



Parent and Athlete Handbook

Rev 4: Sept 2019



About Stratford Fencing Ontario

Stratford Fencing Club is primarily a foil club, reflecting the expertise of its coaching staff. Our fencers place well in national and international competitions, have excelled to become team members of the Ontario Summer Games, provincial medalists, international medalists, varsity champions and national team members as well as just have fun fencing.

Our coaching staff come from recreational fencers, former provincial, national fencers, ex-international fencers and even Olympians.

Our fencers are all ages, of various abilities and with different goals from just having fun to placing in provincial, national and international competitions to making Team Canada.

Our fencing family comes from all different kinds of backgrounds.

Our fencers have gone on to fence on no less than 4 University Varsity Teams, as we encourage leadership as well as athletic excellence.

Our fencers are engaged in community leadership.

Our fencing club is internationally known, with athletes from all over the world having come to train with us. No less than 4 world champions have trained with us.

Our mission as a club is to promote the sport of fencing in a safe environment and to ensure that each one of our members succeeds as person and athlete to the level they desire.

Stratford Fencing Club is a recognized member of the [Ontario Fencing Association](#) and [Canadian Fencing Federation](#).

Stratford Fencing Club requires all its coaches, parents of competitive athletes to take Respect in Sport training to learn to mitigate abuse and toxic environments and to create a positive safe culture of accomplishment and self-worth.

Code of Conduct

You'll quickly learn that fencing has a number of customs based on sportsmanship, respect, and honor; fencers salute their opponents and the referee before every bout, and they shake hands afterwards—even in practice. We feel strongly that our fencers should take this spirit into all their training, competition, and even their general lives. We require our fencers to comport themselves in a way that reflects well on them and the club, and so we have developed a code of conduct for both athletes and parents. We require all our members to sign these contracts. See Appendix A at the end of this document for the Codes.

SFO has worked hard to ensure that the club is a safe space for coaches and athletes and has a ZERO-tolerance policy on any form of abuse: physical, sexual or emotional/verbal abuse. SFO was the first fencing club to join the Respect in Sport movement and spearheaded its universal adoption by the Canadian Fencing Federation.

In 2018, Canada legalized marijuana. Given that our club is largely made up of minors, and that marijuana is a prohibited substance as defined by the International Olympic Committee and FIE (our international sport organization) we have a ZERO tolerance policy on it at SFO. Regardless of your opinion or personal use, there can be NO use of it within our club culture, including parental or athlete use at tournaments or within our club or its confines.

Gender Policy: In club training, SFO does not distinguish between genders in terms of bouting or competition. SFO will use whatever pronouns an athlete wishes to self describe. Training is person specific, and the coaches do not make decisions independent of individual development on how training occurs.

Our club championships include all genders. In the wider world of sport, there is gender distinction and SFO follows the policies set by its international, national and provincial bodies on competitions therein. Those with questions are asked to speak to one of the coaches.

Training Programs / Location

SFO trains at our full time dedicated fencing salle located at 44 Griffith Rd W, Stratford, Ontario. In 2019-20, we are also training in London, Ontario.

Programs we offer include:

Minifence: Fundamental movement skills, beginning fencing skills with minifence equipment.

Duration: 1 hour. Frequency: 1x/week. Payment: Monthly.

Pre-elite: Merge of minifence and beginners programs for those who are enthusiastic about fencing and wish to begin earlier development. Pre-elite stay in original program and participate in one extra training blending the programs with senior coach including short private lessons.

Duration: 1 hour. Frequency: 2x/week includes beginner or minifence but one-time preelite alone. Payment: Monthly.

Beginners (u16): Basic fencing skills – yellow and orange armband with transition to competitive or recreational fencing after 16 weeks if desired. U13 may continue in cadre with coach permission until develop physical literacy for competitive fencing.

Duration: 2 hours. Frequency: 1x/week. Payment: Sessional (8 weeks or four weeks).

Beginners (adult): Basic fencing skills – yellow and orange armband with transition to competitive or recreational fencing after 8 weeks if desired.

Duration: 2 hours. Frequency: 1x/week. Payment: Sessional (8 weeks)

Competitive (all): Refined and advanced training skills, with emphasis on physical literacy/conditioning as well as psychological preparation (orange, green, blue armband). Private lessons included, usually one per week.

Duration: 2-3 hours. Frequency: up to 3x/week. Payment: Monthly.

Elite (all): Refined and advanced training skills, with deeper emphasis on physical literacy/conditioning as well as psychological preparation (orange, green, blue armband). Private lessons included, usually two to three per week.

Duration: 2-3 hours. Frequency: up to 5x/week. Payment: Monthly.

Recreational: No lessons or group work, able to fence in the last hour of each training session excluding pre-elite and elite unique time. Must have own gear.

Duration: 1 hours. Frequency: 3x/week. Payment: Monthly.

On the Website

We keep a Google calendar on our website--you can sync it with your own calendars. Find it here: <http://www.stratfordfencingclub.ca/calendar.html>

Fencing Equipment and Clothing

The first and most important piece of equipment for fencing is the weapon. There are three forms of fencing, each with their own weapon: Foil, Epée and Sabre.



The parts of the weapon include the handle, guard, blade and tip. Identifying the form associated with each weapon is fairly easy.

- Foil: The lightest of all weapons. The guard on a foil is the smallest of all three and the end of the blade has a spring loaded tip.
- Epée: The guard on an Epée weapon is larger and covers more of the handle to protect the hand. The end of the blade also has a spring loaded tip.
- Sabre: The guard is large and wraps around to the bottom of the handle. The end of the blade is has a blunt tip.

A fencer needs protective equipment which includes: mask, glove, knickers, socks, plastron, and jacket. If fencing with an electric weapon, you will also need a lamé and a body wire.

