

**The USFA Operations
Manual should be
considered a
“work-in-progress.”**



Operations Manual

2000 Edition

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PREFACE

This book is written to help all members of the United States Fencing Association (USFA) with the operation of competitions.

Glossary of Terms:

Dates:	Whenever a date appears in this document, it is assumed that all dates are as of 00:00 on the date, unless a time is specifically included.
Fencing Season:	The fencing season officially begins on August 1 and continues through July 31 of the next calendar year.
Rounded Up:	The term “rounded up” is used to indicate that the result of a calculation is the smallest integer that is greater than or equal to the calculation. For example, 92.8 rounded up is 93; 95.2 rounded up is 96.
Tournament:	A series of two or more fencing competitions held at a common location on one day or over a series of consecutive days. Examples of tournaments: The Summer Nationals. A North America Circuit. The Elite National Championships.
Competition:	A fencing contest between two or more people or teams. Examples of competitions: A divisional men's épée Open. The Division II women's saber Championships at the Summer Nationals. The men's foil team Elite Championships.
Junior Age Category:	The Junior age category refers to fencers who have not attained their 20 th birthday as of January 1 of the year of the next Junior World Championships (held annually by the international fencing federation during Easter week).
Cadet Age Category:	The Cadet age category refers to fencers who have not attained their 17 th birthday as of January 1 of the year of the next Cadet World Championships (held annually by the international fencing federation during Easter week).
Musketeer Age Category:	The Musketeer age category (formerly known as Youth-14) refers to fencers who are 14 or younger as of January 1 of the fencing season.

Squire Age Category:	The Squire age category (formerly known as Youth-12) refers to fencers who are 12 or younger as of January 1 of the fencing season.
Page Age Category:	The Page age category (formerly known as Youth-10) refers to fencers who are 10 or younger as of January 1 of the fencing season.
Veteran Age Category:	The Veteran age category refers to fencers who are at least 40 years old as of January 1 of the fencing season.
Elite National Championships:	The Elite National Championships were formerly known as the Division I National Championships.

Chapter I: The United States Fencing Association

Section 1: The Corporation

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

The USFA tax identification number may not be used for division or section bank accounts. Divisions or sections with bank accounts that earn enough interest to require filing with the IRS must also file a copy with the USFA.

Section 2: Jurisdiction and affiliations

The USFA is the official governing body for amateur fencing in the United States and its exclusive jurisdiction is recognized by the *Fédération Internationale d’Escrime* (FIE), the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and other organizations. It is the officially designated National Governing Body (NGB) of fencing by the USOC.

The USFA is the sole representative of US amateur fencing in the FIE, which is the governing body for all official international fencing competitions including the World and Olympic Fencing Championships. Any US fencer wishing to participate in official international competitions must be accredited by the USFA to the FIE or to the host country as to amateur standing and qualification.

The USFA is a member of the USOC with representation at the USOC Congress and on the USOC Board of Directors.

The USFA works in close cooperation with the USOC in the selection and training of the US Olympic Fencing Teams. It selects the members of all international fencing teams. Every competitor on such teams must be a competitive member of the USFA.

The USFA maintains close relations with other sports organizations including the US Fencing Coaches Association. Most of the active fencing coaches in the United States are also members of the USFA.

Section 3: Brief history

The USFA was founded in New York City on April 22, 1891, as the Amateur Fencers League of America (AFLA). Prior to that date fencing competitions had been conducted by the AAU. The organizers elected Graeme M. Hammond as the first President and he held that office from 1891 to 1925.

In June 1981, the membership approved a change in the name of the organization to “United States Fencing Association.”

Section 4: International activity

Under the leadership of the USFA, United States fencers have achieved considerable prestige on and off the strip. Despite financial and geographical handicaps to participation in most major international competitions, US fencers have competed with distinction in international competitions since 1904.

The USFA has hosted many international competitions, including the World Championships, the World Junior and Cadet Championships, and numerous World Cup competitions.

Two fencers have served on the International Olympic Committee. The first was Frederick R. Coudert of New York, who was succeeded in 1952 by J. Brooks Parker of Philadelphia.

The highest honor and vote of confidence in US fencing was bestowed by the FIE in 1960, when it elected Miguel de Capriles as President for a four-year term and entrusted the running of international fencing affairs to an all US Bureau including Jose de Capriles, Deputy President; Gen. J.V. Grombach, Secretary-General; and Leo G. Nunes, Treasurer.

The honor of taking the Olympic oath at the opening ceremony on behalf of all the assembled athletes was given to Lt. George C. Calnan in the 1932 Olympiad and to George V. Worth in the 1959 Pan American Games. The honor of carrying the flag for the US delegation as it entered the stadium for the opening ceremonies was awarded to Norman C. Armitage in the 1952 and 1956 Olympic Games, to Miguel de Capriles in the 1951 Pan American Games. The honor of carrying the flag for the US delegation for the closing ceremonies was awarded to Peter Westbrook in the 1992 Olympic Games. In the 1968 Olympic Games, Mrs. Janice Lee York Romary became the first woman ever to carry the flag of the US delegation, this signal honor recognizing her sixth competitive appearance in the Olympic Games.

Section 5: Administrative organization

A. Congress

One of the governing bodies of the USFA is the USFA Congress. The composition of the Congress is described in the Bylaws of the USFA and includes the elected National Officers of the USFA, the Chair of each Section, the Chair of each Affiliate Member, and representatives from each Division.

The responsibilities of the Congress are described in the Bylaws of the USFA and include:

- (a) electing directors to the Board of Directors
- (b) electing the USFA Nominating Committee
- (c) electing trustees of the U.S. Fencing Foundation
- (d) approving nominations for Editor of American Fencing Magazine, Chair and members of the Hall of Fame Committee
- (e) proposing legislation and resolutions to the Board of Directors and Executive Committee
- (f) impeaching and recalling officers

B. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the USFA is wholly responsible for the management and policies of the USFA. The composition of the Board of Directors is described in the Bylaws of the USFA and includes the elected officers of the USFA, one director elected by the members of each Section, six “Athletes” elected by Athletes, four directors elected by the Congress, and up to four directors appointed by the President.

C. Standing Committees

(1) Executive Committee

The Board of Directors shall have an Executive Committee composed of not less than five members which Committee shall include the President, each of the 3 Vice Presidents and the Secretary and such other members (who may, but need not be members of the Board of Directors) as may be appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee, shall have such powers as the Board may by resolution prescribe or delegate, provided, however, that the power so delegated shall be limited to the power to take action until the next meeting of the Board of Directors.

Taken from the Bylaws of the USFA, 1997 Edition

(2) High Performance Committee

(3) Tournament Committee

The Tournament Committee is responsible for planning and running national level competitions. It establishes guidelines for the facilities necessary to hold these competitions and solicits, receives, reviews, and approves bids to hold them. It assigns a Bout Committee chair and additional Bout Committee personnel to run the competition. It reviews the competitions after they've been held and recommends to the Board of Directors changes to such things as the qualification criteria and entry fees.

(4) The US Fencing Officials Commission

i) Composition and Responsibilities

The Commission is composed of twelve (12) to sixteen (16) members, each of whom normally serves a term of four (4) years. The terms of the entire Commission are staggered in four (4) groups, each identified by the final year of its term so that in each year the terms of three (3) or four (4) members expire. The President of the USFA nominates candidates to fill vacancies and submits them for approval by the Board of Directors, whose approval is required. If necessary, the President of the USFA will nominate members to fill

vacancies which occur due to a term that is not completed. These nominations must also be approved by the Board of Directors. In addition, any USFA member who is a member of the FIE *Commission d'Arbitrage* is automatically a member of the Fencing Officials Commission (FOC). A member of the USFA Technical Committee will be appointed annually by the President of the USFA to serve ex officio on the Commission so as to provide expert opinion on technical matters. The FOC members will annually elect a chair or co-chairs from among themselves. The Commission members, due to the nature of their duties, are expected to hold a valid current FIE referee license or one of the highest USFA domestic classifications.

The Commission has responsibility for:

- developing referees
- assigning US referees to international teams and competitions
- submitting candidates to the FIE for examination or removal as an international referee
- preparation of clinic formats
- examination development
- rules legislation and interpretation
- conducting hearings on matters referred by the USFA Board of Directors
- administration of referee examinations for Classes 1 through 5 ratings
- selecting and assigning of referees at the National Championships and at all competitions in the United States which are part of the qualifying procedure for international teams
- liaison with schools and colleges on referees

ii) Referee Classifications

Ten domestic classifications (10, the lowest, through 1, the highest) and the international (FIE) classifications are recognized by the USFA. Classes 10 and 9 are awarded at the divisional level with written and practical testing conducted by a division-designated examiner. The written portion of the Classes 10 and 9 examination will consist of 25 questions. Classes 8, 7 and 6 are awarded at the sectional level with written and practical testing conducted by a Commission-designated examiner. The written portion of the Classes 8, 7 and 6 examination will consist of 50 questions. Classes 5 and 4 are awarded at the national level with the written portion of the examination administered by a Commission-designated examiner and the practical portion of the examination conducted by two Commission-designated examiners with at least one of them being a member of the Commission. The written examination for Classes 5 and 4 requires a \$10 fee payable to the USFA. Classes 3, 2, and 1 are awarded by a vote of the Commission. The passing grade for all written examinations is 90%.

Examiners are to submit a copy of the written answer sheet and the practical evaluation form to the Commission's Chair of the Ratings Committee for any members earning a referee classification. These documents are to be sent within fourteen days of the examinations; examiners are to retain a copy of reports for one year. Examiners are to also give written notification of passing to any members at the time the examinations are passed.

The level of qualification is indicated as follows:

DIVISIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS:

- 10 Qualified to referee in non-rated competitions
- 9 Qualified to referee in the finals of a competition in which the winner earns an "E"

SECTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS:

- 8 Qualified to referee in the finals of a competition in which the winner earns a "D"
- 7 Qualified to referee in the finals of a competition in which the winner earns a "C"
- 6 Qualified to referee in the finals of a competition in which the winner earns a "B"

NATIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

(Based on Elite National Championships):

- 5 Qualified to referee to determine places 97-120
- 4 Qualified to referee to determine places 49-96
- 3 Qualified to referee to determine places 25-48
- 2 Qualified to referee to determine places 9-24
- 1 Qualified to referee any bout (including the gold medal bout)

All sectional and national referees rated must attend a Commission-approved seminar every year. Candidates for a sectional or national rating may take the written examination whenever one can be arranged with an examiner, but they must attend a Commission-approved seminar prior to taking the practical examination.

The Commission publishes periodically (at least annually) a list of nationally and internationally rated referees and is responsible for maintaining the quality of the list. Referees' classifications may be changed by the Commission. Classifications of referees will be lowered automatically one level if the referees do not referee at their rated level for a period of two years. After two more years of not refereeing at their rated level, the referee classification will be removed. Lists of rated referees published by the Commission will indicate the most recent year of activity.

One must be a current member of the USFA to be retained on the list of referees. Referees who allow their memberships to lapse for more than one year will lose their ratings; to regain their ratings, they must retake the examinations.

In order to assist a candidate in obtaining a national classification, the Commission has established the following policy regarding examinations at national competitions. One must understand that the examination of referees may not be considered as the primary function of a national competition. Every effort will be made to allow for examinations at these competitions as long as they do not interfere with the proper conduct of the competition.

Only those candidates who have passed their Class 5 written examination may be considered to take the practical examination.

Only those Class 5 candidates who have submitted a request in writing to the Commission which has been endorsed (in writing) by the candidate's division chair or by a Commission-approved Class 5 Examiner in that weapon may be considered to take the practical examination. Such written notification must be received at least three weeks prior to the competition.

