

Operating Manual of the Gold Coast Florida Division of USA Fencing

1. Purpose of this Manual

This manual has been written to document established Gold Coast Florida Division (henceforth referred as GCD) procedures, best practices, and rules. It is not intended to supersede, nor may it contradict, the Gold Coast Division's Bylaws. Where a policy in this manual may conflict with the Division By-Laws, that policy is null and void.

2. Who May Modify this Manual

This manual may be modified from time to time as procedures and rules change in the Division. Changes to the manual do not need a vote of the Executive Committee of the GCD. However, the GCD Executive Committee should review the manual 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 an officer being assigned direct responsibility for this Operations Manual, the Secretary of the Division has the responsibility to maintain this document.

While only a Division officer or officers may modify this document, this document is public to all members of the Division.

3. Officers

3.1. Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Division acts as the Chief Executive Officer of the Division, and is responsible for the smooth running of the Division, enforcing the bylaws of the GCD of USA Fencing, as well as the rules set for in the USA Fencing Athlete Handbook, Operations Manual and USA Fencing rules.

The Chairperson leads the meeting of the Division Executive Committee as well as the Division meetings of the membership.

The Chairperson ensures that the responsibilities of the other officers and appointed Committees and Task Forces of the Division are met.

The Chairperson of the Division acts as one of the signers on the bank account.

Lastly, the Chairperson is the public face of the GCD of USA Fencing, and serves as the liaison to the National Office of USA Fencing.

3.2. Vice Chairperson

The Executive Committee benefits from the given expertise of a Vice-Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson succeeds the Chairperson if, for some reason, the current Chairperson is unwilling or unable to fulfill his or her duties.

3.3. Secretary

The Secretary keeps the official minutes of all Executive Committee and Division meetings. In addition, the Secretary is responsible for the reporting of tournament results and ratings changes to the offices of USA Fencing.

The Secretary is responsible for communicating to the membership of the division all relevant information such as meeting dates, agendas, minutes, and any other information concerning the membership and the operation of the division.

The Secretary is responsible for filing any officer reports as required by US Fencing.

The Secretary also coordinates the Division public presence, including Web Page support and updating any public media accounts the Division should choose to operate. Division announcements and press releases should be coordinated by the Division Secretary, including updating and maintenance of Division events on AskFred, the Division webpage (in coordination with the webmaster for the Division, where appropriate), and any and all social media accounts.

Additional duties include, but are not limited to: submission of the official results and rating changes resulting from tournaments held in the Division, referee utilization reports (shared with Division FOC) for Division events, and the upkeep of this document.

3.4. Treasurer

Keeps all financial records of the Division, and ensures that Division funds are properly recorded and accounted for. The Treasurer is also responsible for filing the yearly statement of financial position with USA Fencing, as well as ensuring compliance with any other necessary financial reporting. The Treasurer must give a complete account of the Division Finances at least once a year, though more often is recommended. The Treasurer is one of the signers on the Division bank account.

The Treasurer may also have to collate information for IRS 1099 income reporting, and issued the required 1099 forms at the end of the calendar year.

6. Division Fencing Officials Commission (FOC)

The Division FOC is a semi-permanent, appointed member who serves at the pleasure of the Executive Committee. The Division FOC is responsible for overseeing the development, continued professional education, and hiring of referees in the Division. The Division FOC is the first point of contact between referees and the Division.

Ideally, the Division FOC is an active referee with a USA Fencing rating of "5" or above in one weapon, and with referee experience at the local, regional, and National level. The Chairperson is under no obligation to fill this role if they feel there are no qualified candidates among the members of the Division.

While not a voting member of the Executive Committee, the Division FOC is considered an ad hoc member of the EC unless specifically excluded in deliberations or meetings.

7. Division Armorer

The Division Armorer is a semi-permanent, appointed member who serves at the pleasure of the Executive Committee. The Division Armorer is responsible for the procurement, upkeep, and inventory of any Division owned scoring and timekeeping equipment, ascertaining that safety equipment inspections are properly conducted at all sanctioned division events, and advising the division of new development in reference to equipment regulations.

