

OPERATING GUIDE

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Division USA Fencing



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INTRODUCTION

USA Fencing has adopted a set of Uniform Bylaws to be used by all Divisions. The Uniform Bylaws address matters of common concern, and Section 6.9 of the Uniform Bylaws provides that each Division must function under a Division Operating Guide. USA Fencing provides the following template Division Operating Guide, but recognizing that circumstances vary from Division to Division, the Uniform Bylaws allow Divisions that wish to do so to modify this template in certain ways to accommodate local conditions and concerns. By default, Divisions that make no modification will operate under the Operating Guide as set forth below. For those Divisions that do wish to customize the Operating Guide, USA Fencing also provides Division Operating Guide Instructions for doing so.

ONE | Purpose of this Operating Guide

This Operating Guide has been written to document the established procedures, best practices, and rules of the Western PA Division of USA Fencing ("the Division"). It is not intended to supersede, nor may it contradict, the division Bylaws. If a policy in this Operating Guide conflicts with the Division's Bylaws, that policy is null and void. Changes and variances to this Operating Guide may be adopted by the Division provided such modifications do not contravene USA Fencing policies or the Division Bylaws and have been submitted to and approved by USA Fencing acting through its Division Resource Team.

TWO | Who May Modify this Operating Guide

This Operating Guide may be modified in certain respects from time to time as procedures and rules change in the Western PA Division or USA Fencing. Changes to the Operating Guide do not need a vote of the Executive Committee (sometimes herein, "EC") of the Division unless the Division Bylaws or Operating Guide provide otherwise. However, the Division EC should review the Operating Guide on a timely basis -- at least once every three years -- and approve its continued use, or request that it may be modified as necessary. In the absence of another officer being assigned direct responsibility for this Operations Manual, the Secretary of the Division has the responsibility to maintain this document. All changes made to this document must be approved by USA Fencing, specifically the Division Resource Team.

This document is public to all members of the Division and shall always be maintained in its current form on the Division's website.

THREE | Executive Committee

The Executive Committee comprises the officers, at-large members, and any member clubs in the Division who desire to have a voice on the Executive Committee. Officers and At-Large members of the Executive Committee may, but need not be, affiliated with a club.

3.1 Officers

The Division By-Laws define the roles and responsibilities of each officer position (Article V: Officers and Duties), which may be augmented by this Division Operating Guide.

3.1.1 Non-Officer Advisors to the Executive Committee

FenceSafe Advisor:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisor:

Division Equipment Manager:

Division Sponsorship Manager:

3.2 At-Large Members

The Division may (but need not) in this Operating Guide provide for additional members of the Executive Committee to be elected from the membership as a whole.

3.3 Club Representatives

Each USA Fencing member club in good standing in the Division is entitled to representation on the Executive Committee by one individual member of that Committee who meets the qualifications stated in Section 3.0, above. If any officer or At-Large member of the Executive Committee is affiliated with a club, then that club is deemed to be represented. However, if any member club is not represented by an officer or At-Large member of the Executive Committee, then such club may, but is not required to, appoint one of its members to serve on the Executive Committee.

FOUR | Annual & Special Membership Meetings

The Division shall have at least one general membership meeting held in accordance with the Bylaws of the Division during each membership year. The Chair of the Division may call additional general meetings as necessary, and such will be held in accordance with the Bylaws of the Division (Article VII: Meetings of the Membership).

4.1 Notification of Meetings

In order to reach as many members of the Division as possible, notification of any and all membership meetings shall be made by several means: an email sent to the Division email list, a post on the Division Facebook page, and a post on the Division website.

FIVE | Division Elections

Elections are held in accordance with the Bylaws of the Division and the procedures listed here, if any.

5.1 Nominating Committee

For each annual membership meeting, a Nominating Committee, consisting of three voting members of the Division designated by the Chair and approved by a quorum of the Executive Committee, receives the names of individuals interested in running for one of the open positions on the Executive Committee, and, of the names received, recommends one individual for each open post. These nominations will be placed on a ballot along with a blank space for each open position for any write-in candidates.

5.2 Executive Committee Terms of Office

The terms of office for Executive Committee positions, except in cases of dismissal or resignation, will be two (2) years in duration, effective from August 1st following the elections until July 31st two years later. All members of the Executive Committee are eligible for re-election without term limits.

5.3 Executive Committee Classes

The Executive Committee consists of two classes of members: the first class includes the Chair, 1st Vice Chair, and Treasurer, and is subject to election in odd years; the second class includes the 2nd Vice Chair and Secretary, and is subject to election in even years.

5.4 Proxy Votes

Proxies in the form attached to this Operating Guide as Appendix A are sufficient, but this form is not required. However, any submitted proxy must unambiguously identify the voting member conferring the proxy, the person holding the proxy, the date or meeting for which the proxy is given and expires, and whether the votes to be cast by proxy are specified or discretionary with the holder.

