

Parent's Guide to Fencing

Apex Fencing Academy

February 16, 2022

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Vocabulary List

<p>askFRED.net</p>	<p>The website used by fencing tournament organizers. You can sign up for local tournaments via askFRED</p>
<p>RYC – Regional Youth Circuit</p>	<p>RYCs are hosted throughout the year in each Region. Fencers from any region can compete, but only fencers from the Region hosting the tournament can earn Regional Points at that tournament. These competitions are qualification paths for youth (Y10, Y12) for the March NAC. They also serve as a qualification path (Y10, Y12, Y14) for the Summer Nationals.</p>
<p>Region 6</p>	<p>Our region, region 6, encompasses Maryland to Florida in the east, Tennessee to Mississippi in the west.</p> 
<p>SYC – Super Youth Circuit</p>	<p>SYCs are hosted throughout the year in every region. These competitions are one possible qualification path for youth (Y10, Y12) for the March NAC, and also serve as a qualification path (Y10, Y12, Y14) for the Summer Nationals. At an SYC, you can earn national points.</p>
<p>Rating</p>	<p>A letter ranking assigned to a fencer. All fencers start as a “U” or Unrated fencer. The ratings work up from an E to an A, with A being the highest. You can earn a rating by placing well at sanctioned tournaments.</p>
<p>JOs – Junior Olympics</p>	<p>JOs serve as the National Championships for the Cadet and Junior age categories. There are multiple paths for fencers to qualify for this</p>

	tournament including National Points, Regional Points, and Divisional JO Qualifiers.
NAC – North American Cup	National competitions held around the US for different age groups & classifications. There is a possibility to earn national points.
RJCC – Regional Junior Cadet Circuit	RJCCs are hosted throughout the year in each Region. Fencers from any region can compete, but only fencers from the Region hosting the tournament can earn Regional Points at that tournament. These tournaments are a qualification path for Junior Olympics & July Challenge.
ROC - Regional Open Circuit	Regional Open Circuit The ROCs serve as one of the qualification paths for certain events at the USA National Fencing Championships and July Challenge (regional points are earned here)
Division	A local USA Fencing organizing body. Multiple Divisions make up a Region. We belong to the North Carolina Division. www.ncfencing.org
Summer Nationals	Is the National Championships Youth, Div1A, Div2, Div3 and Vet events. The culmination of the fencing season. This tournament lasts over 10 days in late June – early July that requires qualification. There are multiple paths for fencers to qualify for this tournament including National Points, Regional Points, and Divisional Qualifiers.
July Challenge	A national July tournament for junior and cadet fencers usually held at the same time/place as Summer Nationals that requires qualification. There are multiple paths for fencers to qualify for this tournament including National Points and Regional Points.
USA Fencing (USFA) – United States Fencing Association	The governing body for fencing in the United States. Similar to sister sports like Lacrosse, Boxing or Field Hockey, it’s a subsidiary of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Partially funded by the USOC, USFA provides the infrastructure that standardizes fencing across the country. It provides a USA Fencing Tournament Browser for finding and registering for national and regional tournaments.
USA Fencing Membership	All Apex Fencing fencers must be members of USA Fencing in order to meet our club liability insurance requirements. The membership essentially buys a place for a fencer in the USA Fencing registry and funds national competitions throughout the year. Several tiers are available, but these are the most common:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-competitive - This is the minimum level allowing you to practice at our facility and participate in unsanctioned tournaments. • access - This level allows you to practice at our facility, participate in unsanctioned tournaments, and compete in North Carolina sanctioned tournaments. You cannot compete in regional or national tournaments without upgrading to a competitive membership. • competitive - This allows you to practice at our facility, compete in unsanctioned/sanctioned tournaments and USAF regional and national tournaments. <p>Membership cover the entire fencing year from August 1st through July 31. Accounts are created, and dues are paid on the USA Fencing website. Membership details, including fees, can be found on the membership page of USA Fencing: www.usafencing.org/membership.</p>
Safesport	A policy followed by USA Fencing that addresses: sexual, emotional and physical misconduct, bullying, harassment, and hazing
DE – Direct Elimination	At a tournament, after pools are completed, fencers are reseeded and put into a bracket. The bouts that follow are called Direct Elimination bouts, because if a fencer wins, they move on to the next round, and if they lose, they are eliminated from the tournament.
Bye	A fencer might be awarded a bye in the direct elimination bracket. This means the fencer is automatically promoted to the next round.
Pools	At a tournament, pools are the initial groups of fencers that fence on a particular strip used during the tournament. Every fencer in the pool will fence each other, and then the results (wins, losses, touches scored and touches received) will be used to calculate your fencer’s seeding for the Direct Elimination round.
Bout	The act of two fencers fencing each other. Typically to 5 touches in pools and to 15 touches in DEs. Y10 & Veteran fencers fence 10 touch DE bouts.
Tableau	After pools and re-seeding, fencers are organized into a single-elimination bracket known as the tableau.
Piste	Another word for the fencing strip

