

Fencing Club By-Laws: Ranking System

Ranks are marked by colored bands beneath the shoulder patch.

Testing occurs on individual occasions as determined by the Head Instructor. Members wishing to test can do so only if the Head Instructor offers to perform the testing. If a member wishes for a testing, the candidate cannot bring the request to the Head Instructor's attention, but must instead convince a member in good standing of at least the rank he/she wishes to test for (and at least the 2nd rank) to act as a sponsor on his/her behalf. This sponsor is also responsible for making sure the candidate is adequately prepared for the rank testing.

When the testing occurs, all actions requiring 2 people will be performed by the candidate and her/his sponsor. The Head Instructor (the tester) will direct the actions and observe so as to score the candidate. The candidate should not be penalized for mistakes made by the sponsor; instead, the Head Instructor should ask them to repeat the action.

Each rank confers upon the fencer a set of permissions to accompany their new rank.

First Rank – Yellow Band - Beginning Foil

Requirements:

A) Length of attendance:

Minimum attendance time before testing: 15 practices, with discretion for those with previous experience

B) Candidate should have participated in at least two assaults previously with instructors.

The Testing:

The purpose of the 1st rank testing is for the candidate to demonstrate the knowledge and ability needed to fence safely with the foil in a bout.

A) Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

Notice, all techniques should be done from a proper guard, attacks should be done with a properly executed lunge, etc. A salute should be made when beginning techniques that touch a living opponent. Failure in these things is equivalent to failure in the technique.

Techniques:

- Footwork:
 - First position
 - On guard
 - Advance
 - Retreat
 - Lunge
 - Advance-lunge
 - Distance maintaining drill

- **Bladework:**
 - Grip
 - Hand Positions
 - Salute (Simple [assault], and grand [judged])
 - Invitations/Engagements

(Candidates should be proficient in the following actions in all lines.)

- **Offensive:**
 - Straight Thrust
 - Disengage and Lunge
 - Glide
- **Defensive:**
 - Simple parries
 - Circular parries
 - Riposte (direct & indirect)
- **Actions on the Blade:**
 - Blade Seizure (engagement)
 - Change of Engagement

B) Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- **Tactical: Foil Target Area**
 - Priority and Right-of-Way (basics)
 - Distance control (close, in-, far)
 - Defense of Measure
- **Rules & Officiating:**
 - Bout protocol
 - Toccatto-Grazie Scoring System
 - Strip dimensions (AFL or true classical (20'x3')?)
 - Minor (group I) bout offenses for standard foil (AFL)
 - Sportsmanship and "Social Behavior in the Salle"
- **Armoring:**
 - Cleaning and care of basic fencing gear
 - Identify components of the standard foil (French and Italian hilts)

C) Candidate must participate in a bout with the sponsor. This bout should be to 5 points. The outcome of the bout (winner/loser) has no bearing on the candidate's success in the testing. Rather, this serves as a chance to teach the candidate what a good bout should be like, and to make sure they can demonstrate the needed control to be safe in a bouting situation. The candidate will be graded out 10 points on their execution of control. The sponsor should execute her/his actions with good control and form to allow the candidate a chance to properly demonstrate his/her skill.

Permissions:

A) Fencers of the 1st rank have the permission to bout foil and do bladework drills with other fencers of the 1st rank or higher using club gear and at club functions without needing an instructor's direct supervision--as long as the club's standard safety rules are followed!

B) Fencers of the 1st rank are granted the ability to borrow equipment pertaining to foil from the club outside of club meeting times. However, they must obtain permission from the Head Instructor, and need to sign for all items using the registry.

Second Rank – **Red Band** - Intermediate Foil

The purpose of this test is to show that a fencer has a solid understanding of first rank material. Furthermore, this test will demonstrate competence with more advanced techniques and tactics.

Requirements:

A) Length of attendance:

It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly (at least twice per week) for 1 semesters before testing for this rank.

Minimum attendance time before testing: 20 practices as a first rank before examination. (In the case of a new member with previous experience at another club, this time serves to assure that the member has patience, and forces them to review the techniques of foil, which are essential to the practice of all the weapons).

B) Participation

Participate in at least 2 events (tournaments, symposiums, etc) other than weekly meetings
Compete in three public bouts.
Judge two bouts

C) Candidate must be of the 1st rank.

