



USA Fencing Division Operating Guide

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USA Fencing

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Introduction

The original “Division Operating Guide was written and distributed in 1989. It was a collaborative effort of Beverly LaFlamme and Edwin “Buzz” Hurst. Beverly LaFlamme’s credentials include past positions as a Division Secretary and Treasurer holding a Certified Public Accountant License. Edwin “Buzz” Hurst has been the Chair of three different divisions, a member of seven, and served for over decade as the Chair of the USA Fencing’s Committee for Divisions and Sections (now the Division Resource Team). He is also a past USFA Vice President, whose responsibility included overseeing that committee. Further revisions to the original Division guide were done with the assistance of Dana Brown, the past USA Fencing Director of Member Services. Sample bylaws (included in this version) are the work of Mr. Hurst and attorney Donald Alperstein, a past USA Fencing President and current USA Fencing Board Member.

The original guide also included a brief section on armory work, with material originally supplied by the late Eleanor Turney, a respected armorer whose career started in the old AFLA (Amateur Fencers League of America).

This most recent revision of the Division Operating Manual is the work of Allen Evans, a founder of one USA Fencing Division (the Alaska Division), and a past officer in three Divisions (Alaska, Western Washington, and Virginia). There have been substantial changes to this guide to reflect the current state of affairs in US Fencing, and in the operation of the local administrative branches (the Divisions). Sections on Safe Sport and running meetings have been added, and the armory guide dropped.

Obviously, USA Fencing and its Divisions continue to evolve. We hope that this rewrite will bring the Division Guide up to assist Division Officers in the performance of their valuable duties.

Preface -- Why Are Divisions Important?

The fencing climate in the United States has exploded since I started fencing in the 1970's. When I first started fencing, I knew of only one or two permanent clubs (none of them near me), and only a handful of people who made a living off of fencing.

Today I know dozens of clubs, and dozens of coaches who make it their full time job to teach and work in this sport. Fencing continues to grow and change, and the United States has become a major influence in international fencing. As we finish up the Olympic Games in Rio, we are seeing the rise of the United States as a major international contender in fencing, the result of individual and group efforts from all over the United States.

What hasn't changed in the last forty years is the role of US Fencing Divisions in local fencing. Local competitions at the Division level introduce new athletes and new volunteers to our sport. Many fencers on our National Teams had their first introduction to competitive fencing at a local Division tournament or qualifier. Referees, armorers, and bout committee members learn their skills running tournaments large and small in their local Divisions.

Divisions are the face of local fencing in cities across the country, and it is important that USA Fencing's Divisions remain strong and active. A well run Division helps the growth of fencing and assists fencers in their goals: from earning that first rating to making a National Team. A well run Division should be a locus of cooperation among clubs that compete against

each other in tournaments and in the marketplace.

As one Division officer told me when I first joined the Division Resource Committee:

“I certainly hope that this committee understands what our Divisions officers (most at least) do to support US fencing for free. I cannot imagine what would have to be done nationally to elevate these tasks to the national level without there being huge pitfalls of information back and forth. It's my view that US fencing would not survive if they were to eliminate the role of the Division officers and Divisions. “

This is a sentiment that I very much agree with. To that end, I hope this document assists local Divisions in running their day-to-day affairs. Nothing is more important to fencing than well ran Divisions as we move forward in our sport.

Allen Evans

Chapter One --The Division By-Laws

Every Division is governed by its officers operating under the Division's bylaws. To insure that a Division runs as smoothly as possible, the bylaws should be complete, while at the same time remain flexible. *Appendix A* has a sample set of bylaws for a hypothetical Division. This example is by no means the only form a set of bylaws can take, but shows the minimum amount of language that a set of Division bylaws should contain.

A good set of bylaws does not need to be written in complicated "legal-ese". Phrasing in the bylaws should be unambiguous and simple to understand. Any complicated Division processes should be broken down into simpler elements. Where flexibility is required, it should be spelled out, with such phrases as "...more than one, but never more than seven..." for example.

Good bylaws improve decision making, and provide a platform for reasonable discussion and resolution when decisions need to be made. The first question the Division Officers should ask is when making a decision is: "What do the bylaws say concerning this?". This is where a strong set of bylaws is important to running a Division in an orderly fashion.

At the very least, the bylaws should have the following elements:

- How Division elections are held
- When Division elections are held
- Who is eligible for office in the Division
- How voting is conducted, including the use of proxies in Division elections
- How ties and run offs are decided in Division elections
- Who in the Division is empowered to set the competitive calendar for the season
- How amendments are made to the bylaws

It is important to note that a Division's bylaws *cannot conflict* with USA Fencing's bylaws, operations, or procedures. Divisions are administrative units of USA Fencing, and thus subject to the same laws that govern USA Fencing.

The sample bylaws in *Appendix A* try to address all of the mentioned areas above. The provisions written down in the sample bylaws are time-tested principles that earlier Division officers learned the hard way.

Briefly, let us go over the sample bylaws:

"Article I: Name and Affiliation". This article establishes the relationship of the local Division to USA Fencing. This article would seem to be obvious, but in the event that the Division elects to pursue a non-profit status inside of its state domicile, it is important that this relationship between the Division and USA Fencing be spelled out formally.

The second paragraph in Article I should specify, as accurately as possible, the Division boundaries. It is best if the boundaries are fixed by something semi-permanent, such as state or municipal boundaries. If a Division includes parts of other states, or there is more than one Division in the state, then Legal County, borough, or parish boundaries should be used, and coordinated with the other Divisions that share a boundary. Note that Division boundaries are set forth in the Division's Charter but are ultimately established by the USA Fencing Board of Directors.

"Article II: Objectives". The language used in this article mirrors other non-profit sports organizations if the Division eventually wishes to pursue non-profit status under USA Fencing.

"Article III: Membership - Dues - Competitions". Section 1 in this article defines the membership of the Division as a subset of the membership of the USA Fencing, and precludes the member of one Division being a member in another Division. Obviously, it is unwise to

allow membership in more than one Division to protect the integrity of qualifying paths to National Tournaments.

Section 2 in Article III concerns classes of membership. The language in the article lines up Division membership classes with the membership classes of USA Fencing. This allows the membership classes of the Division to change as USA Fencing makes changes to its membership classifications. Linking the Division membership classes to USA Fencing membership Classes relieves the Division of having to amend their bylaws as USA Fencing changes its membership classes from time to time.

Section 3 in Article III outlines the mechanism for transferring membership from one Division to another. USA Fencing allows transfer of membership from one Division to another in certain circumstances. However, this change has to come from the National Office rather than occurring at the Division level.

This transfer of membership from one Division to another was historically more critical than it is currently. Previously fencers qualified out of their Division to their Sections (now gone) and then onto National events. While somewhat dated, the mechanism is included in these sample bylaws to reinforce the integrity of membership in a particular Division.

Section 4 of Article III establishes who in the Division is enfranchised to vote, and links voting to the membership classes of USA Fencing. Much like in Section I, this clause links voting in the Division to the voting membership classes of USA Fencing, and relieves the Division of amending its bylaws as the classes of membership in USA Fencing change. This clause also avoids a tedious enumeration of voting qualifications for the Division.

Section 5 of Article III determines how the Division funds itself. While USA Fencing currently remits a portion of every Division member's dues back to the Division, this may not

often be enough to sustain the operating expenses of the Division. This clause allows the Division to pursue additional sources of funding internal to itself and tailored to its own operations.

Division fund raising can take a number of forms, such as entry fees from Division hosted tournaments or “sanctioning fees” on tournaments held by the member clubs in the Division. Spelling out, in detail, how these fees are assessed and collected, and any penalties for non-payment, is critical to the financial health of the Division. Considerable thought should be given to this section of the bylaws.

Section 6 of Article III concerns the Division schedule. USA Fencing requires that only a small number of tournaments a year be run under the auspices of the Division itself. These tournaments are the national qualifying events for Division II, Division III, and Youth 14 events at the US National Championships, as well as the qualifiers for the yearly Junior Olympic Championships.

Any other tournaments run inside the Division boundaries which are to be recognized by USA Fencing *must* be sanctioned by the Division. While it may not be necessary for the Division bylaws to explain -- in detail -- how the Division organizes its calendar, it is wise to allocate that power to the Division in some form as part of the Division sanctioning process.

Finally, Article IX describes how the by-laws are changed or amended. Division bylaws should be reviewed on a regular basis. Sometimes a clause written to respond to a condition does not make sense after the fact. Sometimes the Division has changed in such a way or some other event that causes the Division to rethink its position of a part of its by-laws. Occasionally, bylaws will need to be changed to reflect changes in USA Fencing itself.

