

# BY-LAWS OF THE GOLD COAST DIVISION OF THE UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION

## ARTICLE I NAME AND AFFILIATION

The name of the division shall be the **GOLD COAST** Division of the United States Fencing Association, hereinafter be referred to as "THE DIVISION", and "USFA" respectively. THE DIVISION is a duly chartered subordinate, constituent body of the USFA, exercising powers given by, performing duties directed under, and subject to, the Charter and By-Laws of the USFA, with jurisdiction over the following geographic area: in the State of FLORIDA: area designated as "SOUTHERN FLORIDA" by the USFA (Monroe, Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St Lucie Counties)

## ARTICLE II OBJECTIVES

The objectives of The **GOLD COAST** Division shall be:

1. The encouragement and development of the art of Fencing.
2. The holding of local competitions and tournaments.
3. The promotion of participation in State, Sectional and National competitions sponsored by USFA
4. Such other purposes and objectives as have been promulgated in the By-Laws of USFA

## ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1 - Eligibility:** Any person residing in THE DIVISION, or belonging to a fencing club located within THE DIVISION and who is not a member of another division of USFA and who meets the requirements for membership in USFA shall be eligible for membership in THE DIVISION.

**Section 2 - Classes of memberships:** Classes of membership and requirements for membership in each class shall be as stipulated in the By-Laws of the USFA

**Section 3 - Admission to membership:** Applicants who qualify under section 1 of this Article shall be admitted to membership upon payment of the required dues.

**Section 4 - Discipline, suspension & expulsion of members:** As dictated by the rules of the USFA.

## **ARTICLE IV ELECTED OFFICERS**

The officers of THE DIVISION shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer. All officers shall take office the first day of August next following their election, and hold Office until the following July 31st, or until their successors are elected and have qualified. Any voting member of THE DIVISION shall be eligible to hold elective office in THE DIVISION provided that the person is a current member in good standing. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

**Section 1 - Chairperson:** The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of THE DIVISION and its Executive Committee, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office and are not inconsistent with these By-Laws. The Chairperson has the responsibility for filing with the Secretary and the Treasurer of the corporation the annual reports called for under the corporate By-Laws and the standing votes of the Board of Directors. The preparation of these reports may be delegated to the Secretary and Treasurer of THE DIVISION. The Chairperson will select additional Directors entitled to THE DIVISION based on membership as well as a Director for Sectional Affairs who is empowered to vote in sectional matters.

**Section 2 - Vice Chairperson:** The Vice-Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson, shall perform the duties of the Chairperson.

**Section 3 - Secretary:** The Secretary shall conduct all official correspondence; keep a record of the meetings of THE DIVISION; issue notices to members of all meetings, and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson of THE DIVISION or other proper authority.

**Section 4 - Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of THE DIVISION; receive all monies, fees, dues, etc.; pay all bills approved by the Executive Committee and preserve all vouchers for such disbursements. The Treasurer shall at the annual meeting of THE DIVISION submit a report of the financial transaction of the preceding year. The Treasurer shall keep all funds of THE DIVISION in such account or accounts as the Executive Committee may prescribe. Nominal disbursements may be made from a petty cash fund under such regulation and control as may be established by the Executive Committee. The Treasurer shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson of THE DIVISION or other proper authority.

**Section 5 - Combining of Offices:** The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined for any year upon majority vote of the members of THE DIVISION voting, in person or by proxy, at the annual meeting. In the event of such a vote, the candidates for the office of Secretary and the office of Treasurer, nominated pursuant to Article VIII of these By-Laws, shall all be deemed candidates for the combined office.

**Section 6 - Removal of an Officer:** There are Two (2) methods of removing officers for cause: Removal for Cause and Recall.

**Removal for Cause:** The accused officer must be given at least fifteen (15) days notice of the charges being brought against him/her before a vote can be held. Additionally all registered clubs that are not already represented on the Executive Committee must be notified at least fifteen (days) before the meeting so that they can appoint a representative if they wish to. At the meeting the accused officer will be allowed to make a statement to answer the charges laid against him/her. A vote, excluding the accused, will then be taken and the officer will be considered removed only if it is unanimous.

**Recall:** In order to initiate a recall a petition containing the names, USFA membership numbers, and signatures of 25% of the voting members of THE DIVISION, must be submitted to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee must then set a date and location for the recall vote and provide the voting membership with at least fifteen (15) days notice of the date and location. Proxy voting is not allowed for this vote. The officer will be recalled if the vote passes by a 2/3 majority.

