYING COMPETITIONS

1. In accordance with the Ted Stevens Act, the United States Olympic and Paralympic committee has given the authority to USA Fencing as the sole national governing body recognized for the sport of fencing in the United States. As such, it is the only entity permitted to operate national championships for the sport of fencing, and there are no alternatives to any national championship competition; only those who have met the qualifying standard will be eligible to enter the National Championships.

2. In determining the number of qualifiers, the number of competitors is the total number of fencers who competed in the qualifying competition who are eligible to fence in the Championships. Once the number of qualifiers is determined, those who have already qualified to the Championships in that event (athletes who are automatic qualifiers) by earning of National Points are skipped in determining those who have qualified for that competition. For example, if there are 20 competitors in the qualifying competition, of which four have already qualified for that particular championship event by having national points, those four are skipped in determining the five qualifiers from that competi-

tion. Example: If the automatic qualifiers placed 1st, 3rd, 6th, and 7th, then the qualifiers are those who have placed 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th and 9th.

3. A fencer may appeal to USA Fencing a decision made by the Bout Committee at a qualifying competition as a possible violation of the rules, by forwarding in writing the appeal to the National Office within three business days after the qualifying competition. If a Jury of Appeal considered the protest at the competition, there is no further appeal of the decision.

- When a local Bout Committee has decided on an appeal of a decision of a referee, there is no further appeal. Examples of decisions that are made by the Bout Committee that may be appealed are: the format used at the competition disallowing the entry of a fencer, or scheduling multiple events in such a way that a fencer is unable to seek qualification in an event, etc.
- At a competition, the next higher authority is the Jury of Appeal. [t.97 of USA Fencing USA Fencing Rulebook: (e) The decisions of the Bout Committee that it takes spontaneously or in its own right (as the first level of authority) are subject to appeal to a Jury of Appeal.

4. USA Fencing may set aside the results of any qualifying competition which does not conform to USA Fencing USA Fencing Rulebook and/or rules specified in USA Fencing Operations Manual and require that the qualifying competition be rescheduled, designate the qualifiers from that Division or require that some or all of the contesting fencers compete in a special qualifying competition held at the site of the National Championships on the day before the national championship competition is scheduled to be held.

5. Within 72 hours after the completion of each of its qualifying competitions, the secretary of each Division, or the designated Division office, shall transmit the Fencing Time results file or the approved Results File using the required template to the USA Fencing National Office.

USA Fencing National Office shall check the certified lists against the list of USA Fencing members in good standing and shall use these lists to process the entries.

APPENDICES

GUIDELINES FOR FORMING NEW DIVISIONS

PROCEDURE

1. The proposed Division should encompass a minimum of two USA Fencing member clubs.
2. These clubs must have been member clubs of USA Fencing for at least three years.
3. The two clubs must each have a minimum of 25 USA Fencing members.
4. The new Division will be in a probationary status for two years. During that period, it must increase the size of its membership by 10 percent.
5. A complete and compliant set of Bylaws and Division Operating Guide for the proposed Division must be included with the application.
6. The application must include a rationale for the proposed Division that explains how it will better serve its members' interest than the current Division.

The application should be sent to the National Office of USA Fencing. The USA Fencing Board of Directors will review the application, and if it desires more information, may refer the application to other committees of USA Fencing for review and comment. When it is satisfied that it has the necessary information to make a recommendation, it will place the application on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of Directors with its recommendation for approval or denial.

COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS & TASK FORCES

The standing committees of USA Fencing, are defined by the USA Fencing Bylaws. For a full list of these committees go to

www.usafencing.org/committees

OFFICIAL USA FENCING PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS (ATOZ)

American Fencer

American Fencer is the official publication of USA Fencing. American Fencer was founded by Jose

de Capriles and William L. Osborn, who served as editor and publisher, respectively, without remuneration. American Fencer can be found on

www.americanfencer.org

Persons who wish to submit articles or advertisements for publication in the magazine should email them to information@usafencing.org addressed to the editor of American Fencing.

Athlete Handbook

At the beginning of each fencing season USA Fencing publishes an **Athlete Handbook** that describes current programs offered by USA Fencing to provide opportunities for athletes of all ages and proficiency levels to enhance their domestic and international competitive experiences as well as gain the means by which to become world class athletes. The National Office will notify USA Fencing membership of changes to any of the programs domestic or international requirements via posting on USA Fencing website and with a list of revisions to the Athlete Handbook that is published in both the book and on the website.

Operations Manual

USA Fencing publishes an Operations Manual that will be posted on the website and that is updated periodically. This manual serves to assist the administrative units to understand their responsibilities and manner in which to manage qualifying tournaments and local competitions.

Financial Policy and Procedures

USA Fencing has published a Financial Policy and Procedures that is posted on the website that is updated periodically. USA Fencing intends this manual to be used as a set of guidelines for day-to-day business operations. This manual is approved by the board of directors, which serves as the sole authority for financial policies and procedures.

USA Fencing Website

The official USA Fencing website address is www.usafencing.org. The website, under the authority of USA Fencing, is a source of information about USA Fencing competitions throughout the country, international competitions, member fencing

ing clubs, current coach and athlete membership and club list, the national and regional schedule of tournaments, and official forms and documents. The website provides links to various association resources, online registration, committees, and other related websites.

FORMS

For an up to date listing of all available forms for tournament organizers, please reference the USA Fencing Event Resources page located at www.usafencing.org

REFERENCE LINKS

USA Fencing Rule Book | [Rule Book Video Referencing \(t.42\)](#)

SafeSport | [SafeSport](#)

Anti-doping | www.usada.org

FIE Rule Books | [FIE Rule Book](#)

RC Site | [Referees' Commission Website](#)

Regional Calendar | www.usafencing.org/regional-events

National Calendar | www.usafencing.org/national-events-calendar

International Calendar | www.usafencing.org/international-calendar

Referees Commission | www.usafencing.org/referees-commission

Regional Calendar | www.usafencing.org/events-regional

National Calendar | www.usafencing.org/events-national



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