



GHSFL

Competition Format

2019-20 Season

31 August 2019

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Preface

This document describes how the GHSFL season works and how rankings are determined. Questions about the document, or suggestions for clarifying it should be sent to:

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

Related documents

This is one of a series of documents describing how GHSFL operates. The other documents are:

- *Policies and Procedures of the Georgia High School Fencing League*. Describes the obligations of GHSFL members, procedures for certifying referees, and rules relating to safety.
- *GHSFL Tournament Hosting Guide*. Describes how to organize a GHSFL tournament.
- *GHSFL Fencing Time Instructions*. Describes how to use the Fencing Time software to run a GHSFL Tournament.

These documents can be obtained from the Tournament Director, Chris Grimshaw (chris.grimshaw@ghsfl.net).

Changes for the 2019-20 season

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

- “Transfers” on page 5 was added to explain how points and qualification for the championships are handled when a fencer moves to a different GHSFL school during the season.
- “Bout committee” on page 7 was updated to allow USA Fencing certified referees to serve on the bout committee if there are not enough head coaches present.
- “Tournament fees” on page 8 was updated to show the increased tournament fee (\$10 rather than \$7).

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. Tournament dates are selected to minimize conflicts with national fencing tournaments, qualifiers for national championships, major school breaks, major religious holidays, ACT and SAT testing dates. Note that it is generally impossible to avoid **all** these conflicts.

Regular season

The regular season consists of several rounds (currently seven) of individual (rather than team) tournaments. 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.

Championships

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

Standard start times

Unless the availability of the facility makes it impossible, the following start times will be used at all tournaments except the Team Championship:

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

Tournament hosts

Once the tournament dates are announced (usually shortly after the end of the previous season), schools are invited to bid on hosting on the date(s) of their choice. Bids are accepted in the order they are received. All schools are expected to host at least one regular season tournament, except schools that are new to the league are excused from hosting for the first two seasons in which they compete in any tournaments.

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

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.

If there are no bids to host a particular tournament, the Board will assign a school to host that tournament. If a school finds that it is no longer able to host a tournament it has been assigned, it is that school's responsibility to resolve the situation by hosting at an alternative location (e.g. a middle school or community centre), finding another school to host the tournament, or (with the board's approval) moving the tournament to a different date.

Scrimmages

The league will sanction scrimmages, which are tournaments that do not award points or affect standings. The school wanting to host a scrimmage 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 (where 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 (where 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.

Transfers

If a fencer transfers to a different GHSFL school while the season is in progress:

- The fencer's place on the Individual Points List is based on points earned through the whole season.
- For Team Points, each school is credited with points earned by the fencer when competing for that school.
- If qualified (see above), the fencer may represent the new school in the championships.

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. Medals are awarded to the top four fencers in each event.

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. The winner receives a trophy and can also keep the traveling trophy until the next Individual Championship.

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 school's top ranked fencer 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, members of the top four teams receive medals.

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.

Running the tournament

In individual tournaments, 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 must be of six and seven fencers with a few rare exceptions listed below. If there are more strips available than there are pools, the larger pools can be run on two strips in order to save time.

- If the event has between 10 and 29 fencers **and** there is no combination of pools of six and seven that includes all fencers, pools of five and six may be used.
- If the event has less than 10 fencers, all fencers should be in a single pool.

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.

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 an error on the scoresheet results in the wrong fencer being recorded as the winner of a DE bout, and the fencer who was incorrectly recorded as the winner leaves the venue believing that he or she has been eliminated, that fencer will be considered to have withdrawn and will not receive a black card.

If a fencer withdraws or is excluded before completing all pool bouts, the rules say that the fencer should be removed from the pool. The 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 and the composition of the DE bracket are not affected.

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. The Bout Committee usually consists of the head coach of the host school (acting as the committee chair) and two other head coaches. If fewer than three head coaches are present, USA Fencing certified referees may be selected.

Referees and floor judges

Referees who are former high school fencers must not referee DE bouts involving their former school for three seasons after leaving the school (that is, until after all their former teammates have graduated). The tournament organizer may not know which school referees used to fence for; referees who are assigned a bout involving their former school should ask for the bout to be reassigned.

There are no other restrictions on referees based on any association they may have with the schools or fencers involved in the bout. However, a referee who feels uncomfortable refereeing a bout because of any such association may ask for the bout to be reassigned, and the organizer will honor that request if possible.

If qualified 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 of any tournament.

Finals

Except at team tournaments, no other bouts should be fenced while the men's or women's final is in progress.

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 \$10 for the greater of (a) the estimated number of fencers they provided a week in advance or (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

It takes time for a new school to save money for equipment and train referees, so 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. All other schools will be assigned strips. Being responsible for a strip means providing:

- Scoring equipment. This means 2 reels, 2 floor cords, 1 scoring box. Note that reels must be placed both behind and off the side of the strip (so that retreating fencers won't trip over them).
- A 50-foot extension cord and a power strip or another way for at least two devices to be plugged in.
- Referees' equipment. This means a test weight, shims, timing device, clipboard and 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 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).

In order for strips to be assigned in time, all schools (including the hosts) must provide an estimate of the number of men and the number of women they will have competing (**two separate numbers**). The number of fencers that a school must pay a tournament fee for is the number they estimated or the number who check in on the day of the tournament, **whichever is greater**. Schools who do not provide an estimate will be assumed not to be competing.

The hosts must provide the Tournament Director with the following information about the tournament which will be passed on to the participating schools along with the strip assignments.

- The maximum number of strips they have room for. The number that will actually be assigned will be based on the estimated numbers of fencers but will never be more than the maximum that the host has room for.
- Information about where on the campus the tournament will be held, and where to park. If the tournament will not be held at the high school, the address of the location is required.
- If it is not possible to use the standard start times, the alternate start times are required.

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), the number of fencers in 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).

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.

Timeline

- Two weeks before the tournament (earlier if there is an intervening holiday), the Tournament Director will remind all schools that their estimated numbers of fencers are due by Friday. He will also remind host schools to provide information about the tournament.
- By Friday (8 days before the tournament) all schools, including the hosts, must send the Tournament Director their estimated numbers of fencers, and hosts must send the requested tournament information.
- The Tournament Director will make the strip assignments and will inform the schools, by Sunday evening, how many strips they have been assigned and if there is any limit on the number of fencers a school can send. He will also remind schools that their rosters and referee names are due by Wednesday.
- By Wednesday (3 days before the tournament) all schools, including the hosts, will send their rosters and the names(s) of their referee(s). If the roster has more fencers than the estimated number already provided, an additional strip may be assigned.
- The Tournament Director will send the combined rosters to all participating schools and to the GHSFL Vice Chair. The Vice Chair will designate which referees must remain until the end of the tournament in order to referee or be floor judges in the semi-finals and finals.
- 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.