

United States Fencing
Association
Fencing Officials Commission

Special Points of Emphasis for the 2004-05 Season for Referees

The following will be discussed at every referee's meeting before each NAC, at each referee seminar given as part of the process of certifying referees, and as part of the seminar for certifying Referee Seminar Instructors.

- 1) Attendance
 - a. On the first day of competition, Referees must be present 45 minutes prior to the close of registration for the first event for each National Tournament for a mandatory referee meeting.
 - b. Referees should plan to remain until the end of the competition, or until specifically released by one of the FOC.
 - c. For each subsequent day of the Tournament, Referees should report to the venue 15 minutes prior to the start of the first event, for a mandatory meeting, unless specifically notified by the Lead Referee.
- 2) Appearance/Dress Code
 - a. Referees working for the USFA will adhere to the official dress code. For men: blue blazer, grey slacks, shirt and tie, for women, blue blazer, grey slacks, or skirt, blouse or shirt
 - b. Clothes must be clean, shirts ironed, jackets pressed. Clothing should fit appropriately and convey a professional image. While refereeing, jackets should be buttoned.
- 3) Procedures for the start of a bout
 - a. At the beginning of each bout the referee must:
 - i. check for the underarm protector
 - ii. check for tears in the uniform
 - iii. ensure that the jacket overlaps the knickers by ten centimeters when en garde
 - iv. check for inspection marks on the mask, body cords, lamés and weapons
 - v. check for a fastener between the body cord and the weapon.
 - vi. check under the thumb pad, foil and epee must have continuous spaghetti tubing (in one piece) from the emergence of the wire at the guard to the fastening at the guard socket. In the case of épée, there must be two continuous strands
 - vii. make sure the body cord is fastened to the reel.
 - viii. In epee, check the barrel of the weapon to be sure it is not loose and that both point screws are present (in epees that have point screws).
 - ix. In foil and épée, test the pressure spring with the appropriate weight. If the point should not push back the weight, the referee

may put the weapon on a stable surface such as the scoring table or the floor for a second chance.

- x. In epee test the travel of the point by inserting the thin shim in three different places, and ensure sufficient distance between the barrel and the tip by inserting the thick shim.
 - xi. In foil, as in épée, the maximum bend in the blade is ONE centimeter. If the fencer is en garde, the command “ready” is given and the blade is bent more than the maximum allowable curve, a yellow card will be given for non conforming equipment.
 - xii. make sure the fencer’s jackets are completely closed prior to the onset of the bout.
- 4) Hand signals
- a. All hand signals approved by the FIE should be used by all certified referees.
 - b. In order to facilitate the use of the hand signals, the clipboard should not be held by the referee, but instead a small piece of paper should be used for each bout for keeping track of the score and record the end score on the official score sheet at the conclusion of each bout.
 - c. Note any penalty cards on this same sheet.
- 5) Enforcement of the Sport zone
- a. For tournaments where there is no Sports Zone, all spectators must remain behind the endlines of the strip at all times.
 - b. For tournaments where there is a sports zone, all spectators, friends and fencers not directly involved in the fencing are to be kept out of the zone during the rounds of pools.
 - c. In direct elimination rounds, all spectators, friends and fencers not directly involved in the fencing are to be kept out of the zone. One coach per fencer will be allowed to stand in the Coach’s Zone. Both coaches can stand in the same Zone.
 - d. Keep spectators and athletes out of the Coach’s Zone.
- 6) Rules
- a. Reversing the shoulders is allowed, but be sure the unarmed hand is raised so that it does not obscure valid target.
 - b. Any body contact (even the smallest nudge) should always result in a halt. In foil and saber a card should be issued. In epee, a halt must be called, but no card given.
 - c. In foil, special attention should be paid to covering target with the mask
 - d. In foil and saber, any obscuring of the valid surface by the hair of any fencer must not be allowed.
 - e. Falling on the strip from accidental causes is not a violation.
 - f. If a touch is scored while in the act of falling, the fencer at fault will be given a yellow card, and the touch annulled.
 - g. Falling to avoid the touch is disorderly fencing. Appropriate cards will be given.
- 7) One foot off the strip:

