



GHSFL

Tournament Hosting Guide

2018-19 Season

3 August 2018

Contents

Preface	3
Related documents.....	3
Getting on the tournament schedule	4
Facilities.....	4
Fencing Strips	4
Strip layout.....	4
Other space requirements.....	6
Other facilities issues	7
Start times	7
Communicating with participating schools	7
Equipment needed	8
Check-in.....	8
Taping strips	8
Scoring table and electronics	8
Supplies.....	9
Staffing	9
Management team.....	9
Volunteers.....	10
Fencer equipment safety check.....	11
Masks.....	11
Gloves.....	11
Information included in other documents.....	11
Medal ceremony	11
Signage, forms and notes.....	12
Signs outside the school.....	12
Signs inside the school.....	12
GHSFL Medical Withdrawal Form	12
Referee meeting notes.....	12
Timeline.....	13
Before the season starts.....	13
Before the tournament	13
Tournament day (and the night before)	13

Preface

This document attempts to cover all aspects of hosting a GHSFL tournament **except** for running the Fencing Time software.

If you have questions about the document, or find any errors or omissions, please contact:

- 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 Competition Format*. Describes how the GHSFL season works and how rankings are determined.
- *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).

Getting on the tournament schedule

All schools that have competed in any tournaments in two or more seasons are required to host at least one regular season tournament. The schools that won the previous season's Team Championship have the right of first refusal on hosting the new season's Individual Championship and Team Championship (in addition to their obligation to host a regular season tournament). Depending on the number of schools in the league and the number of tournaments in the season, it may be necessary for some schools to host additional tournaments, or for a new school that has not competed in two seasons to host a tournament.

Hosting a tournament may be quite profitable. The host receives a fee of \$7 per fencer from the participating schools (amounting to about \$700 for a regular season tournament). There is also a profit to be made on concessions sales.

The league usually announces tournament dates for the coming season in February or March and asks schools to bid on hosting the tournaments. Bids are accepted in the order that they are received. Before the schedule is published, try to have an idea of what dates you can host on, that gives you the best chance of securing the date(s) you want.

If you are unable to reserve suitable facilities at your school, other possible locations might include a middle school or elementary school (start with the ones that feed your school), a church gym, or a community centre.

The board will assign a host school for tournaments that no school has bid on.

Facilities

Fencing Strips

The GHSFL Tournament Director will decide how many strips to assign at your tournament based on the number of fencers expected from each school. You will need to tell him the maximum number of strips you have space for; he will not assign more than that number of strips even if that means turning away some fencers who want to compete.

For regular season tournaments, hosts must provide space for at least 8 strips; in recent seasons, most regular season tournaments have had 10 or 11 strips. For the Championships, the host must have space for at least 12 strips, although the Individual Championship often uses 13 strips and the Team Championship usually needs fewer than 12.

Strip layout

At most schools, the possible locations for strips are the main gym, aux gym and cafeteria. The typical numbers of strips that most schools can fit in each room are main gym: 7-9 strips, aux gym: 5-7 strips, cafeteria: 6-10 strips. If necessary, you can place some strips in wide hallways.

Fencing strips must be the size specified by USA Fencing: 14 m (46') long and 1.5 m to 2 m (5' to 6' 6") wide. Usually the 1.5m width is used. There must be enough space around the strip to allow for safe fencing. This means:

- At least 1.5 m (5'), ideally 2 m (6' 6") or more, run-off space at each end of the strip.
- At least 2', ideally 3' or more, between the edge of the strip and the scoring table or any other obstruction.
- At least 6' 6", ideally 8' or more, between strips when the space will be occupied by the scoring table.
- At least 10' 6", ideally 12' or more, between strips when the space will be occupied by two referees.
- At least 7', ideally 9' or more, between the edge of the strip and a wall when the space will be occupied by one referee. However, it is preferable to avoid this and have a scoring table between the strip and the wall.

There also needs to be enough room for spectators to get from the doors to their seats and fencers to move from strip to strip without stepping on a strip or passing between referees and their strips.

It is a good idea to survey all the possible locations well in advance so that you know how many strips each can hold. Note the location of any obstructions (doorways, pillars, closets, water fountains, etc.). For gyms, find out how much space the bleachers take up when they are extended and when they are retracted. Remember that each strip will have a scoring box that needs electricity, so make a note of where the electrical outlets are.