**Section 7 - Vacancies:** Any vacancy, whether arising from resignation, death, removal, or otherwise, shall be filled, for all offices except chairman, by interim appointment by the Executive Committee for the balance of the term. If the vacancy is for the office of chairman than the vice chairman will assume the office and shall be considered the sitting rather than interim chairman. In this situation the Executive Committee shall then appoint an interim vice chairman. In filling vacancies the Board may appoint any member eligible to hold office.

**Section 8 - Multiple Officers from the Same Club:** No club may have more than Two (2) sitting officers. If a third officer from the same club is either elected or appointed then one of the officers from that club must resign. If none will do so then the last one elected / appointed will be removed from office. A member is considered to belong to any club that the USFA, Inc. has them listed as being affiliated with. Unattached members are considered to belong to no USFA club.

## **ARTICLE V MANAGEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Section 1 - Composition:** The management of THE DIVISION shall be vested in an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the establishment of Divisional goals, training and competition schedules and the orderly conduct of the business of THE DIVISION. The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers of THE DIVISION, the outgoing Chairperson of THE DIVISION (for a period of one year after he/she leaves office), and one member each from any or all USFA Registered Clubs of THE DIVISION.

**Section 2 - Quorum:** A quorum shall consist of One-Third (1/3) of the members of the Executive Committee, or Three (3) members, whichever is the greater.

**Section 3 - Meetings:** Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at such time and place as shall be designated by the Chairperson, and shall be called upon the written request of Three (3) or more members of the Committee. All members shall be given not less than 14 days notice, except in the case of an emergency where only Forty-Eight (48) hours is required.

## **ARTICLE VI COMMITTEES**

Committees of the Executive Committee shall be created as needed by the Executive committee. The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Chairperson of THE DIVISION and approved by the Executive Committee. The appointed and approved committee chairmen will serve in their positions until either they resign or until the end of the current term of the Chairperson of THE DIVISION, whichever comes first.

## **ARTICLE VII MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS**

**Section 1 - Annual Meeting:** An annual meeting of the members of THE DIVISION shall be held each year prior to the month of August, at a date, time and place designated by the Chairperson, and approved by the Executive Committee.

**Section 2 - Scheduling Meeting:** A meeting of the members of THE DIVISION for the purpose of laying out the season's competition schedule shall be held each year prior to the end of the first week of September if possible at a date, time and place designated by the Chairperson, and approved by the Executive Committee. Though called by the Chairperson the Secretary shall run the meeting. Additional scheduling meetings may be held at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

**Section 3 - Special Meetings:** Special meetings may be called at any time and place by the Chairperson, and shall be called by the Chairperson upon the written request of not less than Seven (7) voting members of THE DIVISION.

**Section 4 - Notice:** Written notice of the date, time and place of the annual meeting shall be given to all members not less than Twenty-one (21) days in advance of such meeting. The notice shall contain a statement of the offices to be filled at such meeting, a statement as to any proposed amendments to the By-Laws to be voted upon at such meeting, and a statement of any other matters requiring a vote of the membership at such meeting. All members shall be given at least Seven (7) days prior written notice of all special meetings, which notice shall set forth the business to be transacted at the meeting. The Executive Committee and all clubs within THE DIVISION shall be given at least Twenty-one (21) days prior written notice of all scheduling meetings.

**Section 5 - Quorum:** A quorum shall consist of not less than Seven (7) members of THE DIVISION present in person, and a majority vote of those present shall control, except as herein otherwise provided.

**Section 6 - Proxies:** Except where otherwise proscribed in these by-laws, voting by proxy shall be allowed at all meetings of THE DIVISION. All proxies are valid for no more than Thirty (30) days after they are given. All proxies shall be produced by the division and contain the following items, Name of Member, USFA #, club, address, phone number, their signature and the name of the person they designate on their behalf. All proxies will be issued by the secretary of the division as needed, and if the original division proxy is lost and replaced it must be verified by Secretary as valid.

## **ARTICLE VIII ELECTIONS**

**Section 1 - Nominations:** Nominations for all elective offices set forth in these By-Laws will open in the second issue of the newsletter of THE DIVISION. In that issue the nominations filled by the Nominating Committee shall be listed. If the second issue of the newsletter has not been published by 1 January of the fencing year then nominations will open on 1 January. Additional nominations may be made by written petition up until Six (6) weeks before the date of the election and are to be directed to the Secretary. The petition must clearly state the office for which the nominee wishes to be considered and must contain signatures, addresses and USFA numbers of no less than Five (5) Gold Coast Division members. The election will take place at the annual meeting during the Divisional Championships at a time and place at or near the site of the competition.

