

FENCING RULES

1987 Edition

United States Fencing Association, Inc.



©United States Fencing Association, Inc. 1988

FOREWORD

The English text of the international rules presented here is published by the United States Fencing Association, Inc., by arrangement with the Amateur Fencing Association of Great Britain. This American edition was adapted from the 1986 British edition, which was translated from the French, edited and produced by Steve Higginson, Peter Jacobs and James Noel and published by the Amateur Fencing Association.

Four appendices are included with this 1987 edition. The Fencers' Publicity Code is now part of the FIE Rules for Competitions and as such is referenced in the Index. The NCAA Rules for Men's Intercollegiate Fencing, a list of US National Individual Fencing Champions and a Penalty Reference Chart are provided for the information of US fencers and officials.

The publication in loose-leaf format with year-dating at the bottom of each page is intended to simplify the incorporation of future changes to the rules. Dated replacement pages will be published as necessary in the USFA National Newsletter, along with a master list so that users of the book can ensure that it is up to date.

The USFA, Inc. (founded as the Amateur Fencers League of America in 1891) is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization primarily engaged in increasing participation in the sport of fencing. Membership in the USFA, in an appropriate category, is open to anyone who has an interest in fencing. The USFA is the official governing body for amateur fencing activities in the United States, and is so recognized by the United States Olympic Committee and the International Fencing Federation (FIE). Accordingly, the authority to enact, amend, and repeal the rules governing amateur fencing in the United States rests solely with the Board of Directors of the USFA. As a matter of policy, the USFA normally follows the technical rules enacted for the sport by the FIE, with occasional minor exceptions that are duly announced. The rules for fencing, as set forth in this book, therefore apply to all USFA championships and nationally-rated competitions, and, unless exceptions have been announced in advance by the appropriate authorities, apply also to all events scheduled by any Section or Division of the USFA, or held under USFA auspices.

United States Fencing Association, Inc.
1750 East Boulder Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774

TEL: 719/578-4511 TELEX: 45-2424 CABLE: AMOLYMPIC-CSP

PREFACE

This American edition incorporates the most recent FIE rules changes, substituting terms and spellings more commonly used in American fencing for their British counterparts. Some changes of form have been made to increase the clarity of the text, without altering the original intent. The Table of Contents and Index have been extensively revised in an attempt to improve their usefulness.

Where appropriate, the text has been changed to agree with the current system of awarding touches "for" (as opposed to "against") a fencer. The term "negative touch" is used to indicate the penalty resulting from the repetition of an offense incurring a MINOR warning.

This project was carried out under the auspices of the USFA Fencing Officials Commission, Ralph A. Zimmerman, Chair. George Kolombatovich coordinated the efforts of the contributors and served as a resource on the most recent rules changes. Joseph Byrnes compared the text with the original French to ensure its accuracy. Doug Varney was responsible for typesetting, page layout and final copy preparation. Mary Frye spent many hours proofreading the text and keeping the editor in line.

For those who are interested in such things: The text was originally typed on an Atari 800XL computer using The Writer's Tool word processor from Optimized Systems Software, Inc. After several false starts, the text was converted to ASCII format, with formatting commands compatible with WordStar for the IBM PC. The ASCII text was transmitted via modem from Detroit to Manhattan, Kansas, where it was received on an IBM PC. It was then ported via null modem to an Apple MacIntosh and typeset using PageMaker from Aldus. The final copy was prepared on an Apple Laserwriter printer.

Ann McBain Ezzell
Editor
Birmingham, Michigan
January 1988

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

Cf. (followed by a number)	= see article number
f. (after a number)	= and the following article
ff (after a number)	= and the following articles

Please note the difference between

“327f.” - Articles 327 and 328

and

“327f” - section (f) of Article 327

A single digit enclosed in parentheses refers to a note, found at the end of each part: (1).

NUMBERING OF ARTICLES

The articles are numbered without continuity from one part to the next. The number of each part of the Rules corresponds to the first digit of each article it contains.

Part I	(GENERAL RULES)	begins at Article 1.
Part II	(FOIL)	begins at Article 201.
Part III	(EPEE)	begins at Article 301.
Part IV	(SABRE)	begins at Article 401.
Part V	(ORGANIZATION)	begins at Article 501.
Part VI	(DISCIPLINARY RULES)	begins at Article 601.
Part VII	(SCORING EQUIPMENT)	begins at Article 701.