Pod	A group of four strips in an area; this term is usually used in the Direct Eliminations rounds of larger tournaments. For example, Pod K consists of strips K1, K2, K3, and K4
Seeding	The ranking/order of fencers competing in the event. There is an initial seeding determining the pool order, and a DE seeding based on the pool results.
Y10	Youth ages 10 and under
Y12	Youth ages 12 and under
Y14	Youth ages 14 and under
Cadet	Ages 17 and under
Junior	Ages 20 and under
Open	Events with no specific restrictions except an age minimum of 13. Sometimes known as Div 1A.
Division 1	Fencers 13 years or older holding an A, B or C rating
Division 1A	Fencers 13 years or older holding an A, B, C, D or E rating or Unrated
Division 2	Fencers 13 years or older holding a C, D, E or U rating
Division 3	Fencers 13 years or older holding a D, E or U rating
VET	Veteran fencer age groups 40 and above (V40, V50, V60, V70, V80+)
Mixed	A tournament event where men & women compete in the same event against each other
Points	An athlete's result in an event may earn them points. There are regional and national points lists which help determine qualification for higher-level events. Regional points are earned at RYC and RJCC events, and National points are earned at SYC, SJCC and NAC events.

Live Results	Usually found at fencingtimelive.com , this website gives you a way to keep up where your fencer needs to be (strip assignments), bout order, and tableau. This application also gives the up to date results of each fencing event. You need to know this!
Sanctioned Tournament	A tournament sanctioned and governed by USA Fencing. Certain size events allow fencers to earn ratings based on their finish. There are equipment requirements at a sanctioned tournament - padded chest protectors (required for women, optional for boys), mask cords (foil), body cords, lame (foil), jacket, plastron (aka. underarm protector), a glove, knickers or fencing pants and a mask. This equipment must pass inspection.
Unsanctioned Tournament	A locally organized tournament that does not award ratings. A tournament that doesn't require all the equipment needs of a sanctioned tournament. Armory check-in is not a requirement at unsanctioned tournaments. Similar to an intramural scrimmage.

Tournament Resources

Apex Fencing Academy keeps a tournament calendar with appropriate local, regional and national events online at [Apex Fencing Tournament Calendar](#)

Local tournaments are announced and registration handled on [askFRED](#)

USA Fencing national and regional events can be accessed through the member portal of [USA Fencing Tournament Browser](#)

[The Athlete Handbook](#) provides fencers, coaches, administrators, and parents the information pertinent to all aspects of USA Fencing programs.

Choosing Tournaments

Be sure to have a conversation with your coach to determine which tournaments would be a good fit for your level.

Competitions can be viewed in a series of stepping stones:

- **Local Tournaments:** usually an introduction to competition though some can become quite large. For AFA fencers who are new to competing the Apex Novice Cup (held monthly) is the perfect place to start.
- **Regional Tournaments:** for better practice, and to qualify for the national level.
- **National:** athletes should be highly competitive, and highly motivated.