Only those recommended Class 5 candidates who present themselves to the Commission representative thirty minutes prior to the start of the competition may be considered to take the practical examination.

Written examinations for Class 5 may be administered if requested in writing to the Commission. Such written notification must be received at least three weeks prior to the competition.

Nationally rated referees who wish to be observed for a possible increase in classification must send their request in writing to the Commission. Such written notification must be received at least three weeks prior to the competition. The referees must then present themselves to the Commission representative thirty minutes prior to the start of the competition, and they must be available to preside at least two levels below their classification (i.e., a referee with a 5, 4, or 3 classification must be present at the start of the competition; a referee with a 2 classification must be present at the 4 level of a competition — the point in the competition that is a 4 level will be determined by the Commission representative).

The Commission representative may have to deny a properly presented request for an examination if, at the discretion of the Commission representative, it would not be in the best interest of the competition (e.g., those who could act as examiners must be utilized as referees). Examinations, written or practical, may not in any way disrupt the competition.

The Commission is the sole authority for the submission of candidates to the FIE for examination or removal as an international referee. A nationally rated referee who would like to be rated by the FIE should send the request, in writing, to the Commission. The Commission will notify the candidate if the request is approved and, if it is, when and

where the candidate may take the examination. If the Commission is considering removal of a US referee on the FIE list due to inactivity, etc., the Commission will notify that referee, in writing, that removal is being contemplated prior to any action being taken.

iii) Procedure for Handling Complaints Against a Member of the FOC

WHEREAS, the Fencing Officials Commission (FOC) was established to examine, accredit and assign referees for national and international events. It is further charged with the duty of evaluating referee performance and the awarding of domestic ratings to these officials. In order that the corps of referees be free from partisan or political influences, the FOC is, and must be, the sole authority regarding these issues; and

WHEREAS, the USFA Board of Directors controls the FOC budget and the USFA President appoints or re-appoints up to 25% of the Commission's members each year:

THEREFORE, the FOC, acting under authority delegated by the Board, has the primary responsibility for monitoring the proper performance of their FOC duties by the Commission's members and desires to establish a procedure with the Board for handling complaints regarding members of the FOC itself in the following manner:

No complaint against a member of the FOC will be acted upon unless made in writing and delivered to both the Chair of the FOC and the USFA Officer Liaison. The latter will place the establishment of a Disciplinary Panel on the agenda of the next Board of Directors meeting as an Urgent item. If the Board approves such motion, the Panel will consist of five (5) members and be formed as follows: two (2) members will be appointed by the President, two (2) members shall be appointed by the Chair of the FOC and one (1) member shall be appointed with the joint concurrence of the President and the Chair. At least one athlete shall be a member of the panel.

The Disciplinary Panel will review the complaint. It may then dismiss it as either spurious or without merit, or, if it determines that the complaint presents a prima facie case (if the facts are as alleged, the complaint has substance) it will investigate the allegations using USFA procedures for due process and make a determination of an appropriate discipline, if any. This may be a reprimand, removal from the FOC, or suspension or revocation of USFA membership. In all cases, the Panel will submit a written report to the Board of Directors.

If Board action is recommended, the accused and the complainant shall be notified in writing. The accused shall have the opportunity to speak to the Board and to be represented by counsel (of his/her own choosing and at his/her own expense) prior to the Board's decision. The Board of Directors can either ratify the recommendation of the Panel or decide by majority vote in favor of a lesser penalty. It cannot vote in favor of a harsher sanction than that recommended by the Disciplinary Panel.

BOD 2/2000

D. National Office

The National Office is the headquarters of the US Fencing Association and the associated staff responsible for serving the membership's needs.

Section 6: Publications and Communications

A. American Fencing

In order to promote better communication among fencers throughout the United States, the USFA in 1949 designated the magazine *American Fencing* as the official publication of the USFA.

American Fencing was founded by Jose de Capriles and William L. Osborn, who served as Editor and Publisher respectively and without remuneration. The magazine is distributed to all members of the USFA four times a year as part of their membership, and is often used to make official announcements to the Association members. Subscriptions also circulate throughout the fencing world.

Persons having articles they wish printed in the magazine should send them to the Editor as listed in *American Fencing*.

American Fencing is required to print official communications submitted to the Editor by officers of the Association and by the chairpersons of any committee or commission duly established by the Association. To guarantee publication, they must identify the submission as an official communication so that it is not mistaken for a regular article or letter being submitted for publication at the discretion of the Editor.

All questions of policy regarding *American Fencing* are referred to the American Fencing Policy Board, which consists of the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the USFA, the Editor of the magazine, and the Editors Emeriti.

B. National Newsletter

In addition to *American Fencing* magazine, the USFA publishes a National Newsletter to the membership as a whole containing timely information and competition entry forms.

C. Athlete Programs Handbook

The USFA shall publish an Athletes' Handbook that lists the selection criteria and funding for international teams in a timely fashion to give proper notice to athletes and coaches for preparation and training. Changes to the Athletes' Handbook will be transmitted to the affected top twenty-four point holders as soon as they are received by the national office and those changes shall be published in the National Newsletter in an article headed "Change to Athletes' Handbook" and submitted to the Chair of the Online Services Committee for posting on the USFA web site.

D. USFA Website

The USFA maintains a presence on the Internet. The address for the USFA Website is <http://www.USFencing.org>. The Website is under the authority of the Information Services Committee of the USFA.

Section 7: Geographical organization

At first, membership in the USFA was heavily concentrated in Metropolitan New York, although divisions were created to administer the local affairs of fencing groups in other parts of the country. The first divisions were established on March 20, 1892, in Nebraska and New England. There are over sixty active divisions as well as a national group composed of members who do not belong to an active division.

Non-administrative regional units, called sections, were created for the purpose of conducting annual regional championships among divisions within a section. The first Sectional Championship was organized on the Pacific Coast in 1925, and has been held annually ever since.

The boundaries of a division must follow either established political or postal boundaries even though that division may be made up of several unrelated political or postal entities. For example, a division could be defined as being comprised of several states, one state, or a list of contiguous counties within one or more states.

Petitions for the establishment of a new division and for the partition of an existing division must include an acceptable description of the boundaries of the new divisions.

The boundaries of a section are defined as being the boundaries of the divisions which comprise that section. Section names should be selected to indicate the general region of the United States in which they reside.

For further information regarding the boundaries of divisions and sections, please contact the USFA National Office or the chair of the division or section concerned.

Section 8: Development Funds

The long term development of fencing in the United States requires the long term commitment of funds. At first two investment accounts looking toward the long term development of USFA activities were established. One fund was earmarked for domestic development programs and the other was dedicated to improving our international efforts.

When the USFA received its share of the profits from the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, the Board of Directors voted to combine these two funds with the proceeds from those Olympics and establish one trust fund, the U.S. Fencing Foundation, to support all development activities. Only the investment income of this fund is available for current activities. The principle and any additions made to it can not be expended without the approval of the Board of Directors.

Section 9: USFA Hall of Fame

The Hall of Fame committee assists the USFA in selecting members with especially outstanding achievements in American fencing, whether through competition, coaching, or service, for induction into the USFA Hall of Fame. It solicits suggestions from the membership, makes nominations, prepares interpretive materials, conducts the balloting at Congress meetings, and organizes the presentation of awards to the honorees.

A list of the honorees of the USFA Hall of Fame is included in Appendix G.

Section 10: Professional Certificate of Merit

The Professional Certificate of Merit is an honorary award voted by the Board of Directors to professional teachers of fencing who have rendered distinguished service to the USFA by developing among their students the qualities of technical skill and love of fencing, as well as the spirit of sportsmanship. This award does not purport to certify the professional competence of fencing instructors, but the USFA believes that outstanding instructors are deserving of recognition by the national governing body for fencing in the United States.

The Professional Certificate of Merit is never voluntarily offered by the Board of Directors and it cannot be solicited by a teacher of fencing. A proposal for the award must be made by two or more members of the Board, or by the executive committee of a division, in the form of a letter to the Board accompanied by the fencing history of the professional to be honored and the names and achievements in USFA competition of at least two of his or her recognized pupils.

A list of the recipients of the Professional Certificate of Merit is included in Appendix G.

Section 11: Membership

A. Annual Dues

The schedule of annual dues of the USFA shall be as follows:

CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP	ANNUAL DUES	DUES PAID FOR 3-YEARS
Competitive Member		
Senior	\$40	\$105
Junior	\$40	\$105
Coach Competitor	\$40	\$105
Veteran	\$40	\$105
Non-Competitive Member		
Associate	\$30	NA
Coach	\$30	NA
Fence For Fun Member	\$30	NA
Parent	\$30	NA
Family	\$60	NA
Life Member	\$1,000	NA

Family membership allows for a maximum of four persons at the same address to join for the one fee of \$60. Within the family membership, up to two persons will attain competitive membership; the remaining two are considered “Associate” members and can not fence in USFA or international competitions.

Fence For Fun membership provides a competitive membership that is valid only in local competitions. Membership will not permit competing in Sectional or National level tournaments.

B. Dues Sharing

Annual dues shall be allocated according to the following schedule, and Division and Sectional shares of dues shall be paid on a quarterly basis by the USFA National Office to the Divisions and Sections.

For each membership processed in a quarter, the Division shall receive \$3.00 and the Section shall receive \$1.00.

Thirty percent (30%) of the Life Membership fee shall be paid by the USFA to the division to which the member belongs, except that if the member also belongs to a Section, the USFA shall pay to the Section five percent (5%) and shall pay to the Division twenty five percent (25%).

Where the Division is not a member of any specific Section, the Sectional share of dues shall be retained by the USFA.

All dues received by the USFA National Office shall be accounted for by the USFA. Before a Division or Section is eligible to receive any quarterly payments, a financial report must first be filed with the USFA National Office for the previous membership year. That portion of dues not reserved for Divisions and Sections shall be deposited to the national account of the USFA for general USFA purposes.

C. Membership Year

The membership year shall commence on August 1 and end on the following July 31. All dues are payable in full on application for membership and thereafter on or before the next membership year begins.

D. New Members

A new member whose dues are paid between April 1 and July 31 shall be entitled to membership through the next membership year.

E. Arrears

A new member is not admitted to membership and an old member is not in good standing until the member's dues and fees have been received by the USFA National Office. Payment of dues to a Divisional Secretary or other duly appointed agent will render a fencer eligible to fence. However, no person will be eligible to vote in Corporation affairs at the national level unless the person's dues for the membership year in which the person seeks the right to vote are received by the USFA National Office by February 1 of that membership year.

Chapter II: Organization of competitions

Section 1: Authorized competitions

- A. Except as herein provided, members of the United States Fencing Association (USFA) may participate only in competitions scheduled by or under the auspices of the National Board of Directors or of the divisions and sections of the USFA. Violations of this rule are punishable by disciplinary penalties according to the gravity of the offense.
- B. Members of the USFA are authorized to participate in collegiate and scholastic meets for which they are eligible, and in tournaments organized by the Intercollegiate Fencing Association, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and similar intercollegiate and interscholastic associations, providing that such competitions are conducted under fencing rules that substantially conform to the rules of the USFA.
- C. Members of the USFA are authorized to participate in foreign individual competitions when such competitions are organized by or under the sponsorship of a national federation that is a member of the FIE. Members are also authorized to compete in international collegiate or scholastic competitions which are held without any objections thereto by the federation of the country in which the competition is held. Members of the USFA must be certified by the USFA national office as to eligibility before competing in FIE competitions. Members of the USFA should check with the national office before participating in other foreign individual competitions. Members of the USFA may not compete in foreign or international competitions as a team representing the US except upon specific approval of the Board of Directors or a committee designated by the Board to select members of international teams.

