Renaissance Fencing Club - Parent Guide to Fencing

**Why Fencing**

If you’re reading this guide, you obviously have some interest in this unique activity.

Maybe it’s the cool weapons that initially sparked your curiosity, or the distinctive clothes, or the intricate strategy involved. No matter your initial ingress into the world of fencing, the more you learn about it, the more you will want to participate.

Coordination, speed, agility and self-assurance are just a few of the qualities this sport requires and develops. A fencer needs not only to be quick of body but of mind as well. Fencing trains the mind to make logical decision under pressure. This also carries to other parts of life. If your child enjoys puzzles or problem solving games, than they will enjoy the mental intensity of a fencing match. The intensity of fencing, and the extreme demands it places on one are in large part what makes fencing such an exhilarating endeavor.

A successful fencer must be capable of mounting powerful driving attacks or conversely, of making subtle and crafty defenses, all within the space of a few seconds. Brawn only, however, will only take you so far in fencing: intellect is paramount. A good fencer must be clever and with unwavering concentration able to conceive and execute calculated moves quickly. There is no size requirement in fencing. Fencers may be tall or short, fast or powerful. Each fencers can adapt a fencing style that will maximize their personal strengths.

The spirit of fair play and honor is an integral part of fencing. A maximum of politeness and consideration is always observed while competing with others. Fencing is as much an attitude as it is a sport and those who participate in fencing find that it can profoundly affect their lives.

Finally fencing is both an individual and a team sport. Fencers will develop self reliance from their individual experiences, but can still enjoy the camaraderie of competing in team events, and from being a member of a fencing program and club.

**STARS Aspect**

Fencing is historically a chivalrous sport. At Renaissance Fencing Club we stress the qualities of Sportsmanship, Teamwork, Attitude, Respect, and Self Sufficiency (the STARS quality). We recognize that everyone wants to win, but within the context of fair play we want to develop these qualities (thus our STARS).

**Safety - Is this sport really safe? After all, there are swords involved!**

First of all the weapons are not actually sharp! The foil and epee end in a flat, spring loaded tip. The sides of the weapons are blunt. At RFC we take safety seriously. It is included in our curriculum for all our beginning classes. We require fencers to wear all regulation safety equipment. Fencing is one of the safest sports that you can compete in. The most common injuries in fencing reflect those of other sports – ligament sprains and muscle strains account for over half of the injuries. (<http://exra.org/FencingChptr.htm>).

Even the insurance companies agree! When comparing insurance rates for “Accident Medical Coverage” for sports teams and leagues, the insurance premiums for fencing are the least expensive – cheaper than for volleyball and basketball.

**Can my child get a college scholarship?**

Many colleges and universities have fencing as either a varsity sport or a club sport. There are some scholarships available. However, please do not make this the goal of your childs fencing career. There is much competition for the available scholarships, and often once the fencer is good enough to be a scholarship candidate, they prefer a university near a national training center or seek a college with a stronger fencing program. Within the realm of college preparation, parents should instead look at fencing as a unique activity that will make their child stand out among other qualified candidates. Fencing often helps students prioritize and may actually improve grades. Traveling to competitions gives fencers life experience often beyond what a school sport would offer. Having fencing on a resume will provide another way for a child to market themself.

Fencing is fun! Hopefully all fencers can enjoy fencing during college either as an aspiring All American, NCAA champion, or as a recreational club competitor.

Here is a website with a fantastic article that discusses fencing in college on [fencing.net](http://fencing.net):

<http://www.fencing.net/14613/fencing-college-get-ncaa-fencing-team/>

**Overview of the Three Weapons Foil, Epee, and Sabre.**

Each weapon has its own distinct “character” and resulting pace of action. The differences stem from the different rules and target areas for each weapon. Sabre, for example, tends to be faster and most aggressive, epee is the slowest and requires the most patience while foil is in between and attracts fencers who like to employ both aggression and patience. If you or your child are going to participate in fencing, you need to understand the different nature of the weapons, their characteristics, how they’re used and how a fencer can win with each weapon.