Traditionally, a fencers' uniform is white. Prior to the days of electric scoring, weapons were tipped in dye, soot, or colored chalk in order to make it easier for the referee to determine the placing of the touches.

In general, there are two levels of ratings for clothing and equipment. The levels represent the impact that the equipment is designed to withstand. Level 1 equipment is rated at 350 N indicating that it is designed to withstand a force of 350 Newtons. This is the minimum standard of clothing acceptable for most entry-level tournaments. Level 2 clothing, also referred to as FIE

equipment, is rated at 800 N. FIE (Fédération Internationale D'Esime) is the international governing body for the sport. Level 2 clothing is required for all top level events.

While there are variations in the equipment for each form of fencing, this guide will focus on foil fencing equipment since this is predominantly what our club uses.



Mask: The mask protects the face. The bib of the mask is designed to protect the neck. Different manufacturers offer a variety of features. For example; removable bibs, removable padding for easier cleaning, coloured mesh, etc. Recent changes to the rules of foil now require the bib to be conductive as the bib has become part of the target area for fencers.

Glove: A fencing glove is worn on the weapon hand and has a long cuff to protect the wrist.

Knickers or Breeches: These are short trousers that extend to just below the knee.

Socks: Fencing socks stretch up to above the knee to protect the lower legs. There should not be any gap in clothing between the knickers and the socks.

Plastron: This underarm protector is worn underneath the jacket as a second layer of protection for the weapon arm.

Jacket: A fencing jacket is form fitting and protects a fencer's torso and groin with a strap that goes between the legs. The collar of the jacket is made with a flap that is designed to help prevent an opponent's weapon from slipping under the mask.

Lamé: The lamé (pronounced La May) is a layer of conductive material worn over the jacket that covers the target area.

Body Wire: The body wire is required for electronic scoring. The body wire connects a fencer's weapon and lamé to the scoring machine. The body wire is threaded under the back of the jacket and down the sleeve, through the glove and is connected to the weapon. The lamé is connected with a clip.

Chest Protector: While mandatory for female fencers, these plastic protectors are also available in male versions and tend to be worn by younger athletes.

Equipment Purchases

There are very few retail locations in Canada for fencing equipment, and none local. The club has discount arrangements (usually 10-15%) with several well-supplied fencing equipment retailers in the US (Blue Gauntlet) and Europe (FWF). Check with club coaches or board members for the details of how to use these discounts in your individual orders.

Group Orders

From time to time the club also makes group orders, which are good opportunities to reduce cost by sharing shipping. Watch the website and check with the coaches for the next group order.

Maintaining Your Equipment

There are many Youtube videos of how to clean a fencing foil tip, and they vary in quality. Read the instructions below first. If you find a video that agrees with them, then you can use it to get more detail. Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Meb5rDW8CK8>

Cleaning a foil weapon tip Part 1:

1. Remove tape from the weapon tip.
2. Using a GOOD mirco / jeweller's screwdriver, remove the first screw from the tip barrel (NOTE: these screws are often soft and can be easily damaged if too much force is applied or if you use a worn screwdriver. A set of these tools can be purchased for less than \$15.)
3. Keep the tip depressed as you remove the second screw from the barrel (there is a spring under the tip).



Cleaning a foil weapon tip Part 2:

1. Remove the tip and spring from the barrel.
2. Using rubbing alcohol and some Q-tips, clean out the inside of the barrel (the 1st pass will be very dirty - the 2nd or 3rd pass should be quite clean).
3. DON'T put a dirty Q-tip end back in the barrel - this will spread grime around, not remove it.
4. Reassemble the barrel in the reverse order (step 4 to 1), remembering to compress the tip for the first screw, and that the screws are soft.
5. Retape the tip



Fencing: The Sport Explained

If you're new to fencing, you may appreciate the wisdom and experience of others. So we've collected not one but two explanations for you from different perspectives. Enjoy.

Explanation 1: Head Coach Darren Marks

Fencing evolved from duelling, or rather preparation for duelling. Its rules are oriented on one basic principle - don't get touched while trying to touch the other fencer and the training is designed to highlight this idea that you are either attacking or defending as doing both is certain to allow a touch while making one. This is best understood as 'priority' in foil.

Priority is a convention determined by the referee and initiated by the fencers so as to decide who has the right to attack, and who is defending. You can only be doing one or the other at any one time (remember, you don't want to be hit and hit safely in days of old). The determination of who has priority to attack is dependent on both fencers, not just one. Priority is given when a fencer is close enough (usually step lunge or less) to attack, is extending arm and point towards the opponent so as to threaten the target and ends with either a touch, a miss, a parry or the opening of distance by the other fencer beyond the step-lunge distance without compensating distance from the attacker. Once any of the above conditions are met - touch, miss, parry or distance - then it is the right or priority of the other fencer to attack. This can be with a new attack (miss or distance or stoppage) or a riposte following a parry. It is the role of the referee to determine who has priority although it is fairly clear for fencers, and the referee declares the phrase of actions on what happened and whose priority the touch went. There can be in foil only one priority, even if there are two touches made in a phrase.

It is important to recall that priority involved both fencers as it includes things such as distance and displacement of target. For example, if a fencer withdraws or moves target while attacking, even with clear priority, the decision to 'defend' by withdrawing target (e.g. ducking or moving backward while hitting) is a defensive action - the priority is the opponents. Thus, priority is a dance between two fencers, and what is acknowledged by trying to parry (with a failed a search for the blade) even if it hits the opponent is a defensive action. But for the novice, priority is a confusing reality.