Section 2: Responsibility for events

A. Divisional

Divisional competitions are under the supervision of the chair and the executive committee or other appropriate committee of the division, pursuant to the divisional bylaws. Each division's chair, with the approval of the appropriate divisional committee, is responsible for appointing the organizing committee, the bout committee, and their respective chairs.

B. Sectional

Sectional competitions are limited to the annual Sectional Championships and are under the supervision of the sectional chairs and executive committees pursuant to sectional bylaws. Each sectional chair, in consultation with the chair or executive committee of the host division, is responsible for appointing the organizing committee, the bout committee, and their respective chairs.

C. National

National competitions (including the annual National Championship tournaments) are under the supervision of the President and the Board of Directors.

No meeting of the general membership, the Board of Directors of the USFA, or the USFA Congress shall be held while fencing is in progress at a national competition (National Championships, Junior Olympic Championships, North American Cup, et cetera), or an international competition conducted in the United States (World Cup, World Championships, et cetera). USFA committees are responsible for ensuring that their meetings do not interfere with the smooth running of any national competition.

Section 3: Types of competitions

A. Open

An Open competition is one in which all competitors are eligible to compete without regard to their divisional membership, classification, rank, or age (except for minimum ages as specified in the *Athlete Programs Handbook*).

B. Closed

A Closed competition is a sectional, interdivisional, or divisional competition in which eligibility is limited on the basis of sectional or divisional membership.

C. Restricted

A Restricted competition is one in which the eligibility of competitors is limited on the basis of classification, rank, age, academic status, or special invitation.

- (1) A Class A competition is one open to Class A fencers.
- (2) The designation of a competition as Class B or Class C (or other designation) indicates the highest category of fencers permitted to participate therein, but these competitions are also open to fencers of lower categories unless the contrary is specifically announced in the schedule.
- (3) Restricted competitions limited to fencers of a certain age or academic status shall not be further restricted on the basis of classification or rank unless the contrary is specifically announced in the schedule.
- (4) For age-restricted competitions, fencers must meet the specified age criteria as indicated in the preface and in the *Athlete Programs Handbook*.
- (5) A fencer may be too old or too young to enter a National competition. Refer to the most recent issue of the *Athlete Programs Handbook* for current information on age restrictions.

D. Mixed (co-ed)

A mixed (or coed) competition is a competition in which members of both sexes may compete. Only members of the same sex may compete in Divisional, Sectional, or National competitions that are part of a qualifying path to a non-mixed National Championship competition.

E. Championship

The title “Championship” shall be limited to the most important competitions or tournaments in national, sectional, interdivisional or divisional schedules.

- (1) The USFA sponsors competitions at the following National Championship tournaments:

- Junior Olympic National Championships
- Elite National Championships (formerly known as Division I)
- Summer National Championships

The National Championship competitions shall be limited to duly qualified contestants. The championship competitions shall include such competitions that have been approved by the Board of Directors. The National Championship competitions are held in men’s épée, foil, and saber and women’s épée, foil, and saber.

The date and place of the National Championship competitions shall be determined by the Tournament Committee. The Tournament Committee shall receive bids and/or generate alternative proposals. Bids shall be submitted in conformance to the procedures established by the Tournament Committee, and consideration by the Tournament Committee should include a site inspection. Any organization, club, division, or section interested in hosting National Championships should request a bid packet from the USFA National Office.

- (2) Sectional Championships are competitions run by each of the sections of the USFA. Sectional Championships must be closed but cannot be restricted except as required to qualify competitors to National Championships.

The Sectional Championships must be held prior to the submission date specified on that year’s sectional qualifying forms that are provided by the National Office. The National Office must receive the appropriate qualifying forms from the sectional officers before individual entries from the section can be processed.

Only members of the section may compete in that section’s qualifying competition. No competitive member who is in good standing and files a proper entry shall be denied entry if he or she is eligible under Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) below.

- (3) Divisional Championships are competitions run by each of the divisions of the USFA. Divisional Championships must be closed but cannot be restricted except as required to qualify competitors to National Championships.

Divisional qualifying competitions must be held prior to the submission date specified on that year's divisional qualifying forms that are provided by the National Office. The National Office must receive the appropriate qualifying forms from the divisional officers before individual entries from the division can be processed.

Only members of the division may compete in that division's qualifying competition. No competitive member who is in good standing and files a proper entry shall be denied entry if he or she is eligible under Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) below.

F. Team

A team competition is a competition between teams of two or more fencers. For any particular team competition, the number of fencers on a team is the same for all teams and is specified in advance. Lately, team competitions have been held for teams made up of from as few as two members (as, for example, in a mixed doubles competition where the teams are made up of a male and a female fencer in one weapon) to as many as six members (as, for example, in a six-weapon team competition where the teams are made up of a male and a female fencer in each of the three weapons). Usually, though, team competitions consist of three members of the same sex fencing the same weapon. Refer to Chapter III:Section 1:B below for information on eligibility for team competitions at National Championship tournaments.

G. Exhibition

No competitive member of the USFA may participate in an exhibition without permission from the Board of Directors or the divisional executive committee, or an authorized representative of these governing bodies. Violation of this rule may result in severe disciplinary penalties.

It is the policy of the USFA that any fencing exhibition must be conducted in a manner that will properly publicize the sport. No exhibition shall be authorized under conditions that place fencing in an unfavorable light.

Exhibitions of modern fencing shall conform to the rules of the USFA. The wearing of masks is required.

Exhibitions of historical swordplay in period costume are encouraged and participation in special comedy bouts within the limits of good taste is permitted.

Participation of a competitive fencer in television programs is strictly limited to that portion of the telecast devoted to entertainment. Appearance in any portion devoted to an advertising message is prohibited. If identified as a fencer on the program, he or she may donate the fees (if any) involved in the appearance to the USFA or the USOC to preserve amateur status.

A competitive member may receive reimbursement of his or her actual out-of-pocket expenses for travel and subsistence, and may accept a medal or prize of nominal value, in connection with an occasional fencing exhibition. He may not receive any other remuneration, and he may not devote

any substantial and regular portion of his time to giving exhibitions for which he receives reimbursement of expenses and prizes.

H. Academic

Academic contests, where the number of touches scored is not the sole criterion for victory in a bout, are permitted, provided adequate notice of the exact character of the competition is included in the schedule.

Section 4: Scheduling of competitions

A. Divisional and sectional

The fencing season officially begins on August 1 and continues through July 31 of the next calendar year.

- (1) At the beginning of each season (and not later than October 1) each section and division shall publish a schedule of team and individual competitions.
- (2) The schedule shall indicate the name and address of the person to whom entries are to be forwarded and the closing date for entries.
- (3) All competitions shall be held with electrical equipment unless specifically identified as “non-electric” in the schedule.
- (4) The schedule should include the following information:
 - The title and classification of each competition.
 - The date, time for close of registration, and place.
 - The entry fee and conditions for entries.
 - The terms, if any, for admission of spectators.
 - Any special regulations or conditions.

B. National

The exact schedule of competitions shall be prepared by the Tournament Committee in consultation with the organizing committee and the bout committee and shall be published in the National Newsletter and championship confirmation materials.

Section 5: Management and control of competitions

A. Organizing committee

The organization of a competition or tournament is the responsibility of an organizing committee that shall provide for the physical facilities, necessary equipment, supplies, personnel, and awards necessary for the smooth running of the tournament.

For National competitions, the local organizing committee (LOC) is responsible for providing all physical facilities, necessary equipment, supplies, and personnel as specified by the Tournament Committee.

B. Bout committee

(1) Duties

Each bout committee, through its chair, is responsible for and in complete charge of all competitions within its jurisdiction, including all officials, contestants, and spectators. At national competitions, the Tournament Committee representative works in conjunction with the bout committee chair to ensure that the competition is conducted in accordance with the criteria approved by the Board of Directors.

The bout committee itself is not a parliamentary body that makes administrative decisions by majority vote. All of the committee's authority is vested in the chair, who may delegate it as he or she sees fit. The advisory capacity cannot overrule the chair on administrative matters. Only on questions properly brought to it on appeal does the bout committee decide by majority vote. In such cases, the chair has only one vote.

The bout committee has no power to amend the rules of fencing. In emergency cases it may waive or modify the rules of organization for a particular competition with the consent of the fencers directly or indirectly affected, but in all such cases a report of the action taken must be submitted to the appropriate governing body.

The decisions of the bout committee on matters within its jurisdiction are final. However, if it ignores a positive prescription of the rules, or applies the rules incorrectly, a protest by the aggrieved person or team is allowed. If the protest is overruled by the bout committee, the aggrieved person or team may appeal, in writing, to the Jury of Appeal.

The bout committee, subject only to the Jury of Appeal, has the ultimate authority for conducting a competition. It is in charge of all personnel, competitors, officials and other persons present, including spectators.

(2) Composition

The bout committee for USFA competitions shall consist only of members of the USFA in good standing.

The minimum requirement for a place on the bout committee is a thorough knowledge of the rules.

Any member of the bout committee who is a competitor or team captain may not participate in the seeding of pools or direct elimination plan for the competition in which he or she is involved.

The chair of the bout committee is responsible for review of plans and programs set up by the organizing committee, the conduct of the competition, assignment of referees (at National competitions, this is the responsibility of the Fencing Officials Commission representative(s)), seeding of pools, and maintenance of discipline.

The chair or co-chairs of the bout committee for national competitions are appointed by the Tournament Committee after consultation with the organizers.

C. Jury of appeal

(1) Duties

The Jury of Appeal is responsible for hearing a protest against a decision of the bout committee or of a referee (where permitted under the *Rules for Competition*) which has been properly filed and overruled. Such an appeal to the Jury of Appeal must be in writing. Further, notice of appeal must be given to the bout committee.

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. The decisions of the Jury of Appeal are final.

(2) Procedures

When the Jury of Appeal is convened, any person involved in the decision being appealed or any person who is the coach, clubmate or relative of a fencer involved in that decision shall not be eligible to serve as a member of the Jury of Appeal. The Jury of Appeal shall resolve all conflict of interest issues before hearing the appeal. 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 cast one vote. All motions are decided by majority vote. In the event of a tie vote, the motion fails.

In all cases, the record of the action taken and the reason therefore must be filed with the Secretary for presentation to the National Office.

(3) Composition

i) Divisional

The Jury of Appeal at a divisional competition shall be composed of all current members of the Board of Directors, the USFA Congress, and the divisional executive committee present at the competition, the chair or acting chair of the bout committee, and the club or team captain of every club or team competing and not otherwise represented. In the latter

case, if a captain is not present, a member of the club shall be chosen by majority vote of the other members of the Jury of Appeal.

The chair shall be the chair of the division. In his or her absence, the Jury of Appeal shall elect a chair from among its members.

ii) Sectional

The Jury of Appeal at a sectional competition shall be composed of all current members of the Board of Directors, the USFA Congress, and the sectional executive committee present at the competition, the chair or acting chair of the bout committee, the FOC representative, and an officer from every division competing and not otherwise represented. In the latter case, if no officer is present, a member of the division shall be chosen by majority vote of the other members of the Jury of Appeal.

The chair shall be the chair of the section. In his or her absence, the Jury of Appeal shall elect a chair from among its members.

iii) National

The Jury of Appeal at a national competition shall be composed of two members each from the following groups, if present:

- Tournament Committee
- Fencing Officials Commission
- Coaches Committee
- International Committee
- Athlete Advisory Group

At the beginning of each national tournament, the Tournament Committee Representative shall compile a list of prospective Jury of Appeal members, consisting of up to two representatives and two alternates from each of the above groups, chosen from those who will be in attendance at the tournament. This list will be posted near the registration area and at the bout committee table throughout the tournament.

