

Rules Updates for 2026-27

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Topics for Today

2026 Rules Updates:

1. Unwillingness to fence
2. Secondary mask retaining devices
3. *t.122* – post-bout etiquette
4. Changes to warm-up clothing requirements
5. Other FIE changes made in 2025-26
6. *t.109*



First, Some Rules & Exams Business

Rules & Examinations Subcommittee:

- Sabre: Laura Schwarz, Nicholas Quan
- Épée: Tyler Jacobson, Bern Samko
- Foil: Michael Green, TBD x1
- Athlete Reps: Nina Sayles, TBD x2

Please contact me if you are a TBD and interested.

This season:

- Masks, emails, & rules Qs (not on call)
- Written exam rewrite about to start
- Analysis of referee usage hours
- (Maybe: comprehensive Rulebook freshen-up)

Quick note on rules changes in USA Fencing:

- Only the USA Fencing Board of Directors may change the Rules of Competition (Bylaws, Section 7.20)
- The Editor of the Rules (me) & Referees' Commission *maintain* the Rules
- Sometimes, USA Fencing defers changes to later when FIE makes them
- Sometimes there is service turnover, leading to lagged procedural motions
- FIE season ≠ USA Fencing season ≠ FIE Congress dates (and this is historically painful)



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Rules Changes

Effective 1 October 2026

Unwillingness to Fight

Starting 2026-27, the FIE has adopted a change to *t.124* removing the **P-Yellow** card

- 1st instance of U2F results in **P-Red** cards for both fencers
- All other properties of *t.124* unchanged; this is to remove the “tactical **P-Yellow**” that was very common w/ *t.124*, esp. in épée
- Nothing else about Unwillingness to Fight has changed

Unwillingness to fight (Non-combativity)

t.124

There is unwillingness to fight when there is one minute of fencing without a hit or without a hit scored off the target.

In the event of **unwillingness to fight**, the Referee will immediately call 'Halt!' as a decision of "fact" (cf.t.136.2).

Unwillingness to fight is sanctioned as follows (t.170):

1 Individual events – Direct elimination

~~P-yellow cards and~~ P-red Cards are awarded to both fencers simultaneously; ~~starting with a P-Yellow card, followed by a P-Red card.~~ The P-Black card is awarded as described in 1**cb**) below.

a) When, for the first time, there is one minute of unwillingness to fight, the Referee sanctions both fencers with a P-yellow **red** card.

~~b) When, for the second time, there is one minute of unwillingness to fight, the Referee sanctions both fencers with a P-red card:~~

b c) When, for the **third second** time, there is one minute of unwillingness to fight, a P-black card is awarded as follows:



Secondary Mask Retaining Devices

FIE has made appearing on strip w/ a mask that lacks a secondary safety device an offense of the 1st group (t.72; awhile ago)

- USA Fencing did not adopt this immediately, but has required the devices to be present
- It's been several seasons, and all fencers should know
- Safety implications are big, as USA SEMI was early to recognize
- Appearing on the strip w/o the secondary strap affixed is now a group 1 yellow card
- Please do not punish the occasional forgetful, well-meaning fencer

t.72

Similarly, even during the course of a bout, any fencer whose mask, at the moment he presents himself on guard and ready to fence, is not securely held on his head by the 2nd security device (cf. m.25.7.f), commits an offence in the first group and will be penalised in accordance with articles t.158-t.162, t.165, t.170.



This thing needs to be worn



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Post-Bout Protocol

Covid-19 and geopolitics have recently laid waste to post-match protocols (t.122):

- FIE has more or less used the current formulation w/o a handshake for several years
- Plans in motion to codify this with no expiration at 2026 Congress
- Nothing prevents fencers from shaking hands anyway
- NACs are gross; we won't be *forcing* people touch sweaty hands
- Note: no blade tap required either

Motivation: final update.

t.122

Before the beginning and at the end of a bout, the two fencers must perform the **fencer's salute** to their opponent, to the referee and to the spectators, as defined in article t.1.

When the final hit of the bout has been scored, the two fencers stand still on their on-guard line while the referee is making his/her decision.

The two fencers then perform the **fencer's salute** (cf. t.1) to their opponent, to the referee and to the spectators. The bout has then ended.

If either or both of the two fencers refuse to comply with these rules, the Referee will penalise him/them **as specified for offences of the 4th group** (cf. t.158-162, t.169, t.170).