Chapter Two -- Division Officers

Duties of the Chair

The Chair of the Division has the overall responsibility for the smooth running of the Division. The authority arising from that responsibility may be discharged through other Division officers and the Executive Committee, but ultimately, the responsibility for the Division lies with the Office of Chair.

The phrase “smooth running” is open to many interpretations, but in short, the Division Chair:

1. Coordinates the work of the Officers of the Division, including members of the Executive Committee, ensuring that the responsibilities of the Officers and any appointed Committees and Task Forces are being met.
2. Is responsible for enforcing the bylaws of the Division, as well as the rules set out in the USA Fencing Athlete Handbook, Operations Manual and USA Fencing rules, where applicable.
3. Is a member of the Division Executive Committee and leads the meetings of the Executive Committee as well as the Division meetings of the membership.
4. Votes to break any ties in the decisions of the Executive Committee. The Chair always votes last in any decisions of the Committee.
5. Serves as the Division’s liaison to the National Office of USA Fencing, as well as to neighbor Divisions and sports organizations.
6. Lastly, the Chair is the public face of the Division of USA Fencing.

Once elected, the Chair of the Division is in a position to appoint committee and task force¹ members to aid in the running of the Division. For a small division there may not be a need for any additional assistance, but if the Chair requires assistance, it is within the purview of the Chair to appoint (or request volunteers) for a committee or task force. It may not be necessary that the bylaws be written to require that these appointments be confirmed in any way by the Executive Committee, but certainly notification to the Executive Committee about such appointments should be required.

The best Chairs are those members of the Division that have a deep knowledge of USA Fencing procedures and rules and are capable of defusing strong personalities. Most Divisions run themselves....until they don't, and at this point, the Division will need a calm voice and cool head to make decisions.

Duties of the Vice Chair

As in most elected Executive bodies, the duties of the Vice-Chair are very succinct. The Vice-Chair presides over the Division and leads the Executive Committee when the Chair is unable. The Vice-Chair acts as a voting member of the Executive Committee when the Chair is present and chairs the Executive Committee and other meetings of the Division in the Chair's absence.

Often it is useful to make the Vice-Chair responsible for a critical Division task, thus taking some of the pressure off of the Chair. Supervision of referees, setting the Division schedule (depending on the procedures in the Division for doing so) and like duties can make the job of the Chair much less burdensome.

¹ A committee is organized for an undetermined length of time for a particular area of expertise or management. A task force is given a particular mission to accomplish and disbands once that mission is accomplished.

Like the Chair, the Vice-Chair should have good knowledge of USA Fencing rules and procedures, and it is advantageous if they can bring a special expertise to the running of the Division.

Duties of the Secretary

The offices of Secretary and Treasurer can be combined, but in the interests of keeping a balanced workload, it is better to separate them so that daily duties of running the Division do not overwhelm one person.

The Secretary is responsible for the official record keeping and correspondence of the Division. The most important part of this task will be preparing meeting agendas and keeping the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee and any other Division meetings. The minutes of these meetings should document any actions taken by the Executive Committee or the Division, issues considered and voted on, any authorization of expenditures (where required by the bylaws or the operating procedures of the Division), elections results, and documenting the policies of the Division that are not covered directly by the bylaws of the Division. The minutes of each meeting is a legal document that may be required to be presented if the actions of the Division are in any way questioned by the members.

At a minimum, the minutes should include the basics of who, what, where and how of each item discussed and resolved, and may include a paragraph or so of any discussion or debate before the result. The minutes should conform to the agenda for the meeting (assuming one was prepared ahead of time). The minutes do not need to be a transcript, but an accurate summary of what took place at the meeting. A good rule of thumb is that the longer the discussion occurs, the more documentation of the decision should be done. The minutes of each meeting should

include the vote on any decisions, responsible roles in implementing any decisions, a timeline for completion of projects and actions, budgets, and so forth.

Any supporting documents for the minutes which can summarize or add information to the minutes (schedules, exhibits, lists of equipment, and copies of invoices or proposals, for example) should be attached to the minutes. Copies of any financial information presented during the meeting should also be attached, with originals of Division finances kept with the Treasurer.

In addition to the Executive Committee and membership meeting minutes, the Secretary is responsible for correspondence with the member clubs in the Division (either by mail or electronically), correspondence with the National Office of USA Fencing, and supervision of the Division web site or social media page, unless this function is delegated to a committee or another individual. In addition, the Secretary is responsible for submitting -- or overseeing the submission -- of competition results (including qualifier lists) and ratings changes to the National Office.

Unless the bylaws provide otherwise, the Secretary should supervise the annual elections of the Division, including the election announcements, recording the slate of candidates, the vote, and the eventual winners (including the results of any run-off election).

New and renewed memberships to USA Fencing may come through the Division Secretary, though more commonly, membership is done electronically. If paper forms do come through the Secretary's office it is advisable to keep a copy of any forms submitted (removing or obliterating any credit cards numbers on the form) in case membership needs to be confirmed before it becomes official with USA Fencing. After the membership is confirmed, it's best to destroy these copies safely (by shredding).

Electronic communications has made it much easier to communicate with the membership of the Division. The Secretary will want to supervise any Facebook, Twitter and web presence that the Division has, or supervise anyone put in a position of responsibility for the Division's presence on public media.

Written newsletters sent through the mail are very rare these days, but USA Fencing will provide mailing labels for all the recorded members of the Division for those times when a bulk mailing might be required.

Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for controlling, monitoring, collecting, reporting, and disbursing the Division funds.

For the most part, Divisions are run on what accountants call a “cash basis”. Simply, that means that all transactions are recorded in regards to how they affect the cash (usually in a checking account) that the Division has, and those transactions are recorded as they occur. There is little need--if any--for the Division Treasurer to engage in any accounting knowledge much more difficult than balancing a checkbook.

With that said, having some familiarity with spreadsheets *is* very useful, as it allows the Treasurer to sum up expenses and income by category at the end of the Division fiscal year for reporting to USA Fencing as required. The current USA Fencing financial reporting form is attached as *Appendix C*.

It is important for all Division officers and members to recognize that an administrative unit of USA Fencing, the money handled by the Division ultimately belongs to USA Fencing. The Division and its officers are trustees of these funds under authority delegated by USA Fencing.

The Treasurer is ultimately responsible for the care of the funds of the Division while that person is in office. In a worst case scenario, if funds are mishandled, the Treasurer may face legal complications for any missing or misused funds. It is in the Treasurer's best interest to institute a number of financial controls on the Division funds as outlined next.

Accounting Controls

The Treasurer should have in place a number of safeguards to protect the funds of the Division. The most important safeguard is to keep the funds in a recognized, local bank, and to keep records documenting the transactions on the bank account, reconciling the bank statement every month as it arrives, and making monthly regular reports--if not to the membership, at least to the Executive Committee--about the balances and transactions on the Division account.

Deposits should be made into the account in a timely manner. Checks can often wait a week or so before being deposited (though the sooner the better) but cash should be accounted for and deposited immediately. At Division run tournaments, it's best to have only one person with access to the cash box, and expenses should not be paid out of the tournament receipts. It is better to make purchases by writing checks or using a Division debit card so that there is a good record of expenses incurred. Cash should always be tied to some written document, and each tournament should have the cash "balanced" to the entry fees within 24 hours after the event, and then promptly deposited. If cash must be paid for an expense (for example, to a referee or official), the Treasurer should obtain a receipt (signed by the payee) at the same time.

It is almost impossible to over document expenditures. The more proof of a payment to a business or individual, the better.

There should be specific policies in the Division about expenditures. This can be written up in the bylaws, but more commonly there should be a written list of procedures/requirements

for handling the Division funds. If the Division Officers meet frequently, it's possible to present the Executive Committee with a list of expenditures for the month, and the Executive Committee can vote to approve the expenditures. The Executive Committee can also "pre-authorize" future invoices that may come due as a part of tournament hosting, and so forth. This procedure works provided transactions are few and that the Executive Committee meets promptly, or can communicate easily by email.

An alternative system is to set a budget for the year, with the Treasurer writing checks to cover all budgeted items without approval, but needing the approval of the Executive Committee for out of budget or over budgeted items. On a regular basis, the Division cash is reconciled back to the Division budget, and a report made about any differences (with documentation, of course!).

Again, transparency in purchases and a clear authorization chain for the expenditure of funds is important to control finances, along with regular reports of income and expense to the Executive Committee with a breakdown of what has been spent (as opposed to simply reporting a bank balance). The potential for or actual misuse of Division funds is a quick method to cause rancor and disagreement in even the best run Division.