Being a competitive fencer in Region 6 requires a fencer to travel a good bit. Our region stretches from Florida to Maryland. We encourage your fencer to get to as many tournaments as you possibly can. Fencing in tournaments

helps you improve quicker. Don't be intimidated by a large tournament; go with the attitude to fence and learn. While results might not come quickly, they will come quicker the more you compete.

Apex Fencing Academy hosts a series of monthly, unsanctioned tournaments known as the Novice Cup. We also host two sanctioned tournaments each year: The Peak Open and the Apex Open. These tournaments will be listed on [askFRED](#).

RYCs competitions are part of the Regional Youth Circuit, a series of competitions created by USA Fencing as a developmental system for young fencers. There is a Regional Points system where fencers are awarded points based on their placement. Points are tallied at the end of the season, and the top three fencers on the regional points list for each age, gender and weapon will receive a patch & certificate commemorating their achievement from USFA after the end of the season. RYCs are also qualifying events for the youth NAC and Summer Nationals. Fencers will "get a feel" for what it's like to go to a competition with all of their gear, check in, have their equipment checked by an armorer, be assigned to a pool, meet their referee, fence in a pool, and fence direct elimination bouts (DEs). The Regional Junior Cadet Circuit, RJCC, is similar to the Regional Youth Circuit but is for Cadet & Junior fencers.

SYCs are higher-level tournaments that are part of the Super Youth Circuit. These competitions serve as qualifying events for national championships for Y10, Y12 & Y14 fencers. Also, fencers who finish in the top 40% in each event earn national points. SYCs tend to be large, competitive events and can be intimidating (or inspiring) for newer fencers. SYCs are usually a youth fencer's introduction to the bigger fencing community.

National events (NACs/Junior Olympics/July Challenge/Nationals) are appropriate for athletes who are motivated to challenge themselves and compete at the highest level.

When in doubt, ask your coaches, teammates, or even seasoned team parents.

What do I Need to Fence in a Competition?

Sanctioned events require full fencing attire (fencing knickers, long socks, plastron/underarm protector, chest protector for women, fencing jacket, glove, mask and lame). In addition, you will need 2 weapons, body cords, and mask cords – a spare **is required** in case one breaks.

Unsanctioned events tend to be looser with the exact requirements determined by the organizer. That said, most follow what's listed above with the exception that long athletic pants often suffice. It is best to check with organizers if you are in doubt

All events require a USA Fencing membership. For sanctioned events in North Carolina, you must have a USA Fencing "Competitive" or "Access" Membership. If you will be traveling to other states or participating in USA Fencing Regional or National events, you must have a "Competitive" Membership. Note: Some events are UNSANCTIONED. In this case, you still need at least a "Non-Competitive" USA Fencing Membership. Memberships are valid for one year fencing year beginning August 1st and expiring on July 31st.

Registering for a Tournament

To register for a tournament, go to the tournament website (either on [askFRED](#) or [USA Fencing](#)). The "more info" or "details" section will have lots of information about events, days and times, the venue, the hosting club or division, hotels near the venue, etc.

You will also see a registration deadline. This is the cut-off date to register at the regular fee amount. Late registrations often pay significant higher fees, up to triple the original cost. You can also see who else is registered for the tournament.

Pay close attention to the time listed for your fencer's event. The time indicated is the time that check-in closes for the event. The pools could begin anytime at or after the close of check-in. If your fencer's event shows a 9:00 am start time, be sure that you arrive at the venue in plenty of time to check in, get equipment checked, and warm up before 9:00 am. **Coaches recommend an hour before registration closes.**

Tournament Travel

Local Tournament: If you will be driving to the tournament, you need to decide if you will go straight from home the day of the event or stay at a hotel the night before. Generally, it is best to be well rested and well fed the night before a tournament. If the venue is more than an hour or two away, you might consider driving the day before and spending the night close to the venue, especially if your fencer has an early check in time. A 5:00 am wake up and a two-hour drive with breakfast in the car might not be the best preparation for an 8:00 am pool!