SIX | Tournament Sanctioning

Only USA Fencing or the Division may sanction a USA Fencing tournament within the Division boundaries as provided in the Bylaws. Tournaments organized by USA Fencing within the Division's boundaries (such as North America Cups and regional tournaments) are not considered sanctioned by the Division and need not meet any requirements specific to the Division.

6.1 Requirements for Division Sanctioning of Tournaments

To be a Division sanctioned USA Fencing tournament, the tournament must meet these minimum requirements:

1. The tournament must be announced at least 14 days before it begins. That announcement must be in a public forum, such as a publicly accessible web page, flyer, or announcement on "AskFred" or its equivalent, and must state the competitions to be contested, all fees that will be charged, and the name and contact information of the person to whom notices of withdrawal must be sent (See Section 10.1, below).
2. The tournament must have a close of pre-registration of no later than 11:59 PM on the Thursday before the weekend of the tournament, in order to allow for at least one business day to address any complications with the Division or the National Office.
3. The tournament must appear on the official Division calendar as published on the Division web site (see Section 11, below) and such social media and other sites as the Division may utilize.
4. The hosting club or location and organizer must be insured for the full course of the tournament, in compliance with guidelines published by USA Fencing. This insurance must be through the USA Fencing club insurance program, or the equivalent from a third-party vendor. If the insurance is written by a third-party vendor, the Division reserves the right to obtain and approve a copy of the insurance policy (or its declarations) before sanctioning a tournament.
5. The competition must follow the rules of USA Fencing.
6. The competition must use a tournament format approved by USA Fencing (See USA Fencing's current Athlete Handbook for approved formats).
7. All tournament officials (e.g., bout committee, referees, armorers, medical staff) and such other persons as USA Fencing policy designates must meet USA Fencing's requirements for U.S. Center for SafeSport certification, background check clearance and other qualifications, and where mandated, one or more referees of the required level must be present for the duration of the competition.

SIX | Tournament Sanctioning (cont.)

8. If a competition results in classification changes, the .results file from FencingTime as well as the .ftx file with the entire tournament must be sent via email to the Division secretary, who will submit the results to the USA Fencing National Office to be processed. The competition results shall be posted on AskFred, Fencing Time Live, or the organizing club's website within 48 hours of the tournament's completion. Unexcused failure to meet this deadline could result in loss of an organizer's privileges to host sanctioned tournaments.



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SEVEN | Division Tournament Schedule

All USA Fencing member clubs in the Division have equal access to the Division Calendar for hosting competitions. Early in August, when the new season begins, the Division will announce the “opening” of the season’s calendar for tournaments on both the Division web page and on social media or by email to the Clubs.

When reviewing and awarding sanctioned tournaments to member clubs, the Division will consider:

- a. USA Fencing's National and Regional Calendar
- b. Local high school or college competitions
- c. Division organized events
- d. Traditionally held tournaments
- e. Calendars of other USA Fencing Division's that are in proximity to the Division

7.1 Scheduling Process

The Executive Committee sets the Division Calendar for the season at an Executive Committee meeting held no later than August 15 of each calendar year. The Executive Committee may set the first half of the calendar (August through January dates) at that meeting and leave the remaining half of the calendar (February through July dates) for a meeting to be held no later than January 15th of that fencing season.

The scheduling process shall be as follows:

Requests from member clubs wishing to hold tournaments should have the following minimum information:

- a. Date of competitions
- b. Name of the tournament
- c. Type of competitions (classification)
- d. Location
- e. Competitions to be contested

Requests should be submitted using the Tournament Sanctioning Request form found on the Division website.

Once the calendar is approved, it shall be posted on such media as the Division uses to communicate with its members (see Section 11, below). The Executive Committee or its delegate shall arrange for notification of the posting of the schedule with a link to where it is posted to be emailed to the Division membership as it exists on the date of posting. Such notification may be sent from the USA Fencing National Office or may be sent by the Division utilizing a current and official membership list.

SEVEN | Division Tournament Schedule (cont.)

Clubs may request additional tournaments after publication of the schedule by sending an email to the Division Secretary providing the information needed for sanctioning. The Secretary will confirm receipt of the request and forward it to the Division Executive Committee requesting approval. If no objections are received within 5 days, the tournament is added to the calendar.

7.2 Schedule Changes

Deviations from the published calendar will be allowed with the approval of the Executive Committee or its designated subcommittee for good cause and shall be announced to the membership of the Division in the same manner as the calendar was publicized.