The Bank

The Division should have a checking account in its own name. This usually requires the Division to apply for a TIN (Taxpayer Identification Number) from the IRS if the Division does not have one already. Needless to say, Division funds should NEVER run through someone's personal bank account: the chance for error, misunderstanding, and the complication of separating personal funds from Division funds is far too great.

In addition to the TIN, the Treasurer may need to produce a Board resolution authorizing the opening of an account and specifying that checks be signed by one or more Division officers. There are templates on the web that can help guide the writing such a resolution if one is required. The resolution may require a specific outline of the Division policy (number of signers, etc.) in opening the account, so be prepared to have some policies in place before going to the bank. The bank wants to open new accounts, so they will attempt to be helpful.

At least two officers should be signers on the account, the Treasurer and one other (often the Chair). It is often wise to require that for checks over a certain amount (perhaps as low as \$500), two signers are required. The needs will vary from Division to Division depending on the sort of expenses the Division incurs. The bank may also offer to issue debit cards to each signer, and if the Division wishes to use debit cards, there should be specific policies about their use.

If possible, try to find a “no-fee” account. Sometimes this may require a high minimum balance, or the opening of a corresponding savings account. Banks vary widely in what they will offer and require, so it is helpful to shop around before opening an account.

If the incoming Treasurer is taking control of an existing bank account the new Treasurer will have to meet with the bank to file a signature card and complete some other formalities. This is a good time to review who has access to the bank account, get a list of outstanding debit cards (and cancel the ones not in use) and to review any existing agreements on the bank account to see if they are robust enough going forwards.

Checks, Cash, and Credit Cards

Division run tournaments are becoming rarer as clubs take over much of the hosting of events, but the Division is still responsible for hosting a number of qualifying events every year. That will mean income from tournament fees, and expenses for hosting and running the event.

The best way to take in funds for Division events is to request that entries be pre-paid through a system such as AskFred. This ensures first, that the fencers are committed to attending the event (which makes it easier to estimate the resources needed for the tournament) and also ensures that the Division is paid upfront for the entries. It also allows fencers to pay for their tournament entries with a credit card, which can be difficult for a Division to arrange on its own (though the spread of phone applications, such as Square has made this much easier, the fees for regular use of such applications can also be quite high, as much as 4-5% of every transaction, depending on the provider).

The next best way to accept funds is through a personal check. The Division should have a stamp made to endorse the back of any check it receives as “Deposit Only” and the checks for entry fees should be stamped at the time of receipt at the tournament. The Division may also want a stamp for the payee portion of the check, as well.

The Division should try to avoid cash payments, but this is often difficult. For those events in which cash is received, it should be counted at the end of the tournament, and the amount of cash received verified by another officer. This should be part of a reconciliation document for the tournament that balances the number of entries to the income received. This document then becomes part of the deposit record for the tournament. It goes without saying that deposits should be made as soon as possible after the event.

Most of the checks the Division receives will clear the bank with no problems. However, it will happen that a check comes back from the bank as “insufficient funds” -- a “bounced” check. Normally a phone call will reveal that the fencer forgot to make a deposit, or the check beat a deposit to the fencer’s account. At this point, the fencer has to make good on the check, plus any bank fees the bank has charged for returning the check. The Division should ask for the

amount of the check and any additional bank fees in order to make the check good, and should request that this payment be made in cash.

Accidents happen, and a bounced check is not usually an issue. However, if a fencer has a pattern of bouncing checks, the Division will have to take further steps. The Division cannot *prevent* a fencer with a valid USA Fencing membership from entering an event. However, the Division is allowed to put that fencer on a “cash only” basis for future events if the fencer has a history of writing bad checks to the Division.

Accounting System

There is no requirement that the Division maintain any specific accounting system as a part of its operations. Most Divisions get by with a simple check register or a set of spreadsheets to track their funds. Here are the basics of the Division “Accounting System” that make good sense.

Checks for the Division bank account should be the larger, “ledger” type of checks that come in a multi-ring binder. Usually the checks come three to a page, and have a check stub in which information can be recorded (and SHOULD be recorded) at the time the check is written. Fill in the check stub when writing the check! Don’t rely on memory for recording a check after the fact.

In addition to using the checks stub, it’s a good idea to keep a spreadsheet of deposits and withdrawals. This file can be put on a thumb drive (which should be backed up regularly) to record the Division financials. The spreadsheet might look like this:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Record</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Balance</i>
1/1/2015	1628	Check to M Smith	Referee	Walla Walla Open	(\$50.00)	\$1,100.00
1/2/2015	DEP	Proceeds from event	Income	Walla Walla Open	\$500.00	\$1,600.0

A system like this makes it easy to keep track of expenses and income by event (which makes reports to the Executive Committee and the year-end financials for US Fencing easy) and most importantly, using a spreadsheet as a check register reduces mathematical errors. Ideally the “category” column reflects the same categories as the Division Financial statement that is reported to USA Fencing at the end of every year (see Appendix C), but of course, the system can certainly have more categories that “roll up” to the places on the financial report.

All of the Division transactions should run through the Division checking account. Record every transaction and keep receipts (preferably in date order in a folder) to reference when balancing the checking account, or to respond to any audit requests

Balance the Division checking account every month! It’s also a good idea to look at the bank balance regularly. Electronic fraud happens too often, so be alert for any unusual transactions on the Division checking account and contact the bank immediately if something seems odd or out of place.

The Division Financial Statement

It’s a good idea to make a regular financial report to the Executive Committee. Using a spreadsheet arranged as above makes it easy to sort and summarize information, which can then be sent out in an email or presented as part of the regular Division meeting.

The Treasurer will also be responsible for the yearly financial report due to the National Office of US Fencing every year. Having a spreadsheet as above will make filing this report an easy process. See Appendix B and C for information on the Treasurer’s report, due at the end of every season, before the last day of August.

Chapter Three -- Division Executive Committee

The Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer make up the core of the Division's *Executive Committee*. In addition to the officers of the Division, it is reasonable to allow additional members of the Executive Committee, drawn from the USA Fencing Member Clubs of the Division. Have provisions to allot representation among all the clubs, so that one club cannot dominate the voting of the committee by "packing" the committee with club members. Obviously, it makes sense to deny a seat on the Executive Council to non-Member Clubs, to prevent "phantom" clubs from being created to stack the Committee in favor of one group.

Division members and clubs are more likely to accept decisions of the Divisions if there is a feeling that the Division is as inclusive as possible and the membership is represented and heard from.

The annual Division meeting (as established in the Division bylaws) elects the officers of the Division. The rest of the makeup of the Executive Committee can be by appointment (from the member clubs) or also by election ("Members at Large").

The Executive Committee and each Division officer has a fiduciary duty to its Division members and USA Fencing. The management of the Division is vested in the Executive Committee as per the USA Fencing bylaws (Article XV). A Division's bylaws may create or allow for other bodies, but ultimately, these bodies must report to the Executive Committee, and are subservient to it. No group can be allowed to operate outside of the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee.

Chapter Four -- Safe Sport²

In response to increasing awareness of the vulnerability of underage athletes, officials, and volunteers in our sport, as well as the need for all members of USA Fencing to engage in their sport in a safe and accepting environment, USA Fencing implemented a protection policy in 2013 called “Safe Sport”.

Safe Sport works on a number of levels, not only in screening coaches, officials, and volunteers to prevent people with a history of abusive behavior from having access to underage athletes, but also to raise awareness about the proper conduct of members in position of authority. Finally, Safe Sport provides a mechanism for reporting of complaints or abusive behavior.

Abusive behavior is described as:

1. Sexual misconduct, including conduct against a child
2. Emotional misconduct
3. Physical misconduct
4. Bullying
5. Harassment
6. Hazing

Anyone over the age of 18 in a position of supervision or authority over fencers must apply for a background screening. This includes: (1) All USA Fencing directors, staff members, **division officers**, committee/task force members, and national team staff; (2) **Officials and volunteers at all USA Fencing sanctioned events** who have direct access to minors participating in such events. This includes persons who interact directly and frequently with

² This outline does not attempt to fully explain USA Fencing’s Safe Sport policies or procedures. For complete information, please visit USA Fencing at <http://www.usfencing.org/safe-sport>

athletes as part of their duties, e.g., event administrators, referees, bout committee members, and armorers. It does not include volunteers who have incidental interaction with athletes, e.g., at registration or lost and found booths; and (3) All affiliate and member club coaches, independent contractors, owners, board of directors members, and administrators.

The Safe Sport screening process is independent of any other screening a member may have in connection with their job or profession, such as through the police, a professional license, or a government position.