The Testing:

All techniques should be done from a proper guard, attacks should be done with a properly executed lunge, etc. A salute should be made when beginning techniques that touch a living opponent. Failure in these things is equivalent to failure in the technique.

A) Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

- Footwork:
 - Appel
 - Ballestra
 - Cross-Step
 - Jump Back
 - Gaining on the Lunge
 - Ballestra-Lunge
 - Reverse-Lunge
- Bladework:
 - Offensive:
 - Single Feint
 - Direct
 - By Disengagement
 - By Glide
 - Technical Note: Eluding Parries...
 - by Disengage or
 - by Deceive, depending on parry encountered.

- Double Feint
 - Triple-Feint Theory
- Defensive:
 - Semi-circular parries (French)
 - Diagonal parries (Italian “Half-Circle Parry)
 - Beat parries
 - Compound Riposte
 - By Disengage
 - By Feint
- Actions on the Blade
 - Transport
 - Envelopment
 - Pressure
 - Simple Beat
 - Circular Beat
 - Expulsion
 - Disarmament
- Counter-Offensive:
 - Disengagement in Time
 - Stop thrust (Arrest) (counterattack launched on opponents initial advance of attack or preparation)
 - Time Thrust (One “fencing time action that interrupts a multi-tempo attack, eg. pasatta sotto)
 - Body Evasions
 - Inquartata
 - Pasatta Sotto

B) Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- Tactical:
 - First and Second Intention Actions
 - Probing Actions
- Rules & Officiating:
 - General weapon rules and regulations
 - Group I & II offenses
 - Rules and obligations of Judges

C) Candidate must participate in a bout with the tester. This bout should be to 5 points. The outcome of the bout (winner/loser) has no bearing on the candidate's success in the testing. The purpose of this bout is to test the candidate's learning of tactics and control. The candidate will be scored out of 18 points, with 10 points for control, and 8 points for technique/form.

Permissions:

A) Fencers of the 2nd rank, having demonstrated sufficient skill with and understanding of the foil, are allowed to study and train with epees. Bouts with these weapons can be performed with the permission of a 5th rank. It should be noted that prior to achieving this rank fencing with these weapons is still allowed (under supervision) at events--such as Western Martial Arts conventions--that the club attends away from Whitman. However, continued training in these weapons at club meetings and events at Whitman is not allowed until this test has been completed, so as not to distract the fencers from learning the basic principles of all fencing

weapons, which are trained through the use of the foil.

B) Fencers of the 2nd rank can serve as judges for foil tournaments held at Whitman.

C) Fencers of the 2nd rank can propose candidates for the 1st rank to the Head Instructor (serve as sponsors for 1st rank).

Third Rank – Green Band - Advanced Foil and Epee

A) Length of attendance:

It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly (at least twice per week) for 2 semesters before testing for this rank.

Minimum attendance time before testing: 40 hours (20 practices) as a second rank before examination. (In the case of a new member with previous experience at another club, this time serves to assure that the member has patience, and forces them to review the techniques of foil, which are essential to the practice of all the weapons).

B) Participation

Compete in five public bouts.

Judge five bouts

Direct two assaults (under supervision)

C) Candidate must be of the 2nd rank.

The Testing:

All techniques should be done from a proper guard, attacks should be done with a properly executed lunge, etc. A salute should be made when beginning techniques that touch a living opponent. Failure in these things is equivalent to failure in the technique.

A) Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

- Foil Footwork:
 - Inverse advance-lunge (advance-reverse lunge?)
 - Running Attack/Fleche
- Foil Bladework:
 - Renewed Attacks:
 - Replacements (reprise) (against someone you utilizes defence of measure)
 - Appuntata (remise) (re-attack in the same line if opponent hesitates on reposting after parrying)
 - Redoublement (like remise, but directed in the opposite line than attack)
 - Counter-Time (attacks in time)
 - Feint in Time
 - Counter Disengagement
 - Arrest in Counter-time (Fr. Contre-temps: counter attack by blade engagement to a counter attack)
 - Flanconade
 - Imbroccata

- Ceding Parry
 - Blade Cover
 - Cut Over
 - Epee Bladework:
 - Grip
 - Angulation
 - Arrest
 - Reassemblément
 - Epee Tactical:
 - The Guard Stance
 - Target Area
 - Double Hits (no priority)

B) Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- Rules & Officiating:
 - Group I, II, and III offenses
 - Referee hand signals
- Armoring:
 - Parts of the Epee (French and Italian hilts)

Permissions:

A) Students will be able to assist in teaching with the head instructor discretion as well as free assault in epee after completion. Students are also allowed to branch their study into other weapons (sabre and historical). See below for qualifications.

