

Bylaws

By-laws of the Green Mountain Division

U.S. Fencing Association

(Adopted by the general membership 2009; updating the original By-laws of 2002)

An Adobe PDF version of these bylaws is may be downloaded here:

Article I: Name and Address

The name of the organization shall be the Green Mountain Division (GMD) of the United States Fencing Association (USFA). The official business address of the division shall be that of its serving President. The geographic boundaries of the division shall comprise the state of Vermont plus Clinton and Essex Counties in New York. Inclusion of the NY counties is provisional; pending acceptance of their petition to the national office, which will be acted on at the 2009 summer meeting. The fiscal year of the Division shall run from August 1 through July 31.

Article II: Statement of Purpose

The mission of the GMD is as follows.

- 1) To provide Vermont fencers with regular opportunities to participate in competition.
- 2) To administer Sectional and National qualifying tournaments as required by the USFA.
- 3) To promote the sport of fencing in Vermont and increase public awareness of fencing.
- 4) To promote the growth of individual and club membership in the USFA.

Article III: Membership and Organizational Structure

1) Nondiscrimination: The Green Mountain Division shall operate without discrimination with respect to race, national origin, religion, gender or sexual preference in regard to membership, selection of Executive Committee members and operation of tournaments.

2) Definition of membership: All individual USFA members in good standing, including associate members, who elect to affiliate with the Green Mountain Division when applying for USFA membership are considered members of the Division.

3) Means of organizational decision making: The primary responsibility for organizational decisions and management of the Division shall lie with the Division's Executive Committee (EC), whose make-up and duties are described in Article IV. Any Division member may at any time submit a proposal for the EC to consider. Any Division member who feels the EC is not responding to the desires of the majority of the membership may at any time call for a referendum on any issue by presenting the Executive Committee with a petition containing 20 or more voting members' signatures. If a referendum is called for, the Division Secretary shall notify the general membership (by e-mail, website and/or designated club contact people) of the question to be decided and the time, place and means of voting. Referendum votes may be conducted by online voting or, alternately, shall be scheduled to take place at a Division tournament between 2 and 6 weeks following the presentation of the petition. A means of proxy voting for those who can not make it to an in-person referendum vote shall be determined and the membership notified. A simple majority of those voting in person or by proxy decides the question in a referendum vote, regardless of any past decisions on the issue by the EC. Once a referendum has been taken, the same question may not be voted on again for 2 months.

4) Voting rights: All GMD members aged 14 years or older are eligible to vote in Division elections and referenda. All members aged 18 years or older are eligible to serve on the EC.

Article IV: Executive Committee

1) Officers and elections: The Green Mountain Division Executive Committee shall be made up of four Division officers, the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and possible additional club representatives as described below. The Division officers shall be elected by the general membership in April or May of each year for the following fencing season, running from August 1 through July 31 of the following year. Officer elections may be conducted by internet voting, in person at a tournament or meeting where more than 60% of the voting membership is present, or by some other method deemed by the entire EC to be fair and accessible to the general membership." The incoming and outgoing EC members shall work together from the election through July 31 to ensure a smooth transition.

2) Additional EC members: Every USFA member club in the GMD is entitled to have at least one representative on the EC. Following the election of Division officers, any member club that finds itself not represented by one of the regular officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer) may name a representative to sit on the EC. Fencers affiliated with clubs which are not member clubs of the USFA may be elected to Division offices in a general election, but nonmember clubs are not automatically entitled to representation on the EC.

3) GMD officer Responsibilities and areas of oversight:

The President is the general manager of the Division and in that role will monitor the smooth running of the Division, identify problems or areas in need of improvement, and propose solutions to any problems that might occur throughout the season. The President will delegate responsibilities within the Division and help the other officers fulfill their duties as needed. The President is responsible for overseeing Division officer elections and appointments of other EC members by Division clubs. The President is responsible for organizing the tournament scheduling process and responsible for the timely posting of the season tournament schedule. The President will oversee the season's tournament schedule to ensure compliance with USFA rules and requirements regarding competitions and qualifiers. The President will oversee the annual business meeting, any EC meetings and votes, and any membership referendum votes. The President will make a Division report at the annual business meeting.