Who is not required to be screened? Athletes who are over 18 and are “self-referring” in a tournament are not required to be Professional/Professional+ members or have a background screen on file. Referees under the age of 18 are not required to be screened, but must apply for screening when they turn 18, even if that occurs in the middle of the fencing season.

Once a member screened, the background check is good for two (2) years. Along with the background check, the member must hold a Professional or +Professional membership. The cost of the Professional membership includes the cost of the screen. For those members who hold a non-competing or life membership, the +Professional fee is an add-on to their current membership and needs only to be paid in the years in which the member must establish or renews their screening.

Division Officers, are required to undergo screening and hold a Professional or +Professional membership for their term in office. When one purchases the Professional membership or adds the +Professional to an existing membership type, a link appears in their membership profile under the Background section. The link will take the applicant directly to the NCSI website where they can enter and submit the screening information needed for screening.

The screening process typically takes 3-10 days, and a link will be sent to the applicant's email account in order to retrieve the results. The screening process returns either a "green light" (approved) or a "red light" (not approved). There will be no details on the report to indicating the circumstances of a "red light" result. If the applicant feels that the "red light" resulted from an error or is unjustified, the applicant may appeal the result to USA Fencing for further consideration.

Once an initial screen is completed successfully, the screened member will receive an email reminder every other year when a renewal is due, or a link will appear in the member's profile at USA Fencing.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2017, all Professional and +Professional members must have completed the Safe Sport Training course in order to maintain their Professional membership status. This is an online, 90 minute course offered at no cost. Check the USA Fencing web page using the link above for more information.

Chapter Five -- Division Meetings

Holding a good meeting is an art form. With small Division Executive Committees (3-6 people) there is probably no need to hold meetings in a rigid format, ala “Robert's Rules of Order”. However, if the Division has a very large Executive Committee, and for the membership meeting (there should be at least one annually) it is helpful to have a rough working knowledge of how a formal meeting is conducted.

Meetings start by a call to order by the Chair (or presiding officer if the Chair is not present). From the call to order, there is a progression of business to be conducted:

1. Reading and approval of minutes from the last meeting. The Secretary should have ideally sent these out beforehand so that corrections can be quickly raised and executed. Once the corrections are made and approved, a motion is made to adopt the minutes into the permanent record. The motion is seconded, and the vote to adopt the minutes is taken.
2. Reports of officers, boards, and standing committees. These reports are usually done in order of seniority, with the Chair first, then the Vice-Chair, Secretary and/or Treasurer. Again, it's best if written reports are sent out ahead of time, and everyone has a chance to read the reports before the meeting. Questions should be handled quickly and succinctly. If action on a report needs to be taken, it should be presented as a motion, the motion seconded, debated and then voted on.
3. Unfinished business. Any business that was tabled in the last meeting should be addressed now. If the Division has a requirement that motions have two hearings, this should be the second hearing for a previously made motion.

4. New business is introduced from the members attending, or the members of the Executive Board.
5. If there is no further business, a motion to adjourn is made, seconded and voted on.

It is the role of the presiding officer to control the flow of the discussion in the meeting. Robert's Rules can be very complicated, but in a streamlined form, they can reduce any confusion in the room to a dull roar. New business is conducted by "making motions" which are then seconded, debated, stated for the record (the minutes of the meeting) and then voted on. A typical motion might go like this:

1. A member (for example) raises their hand to speak.
2. The Chair recognizes the member ("The chair recognizes Ms. Smith").
3. The member makes a motion ("I move to purchase a new scoring machine for the Division, based on the excess funds outlined in the Treasurer's report").
4. The Chair calls for a second on the motion. Another member is recognized by the Chair and seconds the motion.
5. The Chair states the motion and opens up discussion ("It is moved and seconded to purchase a new scoring machine for the Division. Discussion?").
6. The members debate the motion, speaking as they are recognized by the Chair ("The Chair recognizes Mr. Sharp to speak to the motion on the floor. . . .").
7. When debate seems to have ended, the Chair calls for a vote. This vote may be voice vote ("Those in favor of adopting the motion to buy a new scoring machine say 'Aye.' [pause] Those opposed, say 'No.'"), or a show of hands. In rare cases, a secret ballot may need to be taken, supervised by the Secretary of the Division.

8. The Chair announces the result of the vote. (“The ayes have it, and the motion carries. A new scoring machine will be purchased for the Division”).

No matter how the meeting is run, the goal should always be the same: everyone who wants to address the Board should have an opportunity to do so without being interrupted, it should be clear what the group is discussing, and it should be clear what is being voted on.

Chapter Six -- Sanctioning Tournaments

One of the most important roles for the Division is the sanctioning of local tournaments. Only sanctioned tournaments can award new classifications/ratings to fencers and referees. Because of this tournament sanctioning is an important responsibility.

A sanctioned tournament must meet a number of criteria:

1. The tournament must follow the rules for USA Fencing competitions substantially.
2. The tournament must adhere to approved formats.
3. The tournament must appear on the official Division calendar, in other words, be publically announced and known to the rest of the members of the Division.
4. Entries to the tournament cannot be restricted except in certain approved ways (such as by rating, age, or gender, for example).

Every Division should have a process by which tournaments are recognized and sanctioned. Depending on needs of each Division, these requirements can vary based on local custom and experience. In general, however, a Division works best when the sanctioning process follows some general principles:

First, that all clubs and individuals in the Division should have access to the Division calendar for hosting events. The process for a club or individual to host an event should be public and transparent.

Second, if a Division has one or more premium events that have a long history of being held, these events should be fixed in the Division calendar and occur around the same date every year. The Division governing body should have criteria to identify and set these events.

Third, reasonable tournament conflicts should be avoided. Tournaments on the same weekend should not be scheduled together, and “like” tournaments (Opens, Vet, Youth, Ratings restricted, for example) should not be in close proximity to each other on the calendar. If the Division is small, ratings restricted events (for “U”, “E” and “D” fencers) should not conflict with “Opens”. The Division should coordinate with nearby Divisions to avoid conflicting with their premier events, and examine the USA Fencing calendar to not conflict with National events in their area. A reasonable driving distance (say, two hours) may be considered “not in conflict”, depending on the size of the Division.

Fourth, clubs or individuals hosting events must make every effort to hold events within the resources of their club. Venues should be adequate for the size of the event, and referees and technical committees should have adequate training for the level of event.

Finally, Division events that are hosted by a club are treated as club-run events, unless the club takes no income from the event (the Division keeps the proceeds). It should always be clear who is sponsoring the event. Divisions may, of course, pay a use fee to any club whose facilities or equipment are used to run Division organized competitions without turning the event into a club-run event.

Divisions may require other criteria as they see fit, within reason. For example, a requirement that a Division officer or representative not from the hosting club attend every sanctioned event is not unreasonable. However, if requirements are so written that they appear to favor one club or facility over any others, or are so stringent as to exclude clubs who may want to organize competitions, conflict will arise. The Division should be reasonable in establishing tournament sanctioning requirements.

Here are some suggested sanctioning processes for Divisions of various sizes:

An example for a small Division with few events: tournaments are sanctioned by submitting proposed dates to the Executive Committee of the Division with a brief description of the type of competitions(s) being held. Requests must be made at least 30-60 days in advance. Tournaments are sanctioned on a “first come, first served” basis, with the Division calendar being “open” for new events 30-60 days before the start of the new season. The Executive Committee sanctions tournaments automatically unless a member or club makes an objection, there is a schedule conflict, or there is another pressing issue, such as a club that regularly does not follow USA Fencing rules at their events.

A medium Division with more events: Every club in the Division has a member on a “Tournament Committee” in which email or forum discussions are held concerning sanctioning. The sanctioning process starts 30-60 days before the start of the new season, or longer if conditions warrant and the Division schedule is particularly crowded. At the start of the sanctioning process, a random list of all the clubs wishing to hold tournaments is generated. Each club, going down the list, has a chance to pick a tournament day (or days), allowing for premier events in the Division, and conflicts with National or Regional events.

Each club picks a date on the calendar in turn, rotating through the list of clubs until all of the available weekends are allocated or all clubs have picked all the dates they want (or have elected to pass on choosing a date). At this point the Executive Committee announces the schedule as “closed” and the calendar for the season is set. For convenience, the Division may use this process every half season to speed up setting the calendar.

Clubs may host a certain number of “recurring” events every year, probably no more than two or three per club. These events should be held close to the same weekend annually. For the purposes of allocating weekends, the club with a recurring event is “skipped” in bidding for dates

for every recurring event that they hold (if the club has two recurring events, they are skipped over twice on the rotation).