EIGHT | Division Tournaments

The following are considered Division Tournaments, for which the Division serves as the sanctioned organizer:

- Junior Olympic Qualifiers;
- Division II, Division III, and Youth 14 Summer National Championship Qualifiers; and
- Such other competitions for which the Division serves as the organizer, i.e. Fight Strong!, Lil Yinzers, other fundraisers for special causes.

8.1 Tournament Official Honorarium, Per Diem and Meals Policy for Division Events

The Division has set the following honoraria and per diem for individuals serving as officials at Division Tournaments:

The Division has set a pay scale comparable to USA Fencing's National tournaments for Division-run tournaments (e.g., Junior Olympic and Summer National Championship Qualifiers):

National Referee Rating	Daily Honorarium
N1, N2 (and Bout Committee/Armory)	\$250
R1 and R2	\$200
L1 and L2	\$150

8.2 Travel and Hotel

The Division may provide additional compensation for tournament officials traveling an unusual distance. In addition, hotel accommodations are provided, as needed, for Division Tournaments. The officials may be asked to share a room with another official of the same gender and appropriate age.

Because the Division Operating Guide has the approval of the Executive Committee, inclusion of these amounts in Section 8.2 satisfies the requirements of Division Bylaws Section 5.3.d.

NINE | Club Tournaments

Clubs are encouraged by the Division to host competitions throughout the year. These may be "Unsanctioned" or "Sanctioned".

Unsanctioned competitions may be of any type and should preferably not conflict with other tournaments on the Division Calendar. Unsanctioned competitions do not award USA Fencing classifications. These competitions should state clearly that they are being held "unsanctioned" when advertised/posted on AskFred, social media or by other means.

Clubs and other private organizers holding Division sanctioned tournaments are responsible for posting the results of the competitions and reporting any classification changes as provided in Section 6.1.7 of this Operating Guide. The reports shall include a list of SafeSport qualified officials, indicating their positions at the tournament, the ratings of all referees used in the competitions and the name of the Division representative in attendance, as provided in Section 4.4 of the Division Bylaws.

TEN | Tournament Fees

The Division does not have any official position on the fees that a club may charge for tournament registration or entry, but such fees must be stated in the official announcement of the competition. Such fees must be uniform for all competitors, except for any complementary entry or other allowance given to Division Officers/Executive Committee members.

If an organizer intends to charge an entrance or other fee to non-competitors, it must apply equally to all such individuals, including, for example, to affiliates of the organizing club. The Division will not sanction any club competition in which excessive fees are charged by an organizer to non-club members or if any other deliberate pattern of discouraging attendance is employed. Organizers may, however, limit access to the venue where space or safety considerations require, so long as such limitation is not discriminatory.

10.1 Division Tournament Refund Policy

Any fencer who has pre-paid fees for a Division Tournament and is unable to fence in that tournament due to a family emergency, injury or other valid emergency excuse will have all paid fees refunded within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the tournament if the organizer was timely notified of the withdrawal in advance of the competition.

Fencers who withdraw for non-emergency reasons will not have the registration portion of the fee (if one is charged) refunded, and entry fees will not be refunded unless the fencer withdraws more than 72 hours in advance of the competition to which it applies.

For those cases in which a fencer qualifies to a national tournament by another route after paying to fence in the Division qualifier, the fencer's competition entry fees for the qualifier will be refunded, but not the registration fee.

ELEVEN | Division Website & Social Media Presence

The Division shall establish an Internet presence that is made known to and is accessible by the Division members. That presence may be in the form of a proprietary URL, a dedicated Facebook page, or similar social media outlet. The Division website (www.westernpadivision.org) is self-managed by the Secretary of the Division unless the Bylaws or this Operating Guide assign that function to another officer. The Division has the following additional social media accounts that it manages:

Facebook: Western PA Division - USA Fencing

Instagram: @westernpadivision



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TWELVE | Division Equipment & Usage

The Division maintains a certain amount of equipment for use by its member clubs for tournaments. The Division Equipment Manager is responsible for the inventory and maintenance of all equipment.



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THIRTEEN | Division Club Rental Policy

The Division will pay an agreed sum to any Division Member Club whose venue is used to host a Division Tournament or Division sponsored clinic or other function. The amount and terms of payment for this service requires approval of the Division's Executive Committee.



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Appendix A: Western PA Division Election Proxy Form

The Western PA Division of USA Fencing
2024-2025
ELECTION PROXY FORM

Name of Member:

USA Fencing Membership #:

Club Affiliation:

Choose one only:

☐ I designate _____ to vote on my behalf)

☐ I wish to vote for the following candidates/positions (Absentee Ballot):

Signature of Member:

Date (Required):

This proxy is valid for no more than thirty (30) days after the above signature date.

Note: You must be a voting member of USA Fencing by Feb. 1 of the membership year to be eligible to vote and/or assign a proxy. The Division will validate every proxy form received before the election is held.



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USAFENCING.ORG