In addition, each Section Chair, or a pre-designated representative, if present, shall serve as a member of the Jury of Appeal. To pre-designate a representative, the Section Chair must do so in writing prior to the start of fencing for the first competition of the day.

The Jury of Appeal shall elect a chair from among its members.

D. Spectators

“Spectators” include any and all persons attending a competition (including teammates, coaches, parents, etc.) who are not at the moment engaged in active participation therein either as contestants, or in any official capacity recognized by the rules.

Spectators are required, in the interest of safety and good order, to sit or stand at a distance of not less than ten feet from the limits of the strip and to obey any directives of the referee or the bout committee.

Chapter III: Entering competitions

Section 1: Eligibility

A. Competitors

(1) General

A competitive member of the USFA is one who belongs to one of the membership classes designated by the USFA as being authorized to compete in USFA-sanctioned competition.

Only competitive members of the USFA in good standing or holders of valid, current FIE licenses are eligible to compete in team or individual competitions scheduled by or under the auspices of the USFA.

No member of a division shall be in good standing unless his or her division is in good standing according to the established rules and practices of the USFA. Consequently, if a member's division is not in good standing, the Board of Directors may transfer his or her membership to the National Division and make such rules respecting eligibility to enter competitions and for the holding of additional competitions as may be appropriate.

A fencer who has entered a competition but has failed to pay the required entry fee, and has either participated in the competition or failed to withdraw therefrom in time, shall be liable to the appropriate organizing committee of the USFA for the amount of the entry fee and shall be ineligible to enter any subsequent USFA competitions until restored to good standing by payment of the sum due.

Every entry certifies the entrant's eligibility for the particular competition not only with respect to USFA membership in good standing but also as to compliance with every other requirement.

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

Unless otherwise specified, all USFA competitions are governed by the USFA *Rules for Competition* and it is the responsibility of each fencer to be familiar with them.

It is the responsibility of the fencer to provide the necessary equipment to compete in accordance with the rules of the USFA.

(2) National Championships

- A. Only members in good standing at the time the entries for the Nationals are closed are eligible to qualify for National Championship competitions.

- B. Only US citizens and permanent residents are eligible to qualify for National Championship competitions.
- C. Athletes who have represented another country (FIE federation) in international competition during the previous three years (unless released by the FIE to represent the United States) are not eligible to compete in National Championship competitions.

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- D. In all the qualifying competitions for the individual National Championship competitions, when the number of qualifiers who will be eligible to compete in that tournament from each division or section is determined by the number of eligible contestants competing for qualification, those who are not eligible to fence in the National Championships will *not* be counted among those who will be included in the number of eligible contestants.
- E. Only members who have submitted a timely entry are eligible to compete in any competition (including non-Championship competitions) at National Championship tournaments. Specifically, no late entries will be accepted for any competition held at National Championship tournaments. Entries cannot be processed until the National Office receives the appropriate qualifying forms from the sectional or divisional officers.

B. Teams

(1) Club representation and affiliation

The term “club” as used in these rules includes any organized fencing group of individual members. The group may be affiliated with a club, industrial institution, association, or other entity. A recognized club is one that has a relatively stable organizational structure and membership, a place for regular fencing activity, and preferably a professional fencing master for lessons and training. The division affiliation of a member club shall be the primary location where its regular fencing activity is conducted. A club may only be a member of one division.

A distinction is made between club “affiliation” and “representation.” A fencer may be affiliated with more than one club but can represent only one of them (except as provided for below) in USFA competitions during one fencing season.

- A. A fencer may at any time resign from one club and join another, or join or hold membership in two or more clubs. However, within the same fencing season, no fencer may represent in competition more than one club without special permission of the Board of Directors. The fencer’s first stated club affiliation at a USFA competition in each fencing season will determine that fencer’s club representation for that year.

- B. A college or scholastic fencer, who is also a member of another recognized club, may represent his or her school in dual meets and other interscholastic or intercollegiate competitions, and also represent the other club in USFA competitions. In addition, if the rules of his or her school conference require it, he or she may represent his or her school or fence unattached in all USFA individual competitions held during the school fencing season or, in the case of collegiate fencers, during the period in which NCAA rules regarding playing dates have jurisdiction. Such fencers may represent their club during the other portions of the fencing season.

Fencers who represent their club after having represented their school during the fencing season must represent their club for the remainder of that fencing season. Fencers who represent their school outside the dates when required to do so, must represent their school for the remainder of the fencing season. Under no circumstances can fencers represent both their school and their club at any one National Championship tournament.

- C. A fencer who, while a member of a recognized club, elects to fence unattached, may not be permitted to represent any club during the remainder of the season in individual competition, and may not compete in team competitions except as a member of composite teams except as noted in paragraph A above for collegiate fencers in NCAA Division I and Division II schools.

All fencers should notify the National Office of all club affiliations at the start of the fencing season or as such club affiliations change. They should also notify competition organizers of such affiliations even if representing another club (or school) or fencing unattached for reasons given above in paragraph A. Competition organizers should apply the same criteria for separating fencers with the same club affiliations as they do for fencers with the same club representation.

(2) Composition of teams

i) General

- A. There shall be no limitation on the number of team entries from one club unless the appropriate governing body fixes a specified limit in advance.
- B. Members of two or more teams representing the same club may not be interchanged during the competition (see exception for National Championships below).
- C. The names of individual fencers on the team need not be formally filed at the time the team entry is made, but must be given to the bout committee before the plan of competition is worked out.

- D. No team entry shall be permitted to compete with a lesser number of members than required for the particular competition (which shall be three unless otherwise announced in the schedule).
- E. Every individual member of a team shall, by participating in the competition, personally certify his or her eligibility to compete.

ii) National Championships

A duly qualified and entered team need not limit its composition to those members of the club who actually competed on that team in the qualifying competition and the general rule providing that members of two or more teams representing the same club may not be interchanged during a competition (applicable in the qualifying competition) shall not apply.

Fencers shall not be permitted to represent a club in team championship competition unless they satisfy the club representation restrictions specified in Chapter III:Section 1:B(1) above, and meet one of the following criteria:

- A. They have represented that club at least once during that regular season either in a competition of the division or in the Sectional Championships of the section in which the club is located, OR
- B. They have represented that club at least once during that regular season in a North American Cup competition or in the Junior Olympic Championships, OR
- C. They have represented the same club in a prior National Championship and have notified the National Office in writing before April 15 (and be able to prove so by, for example, certified mail with return receipt requested) of their intent to represent that club at the coming National Championships.

(3) Composite teams

i) General

- A. A composite team is one whose members do not represent the same club (they may all be unattached). Such teams are permitted unless notice to the contrary is included in the schedule of competitions. Further, a fencer may be part of a composite team in a competition in which his or her club is formally represented with the approval of the appropriate division. Composite teams may compete *hors concours* in the National Championship qualifying round, but will not count in determining qualifiers to the National Championships.
- B. Composite teams must furnish a guarantee for the safe custody of any trophy that may be won.

- C. The bout committee shall refuse the entry of any composite team when, in its judgment, the conditions of subsections A and B above, have not been complied with in every respect.
- D. A fencer who is a member of a club may fence on a composite team without prejudice to his right to represent his club during the same season (see Chapter III:Section 1:B(1) above).

ii) National Championships

Composite teams are forbidden in National Championships, except if a division is unable to provide club representation for team competition in a given weapon, despite scheduling a regularly scheduled team qualifying competition. A division composite team may be entered only in the Team Championship competitions at the Summer Nationals.

Division composite teams must be composed of fencers who are members of the division so represented. Composite team members must also have competed at least once during that regular season in a competition held by the division that the composite team represents.

Members of composite teams will be selected based on highest final placement in the following competitions:

1. Primary Selection Criteria: Divisional Championship competition in the team competition weapon.
2. Secondary Selection Criteria: Sectional Championship competition in the team competition weapon.

In the case of a division composite team, the names of the members of the team must be listed at the time the team entry is submitted for the National Championships.

Section 2: Qualification criteria

A. For competitions

- (1) All qualifying competitions shall conform strictly to the rules governing USFA competitions. Each division, at its discretion, may designate its Divisional Championships as its qualifying competition to the Sectional Championships. The divisions and sections must give at least three weeks notice of the date, time and place of the qualifying competitions.

All qualifying competitions should be scheduled with regard to date, time, and location in such a manner as to prevent undue hardship to members wishing to attend such competitions. They may not be scheduled in conflict with major religious holidays or competitions on the National Calendar in that weapon (such as North American Cup

competitions). If a division is geographically large, the qualifying competitions should be held on weekends or national holidays.

- (2) A fencer may appeal from the local bout committee and/or the Jury of Appeal of a qualifying competition any decisions involving a possible violation of the rules to the USFA Executive Committee by forwarding said appeal to the National Office within three business days after the qualifying competition.
- (3) Each division is required to schedule qualifying competitions for each competition for which there are divisional qualifying requirements described below. Divisions must hold separate qualification competitions for each Championship competition. Divisions must make every reasonable effort to ensure that competition schedules permit competitors to qualify for all competitions for which they are eligible.
- (4) In the event that the number of entries for a qualifying competition is less than the number of authorized qualifiers, the qualifying competition need not be held and all entries shall be automatically qualified for the Tournament.
- (5) In the event that the number of entries for qualification from the National Division is greater than the number of authorized qualifiers, a qualifying competition may be held at the site of the National Championships on the day before that National Championship competition is scheduled to be held.
- (6) There are no alternates to any National Championship competition.
- (7) Qualification places must be determined without ties, regardless of the format used — the number of qualifiers is not increased due to ties. If two or more fencers finish in a tie for the last qualifying place, which fencer(s) are qualifiers must be determined by fencing as many barrage bouts as necessary. If a format with direct elimination is used, any ties affecting qualification must be resolved by fencing a barrage between the fencers involved. For example, having a bout to determine third place in a direct elimination final.

(By “ties” in the above paragraph, it is meant that the fencers are tied in all indicators: as explained in the *Rules for Competition*.)

- (8) Divisions must hold the Division II qualifying competitions as separate competitions open only to those eligible to compete in the Division II Nationals.
- (9) The qualifying competitions are considered the first rounds of the Nationals themselves. The formats used in qualifying competitions are:
 - by pools throughout; or
 - by any format specified in the current *Athlete Programs Handbook* except any format with first round byes.
- (10) The Board of Directors may set aside the results of any qualifying competition which does not conform to the rules and require that the qualifying competition be

rescheduled, designate the qualifiers from that division or section, 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.

B. For individuals

(1) Elite Competitions

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above are eligible to participate in the Elite individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria:

- (a) All fencers on the National Senior Point Standings as of the entry deadline.
- (b) The top eight on the National Junior Point Standings as of the entry deadline.
- (c) The top four on the National Cadet Point Standings as of the entry deadline.
- (d) The top eight finishers in the prior Division I-A Individual National Championships.
- (e) The top four finishers in the prior Division II Individual National Championships.
- (f) The US Modern Pentathlon Association may designate three fencers each to compete in the men's épée and women's épée competitions. Such designation and the necessary entry forms must be received by the National Office by the entry deadline.

(2) Division I-A Competitions

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above are eligible to participate in the Division I-A individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria:

- (a) The top ten finishers of each Division I-A (Senior) Sectional Championships in that season.
- (b) Each current Junior Sectional Champion.
- (c) The top eight finishers from the prior Division I-A Individual National Championships.
- (d) The top four finishers from the prior Division II Individual National Championships.
- (e) The top two finishers from the prior Division III Individual National Championships.

(3) Division II Competitions

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above are eligible to participate in the Division II individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria, provided that they are classified as Class C or lower at the time that they so qualify:

- (a) Each division will be entitled to a minimum of two qualifiers (if there are two or more competitors) and a maximum of thirty percent (30%) - rounded up - of those competing in the Division's Division II Qualifying Competition in the season of the competition.