**Should I fence all the weapons?**

Though many recreational fencers compete in multiple weapons, Olympic level fencers concentrate on one weapon for their competitive careers. It is best to be a master of one weapon, rather than to dabble in many.

**Foil** – The foil used by fencers today is the modern version of the original practice weapon used by nobility to train for duels. The torso is the target area since this corresponds to the vital organs.

To score points with the foil, the fencer must land the tip of the blade on a valid target: along the torso from shoulders to groin in the front and to the waist in the back. The arms, head and legs are considered off-target. Off-target hits will temporarily halt the fencing action, but does not result any points being awarded.

For newcomers to foil fencing, one of the most challenging concepts to grasp is the rule of right-of-way. Basically, the right-of-way rule states that the fencer who started to attack first will receive the point if they hit a valid target, and that their opponent is obligated to defend themselves. (In other words, you don’t get points by committing suicide and running onto your opponent’s blade once they have established the start of their attack.)

However, if a fencer hesitates for too long while advancing on their opponent, they give up right-of-way to their opponent. A touch scored against an opponent who hesitated too long is called an attack in preparation.

Although some foil fencers still employ the classical technique of parries and thrusts, the flexible nature of the foil blade permits the modern foil fencer to attack an opponent from seemingly impossible angles.

Competitors can execute “marching attacks” where they move down the fencing strip towards their opponent, looking to flick the point of their blade at back or flank of their opponent. Because parrying (blocking) these attacks can be very difficult, the modern game of foil has evolved into a complicated and exciting game of multiple feints, ducking and sudden, explosive attacks, making it a lot of fun to watch.

**Epee** – (Almost) Anything Goes

As the epee (pronounced “EPP-pay”) evolved, the idea was to develop epee fencing in a manner that reproduced as closely as possible the conditions of an actual duel to first blood.

As a result, in epee the entire body is considered a valid target and there is no “right-of-way” rule: anything goes (almost).

Epee fencers score a point by hitting their opponent first. If the fencers hit each other within 1/25th of a second, both receive a point - this is commonly referred to as a double touch.

The lack of right-of-way combined with a full-body target naturally makes epee a game of careful strategy and patience - wild, rash attacks are quickly punished with solid counter-attacks. So, rather than attacking outright, epeeists often spend several minutes probing their opponent's defenses and maneuvering for distance before risking an attack. Others may choose to stay on the defensive throughout the entire bout. Watching epee also requires patience.

**Sabre** – Slash and Dash

The sabre is the modern version of the slashing cavalry sword. The target area is the entire body above the waist, including the head, but excluding the hands.

Similar to foil, sabre uses the rules of right-of-way, which are very similar to foil, but with some subtle differences. The fencer who starts to attack first is given priority. However, sabre referees are much less forgiving of hesitation by an attacker. It is common to see a sabre fencer execute a stop cut against their opponent's forearm during such a moment of hesitation, winning right-of-way and the point.

Another major distinction of the sabre is that sabre fencers can score with the edge of their blade as well as their point.

The sabre fencer’s uniform features an electrically wired metallic lamé, which fully covers their valid target area. Because the head is valid target area, the fencer's mask is also electrically wired.

One significant departure from foil is that off-target hits do not register on the scoring machine, and therefore do not halt the fencing action.

If epee is the weapon of patient, defensive strategy, then sabre is its polar opposite. In sabre, the rules of right-of-way strongly favor the fencer who attacks first, and a mere graze by the blade against the lamé registers a touch with the scoring machine. As a result, sabre is a fast, aggressive game; with fencers rushing their opponent from the moment their referee gives the instruction to fence.

Defending a strong attack of a skilled opponent is very difficult, so sabre fencers very rarely purposely take the defensive. However, when forced to do so, they often go all-out using spectacular tactical combinations in which victory or defeat is determined by the slightest of margins.

