



GHSFL

Competition Format

2017-18 Season

23 October 2017

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Preface

The competition format is set by the Board of Directors. This document is a summary of the current format. Questions about the competition format should be directed to the Board:

- Chair Terry White terry.white@ghsfl.net
- Vice Chair Kathy Vail kathy.vail@ghsfl.net

Questions about the wording of this document, or suggestions for clarifying it should be sent to:

- Tournament Director Chris Grimshaw chris.grimshaw@ghsfl.net

Changes for the 2017-18 season

The following changes were made since the start of the previous season.

- “Standard start times” was added on page 3 was added to show the start times that will be used whenever possible.
- “Eligible fencers” on page 5 was updated to require fencers to compete in four tournaments (at least half of the regular season tournaments). In order to be eligible for the Championship.
- “How many strips is a school likely to be assigned?” on page 7 was updated to better reflect the likely number of strips. This does not represent a change on how the calculation is done.
- “Submitting rosters and assigning responsibility for strips” on page 8 was updated to remove the requirement for the name of the responsible adult to be submitted along with the roster. The responsible adult must still sign in on the day of the tournament in order for the school’s fencers to compete.
- “Submitting rosters and assigning responsibility for strips” on page 8 was updated to say how the size of events would be limited when a planned tournament has to be cancelled.
- “Timeline” on page 8 was updated to say that the host must inform the tournament Director if non-standard start times are required for a tournament, or if the tournament will be held at an address other than that of the high school.
- “Safety checks” on page 9 was updated to say that (in addition to the safety check) foil masks are to be rejected.
- “Referees and floor judges” on page 10 was updated to remove the requirement to assign floor judges to the last few bouts of regular season tournaments.

The following change was made during the 2017-18 season.

- “Safety checks” on page 9 was updated to include instructions for checking the elastic straps on masks.

Tournament season

According to the League's bylaws, the tournament season begins no later than 31 October and ends no later than 31 March. The Board of Directors sets the schedule for each tournament season. The rest of this section mentions several goals that the Board generally keeps in mind when setting the schedule. The Board is not bound by these goals, and indeed it is unlikely that a schedule can be devised that meets all the goals.

Regular season

The regular season consists of several rounds (currently seven) of individual (rather than team) tournaments. The Board designates dates for each round, and those dates are selected so as to minimize conflicts with national fencing tournaments, qualifiers for national championships, major school breaks, major religious holidays, ACT and SAT testing dates.

In order to keep tournaments to a manageable size, rounds usually consist of more than one tournament. In that case, the schools are split between the tournaments in a way that makes each tournament approximately equal in size and strength, and with the goals of ensuring that every school fences every other school about the same number of times and keeping the average distance traveled relatively low.

The schedule designates a school to host each tournament. All schools are expected to host tournaments, except schools that are new to the league are excused from hosting for the first two seasons in which they compete in any tournaments.

Standard start times

Unless the availability of the facility makes it impossible, the following start times will be used:

- 7:30 – Sign in opens
- 8:15 – Referee meeting
- 8:30 – Men's sign in closes
- 10:00 – Women's sign in closes

Championships

After the regular season, there are two championship tournaments; the Individual Championship followed by the Team Championship.

The schools that won the previous season's Team Championship (generally two schools, one for the Women's Championship and one for the Men's Championship) are given the opportunity to host the next season's Championships.

Scrimmages

The league will sanction scrimmages, which are tournaments that do not award points or affect standings. The host must give the board one week's notice, the tournament must be held at a GHSFL school, and all the participants must be GHSFL schools.

Scrimmages may include individual or team events in any format, they may be open to all GHSFL schools or only some of them, and they may be open to all fencers or only certain classes of fencer (such as novices, or freshmen). The host school is responsible for providing any medals or prizes that are awarded.

Points and Standings

Points

All individual tournaments except scrimmages award points. In combined tournaments (all schools compete in a single tournament) including the Individual Championship, points are awarded to the top 32 fencers in each event. In split tournaments (schools are split between two or more tournaments), points are awarded to the top 16 fencers in each event. Fencers who did not qualify for the direct elimination round are not awarded points even if they finished in the top 32 or 16. Points awarded for each place are:

Places 1-16:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Split tournaments:	64	52	40	n/a	32	30	28	26	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
Combined tournaments:	128	104	80	n/a	64	60	56	52	36	34	32	30	28	26	24	22
Places 17-32:	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Combined tournaments:	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Standings

Individual rankings

Men's and women's individual points lists are published after each regular season round showing the number of points earned by each fencer in the current season. These points are used for initial seeding at the next tournament.

