

## **USA Fencing Referees Code of Ethics**

The USA Fencing Referees Code of Ethics communicates the USA Fencing Referees' Commission's expectations for how officials should conduct themselves as representatives of the sport, community, and country. Refereeing is an important part of any sport: the guarantee of impartial adjudication is what gives any competition its legitimacy and its sense of fair play, and as the people entrusted to uphold these principles, we must comport ourselves accordingly.

### **Referees**

Referees must strive to maintain and promote neutrality. When interacting with athletes and spectators, the referee's decisions must be free of bias for *any* reason, including (but not limited to) gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, nationality, etc.

Referees shall recuse themselves from any match and/or request a change of assignment should a referee believe they are not capable of adjudicating in an unbiased manner.

Referees shall accept assignments only when no conflict of interest exists. In those instances that may suggest a conflict of interest (e.g., pupil or former pupil, same club, etc.), the referee must make it known immediately to the Assigners, whose judgment will resolve the concern.

Referees are representatives of the body conducting the competition and therefore shall not consider themselves associated with any country, club or individual during the competition.

Referees shall not coach or assist athletes; referees are present at the competition solely to officiate. This applies from when the referee first reports to work until they are released for the day by the Referee Coordinator and have changed out of the referee uniform.

Referees should exercise authority but shall avoid inciting participants (e.g., athletes, coaches, or spectators) to misbehave.

### **Referee Coordinators/Assigners/Assessors**

Referee Coordinators/Assigners/Assessors shall maintain the utmost respect for referees and other officials and shall conduct themselves honorably at all times.

Referee Coordinators/Assigners/Assessors shall perform their roles based on what is good for fencing and what is good for the referees. As members of USA Fencing, their actions reflect upon the organization and the Commission.

Referee Coordinators/Assigners/Assessors shall contribute to the continuous development of referees in the National and International Referee Development Programs. They shall conduct themselves ethically and professionally in the assignment process.

Referee Coordinators/Assigners/Assessors shall respect the rights and dignity of all the referees and will not criticize them publicly, and any criticism shared will be constructive, and for the referee's benefit.

Referee Coordinators/Assigners/Assessors shall offer equal opportunity to all qualified referees and shall not discriminate against or take undue advantage of any individual or group. They shall be free of bias for *any* reason, including (but not limited to) gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, nationality, etc.

Referee Coordinators/Assigners/Assessors shall cooperate fully in the timely resolution of any grievance or complaint.

*This Code is intended to provide the general principles by which Fencing Officials shall guide themselves and by which they will be measured by the Referees' Commission.*

**Should an official fail to adhere to the Code of Ethics, repercussions may occur.**

#### Revision History

July 2022: Initial release (Referees' Commission)

August 2023: Added Assessors to the code of ethics