**Equipment - What do I need?**

Besides a good attitude and a lot of patience, the gear one needs to actually fence includes:

1. Jacket
2. Mask
3. Glove
4. Practice weapon
5. Breast /chest protector (required for females)
6. Sports shoes
7. Long sweat pants or fencing knickers

Many clubs will lend you the basic equipment when you are just starting out. It is included in the basic classes at RFC. Once you have decided you would like to continue, it is a good idea to buy your own equipment. It will be more comfortable to have equipment that fits you perfectly and is not used by anyone else.

For competition the following items are also required:

1. Knickers (sweat pants cannot be used in competition)
2. A clean jacket in good condition without any rips or tears
3. Mask free from rips, tears, or holes
4. Underarm protector (plastron) is required
5. Chest protector - this is required for women
6. Shoes (they do not have to be fencing shoes, but some sort of supportive athletic shoes)
7. Long socks (required to cover the entire lower leg up until the knickers)
8. Body cords (minimum two working)
9. Electrical vest (also called a lame). At national tournaments it will need to have your last name on the back.
10. Mask cords (minimum two)
11. For Sabre - metallic over glove (sometimes built into a regular glove)
12. At least two working electrical weapons. It would be best to have four.

**WASHING EQUIPMENT**

Wash the uniform (jacket and knickers) as you would any other whites, EXCEPT do not use chlorine bleach. Wash on a regular basis.

Lamés, may be hung in the shower and spray rinsed and drip dry; some people use

blow dryers.

Masks may be washed in dishwashers (make sure to wash by itself)

Washable gloves and socks per normal wash

**Breaking Equipment**

Remember – Fencing Blades Break!

Don’t scold your child when they break their $50 foil after a few competitions. Blades break, especially the cheaper blades in the hands of fencers who are still learning the proper techniques and distance for fencing. When a blade breaks, you can replace just the blade – you don’t need to purchase a complete new weapon.

Body cords break too. Often they can be repaired quite easily.

Electrical jackets and protective clothing may develop small holes. Often these can be sewn or patched.

**Competitions: How to decide to compete and choose competitions.**

After you’ve been fencing for some time you may be ready to hit the strip and compete. There are a wide variety of tournaments in the local fencing area (the "Division").

Local competitions vary in size, strength and restrictions on who can enter. Some local tournaments are restricted by classification (more on that below). Some tournaments may only be for one of the three (foil, epee, sabre) weapons, and may be restricted by gender or age group.

Your child's first tournaments should be age or classification restricted. Many areas have "novice" or beginner tournaments for those fencers who have not been fencing very long, or have yet to earn their first classification.

Note that most tournaments require an entry fee somewhere between $10-20 depending on the club and region. Almost all competitions are governed by the rules of the US Fencing Association, and require US Fencing membership.

In all cases, your child’s coach is the best reference to determine when your child is ready to compete. Some children are mentally ready for competition much sooner than others, so make sure that it’s also something they want to do.

**Classifications and Age Categories**

Competitions are often divided by age or classifications.

The first distinction is age: Youth, Cadet, Junior and Senior. There are four Youth categories for fencers that are under 8, under 10, under 12, and under 14 years of age. Cadets are fencers who are 16 years old or younger at the start of the fencing season. Juniors are fencers who are 19 years old or younger at the start of fencing season. For the United States Fencing Association purposes, it’s not your age as much as the year you were born. For example, for a fencer who turns 20 on January 1, can fence the entire year as a Junior because they were born after the start of the fencing season. But a fencer whose birthday is December 31 would be bumped up to the Senior division.

In order to compete in a Senior Open (or “Open”) event, the fencer must be at least 13 years old.