Below is an example of a layout used at Pope.

Pope Old Gym with 7 strips

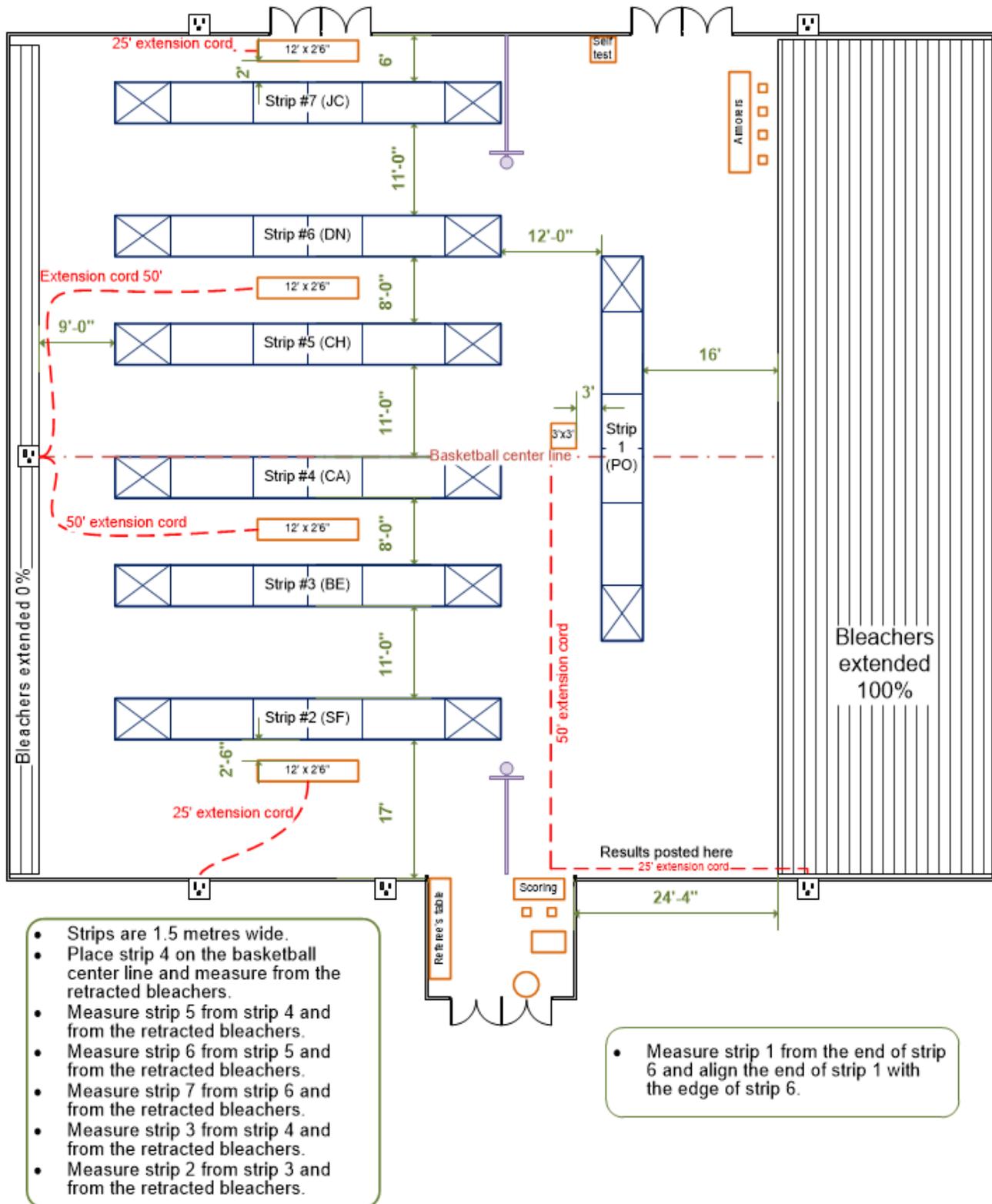


Figure 1: Example strip layout

Other space requirements

There will usually be one room where most of the strips are, and where PA announcements will be made. For convenience, I refer to it below as “the gym” although it might in fact be the cafeteria. If you decide to place any of the following tables, etc. in the gym (and that is often desirable), consider the number of fencers who might surround the table and don’t place it too close to any strip.