The Division can add additional requirements where needed, such as requiring a Division officer at every sanctioned event.

A very large Divisions with many events: the Division opens up bidding for events in the weeks before the start of the season. Each club or organization wishing to hold events may submit as many dates as they feel they will need for the season. The Executive Committee or a Tournament Committee appointed for this task resolves the schedule and informs the clubs and then the members of the schedule for the upcoming season. Date conflicts are resolved either by the clubs submitting alternative dates for their events, by negotiation, by drawing lots, or any other means adopted by the Executive Committee, or the Tournament Committee of the Division.

None of these procedures is “better” than the other. It could be that a mix of all three approaches will work for best for a given Division. The most important part of the scheduling and sanctioning of events are in the four starting principals: equal access, transparent decision making, a predictable schedule of big and small events, and a method of resolving conflicts.

Removing sanctioning from an event: It is understood that mistakes will occur at local tournaments. Fencers may be seeded in error. Referees may not be as skilled as the fencers (or their parents) might wish. A pool may be fenced out of order.

These are simple mistakes that a tournament organizer may make. Or a single individual at an event may make. None of these are the grounds to remove the sanctioning from an event and lose the work the fencers have done to earn any ratings awarded.

For a Division to remove sanctioning from an event after the fact should only be done in the gravest of situations. A tournament that submits fraudulent results, creates “ghost fencers” to inflate participation, directly convenes the sanctioning process (such as not appearing on the Division calendar or not being publicly announced), or that flaunts USA Fencing rules by not enforcing the basic norms of fencing (allowing fencers to participate in non-regulation uniforms, for example) should have its sanctioning withdrawn. If the club has a history of holding improper events, the Division may require additional guarantees (such as the presence of a Division officer to supervise the event) as a conditioning of sanctioning at the club’s future events.

Part of the role of a Division officer is educating clubs and fencers -- and to promoting fencing. Honest mistakes will occur, and those should be pointed out and corrected when they happen. Sanctioning tournaments is a big stick in the hands of the Division officers, and threatening the withdrawal of sanctions should always be a last resort.

Chapter Seven -- Tournament Management

In many Divisions, the role of hosting tournaments has moved from a Division-centric focus to a more club-centric focus. However, a Division is still required to run a number of qualifiers during the season and may elect to hold other events as it wishes.

Qualifiers are held in all six weapons for the Junior Olympics Championships (Cadet and Junior age groups), the Division II and II events for the US National Championships, and the Y14 events at the US National Championships. At the very least, the Division is responsible for two to three events a season.

Division qualifying events are very important to new fencers, even though there are now numerous additional qualifying paths for many National tournaments. It behooves the Division to pay close and particular attention to running of their qualifiers to avoid any problems.

Any qualifier should be announced well in advance by the Division through multiple sources such as the Division website, Division Facebook page (if it has one), Twitter account (if the Division has one), and email blast, both to individual members (if the Division keeps a list) and to individual clubs. Email blasts alone are notorious for being inadequate as a means to notify fencers because of constantly changing email addresses and “white lists”, so Divisions should not rely on members receiving email announcements. The more mechanisms used for notification the better, and the earlier the notification the better. Sixty days is generally considered adequate notification, but longer is better, and multiple reminders are a good idea.

Every National tournament with a local qualifying path has a deadline by which results of the qualifier must be submitted to the National Office. Do not make the mistake of holding a qualifier a week or two before the deadline. Bad weather, power outages, or other issues can force a Division to reschedule a qualifier, and good planning will allow plenty of room to

reschedule if it becomes necessary. It goes without saying that if a Division is forced to reschedule an event, a later date is always better than an earlier date.

All tournament announcements should be very clear about times and locations. Close of check in for each event should be clear and easy to understand. Statements like “Check in will close at 9:00 am and fencing will start at 9:30 am” runs the risk of a hurried fencer or parent misreading the sentence and showing up with their young fencer at 9:30 am, only to find that check in has closed. Remember, many people attending these events are often new to fencing, and consideration must be given to their lack of familiarity with technical terms and tournament operating procedures.

It is a good idea to announce the format of the competition, and whether or not (in the case of Division II and III qualifiers) events will be combined. However, remember that qualifiers must be separated by gender. Most Divisions currently run a standard pool to a direct elimination table as their qualifier format, but other formats are allowed by USA Fencing, and it is important to let fencers know what format will be followed. Once the format of the event is announced, it cannot be changed!

The use of AskFred.net for events is strongly encouraged. Using the prepayment function of the web site ensures that fencers won't sign up weeks in advance with a vague interest in attending their qualifiers, only to decide at the last minute that they are not going to go, leaving the Division stuck with having hired too many referees, or purchased medals or other prizes that they can't get refunds for. Using a public pre-registration web site helps the Division managed the tournament better.

Using AskFred or a similar website also allows the Division to remind fencers of the rules of qualifiers:

1. USA Fencing membership is required to fence in all sanctioned events, including qualifiers. That means showing a current card at the time of check in or being on the US Fencing membership list, available on the US Fencing web site. A fencer can join USA Fencing at the event, of course, but there is much less hassle if they are already a member. Joining at the event can be done from a smartphone or computer at the venue, if necessary.
2. A full uniform--including an 800 newton glove for saber--is required (and if there is spare equipment available, it should be noted). The fencer's uniform must be in good condition, and free from any holes or defects (this now includes gloves as well). If there is a formal armory check, that should be announced.
3. The competitors must be members of the Division hosting the tournament, and (in the case of qualifiers for the USA National Championships) must be US Citizens or permanent residents.

It is recommended that qualifying tournaments are not held at individual clubs and are on “neutral ground”, especially if those clubs have facilities that vary wildly in quality.

Unfortunately, this is not always possible, especially since qualifying tournaments are often small events that won't generate the income necessary to offset the expense of renting a separate hall for the event. If it is not possible to hold the qualifying event in a neutral location, it is often a good idea to rotate qualifiers through the clubs capable of hosting.

Once the schedule has been set, the Division should plan the staffing for the event. Division officers should oversee a qualifier tournament--even those being held at a local club with the staff to run the event--in order to prevent any charges of bias and to make sure that all requirements (such as Safe Sport) are followed. At the very least one or more Division officers

should make up the Bout Committee, and should do all referee hiring and supervision. Keep in mind that each qualifying tournament needs at least one referee rated a “5” or higher to be physically present at the event. It is always best if that referee does not come from the club hosting the event. The usual rule of thumb for hiring referees is 1.2 referees per strip in order to keep the event moving, but if the qualifier is very small, a referee per strip is usually adequate.

The best referees make for the best competitions, and organizers should attempt to engage the most accomplished officials in the area. Do not use the qualifiers to examine new referees or to give an inexperienced referee more strip time.

A week out from the qualifier a member of the bout committee (or the Division Secretary) should monitor the sign ups on AskFred, looking for possible problems. Those problems might be members from other Divisions signing up for the qualifier, fencers who are too young (or too old) signing up for age restricted qualifying events, or foreign fencers entering when they are not eligible. Sometimes these mistakes cannot be caught simply by looking at the preregistration list, but if possible, it is good to head off possible ineligible entries with enough time to have the fencer correct their error or withdraw from the event. Remember, many of these fencers are going to be new to the sport, and will not always understand their eligibility. This is especially true with qualifying events involving younger fencers who are signed up by their parents with the best of intentions, even when their child may not be eligible.

Using software such as FencingTime allows the bout committee to download the entry list and check for possible errors in membership or eligibility. Keep in mind, however, that software (and the lists it draws from) is not infallible, and the bout committee should review entries manually as well. Often the Division officers know their members well, and when a fencer who no one knows appears on an entry list, it is a good idea to double check their status.

In every qualifier run in Virginia for the last several years, we have had one ineligible fencer sign up. Usually these are new fencers who don't understand the restrictions on Division qualifying events or fencers who are signed up by well-meaning parents who do not understand the rules. Catch these problems before someone makes a two hour drive to an event they cannot fence!

Modern tournament software takes most of the hassle out of running an event. It will seed the pools, and organize the competition. A forward thinking Division counts as one of its assets a laptop with the most current version of FencingTime installed. If a computer at a host fencing club in the Division is used to manage the competition, make sure it has the most current version of the software needed to run the event.