Sitting officers are considered to automatically be running for their office for another term. They do not require a nomination petition. Since interim officers are appointed, not elected, they do not qualify for this and must file a nomination petition if they wish to seek their office for a full term.

There will be NO nominations from the floor unless an office has no one running for it. This can arise from a combination of the following situations: a lack of nominations, a sitting officer deciding to not seek another term, and an office becoming vacant (Article IV, §6) during the fencing year. In this case, and only this case, nominations from the floor will be allowed.

**Section 2 - Voting procedure:** With the closing of nominations, a mailing will be prepared and sent to the membership announcing the members running for office.

In the event that only one person is nominated for an office, the Secretary will be directed to record a unanimous vote for that candidate.

If two or more candidates are running for one position an election will be held between those candidates at the Annual Meeting

Members of the Division may appear in person at the Annual Meeting to vote for the Officers of the Division and members of the Executive Committee or designate a proxy to vote on their behalf according to Article VII, Section 6.

## **ARTICLE IX FEES, DUES AND ARREARS**

**Section 1** - All initiation fees and dues shall be as prescribed in the By-Laws of USFA, INC.

**Section 2** - Dues shall be payable on August 1st of each year, and no member who has failed to pay his or her dues shall be eligible to compete in any competition sponsored by THE DIVISION, and shall have no vote in DIVISION affairs until his or her dues have been paid.

## **ARTICLE X BY-LAWS, RULES AND POLICIES OF USFA**

All By-Laws, rules, regulations and matters of policy concerning the conduct of competitions as set forth in the fencing rules and manual of USFA are hereby incorporated as part of these By-Laws without action by the Executive Committee or the members of THE DIVISION. Where these by-laws are found to disagree with the by-laws, rules, regulations, and policy statements of USFA these by-laws take precedence unless they violate said by-laws, rules, regulations, and policy statements, in which case the by-laws, rules, regulations, and policy statements of USFA take precedence.

## **ARTICLE XI THE DIVISION NEWSLETTER**

In order to make known to the members of THE DIVISION the business of THE DIVISION and any other items deemed of interest to the membership, THE DIVISION shall publish a newsletter hereinafter referred to as "**THE GOLD COAST NEWSLETTER**". The purpose of "**THE GOLD COAST NEWSLETTER**" shall be to promote and improve fencing in THE DIVISION.

"**THE GOLD COAST NEWSLETTER**" shall contain a schedule of competitions, registration instructions and notice of entry fees, competition results, timely or historic articles, and other items of interest. One issue shall be published in September, one issue shall be published in January, and additional issues may be published as necessary. Articles may be solicited for publications.

Publication of "**THE GOLD COAST NEWSLETTER**" and its content shall be the responsibility of the Secretary or such individual or individuals as may be appointed by the Chairperson..

## **ARTICLE XII ADMINISTRATION OF DIVISION COMPETITIONS**

**Section 1 - Competition Structure:** THE DIVISION is required to hold a minimum of Three (3) events a season for which all monies go to the division and all expenses are paid by the division as follows: Junior Olympic Qualifier, Summer National Qualifier and the Division Championship. The schedule of events shall be determined at the scheduling meeting (ARTICLE VII, §2). The distribution of events by location and by date and time shall be such that no area in THE DIVISION (ARTICLE I) is consistently advantaged or disadvantaged.

THE DIVISION may schedule special events, which may or may not, have unique entry requirements, as may be appropriate.

**Section 2 - Registration for Competitions:** To better manage competitions, the Division may require fencers to preregister for competitions. The procedure and deadline shall be prescribed by the Executive Committee, and shall be published with the schedule for the season. Competitors who fail to preregister (when required) shall be required to pay an additional fee prescribed by the Executive Committee for each event they enter.

An event with preregistration may be canceled, at the discretion of THE DIVISION, if fewer than Six (6) fencers enter that event. Fencers preregistered in that event shall be notified in a timely manner.

**Section 3 - Requirements for Entry in Competitions:** Competitors must have current membership in The USFA to enter Division competitions, unless specifically stated otherwise in the schedule. Where used for eligibility purposes age will be determined in accordance current USFA policy.

