

## 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 or respective test proctor. Members can take a test when the test proctor offers to perform the testing. If a member wishes to take a rank exam, the candidate can request to take the test. The candidate should also approach 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 test proctor 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 test proctor 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: one semester of consistent attendance (about 15 practices, with discretion for those with previous experience)
- B. Candidate should have participated in at least two bouts with instructors.

#### The Testing:

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

1. Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

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

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

- Guard and Movement:
  - Grand Salute
  - First position
  - En garde
  - Four invitations
  - Advance
  - Retreat
  - Lunge
  - Advance-lunge
  - Defense of Measure
  - Appel
  - Distance Maintaining Drill

- Bladework
  - Defensive Actions:
    - Simple parries
    - Circular parries
    - Riposte (direct & indirect)
  - Offensive Actions:
    - Straight thrust
    - Disengage and lunge
    - Glide

Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- Tactical:
  - Foil target area
  - Priority and right-of-way
  - Distance control (close, in-, far)
  - Defense of measure
  - Importance of learning foil first
- Rules & Officiating
  - Bout protocol
  - Toccatto-grazie scoring system
  - Strip dimensions
  - Minor (Group I) bout offenses for standard foil (AFL)
  - Customs and safety
- Armoring:
  - Cleaning and care of basic fencing gear
  - Identify components of the standard Italian foil

2. 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. 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 on attention to measure and distance, variety of attacks and parries, and calm. 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:**

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!

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**

### Requirements:

- A. Length of attendance: It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly for two semesters (about 20 practices after taking the first rank test) before testing for this rank. 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:
  - a. Compete in three public bouts.
- C. Candidate must be of the 1st rank.

### The Testing:

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.

1. Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

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

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

- Footwork:
  - All footwork and movement from the first rank test
  - Ballestra
  - Cross-step forward
  - Jump back
  - Gaining on the lunge
  - Reverse-lunge
- Bladework:
  - All bladework from the first rank test
  - Offensive:
    - Single Feint
      - Direct
      - By Disengagement
      - By Cut-Over
      - By Deceive
      - By Glide
    - Double Feint
      - Direct
      - By Disengagement
      - By Cut-Over
      - By Deceive
      - By Glide
    - Triple Feint Theory
  - Defensive:
    - Vertical parries (also known as semi-circular parries)
    - Diagonal parries (also known as half-circular parries)
    - Beat parries
    - Circular beat parries
    - Cut-overs

- Counter-disengagements
  - Compound Riposte by Feint
- Actions on the Blade:
  - Transport
  - Envelopment
  - Pressure
- Actions in Time:
  - Disengagement in Time
  - Arrest (counterattack launched on opponent's initial attack or preparation)
  - Time Thrust (One "fencing time action that interrupts a multi-tempo attack," eg. passata sotto)

Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- Tactical:
  - All tactical questions from the first rank test
  - Triple Feint Theory
  - First and Second Intention Actions
  - Probing Actions
  - Principles guiding a parry
  - Time Thrust Theory
- Rules & Officiating:
  - Rules and Obligations of Judges
  - Group I & II offenses
  - Customs and Safety

2. 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 graded on attention to measure and distance, variety of attacks and parries, and calm. 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:**

Fencers of the 2nd rank, having demonstrated sufficient skill with and understanding of the foil, are allowed to study and train with epees and historical weapons. Bouts with these weapons can be performed with the permission of the Head Instructor. 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.

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

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

## Third Rank – Green Band - Advanced Foil

### Requirements:

- A. Length of attendance: It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly for three semesters (about 20 practices after taking the second rank test) before testing for this rank. 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
  - a. Compete in five public bouts.
  - b. Judge five bouts
  - c. Direct two assaults (under supervision)
- C. Candidate must be of the 2nd rank.