The Vice President will share responsibility of overseeing the season's tournament schedule and share responsibility for ensuring compliance with USFA rules and requirements regarding competitions and qualifiers. The Vice President is responsible for maintaining Champlain Cup point updates and posting them in a timely manner. The Vice President is responsible for ordering the Champlain Cup trophies and posting and updating the Champlain Cup winners on the Division website.

The Secretary is responsible for communication between the EC and the general membership, including receiving and forwarding proposals and petitions. The Secretary will do this by maintaining a current e-mail list of Division members and by overseeing the website (accurate and up-to-date). The Secretary can designate a member or nonmember of the EC to be the official Division Webmaster.

The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that classification changes and new memberships/renewals from GMD tournaments are submitted to the USFA in a timely manner throughout the season. The Secretary is responsible for submitting the annual Division report (organizational and officer information) to the USFA at the beginning of each season and for submitting tax-status documents to the State of Vermont when required.

The Secretary will take the minutes at the annual meeting and ensure they are posted on the Division website.

The Treasurer is responsible for keeping accurate records of the Division's finances. This includes processing tournament reports and accurately tracking expenses and sources of income throughout the fencing season. The Treasurer will collect and keep receipts for all Division expenditures. The Treasurer is the primary individual responsible for writing checks to pay Division expenses, and thus is responsible for the Division's bank account. Capital and grant decisions are made by the EC. The Treasurer provides a financial perspective to the other officers on these matters.

The Treasurer will present a financial report at the annual business meeting. The Treasurer will use the information from that financial report to complete an annual USFA financial statement (August). This financial statement must be submitted to the USFA in order to receive the Division's share of USFA membership dues.

The Treasurer is responsible for purchasing tournament medals and having them available throughout the season for tournament host clubs to optionally purchase at cost.

All GMD Officers share the important responsibility, as each is able, of understanding tournament meet management duties and being able to train other members in meet management in order to assist tournament host clubs throughout the season, as needed.

4) Term limits: No individual may serve on the EC, in any capacity, for more than 3 consecutive fencing seasons. However, any member in good standing may return to the EC to serve an additional term after taking at least a one season hiatus. If a small club is unable to furnish a new representative after a 3 year term, their current EC representative may ask the rest of the EC for special permission to serve for an additional season. The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are strictly limited to a term of 3 consecutive seasons and may not seek permission to serve additional seasons without first taking at least a one season hiatus from EC duties.

5) Executive Committee Meetings: All EC meetings are open to the general membership (who shall be notified of their time, place and agenda by e-mail, website, and/or designated club contact people), and any Division member may speak at an EC meeting, although only EC members may vote at such a meeting. At any meeting of the EC, the President plus two thirds of the other EC members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. When the Executive Committee can not reach consensus on an issue, the EC members will vote on it and a simple majority will carry the decision. If the vote is evenly split, the question will be put before the general membership in a referendum, following the procedures described in Article III.

6) Should a member of the EC resign his/her position before the end of the term, that person's club will be offered the opportunity to appoint an interim representative to serve out the remainder of the term. If that club declines to nominate someone, the remaining EC members will ask for volunteers from among the general membership without regard to club affiliation. If more than one person volunteers for the position, an election will be held at the next scheduled Champlain Cup tournament, or by e-mail.

Article V: Organization of Tournaments

1) Champlain Cup: The GMD shall take over and continue the Champlain Cup league and perpetual trophy established in 1999 by the Vermont Fencing Alliance. The Division shall schedule a minimum of one tournament per month from September through May at which competitors may earn points toward Champlain Cup awards. The Division shall make every effort to offer a reasonable variety of events over the course of each season reflecting the diversity of skill levels, ages and weapon preferences in the Division. At the start of each season, the Division Secretary shall notify the membership (using e-mail, website and/or printed newsletter) of the scheduled Champlain Cup tournament dates for that season, the point system to be used and

the awards to be given out at the end of the season. At the end of each season, the EC shall review the tournament schedule and awards system and recommend any changes for the following season.