The final individual rankings for the season are the places earned in the Individual Championship. Fencers who do not compete in the Individual Championship are not ranked.

Team rankings

Men's and women's team points lists are published after each individual tournament showing the number of points earned by all fencers at each school in the current season, including the Individual Championship. The school's place on the points list decides the seeding in the Team Championship.

The final team rankings for the season are the places earned in the Team Championship. Teams that do not compete in the Team Championship are not ranked.

Qualifying for the Championships

Eligible fencers

Fencers are "eligible" to compete in the Championships if they have competed in at least half of the regular season tournaments (not including scrimmages). This means that if there are seven regular season tournaments, fencers must compete in at least four to be eligible. This is a minimum requirement to compete in either Championship.

Individual Championship

The Individual Championship is limited to 84 men and 84 women. Of the "eligible" fencers who have earned points, the 84 who are highest on the points list (including ties for 84th place) qualify for the Individual Championship.

Team Championship

The Team Championship is limited to 24 men's teams and 24 women's teams. In order to compete, the school must have enough "eligible" fencers (at least three) to form a team. Of those teams, the 24 that are highest on the points list qualify for the Team Championship.

Tournament format

Regular season

Regular season tournaments consist only of individual, rather than team, events. Each tournament must include events for men's épée and women's épée. The host can choose to also include events for men's and women's foil and sabre. Each event consists of two rounds:

Round 1: Pools

Initial seeding is based on the fencer's place in the current season's points list (see Points and Standings on page 5). In the case of the first tournament of the season, initial seeding is based on the fencer's place in the points list at the end of the previous season (not the place the fencer earned in the Individual Championship).

Pools of six and seven fencers are preferred. Pools of five and six fencers may be used if necessary. In the unlikely event of there being fewer than ten fencers, all fencers should be in one pool. The pool may be fenced on two strips to save time (highly recommended for pools of eight or nine). In the even more unlikely event that there are fewer than three fencers, the round of pools is skipped and if there are two fencers we proceed to the final.

Round 2: Direct Elimination

The top 80% of the fencers (rounded up to a whole number) are promoted to the Direct Elimination round.

A gold medal is awarded to the winner of the final and a silver medal to the loser of the final. The losing semi-finalists are each awarded a bronze medal. There is no fence-off for third place.

Individual Championship

The format for the Individual Championship is the same as for the regular season. Medals are awarded to the top eight fencers in each event and a traveling trophy is awarded to the winner of each event.

Team Championship

Matches in the Team Championship are standard team matches between two teams of three fencers (with an optional reserve) using the 45-touch relay format. Seeding is based on the school's place in the team points list following the Individual Championship. Ties in the seeding are broken based on points earned by the schools' top ranked fencers of that sex (and if necessary, the second ranked and so on), any remaining ties are broken by drawing lots at the Individual Championship. The top four seeds are given a bye into the second round.

In round one, seeds 5 and below compete in a direct elimination bracket until four teams remain (that is until the end of the table of 8). Those four teams are seeded 5 through 8 in round 2 based on their initial seeding.

Round two is direct elimination starting from a full table of 8 and with a fence-off for third place. Trophies are awarded for the top four places.

Scrimmages

The host can alter the tournament format for scrimmages. For example, by allowing all fencers to advance to the direct elimination round in individual events, or by allowing teams to continue until they have lost twice in a team event, or by adding one-touch events to the tournament.

Medals and trophies

GHSFL provides the medals and trophies described above for regular season and championship tournaments. The host school is responsible for providing any medals or other prizes offered at scrimmages.

Responsibilities of participating schools

Responsible adult

Schools must name an adult (such as the Faculty Sponsor) who will be responsible for the fencers at the tournament. The responsible adult must be present for as long as any of the school's fencers are at the tournament.

Coaches and referees

Except at scrimmages, referees must be certified by GHSFL or USA Fencing, or must be candidates for GHSFL certification who are being observed by their instructor.

Schools are responsible for the conduct of their coaches and referees. Nobody will coach and referee at the same tournament. Coaches must wear the school's colors, GHSFL or neutral attire; they must not wear private club attire.

Fencers

Black cards

If a fencer receives a black card for any reason, the following penalties apply:

- The fencer receives no points for this tournament.
- When deciding Championship eligibility, the fencer is not considered to have competed in this tournament.
- The fencer is not allowed to fence in the next tournament (regular season or Championship).