1 entry	= 1 qualifier
2-6 entries	= 2 qualifiers
7-10 entries	= 3 qualifiers
11-13 entries	= 4 qualifiers

et cetera. For example, if there are 20 competitors, 6 will qualify. If there are 21 competitors, 7 will qualify.

The Tournament Committee may designate divisions that assist in hosting the tournament to be allowed up to double the number of qualifiers normally allowed from the Qualifying Competition.

- (b) The top four finishers from the prior Division III Individual National Championships.
- (c) The qualifiers to this tournament's Junior Individual National Championships.
- (d) The qualifiers to this tournament's Cadet Individual National Championships.

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- (e) The top six finishers from each Division I-A Sectional Championships who do not otherwise qualify through paragraphs (a) through (c) above.

(4) Division III Competitions

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above are eligible to participate in the Division III individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria, provided that they are classified as Class D or lower at the time that they so qualify:

- (a) Any fencer who competed in the Division's Division II Qualifying Competitions or the I-A Sectional Championships in that fencer's Division or Section in the season of the competition.
- (b) The qualifiers to this tournament's Division II Individual National Championships.

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(5) Junior Competitions At The Junior Olympic Fencing Championships

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above and who meet the age criteria specified in the current *Athlete Programs Handbook*, are eligible to participate in the Junior individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria:

- (a) All fencers on the National Junior Point Standings as of January 1 in the year of the Championships.
- (b) The top sixteen point holders on the National Cadet Point Standings as of January 1 in the year of the Championships.
- (c) In addition to those qualifying through (a) or (b) above, each Division will be entitled to a minimum of two qualifiers (if there are two or more competitors) and a maximum of thirty percent (30%) - rounded up - of those competing in the Division's Junior (age category) Junior Olympic Qualifying Competition in the season of the competition.

1 entry	= 1 qualifier
2-6 entries	= 2 qualifiers
7-10 entries	= 3 qualifiers
11-13 entries	= 4 qualifiers

et cetera. For example, if there are 20 competitors, 6 will qualify. If there are 21 competitors, 7 will qualify.

The Tournament Committee may designate divisions that assist in hosting the tournament to be allowed up to double the number of qualifiers normally allowed from the Qualifying Competition.

(6) Junior Competitions At The Summer National Championships

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above and who meet the age criteria specified in the current *Athlete Programs Handbook*, are eligible to participate in the Junior individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria:

- (a) All age-eligible fencers on the National Junior Point Standings as of the entry deadline.
- (b) The top sixteen point holders on the National Cadet Point Standings as of the entry deadline.
- (c) In addition to those qualifying through (a) or (b) above, each Section will be entitled to a minimum of two qualifiers (if there are two or more competitors) and a maximum of thirty percent (30%) - rounded up - of those competing in the Section's Junior Individual Qualifying Competition.

1 entry	= 1 qualifier
2-6 entries	= 2 qualifiers
7-10 entries	= 3 qualifiers
11-13 entries	= 4 qualifiers

et cetera. For example, if there are 20 competitors, 6 will qualify. If there are 21 competitors, 7 will qualify.

- (d) The Tournament Committee may designate divisions that assist in hosting the tournament to be allowed additional qualifiers as follows: In addition to those qualifying through (a), (b), or (c) above, the designated divisions will be entitled to a minimum of two qualifiers (if there are two or more competitors) and a maximum of thirty percent (30%) - rounded up - of those competing in the Division's Junior Individual Qualifying Competition.

1 entry	= 1 qualifier
2-6 entries	= 2 qualifiers
7-10 entries	= 3 qualifiers
11-13 entries	= 4 qualifiers

et cetera. For example, if there are 20 competitors, 6 will qualify. If there are 21 competitors, 7 will qualify.

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(7) Cadet Competitions At The Junior Olympic Fencing Championships

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above and who meet the age criteria specified in the current *Athlete Programs Handbook*, are eligible to participate in the Cadet individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria:

- (a) All fencers on the National Cadet Point Standings as of January 1 in the year of the Championships.
- (b) The top eight point holders on the National Musketeer Point Standings as of January 1 in the year of the Championships.
- (c) In addition to those qualifying through (a) or (b) above, each Division will be entitled to a minimum of two qualifiers (if there are two or more competitors) and a maximum of thirty percent (30%) - rounded up - of those competing in the Division's Cadet Junior Olympic Qualifying Competition in the season of the competition.

1 entry	= 1 qualifier
2-6 entries	= 2 qualifiers
7-10 entries	= 3 qualifiers
11-13 entries	= 4 qualifiers

et cetera. For example, if there are 20 competitors, 6 will qualify. If there are 21 competitors, 7 will qualify.

The Tournament Committee may designate divisions that assist in hosting the tournament to be allowed up to double the number of qualifiers normally allowed from the Qualifying Competition.

(8) Cadet Competitions At The Summer National Championships

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above and who meet the age criteria specified in the current *Athlete Programs Handbook*, are eligible to participate in the Cadet individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria:

- (a) All age-eligible fencers on the National Cadet Point Standings as of the entry deadline.
- (b) The top eight point holders on the National Musketeer Point Standings as of the entry deadline.
- (c) In addition to those qualifying through (a) or (b) above, each Division will be entitled to a minimum of two qualifiers (if there are two or more competitors) and a maximum of thirty percent (30%) - rounded up - of those competing in the Division's Cadet Individual Qualifying Competition.

1 entry	= 1 qualifier
2-6 entries	= 2 qualifiers
7-10 entries	= 3 qualifiers
11-13 entries	= 4 qualifiers

et cetera. For example, if there are 20 competitors, 6 will qualify. If there are 21 competitors, 7 will qualify.

The Tournament Committee may designate divisions that assist in hosting the tournament to be allowed up to double the number of qualifiers normally allowed from the Qualifying Competition.

(9) Musketeer Competitions At The Summer National Championships

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above and who meet the age criteria specified in the *Athlete Programs Handbook*, are eligible to participate in the Musketeer individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria:

- (a) All fencers on the National Musketeer Point Standings as of the last domestic point event prior to the entry deadline.
- (b) In addition to those qualifying through paragraph (a) above, each Division will be entitled to a minimum of two qualifiers (if there are two or more competitors) and a maximum of thirty percent (30%) - rounded up - of those competing in the Division's Musketeer Qualifying Competition in the season of the competition.

1 entry	= 1 qualifier
2-6 entries	= 2 qualifiers
7-10 entries	= 3 qualifiers
11-13 entries	= 4 qualifiers

et cetera. For example, if there are 20 competitors, 6 will qualify. If there are 21 competitors, 7 will qualify.

The Tournament Committee may designate divisions that assist in hosting the tournament to be allowed up to double the number of qualifiers normally allowed from the Qualifying Competition.

(10) Veteran Competitions At The Summer National Championships

The following members of the USFA who meet the eligibility requirements in Chapter III:Section 1:A(2) above are eligible to participate in the Veteran individual competitions in the same weapon in which they meet the qualification criteria, provided that they have achieved their 40th birthday by January 1 of the year of the competition:

- (a) Any fencer who competed in the Division's Division II Qualifying Competitions or the I-A Sectional Championships in that fencer's Division or Section in the season of the competition.
- (b) Any fencer who competed in a Division I or Veteran NAC competition in the season of the competition.

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C. For teams

- (1) Teams will consist of three members and optionally one substitute. Each division will be allowed to qualify the following number of teams to the Team Championships (both Elite and Junior Teams), based on the number of clubs represented in the qualifying round: 1-5 clubs, 4 teams; 6-10 clubs, 5 teams; more than 10 clubs, 6 teams. The clubs who are the top 4 finishers at the prior Team Championships qualify automatically to the next Team Championships. Separate qualifying competitions must be held for Elite and Junior teams.
- (2) Any team which competes in the Elite Team Championships qualifying round will qualify to the Open Team Championships.

- (3) Alternate teams are not permitted in any Team Championship.
 - (4) Teams shall represent a club which is a member club of the USFA no later than the time of the qualifying competition. No member club may qualify more than one team even though the rules of the qualifying competition may permit a club to enter two or more teams.
 - (5) Composite teams are forbidden in the Tournament, except as noted in Chapter III:Section 1:B(3) above.
 - (6) Only clubs which are USFA members of a division shall qualify from that division.
 - (7) The US Modern Pentathlon Association may enter one team in each men's épée and women's épée Team Championships. The three branches of the armed forces (Army, Air Force, and Navy) may each enter one team in each Team Championship. The normal rules regarding club requirements during the season are waived as to Pentathletes and service personnel for purposes of exercising this privilege in the tournament provided they submit entries identifying themselves as members of these teams by the deadline for entries to the Nationals and waive the right to fence on any other team.
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- (8) The Tournament Committee may designate divisions that assist in hosting the tournament to be allowed up to double the number of team qualifiers normally allowed from the Qualifying Competition.

Section 3: Certification of qualifiers

- A. Immediately upon the completion of each of its qualifying competitions, the Secretary of each division and section shall transmit to the National Office a certified list of the final placement of all entries to the qualifying competitions.

Qualifying forms must be sent to the National Office no later than two business days after the qualifying competition.

These forms do not constitute the required entries for the Tournament, which must be submitted by the competitors themselves. Individual entries cannot be accepted until the National Office has received the appropriate qualifying forms. All requested information must be provided in a legible format on the forms provided by the National Office.
- B. The USFA National Office shall check the certified lists against the list of USFA members in good standing and shall use these lists to process the entries.

Section 4: Qualification By Appeal

In exceptional cases, subject to specific approval by the USFA Executive Committee, a member of the USFA may be permitted to qualify by appeal.

A fencer can qualify by appeal only after exhausting all possible competitive qualification paths.

There is no qualification by appeal for the Elite National Championship competitions.

The following are samples of cases for which an appeal does not apply.

- A. If you are injured or ill while competing in a qualifying competition and do not withdraw on a medical basis, your result stands and there is NO appeal. It is better not to fence and get medical documentation or to withdraw and ask the bout committee for a written statement verifying the medical withdrawal. That statement or medical documentation must be submitted with your appeal.
- B. Division membership is determined by where you live, where you go to school or the location of the club that you represent in competition. When you renew your membership in the USFA, you must state the Division to which you wish to be assigned based on this criteria. That is your Division for the year and the one from which you must qualify to Championship tournaments. Appeals on the basis of missing the qualifying competition due to going to school elsewhere are NOT approved.
- C. If the qualifying competition was not run in accordance with the USFA rules a protest may be submitted specifying the infraction(s). It must be done within THREE DAYS of the qualifying competition; otherwise, no action will be taken by the USFA. Even if a timely protest is submitted, there is no guarantee it will be decided in favor of the one who submitted the protest.
- D. The Division scheduled the qualifying competition on the same weekend as an NAC. (Divisions and Sections try to avoid such conflicts but it may not always be possible.) The athlete must decide in which competition (s)he wishes to compete. An appeal will not be approved in this instance.

The procedures for qualification by appeal are common to all National Championship competitions (except for Elite). They are as follows:

- (1) Appeals may be filed by fencers who were qualifiers (by means of competition or appeal) to that same competition (i.e., épée, foil, or saber) in the prior season or whose competitive record during the current fencing season indicates a strong possibility that they would have qualified had they been able to compete in the qualifying competition but:
 - (a) were unable to compete in local qualifying competitions this season (mere attendance at an out-of-town school during the qualifying competition shall not constitute inability to compete.), OR
 - (b) did compete and had to withdraw because of a disabling injury or illness. The chair of the bout committee at the qualifying event must substantiate any such withdrawals.
- (2) All appeals must be made in writing to the Director of Technical Programs, USFA National Office, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774 and must be

received within three business days following the competition from which the petitioner could have qualified, and in no case later than the entry deadline for the championship.