Tournament Requiring Air Travel: If you are flying to a tournament, there are some helpful hints to minimize the stress on both you and your fencer! The first basic rule is never fly the day you fence. There are some fencers who can perform the same day after a red-eye flight, but most cannot. Try to fly into the host city the day before your first event, and if at all possible schedule your arrival so that your fencer can eat something and get a decent night's sleep once you arrive. With time zone changes, school requirements and unhelpful airline schedules, travel can be difficult, and of course we "do what we have to do," but whenever possible we try to make it easier for our fencers! Also, don't book your return flight on the same day as your fencer's last event. It is tempting to look at the schedule and think, "Oh, we'll have plenty of time to make that flight" but don't be fooled. Unless your fencer has an 8:00 am start time and you can find a 7:00 pm flight home, don't do it. Having a fencing tournament run late is the rule rather than the exception, and events are often scheduled at the end of the day. Also, you may have to book your travel before the event check-in times are posted (this applies to NACs and Nationals), which means you might not know what time your fencer is competing each day until after you book your flights. Book your flight home for the day after your fencer's last event if at all possible.

The next hurdle is your luggage. The fencing bag will be checked, and it should only contain weapons and some large toiletries or non-fencing clothing. If the airline asks you what is in the bag, your answer is "sports equipment," not swords or weapons. If pressed, it's "fencing equipment." The rest of your fencer's equipment (mask, glove, lame, jacket, plastron, chest protector, knickers, socks, shoes, body & mask cords) should fit nicely in a roll-aboard bag, duffel or backpack that is carried on the plane.

Always keep the carry-on with you - if the airline misplaces your fencing bag, you can borrow weapons at the tournament, but if they lose the rest of your gear, it's a real problem. You generally won't be there long enough for them to get your bag back to you before the event begins. A national tournament (NACs and maybe some larger SYCs) will have equipment vendors on site that will happily sell you all new equipment, but smaller tournaments will not. It is unlikely that your fencer can beg or borrow enough gear to compete. Spending the time and money to get to an event but being unable to compete is very disappointing for your fencer (and painful for your wallet). Just don't check your gear on the way to a tournament, ever!

At the Tournament

The night before the event

- Double-check the time of the event. The time listed is the close of registration. Your fencer must be at the venue, checked in, with all equipment checked, and warmed up by that time.
- Pack the gear in the fencing bag using a checklist. You may not be able to get back to the hotel the day of the event to retrieve forgotten items. Doing this the night before reduces stress on the morning of the event and gives you one less thing to worry about. If you have a basic first aid kit (Band-Aids, pain reliever, tape, instant cold packs), it belongs in the fencing bag. Your fencer may also want a fresh t-shirt, warm up jacket, sweats or shorts to wear after their event (and of course their AFA warm up jacket to wear on the podium if they earn a medal!).
- Pack your “support bag” with a water bottle or sports drink and a decent snack (banana, trail mix, energy bar, beef jerky- whatever your fencer will eat). This can also go into the fencing bag if there is room. Remember that your fencer may be too nervous to eat a great breakfast, or too excited to eat in between pools and DEs - do your best and let them choose what sounds good to them in the moment, while still keeping them reasonably fed.
- Don't forget your fencer's USFA membership card and a copy of their birth certificate. They will need the card to check in, and the age verification if USFA doesn't have it on file yet.
- Feed your fencer! Carbohydrates, protein and water are the most important. Hydration starts the week before. Many fencers like energy gels during the pools and DEs. (Gatorade & Clif Shot Bloks)
- Sleep can be tough the night before a tournament- time zone changes, nervousness, and an unfamiliar bed can all cause problems. Encourage your fencer to get as much rest as possible.