Medal ceremonies

Medal winners must appear at the medal ceremony in fencing uniform (jacket and knickers). Fencers who do not appear or are improperly dressed will not be awarded a medal or receive any points for that tournament.

Tournament fees

At regular season and championship tournaments, the host may collect from all participating schools a fee of \$7 for the greater of (a) the estimated number of fencers they provided a week in advance and (b) the number of fencers who sign in. Participating schools should be prepared to pay the combined fees for all their fencers with a single check, payable to the host school, on the day of the tournament. The host will provide a receipt on request.

Fees for the scrimmages are set by the host school.

Strips at tournaments

All schools who are not in their first season, including the host, are responsible for strips. Because it takes time for a new school to save money for equipment and train referees, they are excused from being responsible for a strip for the first season in which they compete provided they have less than 15 fencers at the tournament. Instead, they must provide one timer/scorekeeper at each tournament in which they compete

Being responsible for a strip means providing:

- Scoring equipment (2 reels, 2 floor cords, 1 scoring box and 1 long extension cord).
- Referees' equipment (test weight, shims, timer, clipboard, pencil).
- A referee and (if the referee wants one) a timer/scorekeeper.

How many strips is a school likely to be assigned?

The following shows the likely number based on the total fencers (men and women) from the school who compete. Note that in exceptional circumstances the number of strips may be more or less than shown below.

- Less than 14 fencers: probably 1 strip, possibly 0.
- For 14-27 fencers: probably 2 strips, possibly 1.
- For 28-41 fencers: probably 3 strips, possibly 2. ... And so on.

Submitting rosters and assigning responsibility for strips

The aim of this procedure is to tell schools how many strips they have been assigned by the Monday before the tournament to give them time to arrange for the required number of referees. To simplify matters the Tournament Director will be the single point of contact for reporting rosters and assigning strips (until 10 PM on the day before the tournament).

Hosts need to provide the participating schools with start times, directions and other information about the tournament. If they want, they can send that information to the Tournament Director who will forward it to the schools, or they can send it directly.

In order for strips to be assigned in time, all schools (including the hosts) must provide an estimate of the number of fencers they will have. The number of fencers that a school must pay a tournament fee for is the number they estimated or the number who actually sign in, **whichever is greater**.

The hosts will tell the Tournament Director the maximum number of strips they have room for. The number that will actually be assigned will usually be less than the maximum number; it will most often (but not always) be the number of strips required for men's pools. If there is an early deadline for the end of the tournament, more strips will be assigned. The number of strips assigned will never be more than the maximum that the host has room for.

If a regular season round has fewer tournaments than planned (e.g. the round was supposed to have three tournaments, but only two tournaments are held), each men's and women's event will be limited to the number of available strips multiplied by seven (this ensures no more than one men's and one women's pool per strip).

Timeline

- Two weeks before the tournament (earlier if there is an intervening holiday), the Tournament Director will remind all schools that their estimated number of fencers is due by Friday. He will also remind host schools to report the maximum number of strips they have room for.
- By Friday (8 days before the tournament) all schools, including the hosts, will send the Tournament Director the number of fencers they expect to have at the tournament. Schools who do not provide an estimate will be assumed not to be competing.
- Also by Friday, the hosts will send the Tournament Director the maximum number of strips they have room for. They will also provide any guidance they have for the number of strips that should be assigned (e.g. more strips may be needed if there is a deadline for finishing the tournament). If it is not possible to use the standard start times, they will provide start times that will be used for this tournament. If the tournament is not being held at the high school, the host will provide the address of the tournament location.
- Over the weekend, the Tournament Director will make the strip assignments and will inform the schools, by Sunday evening, how many strips they have been assigned. He will also remind schools that their rosters are due by Wednesday. If a host doesn't have enough room for all the fencers who want to compete, a limit will be set on the number of fencers that schools can send to that tournament and the larger schools will have to reduce their numbers.
- By Wednesday (3 days before the tournament) all schools, including the hosts, will send their rosters. If the roster has more fencers than the estimated number already provided, then an additional strip may be assigned.
- The Tournament Director will enter the rosters in the Fencing Time tournament files before sending them to the hosts.
- Any last minute changes to the roster may be sent to the Tournament Director up until 10 PM on Friday evening (the Tournament Director will forward the changes to the host), after that all communication should be with the host.

Responsibilities of host schools

The following are minimum requirements for running a GHSFL tournament.