Other competitions may be divided by classification level. The ratings system in fencing is similar to that of the “belts” in karate, but instead of belts, fencing uses letters. The highest caliber fencer would be an “A”, the next a “B” and so on until you reach “E.” An un-rated fencer (i.e., beginner) would be classified as a “U” for un-rated. Your letter is also distinguished by the year in which you achieved your rating. For example, if you earned your “B” in 2006 then your rating would be “B06.” The newer your rating is, the higher your rank, so that a “B06” would be ranked higher than a “B01.” Once a fencer earns a rating they keep it for 4 seasons, and then drops one letter.

Local tournaments will often be divided by classifications, including Unclassified (only fencers without a rating may compete), E and under, D and under, C and under, and Open (all classifications welcome). On a National Level, there are tournaments which are designated as Division 2 (which is the same as a C and Under) and as Division 3 (which is the same as a D and Under). There are also National Division 1 events which require a rating of C or higher. Division 2 and Division 3 give beginners and less experienced or competitive fencers the chance to compete against fencers at a similar level.

**How to sign up for fencing competitions - How to use** [askfred.net](http://askfred.net)**.**

Most local and regional competitions are listed on a website - [askfred.net](http://askfred.net). FRED stands for Fencing Results and Events Database. National competitions are usually not listed on this website but almost all other events are. By going to the website and clicking on upcoming tournaments, it is possible to filter the events by using the search options at the top (eg limit to within a certain geographic area or certain age or weapon group). There are also buttons that can be clicked when viewing upcoming tournaments that will help see how many fencers are already signed up for the event, directions, and how to contact the organizers of the tournament.

To sign up for an event, find the event on the website and click the button “preregister”. It will then display a box to input the registering fencer’s name. The first time a fencer is using askfred, they may need to “create a new fencer record”. Just fill in the blanks and you should receive a confirmation email in a minute or two. This is free. Also, most tournaments do not require payment to preregister and most offer a discount if you’re preregistered. If the competition requires pre-payment, after the fencer selects their name as the one to preregister, they will be taken to a secure payment form.

To view results from a tournament, select results and fill in the search fields to find the tournament for which results are desired. Not all organizers post the results of their tournament on askfred.

**How does one earn a rating?**

Through tournaments: there is a matrix that the USFA publishes that describes what ratings can be earned at each tournament. The matrix is based off of the number of fencers in a tournament, the ratings of the fencers in the tournament and the finishes of the fencers in the tournament. To read more about the USFA ratings matrix, go to: <http://www.fencing.net/forums/thread7493.html>

What’s important to remember about ratings is that they are just that, a rating. They don’t always tell the whole story. You may see “C” rated fencers that can consistently beat “B” fencers, but take a long time to earn a higher rating because of how classifications are awarded at tournaments. Unfortunately a lot of fencers get hung up on their “rating” when they should be enjoying the process of learning to fence and fence better.

**Competition Season**

The competitive season for US Fencing runs from September through July. Each local fencing organization (called a “division”) runs a series of tournaments of various skill levels. These culminate into two qualifying events for the Junior Olympics (held in February) and the Summer National Championships (held at the beginning of July).

Most fencers focus on competing at the division and region levels before spending the extra time and money to go to the larger national competitions. In the summer you’ll also find a host of fencing camps where your kids can meet new friends and learn from coaches in other parts of the country.

**Tournament Expectations**

Before going to the tournament, make sure that you are prepared. Fencing tournaments can be all-day affairs, often with no food vendors (or only fast food) available. Pack a snack bag with all of the good stuff your kids will need to keep their energy up all day – things like bagels, granola bars, fruit. Make sure to have a water bottle and if you use it, some of the preferred sports drink. Remember to bring yourself a snack too – we don’t want grumpy parents watching fencing!

There is also a lot of down time in tournaments. The kids should have something to do that isn’t going to interfere with other fencing bouts that are going on. Activity books, puzzles, art supplies are all good ideas. (You’ll want a good book or the latest set of sudoku puzzles.)

Clothes – Bring a change of clothes for after your child is done fencing for the day and also a towel as well as one or two extra t-shirts, just in case they need to change into a dry shirt halfway through the competition.

