

Fencing etiquette and disciplinary rules

Order and Discipline

1. Everyone taking part in or attending a fencing competition, including the spectators, must observe strictly and faithfully the particular rules for the competition in which they are engaged, the traditional customs of courtesy and integrity and the instructions of the officials. In particular they will subscribe, in an orderly, disciplined and sporting manner, to the following provisions; all breaches of these rules may entail punishments by the disciplinary authorities after, or even without prior warning, according to the facts and circumstances.
2. Everybody taking part in or present at a fencing competition must remain orderly and must not disturb the smooth running of the competition. During bouts no one is allowed to approach the arenas to give advice to the fencers, to criticise the Referee or the Assistant, to insult them or to attempt to influence them in any way. The second must remain in the space assigned to him/her. The referee must stop immediately any activity which disturbs the smooth running of the bout which he/she is refereeing
3. Any person who, for any reason, threatens or insults an official is eligible for immediate disqualification/expulsion from the premises.
4. The referee, and/or the organising team, on their own authority, can decide to expel from the competition venue, with or without a warning, any person who by his/her gestures, attitude or language disturbs the good order or smooth running of the event.

The Competitors

1. By the mere fact of entering a fencing competition, the fencers pledge their honour to observe the Rules, and the decisions and instructions of the officials, to be respectful towards the Referees (Referee and Assistant) and to scrupulously obey their orders and injunctions.
2. No fencer may take part in the competition if he/she refuses to fence against any other fencer whatsoever correctly entered in the event. Should this rule be broken, the penalties specified for offences of the 4th group will be applied.
3. The fencers, completely equipped, with all equipment conforming with the regulations and ready to fence, must be present at the time and place appointed for the beginning of the pool, match, or bout of direct elimination, or at the time appointed for the checking of their equipment before their bout, as well as during the competition, whenever the Referee requires it.
4. When presenting themselves to fence a bout, the fencers must arrive on the arena completely ready to fence — regulation clothing, jacket fastened,

hands gloved and holding the weapon.

5. During a competition, if a fencer does not present himself on the arena, ready to fence, when ordered to do so by the Referee:
 1. The fencer not present will be penalised with a Yellow Card;
 2. A second call will be made, one minute after the first call, followed by a Red Card for the fencer or team member not present;
 3. A third and last call will be made, one minute after the second call, followed by elimination from the competition for the fencer not present.
6. During or after a bout, even if the fencer has already left the arena, any act against the spirit of sportsmanship such as violently or dangerously throwing one's mask (or any other piece of equipment) will be penalised.
7. The fencer, whether on or off the arena, must keep his mask on until the Referee calls 'Halt!'. He may under no circumstances address the Referee until the Referee has made his decision.
8. Competitors must fence to their utmost ability in a sportsmanlike manner until the end of the competition in order to obtain the best possible classification, without giving away hits or seeking to be favoured by being given hits by anyone.

Fencing Etiquette

1. All bouts must preserve the character of a courteous and frank encounter. All irregular actions (e.g. violently jostling the opponent; disorderly fencing; irregular movements in the arena; hits achieved with violence; blows struck with the cross-guard; hits made during or after an accidental fall; failing to stop dangerous techniques short of full application, taking out fury on the furniture or equipment of the venue) or anti-sporting behaviour are strictly forbidden. Should such an offence occur, any hit scored by the fencer at fault is annulled.
2. Before the beginning of each bout, the two fencers must perform a fencer's salute to their opponent, the referee, and preferably to the spectators. Equally, when the final hit has been scored, the bout has not ended until the two fencers have saluted each other, the referee (and the spectators). To this end, they must remain still while the referee is making her decision; when she has given her decision, they must return to their on-guard line, perform a fencer's salute and shake hands with their opponent. If either or both of the two fencers refuse to comply with these rules, the Referee will penalise him/them as specified for offences of the 4th group.
3. Punishable actions are acted on by verbal warnings, warnings (yellow card), point awarded to the opponent (red card) or disqualification and expulsion from the venue (black card), according to severity and repetition of offense, as detailed in the rulebook (see the table of offences, also

attached to this summary).

4. Spectators are obliged not to interfere with the good order of a competition, to do nothing which may tend to influence the fencers or the Referee, and to respect the decisions of the latter even when they do not agree with them. They must obey any instructions which the Referee may deem it necessary to give them.