The appeal must be accompanied by:

- (1) A non-refundable filing fee of \$25.00 made payable to the USFA.
- (2) A statement of specific details as to the dates, reason for absence, and other pertinent facts. Any medical reasons must be substantiated by written confirmation from a physician.
- (3) A summary of the fencer's significant competitive results during the past year. Results in previous National Championships (JO Championships, where applicable) and recent North American Cup competitions should especially be noted.
- (4) A self-addressed, stamped envelope for reply to the appeal.

An appeal is not a substitute for a timely entry. Petitioner must file an entry by the entry deadline. If the appeal is denied, all tournament fees specific to the competition(s) denied will be refunded.

Section 5: Entries and fees

- A. Entry forms for the individual Elite National Championships will be mailed to each eligible competitor. Entry forms for the Elite Team National Championships will be mailed to each USFA member club. Entry forms for the Junior Olympic Championships and Summer National Championships will be published in the National Newsletter. All entry forms will also be accessible via the USFA website and FaxBack.
- B. Every individual or team qualifier who wishes to participate in the National Championship competitions must file an official entry with the USFA National Office by the entry deadline specified on the official entry form.
- C. Every entry must be accompanied by the required fees. All fees are determined by the Board of Directors and shall be announced in the schedule for the Tournament.
- D. Each entrant should include a self-addressed stamped postcard, or a fax return sheet with the entry form for confirmation of receipt of entry. This will be the only acceptable proof of submission of timely entry.
- E. Entries will be checked against the certified list of qualifiers. Determination shall be made of the number eligible to qualify from each division and the number of valid entries actually on hand from the division. Every entrant shall be sent confirmation of his/her acceptance for the Tournament.
- F. Event fees will be refunded if written notification of withdrawal is received by the National Office at least two business days prior to the competition. Registration fees are non-refundable.

Section 6: Assumption of risk

Every fencer engaging in competition, and every person attending a competition in any capacity whatsoever, does so at his or her own risk and peril and neither the organization having jurisdiction over the competition nor the organization furnishing the place for the competition, nor any officer, official, agent or employee of either of the aforementioned organizations, shall be liable in any manner for any damage, injury, or loss suffered by any person as a competitor, official, attendant, or spectator at a fencing competition regardless of whether or not there has been compliance with the rules and regulations prescribed herein, whether or not any official has waived or failed to enforce strict compliance therewith.

Section 7: 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 IV: Running competitions

Section 1: Seeding

A. Individuals

The bout committee shall do the seeded draw in the first round of championship competition.

In all non-World Cup competitions, fencers affiliated with the same club shall be separated as much as possible by applying the rules regarding the separation of fencers of the same nationality as specified by the FIE *Rules for Competition* for the particular format being used, treating different club affiliations as if they were different nationalities. The separation for nationality shall take precedence over separation for club affiliation.

(1) Ranked fencers

Ranked Fencers in a particular weapon are those who have achieved a ranking under the current national point system. For the purpose of seeding competitions, Ranked Fencers shall be subdivided into two classes:

A specified number of Ranked Fencers in each weapon in the current point standings for a particular category shall be entitled to a seeded draw ahead of all other domestic fencers in USFA individual competitions of that category, as follows:

Senior (Open)	Top 32 in Senior points
Junior	Top 24 in Junior points
Cadet	Top 16 in Cadet points
Musketeer	Top 12 in Musketeer points
Squire	Top 8 in Squire points
Page	Top 4 in Page points

Other Ranked Fencers who have points in the relevant category shall be seeded ahead of all other domestic fencers with the same letter classification but behind all fencers with a higher letter classification.

(2) Classified fencers

Fencers holding a classification in the weapon being fenced, but not having a ranking under the current national point system will be seeded according to their letter classification first and, within the same letter classification, by their numeric classification (i.e., the year in which they last won that letter classification).

B. Teams

Seeding for team competitions shall be in accordance with the FIE *Rules for Competition*. The bout committee may assign quality points to a competitor who did not fence in the individual competition in accordance with its best judgment, with the proviso that the competitor cannot be deemed to have placed higher than 13th.

Section 2: Format of competition

A. Pools

Seeding of pool rounds of competitions shall be in accordance with the FIE *Rules for Competition*. In an individual competition, if pools are not of equal size, priority for larger pools must be given to the higher seeds.

B. Direct elimination

Seeding of direct elimination rounds of competitions shall be in accordance with the FIE *Rules for Competition*.

Section 3: Appeal procedures

Section 4: Rating of competitions

Competitions are designated based on the highest classification and the number of such classifications awarded (e.g., an A8 competition awards A classifications to the top 8 finishers).

- (1) **Group A8:** In order to qualify as a Group A8 Competition, a competition must be a USFA Elite National Championship or meet all of the following requirements:
 - A. There must be a minimum of sixty-four participants in the competition of which at least twelve must be Class A, another twelve must be Class B (or higher), and another twelve must be Class C (or higher); AND
 - B. At least four of the top eight finishers must be Class A and at least another four of the top twelve finishers must be Class B (or higher).
- (2) **Group A4:** In order to qualify as a Group A4 Competition, a competition must be a USFA Division I-A National Championship.
- (3) **Group A1:** In order to qualify as a Group A1 Competition, a competition must meet all of the following requirements:
 - A. There must be a minimum of fifteen participants in the competition of which at least six must be Class C (or higher); AND

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- B. At least two of the top eight finishers must be Class A and another two of the top eight finishers must be Class B (or higher).
- (4) **Group B4:** In order to qualify as a Group B4 Competition, a competition must be a US Division II National Individual Championship or be a USFA sponsored Division II North American Cup or meet ALL of the following requirements:
 - A. There must be a minimum of sixty-four participants in the competition of which twenty-four must be Class C (or higher) and twelve must be Class D (or higher); AND
 - B. At least four of the top eight finishers must be Class C (or higher) and at least another four of the top twelve finishers must be Class D (or higher).
- (5) **Group B1:** In order to qualify as a Group B1 Competition, a competition must meet ALL of the following requirements:
 - A. There must be a minimum of fifteen participants in the competition of which at least six must be Class D (or higher); AND
 - B. At least two of the top eight finishers must be Class B (or higher) and another two of the top eight finishers must be Class C (or higher).
- (6) **Group C4:** In order to qualify as a Group C4 Competition, a competition must be a US Division III National Individual Championship or be a USFA sponsored Division III North American Cup or meet ALL of the following requirements:
 - A. There must be a minimum of sixty-four participants in the competition, of which twenty-four must be Class D (or higher) and twelve must be Class E (or higher); AND
 - B. At least four of the top eight finishers must be Class D (or higher) and at least another four of the top twelve finishers must be Class E (or higher).
- (7) **Group C1:** In order to qualify as a Group C1 Competition, a competition must meet EITHER one of the following requirements:
 - A. There must be a minimum of fifteen participants in the competition of which six must be Class E (or higher) and at least two of the top eight finishers must be Class C (or higher) and another two of the top eight finishers must be Class D (or higher); OR
 - B. There must be a minimum of fifteen participants in the competition of which eight must be Class E (or higher) and at least four of the top eight finishers must be Class D (or higher).
- (8) **Group D1:** In order to qualify as a Group D1 Competition, there must be a minimum of fifteen participants.

- (9) **Group E1:** In order to qualify as a Group E1 Competition, there must be a minimum of six participants.
- (10) In International and National competitions sponsored by the USFA, internationally ranked fencers may be considered as Class A in evaluating the field.
- (11) Sectional Age Group Championships and National Age Group competitions may be rated if they meet the criteria above. Other Age Group competitions are not rated.
- (12) Competitions may be restricted to fencers under or over a certain age, to Unclassified fencers or novices (relatively inexperienced fencers), or to other categories of fencers provided that, if some fencers are barred from such competitions, an appropriate description of the basis of eligibility of contestants must be announced in the schedule. Such competitions may not be rated unless such restriction is based solely upon fencers' classifications or division or section membership.
- (13) Academic competitions (as described in Chapter II:Section 3:H above) may not be rated.
- (14) Every division is authorized to schedule competitions open to both men and women. For the purpose of seeding and rating such competitions, men's and women's ratings will be considered to be equivalent.

Section 5: Awarding classifications

For the purpose of providing reasonable equality of strength in the seeding of competitions, fencers are classified nationally on the basis of competitive experience and achievement into the following classifications: Class A (highest), Class B, Class C, Class D, Class E, and Class U (Unclassified, lowest). Within each of these major classifications (with the exception of Class U), the fencers are classified based upon the calendar year in which the major classification was last achieved. This minor classification shall be indicated by a two digit number immediately following the major classification (e.g., "A85" would be the classification of a fencer who achieved an "A" classification in 1985). The minor classifications shall be used to rank the fencers within the major classifications so that, for example, a "C86" shall be considered to be ranked higher than a "C85" but lower than all "B" fencers.

The following rules govern the classification of fencers:

- (1) A fencer is classified as Class "A":
 - (a) by placing in the top eight of an individual competition rated as Group A8 (see Chapter IV:Section 4: above); OR
 - (b) by placing in the top four of an individual competition rated as Group A4; OR
 - (c) by winning an individual competition rated as Group A1; OR

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- (d) by attaining distinction in international competition which in the judgment of the Board of Directors is equivalent to that involved in the preceding clauses of this paragraph and the awarding of the classification may be retroactive.
- (2) A fencer is classified as Class “B”:
 - (a) by placing ninth through sixteenth in an individual competition rated as Group A8 (see Chapter IV:Section 4: above); OR
 - (b) by placing fifth through eighth in an individual competition rated as Group A4;
OR

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 - (c) by placing second or third in an individual competition rated as Group A1; OR
 - (d) by placing first through fourth in an individual competition rated as Group B4;
OR
 - (e) by winning an individual competition rated as Group B1; OR
 - (f) by fencing in the final round of four as a member of a team that wins a US National Team Championship; OR
 - (g) by attaining distinction in international competition which in the judgment of the Board of Directors is equivalent to that involved in the preceding clauses of this paragraph and the awarding of the classification may be retroactive.
- (3) A fencer is classified as Class “C”:
 - (a) by placing seventeenth through twenty-fourth in an individual competition rated as Group A8 (see Chapter IV:Section 4: above); OR
 - (b) by placing ninth through sixteenth in an individual competition rated as Group A4; OR

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 - (c) by placing fourth through sixth in an individual competition rated as Group A1;
OR
 - (d) by placing fifth through eighth in an individual competition rated as Group B4;
OR
 - (e) by placing second or third in an individual competition rated as Group B1; OR
 - (f) by placing first through fourth in an individual competition rated as Group C4;
OR
 - (g) by winning an individual competition rated as Group C1; OR
 - (h) by fencing in the final round of four as a member of a team that places second or third in a US National Team Championship
- (4) A fencer is classified as Class “D”:

- (a) by placing twenty-fifth through thirty-sixth in an individual competition rated as Group A8 (see Chapter IV:Section 4: above); OR
- (b) by placing seventeenth through twenty-fourth in an individual competition rated as Group A4; OR

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- (c) by placing seventh through ninth in an individual competition rated as Group A1; OR
- (d) by placing ninth through sixteenth in an individual competition rated as Group B4; OR
- (e) by placing fourth through sixth in an individual competition rated as Group B1; OR
- (f) by placing fifth through eighth in an individual competition rated as Group C4; OR
- (g) by placing second or third in an individual competition rated as Group C1; OR
- (h) by winning an individual competition rated as Group D1

(5) A fencer is classified as Class “E”:

- (a) by placing thirty-seventh through fifty-second in an individual competition rated as Group A8 (see Chapter IV:Section 4: above); OR
- (b) by placing twenty-fifth through thirty-second in an individual competition rated as Group A4; OR

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- (c) by placing seventeenth through thirty-second in an individual competition rated as Group B4; OR
- (d) by placing seventh through ninth in an individual competition rated as Group B1; OR
- (e) by placing ninth through sixteenth in an individual competition rated as Group C4; OR
- (f) by placing fourth through sixth in an individual competition rated as Group C1; OR
- (g) by placing second or third in an individual competition rated as Group D1; OR
- (h) by winning an individual competition rated as Group E1

(6) If a competition qualifies as more than one group (i.e., Group A1 and Group B4), each fencer will earn the higher classification to which that fencer is entitled. For example, if a competition qualifies as Group A1 and as Group B4, the winner earns an “A”, as the Group A1 award is higher for that place; the fencer who finishes eighth earns a “C”, as the Group B4 award is higher for that place.