8. Other Division Duties

Other duties to be taken on by a variety of officers or appointed positions in the Division:

- A. Regional tournament proposals and coordination
- B. Division Points lists and updates
- C. Website upkeep (when not done by the Secretary)
- D. Support for Division sponsored events and/or qualifiers (either onsite or otherwise, i.e., adding Division Events on AskFred)

4. Elections of Officers

Elections are held in accordance with the bylaws of the Division. In the case of single issue decisions voting may be by voice vote rather than secret ballot.

4.1.Election Procedures

Elections are conducted as per the bylaws of the GCD. In the case where a seat or seats is not contested, vote may be by popular acclamation and there is no need for a secret ballot.

4.2.Proxies

It is understood that not every voting member of the GCD can attend meetings of the Division. Any voting member of USA Fencing, who has satisfied the requirements for Division membership is eligible to hold elective office in THE DIVISION. Voting members and eligible office holders must be USA Fencing members by February 1 of the fencing season, in good standing, and 18 years old or older by the election date. In addition, eligible office holders must have passed the background check and Safe Sports as required by the USA Fencing. Any member may assign their voting proxy to another voting member of the Division with a signed affidavit that states as follows: "I (member name), with USA Fencing membership number (member number) assign my proxy to (voting member name) to vote my proxy without restriction. This proxy expires on (date not more than 10 days in advance). (member signed, dated, and with birth year)"

Proxies without an expiration date are assumed to be invalid ten days after proxy was signed. Undated proxies are invalid and may not be voted.

5. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) is made up of the officers of the Division, and those other members that may be appointed by the officers for their areas of expertise. Any appointed members serve as non voting members of the Executive Committee. Only the officers of the Division have a vote in the deliberations of the Executive Committee, and only the officers may be counted towards a quorum of the committee. For this purpose, quorum should consist of a third of the EC.

6. Tournament Sanctioning

Only USA Fencing or the GCD may sanction USA Fencing tournaments inside of GCD boundaries. Tournaments held by USA Fencing are considered as being sanctioned by the GCD de facto, and need not meet any other requirements by the Division.

6.1.Requirements for Sanctioning

In order to be a sanctioned USA Fencing tournament, the tournament must meet the following requirements:

1. The event must be announced at least 30 days before the event. That announcement must be in a public forum, such as publicly accessible web page, flyer, or announcement on "AskFred" or its equivalent.
2. The event must appear on the official Division calendar as published on the GCD web page or other official schedule.

3. The hosting club or location must be fully insured for the course of the event, along 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 club is insured by an equivalent third party vendor, the GCD reserves the right to obtain a copy of the policy before Sanctioning a tournament.
4. The competition must follow the rules of USA Fencing without significant departures.
5. The competition may not use a tournament format not approved by USA Fencing.
6. A Division officer (or appointed representative) must be present during the running of the event, though they may or may not have a role in the event itself.
7. At the conclusion of the event, a Sanctioning fee amounting to the following:
 1. For tournaments with 1 to 40 fencers per day, a pro rated fee will be charged of a minimum of \$1 and a maximum of \$3 per fencer (or donations in lieu of entry fees) must be remitted to the GCD.
 2. For tournaments with 41 to 100 fencers per day, the Sanctioning fee of \$100 must be remitted to the GCD.
 3. For tournaments with 101 to 200 fencers per day, the Sanctioning fee of \$200 must be remitted to the GCD.
8. Sanctioning fees from any previous tournament must be current before a subsequent sanctioned event can be held by the member club.

6.2.Appointed Representative for Sanctioning

The Division Executive Committee may, at its discretion, appoint a representative to be present for any sanctioned tournament in order to meet the requirements of 6.1(6). The appointed representative is obliged to insure that the tournament is run in a manner in accordance with the policies of the GCD, and has no other duties or responsibilities as an officer. The Executive Committee must unanimously agree to the appointment of the representative. That representative may be a member of the hosting club for the event, but must be at least 18 years of age.

The appointment as a representative does not transfer any of the powers or responsibilities of a Division Officer to the appointee, except in the case of a formal bout committee being called during the course of the event. The appointment begins at the opening of registration and ends after the finals bout of the last event of the day has been recorded by the Bout Committee.