The Disciplinary Authorities and their Competence

The Referee

1. By accepting a position as referee or assistant, the person so designated pledges his/her honour to respect the rules and to cause them to be respected, and to carry out his/her duties with the strictest impartiality and absolute concentration.
2. The Referee is responsible not only for the direction of the bout, the judging of hits and the checking of equipment, but equally for the maintenance of order in the bouts which he is refereeing.
3. The referee has the right to interrupt a bout if the play becomes confused, dangerous or she/he is unable to clearly judge the action any more. In the absence of an objective scoring device, the fencing phrases are judged according to the referee and assistant's observation of the action. Before the final decision is made, fencers may address the referee for clarification or an appeal. The referee's judgment regarding points of fact is not to be questioned (except for the appeals for video refereeing), and if a fencer infringes on this principle, they will be penalised according to the rules regarding the 1st group of offences. A point of fact includes, but is not limited to, any ruling by the referee analysing what happened on the piste, such as the validity or priority of a hit, whether a fencer left the side or end of the arena or if a person's behaviour is a Group 3 or Group 4 offence. However if the Referee is ignorant of or misunderstands a definite rule, or applies it in a manner contrary to the Rules, an appeal on this matter may be entertained.

This appeal must be made:

1. in individual events, by the fencer,
2. in team events, by the fencer or the team captain,

it should be made courteously but without formality, and should be made verbally to the Referee immediately and before any decision is made regarding a subsequent hit. If the Referee maintains his opinion, the Head of the Refereeing Team has the authority to settle an appeal, or if he finds it necessary, provide supervision for the rest of the bout. If such an appeal is deemed to be unjustified, the fencer will be penalised according to the rules regarding the 1st group of offences.

4. In his capacity as director of the bout and arbiter of hits, he can, in accordance with the rules, penalise the competitors, either by refusing to award a hit which they have in fact made on the opponent, or by awarding against them a hit which they have not in fact received, or by excluding them from the competition which he is refereeing, all, according to the circumstances, with or without prior warning. In these circumstances, and if he has judged on a matter of fact, his decisions are irrevocable
5. By reason of the right of jurisdiction which he has over all the fencers who participate in, or are present at a competition which he is refereeing, he can also propose to the the expulsion from the venue of the competition of the spectators, trainers, instructors and other persons who accompany the competitors.
6. Finally, he may recommend to the Organising Team all other penalties which he considers appropriate (exclusion from the whole competition, suspension or disqualification). The Head of the Refereeing Team is the authority competent to deal with appeals against the decisions of the Referee.

The Organising Team and the Head of the Refereeing Team

1. The organising team and the head of the Refereeing Team have jurisdiction over all the fencers who take part in or are present at a competition which they are running. When necessary, they can intervene on their own initiative in all disputes. They are also responsible for maintaining order and discipline during competitions, and may use the penalties specified in the Rules.
2. All the decisions of the Organising team or the Head of the Refereeing Team are immediately enforceable. No appeal against a decision can suspend that decision during the competition.

Penalties

1. There are distinct categories of penalty applicable to different sorts of offence.
 1. Penalties related to fencing, applicable to offences committed while fencing. These are:
 1. refusal to award a hit actually made
 2. awarding a hit which has not in fact been received
 3. exclusion from the competition
 2. Disciplinary penalties applicable to offences concerned with maintenance of order, discipline or sportsmanship. These are:
 1. awarding a hit which has not in fact been received

2. exclusion from the competition
 3. exclusion from participation in the whole tournament
 4. expulsion from the venue of the competition
 5. exclusion from events organised by the Federation or the specific Organising Team for a period of time.
2. All these penalties can be applied by the competent authorities at a competition — the Referee, the Head of the Refereeing Committee, and the Organising Team.

Penalties Related to Fencing

1. Refusal to award a hit actually made. Although a competitor may in fact have hit his opponent on the target, this hit may be disallowed, either because it did not arrive during the period of time during which fencing is allowed, or because the competitor had crossed the boundaries of the arena, or because violence was involved in the making of the hit, or because of other reasons as laid down in the Rules.
2. Award of a hit which has not in fact been received. A competitor may have a hit awarded against him which he has not in fact received, either because he has crossed the limit of the arena, or because he has committed an offence which has prevented his opponent fencing.
3. Exclusion. A competitor who, while fencing, commits certain violent or vindictive actions against his opponent, or who does not fence to his utmost ability, or who profits from a fraudulent agreement with his opponent, may be excluded from the competition. A competitor who is excluded from a competition may not continue to take part in that competition, even if he is already qualified for promotion to the next round. He loses the right to his individual classification and all the fencers ranked after the disqualified fencer move up one place in the results of the competition.