Check-in table

You will need somewhere for the check-in sheets for fencers, referees and school representatives (plan on about 7 sheets of letter sized paper) and for the people doing equipment safety checks. A 12-foot long table would be ideal; it could be in a hallway between the school entrance and the gym.

Armors’ table

You should provide a table and chairs for visiting armorers (as well as your own). Fencers need to be able to visit the armorers between bouts, so the table should be close to most of the strips (perhaps in the gym or just outside it).

Scoring table

You must provide a table and chairs for the scorers with space for a laptop and printer. A 12-foot table or two 6-foot tables would be ideal. It needs to be located reasonably close to the gym (so fencers can bring their scoresheets to the table), to the microphone (most of the PA announcements will come from the scorer) and ideally with a view of most of the strips (so the scorer knows which are in use). It will also need access to an electrical outlet.

Posting results

You will need space on a wall where results can be posted. The space should at least 9’ 6” wide. It should be in or near the gym, and reasonably close to the scoring table (as the scorer will be posting the results).

Fencing bags

You need to set aside space near the gym for fencers to store their fencing bags. Don’t use the floor of the gym; experience shows that the bags will overflow the area you set aside and encroach on the strips. Possibilities include the upper levels of the bleachers, nearby hallways or classrooms. It helps to designate a space for each school by placing a sign with the school’s name on it in the designated space.

Concessions

You will need an area for concessions sales. Most schools have a concessions stand close to the gym that you may be able to use, otherwise you will need a table and chairs (for the volunteers). You also need tables and chairs for people who are eating (especially if food and drink is not allowed in the gym). A couple of 12-foot long tables or 3 to 4 8-foot round tables should be enough.

Most hosts provide breakfast items (such as bagels and doughnuts) early on and lunch items (pizza and sandwiches) beginning late morning, as well as drinks, snacks and fruit throughout the day.

You must also have a first aid kit in the concessions area. Concessions was chosen as it is likely to have ice.

Referees’ table

You should provide complementary food and drink for referees, scorekeepers, and coaches (and, if you want, your own volunteers). This can be a table in or near the gym and should provide breakfast items, lunch items and drinks. If you like, you can stock the table with items from the concessions stand, in fact some hosts simply provide referees with vouchers that they can use to get a free breakfast and lunch from concessions. If you go with vouchers, you should still provide referees access to free water (for example a cooler with iced down bottles of water).

Other facilities issues

Be familiar with your school's policies and procedures. You should at least know the answer to these questions:

- What is the procedure for reserving a gym or the cafeteria? Is there a charge?
- How far in advance can facilities be reserved?
- How do you make sure you will have access to other spaces that you plan on using, such as the concessions stand and hallways? That includes hallways you need to get from the school entrance to the gym, etc.
- Do you need to arrange for heating or air conditioning to be turned on (and is there a charge for this)?
- Can you reserve the facilities for the night before the tournament so that you can set up on Friday evening?
- Can bleachers be retracted (if you need more space) and basketball goals be raised (so that épées don't get caught in the netting)? If so, how do you arrange for this to be done?
- How early in the morning can you get access to the school? Check-in usually opens at 7:30, so you need to be in the building by 7 AM at the latest (earlier if you didn't set up on Friday).
- When must you leave? Most tournament finish before 5 PM, but it is best to reserve space until 6 PM.
- How do you get access to the PA system in the gym? What batteries (if any) are needed for the mike?
- Can spectators bring food and drink into the gym (note that fencers must always be allowed water)?
- Where can you get the tables and chairs that you will need? Are you allowed to move them yourselves?
- What other activities will take place on the same day as your tournament? Do they affect what parking lot or school entrance you can use? If there is an ACT or SAT, you may need to keep fencers away from the part of the school where the test is being administered.

Start times

You should the following standard start times unless the availability of the building makes this impossible:

- Check-in should open at 7:30
- The referee meeting should be at 8:15.
- Men's check-in should close at 8:30.
- Women's check-in should close at 10:00.

Communicating with participating schools

To simplify matters, the Tournament Director handles communications between host schools and participating schools up until the night before the tournament.