Typically, fencing is done in the confine of a bout - a engagement between two fencers - that is both against the clock and each other as well as for real estate or placement on the piste. A bout ends at 3 minutes or usually when a fencer reaches 5 touches against the other person. A bout cannot end in a tie, and an overtime is added if there is a tie and a coinflip determines who would win if there is no touch scored so the overtime always coincides with a victory. Fencers typically participate in poules - a group of 4-8 participants - that fence each other and then are ranked according to victories, and the indicator (touches scored - touches received) in the poules to fence in the eliminations. Eliminations fence from highest rank to the lowest rank in a bracket until the final two fencers.

Fencing occurs on a 'piste' - a strip (sometime copper or metal or rubber but often just taped lines on the floor) - which is 14 m long and 1.5-2 m wide, divided into three sections from the middle line: en garde line (2 m from middle); warning line (3 m from en garde) and end of piste (2 m from warning line) which if passed with both feet constitutes a touch against. Fencers may step off the piste sides but incur a penalty of the loss of 1 m from the point of exit, if they 1 m penalty pushes them off the end of the piste then a touch is awarded against. You may not leave to avoid a touch but can do so in the course of fencing as a normal action. If fencers pass each other, then fencing is halted and this is legal. The referee resets the en garde from the middle point of the pass. Likewise any halt in fencing resets the en garde from the middle point of any fencing activity. This is determined by the referee.

A bout starts with testing the electrical gear, then saluting at the en garde line. The referee says (in French) "en garde," "prêt" and then "allez" (on guard...ready...go) and the bout starts. Fencers cannot move until 'allez', and stop with the referee calling 'halt'. The referee interprets priority, and awards accordingly if a touch is scored or if an infraction occurs. Infractions are 'cards' and they are coloured: yellow, red and black. Two yellow cards equal one red card, and a red card means a touch is scored against the person committing the infraction. A black card is automatic expulsion and reserved for the most serious offences such as unsporting behaviour or excessive violence. Yellow and red cards are carried only within a bout, but a black card carries forward for all bouts and the next tournament.

A fencer may ask the referee for clarification on how priority is determined, and in some tournaments ask for a video replay if possible. A referee can change a call dependent on an appeal but the decision is always final when fencing resumes.

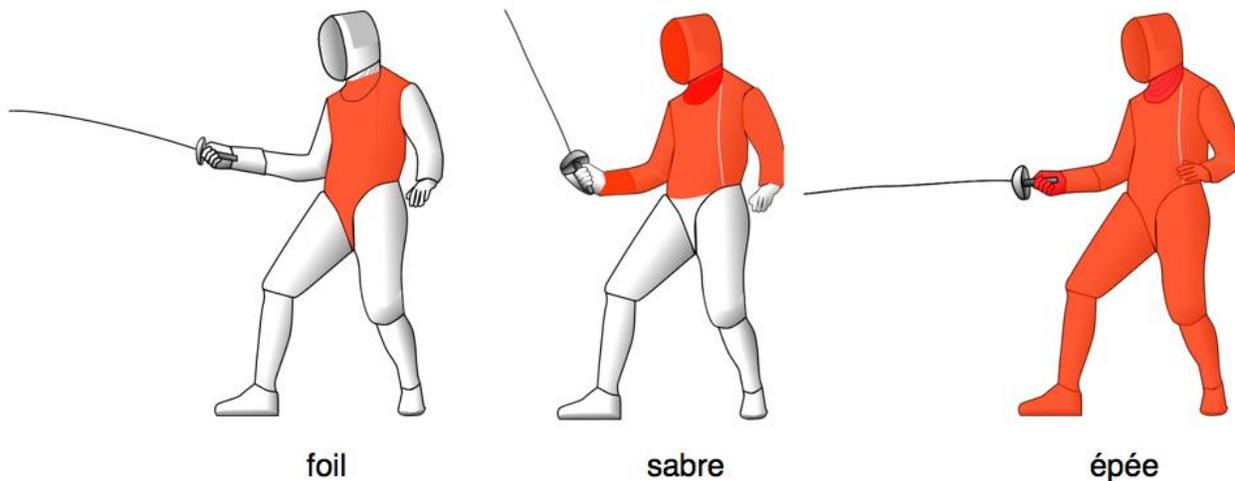
A fencing bout ends with the end of time or reaching of the allowed number of touches or hits. The referee will cross arms, and say 'combat' and then lift hand to the victor. Fencers return to the en garde line, remove face masks and salute once more. They then shake hands with the ungloved non weapon hand and may do so with the referee. At the end of a poule, a fencer must sign off the scoresheet to check on its accuracy

The main object of a fencing bout is effectively to score more points on your opponents than they score on you. A point can be scored by hitting your opponent with your weapon in a valid target area. These hits are detected by an electronic scoring machine. When a valid hit is made, a coloured light will come on. If a red light comes on the person on the left has touched his opponent's target area. If a green one comes on then the person on the right has made a hit. A white or yellow light will come on if the fencer misses a valid target area.



Target Area:

The target area varies according to the weapon being fenced. A foil fencer's target area is the torso from the shoulders down to the groin, including the back and a swath across the mask bib. In sabre, the valid target area is from the waist up, including the back and the head. The whole body is a valid target area when fencing épée.



Scoring for épée is the simplest to follow. A valid hit results in a point. If both opponents hit simultaneously, they are both awarded a point.

Right-of-Way (or Priority):

In foil and sabre however, only one point is awarded at a time. If both opponents hit simultaneously, the point is awarded to the fencer who has the right-of-way. The concept of right-of-way (or priority) is the most confusing part of point scoring in fencing. The attacking fencer (on the offensive) has the right-of-way while the opponent is defending. Confusion arises because fencers will transition from offence to defense several times throughout the bout, changing who has the right-of-way. The attacking fencer will retain the right-of-way until they make a hit (either valid or not), miss their attack or stop attacking. A defender can gain priority by pushing the attacker's weapon away - known as a "parry". A successful parry changes the roles and the defender gain the right-of-way and becomes the attacker. The referee ultimately will decide who has the right-of-way. If he cannot determine who made the attack first, no points are awarded (a tie).