- a. One foot or both feet off of the lateral boundary of the strip causes a halt to be called. The penalty is that the fencer not in violation will move forward one meter from his/her position on the strip and the violator will give ground appropriately until the fencers are approximately four meters apart. This distance is determined by placing the fencers in a normal en garde position with their weapons extended. The violator must give ground until the points can no longer touch. If this procedure moves the violator off of the strip with both feet a penalty touch will be awarded for the other fencer.
- 8) Passivity
 - a. If it is obvious that the fencers are unwilling to engage in actions during the first and second periods of a direct elimination bout, the referee will stop the bout and go to the one minute break. If passivity is determined during the first two minutes of a pool bout, or during the first two minutes of the third period of the direct elimination bout, the referee will call halt, and determine priority. The fencers will then fence a one minute period, without sudden death. The bout will end when one fencer reaches the maximum score (5 or 15 points) or time expires. If passivity occurs during the final minute of the bout or period, the referee will do nothing.
 - 9) Salute
 - a. Referees must enforce the salute rule at the beginning and conclusion of the bout.
 - 10) Weapons presented for inspection, after an action
 - a. The fencer must not do anything to alter the weapon (smashing the tip against the ground, violently testing or knocking the weapon against the strip, etc.) or remove the weapon from the referee's sight.
 - b. The test should be as follows:
 - i. Start from the back.
 - ii. Verify that the body cord is plugged into the reel cord
 - iii. Verify that the body cord is plugged into the weapon
 - iv. Check the condition of the body cord
 - v. Check the point screws (in epee)
 - vi. Verify that the barrel is not loose.
 - vii. Then, and only then, should the point be tested. The referee should deliberately push down firmly ONCE. If the weapon fails, the touch should be annulled. In all other cases, the touch should stand.
 - 11) Breaking momentum with gamesmanship.
 - a. The referee should make every effort not to let either fencer gain an advantage by delaying the bout unduly. This includes changing weapons for unsubstantiated reasons, tying shoes, removing masks, wiping faces, fixing hair, etc. This is especially critical near the conclusion of the bout. Reasonable requests should be granted, but not repeatedly. If the referee determines that the fencer is using this as a delaying tactic and an attempt to change the flow of the bout, sanctions for delay of bout should be given.
 - 12) Dealing with spectator (coach/parent/non-competitor) questions/comments/criticism.

- a. It is often very difficult to hear in venue settings. Be sure to make your calls clearly, and use precise hand gestures. If there is not a remote score board, call out the score clearly, after every touch. Likewise, make announcements about time remaining clearly. Call the fencers to strip and the on deck fencers clearly. It's not just the fencers who are interested in this information. A loud, clear voice is a referee's best asset.
- b. Be aware that the configuration of the sports zone can affect the ability of spectators (including fencers in the pool or DE table) to hear what's going on. Eye contact and hand gestures overcome noisy conditions.
- c. In ordinary circumstances, only the fencers in the bout at hand may speak to the referee.
- d. The referee must maintain order on the strip. Spectators must remain outside the sports zone or, as mentioned above, in the Coach's Zone.
- e. Questions from spectators can be briefly answered, if asked politely, and if answering doesn't detract from the bout.
 - i. For example, if a spectator asks for the score.
 - 1. Call the score clearly and indicate which fencer has which score.
- f. If there is not a clearly visible clock, when asked, announce the time remaining clearly. Show the fencers the clock, if there's any doubt.
- g. Do not let spectators insinuate themselves into the bout. An occasional question for clarification is within the bounds of acceptability. Constant, or abusive questions will not be tolerated.
 - i. Be polite.
 - ii. Be firm
 - iii. Don't be officious
 - iv. Don't tolerate abuse.
- h. Often, simply holding up one's hand to the spectator who has crossed the line is sufficient. If not, hold up the hand with a Yellow Card in it.
- i. A spectator who insults the referee, makes personal comments, or becomes physically threatening (i.e. accuses the ref of being dishonest, refers derogatorily to the referee, or violates the referee's personal space) will be given a Black Card.