Even with this technology available, it is a good idea that a least one member of the bout committee understand how to run a tournament "manually". Here is a quick tutorial for running a small event the old fashioned way:

1. At the start of each competition each fencer is represented by an index card or slip of paper. This card should have their name, rating, and club. Planning ahead of time, the card may also have "V/D, HS, HR, IND" in a small column format for use in recording pool results.
2. The first step is to determine the initial seeding into the pools. Seeding is determined by the letter and the year of the fencer's classification, with the most recent classification seeded higher than an older classification. For example, a "B16" is seeded higher than a "B14". Placement on the National Points list for that weapon and category should also be considered. For more information about seeding, consult the Athlete Handbook.
3. Order the cards in a deck, with the strongest fencer on top and the weakest fencer on the bottom. Then, lay the cards out in a "snake" or "S" pattern with the same number of

columns as the anticipated number of pools. Assume 18 fencers will be seeded into three pools of 6. The layout of the seeds from #1 through #18 would be:

<u>Pool #1</u>	<u>Pool #2</u>	<u>Pool #3</u>
1	2	3
6	5	4
7	8	9
12	11	10
13	14	15
18	17	16

Now, look at each pool. It may be possible to make adjustments to ensure that the fencers from one club are not over represented in a pool. The bout committee can move fencers horizontally (for instance, switching fencer #4 with fencer #5) or diagonally *down* (for instance, replacing #14 with #16) to avoid conflicts, so long as doing so does not change the strength of the pool, such as swapping a “B” rated fencer for a “C” rated fencer.

Obviously, in this example, if four fencers enter from the same club, it’s unavoidable that two of them are going to end up in the same pool. The smaller the field, the harder it is to balance a pool and to eliminate club conflicts.

4. Once the pools are seeded and balanced as much as possible, fill out each pool sheet. If there are teammates in the pool, look at the bout order and enter the fencers in such a way that teammates fence each other before any other bouts. This is done to avoid any collusion at the end of the pool when a teammate might need a victory over another teammate to get good indicators or to promote out of the pool. For more information, look at the rulebook, Chapter 5, Part 1, Paragraph 15.
5. Once the teammates have been entered onto the pool sheet, shuffle the remaining cards for each pool and enter the remaining fencers for each pool on the score sheets. Shuffling

the cards ensure that the fencers will fence each other in random order and not be fencing “up” or “down” the pool in terms of difficulty.

6. Announce or publish the pools, and instruct the fencers to report to their strips. Send the score sheets out to the referees for the pools to be fenced.
7. As the pools come back, enter each fencer’s record of Victory/Defeat, Touches Scored, Touches Received, and Indicators (TS-TR) on their card.
8. Once all the pools are done, rank the fencers in order by their V/D ratio, Indicators, TS, and TR. In the formats in which a specific number of fencers are being promoted to the next round or direct eliminations, ties must be fenced off (a “barrage”) with the winner advancing, and the loser being eliminated. Where promotion is based on a percentage of the field, to seed the next round or a direct elimination table, any absolute ties are resolved with a coin toss.
9. Using the principles above, seed the next round of pools or the direct elimination table using the ranking of the fencers out of their pools. If the format calls a sequence of pools rather than -- or before -- a direct elimination table, select the fencers advancing to the next round and seed the subsequent set of pools, using the same sequences as in Step 2, but now using the new seeding from the first pool.
10. Fence out the direct elimination table. If using pools, send the next round of pools out to be fenced.
11. As fencers are eliminated, they should be ranked in the results. The fencers that go out in the same “round” (pool or direct elimination table) are ordered by their seeding, from top to bottom. For example, in the direct elimination table, if the number #2 seed out of pools is eliminated in the round of direct elimination round of 16, that fencer finishes 9th, as the

highest fencer eliminated in the round (assuming the #1 fencer advances to the round of 8, of course).

12. An important note about qualifying tournaments: there is no tie for third place in these events, so in direct eliminations the last two fencers who does not make the gold medal round (places 1-2) must fence off to determine who occupies the 3rd place spot and who finishes 4th. This is done even if all four fencers qualify. If the qualifier is fenced as a round of pools, and there is a tie in the final pool, the places must be fenced off in a barrage. Since many qualifying events are small, and may only qualify three people, the importance of these bouts is obvious.

Often a fencer, coach, or parent, will have a disagreement with something concerning the tournament, and will want to lodge a protest about an action taken by a referee, bout committee member, or some other aspect of the tournament. Protests are handled by a formal Bout Committee at the tournament. Members of the Bout Committee must be identified before the tournament begins to avoid any appearance of gerrymandering and so that any meeting can be convened and the protest handled quickly. The composition of the Bout Committee at a local tournament is usually the Bout Committee chair (whoever is running the event), the head referee (or the highest ranking referee present who is not involved in the protest), any Division officers present, and perhaps representatives from two or more clubs as observers. Obviously, anyone with a conflict of interest (same club, a personal relationship, coaches of the fencers involved, etc.) are excluded from the formal Bout Committee.

Many protests can be avoided by being as transparent as possible in running the qualifying event. Announce the format ahead of time. Make sure it is an approved format for Division qualifying events (see the Operations Manual for approved formats). Post the initial

seeding once registration is closed and before fencing starts, and give the fencers a reasonable time (15 minutes is the usual standard in large competitions) to note any changes that need to be made. Post the pools before fencing starts. Post the direct elimination seeding and table after pools are finished. The more transparency in how the event is run, the better. Fortunately, tournament software makes it very easy to print out and post all of this information. But if the bout committee is operating without a computer, take the time to post at least basic seeding into the pools, and the seeding into the direct elimination table or subsequent pools, so that any errors may be brought to the bout committee's attention before the next round begins.

Often a protest will come from the decision of a referee in a bout. Remember that a statement of fact by the referee cannot be appealed. If the referee said there was a parry, then a parry occurred. If the referee said that the attack from the right had the priority, then that cannot be protested. What can be protested to the bout committee is how a rule is applied. If the referee gives a red card for the first occurrence of a Group One offense, for example, that is a misapplication of the rules and the fencer may appeal the decision. If the fencer is protesting an unfamiliar to the bout committee (or, more commonly, a rule that is no longer in use) the fencer must be able to find the rule in the current rule book. It goes without saying that all qualifying tournaments should have current rule book present and that the Bout Committee should be familiar with the rules.

Bout Committee appeal meetings should be kept short and to the point. Limit discussion and testimony to the facts of the appeal. Each Bout Committee member gets one vote, and a majority decides the issue (so Bout Committees should be constituted with an odd number!). A written report of the protest and the decision that was reached should be included with the results and any other copies of the tournament documents for later reference, if necessary.

In the case of a major infraction of the rules during a qualifying event and the exclusion of a fencer or spectator, a quick written explanation by the issuing official should always be made and filed with the tournament paperwork, even if a formal Bout Committee is not called.

Once the tournament is over, and the awards have been given, generate the reports necessary for classification changes and qualifying spots. It is a good idea to do those reports immediately after the event, rather than wait a day or two. There are two reasons: first, people are wildly impatient to know that classification changes have been sent to the National Office, and second, doing it immediately keeps the daily emergencies that everyone deals with from causing the reports to be forgotten or delayed.

Referee reports listing who refereed at the event, their names and membership numbers are required for any sanctioned event including qualifiers. Fencing Time has an option to produce this referee report, but referees must be put into the program's database beforehand.

It is a good habit to keep all pool sheets, bout slips, and other paperwork from the tournament for a period of time afterwards in case there are any questions about the results. Two weeks after results have been posted is usually sufficient for a non-qualifying tournament. For qualifying events, keeping the results of the qualifier until after the conclusion of the actual event qualified for makes sense.

Chapter Eight -- Division and Club Representation

What constitutes a club? And what constitutes club representation in competition? An individual may declare any affiliation they wish at the start of a fencing season. That club affiliation is then fixed for the rest of the fencing season, unless changed by the USA Fencing Board of Directors. The club does not necessarily have to be registered as a Member Club by USA Fencing, but if the club is not a Member Club, then for seeding purposes the fencer is not separated from others who may also be fencing for that club. In sanctioned tournaments, that competitor is fencing “unattached”.

In the case of an NCAA fencer, the NCAA is very strict about how a member of an NCAA program represents themselves. During the season (roughly September through March) an NCAA fencer must fence local events either unattached, or representing their school. This means if they also belong to a local club, they will not be separated from their off season club mates in a competition seeding. Most NCAA fencers understand these rules much better than the ordinary division officer, but it is a good idea to be aware that there are complications when NCAA fencers fence in local events.

To represent a Division, a fencer may claim his Division of residence, the Division of the (official) US Fencing club they represent, or the Division of his school club. If a fencer wishes to change Divisions, there must be a compelling reason (change of clubs, change of residence, or something similar) and USA Fencing will on petition consider making that change. The Division is not given that authority.

Chapter Nine -- Other Roles for the Division

The principal roles for the Division are supervising the Division qualifying events and sanctioning events. Beyond that, the role of the Division in local fencing can be as limited or far ranging as the Division would wish.