Winning a Bout:

The first fencer to reach the predetermined number of points wins the bout or alternatively the fencer with the highest number of points after a predetermined amount of time has elapsed wins.

A friendly bout will normally go to 15 points or 9 minutes.

In tournaments and competitions, fencers will be split into poules (similar to heats in swimming, running, etc.) where each fencer will face all other opponents in their poule in a round-robin format to a score of 5 points or 3 minutes (stop-time).

Following the poules, fencers will be ranked according to their results and then proceed to bouts of direct elimination (aka D.E.'s) where the winner will move on to the next round and the loser is eliminated. D.E. bouts will go to 15 points or a maximum of 9 minutes (stop-time).

In the event of a tie in points at the end of time, the referee will toss a coin to determine which fencer has the "advantage". The fencers will continue the bout for 1 additional minute where the first point scored wins. If no points are scored during the additional time, then the player with the advantage wins the bout.

Team Events:

Scoring points in team events is the same as usual, except that points for each team are accumulated. Normally, teams of 3 will fence each member of the opposing team to point intervals of 5. Each individual bout will continue until either team reaches the next point interval. With a 3 team format, the first team to reach 45 points wins (3 fencers X 3 opponents X 5 points = 45 points). During bouts, fencers are not limited to just 5 points, but fence until the next point interval is reached.

For example:

- In round 1, once a team reaches 5 points, that bout ends.
- In round 2, the first team to reach an accumulated 10 points ends that bout. So if the score after round 1 is 5-0, the team with 5 only needs 5 more to end the 2nd bout and move onto round 3. However, the team with 0 needs 10 points to reach the interval and move on to the next round.
- In round 3, the teams must reach an accumulation of 15 points, and so, on and so on until all fencers have met each other in the rounds to a total of 45 points.

Explanation 2: Nancy Orr, Parent and Fan.

So your child has decided to try Fencing...."What is That?"; "I've never even heard of it"; "We have that in Stratford!?!"; "I had a great Uncle Marv who did that way back when he went to school in Europe"; "Wow I have always wanted to try that and my kid loves to play with light sabres and swords"; "Can I try too?" and the list of interesting responses continues. So, be prepared, have your response ready. Mine? "Yep, we tried him in every sport we could think of but never found one he was enthusiastic about; he found this one on his own and absolutely loves it! It is very strategic, requires great focus, and although it offers individual athleticism, the group in Stratford provides a great team atmosphere." And the fun begins.

The sport requires immense physical effort, strength, coordination, and a strategic focus, it is a sport of etiquette and intricacies. So unless you have the personality to match, you may end up like me – cheering at the wrong times and relying on those with the mental capacity and dexterity to repair equipment with those teeny tiny parts.

Aren't they going to get hurt?

If your child is young enough that they start in the mini fence program, the amazing coaching staff start them on a plan to have fun, be active, and begin to learn the basics of the sport. They fence once a week and use plastic foils (what we call the swords we use) and masks. No bruises expected at this level, but lots of smiles.

As your child moves along the age and skill scale they progress to spending more time at the club in lessons, practicing footwork (a key component to the skill of fencing), or just enjoying a bout (what we call a fencing match) with their team mates. It is highly recommended that the athletes wear long pants – although not a guarantee against contusions from poorly aimed hits, it certainly does help.

What do they wear?

Equipment Head to Toe:

The club has several sets of gear to share for those just starting but it is always more comfortable to have your own, just like any other sport. If you are interested in purchasing your own, feel free to ask the coaches or any seasoned parents – although there is no store to go test out or try on, there are several on line options for purchase.

- Mask – note it is not called a helmet – the club does have some of varying sizes to share, but again, it is much more comfortable if you have your own mask dedicated to your own sweat and moulded to your own unique head.
- Sous Plastron – required for the females and recommended for young males – this provides an additional padded or plastic layer of chest protection.
- Half Jacket – this is half of a short sleeve protective layer made of the same white material as the jacket. Ok to wash.
- Jacket – a full long sleeve white jacket made of protective material, complete with a zipper and a strap that is secured through the fencer's legs. Ok to wash.

- **Lame** – this is the shiny silver “vest” that is electrically conductive and is the target for foil. This piece of equipment is checked often and can develop dead spots. It is important to air this out after fencing and to try to reduce dampness as it helps slow the deterioration of the material.
- **Pants or Knickers** - as mentioned, long pants really are important to add an element of protection for the legs, although not a target area, can find themselves the brunt of misguided foils. Knickers are made of the similar white material as the jacket and half jacket, and provide additional protection. They are not often worn at practice but are usually required in tournaments - they also require the use of fencing socks (long socks which cover the shins and often extend over the knee under the knickers).
- **Glove** – this is a snug fitting glove for the weapon holding hand – the other hand is left bare.
- **Wires** – you will require a body wire (which is long and meanders under the jacket down the arm and connects to the foil as well as the electronic scoring devise), and a mask wire (at least for tournaments).
- **Shoes** – a good pair of shoes sets the stage for fencing enjoyment. Footwork is the foundational skill of the sport. It is important the shoes have a good grip, and be a low level court or specialized fencing shoe as there is much reliance on footwork, elevated heel impact, and frequent twisting and turning. Stability and comfort is key.
- **Foil** – this is the weapon taught and used at SFO. There are left handed and right handed grips, both of which appear a little strange and awkward to those of us non fencers, but the athletes seem to figure them out and find them comfortable. The silver part protecting the hand is called the bell. There are several lengths of fencing blades i.e. 0-2-5; for anyone in the Y 10 and below age categories you must use a 2 or 0 which are shorter blades than a 5 which is used by the older athletes. Blades can range in price depending on the quality and strength. Be aware – blades do break – this is normal don’t panic. As your fencer becomes more experienced and begins to hit harder, a stronger higher quality FIE blade provides a little more longevity, but in turn more expensive. The blades have a tip that with cleaning or replacement can also extend the life of the blade. Blades do bend, and sometimes can look like your athlete is trying to fence around corners – this is normal – blades are flexible and can easily be bent back into a straight form. However, too much bending does wear out the blade. There is also a wire that travels down the blade from the tip to the grip where it makes the electronic connection. This wire can break, but is often repairable – good to befriend a handyman or draw on the club’s skilled services, if you are not so mechanically inclined.
- **A Fencing Bag** – a variety of styles exist, but they are very handy to haul your gear around – home to the club, or through a fencing tournament venue (where wheels are very helpful!)