### The Testing:

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

1. Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

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

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

- Footwork and Movement:
  - All footwork and movement from the first and second rank tests
  - Remise (re-attack in the same line if opponent hesitates on riposting after parrying)
  - Replacement (like remise, but directed in the opposite line than attack)
  - Appuntata (a renewed attack that includes an appel)
  - Redoublement (against someone who utilizes defence of measure)
- Bladework:
  - All bladework from the first and second rank tests
  - Counter Attacks and Counter-Time Actions:
    - Arrest against a Double Feint
    - Attack in Countertime
    - Feint in Time
    - Arrest in Countertime
  - Flanconades and Counters
    - Transport to 1st and glide (Flanconade in 2nd)
    - Transport to 2nd and glide (Internal Flanconade)
    - External Flanconade (Engage and Flanconade in 4th)
    - Imbroccata
    - Ceding Parry (of 3rd and 4th)
  - Defensive Actions
    - Ceding Parries
    - Body Evasions
      - Inquartata
      - Passata sotto

- Offensive Actions
  - Blade Cover
  - Change Beat
  - Grazing Beat
  - Expulse
  - Disarm

Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- Tactical:
  - All tactical questions from first and second rank tests
  - Running attack/fleche
  - Renewed attack
  - Grazing beat vs. Expulse vs. Disarm
  - Blade Pressure
  - Actions of Concealment
  - Fencing Time
  - Countertime
- Rules & Officiating:
  - Director hand signals
  - Responsibilities of the director
  - Group I, II, and III offenses
  - Customs and Safety

2. 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 graded on attention to measure and distance, variety of attacks and parries, and calm. 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:**

Fencers of the 3rd rank, having demonstrated sufficient skill with and understanding of the foil, are allowed to study and train with sabers. Bouts with these weapons can be performed with the permission of the Head Instructor. 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.

Students will be able to assist in teaching foil with the Head Instructor's discretion.

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

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

## Fourth Rank – Purple Band – Epee

### Requirements:

- A. Length of attendance: It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly for four semesters (about 20 practices after taking the third rank test) before testing for this rank. 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 epee, which may vary from a new member's previous experiences.
- B. Participation
  - a. Compete in five public bouts.
  - b. Judge five bouts
  - c. Direct two public bouts
- C. Candidate must be of the 3rd rank.

### The Testing:

The purpose of the 4<sup>th</sup> rank testing is for the candidate to demonstrate the knowledge and ability needed to fence safely with the epee in a bout.

1. Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

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

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

- Footwork and Movement:
  - All footwork and movement from the first through third rank tests
  - En garde
- Bladework:
  - All bladework from first through third rank tests
  - Angulations
  - Bell Parries
  - Reassemblément

Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- Tactical:
  - All tactical questions from first through third rank test
  - Priority in epee
- Rules & Officiating
  - Double-touch rules in epee
  - Group I, II, III, and IV offenses
  - Customs and Safety

2. 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 graded on attention to measure and distance, variety of attacks and parries, and calm. 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

Fencers of the 4th rank (epee) have the permission to bout epee and do bladework drills with other fencers of the 4th rank (epee) 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!

Fencers of the 4th rank (epee) 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.

Students will be able to assist in teaching foil and epee with the Head Instructor's discretion.

Fencers of the 4th rank (epee) can serve as directors for foil bouts and epee public bouts (excluding tournament bouts held at Whitman College).

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

## Fourth Rank – Blue Band – Saber

### Requirements:

- A. Length of attendance: It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly for four semesters (about 20 practices after taking the third rank test) before testing for this rank. 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 saber, which may vary from a new member's previous experiences.
- B. Participation
  - a. Compete in five public bouts.
  - b. Judge five bouts
  - c. Direct two public bouts
- C. Candidate must be of the 3rd rank.

### The Testing:

The purpose of the 4<sup>th</sup> rank testing is for the candidate to demonstrate the knowledge and ability needed to fence safely with the saber in a bout.

1. Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/techniques:

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

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

- Footwork and Movement:
  - All footwork and movement from the first through third rank tests
  - En garde
  - Six invitations
- Bladework:
  - All bladework from first through third rank tests



- Simple Offensive Actions
  - R and L cheek cuts
  - Head cut
  - Belly cut
  - Flank cut
  - Circle cut to head
  - Circle cut to R and L cheek
  - Circle cut to belly
  - Circle cut to flank
  - Diagonal cuts upward and downward across torso
- Parries
  - Simple parries
  - Circular parries
  - Ceding parries
- Simple Attacks
  - Point Thrust

Candidates must be able to explain the following topics:

- Tactical:
  - All tactical questions from first through third rank test
  - Draw in saber
  - Priority
- Rules & Officiating
  - Group I, II, III, and IV offenses
  - Customs and Safety
- Armoring
  - Parts of the Saber

2. 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 graded on attention to measure and distance, variety of attacks and parries, and calm. 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**

Fencers of the 4th rank (saber) have the permission to bout saber and do bladework drills with other fencers of the 4th rank (saber) 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!

Fencers of the 4th rank (saber) are granted the ability to borrow equipment pertaining to saber 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.

Students will be able to assist in teaching foil and saber with the Head Instructor's discretion.

Fencers of the 4th rank (saber) can serve as directors for foil bouts and saber public bouts (excluding tournament bouts held at Whitman College).

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

## **Fifth Rank – Black Band - Head Instructor**

### Requirements:

- A. Length of attendance: It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly for four semesters (about 80 practices) before being admitted to this rank. 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 fencing, which may vary from a new member's previous experiences.
- B. Candidate must be of the 3rd rank.
- C. Candidate must be nominated by the previous Head Instructor and voted in by members of the club.

### **Permissions (these permissions supplement the requirements of the Head Instructor as outlined in the constitution)**

The Head Instructor will be able to teach individual and group lessons at the club level as well as serve as tester for 1st through 4th ranks.

The Head Instructor of the 5th rank can serve as director for tournament bouts held at Whitman College.

The Head Instructor of the 5th rank can serve as proctors or sponsor for 1st through 4th ranks.

## **Studying Historical Weapons**

### Requirements:

- A. Length of attendance: It is suggested that a new club member attend regularly for three semesters (about 60 practices) before studying a new historical weapon. 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 fencing.
- B. Candidate must be of the 3rd rank.
- C. The student must continue their study of classical fencing weapons in addition to historical weapons.

### The Application:

1. The candidate must submit a proposal to a panel consisting of the President, Vice President, and Head Instructor before working with a new historical weapon. (Note: this only needs to be done when seeking to study a historical weapon that is new to the club, or has not been actively studied for at least two semesters. This is to ensure that this new weapon is learned safely and in an historically accurate manner, it is assumed that weapons already being studied will have a tradition of safe instruction that will continue. If at any time historical study is deemed unsafe by any member of this panel, the study of that weapon will be reassessed and a new proposal must be submitted by the instructors of that weapon.)
2. A proposal for study must consist of a short informal presentation or short written piece (minimum of 750 words) demonstrating some preliminary work with the topic, and explaining personal interest.

### Historical Study

1. Students studying historical material should strive to learn the fighting style in an historically accurate manner.
2. Students should strive to create a tangible product of their research in the form of particularly useful historical documents or reference materials, an essay (preferred minimum of 1200 words), or video (preferred minimum of 7 minutes). Providing this material is not strictly necessary, but is extremely helpful for future fencers who wish to continue studying this weapon.

### **Permissions**

Students studying historical weapons are given more leeway in borrowing equipment from the club at the discretion of the Captain and Armourer.

Upon receiving approval to study a historical weapon the student will be able to teach other club members of at least the 2nd rank the use of this weapon with the Head Instructor's discretion. Students have the right to refuse to teach members that they are uncomfortable with (the Head Instructor should be notified if the reason is related to safety). Students of historical weapons are offering their experience to the other members of the club and should be treated with their due respect as students and teachers. At all times the conduct of teachers and students is still subject to the regulation of the Head Instructor, and improper activity as determined by the Head Instructor shall be reviewed by the Appeals Board.