Setting up the tournament

Layout of strips

Fencing strips must be the size specified by USA Fencing: 14 m (46') long and 1.5 m to 2 m (5' to 6' 6") wide. There must be enough clear space around the strip to allow for safe fencing. This means:

- At least 1.5 m (5'), ideally 2 m (6' 6") or more, run-off space at each end of the strip.
- At least 2', ideally 3' or more, between the edge of the strip and the scoring table or any other obstruction.
- At least 6' 6", ideally 8' or more, between strips when the space will be occupied by the scoring table.
- At least 10' 6", ideally 12' or more, between strips when the space will be occupied by two referees.
- At least 7', ideally 9' or more, between the edge of the strip and a wall when the space will be occupied by one referee. However, it is preferable to avoid this and have a scoring table between the strip and the wall.

There also needs to be enough room for spectators to get from the doors to their seats and fencers to move from strip to strip without stepping on a strip or passing between referees and their strips.

Number of strips

For regular season tournaments, the host must have space for at least eight strips. However, every effort should be made (as long as safety is not compromised) to accommodate all fencers who want to compete.

For championship tournaments, the host must have space for at least 12 strips.

Tournament management software

Hosts must use Fencing Time version 4.2a or later to manage the tournament. If necessary, GHSFL will provide a Fencing Time license key for use at the tournament. At the start of the season, each school will receive a copy of the GHSFL Fencing Time Instructions document which describes how to use Fencing Time to manage a GHSFL tournament.

Bout committee

The purpose of the Bout Committee is to settle any questions that may arise about the application of the rules. The composition of the Bout Committee will be decided by the Vice Chair of the Board prior to the tournament.

Safety checks

The host must perform safety checks on masks and gloves and stamp those that pass so that referees can verify.

Masks should have no dents in the mesh, broken wires or sharp edges. The mesh should be tested with a mask punch. The gasket must be secure and must not allow a tip to slide through.

The integrity of the mask's elastic strap should be tested to ensure that the strap(s) stretches, that the elastic has not been worn out and that the elastic is in satisfactory condition. To check: give the strap a gentle tug. If there is no stretch or if it's just too big to hold the mask in place, reject the mask and advise that the strap be repaired. Do not confiscate the mask. It is acceptable to stitch up a band to make it shorter as long as it can still stretch to hold reasonably well to the back of the head; otherwise, it must be replaced. We understand there is some judgement involved in the terms "decent condition" and "reasonably well". Therefore, for this season, it is advisable to be a bit more lenient in accepting or rejecting masks. For questionable cases, point out the problem and advise the fencer to get the strap repaired soon

In addition, foil masks (with conductive material on the bib) must not be used.

Gloves with manufactured holes for body cords may be used. Gloves which have tears or rips which penetrate the upper layer of material may not be used.

Running the tournament

Running pools

Pools should be of six and seven fencers if at all possible. If there are more strips available than there are pools, the larger pools can be run on two strips in order to save time. This is preferable to increasing the number of pools.

Withdrawals and exclusions

There are only two ways that a fencer can be removed from the event other than being eliminated in competition.

1. The fencer is unable to continue fencing because of a valid medical reason or a family emergency. The term for this is Withdrawal. In this case, a GHSFL Medical Withdrawal Form must be completed.
2. The fencer has received a black card. The term for this is Exclusion.

Having to leave because of a prior commitment (no matter how important) is not an emergency, and such a fencer should receive a black card for failing to appear on the strip when called.

If a fencer withdraws or is excluded during pools, the rules say that the fencer should be removed from the pool. Any remaining pool bouts for that fencer will be skipped and the results of any completed pool bouts for that fencer will be ignored.

If a fencer withdraws or is excluded during a DE bout, the fencer loses that bout.

Fencers who complete all their pool bouts and qualify for the DE round but leave the venue and do not appear for the DE round should be withdrawn (if they left for a valid reason) or excluded (if they left for any other reason) from their first DE bout, the results of the fencers' pools are not affected.

Referees and floor judges

In the final (and if possible, in the semi-finals), the referee, timer/scorekeeper and any floor judges should be from schools not involved in the bout. It is possible that referees may have some sort of connection to several schools; for the purpose of deciding if they are neutral, they are considered to be associated only with the school they are refereeing for at this tournament.

As long as neutral floor judges are available, they should be assigned for all semi-final and final bouts of the Individual Championship and the final and 3rd place match of the Team Championship. Fencers can *request* floor judges in any bout.

Finals

No other bouts should be fenced while the men's or women's final is in progress.