

The Staff:

Bakhyt (bak-heet) Abdikulov, our Foil and Epee coach, is from Kazakhstan and a former member of the World Champion Soviet Union National Team. He is the former Head Coach of the Mexican National Team and former United States National Coach for Junior Women's Foil. He has also coached the U.S. Senior Women's Foil National Champions

Aaron Stuewe, our Sabre coach, has been fencing for fourteen years and has extensive experience teaching fencing to all ages. Aaron is a three time Sabre NCAA All-American from Penn State University. He is the Volunteer Assistant Coach at Northwestern University. Aaron is also our Fencing Club Manager.

Ed Kaihatsu, the Fencing Club President, fenced for the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana. A former Big Ten Champion in the individual and team event and NCAA 1st Team All-American, he was also on four US World Championship Teams. He is a three time U.S. National Veterans Foil Champion and once in Sabre. He has earned an International 'A' Rating in Foil since 1981 and holds an International Referee License. Ed is currently the Associate Head Fencing Coach at Northwestern University. He has been coaching there since 1989.

Would you like to learn?

Lakeshore members, friends and family members are welcome to come to our practice sessions to see what fencing is like and participate in our fencing classes! It is definitely a sport for the whole family! It is excellent exercise for your legs and heart while training your mind to be sharp. It also teaches you a philosophy of strategy that can be used in many situations outside of fencing.

Available Times

For practice times please contact our manager, Aaron Stuewe at Aaron.Stuewe@lakeshoreathleticclubs.com or call at 773.477.9888 ext. 177

If you have any questions, please contact our manager, Aaron Stuewe at Aaron.Stuewe@lakeshoreathleticclubs.com or call at 773-477-9888 ext. 177



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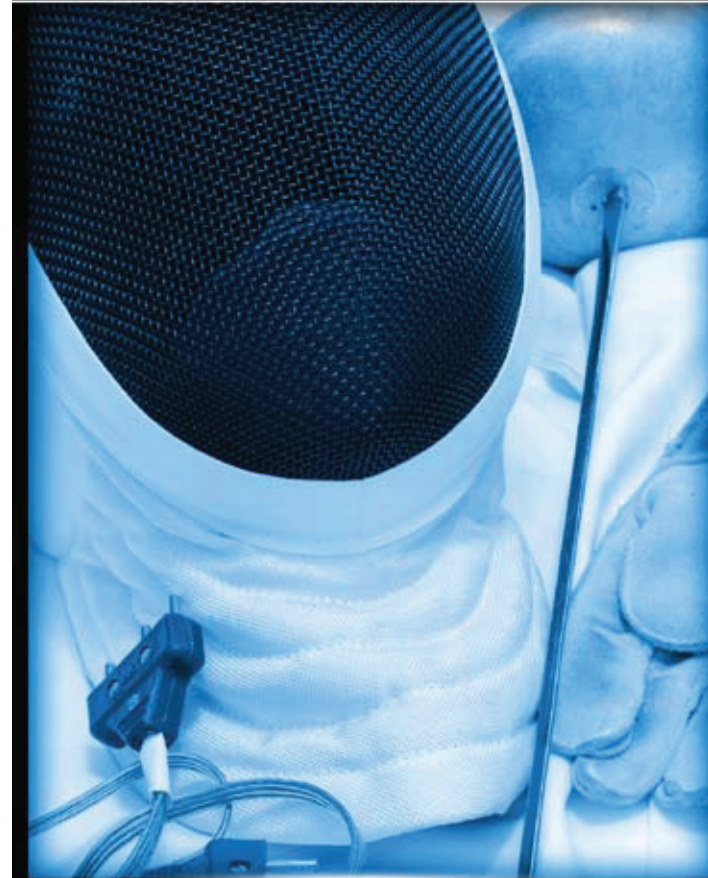
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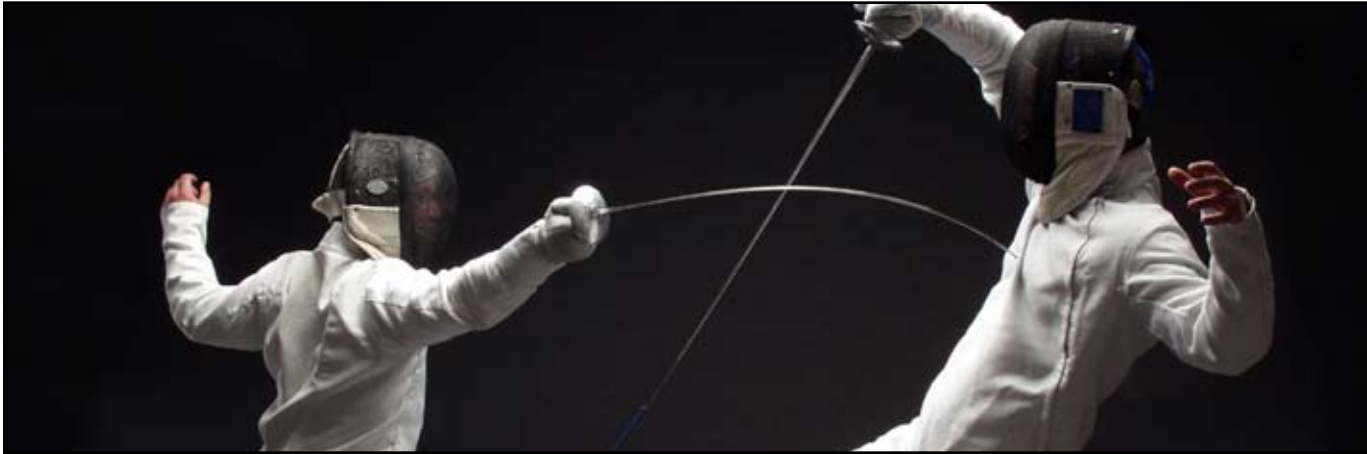
FENCING



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FENCING



A Modern Sport

The sport of fencing is fast and athletic, a far cry from the choreographed bouts you see in film or on the stage. Instead of swinging from a chandelier or leaping from balconies, you will see two fencers performing intense, powerful plays on a 6-foot by 44-foot strip. The movement is so fast the touches are scored electrically and the winner can be determined in the blink of an eye! A lot more like Star Wars than Errol Flynn.

