

Safety and Code of Conduct Policy of the Wessex Blades Fencing Club

While fencing is one of the safest sports, it is after all a martial arts and contact sport. Safety is our utmost importance and we respectfully request all participants to review WBFC's Code of Conduct and Safety Rules to help keep fencing the safe, meaningful and fun sport that it is.

Physical Safety

NEVER CROSS BLADES WITHOUT WEARING FENCING MASKS!

The WBFC is open to the general public who are interested in the sport of fencing. Upon entering the WBFC, all individuals including WBFC members, guests, coaches, and staff, agree to follow these rules, along with adhering to the rules of fencing as adopted by the British Fencing Association (BFA). The WBFC management reserves the right to revoke membership or any privileges of any person who has been found to violate any of these rules. Fencing at the Wessex Blades Fencing Club constitutes acceptance of these rules and code of conduct.

General Code of Conduct

- Coaches, fencers, guests and staff are expected to treat each other with respect and without any discrimination.
- It is expected that each student will greet the coaches and the others who already there as he or she arrives at the salle, and say good-bye to the coaches and the others as he or she leaves.
- Each fencer will salute his opponent before every bout, and salute and shake hands after every bout in a sportsmanlike manner.

Masks and weapons and all other equipment you may used should be returned to their original racks, bags or container when training is over.

- Jackets should be hung on hangers after use or placed into the appropriate bag and gloves and plastrons returned to their containers. Please do not assume someone else will do it. Please put the weapons into the bag in a form that it is easily closeable - even by you.
- Fencers are expected to treat their physical environment with respect and they shall not use any fencing equipment to damage the physical environment that they are in. Fencers must clean up after themselves.

Fencing Rules

The fencing floor is for fencing and training. If you're not fencing or training, get off the floor.

- Sportsmanship: Fencers may not jostle or fight during a bout, curse in anger, or engage in intimidation or threats. Learning to deal with both victory and defeat with grace is an important part of the lessons in fencing.
- If your equipment doesn't work for more than 5 minutes, get off the strip.
- Bouts may not be interrupted for phone calls, conversations, etc. If a fencer is not able to fence during a bout, they must leave the strip and let others fence.
- No equipment bags, food or beverages are allowed on the fencing floor.

Safety Rules

Do not cross fencing strips while there is fencing going on.

- Safety precautions must be observed at all times.
- Mask, jacket, plastro, glove and pants (not shorts) must always be worn when fencing
- At no time shall any fencer raise a weapon without wearing protective masks or without being in a controlled bout or as directed by the coach(es).
- Violent or uncontrolled fencing actions are not permitted. Fencers are expected to control their actions as guided by the coach(es).
- Fencers shall not carry blades with the tip raised.

Fencers shall under no circumstance run while holding a blade.

- Fencers may not hit things with weapons, or throw weapons or gear.
- Do not turn your back on your opponent during an action.
- If you feel a fencer is behaving in a dangerous or uncontrolled fashion, report it to an instructor. They will speak to the fencer without disclosing your identity.
- Inspect your gear each time you use it. If you find a problem with club gear, report it to an instructor. You will not be penalized for reporting broken gear.
- Stop fencing instantly if you think something is wrong or if your opponent retreats and waves the unarmed hand or gives any sign of wanting to stop.

If you think a weapon is broken, stop fencing instantly

- Report injuries immediately to an instructor or coach.

Equipment

- If fencers own their own equipment, they are expected to be familiar with the proper maintenance of their equipment and shall be responsible for the suitability and condition of that equipment. Equipment provided by WBFC are maintained by WBFC. If any equipment appears to be damaged or unsafe, fencers shall present such equipment immediately to the coach(es).

WBFC Guidelines for Safety

In addition to the WBFC Safety and Code of Conduct Policy, here are guidelines that will help keep fencing safe and fun!

- Most fencing injuries are from muscle, ligament and tendon trauma. Warm up and stretching is essential. Always warm up before fencing.
- Novices can use practice jackets, but more advanced fencers or fencers who like to compete should wear competition level jackets (minimum 350N certified) and underarm protectors (minimum 350N certified but preferable 800N)
- Women must wear breast protectors. For men, athletic supporters with a protective shield are recommended.
- Legs should be protected with sweat pants, sports pants or ideally fencing pants and socks. For competitions, fencing pants and socks are required. Shorts are not accepted.
- Always be aware of your surroundings, especially when people are fencing. Do not step on an active fencing strip without looking to make sure it is safe.
- When fencing, do not drive your opponent into a wall. Warn your opponent of any obstacles behind them.
- Be mindful of your fencing distance. Do not fence too close. The hits will be harder than they should be and this creates bad habits.
- Do not run into your opponent. In competition this will draw a yellow card on the first offense and a red card (your opponent will get a point awarded) on the subsequent offense. You may even get a black card, which means that you are suspended from the competition.
- Fencing with intensity is good. Violent, uncontrolled fencing however is not acceptable. Nothing you do should cause pain or harm to the other fencer.
- When your opponent has a clean hit in practice, it is not necessary to point to the area where you are hit, but do acknowledge a nice touch with respect.
- Always salute your opponent and the referee before and after a bout. Make sure to shake your opponent's hand after the bout. Failure to do so may result in a loss of a point or loss of the bout.
- Fencing is a sport of passion and intensity. Yelling after a particularly tense point or moment to let out emotion is acceptable. However, do not do it all the time. First and foremost be respectful of your opponent and exhibit good sportsmanship.
- Always fence your best. Do not fence worse because your opponent is a friend or you wish to concede the bout. This is not only against the FIE Rules of Competition, but it does not help either of you to improve, and actually disrespects the ability of your opponent.
- Remember, you may lose a difficult bout, but the inner strength to pick yourself up and try to fence even better the next time, is the most valuable lesson you can learn from fencing. Grace under pressure is what you learn in fencing competition and mastering this will lead you to success not only in fencing but in life!