A quick survey of Division from several years ago found that some Divisions, in addition to their mandated responsibilities conducted referee clinics, coaching clinics, and armory workshops (both instruction and “repair parties” for fencers to share tools and knowledge). Divisions also frequently ran tournaments for charity or as fundraising events for local fencers traveling internationally.

The Division can also serve as a unifying force to bring clubs together to cooperate in holding large tournaments beyond the capacity of a single club, and to bring clubs together to publicize fencing in their area. In many ways, the Division can operate as an ambassador for fencing in their area, raising the profile of the sport with local and state officials.

The litmus test for Division operations should always be: “What will improve or expand fencing, and serve our members in our Division?”

Appendix A:
Sample By-Laws

What follows below is a sample set of Division by-laws for a fictional USA Fencing Division. These articles are bare bones, but, as discussed earlier, cover almost all of the simple functions of the Division

BYLAWS
OF THE
TIPPERARY DIVISION
OF THE
UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I

NAME AND AFFILIATION

The name of the Division shall be the Tipperary Division of the United States Fencing Association.

The Division shall hereinafter be referred to as “THE DIVISION”, and the United States Fencing Association shall be referred to as the “USFA.” THE DIVISION is a duly chartered, subordinate, constituent body of the USFA, exercising powers given by, performing duties directed under, and subject to the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and policies of the USFA, with jurisdiction over the following geographic areas: the counties of Tipperary, Brigadoon, and Garryowen in the State of Cibola.

ARTICLE II
OBJECTIVES

The purposes and objectives of THE DIVISION are:

1. To promote, develop and encourage the sport of fencing
2. To provide local competitions and tournaments
3. To assist fencers to reach their full potential
4. To aid and assist the USFA in all its objectives and purposes

ARTICLE III
MEMBERSHIP - DUES – COMPETITIONS

SECTION 1. Any person residing within the boundaries of THE DIVISION, or belonging to a fencing club or representing a school within this same area shall be eligible for membership in THE DIVISION. No member of THE DIVISION may be a member of any other Division of the USFA.

SECTION 2. Classes of Membership: Membership shall be the same as that designated from time to time by the USFA.

SECTION 3. Membership may be transferred into THE DIVISION provided that the transferee has a current valid membership in, and receives the approval of, the USFA.

SECTION 4. Any member in good standing who is entitled to vote in elections of the USFA is entitled to vote in elections conducted by THE DIVISION.

SECTION 5. Annual dues shall be determined by the USFA. THE DIVISION may, upon approval of the membership, charge an additional fee for participation in Divisional activities.

SECTION 6. The divisional Executive Committee shall prepare the fencing schedule and shall determine, in accordance with the rules and policies of the USFA, the conditions and restrictions governing the qualifications for, entry into, and conduct of all competitions under its jurisdiction.

SECTION 7. All persons entering a tournament sanctioned by THE DIVISION must be current members of the USFA. The bout committee at each such tournament will have the proper materials to enroll a non-member into the USFA at time of registration. A check returned for insufficient funds will result in a warning to the fencer. A failure to make the check good, or a second occurrence during the season, will result in that fencer being placed on a “cash only” status. B. With the exception of disciplinary penalties associated with competitions, all other matters pertaining to the discipline of a member of THE DIVISION shall be referred to the Board of Directors of the USFA for appropriate action.

SECTION 8. The Executive Committee may allow Registered Clubs within the THE DIVISION to host Division tournaments, but it shall approve the conditions, qualifications and restrictions of all privately and/or club sponsored tournaments before sanctioning such events. At least one official DIVISION representative shall be present at every sanctioned tournament, with full authority to assure that the conditions set by the Executive Committee are being carried out. In case the stipulated conditions are not being adhered to, the Executive Committee may withdraw its sanction from the event, either before or after, and announce that withdrawal to THE DIVISION and the USFA.

ARTICLE IV

OFFICERS AND DUTIES

The officers of THE DIVISION shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The latter two offices may be combined, in accordance with the USFA bylaws. All officers shall take office at 12:01AM on August 1st and hold office until 12:00 midnight on the following July 31st, or until their successors are elected and qualified.

The duties of officers shall be as follows:

SECTION 1. CHAIR – The Chair shall preside at all meetings of THE DIVISION and/or its Executive Committee, and perform such duties as usually pertain to that office and are not inconsistent with these bylaws. The Chair has the responsibility for ensuring that all reports required by the USFA are filed in a timely manner. The preparation of these reports may be delegated to the Secretary and Treasurer of THE DIVISION. The Chair may, from time to time, assign officers and other members of the Executive Committee to chair standing or ad hoc committees. The Chair shall be an exofficio member of all committees. The Chair is responsible for the custody and maintenance of all equipment owned by THE DIVISION.

SECTION 2. VICE-CHAIR – The Vice-Chair shall, should the Chair be unable to perform his/her duties, perform the duties of the Chair. Otherwise, the Vice-Chair shall perform such duties as the Chair may assign.

SECTION 3. SECRETARY – The Secretary shall conduct all official correspondence, issue timely notice to all members of meetings of THE DIVISION, keep the minutes of all meetings of THE DIVISION and/or its Executive Committee, prepare and submit, when due, all reports concerning membership as required by the USFA, and any other like duties that may be assigned by the Chair or the Executive Committee.

SECTION 4. TREASURER – The Treasurer, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall present a budget for the following fiscal year (August 1st to July 31st) at the Annual Meeting of THE DIVISION. Changes made upon the budget shall be presented at the next general meeting of THE DIVISION. The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of THE DIVISION; receive all monies, fees & dues; 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 transactions of the preceding period. All disbursements shall be made from the Divisional checking account. Such disbursements must be supported by receipts stating the nature of the transaction and the payee. All funds of THE DIVISION shall be maintained in a federally insured account, checking and savings, under the name of THE DIVISION. No amounts over \$50.00 will be dispersed without Executive Committee approval, and no amount over \$1000.00, not part of the current fiscal year’s budget approved at the Annual Meeting, will be dispersed without the approval of THE DIVISION’S membership, the majority of those voting deciding. Such vote may be taken by either mail or at a Special Membership Meeting. The Treasurer will provide, upon written request of at least ten voting members of THE DIVISION, current financial records within one month of such request. The Treasurer shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Chair of the DIVISION or other proper authority.

SECTION 5. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined for any year by a majority of those voting, in person or by proxy, at the Annual Meeting.

SECTION 6. Officers of THE DIVISION may be removed for cause upon the petition of one or more voting members of THE DIVISION. The Board of Directors of the USFA may prescribe procedures for removal that provide the accused officer with notice of the asserted grounds for

removal and due process during removal proceedings. If the Board of Directors or the Bylaws of the USFA fail to adopt such procedures, the USFA Board of Directors may remove an officer of THE DIVISION if it finds there is cause for such removal; after notice to the accused officer and a hearing or other appropriate proceeding in which that officer was accorded due process rights.

SECTION 7. Officers and other elected members of the Executive Committee may be recalled through the following procedure: (a) A petition submitted to the Executive Committee, signed by at least 10% of the eligible voters in THE DIVISION, requesting a Special Membership Meeting to be held for the sole purpose of holding a recall vote. (b) At that meeting, two-thirds of those voting either in person or by proxy approve such recall. (c) Time, place and notification requirements of such meeting shall be determined as set forth in ART.VI, Sec.2 of these bylaws.

ARTICLE V

MANAGEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SECTION 1. Composition: The management of THE DIVISION shall be vested in an Executive Committee consisting of the officers of THE DIVISION, and such other members who have been elected at the Annual Meeting. No one may hold office and/or be a member of the Executive Committee unless he or she is a current voting member of THE DIVISION. There must be elected at least one member from each USFA Registered Club in THE DIVISION. Members of THE DIVISION in good standing, with special expertise, may be appointed by the Chair as advisors to the Executive Committee, but these individuals will not have voting privileges.

SECTION 2. Quorum: A quorum shall consist of one-third of the voting membership of the Committee or 4 members, whichever number is larger. No voting by proxy is permitted.

SECTION 3. Meetings: Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held on a regular basis at a time and place designated by the Chair. Meetings may also be called upon the written request of 4 voting members of the Committee. All members must receive at least 48 hours prior notice of all Executive Committee meetings. If all member of the Committee have access to the Internet, then certain specific questions or proposals may be voted upon electronically. All balloting must be copied to every member of the Committee, and the Secretary must keep a printed copy of the vote for the Division records.