Application: ~~until the end of the 2025–2026 season~~ current and from the 2026–2027 season



Required Warm-up Equipment

FIE made changes to the required equipment for lessons or warm-up bouts inside the competition site (t.20). We have adopted a reduced version.:

Lessons:

- **Coaches:** Plastron, glove, *long pants*
- **Fencers:** mask, glove, *chest protector*

Warming Up:

- Full fencing kit, now + *socks and fencing pants*

This is not a referee's article to enforce.

t.20

2 It is obligatory for any fencer who warms up or trains with another fencer on site at an official FIE competition (including in the training halls linked to the competition) to wear **full fencing clothing and equipment** which conforms with the FIE regulations. *This includes breeches and long socks in accordance with m.25.*

Any person giving a lesson must wear at least a fencing master's plastron as well as a fencing glove, *long trousers* and a mask conforming with the regulations.

Any fencer taking a lesson must wear at least a mask, *and* a glove, a *chest protector*, *a top covering the torso and shoulders*, and *shorts which reach to within 10cm of the knees or lower.*



Other Small Changes

- *t.43*: fencers may only ask the referee for the remaining time if time is not displayed on the electronic scoring apparatus
 - No change from practice (I hope)
- *t.71*: specifies that 5 minutes is the maximum “reasonable amount of time” to obtain a spare piece of equipment if a fencer appears on piste without a piece of required regulation equipment
 - Helpful rules support for conventional practice
- *t.127*: “[after a team match concludes] Fencers must not present on piste in a state of undress.”
 - (Be reasonable)
- *t.170*: updates to the penalty chart



Editorial Changes

Vast bulk of changes are *editorial*:

- Updates to organizational rules that only affect FIE competitions
- Renumbering of articles or changes of section titles
- Minor editorial word changes, language cleanup
- Language to define & include two new FIE events (Cadet World Cups & the Grand Veterans' team events)
- Fixing historical typos
- **None of these affect play or refereeing.**

Notwithstanding ~~anything in this Section 9.6 to the contrary,~~ provided Tenant is not in default hereunder beyond any applicable notice and cure period, Tenant may, without Landlord's consent ~~but upon at least ten (10) days' prior written notice,~~ assign this Lease or ~~sublet a portion of the Demised Premises, only for the permitted use contained herein to~~ (i) any entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with Tenant (an "Affiliate"), (ii) a transfer of this Lease in connection with a merger, consolidation, or reorganization of Tenant, or (iii) a sale of all or substantially all of the assets or equity interests of Tenant (each, a "Permitted Transfer"); provided, however, except as otherwise set forth herein, ~~Tenant shall remain liable under this Lease following any such assignment or sublease. In the event of any such assignment or sublease, Tenant shall provide Landlord with a fully executed copy of the assignment and assumption agreement, or sublease, promptly after the effective date thereof. With respect to any assignment that is a Permitted Transfer, Tenant shall be released from all liabilities and obligations first accruing after such Permitted Transfer if the assignee's tangible net worth, following the Permitted Transfer, is equal to or greater than the greater of (a) the tangible net worth of Tenant as of the Effective Date, and (b) the tangible net worth of Tenant immediately prior to the Permitted Transfer, as demonstrated to Landlord's reasonable satisfaction. In no event shall Tenant strategically structure a Permitted Transfer, or use a series or combination of Permitted Transfers, to intentionally circumvent Tenant's obligation to obtain the prior written consent of Landlord to a transfer that would otherwise require Landlord's consent under this Lease, it being understood and agreed that Tenant shall act reasonably and in good faith with respect to effectuating any Permitted Transfers,~~

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Tenant shall remain liable for all its lease obligations, including, but not limited to, monetary obligations.

Section 9.7. Access by Landlord. Tenant shall permit the Landlord and its agents

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t.109

The FIE changed *t.109* near “threaten[ing] or insult[ing] an official” from the 4th to the 3rd group.

- [Don’t freak out] We did, too.
- *Practical result*: allows judgment to apply a **yellow** where only a **black card** was possible before on strict reading
- *Question is not*: “should this always be a **yellow**?” or “Are we allowing abuse?”
- *Question is*: “is there is *even one* situation in which a de-escalation **yellow** would serve the needs of fencing better?”
- Offenses of the 3rd group of this kind have *always* allowed an immediate **black card** for “serious cases.” (*t.170*)
- Read closely: this is partially editorial!

t.109

Everybody taking part in or present at a fencing competition must respect the FIE statutes and rules, including but not limited to the FIE Ethical Code and Safeguarding Policy. They must remain orderly and must not disturb the smooth running of the competition. During bouts no one is allowed to go near the pistes, to give advice to the fencers, to criticise the Referee or the judges, to insult them or to attempt to influence them in any way. Even the team captain must remain in the space assigned to him and he may only intervene in the situations and in the manner provided for in Article t.130 of the Rules. The Referee must stop immediately any activity which disturbs the smooth running of the bout which he is refereeing (cf. t.137,1-3). Any person who, for any reason, threatens or insults an official commits an offence of the 4th 3rd group and is penalised according to article t.169-167-168.



I Will Be at October



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