- About 2 weeks before the tournament, you will be reminded to provide information about the tournament such as the maximum number of strips, the location of the tournament and any nonstandard start times.
- By 8 days before the tournament you must provide the requested information to the Tournament Director along with the usual estimates of how many of your fencers will be competing. If you have any other information to pass on to participating schools, include that as well.
- About a week before the tournament, you (and all the schools competing at your tournament) will receive an e-mail saying how many strips each school has been assigned, as well as the location of the tournament and the start times and other information that you provided about the tournament.
- Also about a week before the tournament, you will receive an e-mail informing you how many strips have been assigned, and providing the Fencing Time license key that you can use for this tournament.
- Once all the schools have provided their rosters (due by the Wednesday before the tournament), the Tournament Director will send out a copy of the combined rosters for the tournament.
- On the Thursday before the tournament you will receive the Fencing Time files with the fencers from the rosters already added to the events as well as the check-in sheets.
- The Tournament Director will tell you if fencers are added or removed in the week before the tournament.

Equipment needed

Check-in

You will need a mask tester (often called a “punch”). At most GHSFL regular season tournaments, there are about 60-70 men, they need to finished checking in by 8:30, and most won’t arrive until 8:00. It is a good idea to have two people checking masks, in which case you will need two mask testers.

You can buy mask testers for about \$70. For example, Absolute Fencing currently sells an [Uhlmann Mask Tester](#) for \$69. If you can’t afford to buy, you may be able to borrow from your coach or from another school.

You will need a way of marking equipment that has passed inspection. This could be a distinctive design drawn with a marker pen, but most schools ensure uniformity by using rubber stamps and ink pads (available from craft stores).

While you can’t know what mark other schools will use, do what you can to make your mark unique, choose an unusual design and use different coloured ink at each of the tournaments you host. Each person checking masks or gloves should have a stamp (or marker pen), two people can share an ink pad (if you have two pads they should be the same colour).

Taping strips

You can speed up the process of measuring out a strip by creating a template (shown in brown in the diagram below). Take about 55’ of sturdy, not too stretchy, cord and make knots at the distances listed below. Label the knots somehow, e.g. with cheap baggage tags. If you have many people taping strips, you may need two templates.

- At one end of the cord: the left end of the strip labelled "A"
- After 2m (6' 6"): the start of the left warning area labelled "B"
- After another 3m (10'): the left en garde line labelled "C"
- After another 2m (6' 6"): the centre line labelled "D"
- After another 2m (6' 6"): the right en garde line labelled "E"
- After another 3m (10'): the start of the right warning area labelled "F"
- After another 2m (6' 6"): the right end of the strip labelled "G"
- After another 1.5m (5'): the minimum width of a strip labelled "1.5"
- After another 0.5m (1' 6"): the maximum width of a strip labelled "2"

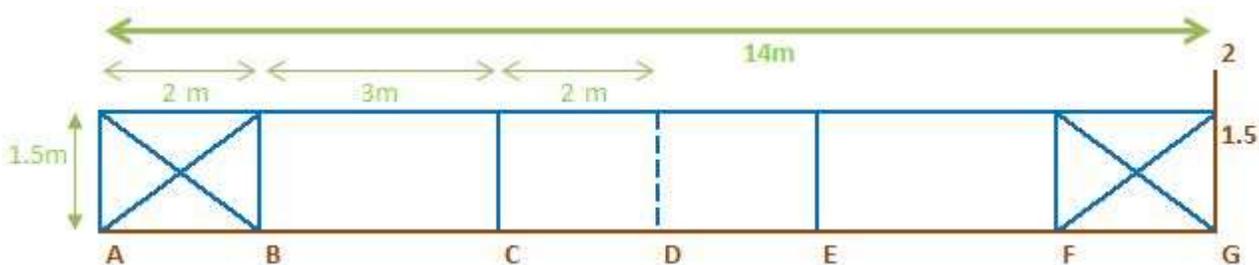


Figure 2: Strip dimensions

Scoring table and electronics

The scorer will need a laptop to run Fencing Time and a printer to print results and scoresheets. Be sure to verify before the day of the tournament that the laptop works with the printer. An optional second laptop or tablet (that need not have access to the printer) may be useful for keeping track of what strips are in use. The scoring table will need a power strip and an extension cord.