Disciplinary penalties

1. Exclusion from the Competition. It may also be imposed for a disciplinary offence (failure to appear on the arena as required, weapons not in accordance with the rules, reprehensible attitude towards an official, etc.). The consequences of such exclusion for the competitor are the same as those described in the Article 29. above.
2. Expulsion from the venue of the competition or the tournament.
 1. A competitor who is excluded from a tournament will no longer be allowed to participate in any competition during that tournament, either at the same weapon or another.
 2. All participants or non-competitors who participate in or are present at a competition (instructors, trainers, technicians, supporters, offi-

cials, spectators) may be expelled. Such expulsion has the effect of forbidding them access to the venue for the duration of the competition or tournament. In no circumstances can the imposition of this penalty give cause for redress to anyone.

The types (groups) of penalty

1. There are three types of penalty to be applied in the cases indicated in the table in Article. If a referee has to penalise a fencer who has committed several faults at the same time, he should penalise the least serious fault first.
2. Penalties are cumulative and they are valid for the bout with the exception of those indicated by a BLACK CARD, which means exclusion from the competition, suspension for the remainder of the tournament or future events organised by the Federation or the specific Organising Team.
3. Certain offences can result in the annulment of the hit scored by the fencer at fault. During the bout, only hits scored in circumstances connected with the offence may be annulled.
4. The penalties are as follows:
 1. a warning, indicated by a YELLOW CARD with which the Referee identifies the fencer at fault. The fencer then knows that any further offence on his part will result in a penalty hit.
 2. a penalty hit, indicated by a RED CARD with which the Referee identifies the fencer at fault. A hit is added to the score of his opponent and may, if the last hit is at stake, lead to the loss of the bout. Furthermore, a RED CARD can only be followed by another RED CARD or by a BLACK CARD, depending on the nature of the second offence.
 3. Exclusion from the competition, suspension from the remainder of the tournament, indicated by a BLACK CARD with which the Referee identifies the person at fault.
 4. Expulsion from the competition venue (any person disturbing the order of the competition).
5. All warnings (YELLOW CARDS), penalty hits (RED CARDS) and exclusions (BLACK CARDS) must be noted on the score-sheet of the bout, the pool or the match, together with the group to which they belong.
6. The offences and their penalties which appear in different articles of the Rules are summarised in the table that follows in Article 44.); they are divided into four groups. All these penalties are within the competence of the Referee, although the Organising Team still retains the right to intervene on its own initiative.

The First Group of offences

1. The first infringement in this First Group is penalised by a YELLOW CARD (warning). If during the same bout the fencer commits the same or a different offence in this group the Referee penalises him on each occasion, with a RED CARD (penalty hit). If the fencer at fault has already been penalised by a RED CARD because of an offence listed in the Second or Third Group, he receives a further RED CARD for his first infringement relating to the First Group.
2. Within team matches, the count of 1st group offences is reset at the beginning of each bout within the team match (in each team match bout, the first offence belonging in the 1st group is penalised with YELLOW CARD, etc.) - except for special YELLOW CARDS affecting the whole team, which are noted in the table of penalties. These YELLOW CARDS affect the rest of the team match, and any subsequent violation belonging in the 1st group will be penalized with a RED CARD.

The Second Group of offences

1. Every offence in the Second Group, including the first infringement, is penalised by a RED CARD (penalty hit).

The Third Group of Offences

1. The first infringement in the Third Group is penalised by a RED CARD (penalty hit), even if the fencer at fault has already received a RED CARD as a result of offences in the First or Second Groups.
2. If during the same bout the fencer commits the same or a different offence in this group, he is penalised with a BLACK CARD (exclusion from the competition, suspension from the remainder of the tournament. The fencer keeps the position in the ranking s obtained up to the moment of the disqualification (unless the ranking has not yet been established via the pools).
3. Any person not on the arena who disturbs the good order of the competition receives:
 1. 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 Technical Team;
 2. At the second infringement during the same competition a BLACK CARD.
 3. In the most serious cases concerning disturbance either on or off the arena, the Referee may exclude or expel the person at fault immediately.

The Fourth Group of Offences

1. The first infringement in the Fourth Group, is penalised by a BLACK CARD (exclusion from the competition).
2. The penalized fencer keeps the position in the ranking s obtained up to the moment of the disqualification (unless the ranking has not yet been established via the pools).