Section 6: Administration of classifications

- (1) Classifications must be certified in writing to the National Office by the organizer of the competition in which said classification was earned. Every member of the USFA is personally responsible for ascertaining his or her own classification in each weapon. To avoid questions with respect to individual fencers, each division, through its executive committee or other designated officer or committee, should certify all classification changes (both major and minor) to the National Office. Changes should be reported within two weeks. Failure to report changes in a timely fashion may affect athletes competing in a national competition.

- (2) Classifications become official when verified at the National Office.

- (3) A fencer drops one level of major classification if that fencer fails, during a period of four years, to re-achieve the results necessary to earn that major classification. All such reclassifications will take effect at the beginning of the fencing season.

For example, a fencer classified as “B85” was reclassified as “C89” at the start of the 1989-1990 fencing season. The minor classification changes at the same time to indicate that the new classification was achieved in the calendar year 1989. A fencer who loses an “E” classification as a result of the application of this rule becomes Unclassified.

- (4) A fencer remains unclassified as long as he or she does not qualify for one of the other classifications under the foregoing rules.
- (5) The classification of a fencer in one weapon has no effect upon his or her classification in another weapon and is not affected by his or her winning or competing in individual three-weapon competitions, invitational meets, intercollegiate competitions, or unofficial club and inter-club competitions.
- (6) Classifications can be earned only in regularly scheduled competitions run by the USFA, its sections, or its divisions. Classifications cannot be awarded if adequate notice of the competition has not been given to the members of the organizing body via such means as a published schedule, newsletter, or notices sent to all USFA clubs within the division or section. Classifications can be earned in competitions sanctioned by a body of the USFA but not run by that body (e.g., State Games) only after the sanctioning body has determined that the competition has been run in such a manner as to justify the awarding of classifications.

Chapter V: Amateurism

Section 1: Constitutional definition

The USFA Bylaws (see Article VII, Section 11) contain the following definition:

Any fencer is an amateur who does not practice fencing except for his own pleasure, for relaxation or for his health and without ever gaining any profit from it.

The bylaws also give the Board of Directors the exclusive power to enact, interpret, and apply the rules on amateurism. The Board is guided in its interpretations and decisions by its own precedents and those of the FIE, including the FIE statutes on “amateurism” set forth in Appendix C, as the same may be modified from time to time by the FIE.

Section 2: Precedents in the United States

Under the precedents of the USFA there is no objection to the receipt of compensation by an amateur fencer for writing, editing, or publishing news reports, articles, magazines, or books on fencing; or for weapon or equipment repair, or manufacture; the guiding principle in these cases being that the fencer is capitalizing upon his or her skill as an author, designer, speaker, or electrical technician, rather than upon his or her skill or reputation as a fencer. Compensation received as an official at collegiate fencing meets must not substantially exceed actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection therewith and must conform to a basic plan of general application that has been approved by the Board of Directors. The policies of the USFA with respect to fencing exhibitions are stated in a separate portion of this chapter.

Section 3: International precedents

It is the policy of the USFA to be as liberal as possible within the limitations of the FIE Statutes.

Section 4: Status of professionals in other sports

The USFA Bylaws no longer require that all persons who are professionals in other sports be automatically denied amateur status in fencing. A distinction is made between professional competitors and trainers in any sport, who are denied amateur status in fencing; and professional teachers of other sports, who are eligible for amateur status in fencing as long as they are not professional teachers of fencing. However, such persons are not eligible to compete in competitions held under the auspices of the FIE or The Olympic or Pan-American games.

Section 5: Participation in exhibitions

A. Requirement Of Official Permission

No amateur member of the USFA may participate in an exhibition without permission from the Board of Directors or the divisional executive committee, or an authorized representative of these governing bodies. Violation of this rule may result in severe disciplinary penalties.

B. Nature Of The Exhibition

It is the policy of the USFA that any fencing exhibition must be conducted in a manner which will properly publicize the sport. No exhibition shall be authorized under conditions that place fencing in an unfavorable light.

Exhibitions of modern fencing shall conform to the rules of the USFA. The wearing of masks is required.

Exhibitions of historical swordplay in period costume are encouraged and participation in special comedy bouts within the limits of good taste is permitted.

C. Television Programs

Participation of an amateur fencer in television programs is strictly limited to that portion of the telecast devoted to entertainment. Appearance in any portion devoted to an advertising message is prohibited. If identified as a fencer on the program, he or she may donate the fees (if any) involved in the appearance to the USFA or the USOC to preserve amateur status.

D. Financial Limitations

An amateur may receive reimbursement of his or her actual out-of-pocket expenses for travel and subsistence, and may accept a medal or prize of nominal value, in connection with an occasional fencing exhibition. He or she may not receive any other remuneration, and he or she may not devote any substantial and regular portion of his or her time to giving exhibitions for which he or she receives reimbursement of expenses and prizes.

Section 6: Administration of amateurism

Each case in which there has been an alleged violation of the letter or spirit of the Eligibility Rules will be reviewed on its merits by the Board of Directors. When a violation is found to exist, the Board may terminate or suspend the amateur status of the violator, depending on the seriousness of the offense. Insofar as the action of the Board is disciplinary in character, it must be preceded by notice to the alleged violator and a hearing on the issue, if requested by the alleged violator.

Appendix A. Extract from the rules of the IOC

(International Olympic Committee)

IV. THE OLYMPIC GAMES

1. Participation in the Olympic Games

26. ELIGIBILITY CODE

To be eligible for participation in the Olympic Games, a competitor must:

observe and abide by the Rules of the IOC and in addition the rules of his or her IF, as approved by the IOC, even if the federation's rules are more strict than those of the IOC;

not have received any financial rewards or material benefit in connection with his or her sports participation, except as permitted in the bylaws to this rule.

Appendix B. Extract from the bylaws of the IOC

- A. Each IF is responsible for the wording of the eligibility code relating to its sport, which must be approved by the Executive Board in the name of the IOC.
- B. The observation of Rule 26 and of the eligibility codes of IFs and NOCs involved. The Eligibility Commission of the IOC will ensure the application of these provisions.
- C. All cases of infringement of Rule 26 of the IOC and of the eligibility codes of IFs shall be communicated by the respective IF or NOC to the IOC to be taken in consideration by its eligibility commission. In accordance with Rule 23 and its bylaw, the accused competitor may request to be heard by the Executive Board whose decision will be final.

GUIDELINES TO ELIGIBILITY CODE FOR THE IFs

- A. The following regulations are based on the principle that an athlete's health must not suffer nor must he or she be placed at a social or material disadvantage as a result of his or her preparation for and participation in the Olympic Games and international sports competitions. In accordance with Rule 26, the IOC, the IFs, the NOCs, and the national federations will assume responsibility for the protection and support of athletes;
- B. All competitors, men or women, who conform to the criteria set out in Rule 26, may participate in the Olympic Games, except those who have:
 - 1. been registered as professional athletes or professional coaches in any sport;
 - 2. signed a contract as a professional athlete or professional coach in any sport before the official closing of the Olympic Games;
 - 3. accepted without the knowledge of their IF, National Federation or NOC, material advantages for their preparation or participation in sports competition.
 - 4. allowed their person, name, picture, or sports performances to be used for advertising, except when their IF, NOC, or National Federation has entered into a contract for sponsorship or equipment. All payment must be made to the IF, NOC, or National Federation concerned, and not to the athlete;
 - 5. carried advertising material on their person or clothing in the Olympic Games and Games under the patronage of the IOC, other than trademarks on technical equipment or clothing as agreed by the IOC with the IFs;
 - 6. in the practice of sport and in the opinion of the IOC, manifestly contravened the spirit of fair play in the exercise of sport, particularly by the use of doping or violence.

Appendix C. FIE statutes on “amateurism”

(1990 Edition)

AMATEURISM

§1. General Rules

- 92** Any fencer is an amateur who does not practice fencing except for his own pleasure, for relaxation or for his health and without ever gaining any profit from it.

§2. Applications

- 93** Rules passed by the International Olympic Committee for the administration of the Olympic Games, FIE competitions and international or national competitions.

1) In order to be admitted to participate in all of the above competitions a fencer must:

- a) observe and respect the rules of the IOC as well as the FIE Statutes and Rules as approved by the IOC even if the rules of the FIE are more stringent than those of the IOC. (These are enumerated below in 3.);
- b) not have received any financial advantage nor obtained any material advantage for the practice of the sport except what is authorized in paragraphs 2b, c and d below, which provide that a fencer must not put his health in danger, nor suffer any material social disadvantage by his preparation or participation in national, international or Olympic competition, and that the FIE must protect and help the fencers.

2) In consequence, a fencer may:

- a) be a physical education teacher at a basic level;
- b) accept, during periods of preparation and during competitions themselves, aid through an intermediary or under the control of his national Olympic Committee or federation for the costs of food and lodging; transportation costs; pocket money covering incidental costs; the costs of insurance covering accidents, illnesses, infirmity and personal assets; the purchase of sports clothes and personal equipment; the costs of medical care and physiotherapy; and the payment of authorized coaches.

In case of need, compensation may be authorized by his national Olympic Committee or federation to cover the lack of earnings resulting from his absences from work or the impossibility of exercising his profession, because of his preparation or participation in the Olympic Games or in international athletic competition. In no case shall the sums paid under these conditions exceed the amount he would have earned at his work

during the same period. The sum representing this compensation will be paid with the agreement of the national federations or the national Olympic Committees and as they intend.

- c) accept prizes in kind won from competitions within the limits of the rules fixed by the FIE (see 3 “m”);
- d) accept money for academic or technical teaching.

3) A fencer must not:

- a) be or have been a professional athlete or professional coach in any sport whatsoever;
- b) have signed any contract as a professional athlete or coach before the official closing of the Olympic Games or an official competition of the FIE;
- c) have permitted that his person, his name, his likeness or his athletic performances be exploited as a means of publicity except if the FIE, his national Olympic Committee, his national federation, or his club with the approval of his national federation has signed a sponsorship or equipment contract.

In this last case, all payments must be made to the FIE, the national Olympic Committee, the national federation or the interested club, and not to the fencer.