Also, before setting out for the tournament, have a print out of the directions and contact phone numbers for the tournament hosts or other parents at your club that are going. It’s often a good idea to caravan to events.

If your child is competing in age restricted tournament make sure you bring a copy of their passport or birth certificate.

Make sure you bring your US Fencing membership card, and your entry confirmation if applicable.

**Tournament Format**

The formats can vary, but in general the following format is observed:

The entire field of fencers who have entered a tournament are divided into groups, called "pools." The bout committee (the organizers of the tournament) balances pools as fairly as possible so that the first pool and the last pool, in theory, should be about the same level of difficulty, with some variation.

Pool size varies between five and seven fencers per pool, depending on the size of the field. Each competitor fences a bout against all of the other members of the pool. (round robin) The bouts last a maximum of three minutes (start-and-stop time, not continuous time), or until one fencer scores five points.

**Here is an example of a pool sheet and how to read it:** Please note that it represents a pool of five fencers. Look at the fencer named “Troi”. It says “BET” after his name because that is the abbreviation for his fencing club. Reading across (horizontally) shows either V for victory or D for defeat and the number of touches scored. (circled in green in the picture). He is fencer number 3 in the pool (a randomly assigned number unrelated to his rank at the competition). By then looking at the top line of numbers, choosing 3, and reading down (vertically), it will show his opponents scores against him (circled in red in the picture).

The order of bout is shown beneath the boxes. So you can see the first bout would have been 1 vs 2 and by looking at the table you can see that 1 (Picard) won against 2 (Riker), 5 to 4.

During a bout, if time runs out, and the score is tied, the referee will flip a coin or otherwise randomly select one fencer to have "priority." One minute of overtime is added to the clock and the fencers fence one minute of "sudden-death" overtime. If one fencer scores a point, he or she wins the bout. If time elapses, and no point has been scored, the fencer with priority, as randomly determined at the beginning of the one minute, is given the victory.

Once all of the bouts in the pool have been completed, the referee counts up all of scores. The referee lists the number of victories each fencer has earned, the number of points each fencer has scored in all of his or her bouts combined, the number of points that were scored against each fencer in all of his or her bouts combined and then the referee determines the differential between points scored by and against each fencer (referred to as their indicator).

These sets of numbers are used to determine the "seeding" of fencers into the **Direct Elimination (DE)** table (also referred to as the bracket or tableau). Fencers with the highest percentage of victories are seeded highest. It is important to note that it is the percentage of victories are used, not the actual number of victories. The win-loss percentage is calculated by dividing the number of victories earned by a fencer, divided by the number of bouts he or she fenced.

If fencers are tied, based on their percentage of victories, the tie is broken based on the "indicators" or differential between the number of touches scored and touches received for each fencer. A more positive number means a higher seed.

If fencers are tied on percentage of victories and on indicators, the tie is then broken by whomever has the highest number of points scored. If there is still a tie after this point, the fencers are considered tied for that placing. Once the seeding has been completed, and the bout committee has arranged the fencers on the DE table, the next round of fencing will commence.DE bout lasts for three three-minute periods with a one-minute break in between the first and second periods. If one fencer reaches 15 points, that is the end of the bout. Sometimes bouts end because time has elapsed, but more often they expire because the score has reached 15 points. If all three periods expire, and the score is tied, then the same overtime procedure takes place as was described above.

**A sample direct elimination table is shown**:

In a standard DE table, if a fencer has lost, they are "out" of the competition. If they win, they advance to the next round of DE bouts, until eventually a winner is reached through this process of elimination.

If eliminated early, it’s proper étiquette and good sportsmanship to stay around and cheer on fellow club members. It is also important to watch the person you lost to in order to determine what will work against them if you fence them in the future. It is strongly encouraged that fencers watch the person who eliminated them until that fencer is eliminated.

Watching the bouts later on in the event, especially the top fencers, is one of the best ways to learn. Encourage your child to change clothes and come back out to watch their friends after elimination. (Just give them the time and space they need to get over the loss first.)