It may not be obvious, but his equipment is heavy and hot, a compromise for protection; but not to worry, our club has air conditioning and our athletes don’t seem to complain – they are strong and dedicated, and love the sport.

Do I get to watch?

At SFO we have a small elevated viewing area as well the far side of the venue often has space for a small number of viewers to sit on the floor or bring camping chairs. The warning though is to stay tight to the wall to avoid the metal foil blades, just as is the warning when entering the club during practice times. It is also important to remove your shoes if you intend to move off of

the entrance carpet at the club as sure footing for the athletes is critical to reduce injury. Unless you are confident in the French language you may wonder what commands are being provided, En Garde, Prez, Allez – the three key words to start a fencing bout, and the Piste is the strip on which the bout occurs. French is the language of fencing.

Finally – the Sport

You will need some kind of OFA/CFF license. Ask a coach about which one.

Etiquette – fencing although fast and furious, is a sport of etiquette. The athletes salute their opponent with their weapon before a bout, shake hands at the end (and yes it usually looks a little awkward as they use their non weapon hand which is often their left hand), and thank the ref. Being polite however, does not mean you don't hear the odd holler of excitement or frustration.

Points – Don't you just stick them with the pointy end? But why didn't I get the point? This is the tricky part of fencing, and not something I am even able to explain simply. So I will leave that to the coach. Footwork, blade work, and the attack all lead to priority, which governs who is in control to earn the point. My advice to parents, don't cheer, even when a light goes on, until the score board shows who got the point, if anyone. Many a time I have been caught voicing my enthusiasm apparently for the opponent.

The Ref – at the club our athletes often self-referee or are refereed by a team mate; at a tournament, the referees are usually the well-dressed people standing between the many strips.

Tournaments

You have decided to try a little more competition than the recreational club component. Now What?....

OH my, our first tournament. Nervousness runs high, likely more for the parent than the athlete as they have been working very hard to prepare for this event. You have registered online months prior, checked in with the bout committee, gone through the armoury which is where they often check the condition of your mask, glove, and wires then ink stamp them with approval. Pay attention to the announcements, screens, online system i.e. fencingtimestlive, OR as is often the case, the paper postings on the wall. This is where you will learn which poule and strip your fencer is assigned to. Once they fence all of the athletes in their poule they will be ranked with the overall larger group, and direct elimination (DE) bouts are posted. Again, pay attention so you are aware of who you fence and where. These DE bouts are literal – as soon as you lose a bout your efforts at the tournament are completed. You are then welcome to stay and cheer on your team mates, or make the long trip home reflecting on all you learned while building confidence and experience.

When going to a tournament it can be overwhelming. You will most often see all three fencing weapons in action, and each has their own rules. Fencing Weapons – Foil (what we do), Epee (no shiny target/lame, and weapon like a foil but a bigger bell); Sabre (full chest & sleeve lame, and a weapon with a big bell hand guard).

When preparing for a tournament it is good to have at least a spare weapon and an extra body and mask wire beside your piste as you are not given excessive time to replace any broken parts during a bout. It is also good to ensure you pack lots of high energy snacks and drinks as the athletes work very hard and it is important to keep them sustained.

You Survived & Are Hooked!

Who knew a sport you had never heard of could be so exciting and provide such a positive impact and experience for your child. Welcome to Fencing!

Tournaments & Competitions -- What to expect

There are two kinds of competitions in Canada - just for fun (JFF) and sanctioned tournaments. JFF tournaments are locally run, staffed and less expensive and designed to encourage people to fence outside of their own club. These require only OFA general membership for insurance purposes. They are typically a little messier in terms of time and organization, and certainly in officiating. Sanctioned tournaments are under the auspices of the OFA and CFF (or other international fencing body such as the USFA etc.) and must meet set requirements in terms of officiating and regulations related to national standing for athletes who are cadet and older including uniforms. These are more expensive, require CFF and OFA competitive licenses.

A typical tournament is confusing, often because it may be very large and often in French! But here are the general things one finds:

1. Registration close time: Any event has a time after which it is not possible to register, even if pre-paid and registered, to fence. You MUST check in before this time at the registration table else you will not be in the tournament. Proof of age may be required for international tournaments. Fencing typically starts within 20 minutes of this time.
2. Equipment check: All but JFF tournaments will require some of the following equipment to be sanctioned for use and given a stamp or other identification marker. This is done by the armourer, and is usually the longest line in the building. The armourer will check - mask, lame, body wires (2) and glove and 'control' them for use. You cannot use a non-controlled piece of equipment.
3. Seeding call: Close to the beginning of poule start, you will be told to check two documents posted by the secretariat - one is a final proof of attendance and the other is the final seeding of fencers for the poules to avoid weak and strong poules. You should

make sure you are on both sheets, and they are correct. Under the age of 14, seeding can be randomly sorted as there are no real rankings here in Canada.