2) Scheduling of events: The GMD shall function as an association of USFA member clubs. Each member club within the geographic boundaries of the Division has the right to host at least one Division tournament per season if it wishes. Clubs wishing to host tournaments must notify the President at least two weeks before the annual June business meeting of the number of tournaments they would like to host, and any preferences regarding dates and/or types of events. The EC shall work on scheduling over the summer and make every effort to have a complete Champlain Cup schedule in place, and posted, by September 1. The EC will do its best to facilitate consensus among the Division member clubs and come up with a tournament schedule that honors member club requests and preferences whenever possible, although they are not bound to grant every club the dates and/or events requested. After every member club has been granted one tournament to host, if more than one club has requested the same date and/or event, the host club for each tournament in contention shall be chosen by drawing lots. Dates/events which are not in contention will simply be assigned to the club that wishes to host them, regardless of how many other events that club is also hosting. Clubs which are not member clubs of the USFA may be permitted to host Champlain Cup tournaments at the discretion of the EC, but are not automatically entitled to do so.

3) Duties of host clubs and the Division in running tournaments: In contracting with the GMD to host a Champlain Cup tournament, a member club must agree to secure an appropriate venue well in advance of the tournament date, liaise with the owner of the venue, contact other Division clubs to arrange for needed equipment and supplies, organize its fencers to help set up and clean up, and supply at least one experienced meet manager for the day. If the club can not supply an experienced meet manager, it must supply at least one meet manager trainee and find an experienced meet manager from another club to work with the trainee(s) to teach them the job, either during or in advance of the tournament. Clubs which wish to host tournaments are expected to share strip equipment with each other during tournaments. Host Clubs are expected to run their tournaments from inception to the posting of the results and the timely submission of the related paperwork (tournament report to the Treasurer and classification changes and new memberships or renewals to the Secretary). Division Officers are the resource people to turn to for help yet are not a substitute for trained volunteers from the tournament host club.

4) Income and expenditures related to tournaments: Before the start of each fencing season, the EC will review and set tournament entry fees for that season. Entry fees for each tournament will be collected by the host club, which must have a bank account or some other means of cashing or depositing checks made out to it. The host club will keep records of all expenditures for a tournament (facility rent, supplies, awards, etc.) and deduct them from the entry fees received to determine that tournament's net profit or loss. Before the start of each fencing season, the EC will review and set a "Division share" of tournament profits for the coming season, to be not less than 10% and not more than 50%. When a tournament turns a net profit, the host club will give the Division its percentage share, and may keep the remaining profit as long as it is used for the good of the club and does not go into private hands (except in the form of scholarships or financial aid as approved

by that club's policies). In the case of a net loss by a tournament that runs as scheduled, the Division will split the burden of the loss 50-50 with the host club. In the case of a loss incurred due to the cancellation or rescheduling of a tournament, the EC will determine whether the host club was at fault (i.e. by failing to secure a venue) or whether it was due to circumstances beyond their control (i.e. bad weather). If the EC rules that the host club was at fault, that club shall bear the entire burden of the loss. If the host club was not at fault, the Division will pick up 50% or more of the loss (at the discretion of the EC). This system will be used for all Division USFA tournaments, including closed qualifiers, team events and championships.

5) Non-USFA events: Clubs may occasionally choose to host events not sanctioned by the USFA (novice events, novelty events, etc.). Such events are not covered by the Division's insurance and all liability for them falls with the host club and/or individual participants. Recognizing that such events may have value in attracting new competitors, boosting a club's morale, and offering a greater diversity of fencing events in our region, the GMD may choose to advertise such events and include them in the Champlain Cup points scheme. If a host club would like the Division to advertise and offer Champlain Cup points for a non-USFA event it may request inclusion as long as it is willing to pay the Division its percentage share of any profit from the event, it hosts at least as many USFA sanctioned events as non-sanctioned ones that season, and the proposed event is run in a manner which is safe and does not give fencing a bad image. If a non-USFA event runs at a loss, that loss is entirely the responsibility of the host club, and will not be shared by the Division.

Article VI: Approval of and Amendments to the By-laws

These by-laws will take effect upon approval by a two thirds majority vote of the general voting membership. Amendments to these by-laws may be made by a two thirds majority vote of the Division's general voting membership. This vote can be done in person or by on-line voting.

Article VII: Disbandment of the Division

Should the Green Mountain Division of the USFA disband, the distribution of its assets shall be determined by the USFA national office.