7. Principles of Tournament Scheduling

1. All clubs should have equal access to the Division Calendar for hosting events. The Sanctioning process should be available to all clubs, and will be transparent in its operation. The Division should announce the "opening" of the next season's calendar for tournaments both on the Division web page and in an email directed to each member club of the Division.
2. It is in the Division's interest that marquee events -- both hosted by the Division and hosted by private parties-- be identified by the scheduling process and remain on or near the same date every year, in order to build up attendance and the reputation of the tournament.
3. Tournament conflicts should be avoided where possible. Tournaments within the Division should not be scheduled on the same weekends, though in some cases, this may be unavoidable. In those cases, the tournaments in conflict must be of different types such as those targeted at different age groups, genders, or ratings.
4. Multiple "like" tournaments (Opens, Vet, Youth, Ratings restricted) should not be in close proximity on the calendar. The Division should avoid (where possible) conflicting with its own Division and Junior Olympic Qualifiers, Division Championships, or major National or regional events. Examples of this avoidance of scheduling conflict may be such as having a Youth event during a NAC for which only Div. I, Senior, and Veterans is scheduled. However, the Division is under no obligation to avoid conflicts with any entity besides itself.

5. Clubs which host a Division tournament with the opportunity to earn revenue from the event use their "turn" as part of the tournament rotation.
6. Tournaments must be hosted with adequate resources for the expected turnout, and level of competition. This means not only should the venue be able to handle the expected event, but that referees and technical committee personnel should be competent to manage the numbers and level of fencing expected.

1. Recurring Events in the GCD

Every club in the Division is allowed to host up to three (3) recurring events during the season. These events must meet the following criteria:

1. The Executive Committee grants recurrent status to those events that meet the requirements.
2. The event must be held in the same month, and preferably the same weekend, every year. The event may shift one weekend earlier or later to accommodate schedule needs.
3. The recurring event may be of any type (Open, Youth, Vet, etc) but must be of the same type of event every year.
4. To be considered for recurring status an event must be held two years in a row at roughly the same time and venue. At the end of the second occurrence, the host may request that the event be given recurrent status, provided the host has not reached their limit of three recurring events.
5. Recurrent events will be considered only on a case-by-case basis. For each tournament a host wishes to be entered into recurring status on the Division calendar, the host must make a separate request to the Executive Committee.
6. At the end of two concurrent years of being on the official Division calendar, a host must apply—and receive—recurring status from the Division Executive Committee.
7. After an event has been given a recurring status, the recurring event must occur every year. Failure to hold an event in a single year will be the loss of the recurring status and the event will return to the open bid process and must be re-certified by the EC after being on the calendar for two consecutive years.
8. Recurring tournament events are not transferable between clubs.

2. Scheduling Process—Setting the Division Calendar

1. The Executive Committee sets the Division Calendar for the next season at least 30 days before the start of the next season, with the convention that the season starts on August 1 of the calendar year. The Executive Committee may—at its discretion—set the first half of the calendar (August through December dates) and leave the remaining dates (January through July) for an additional meeting, provided that meeting is held 30 days before January 1 of the next calendar year.
2. First, the dates of all USA Fencing events are identified and put on the calendar, including NACs, ROCs, and SYCs.
3. Second, the dates for all Division required events (qualifiers and premier Division events) are set.
4. Third, recurring tournament dates are set.
5. Fourth, open Division dates are identified. Requests or bids for those dates are solicited from local clubs by email or any other form of communication by July 1. Any current tournament requests are discussed and accepted or sent back to the hosts for clarification.
6. Open dates are announced to all clubs and potential hosts, and given thirty (30) days for bids to be submitted.

3. Scheduling Process – Submitting a bid

1. Bids from member clubs wishing to hold tournaments should have the following minimum information:

- a. Date of event
- b. Name of event
- c. Type of event (classification)
- d. Location
- e. Any unusual situations (parking, strip layout, location) should also be communicated to the Division.

A club may submit a “save the date” bid to the Division without all the required information necessary, but should respond with complete details within 30 days of submitting the “save the date” bid.