4. Poule Posting: The poules will be posted after the seeding is verified, and pistes assigned. Sometimes there is a PA system announcement, and sometimes it is just paying attention. After checking your poule, find the piste assigned and check in with the referee.
5. Poules: You will need to check in with the referee, who will check all control markers and that you are wearing (you must show him/her) your sous-plastron. Cadet and older athletes may be required to wear FIE level clothing. The referee will assign you your number, and then calls the bouts in order. You typically fence 3 mins or 5 touches, whichever comes first.
6. Direct Eliminations: Once poules are finished, athletes are re-ranked and seeded, and eliminations begin. You may not make a cut to the elimination or may have a bye. Pay attention to the brackets, and fence as deep as you can. Most eliminations are 3 periods of 3 minutes or 15 touches.

Helpful Tips for Tournaments:

1. Be warmed up and readily to go.
2. Arrive early to get controls in case something fails to pass control - you may need to scramble to replace it.
3. Be patient, they are long days and often slow.
4. Eat regularly
5. Use the toilet when you can, when things start it is often quick!
6. Have fun

SFO Clothing

From time to time SFO arranges opportunities to purchase team clothing including jackets, coats, warmups, t-shirts, and hats. Watch the website and check with the club for the next opportunity.



Fundraising and Sponsorship

SFO's program fees do not cover all our costs, we are well below analogous programs in the GTA and rest of Ontario. Parents and fencers are expected to do their part in helping raise funds when asked as we build our community and club.

Sponsorships

SFO is always interested in sponsorship opportunities too. Many businesses actively sponsor youth sports teams, especially for their employee's children. Fencing is just as valid as hockey or baseball, and we have already received funds from corporate sources. If your employer has a sponsorship program, please consider submitting an application on SFO's behalf. We have a standard but customizable application letter with supporting material (photos, press clippings) to make it easy for you.

SFO is sponsored in the 2019-20 season by the local businesses posted in the salle, and by Biosteel.

If you know of a business that would love to sponsor us, please tell one of the coaches.

Glossary of Fencing Terms

- **Absence of blade:** When the blades are not touching; opposite of engagement.
- **Advance:** A movement forward by step, cross, or balestra.
- **Attack:** The initial offensive action made by extending the sword arm and continuously threatening the valid target of the opponent.
- **Attack au Fer:** An attack that is prepared by deflecting the opponent's blade, eg. beat, froissement, pressure.
- **Beat:** An attempt to knock the opponent's blade aside or out of line by using one's foible or middle against the opponent's foible.
- **Bind:** An action in which the opponent's blade is forced into the diagonally opposite line.
- **Black Card:** Used to indicate the most serious offences in a fencing competition. The offending fencer is usually expelled from the event or tournament.
- **Bout:** A match
- **Compound:** Also composed; an attack or riposte incorporating one or more feints to the opposite line that the action finishes in.
- **Counter-attack:** An attack made against the right-of-way, or in response to the opponent's attack.
- **Corps-a-corps:** lit. "body-to-body"; physical contact between the two fencers during a bout, illegal in foil and sabre.
- **Deception:** Avoidance of an attempt to engage the blades; see disengage, coupé
- **Derobement:** Deception of the attack au fer or prise de fer.
- **Direct:** An attack or riposte that finishes in the same line in which it was formed, with no feints out of that line.
- **Disengage:** A circular movement of the blade that deceives the opponent's parry, removes the blades from engagement, or changes the line of engagement.
- **Displacement:** Moving the target to avoid an attack; dodging.
- **Engagement:** When the blades are in contact with each other, eg. during a parry, attack au fer, prise de fer, or coulé.
- **En Garde:** Also On Guard; the fencing position; the stance that fencers assume when preparing to fence.
- **Feint:** Attacking into one line with the intention of switching to another line before the attack is completed.
- **Fencing Time:** Also temps d'escrime; the time required to complete a single, simple fencing action.
- **Fleche:** lit. "arrow"; an attack in which the aggressor leaps off his leading foot, attempts to make the hit, and then passes the opponent at a run.
- **Flick:** A cut that lands with the point, often involving some whip of the foible of the blade to "throw" the point around a block or other obstruction.
- **Indirect:** An attack or riposte that finishes in the opposite line to which it was formed, by means of a disengage or coupé.
- **Lamé:** A metallic vest/jacket used to detect valid touches in foil and sabre.

- **Lunge:** An attack made by extending the rear leg and landing on the bent front leg..
- **Parry:** A block of the attack, made with the forte of one's own blade.
- **Phrase:** A set of related actions and reactions in a fencing conversation.
- **Piste:** The linear strip on which a fencing bout is fought; approx. 2m wide and 14m long.
- **Sous-Plastron:** A partial jacket worn for extra protection; typically a half-jacket worn under the main jacket on the weapon-arm side of the body.
- **Point:** A valid touch; the tip of the sword; an attack made with the point (ie. a thrust)
- **Point in Line:** Also line; an extended arm and blade that threatens the opponent.
- **Preparation:** The initial phase of an attack, before right-of-way is established.
- **Priority:** Rules that decide which fencer will be awarded the touch in the event that they both attack simultaneously; also used synonymously with right-of-way.