B) Fencers of the 3rd rank have the permission to bout epee and do bladework drills with other fencers of the 3rd rank or higher using club gear and at club functions without needing an instructor's direct supervision--as long as the club's standard safety rules are followed!

C) Fencers of the 3rd rank are granted the ability to borrow equipment pertaining to epee from the club outside of club meeting times. However, they must obtain permission from the Head Instructor, and need to sign for all items using the registry.

D) Fencers of the 3rd rank can serve as directors for foil assaults and public bouts (excluding tournament bouts held at Whitman College).

E) Fencers of the 3rd rank can propose candidates for 1st and 2nd ranks to the Head Instructor (serve as sponsors for 1st and 2nd ranks).

Fourth Rank – **Blue Band** - Sabre

A) Length of attendance:

It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly (at least twice per week) for 3 semesters before testing for this rank.

Minimum attendance time before testing: 20 practices as a 3rd rank before examination. (In the case of a new member with previous experience at another club, this time serves to assure that the member has patience, and forces them to review the techniques of foil, which are essential to the practice of all the weapons).

B) Participation

Compete in five public bouts.

Judge five bouts

Direct two public bouts

C) Candidate must be of the 3rd rank.

The Testing:

All techniques should be done from a proper guard, attacks should be done with a properly executed lunge, etc. A salute should be made when beginning techniques that touch a living opponent. Failure in these things is equivalent to failure in the technique.

A) Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

- Basics:
 - Holding the Sabre
 - Hand Positions
- Guard:
 - The Guard Stance
 - Invitations/Engagements
 - The Lines
- Basic Attacks:
 - Point Thrusts
 - Straight Thrust
 - Disengagement and Lunge
 - Glide
 - Cuts
 - Draw vs. Push
 - Direct
 - Circular
- Defense:
 - Simple Parry
 - 6th
 - Circular Parry
 - Semi-Circular Parry
 - Ceding Parry
 - 1st
 - 4th
 - Riposte
 - Simple Riposte
 - By Point Thrust
 - By Glide
 - By Direct Cut
 - By Circular Cut

- By Counter-cut
 - Compound Riposte
 - By Feint with Point Thrust
 - By Feint with Direct Cut
 - Compound Attacks:
 - Single Feint
 - By Direct Point Thrust
 - By Direct Cut
 - By Disengagement with the Point
 - By Glide with the Point
 - Eluding Parries
 - by Disengagement
 - by Deceive
 - Double Feint
 - (as above)
 - Triple Feint
 - (as above)
 - Actions on the Blade:
 - Blade Seizure
 - Change of Engagement
 - Transport
 - Followed by Glide
 - Followed by Cut
 - Beat (with Point Thrust, Direct Cut, Circular Cut, or Feint)
 - Simple Beat
 - Change Beat
 - Circular Beat
 - Grazing Beat
 - Expulsion
 - Pressure
 - Renewed Attacks:
 - Redoublement
 - With the Point
 - With a Descending Cut to the Head
 - Running Attack
 - Counter-offense:
 - Disengagement in Time
 - Arrest
 - Time Thrust
 - Time Thrust by Cut to the Arm
 - Appuntata
 - Inquartata
 - Counter-time (Attacks in time):
 - Feint in Time
 - Counter-Disengagement
 - Arrest in Counter-time

B) Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- Marital Philosophy / Tactics:
 - Time/Tempo

- Measure/Distance
- First and Second Intention Actions
- Probing Actions
- Actions of Concealment
- Rules & Officiating:
 - The Sabre Target
 - Double Hits (Right-of-Way/Priority)
- Armoring:
 - Parts of the Sabre

Permissions:

A) Students will be able to assist in teaching with the head instructor discretion as well as free assault in sabre after completion. Students are also encouraged to branch their study into other historical weapons.