Schools are told to provide a 50-foot extension cord with two outlets for each strip. As two strips usually share a table, there should be several spare extension cords at the tournament. If you have tables that are more than 50 feet from the nearest outlet, consider having spare extension cords of your own that you can lend to schools if needed.

Supplies

The sections above list things that you need to acquire once and then reuse at each tournament. Here is a list of things that you will need to buy for each tournament, and things that you are likely to already have and just need to remember to bring to the tournament.

Tape for strips

Use 1” blue painter’s tape to mark out the strips. For highly polished gym floors use the type labelled for delicate surfaces. Most rolls have 60 yards of tape. Plan on using one 60-yard roll for each strip and buy several extras in case of mistakes. It is traditional to use spare tape to mark the strip numbers in roman numerals on the floor.

Buy the tape at a hardware store. A 60-yard roll of 1” regular tape costs about \$3 - \$5, the type for delicate surfaces costs about \$2 per roll more. You can often get a discount by buying in bulk.

Tennis balls

Really! If there is a danger of table or chair legs scratching the gym floor, you can avoid it by cutting slits in old tennis balls with a utility knife and pushing them onto the ends of the legs. Of course, you can reuse the balls at each tournament, but experience shows that some will go missing; check how many you need and add more if necessary.

First aid kit

Check your first aid kit to see if any items need to be restocked.

Check-in table

Have pens or pencils available for people to use to check in. You may need to buy new ink pads if the existing ones are dry, or if you need another colour.

Scoring table

- A ream of paper and spare ink cartridges for the printer.
- A pair of scissors for cutting up the DE scoresheets.
- A 9-inch wide index card holder with tabs can be useful for keeping returned DE scoresheets in order (so that you can find one if you need to check it).
- A roll of painter’s tape for posting results.
- Spare batteries for the PA system’s wireless mike (if necessary).
- Pencils and a pencil sharpener for referees who break or lose their pencils.
- If you have a few spare clipboards, keep them at the scoring table in case a referee needs one.

Staffing

Management team

You will need many volunteers to run the tournament. Most of them can be recruited a week or two before the tournament, but it is best to have the team that will do the planning in place several weeks earlier. The following is a list of management jobs, in some cases (especially at small clubs) the same person may do more than one job:

- Tournament manager. The person in overall charge. Makes sure that all the other jobs are filled.
- Fencing Time operator. Enters scores, prints scoresheets and results.
- Strip assigner. Decides which bouts will be fenced on which strips.
- Tournament setup. The person in charge of taping strips and putting tables and chairs where they are needed.
- Concessions manager. The person in charge of the concessions stand and the referees’ table.

Also, identify people who know what is going on with other users of school facilities (the major sports, band, orchestra, chorus, etc.). Keep in touch with these people to see if they know of events on the same day as your tournament. If so, you may need to modify your plans to avoid conflicts (for example, if the marching band will be practicing in the parking lot that you plan on telling fencers to park in).

Volunteers

Here is a list of the jobs you will probably need volunteers for. You may want to use a free online signup service such as Signup.com to keep track of what jobs are available and which are filled.

Tournament setup

Unless you have a very large club, you should plan on having all your fencers assist with tournament setup.

A crew of four people (perhaps three fencers with an adult in charge) can tape strips. If you have enough volunteers, consider having two crews to speed up the process. See Figure 2: Strip dimensions on page 8 for how to lay out the strip.

You will also need to place tables and chairs where needed (next to the strips for scoring equipment, as well for the scoring table, armorers, check-in and concessions), and to post various signs (see Signs inside the school on page 12). Plan on having an adult to oversee the fencers who do this. If possible, place a chair for the referee to use at each end of the table between the strips.

Concessions

You will need a couple of people to set up the concessions stand. You may be able to do some of this (such as putting drinks in a fridge) the night before the tournament. You will need two to four people selling concessions. If you have more volunteers, split the day up into shifts so that nobody has to work the whole day. Try to open the stand when check-in opens at 7:30; sales will drop off after lunch and you can probably close by 3 PM or earlier (announce a 50% off sale for the last half hour to get rid of as much food as possible).

Referees' table

You will need someone to provide the food and drink for the referees' table (or fetch it from the concessions stand). This person can also arrange for coolers and ice for the referees' water. If you have strips in different locations, consider having a cooler with water at each location.