2. A club may submit a bid for a tournament at any time for consideration by the Executive Committee.

8. Division Events

The following events are considered “Division Run” events:

All required Division qualifiers (Currently: JO, Y14, Div2 and Div3 Nationals)
Division Championships (when possible)

8.1. Pay Scale for Division Events

The Division believes that the referees and other officials who work the events in the Division deserve the highest possible compensation for their assistance. To that end, the Division has set the following pay scale for referees and Bout Committee people for Division sponsored tournaments:

GCD Board Member or designee for tournaments	Daily Honorarium
Full Day	\$200
Half Day	\$150

National Referee Rating	Daily Honorarium
1 (and any international rating)	\$195
2	\$180
3	\$165
4	\$150
5	\$135
6	\$120
7 (and BC members)	\$110
8	\$100
9	\$75

National Referee Rating	Daily Honorarium
10	\$75

None (includes “P”)	\$60
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Armourers	Daily Honorarium
National Rating	\$150
Armourer Trainee	\$75

In addition, referees working more than 4 hours will be fed one meal (breakfast) and referees working more than 6 hours will be fed two meals (breakfast and lunch).

8.2.Travel and Hotel

While the honorarium is a flat rate in order to simplify calculating costs for tournament organizers and referees, the Division provides additional compensation for those referees traveling an unusual distance. In addition, hotel accommodations are provided—as needed—for Division events. The referee may be asked to share a room with a referee of the same sex.

9. Club Events

Clubs are encouraged by the Division to host tournaments and other events throughout the year. These events may be “un-sanctioned” or “sanctioned” events. Un-sanctioned events may be of any type and may conflict with any event on the Division Calendar. Unsanctioned events are not allowed to give US Fencing approved ratings, do not contribute points to the Florida point standings and they should state clearly that they are being held “unsanctioned” when advertised/ promoted.

Clubs holding Division sanctioned events are responsible for submitting the results of the competition, as well as a list of Safe Sport approved referees working the competition to the Division Secretary within three days after the close of the competition.

10. Division Website

The Division website (<https://www.goldcoastfloridafencing.org/>) is self managed by officers of the division.

11. GCD Points List

The GCD keeps track of point standings on AskFred. Points are accumulated at all sanctioned local and regional tournaments in the state of Florida that are both open and meet the age and gender requirements of the different lists. Only members of the GCD are included on the lists. The lists maintained include:

1. Youth Men’s 3-Weapon (Y12 and Y14 tournaments, but must be 12 or younger)
2. Youth Women’s 3-Weapon (Y12 and Y14 tournaments, but must be 12 or younger)
3. Junior Men’s 3-Weapon (Junior and Senior tournaments, but must be under 20)
4. Junior Women’s 3-Weapon (Junior and Senior tournaments, but must be under 20)
5. Veteran Men’s 3-Weapon (Veteran and Senior tournaments, but must be 40 or over)
6. Veteran Women’s 3-Weapon (Veteran and Senior tournaments, but must be 40 or over)
7. Senior Men’s 3-Weapon
8. Senior Women’s 3-Weapon
9. Senior Men’s Epee

10. Senior Women's Epee
11. Senior Men's Foil
12. Senior Women's Foil
13. Senior Men's Saber
14. Senior Women's Saber

For each tournament the fencer participates in that meets the criteria, the fencer earns the inverse of their placement, plus one. For example, first place in a 30 person event gets 31 points. Second place gets 30 points, and so on until 30th place earns 1 point.

12. Tournament Fees and Division Refund Policy

The GCD does not have any official position on the fees that a club may charge to enter a tournament. However, fees for any event should be uniform for all USA Fencing members, except for reasonable late fees, and the discount given to Division Officers. The Division will not sanction any club event in which excessive fees may be charged by a club to non-club members as a deliberate pattern of discouraging attendance.

12.1.Division Refund Policy

Any fencer who has pre-paid fees for a Division event that is unable to fence in that event due to a family emergency or injury will have all paid fees refunded after the conclusion of the tournament.

Fencers who withdraw for non-emergency reasons will not have the registration portion of the fee (if one is charged) refunded. If there is no registration fee, there will be no refund of any tournament unless the fencer withdraws more than 72 hours in advance of the event.

For those events in which a fencer qualifies in an event previous to the qualifier, the subsequent event fee will be refunded, but not the registration fee. Fees for Division qualifier events not competed in due to insufficient registration numbers will be refunded.

13. Division Equipment Usage

The GCD maintains a number of reels and scoring boxes for the use by GCD clubs in the hosting of Division sanctioned tournaments. This equipment is freely available, without charge for the GCD Junior Olympic Qualifier, National Championships Qualifier and Division Championships. This equipment is NOT for use in the daily operation of any fencing club, unless granted permission by the Executive Committee in the case of extreme circumstances.