**Being a Spectator: How to Follow (and enjoy) the Action**

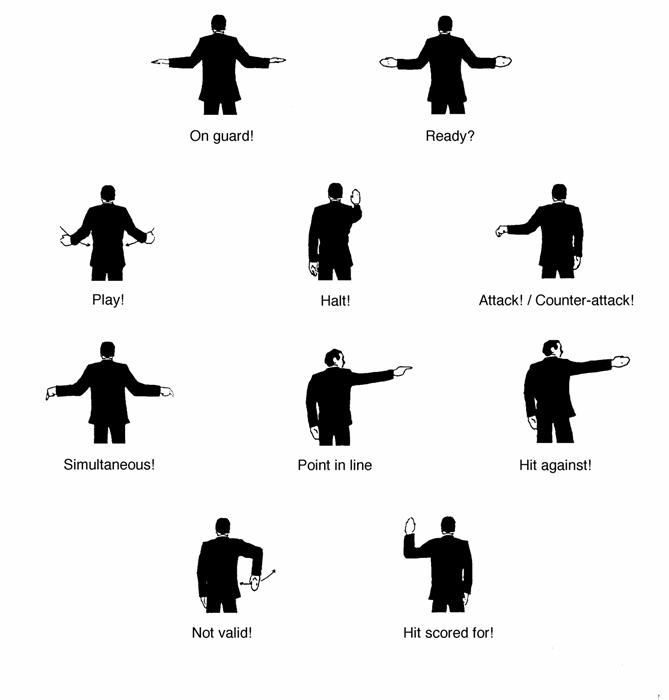
To the uninitiated, watching fencing can be difficult and downright frustrating. Winners and losers are not always that obvious. But if you are a beginning fencer (or a parent to one), watching fencing bouts is one of the best things you can do to help familiarize yourself with the sport. And while it may take awhile to truly understand and appreciate all the complexities of modern fencing, there are some basic concepts that will help you along the way.

**Scoring**

All bouts are scored electronically with a referee or director watching and all weapons are scored the same way: 5 touch, 4-minute pool bouts, 15 touch, 3-minute period D.E. bouts (U12 and Veterans are exceptions.)

**Fencing Referee Signals**

The fencers and audience have to know what the referee is calling. The use of the following words and gestures helps everyone know what is being called and to whom the point is being awarded.



**Penalties**

The penalties handed out are the same for all weapons:

**Yellow card = Warning.** No points are awarded but a fencer can’t score a touch if he or she gets a yellow card while they are scoring. Any subsequent penalty results in a red card. An example of a yellow card offense would be coming to strip with a weapon that fails inspection.

**Red card = A point is awarded** to the offended party. Also, a second yellow card action in the same bout results in a red card. An example of a red card offense would be dangerous, violent or vindictive action; blow with guard or pommel. Another more common example is the fencer who comes to the strip and whose first two foils fail inspection – they have to get a third foil and they start the bout down 0-1.

**Black card = The worst offense.** If a fencer receives a black card he/she is kicked out of the tournament. An example of a black card offense would insulting a referee, or throwing a fencing weapon or mask down on the strip.

For a complete listing of offenses and their corresponding penalties go to http://shop.fencing.net/product\_p/fdn-81999.htm and download a copy of the rule book.

**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 possible 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.

**Right-of-What? A List of Important Terms**

As with any sport, a specific vocabulary is necessary to describe the equipment and explain the movements. To follow is a short list of commonly used terms within the fencing community.

**Advance** Taking a step forward (towards one's opponent.)

**Attack** Offensive movement, or series of movements by which a fencer tries to score a point. In foil and sabre, the fencer who attacks first acquires the "right-of-way." In order to execute an attack properly (i.e. one that the referee will acknowledge), the fencer's hand must be clearly extending towards their opponent's valid target in a threatening manner.

