

NEW USFA FENCING RULES – AS OF AUGUST 1, 2004

The United States Fencing Association (USFA) Board of Directors approved the following rules changes at their meeting on July 5, 2004. These changes, except where specifically modified for the USFA, are the same as those adopted by the Fédération Internationale d'Esgrime (FIE).

These changes to the rules are especially important as they change the penalty for committing a number of faults, as well as what will happen if a fencer or team does not report to the assigned strip on time. Remember the first line in the Rules Book, "Ignorance of the Rules is no Excuse." [George Kolombatovich, FOC & FIE Arbitrage]

TECHNICAL RULES

Article t.20

In foil and saber, it is forbidden for a fencer to cause corps à corps (even without brutality or violence).

Should such an offence occur, the Referee will penalize the fencer at fault as specified in Articles t.114, t.116, t.120 and any touch scored by the fencer at fault is annulled.

Explanation: Previously, if you committed this fault you would receive a warning, but any touch scored would be allowed. Now, if you commit this fault, you receive a warning, and the touch is annulled.

Article t.22

In foil and sabre, it is forbidden to protect the target area or to substitute another part of the body for the target area, either by covering or by an abnormal movement (cf. t.114, t.116, t.120): any touch scored by the fencer at fault is annulled.

During the bout, the fencer must not, under any circumstances, take hold of any part of the electrical equipment with his/her non-sword hand (cf. t.114, t.116, t.120): any touch scored by the fencer at fault is annulled.

Explanation: Previously, if you committed any of these faults, you would receive a warning, but any touch scored would be allowed. Now, if you commit any of these faults, you receive a warning, and the touch is annulled.

Article t.36

First paragraph, delete the words: reversal of the line of the shoulders in foil.

Last paragraph:

The judges must change ends after each period in direct elimination bouts and after each bout in team matches, so as not to watch the same fencer the whole time.

Explanation: Previously, you were not allowed to bring your rear shoulder in front of your front shoulder in reference to your opponent; that is now allowed.

Previously, the rule about judges changing sides covered only individual bouts; now it also applies to team matches.

Article t.43

Add a 6th item:

- At all three weapons, that the fencer is not equipped with any electronic communication equipment which would allow a person off the strip to communicate with the fencer during the bout.

Article t.44

At the end of the 2nd paragraph (after "each time a weapon is changed"), add:

In all three weapons, the referee will check that the fencer is not equipped with electronic communication equipment that would allow a person off the strip to communicate with the fencer during the bout.

Article t.45

Add a new paragraph (f):

is equipped with electronic communication equipment permitting a person outside the strip to communicate with the fencer during the bout.

In cases (c), (d), (e) and (f), the referee must immediately confiscate the equipment concerned (weapon, bodywire, if necessary conductive jacket, mask et cetera) and have it examined by the expert on duty.

- in cases e) and f), the Referee will penalize him as specified in Articles t.114, t.119, t.120.

Explanation: While you are fencing, you may not have any electronic communication apparatus that would enable someone else to communicate with you.

At the end of the article add a new paragraph:

If a fencer appears on the strip for a bout (whether in a pool, in the direct elimination or during a team match) with clothing not conforming to the rules in that he is:

- not correctly showing his name and nationality on his back (application – all official FIE competitions, all stages) and/or - not wearing his national colors; application as follows:

- a) open, junior and cadet World Championships, all bouts (whether in a pool, in the direct elimination or during a team match).
- b) Senior World Cup individual competitions, all DE bouts from the last 64 onwards.
- c) World Cup team competitions, all bouts in every team match. the referee shall penalize him with a red card (Articles t.114, t.117, t.120, second group). He shall however be allowed to remain on the strip and fence the bout concerned.

Note USFA Application:

If a fencer appears on the strip for a bout (whether in a pool, in the direct elimination or during a team match) with clothing not conforming to the rules in that he is: - not correctly showing his name on his back or on his back leg (application – all National USFA competitions, all stages), the referee shall penalize him/her with a red card (Articles t.114, t.117, t.120, second group). He/she shall, however, be allowed to remain on the strip and fence the bout concerned.

Explanation: As has been the case for many years, if you fence in a USFA national event, your name must be on the back of your jacket/metallic jacket or on your back leg, in navy blue and in letters from eight to ten centimeters in height. Now, you will start each bout with a Red Card until you conform to this requirement.

Article t.46

Delete:

At foil it is forbidden, during the course of fencing, to advance the shoulder of the non-sword arm in front of the shoulder of the sword-arm (cf. t.36). Any touch scored by the fencer at fault while committing this offence will be annulled.

Explanation: You may now bring the rear shoulder in front of the front shoulder.

Article t.72

A touch which arrives on a non-valid part of the target is not counted as a touch; it does not stop the fencing phrase and does not annul any subsequent touches. If a fencer substitutes a non-valid part of his target for a valid part, either by covering it or by any abnormal movement, the Referee must penalize him/her by applying the penalties specified in Articles t.114, t.116, t.120, and any touch scored by the fencer at fault is annulled.