Check-in table

You will need at least two people to test masks and gloves at check-in, ideally four people (two for masks and two for gloves). It takes longer to test a mask than a glove, so if you have three volunteers, have two check masks and one check gloves. See Fencer equipment safety check on page 11 for what to check.

Scoring table

You will need one person to enter results in Fencing Time and to print results and scoresheets. Ideally, you will have a second person to decide which bouts to assign to each strip. If you have enough volunteers, assign two more people to be runners (taking scoresheets to strips and posting results on the wall).

National Anthem

A performance of the National Anthem is not required, but most host schools include one (it should be immediately after men's check-in closes). You can play a recording over the PA system, but a live performance by students (fencers if possible) from your school is more impressive. Check with your chorus and orchestra directors; they may offer service hours to their students who perform at school events.

Clean up

After the tournament, you will need to put everything back where you found it and clean up any trash. Doing this properly will improve your standing with the administration and make it easier for you to host future tournaments. Have all your fencers remain for about 30 minutes after the tournament to take care of this.

Fencer equipment safety check

At the check-in table, you must perform safety checks on masks and gloves and stamp those that pass so that referees can verify. The following is a summary of what to check. If you are not sure, ask your coach to explain in detail.

Masks

Masks should have no dents in the mesh, broken wires or sharp edges. The mesh should be tested with a mask tester. The gasket must be secure and must not allow a tip to slide through. The mask must have two points of contact with the back of the head, masks with no tongue and only two straps in an “X” shape should be rejected.

The integrity of the mask’s elastic strap should be tested to ensure that the strap(s) stretches, that the elastic has not been worn out and that the elastic is in satisfactory condition. To check: give the strap a gentle tug. If there is no stretch or if it’s just too big to hold the mask in place, reject the mask and advise that the strap be repaired. Do not confiscate the mask. It is acceptable to stitch up a band to make it shorter as long as it can still stretch to hold reasonably well to the back of the head; otherwise, it must be replaced. We understand there is some judgement involved in the terms “satisfactory condition” and “reasonably well”. For questionable cases, point out the problem and advise the fencer to get the strap repaired soon.

Foil masks (with conductive material on the bib) must not be used as they can fail to register a valid épée touch.

Gloves

Gloves with manufactured holes for body cords may be used. Gloves which have tears or rips which penetrate the upper layer of material may not be used.

Information included in other documents

Each school receives two other documents that include information about GHSFL tournaments.

- *GHSFL Fencing Time Instructions* describes how to use Fencing Time to run a GHSFL tournament.
- *Competition Format* describes the GHSFL tournament season.

The following items that you should be aware of are covered in detail in those documents.

- You must use Fencing Time to manage your tournament. If necessary, GHSFL will provide a Fencing Time license key for use at the tournament. See *GHSFL Fencing Time Instructions* for details.
- Pools consist of 6 or 7 fencers. See “Round 1: Pools” in *Competition Format* for the very rare exceptions.
- For information about whether a fencer should be excluded (receive a black card) or withdrawn, see the *Competition Format* section on “Withdrawals and exclusions”.
- Except at team tournaments, no other bouts should be fenced while the men’s or women’s final is in progress. See the *Competition Format* section on “Finals”.

Medal ceremony

As soon as possible after the last bout, you should award medals to the top four fencers in each event. The league will have given you the medals before the start of the tournament. Announce the following: “The top four fencers should assemble for the medal ceremony wearing full whites or their high school fencing team shirt or jacket”

Begin with either men or women (your choice). A typical announcement is “*Tied for third place, in no particular order, the bronze medals go to [fencer] of [school] and [fencer] of [school]. In second place, the silver medal goes to [fencer] of [school]. And the gold medal goes to today’s winner [fencer] of [school]*”. Pause after reading each fencer’s name and school while the medal is awarded. After receiving their medal, the medal winners should shake hands, then form a line facing the audience. After awarding the gold medal, wait until people have finished taking photos before continuing. Take the following three photographs yourself: group shot of men’s medal winners, group shot of women’s medal winners, group shot of all medal winners. Email photographs to the GHSFL Vice-Chair.