RULES FOR COMPETITIONS

Table of Contents

PART ONE: GENERAL RULES AND RULES APPLICABLE TO ALL THREE WEAPONS

	Article
CHAPTER I - HISTORICAL NOTES	
CHAPTER II - APPLICATION OF THE RULES	
1. Obligatory use of the rules	1
2. Exceptions to the rules	2
CHAPTER III - GLOSSARY	
IIIA - PRESIDENT	3
IIIB - COMPETITIONS	
1. Assaults and bouts	4
2. Match	5
3. Competition	6
4. Championship	7
5. Tournament	8
IIIC - EXPLANATION OF SOME TECHNICAL TERMS COMMONLY USED IN THE JUDGING OF FENCING	
1. Fencing time	9
2. Offensive and defensive actions	10
(a) The attack or riposte	11
(b) The riposte	
3. Counter-attacks	12
(a) The stop hit	
(b) The stop hit made with opposition	
(c) The stop hit made within a period of fencing time	
4. Varieties of offensive actions	13
(a) The remise	
(b) The redoublement	
(c) The reprise of the attack	
(d) Countertime	
CHAPTER IV - THE FIELD OF PLAY	14

CHAPTER V - THE FENCERS' EQUIPMENT

(Weapons - Equipment - Clothing)

1. Responsibility of fencers	16
2. Inspection of fencers' equipment	17
(a) Presentation of equipment for inspection	
(b) Organization of the Inspection Office	18
(c) Inspection equipment and staff	20
3. Nonregulation equipment	21
(a) If there has been an official equipment inspection before the event	
(b) If no preliminary inspection has taken place	
(c) General	
(d) Note	
4. Specifications common to all weapons	22
(a) General description	23
(b) Dimensions	24
(c) The hilt	25
(d) The guard	26
(e) Buttons and points	
5. Equipment and clothing - general condition	27

CHAPTER VI - THE ASSAULT

1. Method of fencing	28
2. Correctness of the touch	29
3. Method of holding the weapon	30
4. Putting on guard	31
5. Beginning, stopping and restarting the bout	32
6. Fencing at close quarters	33
7. Corps à corps	34
8. Displacing the target and passing the opponent	35
9. Ground gained or lost	36
10. Crossing the limits of the strip	
(a) Stopping the bout	38
(b) Rear limits and warning lines	39
(c) Lateral boundaries	43
(d) Leaving the strip accidentally	44
11. Duration of the bout	45
12. Accidents - withdrawal of a competitor	50

CHAPTER VII - THE DIRECTION OF A BOUT AND THE JUDGING OF TOUCHES

VIIA - OFFICIALS

1. President	53
2. The jury, judges and floor judges	54
3. Auxiliary personnel	

(1) Scorers and timekeepers	59
(2) Specialist personnel	60
(a) A superintendent of the apparatus	
(b) One or more experts	
(c) The technicians	
VIIIB - JUDGING BY A JURY	
1. The duties of the President	61
2. Positions occupied by the judges	62
3. Method of judging	
(a) Procedure	63
(b) Materiality of the touch	68
(c) Validity or priority of the touch	70
VIIIC - JUDGING WITH A SCORING MACHINE	
1. Direction of the bout	71
2. Method of judging	
(a) Materiality of the touch	72
(b) Validity or priority of the touch	75

PART TWO: FOIL

CHAPTER I - HISTORICAL NOTES

CHAPTER II - FIELD OF PLAY 201

CHAPTER III - FOIL EQUIPMENT (Weapons - Equipment - Clothing)

IIIA - WEAPONS

1. General specifications for foils	
(a) Weight	205
(b) Length	206
(c) The blade	207
(d) The guard	208
(e) The martingale	209
(f) Buttons and points	210
2. Specifications for the electric foil	211
(a) The tip	
(b) Insulation	

IIIB - EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

1. General specifications for all foil equipment	
(a) The jacket	212
(b) The glove	213

(c) The mask	214
(d) Specifications for clothing for women's foil	215
2. Specifications for clothing and equipment required to fence with the electrical scoring apparatus	
(a) Metallic vest	216
(b) Body cord and attachment plugs	217
(c) Mask	218

CHAPTER IV - THE CONVENTIONS OF FOIL FENCING

IVA - METHOD OF MAKING A TOUCH	219
IVB - TARGET	
1. Limitation of the target	220
2. The possible extension of the valid target	222
3. Touches off the target	223
IVC - CORPS A CORPS AND FLECHE ATTACKS	224
IVD - NUMBER OF TOUCHES - DURATION OF A BOUT	225
IVE - JUDGING OF TOUCHES IN FOIL	227
IVE 1 - MATERIALITY OF THE TOUCH	
1. With a jury	
2. With an electrical scoring apparatus	228
IVE 2 - VALIDITY OR PRIORITY OF THE TOUCH	
1. Preface	232
2. Observations of the fencing phrase	233
3. Judging of touches	237

PART THREE: EPEE

CHAPTER I - HISTORICAL NOTES

CHAPTER II - FIELD OF PLAY 301

CHAPTER III - EPEE EQUIPMENT (Weapons - Equipment - Clothing)

IIIA - WEAPONS

1. General specifications for épées	
(a) Weight	306