Explanation: Please be aware that this rule is in the sabre section. **THIS IS ONLY FOR SABRE!** Previously, if you committed this fault, you would receive a warning, and you would score the touch. Now, if you commit this fault, you receive a warning, and the touch is annulled.

Article t.86

For any fencer not present, or any team which does not have all its members present, when called for the first time by the Referee at the time published for the beginning of the pool, match or bouts of direct elimination, there will be two further calls by the Referee, at intervals of one minute, to be followed by exclusion from the competition if the fencer or the entire team have not presented themselves by the third call (cf. t.114, t.119, t.120).

In the course of the competition (individual or team), when a fencer has been warned that it is his/her turn to fence and does not present himself/herself when called by the Referee, the Referee will similarly repeat the call twice, at intervals of one minute, and will exclude the fencer concerned from the competition if he/she has not present by the third call (cf. t.114, t.119, t.120).

Should a fencer abandon a bout by leaving the strip (cf. t.18/3), he will be penalized as specified in Articles t.114, t.116, t.120.

During a team match, should there be a modification in the order of bouts in the match, either intentionally or unintentionally, the team which has made the modification loses the match (cf. t.120, o.44).

Explanation: Previously, if you were not at your strip after the announcement to report to your strip, or if you were not at the strip after a pool or team match started, the Directoire Technique (Bout Committee) would make an announcement advising you to go to your strip. (Example: "Mary Smith, please report to Strip 22. This is your second call.") Now such announcements will only be made by the referee at the strip.

Article t.87

Replace 2nd and 3rd paragraphs by the following texts:

Before the beginning of each bout, the two fencers must perform a fencing salute to their opponent, to the referee and to the spectators. Equally, when the final touch has been scored, the bout has not ended until the two fencers have saluted each other, the referee and (to) the spectators - to this end, they must remain still while the referee is making his decision; when he has given his decision, they must again perform a fencing salute and must shake hands with their opponent, with the unarmed hand.

If either or both of the two fencers refuses to salute or shake hands in compliance with these rules, the referee will suspend him/them for the remainder of the competition taking place and from the following two FIE (USFA modification: USFA) competitions in the weapon concerned (cf. t.114, t.119, t.120). The points or titles obtained at the moment of the offence remain acquired.

During the first and second periods of a direct elimination bout and the first eight bouts of a team match, when both fencers make clear their desire to stop fencing or show evident passivity, the referee will immediately call 'Halt!' and the two fencers will in individual direct elimination take their regulation one minute rest, in team matches will proceed to the next bout.

In bouts in pools and in the third period of a direct elimination bout or the ninth bout in a team match, should there be passivity on the part of both fencers in the first two minutes and only in

the first two, the referee will warn the fencers (but without imposing a yellow card). If there is obvious repetition, the referee will call 'Halt!' and proceed to the last minute of the time allowed for the bout. This minute, which will be fenced in its entirety, will be decisive and will be preceded by a drawing of lots to decide the winner should the scores be equal at the end of the minute.

Should there be manifest passivity or unwillingness to fight during the third minute, the referee will neither give a warning nor stop the bout.

Explanation: Fencers who do not salute will now be penalized by "suspension" rather than a Black Card. Points earned at a competition prior to such suspension will be kept.

Passivity is now controlled in a slightly different manner than before. It is important to remember that fencing for a long time without scoring a touch does not necessarily constitute passivity. Particularly in épée, a bout may be very active and exciting to watch, yet may end with a very low score (e.g., 3-2) when time runs out.

Article t.118

Any person not on the strip who disturbs the order of the competition receives:

- On the first infringement, a warning, indicated by a Yellow Card, valid for the whole of the competition, which must be noted on the bout score sheet and recorded by the Directoire Technique;
- At the second infringement during the same competition a Black Card (expulsion from the competition venue).
In the most serious cases concerning disturbance either on or off the strip, the Referee may exclude or expel the person at fault immediately.

Explanation: A person disturbing order now receives a Yellow Card instead of a Red Card for the first infringement. The penalty for the second infringement remains the same (a Black Card).

Article t.120

a) Add an asterisk (*) to each of the following in the Schedule of Offences and Penalties:

- Simple corps à corps (foil and sabre)*
 - Touching/taking hold of electrical equipment *
 - Covering/substitution of valid target *
- b) 1st group, delete the following three items:

Fencer not presenting himself at the first call of the referee during the competition, t.86

In foil, reversing the line of the shoulders (*), t.46

Deliberate touch not on opponent, t.53, t.66

c) 2nd group, add:

Deliberate touch not on opponent t.53, t.66

Absence of name on back, absence of national colors where compulsory t.45

d) 4th group,

- add:

Fencer equipped with electronic communication equipment permitting him/her to receive communications during the bout, t.45/3(f) (1) or (2).

- Replace the current text of the paragraph "Non-presentation" by:

Non presentation when called by the referee at the time indicated or when warned it is his turn to fence, after 3 calls at one minute intervals, t.85 (1)

e) below third group

For "Any person not on strip disturbing good order", the first offence warning should read "WARNING (YELLOW CARD) or (4)"

Explanation: These are all changes to the Penalty Chart to reflect the changes in the rules.