- **Red Card:** Used to indicate repeated minor rule infractions or a major rule infraction by one of the fencers; results in a point being given to the other fencer.
- **Redoublement:** A new action that follows an attack that missed or was parried; see also Reprise.
- **Referee:** Also director, president; the mediator of the fencing bout.
- **Remise:** Immediate replacement of an attack that missed or was parried, without withdrawing the arm.
- **Reprise:** Renewal of an attack that missed or was parried, after a return to en-garde; see also Redoublement.
- **Retreat:** Step back; opposite of advance.
- **Right-of-way:** Rules for awarding the point in the event of a double touch in foil or sabre.
- **Riposte:** An attack made immediately after a parry of the opponent's attack.
- **Salle:** A fencing hall or club.
- **Second Intention:** A false action used to draw a response from the opponent, which will open the opportunity for the intended action that follows.
- **Simple:** An attack or riposte that involves no feints.
- **Simultaneous:** In foil and sabre, two attacks for which the right-of-way is too close to determine.
- **Thrust:** An attack made by moving the sword parallel to its length and landing with the point.
- **Two Prong:** a type of body-wire/connector, used in foil and sabre.
- **Whites:** Fencing clothing. Consisting of jacket and knickers or breeches.
- **Yellow Card:** also *advertissement*, warning; used to indicate a minor rule infraction by one of the fencers.

Stratford Fencing Ontario Organizational Structure and Fees

2019-20

SFO Structure: There are 5 levels of fencers: Elite, Competitive, Pre-elite, Beginners and Recreational Fencers. There is also mini-fencing at SFO. Beginners fencing occurs in London, On.

Coaches: Darren Marks, Robyn Godfrey, Scott Bell, Gareth Marks, and Nolan White-Roy
Payment

A fencing training is defined as the following: The club is open and supervised, instruction and/or free fencing is offered. There may be private lessons or there may not be depending on the training goals of the coaching staff. This is left to the professional discretion of the coaching staff. Parents should be careful to equate only private lessons with development; as while these are critical, they are not the only means of instruction and development appropriate in all cases. For the elite and competitive programs, we operate on an **one-time fee** (for 10 months) due at the fiscal start (Sept 1st) for the club. We give you the option to pay monthly and this means, depending on the month, that any athlete may have more trainings than in another month by virtue of the calendar itself. Over the annual calendar including summer, the average number of training opportunities is 4X the weekly offering. As such, extra training due to cancellations (weather, coach illness or emergency) will be offered at the discretion of the coaches and any fee adjustments vetted by them accordingly. Unanticipated cancellation is usually offset by the calendar, and in extraordinary situations of prolonged cancellation – SFO will address the unique circumstances with make-up training opportunities when necessary. But we ask athletes to be holistic in looking at the program, there are numerous ‘free’ events offered when we have guests etc (e.g, Varsity team trainings) and these are a normative part of a healthy club experience.

SFO does offer day camps and PD day trainings (dependent on coach availability) over the holidays, and summer months, or fee reduction therein, as a bonus to its program fee and should not be understood as part of the program fee except as a loyalty reward.

Free camps offered are nullified by non-payment of one or more of the monthly fees and should an athlete withdraw or decide to take a hiatus, then payment for camps as posted per camp will be expected retroactively. As payment is expected upfront, but offered monthly, this ensures that annual planning can be undertaken with fiscal prudence. For the competitive and pre-elite program, they are encouraged to attend at least two camps at half price. If they attend either a Christmas or March Break Camp at half price, and withdraw before the end of the annual fee, then they will be retroactively charged camp fees at full price.

Free Coach Support is also nullified by non-payment of one or more of the monthly fees and should an athlete withdraw or decide to take a hiatus, then payment for coach support will be expected retroactively at a rate of 50\$/event.

Trainings missed due to personal decision or illness will not be made up, with the exception of extraordinary circumstances and such requests should be made in writing to SFO whose decision is final.

Those registering for the monthly fee elite and competitive programs past the beginning of the fiscal year will be prorated and follow the policy on camps and coaching support.

For those registering for non-monthly fee program (beginner, minifence) and for camps and who withdraw or cancel, the following policy is in force: Before program, 100% refund less 25\$ administration fee; to 25% of program, then 50% refund of total fee; and after 26-49% then 25% refund of total fee; after 50% then no refund.

For those registering for the monthly elite and competitive programs, there is no penalty apart from incurred camp/coaching costs within the payment cycle to be paid retroactively.

SFO accepts cash, cheques and credit card payments. Credit card payments do involve a surcharge from the vendor, and as such ongoing credit payments will be adjusted to reflect this surcharge at payment for the payee. In 2018, SFO passed the HST threshold, and will be collecting HST on services as required by law.

SFO understands that from time to time financial duress can occur and ask that parents speak to the coaches should payment become a problem. Without such contact, payment in arrears will be subject to a surcharge of 10% per month of the outstanding balance.

FEES

	Total Fee (10 months)	Location	Monthly Costs	Benefits
ELITE 1	3000\$	SFO	250/month	<p>Up to five trainings per week Free Camps (Christmas, March Break, Summer). This excludes any HPP camps offered. PD day camps may be offered if coach is available.</p> <p>Free Coaching Support at nominated events* #Armoury Support Free locker</p>
Competitive	\$1200	SFO	100/month	<p>3 training per week Free Coaching Support at nominated events* Half Price Camps. This excludes any HPP camps offered. PD day camps may be offered if coach is available.</p> <p>#Armoury Support Free locker</p>
Beginners 1	N/A	SFO	160\$/8 week session	1 training per week
Beginners 2	N/A	SFO	100\$/4 week session	1 evening training per week
Beginners 3	N/A	London	125\$/4 week session	1 evening training peer week
Recreational	N/A	SFO	40/month	
Pre-elite		SFO	140/month if bundled or 100/month if alone	1x/week

RED are one time fee programs. Pre-elite is a ten-month program, and as such not entitled to discount in summer program.