Signage, forms and notes

Signs outside the school

Have signs directing visitors from the campus entrance to where they should park, and from the parking lot to the school entrance that they should use. These signs need to be readable from a distance (and sometimes from a moving car), so keep them simple. Most of the space should be taken up by the word “Fencing” and an arrow. On the right is an example of one used at Pope:

An office supply store or an online service such as esigns.com can make yard signs for you with this type of design.



Signs inside the school

The [Resources for tournament hosts](#) page in the [League](#) section of the Pope Fencing website has sets of signs that you might find useful.

Tournament signs

This set includes signs for:

- First aid. This should be placed where your first aid kit is available (at concessions).
- Various tables (Sign In, Mask and Glove Check, etc.).
- Directing people to the tournament (for example from the school entrance).
- Directing people to strips in different rooms (add the appropriate strip numbers).
- Telling schools where the strips they are responsible for are located.

Results signs

This set includes headers to identify the results posted on the wall (Men’s initial seeding, Women’s final places, etc.).

School signs

This set includes a sign for each school in the league containing the school’s name and logo. You can use these to identify where the school’s fencers should put their fencing bags, and which school is responsible for a strip.

Strip numbers

This file simply includes signs with strip numbers (1-20) that can be taped to the tables between the strips.

GHSFL Medical Withdrawal Form

The [Resources for tournament hosts](#) page also contains the form that must be completed when a fencer withdraws from a tournament for medical reasons. You should have a few copies of this form on hand in case they are needed. Completed forms should be stored with the score sheets and given to the GHSFL Vice Chair after the tournament.

Referee meeting notes

The referee meeting is conducted by the Bout Committee Chair, who is usually the head coach of the host school. The GHSFL Vice Chair will provide notes on points to be covered in the meeting. If your head coach will not be at the referee meeting, you must inform the Vice Chair so that another head coach can be assigned.

Timeline

Before the season starts

As required (at least once a season)

Survey all the locations in your school (including hallways) where you might be able to place strips. You need to know the maximum number of strips you can have with any set of locations. See “Figure 1: Example strip layout” on page 5 for an example of a gym layout. Check each season to see if anything has changed.

At the end of the season

Try to find out which Saturdays during the next season may be possibilities for you to host. When the tournament schedule is announced (in February or March), bid on the date(s) on which you would like to host.

At the start of the school year

Make sure that you have submitted any required paperwork to reserve the facilities. Check the school’s facility calendar (if available) to make sure that it shows your tournament(s) on the correct date and in the correct locations. Continue monitoring this in case the administration cancels your reservation and forgets to tell you (yes, it happens).

Acquire equipment (see Equipment needed on page 8) and put together your management team (see Management team on page 9).

Before the tournament

A few weeks before the tournament

If you haven’t already done so, decide whether you will lay strips on Friday evening or Saturday morning (if Friday evening, make sure you will have access to the building and that nobody will disturb what you have done). If necessary, arrange for the janitorial staff to raise the basketball goals and position the bleachers as you need.

With your management team, put together a list of jobs that you want people to volunteer for and send out the call for parents to sign up for the jobs. Tell your fencers that you need them to help set up the tournament.

The week of the tournament

Check if your volunteer jobs have been filled and send out a plea for more volunteers if they have not. Double-check that you still have the correct facilities reserved and that the janitorial staff plan on doing what you need them to do. Make sure that the building will be unlocked when you need it on Saturday morning. Inform the GHSFL Vice Chair if your head coach is not able to run the referee meeting so that another head coach can be selected.

Make sure you have supplies (see Supplies on page 9) and buy food and drink for concessions and the referees’ table.

Tournament day (and the night before)

Most of the times listed are suggestions. Those in **bold face and underlined** are standard times and you should not change them without checking with the GHSFL Tournament Director.

- Friday evening or 6:30 am Saturday: Tape strips, set out tables and chairs, post signage.
- 7:00 am: Volunteers not involved with taping strips should arrive.
- 7:00 am: Set up concessions stand and referees’ table.
- **7:30 am**: Check-in opens.
- **8:15 am**: Referee meeting.
- 8:30 am: Men’s check-in closes.
- 8:30 am: National Anthem (if you are having it performed).
- **10:00 am**: Women’s check-in closes.
- 3:30 – 4:30 pm: Tournament ends (if all goes well).
- 4:00 – 5:00 pm: Cleanup finished – clear the building.