B) Fencers of the 4th rank have the permission to bout sabre and do bladework drills with other fencers of the 4th rank or higher using club gear and at club functions without needing an instructor's direct supervision--as long as the club's standard safety rules are followed!

C) Fencers of the 4th rank are granted the ability to borrow equipment pertaining to sabre from the club outside of club meeting times. However, they must obtain permission from the Head Instructor, and need to sign for all items using the registry.

D) Fencers of the 4th rank can serve as directors for foil bouts held at Whitman College.

E) Fencers of the 4th rank can propose candidates for 1st thru 3rd ranks to the Head Instructor (serve as sponsors for 1st thru 3rd ranks).

Fifth Rank – **Black Band - Foil Pedagogy**

A) Length of attendance: 2 years within the club.

B) Candidate must be of the 3rd rank.

C) Candidate must be nominated by the Head Instructor

The Testing:

The program for Fifth Rank follows the syllabus of the Classical Academy of Arms' "Classical Fencing Apprentice Instructor Program."

Permissions:

A) Students will be able to teach individual and group foil lessons at the club level as well as serve as tester for first and second ranks.

B) Fencers of the 5th rank can serve as directors for foil tournament bouts held at Whitman College.

C) Fencers of the 5th rank can propose candidates for 1st and 4th ranks to the Head Instructor (serve as sponsors for 1st and 3rd ranks).

Historical Weapons Ranking

Requirements:

1. Candidates for study of historical weapons must have passed their 3rd Rank Exam
2. Application for **Student of a Historical Weapon**
 - a. Competency in performing techniques must be demonstrated before the panel.
 - i. Techniques will be known to the candidate before the exam.
 - ii. Exam curriculum will be developed/modified by the panel for that weapon and approved by the Captain at the end of each semester
 1. The Panel: The panel is to be composed of three individuals: the Captain and any combination of Scholars (in same weapon), the President and the Vice President, with preference being given to the Scholars
 - b. Proposal for scholarly research
 - i. Research proposal is submitted to the panel and must include a brief history of the weapon, demonstrate some preliminary work with the topic, and explain personal interest. Minimum of 750 words
 - c. Continued study in the use of Classical weapons
3. Application for **Scholar of a Historical Weapon**
 - a. Candidate for Scholar must submit a tangible product of research to be archived with the club
 - i. This should be original work in essay or video format examining the history of the weapon and analyzing some technical aspects of its use
 - ii. An essay should be a minimum of 1200 words with sufficient historical citations, including images when appropriate
 - iii. An instructional video should comprise a minimum of 7 techniques with sufficient historical citations and background along with the raw techniques
 - b. Candidate for Scholar must offer a short lecture to the panel.
 - i. The lecture is to be presented as part of a public offering of research and work done by Whitman College Fencing to the larger student body as a whole (if possible, which is determined by the panel).
 - c. Continued study in the use of Classical weapons
4. To be granted teaching privileges: Candidates for **Teaching Scholar** must pass the Historical Weapon Instructor Exam (curriculum to be developed with aid of Captain and/or existing Scholars of that weapon). They must also:
 - a. Demonstrate competence in conveying technique details
 - b. Maintain safe environment for all students participating
 - c. Continued study in the use of Classical weapons
5. Rights and responsibilities of Student of a Historical Weapon
 - a. Given more leeway in borrowing equipment from the club at the discretion of the Captain and Armorer.
 - b. Maintain safe environment for practitioners and bystanders while involved in Historical Weapon activities
6. Rights and responsibilities of Scholar of a Historical Weapon
 - a. Given more leeway in borrowing equipment for extra-extracurricular practice.

- b. Maintain safe environment for practitioners and bystanders while involved in Historical Weapon activities
- 7. Rights and responsibilities of a Teaching Scholar of a Historical Weapon
 - a. Given more leeway in borrowing equipment for extra-extracurricular practice.
 - b. Maintain safe environment for practitioners and bystanders while involved in Historical Weapon activities
 - c. Right to refuse to teach members that they are uncomfortable with. (Captain should be notified if reason is related to safety). Teaching Scholars (and Scholars) are offering their experience to the other members of the club and should be treated with their due respect as students and teachers
- 8. At all times the conduct of dilettantes, students, scholars and teaching scholars is still subject to the regulation of the Captain and improper activity as determined by the Captain shall be reviewed by the Appeals Board.