

Your first tournament

Tournaments are held on Saturdays about once or twice a month from September through March. Tournaments start first thing in the morning and usually last until late afternoon, so pack a lunch or money to buy lunch at the concessions stand, and plan on spending the day.

Packing for the tournament

The night before the tournament, completely unpack your fencing bag. Then repack it with

- Mask
- Fencing jacket
- Plastron (underarm protector)
- Chest protector (women)
- Fencing glove
- Electric epee (and spare if you have one)
- Body cord (and spare if you have one)
- Fencing notebook and pen/pencil

Either the night before or on the morning of the tournament make sure you pack

- Water or sports drink in a container that will not leak
- Snack
- Either a nutritious lunch or money to buy whatever is on sale at the concessions stand
- If you have a music player, pack it, and make sure you have a “relax” playlist and a “get fired up” playlist.

Arrive at the tournament already dressed in:

- T-shirt (team t-shirt or Pope t-shirt if you have one)
- Knickers (fencing pants)
- Athletic supporter (men)
- Team socks (grey on the left foot, blue on the right foot)
- Fencing-appropriate shoes

Arriving at the tournament

The host school will announce when sign in will close. Typically it is about 7:30 or 8:00 for men and 9:00 or 9:30 for women, but this can change so look for the announcement. Make sure you arrive well before sign in closes. When you arrive, you should:

- Find the sign in table and sign in. **If you don't do this before sign in closes, you can't fence.**
- Find the equipment check table and have your mask and glove checked (to make sure they are safe) and stamped (so the referees will know they have been checked).
- Look around and see which strip numbers are where. There may be a few strips not in the main room (they may be in an aux gym, the cafeteria or even in the hallways); find them now so you will know where to go when you are sent to strip number 13 (or whatever).
- Find the Pope armorer if you need to have your weapons checked.
- If you don't have a spare weapon and body cord, check with the armorer or the team mom to find out where the team's spares are so that you can quickly get a replacement if you need one.

- Find a place to put your fencing bag. The host will provide space for fencing bags and often sets aside an area for each school, so look for a sign saying “Pope”. There is usually not much space available, put your bag neatly within the allotted area.
- Warm up.
- Shortly after sign in closes, put on your chest protector (women), plastron and jacket.

Initial seeding

Shortly after sign in closes, the organizers will post the initial seeding (usually on a wall near the scoring table).

- Everyone who is fencing should be on the list. If you don't see your name, go to the scoring table and tell the organizers and ask a teammate to tell Coach or team mom.
- Fencers are seeded based on their league ranking, if you are ranked and don't think you are seeded correctly, check with team mom. Unranked fencers are seeded at random after the ranked fencers.

Pools

The next thing to happen is that the organizers will split the fencers into pools of about 6 or 7 fencers. They should post a list of which fencers are in which pool and they may also announce the names over the PA system. Sometimes they just have the scorekeepers shout out the names of the fencers in their pool.

- Check which pool number you are in and which strip number your pool is on (sometimes the pool number and the strip number are the same, but not always).
- Go to your strip. Make sure you take everything you need (mask, glove, epee(s), body cord(s), water and notebook).
- At the strip, the referee will check that each fencer's uniform is complete and safe. That includes checking that your mask and glove have the correct stamp. You will also need to show that you are wearing a plastron and (in the case of women) a chest protector, so don't zip your jacket all the way up until you have been checked.

You will fence one 3-minute, 5 touch bout against each fencer in your pool. There will usually be one to three other bouts between each of your bouts. Stay close to the strip and listen for your name to be called. Never leave the area around the strip without asking the director first.

Starting and ending a bout

When your name is called:

- Hook up to the reel. The fencer whose name is called first is normally on the referee's right, but if a left-hander is fencing a right-hander, the left-hander will be on the referee's left regardless of whose name was called first. If you are not sure, ask the scorekeeper before you hook up.
- Go to the middle of the strip and hold out your epee, tip upwards, for the referee to check (if you are tall, you may need to take a knee so the referee can reach the tip).
- After checking both epees, the referee will ask the fencers to touch bell guards.
- Go your en guard line, salute your opponent and the referee, then put on your mask and be ready to fence.

At the end of the bout

- Return to your en guard line, take off your mask and salute your opponent. Be sure not to throw your mask; if you do that and the referee believes you did it in anger, you will receive a black card (disqualification) for bad sportsmanship.
- Advance and shake your opponent’s hand with your unarmed hand.
- Unhook from the reel. Do not let go of the cord part way down the strip and let the spring whip it back; this is bad for the reel (and bad for you if the armorer catches you doing it).

Pool results

When the last bout of your pool has been fenced, you must check your scores on the score sheet and sign the sheet if you agree with them. Do not sign if your scores are incorrect.

When all pools have finished, the pool results will be posted and usually the top 80% of the fencers advance to the next round (at the Novice and Freshman/Sophomore Tournaments, all fencers advance). Find your name on the results and see if it says you “Advance” or are “Eliminated”. If you advance, the number to the left of your name is your seed for the next round.

Direct Elimination

The next round is Direct Elimination (usually called DEs). The Direct Elimination round is a standard single-elimination bracket arranged to make sure the higher seeds do not meet until late in the round. The bracket will normally begin with a table of 32, 64 or 128 fencers. If there are not exactly 32, 64 or 128 fencers in the round, the higher seeds will get a bye in the first bout.

Direct Elimination bouts consist of three 3-minute periods with a 1-minute break between periods. The winner is the first fencer to score 15 touches. In a similar way to a pool bout, if the score is tied at the end of the third period, there is a 1-minute “sudden death” period with priority. Fencers are allowed a break of at least 10 minutes between bouts.

After each bout, you must sign the score sheet (but only if it is correct). The scorekeeper will give the score sheet to the winner who then takes it to the scoring table.



The number in parentheses before each name is the fencer’s seed, and the letters in parentheses after the name are the abbreviation for the fencer’s club. The score in each bout is listed to the right of the bout (under the name of the winner). For example, Picard lost to Riker 13-15 in the table of 16, the score appears under Riker’s name in the table of 8.

Final Results

The finalists take 1st and 2nd place and the losing semi-finalists are both awarded third place. Fencers who lose in the table of 8 are awarded 5th to 8th place; the one with the highest seed following the pools gets 5th, the next highest gets 6th, etc. Similarly, fencers who lose in the table of 16 are awarded 9th to 16th place, and so on. Fencers who did not advance to the second round are ranked after those who did, and in the order of their seeding from pools.

Points

In the GHSFL, points are awarded to the top finishers in most events provided that they qualified for the Direct Elimination round. No points are awarded at the novice or freshman/sophomore tournaments. The number of fencers awarded points and the number of points awarded depend on whether the tournament was a split tournament (two tournaments on the same day, half the schools go to each) or a combined tournament (all schools at one tournament).

At split tournaments the top 16 fencers in each event are awarded points, while at combined tournaments it is the top 32. These points determine the fencer's place in the league's individual standings, and the number of points earned by the each school's fencers determines the school's place in the team standings.

Here are the points awarded for each place in split and combined tournaments.

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