The day of the event

- Arrive at the venue an hour before the close of registration. You want to have plenty of time to get situated without rushing and stressing out your fencer (and yourself!).
- Have your fencer check in for the day's event as soon as you arrive at the venue, if possible. If check in for the event is not open yet, go to the armorer and get the equipment checked.
- If multiple AFA families are going, there may be an area where the club sets up (meeting spot) has been set up. AFA tends to meet up around Strip K (for Kristzi) or near our club banner. Head there to meet with other athletes. If something goes wrong (usually missing or failed equipment), the team can work together to solve the problem.
- At the armorer's table, you will present the following pieces of equipment- mask, glove, zipped up lame (foil only), 2 mask cords (foil only) and 2 body cords (untangled). Be sure to remove any previous inspection tape from your cords. The armorer will check the conductivity of the cords by plugging them into a testing machine- if they pass, the armorer will mark them with a piece of colored inspection tape. If they don't pass, you will need to replace them or borrow cords from a teammate. The lame and mask will be checked for conductivity using a testing machine and a small probe. All areas of the material will be checked, and if the armorer finds “dead spots” that won't register a touch, the item won't pass and again it's replace, repair or borrow. The glove will be inspected for structural integrity- no holes or tape repairs will be allowed. The mask must pass both a conductivity test on the bib material (foil) and a punch test of the steel mesh. If they pass, the lame, glove and mask are marked with a stamp unique to the tournament. Referees on the strips will check for these marks before both pools and DEs. Equipment without control marks/tape cannot be used --**NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Teammates should warm up together. If the coach has traveled to the event, listen and make sure you follow their instructions for warmup. Have everyone gather at a strip and have the fencers start doing their

footwork warm ups ON THE STRIP. Space on strips will be at a premium, and if they lose custody of the strip they may not get it back when they are ready to fence their warm up bouts. The oldest fencer or an experienced parent can help with the warm up routine, which should start about ½ hour before the close of registration. The idea is to be warmed up mentally and physically but not tired. Always try to fence at least several competitors whom you don't normally fence during your warmup – getting repetitions with an unfamiliar opponent helps warm up your mind for problem solving during the pool.

- If the coach has traveled to the event, it is the fencers' parents responsibility to acquire a meal for lunch and dinner for the coach. If several team fencers are at the event, split up who acquires and pays.
- Fencing usually starts about 15-30 minutes after the close of registration but could start any time.
- Once registration has closed for your event, you will need to watch for the pools to be posted and listen for announcements. Many larger tournaments use a live results program, so you will be able to check for pool assignments on your smart phone or other device - the organizers can tell you if they are using a live program. If not, then there will be a designated area where pools will be posted after they are announced. Once the pool assignments are posted, check which pool your fencer is in and what strip # the pool is assigned to. The strip numbers are usually posted at the middle of each strip, hanging from the table where the scoring machines are, or at one end of the strip. Fencers need to report to their assigned strip as soon as it's posted. Bring either the entire fencing bag or their strip bag (fencers must have at least one spare weapon and cords next to the strip for every bout in case their primary one breaks or fails). You should feel comfortable leaving the fencing bag zipped shut and "parked" out of the way during pools and DEs - it is very rare to have anything broken or stolen. Usually the fencers all leave their bags in the same spot and only take their strip bags and water bottles to their strips.
- This may sound silly, but be sure your fencer visits the restroom right before or right after the close of registration. Having to "go" during a bout makes fencing difficult, and there won't be time to go in between pool bouts. If your fencer tries to run for it and misses being called to the strip for a bout, it could result in a warning or even disqualification from the event.
- When you get your fencer to the strip, look around for the referee - it'll be the person in a blazer with a clipboard (usually). You may get to the strip before the referee. The referee will call all the fencers in the pool over to check the control marks on their gear and make sure they're wearing a plastron/chest protector. They will either call the fencers by name or by number (the number comes from the order they are listed on the pool sheet). Fencers need to listen for their name or number- the referee will announce who is fencing the current bout and who is "on deck" and should be ready to hook up as soon as the current bout is over. **BE READY TO GO** – referees spend a lot of time on their feet and appreciate promptness.
- Have your fencer's water bottle and spare weapon & cords next to the strip. In case of a broken blade or malfunctioning cord, the spare needs to be available immediately or your fencer will be given a yellow card (a warning).
- As a parent, the best way to support your athlete is to take video! Videos are helpful for the athlete to review by themselves and with their coach.
- When a bout is called, the fencer called first should hook up on the referee's right side, and the second fencer called should hook up on the referee's left side, unless one of the fencers is left-handed. Left-handed fencers should hook up on the referee's left. You or the coach can help your younger fencer hook up if they need assistance, but aside from that you need to stay off the strip. You can cheer energetically but politely for your fencer against opponents from other clubs, but if two AFA fencers are facing each other in a bout, you should stay quiet or clap for both fencers.
- Your fencer will fence every other fencer in the pool, one 5-touch bout each. At the beginning, they will test their blades and salute their opponent and referee. At the end of the pool, the referee will ask the fencers to check their scores and sign the pool sheet. If you have kept score for your fencer, let them know what scores to look for (one win, two fours and three twos, etc.). Their signature on the pool sheet is their