SECTION 4. Any member of the Executive Committee (other than officers, for whom provision is made in ART.IV, Sec.6 above) who fails to perform his duties may be removed from the Committee by the following procedures: (a) Written notification of the causes for removal must be provided to each and every member of Executive Committee. (b) At any meeting at which the removal of a member (officers excluded) will be contemplated, at least three-fourths of the total voting membership of the Committee must be present. (c) A member so charged has the right to appear at the meeting and present arguments against removal, but may not vote on this question. (d) At least three-fourths of the members present must vote for removal for it to take effect.

SECTION 5. The Executive Committee may replace a member who has resigned, has been removed by the foregoing procedure, or removed by the USFA using the following method: (a) At any Executive Committee meeting where a new member is to be voted upon, at least three-quarters of the voting members remaining must be present. (b) The proposed new member must be approved by a three-fourths vote.

ARTICLE VI

MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. The Annual Meeting of THE DIVISION shall be held in June or July. The date, time and place of the meeting shall be designated by the Chair, but notification must be mailed to all members of THE DIVISION so as to be received at least 15 days prior to the meeting.

Officers and members of the Executive Committee for the next year will be elected at this meeting. All members of the Executive Committee take and leave office concurrent with the terms of the officers of THE DIVISION.

SECTION 2. Special Meetings of the membership may be called at any time and place by the Chair, and shall be called by the Chair upon written request of not less than 10% of the eligible voters of THE DIVISION. The same notification requirements as for the Annual Meeting apply.

SECTION 3. A quorum shall consist of 10 voting members in person or by proxy, and a majority of those present shall control, except as herein otherwise provided.

ARTICLE VII

ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. Candidates for all voting positions on the Executive Committee (including officers) shall be nominated from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

SECTION 2. If not more than one nomination is made for a position, the Secretary of THE DIVISION shall cast a unanimous ballot for that candidate. If two or more candidates are nominated for a position, then a vote will be taken by written ballot, in person or by proxy, and the candidate receiving a majority of the votes will be elected. If no candidate receives a majority, then a runoff election (again by written ballot) between the two candidates with the highest vote totals will be immediately conducted. If neither candidate can still achieve a

majority, or the result of the run-off election should end in a tie, then a lot shall be cast and the winner elected.

SECTION 3. Members eligible to vote and in good standing may give their proxy to any other member of THE DIVISION who is eligible to vote and in good standing. All proxies shall be in writing and must be submitted for verification to the Secretary at least 72 hours in advance of the Meeting. The person designated in the proxy must be in attendance at the Meeting in order to exercise it.

ARTICLE VIII

JURISDICTION OF THE USFA

All rules, regulations and policies set forth in the Bylaws of the USFA, the Rules of Competition, the USFA Operations Manual, or actions of the USFA Board of Directors are hereby incorporated into these bylaws without action by the Executive Committee or the membership of THE DIVISION. In the event of conflict between these bylaws and the bylaws, rules and policies of the USFA, the latter shall take precedence and the former shall be considered amended accordingly.

ARTICLE IX

AMENDMENTS

These bylaws of the Tipperary Division may be amended at the Annual Meeting of THE DIVISION, or at any special meeting of the membership called by the Chair for that purpose. Any proposed change to these bylaws must be included in the mailed notification of time and place of the Meeting. An amendment receiving a majority of the votes cast, either in person or by proxy, shall be deemed adopted, subject to the provisions of ART.VIII

Appendix B: **Division Financial Statement**

USA Fencing requires an accounting of the Division finances once a year, at the end of the season. To make matters as simple as possible, the fiscal year of the Division should run the same as the fiscal year of USA Fencing: from August 1 of the previous year to July 31 of the current year. Divisions are assumed to be run on a “Cash Basis” rather than an “Accrual Basis” -- in other words, expense and income are recorded as they occur (money is either spent or received) instead of as they are anticipated in the future.

The form for the USA Fencing’s financial statement is straightforward, and it might be a good idea to deliver reports to the Executive Committee during the year using the same form, to accustom the Treasurer to filling the form out. With the help of a check register kept on a spreadsheet, and some simple SORT and SUM functions in Excel, it is a snap to do.

An explanation of the categories on the financial statement follows:

(Division Income)

USFA Membership Dues Collected: These are the amounts that the Division collects in membership dues on behalf of US Fencing.

USFA Membership Dues Rebate: These are the amounts that US Fencing rebates back to the Division. Note that the Division must be current with its officer reports to receive these funds.

Entry Fees: Tournament entry fees collected by the Division. Report the total of these fees, not the net of fees and expenses.

Interest Income: interest earned on any bank accounts or certificates of deposit.

Contributions: charitable contributions made to the Division.

Sales: Brochures, Decals etc.: This category encompasses any sales the Division makes of tangible good. Usually these sales happen at tournaments or other fund raisers. Include the sale of any refreshments.

Other (itemize): This is any revenue the Division has that doesn't fall into any of the categories above. It might include the Division head tax at tournaments, special fund raising efforts (raffles and so forth) or other monies collected or donated.

(Division Expense)

USFA Membership Dues Remitted: These are membership dues that the Division has remitted back to the National Office. Ideally, the dues remitted should match the dues collected, unless the report is completed before a check is written back to US Fencing, or before a deposit is made.

Stationery & Printing: In the past, Divisions kept their members informed with printed and mailed newsletters. For the most part, the practice of mass mailings has ended in most divisions, but this line item is preserved in the Division Financial Report. However, a Division might have printing expenses for elections or other official business, and those expenses go here.

Postage: The cost of mailing those newsletters, or any other communication.

Telephone: Again, telephone expense is a rare expense these days, since almost everyone has free long distance through their cell phone carrier. But if the Division keeps a separate phone number or cell phone for Division business, the expense of that account should go here.

Medals, Trophies, Engraving: the cost of awards present at Division events, including qualifiers.

Travel: The cost of airfare and hotel accommodations for Division personnel working on Division business. This would include travel and accommodations for referee seminar officials, out of town referees working qualifying events, and so forth.

Competition Expense: Expenses associated with any Division tournament, including staffing, equipment, transport of equipment, fees, permits, and so on. It does not include prizes and awards as above.

Equipment Purchase & Repair: All the costs for purchase, and repair of any equipment. Note that this only includes new items added to the Division stock of equipment, or repairs to existing equipment. There is no requirement for the Division to submit a balance sheet of assets to the National Office.

Dues and Subscriptions: Any membership or subscriptions to associations or publications that the Division might maintain. Examples might be local business associations, community newsletters, and so forth. I might include the monthly maintenance costs for a Division web site or email address with this category.

Bank Charges: Fees levied by the bank for maintaining the Division account, such as account fees, cost of checks, and bad check fees.

Other (Itemize): Any fees or expenses that don't fit into the above categories. This is going to be a large number of items for some Divisions, and should be itemized as much as possible.

When this report is filled out the difference between income and expense should also match the difference between the starting and ending balances of the Division checking account.

If they don't match, an expense or income item was missed and the discrepancy must be reconciled before the report is complete.

When the report balances, the Division Chair and Treasurer must sign off on the report. Make a copy for the Division's records and as part of the annual Treasurer's report, and send the original to USA Fencing. Done!

Appendix C
USFA Financial Report Form

(Attached)

UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

USFA DIVISION / SECTION

Year ending July 31, _____
 Report Year

 Division or Section Name

 Date

	REVENUE		EXPENSES
USFA MEMBERSHIP DUES COLLECTED		USFA MEMBERSHIP DUES REMITTED	
USFA MEMBERSHIP DUES REBATE		STATIONERY & PRINTING	
ENTRY FEES		POSTAGE	
INTEREST INCOME		TELEPHONE	
CONTRIBUTIONS		MEDALS, TROPHIES, ENGRAVING	
SALES: BROCHURES, DECALS, ETC.		TRAVEL	
OTHER (ITEMIZE)		COMPETITION EXPENSE	
		EQUIPMENT PURCHASE & REPAIR	
		DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	
		BANK CHARGES	
		OTHER (ITEMIZE)	
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ -	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ -

COMPLETE ALL ITEMS	
Name of Bank _____	Fed ID# on this account _____
Address _____	City, State, ZIP _____

	Checking	Savings	Total
Beginning			\$ -
Ending			-
Excess (Def.)	-	-	\$ -

Revenues vs Expenditures	
Total Revenues	\$ -
Total Expenditures	-
Excess or (Deficiency)	\$ -

 Certification by Division/Section Chairperson
(REQUIRED)

 Certification by Secretary/Treasurer
(REQUIRED)

Mail Original Before August 31 to: USA Fencing
 4065 Sinton Rd., Suite 140
 Colorado Springs CO 80907