- d) wear on his clothes or on himself any advertising logo other than manufacturer's marks on equipment as authorized by the IOC or the FIE;
- e) accept without the knowledge of his national federation or Olympic Committee, material or financial advantage for his preparation or participation in an athletic competition;
- f) have manifestly acted against the decisions of the IOC or the FIE as regards Fair Play in the practice of the sport (notably by doping, violence, or incorrect attitudes towards opponents or officials);
- g) act against medical rules dealt with in paragraph 4 below;
- h) make bets on official competitions in which he participates;
- i) participate in a competition under an assumed name without the authorization of his own national federation;
- j) accept remuneration in exchange for his affiliation with a club or a salle d'armes or for remaining a member thereof;
- k) accept remuneration for using articles provided by a specialized manufacturer;

- l) a fencer may participate in mixed competitions (with or against professionals) such as are authorized by his national classification; he may not participate in any competitions exclusively for professionals;
- m) accept from competitions cash prizes. Any cash prizes realized in such a competition will be given to the national federation by the organizing committee under penalty of the disqualification of a fencer who accepts his prize directly (Cf. Article 85). The national federation concerned is obligated to see to it that prizes of art objects or practical items of equal value to the total amount of the prize are in fact delivered to the fencer.
- n) sell or pawn prizes in kind won in competitions.

Appendix D. Sections and divisions of the USFA

The Sections of the USFA and their comprising Divisions as of the 1999-2000 season are:

Great Lakes Section

Columbus [OH], Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Northern Ohio, Southern Indiana, Southwest Ohio.

Metropolitan Section

Metropolitan [NYC].

Mid Atlantic Section

Capitol [DC], Central Pennsylvania, Harrisburg [PA], Maryland, New Jersey, Philadelphia [PA], South Jersey, Western Pennsylvania.

Midwest Section

Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, St. Louis [MO], Wisconsin.

North Atlantic Section

Connecticut, Hudson [NY]-Berkshire [MA], Long Island [NY], New England [Eastern MA & RI], Northeast [NH, VT, & ME], Westchester-Rockland [NY], Western New York.

Pacific Coast Section

Central California, Hawaii, Mountain-Valley [CA], Nevada, North Coast [CA], Northern California, Orange Coast [CA], San Bernardino [CA], San Diego [CA], Southern California.

Pacific Northwest Section

Alaska, Inland Empire [Eastern WA, Northern ID & MT], Oregon, Utah-Southern Idaho, Western Washington.

Rocky Mountain Section

Arizona, Border Texas, Colorado, Kansas, Plains Texas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Wyoming.

Southeast Section

Alabama, Central Florida, Georgia, Gateway Florida, Gold Coast Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia.

Southwest Section

Ark-La-Miss [AR, LA, & MS], Gulf Coast Texas, Louisiana, North Texas, Oklahoma, South Texas.

National Division

Those residing in a non-designated geographical area, especially outside the United States.

Appendix E. Guidelines for Forming New Divisions

In accordance with Article XIV Section 1 of the Association By-Laws, the Board of Directors established the following Guidelines to inform its decisions regarding the establishment of new divisions.

- (1) The proposed division should encompass a minimum of two USFA member clubs.
- (2) These clubs must have been member clubs of the USFA for at least three years.
- (3) The two clubs must each have a minimum of 15 USFA 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%.
- (5) A complete set of By-Laws for the proposed division must be included with the petition to the Board.
- (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.
- (7) The application must include, along with the petition itself and the proposed By-Laws, a statement that Guidelines (1), (2), and (3) above are met, or a rationale as to why they should be waived.

The application should be sent to the Secretary of the Association, but a full copy, including all enclosures, should be sent to both the current division and section chairs for comment. The Executive Committee of the USFA will review the application and any comments made by the chairs and, if it desires more information, may refer the application to other committees of the USFA 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 Board of Directors meeting with its recommendation for approval or disapproval.

Appendix F. Officers of the USFA

The office of President has been held successively by Graeme M. Hammond, Henry Breckinridge, F. Barnard O'Connor, Leon M. Schoonmaker, Harold Van Buskirk, John R. Huffman, Dernell Every, Miguel de Capriles, Jose de Capriles, Donald S. Thompson, Paul T. Makler, Norman Lewis, Alan Miles Ruben, Stephen B. Sobel, Irwin F. Bernstein, Emily B. Johnson, Michel A. Mamlouk, Lewis W. Siegel, Samuel D. Cheris, Michel A. Mamlouk, Stephen B. Sobel, Donald W. Alperstein, and Stacey Johnson.

The office of Secretary has been held successively by W. Scott O'Connor (1891-1925), F. Barnard O'Connor, Leon M. Schoonmaker, J. Howard Hanway, Dernell Every, John R. Huffman, Ervin S. Acel, Warren A. Dow, Dernell Every, Ralph M. Goldstein, Allan S. Kwartler, Anthony J. Orsi, William J. Latzko, Irwin F. Bernstein, Eleanor Turney, Fred G. Rhodes, John Higgs-Coulthard, Paul Soter, Ann McBain Ezzell, Andy R. Gearhart, Michael E. Sullivan, and Donald Anthony.

The office of Treasurer was discharged by the Secretary prior to 1936. Since then the Treasurers have been J. Howard Hanway, George Cochrane, Robert S. Driscoll, Rudolph Ozol, Leo Sobel, Peter Tishman, Howard Goodman, William Latzko, Samuel D. Cheris, Elvira Orly, Jennings Smith, Robert J. Prifrel, and Michael E. Sullivan.

The office of Foreign Secretary was an elective position from 1951 to 1968, when it was discontinued. This office was held successively by Tracy Jaeckel, John Grombach, Ralph Goldstein, Norman Lewis and George Worth. It was reinstated as an appointed position effective September 1, 1973. Since reinstatement, the office has been held by Chaba Pallaghy, Michel Mamlouk, Joseph Byrnes, Samuel D. Cheris and Charles Higgs-Coulthard. The office was discontinued again in 1994.

In 1968, the new office of Executive Vice-President was authorized. This office was been held successively by Norman Lewis, William Goering, Micki Conte, Marius Valsamis, Carl Borack and George Masin.

In 1973, the new offices of two National Vice-Presidents were authorized. The one office has been held successively by Emily Johnson, Mary Huddleson, Colleen Olney and Gerrie Baumgart. The other office has been held successively by Chaba Pallaghy, Manny Forrest, Charles Thompson, Samuel D. Cheris, George Masin, Paul Soter and Jack Tichacek.

In 1992, the offices of the Executive Vice-President and the two National Vice-Presidents were changed to three Vice-Presidents. These offices have been held by William Goering, Stacey Johnson, Michael Marx, Edwin K. Hurst, Sherry Posthumus, Ralph A. Zimmerman, and Barbara Lynch.

Appendix G. Honorary Awards

The following individuals have been awarded the Professional Certificate of Merit:

The following individuals have been awarded Honorary membership in the USFA (includes those awarded Honorary membership in the AFLA):

The following individuals have been inducted into the United States Fencing Hall of Fame:

Appendix H. Key Dates for Championship Events

ALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

COMPETITION	DEADLINE
Divisional qualifying forms due at National Office	Four weeks before first day of Championships
Entry forms due at National Office	Deadline published with national schedule
Appeal forms due at National Office	Three business days after the competition from which the fencer could have qualified
Withdrawal for refund of entry fees	Ten days before first day of Championships

ELITE CHAMPIONSHIPS

COMPETITION	DEADLINE
Divisional team qualifying competitions	Five weeks before first day of Elite Championships

SUMMER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

COMPETITION	DEADLINE
Divisional qualifying competitions	Three weeks before Sectional Championships
Sectional Championships	Three weeks before first day of Nationals
Sectional qualifying forms due at National Office	Three business days after Sectional Championships

JUNIOR OLYMPIC FENCING CHAMPIONSHIPS

COMPETITION	DEADLINE
Divisional qualifying competitions	Five weeks before first day of Junior Olympics

Appendix I. Qualification Paths to National Events

FOR JUNIOR OLYMPIC FENCING CHAMPIONSHIPS

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT	NATIONAL POINT STANDINGS			DIVISION QUALIFYING COMPETITION	
	JUNIOR POINTS	CADET POINTS	MUSK. POINTS	JUNIOR U-20	CADET U-17
JUNIOR COMPETITIONS	All as of Jan 1	Top 16 on Jan 1		Top 30%	
CADET COMPETITIONS		All as of Jan 1	Top 8 on Jan 1		Top 30%

AGE-RESTRICTED FOR SUMMER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT	NATIONAL POINT STANDINGS			SECTION CHAMPS	DIVISION QUALIFYING COMPETITION		OPEN – NO QUALIFYING EVENT REQUIRED
	JUNIOR POINTS	CADET POINTS	MUSKETEER POINTS	JUNIOR	CADET	MUSKET.	
JUNIOR COMPETITIONS	All* as of entry deadline	Top 16 as of entry deadline		Top 30%			
CADET COMPETITIONS		All* as of entry deadline	Top 8 as of entry deadline		Top 30%		
MUSKETEER COMPETITIONS			All as of last domestic point event prior to entry deadline			Top 30%	
SQUIRE COMPETITIONS							All
PAGE COMPETITIONS							All

SENIOR LEVEL FOR ELITE & SUMMER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT	NATIONAL POINT STANDINGS			PREVIOUS SUMMER NATLS			SECTION CHMPS		DIVISION 'S DIVISION II QUALIFYING	MODERN PENTATHLON
	SENIOR POINTS	JUNIOR POINTS	CADET POINTS	DIVISION I-A	DIVISION II	DIVISION III	DIVISION I-A	JUNIOR		
ELITE COMPETITIONS	All as of entry deadline	Top 8 as of entry deadline	Top 4 as of entry deadline	Top 8	Top 4					Three qualifiers (épée only)
DIVISION I-A COMPETITIONS				Top 8	Top 4	Top 2	Top 10	Champion		
DIVISION II COMPETITIONS						Top 4	Top 6 who don't otherwise qualify	All "C" and lower	Top 30%	
DIVISION III COMPETITIONS							All "D" and lower		All "D" and lower	
VETERAN COMPETITIONS							All		All	

Appendix J. Classification Reference Chart

COMPETITION	MINIMUM COMPETITORS	RATED FENCERS REQUIRED	RATED FENCERS MUST FINISH	CLASSIFICATIONS AWARDED
GROUP E1	6	NONE	N/A	1 ® E
GROUP D1	15	NONE	N/A	1 ® D 2-3 ® E
GROUP C1	15	2 C's & 2 D's & 2 E's (or higher)	2 C's & 2 D's (or higher) in top 8	1 ® C 2-3 ® D 4-6 ® E
GROUP C1	15	4 D's & 4 E's (or higher)	4 D's (or higher) in top 8	1 ® C 2-3 ® D 4-6 ® E
GROUP C4	64	24 D's & 12 E's (or higher)	4 D's in top 8 & 4 E's (or higher) in top 12	1-4 ® C 5-8 ® D 9-16 ® E
GROUP B1	15	2 B's & 2 C's & 2 D's (or higher)	2 B's & 2 C's (or higher) in top 8	1 ® B 2-3 ® C 4-6 ® D 7-9 ® E
GROUP B4	64	24 C's & 12 D's (or higher)	4 C's in top 8 & 4 D's (or higher) in top 12	1-4 ® B 5-8 ® C 9-16 ® D 17-32 ® E
GROUP A1	15	2 A's & 2 B's & 2 C's (or higher)	2 A's & 2 B's (or higher) in top 8	1 ® A 2-3 ® B 4-6 ® C 7-9 ® D
GROUP A4	Division I-A Only	NONE	N/A	1-4 ® A 5-8 ® B 9-16 ® C 17-24 ® D 25-32 ® E
GROUP A8	64	12 A's & 12 B's & 12 C's (or higher)	4 A's in top 8 & 4 B's (or higher) in top 12	1-8 ® A 9-16 ® B 17-24 ® C 25-36 ® D 37-52 ® E

Elite National Championships are always Group A8 competitions.
 Division I-A National Championships are always at least Group A4 competitions.
 Division II NAC Tournaments are always at least Group B4 competitions.
 Division II National Championships are always at least Group B4 competitions.
 Division III NAC Tournaments are always at least Group C4 competitions.
 Division III National Championships are always at least Group C4 competitions.

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