The Weapons

Foil, epee and saber are the three weapons used in the sport of fencing. While some fencers compete in all three events, elite generally focus their energies on mastering one weapon.

Foil - The Sport of Kings

The foil is a descendant of the light court sword formerly used by nobility to train for duels. It has a flexible, rectangular blade approximately 35 inches in length and weighing less than one pound. Points are scored with the tip of the blade and must land on valid target: torso from shoulders to groin in the front and to the waist in the back. The arms, neck, head and legs are considered off-target - hits to this non-valid target temporarily stops or halts the fencing action, but does not result any points being awarded. This concept of on-target and off-target evolved from the theory of 18th-century fencing masters, who instructed their pupils to only attack the vital areas of the body - i.e. the torso. Of course, the head is also a vital area of the body, but attacks to face were considered unsporting and therefore discouraged. Although top foil fencers still employ classical technique of parries and thrusts, the flexible nature of the foil blade permits the modern elite foil fencer to attack an opponent from seemingly impossible angles. Competitors often fly down the fencing strip at their opponent, looking to whip or flick the point of their blade at the flank or back 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.

Epee - Freestyle Fencing

The epee (pronounced "EPP-pay"- literally meaning "sword" in French) is the descendant of the dueling sword, but is heavier, weighing approximately 27 ounces, with a stiffer, thicker blade and a larger guard. As in foil, touches are scored only with the point of the blade, however in epee the entire body, head-to-toe, is valid target - much like in an actual duel. Similar to the foil, the point of the epee is fixed with a blunt, spring-loaded button. However, the epee tip requires more than 750 grams of pressure to register a touch with the scoring machine (basically, epee fencers have to hit harder). Because the entire body is a valid target area, epee fencers do not have to wear metallic clothing or "lamé." There is no concept of "off-target" in epee - anything goes.

Saber - Hack and Slash The saber is the modern version of the slashing cavalry sword. As such, the major difference between saber and the other two weapons is that saberists can score with the edge of their blade as well as their point. In saber, the target area is the entire body above the waist, excluding the hands. The lower half is not valid target, which is meant to simulate a cavalry rider on a horse. In addition, saber employs rules of right of way which are very similar to foil but with subtle differences. Like foil, the fencer who starts to attack first is given priority should his opponent counter-attack. However, saber referees are much less forgiving of hesitation by an attacker. It is common to see a saber fencer execute a stop cut against their opponent's forearm during such a moment of hesitation, winning right of way and the point. Again, as in foil, the saber 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 stop the fencing action. Saber fencing is also the first of the three weapons to feature a wireless scoring system. If epee is the weapon of patient, defensive strategy, then saber is its polar opposite. In saber, the rules of right of way

strongly favor the fencer who is aggressive, and a mere graze by the blade against the lamé registers a touch with the scoring machine. These circumstances naturally make saber a fast, aggressive game, with fencers rushing their opponent from the moment their referee gives the instruction to fence. In fact, a lopsided saber match can literally be over in seconds. As fending off the attack of a skilled opponent is nearly impossible, saber 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 a hair's breadth.

The Bout Competitors win a fencing bout (what an individual "game" is called) by being the first to score 15 points (in direct elimination play) or 5 points (in preliminary pool play) against their opponent, or by having a higher score than their opponent when the time limit expires. Each time a fencer lands a valid hit - a touch - on their opponent, they receive one point. The time limit for direct elimination matches is nine minutes - three three-minute periods with a one-minute break between each. How to Watch a Fencing Bout For those new to fencing, it can often be challenging to follow the lightning speed of the fencers' actions. To become more comfortable in watching a fencing bout, it often helps focus on the actions of just one fencer. The fencer being attacked defends himself by use of a parry, a blocking-motion used to deflect the opponent's blade, after which they may attempt to score with a riposte (literally "answer" in French). In fact, you may notice a particular cadence to the bout as the fencers rhythmically alternate roles as attacker and defender. Fencers seek to maintain a safe distance from each other - that is, out of range of the other's attack. Then, one may try to close this distance to gain the advantage for an attack. At times, a fencer will make a false attack - a feint - to probe the types of reactions and possible defenses by the opponent. Much of the fencing bout consists of this preparation, during which a fencer simultaneously determine their opponent's true intentions while feeding them false information of their own. The complexity of this premeditated "conversation" between the two opponents represents one of the more subtle beauties of the sport. Of course, eventually one or both fencers will land a valid hit. When this occurs, the referee stops the bout and - in foil and saber - determines who was attacking, if their opponent successfully defended themselves, and which fencer should be awarded a touch, if any.

Benefits of Fencing

There are many benefits to participating in youth fencing. Children and adults learn good sportsmanship and self-discipline. They learn to compete independently as well as for a team; they learn to enjoy winning and profit from defeats, while becoming physically fit and healthy; and, most importantly, they learn to make complex decisions, analyze problems, and think fast. These ideals help fencers reach their potential in many areas other than fencing. Remember that the primary motivating factor for entering sports, for people of all ages, is the desire to have fun.

Don't forget, Olympic Champions have fun too!