**Balestra** A short, sharp jump forwards; usually used as a preparation for an attack. Often followed by a lunge.

**Beat** Sharp tap on the opponent's blade to initiate an attack or provoke a reaction.

**Disengage** Evasive action in which the fencer avoids the opponent's attempt to take their blade.

**Engagement** Contact between the fencers' blades - often as the prelude to an attack.

**En Garde** Position taken before fencing commences.

**Épée** French for sword. Descendent of the dueling sword. It is the heaviest of the three fencing weapons and has a stiff, V-shaped blade, and a large bell guard for protecting the hand from hits.

**Feint** A false attack intended to get a defensive reaction from the opposing fencer, thus creating the opportunity for a genuine attack. ("feint-disengage attack"). In epee, fencers also use the feint to goad their opponent into attacking them.

**Foil** Descendent of the court sword. The foil was used for training in the duel and featured a blunted (or foiled) tip.

**Fleche** Explosive, running attack (foil and epée only).

**Flunge** Action unique to sabre - a combination of a lunge and a fleche. Evolved recently after sabre rules were modified in 1992 to prohibit running attacks.

**Guard** Part of the weapon between the blade and handle; protects the hand, also known as: "bell-guard."

**Lame** Pronounced La-may (not lame). This is the conductive over jacket that is used for electric scoring in both Foil and Sabre.

**Lunge** Most common attacking footwork technique, in which the fencer launches themselves at their opponent by pushing off from their back leg.

**Opposition** As in "thrust with opposition" and means to simultaneously deflect the opponent's point with one's guard while making an attack of one's own. Commonly used in épée to avoid a double touch.

**Parry** Defensive action in which a fencer blocks his opponent's blade.

**Piste** French term for the fencing strip: where the actual fencing action takes place. It is 14 meters long and 1.5 to 2 meters wide. Retreating off the end of the strip with both feet gets a touch against. Going off the side of the strip with one foot halts the fencing action. Going off the side with both feet gets a penalty of the loss of one meter, and if this results in the offender going off the end of the piste, a point is awarded to his opponent. After each touch, fencers begin again at the center of the strip, 4 meters apart, or roughly at a position where their blades can nearly touch when fully extended. Many pistes at fencing tournaments are "grounded" so that if a fencer's blade makes contact with the floor, the hit won't register. (Note: most US fencers refer only to the “strip” – piste is rarely used in the US.)

**Plastron** Also sometimes called an underarm protector; this is worn under your jacket on your sword arm and gives extra protection to the most commonly hit part of your target area. The seams on a plastron are made so that they do not line up with the seams on a jacket for added safety.

**Point-in-Line** Action in which the fencer, who is generally out of attacking range, points their weapon at their opponent with their arm fully extended. A fencer who establishes a point-in-line has right-of- way, and their opponent cannot attack until they remove the blade from line by executing a beat.

**Recover**  The return to the en garde position after lunging.

**Remise** Attacking again immediately after the opponent's parry of an initial attack.

**Riposte** Defender's offensive action immediately after parrying their opponent's attack.

**Sabre** The sabre is a light and fast weapon. The blade is V-shaped, or Y- shaped and not as stiff as the epee. The sabre uses both cuts and thrusts to score points.

**Second Intention** A tactic, in which a fencer executes a convincing, yet false, action in hopes of drawing a true, committed reaction from their opponent.

**Stop Hit, Stop Cut** A counter-action made at the moment of an opponent's hesitation, feint, or poorly executed attack. To be awarded the point, the fencer attempting a stop hit must clearly catch their opponent's tempo. Hence, if their Stop Hit is not "in time," the referee may award the touch to their attacker. A stop cut is specifically for sabre.

**Strip** The place where the actual fencing takes place, the playing field. See Piste above.

Credits - Taken in Part from US Fencing Parent Guide to Fencing, the [fencing.net](http://fencing.net) parent guide, [askfred.net](http://askfred.net), popefencing.org, and the Fencing Officials Commission’s Referee Manual.