acknowledgement that the scores are correct, so make sure to verify the scores before signing. Your fencer also needs to thank the referee.

- There will be a break between pools and DEs. Offer your fencer a snack and some water and encourage another visit to the restroom. They should rest a bit but be ready to warm up again. The length of time between pools and DEs can vary wildly, anywhere from 20 minutes at smaller tournaments to an hour or more at large tournaments. Listen for announcements about your fencer's event, watch for the DE bracket to be posted and have your fencer report to the assigned strip (or pod of strips) as soon as it's posted.
- A note about food at the venue: some larger tournaments have food vendors on site, and some smaller tournaments will have food for sale at their facility. Don't expect a lot of healthy choices- while there may be sandwiches, fruit or salads, you are more likely to find burgers, fries, chicken strips and junk food (especially at events held in convention centers, like most NACs). As a hungry parent, you may want to plan ahead. You can sometimes dart out if there are local food options close by, but it's safest to do that either before or after your fencer's event.
- After the pool results are in, a direct elimination or DE bracket is created. Each fencer will be seeded according to their pool results and assigned an opponent in the table. The bracket is set up so that the top fencers after pools face the bottom fencers after pools first, so that in a table of 8 fencers, #1 faces #8, #2 faces #7, etc. This can be tough if your fencer did poorly in pools, because they may be facing a tough opponent early in the DEs. In Y10, the DE bouts are 10-touch bouts with a 1-minute break for water/coaching when one fencer reaches 3 minutes of fencing or when 5 hits are scored whichever comes first (foil/epee), two periods. All other age brackets, DE bouts are 15-touch bouts with a 1-minute break for water/coaching when one fencer reaches 3 minutes of fencing (foil/epee), three periods. If the coach is there, they will take your fencer the water bottle and talk to them about the bout during the break. If there is no coach at the strip, you may take water to your fencer during the break or have an older team member do it (your fencer cannot unhook or leave the strip to get water during the 1-minute break). If your fencer loses the DE bout, they are done for the event and their final place will be determined by their seeding after pools and the bracket they finished in (top 8, 16, 32, etc.). If your fencer wins the bout, they advance to the next bracket to fence a new opponent.
- If your fencer finishes "in the medals" (top 4 at some tournaments, top 8 at others), they should stay until the end of their event and get their medal. This is another reason not to rush out to catch a flight- your fencer earned a medal and they should be up on the podium to receive it! Medals are usually given out shortly after the final bout. Have your fencer wear either their full fencing gear or their club jacket and club pants.
- Everyone likes to feel like they have a cheering section. If other AFA fencers are still fencing, teammates should be cheering them on. Check the schedule to see when other genders/age groups are fencing and try to be supportive. Encourage your fencer to watch the later rounds of their event, even if they've already lost their DE bout. The best fencing of the day is likely to be in the later rounds, and your fencer should be watching and learning.
- Everyone has a different parenting style (and you know your own fencer best), but it's best to be positive and supportive with your fencer, win or lose. Don't make too much of a win or a loss. Fencing is a tough sport and the kids work very hard. When talking with your fencer after the bout, try to focus on being supportive and constructive - what worked well, what didn't work as well, what they'll try next time. A good way to think about it is "It's okay to lose the bout, but don't lose the lesson." Many experts advise parents to limit themselves to "I loved watching you fence today!" in the first few minutes after their fencer's last bout. The coach will handle the technical fencing issues. We recommend giving fencers a few minutes alone to absorb what has happened and to compose themselves. Some fencers might be fine and want to discuss things immediately, again, you know your fencer the best, but don't be surprised if they need some alone time to process.