*Nominated tournaments include the provincial championships, and local driveable day tournaments. They do not include SYCs, NACs or international tournaments. Coaching cost must be paid by athletes in those cases. Coaching costs include coach hotel, gasoline and food costs. Airfare is ordinarily not included but in the case of need, must be carried by the athletes. #Armoury support is access to armoury for repairs and training when offered; but NOT free repairs or parts. SFO maintains tools, equipment parts for repairs but does not provide the costs for said parts.

+Ordinarily private lessons are 15-20 mins in length.

In addition, the following policies will be set:

Private lessons in addition to above	\$2/minute
Floor Fee (SFO)	\$40/two hours
Armoury cost (rewire, repairs)	Published in armoury
Camps	As published (usually 225\$ per week)
Lockers	10\$/month

Overall Schedule:

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Location	SFO	SFO/London	SFO	SFO	SFO		
	Elite# Competitive <i>Beginner</i> <i>minifence</i>	Beginner 2 Beginner 3	Elite (day and evening) Competitive	Pre- Elite	Elite Competitive		Elite 9-11 am
Time*	10-1 pm <i>1-3 pm</i> <i>3-4 pm</i>	TBA	Daytime and 5-7 pm And 7-9 pm	6:30- 7:30 pm	5-7 pm 7-9 pm		.

ON TOURNAMENT WEEKENDS, ELITE MAY HAVE LESSONS PLANNED ON M/W DEPENDING ON THE TOURNAMENT DEMANDS AND LOCATION IN YEAR.

Appendix A: Codes of Conduct

Fencer Contract and Code of Conduct

Fencer Parent or Guardian Contract and Code of Conduct

Fencer Parent or Guardian Contract and Code of Conduct

I/we, _____, agree to the following in order for _____ to be a member of the Stratford Fencing Club. I understand that failure to fulfil one or several conditions may result in him/her being asked to leave the club.

1. I/we have read and initialled _____'s contract and agree to assist in upholding their commitment as indicated.
2. I/we have taken the Respect in Sport Parent Training.
3. I/we understand that I/we fully represent Stratford Fencing Club, Ontario and Canadian Fencing in my/our actions, and will not bring the club or sport into disrepute by words, actions or attitudes. I/we will not participate in abusive behavior which includes harassment, initiations or discrimination due to gender, sexuality or race. This includes foul language, rude behaviour and the abuse of illegal or legal substances within the context of fencing.
4. I/we will not speak poorly of, threaten or otherwise abuse/harass/discriminate another fencer, parent, official or spectator, especially in front of any club member including your charge. This includes at home, work, social functions as well as in the sale.
5. I/we will endeavour to keep all communication positive and problem resolution based with coaches, parents and officials within the sport. I/we will agree to the 24 hour rule before contacting a coach or other member of the club.
6. I/we agree not to be passive bystanders when I/we witness abuse, harassment or discrimination of an athlete, coach or guest. I/we will confront the persons in charge in accordance with principles of natural justice and Respect in Sport training.
7. I/we understand that winning is not as important as character and development, and will abide by decisions of the coaches to this end for the good of the club and individuals.
8. I/we will endeavour to keep all financial obligations to Stratford Fencing Club current.
9. I/we will endeavour to support fundraising and teambuilding activities for the club.
10. I will ensure that the athlete is picked up sharply at the close of her/her training, and that being late incurs fees.

Federation Membership

- a. As Stratford Fencing Club is a member of the Ontario Fencing Association, I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct of the OFA (<http://fencingontario.ca/code-of-conduct/>) and, when relevant, the Canadian Fencing Federation (<https://www.fencing.ca/content/policies>).

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Fencer Contract and Code of Conduct

I _____ agree to the following in order to be a member of the Stratford Fencing Club. I understand that failure to fulfil one or several conditions may result in my being asked to leave the club.

Training

- a. I will attend all practices and trainings scheduled by the coaches
- b. I will listen to my coaches, giving them my full attention.
- c. I will try my best at each practice
- d. I will let the coaches know if I suffer from an injury or feel I cannot continue
- e. I will not cheat or lie in training, by word, failure to acknowledge a hit or other means.
- f. I will treat club equipment as if it were my own and I will maintain my equipment in clean, safe, and working condition.
- g. I will not speak poorly of, threaten or otherwise abuse/harass/discriminate another fencer, parent, official or spectator. This includes at home, work, social functions as well as in the salle.
- h. I will endeavour to keep all communication positive and problem resolution based with coaches, parents and officials within the sport. I will agree to the 24 hour rule before contacting another member of the club.
- i. I agree not to be a passive bystander when I witness abuse, harassment or discrimination of an athlete, coach or guest. I will confront the persons in charge in accordance with principles of natural justice and Respect in Sport training.

Team participation

- a. I will fully represent Stratford Fencing Club and the sport of Fencing by my actions, and not bring the club into disrepute by words, actions or attitudes. This includes foul language, behaviour and the abuse of illegal or legal substances including marijuana. This stands for in club, at competitions and outside the club. *I am always an ambassador of the sport and club.*
- b. I will try to keep at least a B average or 70% average in school or better unless accommodation is documented by the school I attend.
- c. I will put school first, making sure that fencing follows completion of all homework.
- d. I will encourage my teammates in all ways.

Competition

- a. I will treat all fencers, officials and spectators with utmost respect. This means no dispute of calls, language or actions on the piste that are offensive and that I accept loss and victory with equal graciousness. I am to develop as a fencer first and foremost.
- b. I will treat my teammates as equals and strive to make them better fencers whenever I can.
- c. My coaches have the absolute final word on my competition, including removal for breeching conduct, poor sportsmanship or other matters.
- d. I understand that winning is not as important as character and development, and will abide by decisions of the coaches to this end.

Signed: _____ Date: _____