Division equipment can be rented for sanction and unsanctioned events and/or events sanctioned by the National Offices (i.e. SYC's, ROC's, JRCC's) for a fee. Cost to rent equipment for an event is \$50 per day for scoring machine, power supply, two reels and cables and \$75 per day for strip.

13.1.Equipment Usage Guidelines

Clubs must contact the Division about the use of equipment at least two (2) weeks before the needed date.

Clubs are responsible for arranging the pick up and return of all equipment. Any equipment found by the club to be defective or inoperable must be noted to a Division officer upon the equipment's return.

Clubs are not responsible for reasonable wear and tear on Division equipment. However, in the case of severe neglect or irresponsible use, the Division may request that the club contribute to the repair and/or replacement of any machines damaged, lost, or stolen.

Appendix One: Recommended Procedure for Organizing and Running a USA Fencing Tournament

This section is intended to be an un-official guideline towards running USA Fencing tournaments in Florida. The scope of this work is a small to medium local tournament. Obviously, when running Regional Open Competitions, Super Youth Events, or North American Cup events, the timeline is much different.

The organizer is the individual(s) responsible for overseeing all aspects of the tournament duties may be delegated as necessary.

The Tournament Committee is composed of the Division Officers and the Club representatives for the season.

The Bout Committee (BC) is the one or more people running the tournament process during the day(s) of the competition.

The FOC (Fencing Officials Commission) is the head referee for that day.

Recommended Tasks for Organizing a USA Fencing Tournament

60 or more days in advance.

1. Select the Organizer
2. Select and secure the Venue
3. Select the type of tournament
4. Select the date
5. Strip layout plan and equipment procurement
6. Hire referees and BC staff, check Safe Sport requirements
7. Arrange hotels for any out of town staff
8. Forecast event durations and set schedule of registration
9. Advertise the event on AskFred, including event start times and other information—include late fee information, if necessary
10. Open pre-registration
11. Purchase awards/trophies

Securing the venue well enough ahead of time is critical. This gives you time to inspect the venue for safe Operations, and to lay out the strip layout to determine whether or not your venue is of a size to hold the event you expect.

As the organizer, you should be able to look at the type of event you are running, and make an estimate—using historical numbers for Division attendance—of the number of people attending. From that, it's possible to estimate the number of strips and staff you need. A rough rule for strips is to divide the number of attendees for your first event by seven (7) and round out to get the number of strips you will need. So, for 40 people you will need six to seven strips. It's best to have at least one referee for every strip.

14 Days in Advance

1. Arrange computer and printer.
 2. Arrange venue set up time and hire/request set up assistance.
 3. Purchase set up supplies, including tape and arrange for tables for machines.
 4. Confirm all staff hired for the event meets Safe Sport requirements, and email staff about report times and any necessary travel information.
- 1 or More Days in Advance

1. Email any announcements to pre-registrants. 2. Download pre-registration information
3. Print extra US Fencing membership forms
4. Set up cash box and cash security
5. Test and confirm credit card device is working

The Night Before

1. Set up strips and machines
2. Lay out other supplies (weights and shims)
3. Configure and test computer network
4. Signage, where necessary, directing fencers to location

Tournament Day

1. Breakfast, referee meeting
2. Staff registration table
3. Print initial seeding and confirm tournament registration 4. Start the tournament

End of Tournament Day

1. Secure cash box and membership forms
2. Police and clean up the tournament area
3. Organize and arrange scattered equipment (clipboards, weights, shims, etc)
4. Lost and found

End of Event

1. Pay officials
2. Strip teardown and equipment storage and /or transport 3. Secure lost and found

Up to Three Days After

1. Publish results on AskFred.net
2. Reconcile tournament fees, deposit cash and checks
3. Send in any USA Fencing memberships. Copy forms and send in PDF to National office before sending results. Coordinate with the Division Secretary where necessary.
4. Send in complete results, rating changes, and referee list to the Division Secretary for forwarding to USA Fencing. The Division Secretary should be copied on the email when the scanned membership forms are sent to the National Office.

Update History:

June 2025