- Carefully repack the fencing bag before you leave the venue. Check the area around your last strip and your bag for all equipment, water bottles, etc. Walk by the lost and found table on your way out and see if anything looks familiar.
- Team dinners during tournaments can be fun and a great way to unwind. Remember, **WE ARE A TEAM!** Keep in touch with coaches and other parents at the tournament to see if you can set something up. AFA usually uses Google Hangouts to keep in touch.
- When you get back to the hotel, lay out or hang dry the sweaty gear in the hotel room overnight. This is especially important if your fencer is fencing on multiple days.

Sportsmanship

Remember when fencing at a competition you are representing yourself, your club, your coaches, and your family. It is very important to show good sportsmanship! There are times you will lose when you thought you should have won and days you will win and surprise yourself. Referees are only human and sometimes make bad calls or mistakes, accept this. Shake your opponent's hand and make eye contact at the end of each bout. Make sure to shake your referee's hand at the end of a pool and say "thank you." Also, shake hands with your opponent and the referee at the end of each DE. In the time of Covid, shaking hands is frowned upon, so a quick tap of the blades and a nod to your opponent will suffice. An elbow bump or simply a "thank-you" to the referee is fine too.

Qualifying Paths

Four national tournaments require special mention because they have unique qualification paths. Some of the details change year-to-year. Specifics are outlined in the USA Fencing Athlete Handbook.

Junior Olympic Championships

Held annually in February over President's Day Weekend, the Junior Olympic Championships (or JOs), marks the culmination of the Cadet and Junior season. Fencers can qualify through:

1. Placement on the National Rolling Points Standings
2. Placement on the Regional Point Standing
3. Placement in their Division's Junior Olympic Qualifying Competition

Summer Nationals (Y10, Y12, Y14, Div 1A, Div 2, Div 3, Vet Age)

Held annually at the end of June or beginning of July, Summer Nationals is a huge tournament encompassing all ages and abilities. Fencers can qualify through multiple paths:

1. Placement on the National Rolling Points Standings
2. Placement on the Regional Point Standing
3. Placement in their Division's Div2/Div3 Qualifying Competition

National Championship (Div 1)

Held annually, the best fencers usually meet in conjunction with the April NAC to determine the USA National Champion in Division 1.

1. Senior National Rolling Point Standings OR
2. Junior National Rolling Point Standings OR
3. Previous high finisher in Div1A or Div2 championships

July Challenge Path (Division 1, Cadet & Junior)

The July Challenge is held in late June early July, usually in conjunction with the USA Fencing National Championships. This competition constitutes the beginning of the Cadet and Junior point cycle/season which is why their NRPS are updated with the new season's birth year span in April each year. Only those that meet the new season's birth year span are eligible to compete in these events.

1. Placement on the National Rolling Points Standings
2. Placement on the Regional Point Standing