The Division shall conduct generally Four (4) types of events:

1. Open Events - Any member of The USFA, regardless of age and division affiliation with the following specific age restrictions:
  - a. Fencers under 8 not allowed
  - b. Fencers from age 8 to 14 will be allowed only with a note of permission signed by both the fencer's coach and one of the fencer's parents / legal guardians.
2. Age Category Events- Any member of The USFA, according to age, regardless of division affiliation
3. Qualifying Events - Limited to members of THE DIVISION, may be categorized by age
4. Championship Events - Limited to members of THE DIVISION, may be categorized by age.

**Section 4 - Entry Fees:** Entry fees for events in THE DIVISION shall be determined by majority vote at the Scheduling Meeting, and published with the schedule in the Division Newsletter. If a need arises the Executive Committee may vote alter these fees by calling another scheduling meeting to vote on the matter and notifying all members of the change.

For qualifiers, separate entry fees will be charged for subgroups within a weapon if there are at least Six (6) fencers in that subgroup.

Current officers of THE DIVISION are exempt from paying entry fees at tournaments hosted by THE DIVISION.

**Section 5 - Late Arrivals:** Fencers more than Thirty (30) minutes late for the scheduled beginning of fencing will NOT be allowed to fence. The meet manager may suspend this rule at his/her discretion.

**Section 6 - Awards and Trophies:** THE DIVISION shall distribute awards for all events, at the completion of the event, for all competitions. Generally, the awards shall be:

1. Medallions: The first three places in all events except the Division Championships
2. Trophies: The first three places in the Division Championships.

### **Article XIII DIVISION OWNED EQUIPMENT**

The purpose of Division equipment is to provide equipment for Division sanctioned tournaments and demonstrations, whether hosted by the Division or a Division Club. The Division will store the equipment. Clubs are responsible for the timely return of equipment, with notification of its working status.

### **ARTICLE XIV MATTERS OF PROCEDURE**

For all matters of procedure not specified in these by-laws nor in the by-laws, rules, regulations and policy statements of USFA, INC, THE DIVISION shall rely on the current version of Robert's Rules of Orders. A copy of this book shall be owned and kept by a member of the Executive Committee.

## **Article XV Division Website and Emails**

**Section 1 - Website:** THE DIVISION shall maintain a website for the purpose of conveying information to its members. The website must at a minimum contain names of the division officers, the current by-laws, the current divisional competition schedule and a listing of USFA clubs within THE DIVISION. The website shall be considered a primary though not sole means of conveying information to members of THE DIVISION.

**Section 2 - Email:** Email will be considered the preferred means of conveying information to members of THE DIVISION. Wherever these by-laws DIRECT THE DIVISION or any its members to provide notification in some form email will be considered to be acceptable. The sole exceptions to this policy are absentee ballots, nominations, and proxies. These must still be done by writing and/or postal mail.

**Section 3 - Gathering of Email Addresses:** The email addresses used by the division will be those that the members have provided to USFA or to THE DIVISION or its officers directly.

**Section 4 - Lack of Valid Email Addresses:** If an email address has not been provided for a member or if an email has been returned as undeliverable that member will thereafter receive notification by the original means spelled out in the by-laws.

**Section 5 - Opting Out:** If a member so desires he/she may opt out of receiving email notifications. If a member does so then they will be handled by the procedures in §4. A member may later provide THE DIVISION or its officers with an email address to resume receiving email notification.

## **ARTICLE XVI AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1 - Manner of Making Amendments:** These By-Laws may be amended at any annual meeting of the members, or at any special meeting of the members called for that purpose. The proposed amendments must be made available to the members of THE DIVISION Seven (7) days before the meeting at which they will be voted on. An amendment receiving a majority of all votes cast by the members voting either in person or by proxy shall be deemed adopted. A proposed amendment may also be treated as rule as described in the next paragraph.

Proposed amendments from the floor and those that were not available for public review at least Seven (7) days before the meeting cannot become part of the by-laws immediately. These amendments may be voted on and if passed they will be treated as rules instead of by-laws until the next meeting of THE DIVISION. At that meeting the proposed amendment must be voted on and either adopted as by-law amendments or rejected or remain as rules until the next meeting. By the end of the next Annual Meeting the proposed amendment must be either adopted or rejected.

**Section 2 - Effective Date of Amendments:** Unless otherwise specified, amendments to these Bylaws shall take effect on August 1 next after their adoption. Copies of the amendments so adopted shall be provided to every member of THE DIVISION within 30 days after their adoption.

As amended and accepted by vote at the Division Annual Meeting for 2010-2011 on October 31, 2010.