**Eight General Rules of Tournament Parenting**

General Rules of Tournament Parenting: There are two paths you can take as a parent during a fencing tournament, that of “psycho parent” or that of “calm, supportive parent”.  The latter provides a strong bond between the trio of coach, parent, and athlete, and the former means that all three participants are generally unhappy. Fencing is intense and watching your child participate in a one on one match can make parents as nervous as their children. Try to adopt the following rules of great tournament parenting:

1. **Unless You Are a Coach, You Are Not the Coach:** Never get in the way of the fencing coach.  He or she is paid to teach your children for a reason.  A parent can work with the coach, but never independently of them.
2. **Be Supportive:** Unless you offer positive encouragement to your child, you should probably stick to the sidelines and read a book.
3. **Only Discuss the Next Opponent:**  Do not speak of ratings, national points, college coaches who might be observing or what winning the tournament might mean. Keep your fencer focused on the next bout or the next touch.
4. **Learn Basic Armory:**  Fixing weapons or even taking them to the armorer can sometimes be the most helpful role to play in a tournament.  Everyone will thank you when you make the equipment work.
5. **Learn to Manage Losing:** When your child loses, he or she experiences a maelstrom of emotions.  Allow ten minutes for the fencer to return to reality before approaching them.  Even better, discuss this ahead of time and tell them that you will wait for them to approach you.  Try not to bring up the loss unless they do.  Perhaps discuss dinner or travel plans.
6. **Hydrate Your Team:** Bring water or sports drinks for your child.  Buy coffee or water for the coach and possibly snacks.
7. **Record Bouts When Possible:**  You do not need to document every moment of the tournament, but it could help the fencer and coach later during review of their performance if you quietly offer. Get your fencer’s approval ﬁrst.
8. **Come Prepared:** Make sure all equipment has been checked and there are backups. Know check-in and event times.