

## Proposed Amendments to Operations Manual

NEW WORDING [indicated by italics and underline]

**Chapter 2: USFA Membership.** Section 1: Rights of Membership. (Second Paragraph):

... Payment of dues to a Division Secretary or other duly appointed agent renders a fencer eligible only to fence in local sanctioned competitions ~~sanctioned by~~ in the Division where the dues were paid. Once the membership has been satisfactorily processed, the individual will receive a membership card.

### Chapter 3: USFA Competitions.

#### A. *Authorized/Sanctioned Competitions*

##### A. Definition

Webster's Concise English Dictionary defines sanction as: "official permission or approval." A USFA sanctioned competition refers to competitions that have been authorized by USFA designated representatives who are responsible for the operation and conduct of official competitions (e.g. the USFA or one of its Divisions or Sections), as set forth below in Section 1C of this Chapter and are held in accordance with the *Rules of Competition* and related modifications as specified in the current USFA Operations Manual.

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##### B. Competitor Status

- 1) Current competitive members of the USFA may participate in competitions ~~scheduled by or under the auspices of the USFA Board of Directors or its authorized representatives: e.g., Division officers, Section officers, Regional Youth Coordinators, etc.~~ as set forth below in Section 1C of this chapter. Foreign fencers may fence in USFA competitions (non-qualifying competitions) by showing proof of membership in another fencing federation or a current season FIE License. Foreign fencers whose entry has been sent by the fencer's fencing federation do not need to show any other proof of membership.

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##### C. Competition Requirements

- 1) ~~Competitive members of the USFA can earn classifications at competitions that have been sanctioned by recognized entities under the jurisdiction of the USFA Board of Directors: e.g., Officers of Divisions or Sections, Regional Youth Coordinators or the Tournament Committee. For a competition to be considered sanctioned it must be included in the Division or Section official schedule mailed to the members and/or posted on the corresponding web site or, in the case of Regional Youth Circuit tournaments or National tournaments, published in the annual Athlete Handbook and/or posted on the Youth Committee web site, www.usfaryc.org, and the USFA~~

web site, [www.usfencing.org](http://www.usfencing.org), respectively. The specific categories of competitions at which classifications may be earned are described in Chapter 6.

- 1) Competitions may be held under the jurisdiction of any of the following:
  - a) A USFA member club in good standing at the time the tournament is held
  - b) The officers of a USFA Division
  - c) The officers of a USFA Section
  - d) The Regional Youth Coordinators
  - e) The USFA Youth Committee
  - f) The USFA Regional Open Circuit Advisory Group
  - g) The USFA Tournament Committee
- 2) Sanctioned competitions must be ~~organized and conducted by persons appointed by the appropriate USFA governing group, e.g., Divisions, Sections, Tournament Committee, Youth Committee, etc.~~ The competitions must be conducted in accordance with current USFA rules of competition as described in the *USFA Rules Book* and the *Operations Manual*. These competitions must be open to current USFA competitive members who meet the stated restrictions of the competitions, such as age category or the type of competition, e.g., Class “C” or Division II or similar restrictions, or as an Open with only minimum age restriction.
- 3) Sanctioned tournaments or competitions are those published by an acceptable USFA official (~~Division, Section, Regional Youth Circuit or National USFA~~) means of communication ~~in print, electronic media via email and/or official web site~~. Any deviation from published information about the sanctioned competitions – either in manner of operation or splitting or combining to increase the number of classifications to be earned can be the basis for withdrawal of the sanction and thus nullify award of classifications. The following are considered to be acceptable means of communication:
  - a. Communication in print must be sent at least to all members of the Division of the hosting organization (in the case that a club or the Division is the host) or to all members of the Section (in the case that a Section is the host).
  - b. Communications via website must be posted on a generally accepted forum for competitions defined to at least include the official website of the Division or Section of the hosting organization (except as outlined below). Other web locations widely accepted by the fencing community within the Division of the hosting organization are also acceptable. Disputes about what is considered to be “widely accepted” will follow the dispute procedure outlined below in Section 7 of this chapter.
  - c. Communication of Regional Youth Circuit, Super Youth Circuit, Regional Open Circuit or National tournaments will be published in the annual Athlete Handbook and/or on the USFA web site, [www.usfencing.org](http://www.usfencing.org).
  - d. Communications must include the information outlined below in Section 3A of this chapter.

- e. Communications must be postmarked/posted at least 30 days prior to the close of registration of the first event listed for the tournament.

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**B. Responsibilities**

Member Clubs

Member Clubs may conduct sanctioned tournaments or competitions at a location which must have proper insurance coverage for the event. The club must ensure that such competitions are conducted in accordance with the current USFA Rules of Competition and operating procedures.

The Member Club must hold Club Membership under Chapter 2, Section 2B of this Manual.

The Member Club must NOT have been restricted from holding sanctioned competitions by the US Fencing Board of Directors or by a body delegated the responsibility to administer these restrictions by the Board of Directors.

Division

~~Division competitions are the responsibility of the Division officers and its Executive Committee. Only those competitions published in the official Division schedule, whether by newsletter mailed to Division members or posted on the Division website, and which are conducted under the authority of the Division, are deemed to be sanctioned by the Division and may be considered for a rating whereby fencers may earn a classification, all other conditions specified in this Manual being satisfied.~~

Divisions are responsible for scheduling and conducting the Division qualifying tournaments at which fencers can qualify for specific individual competitions for the Junior Olympic Fencing Championships and for individual and team competitions at the Summer National Championships. The qualifying paths are described in Chapter 8.

~~The official published schedule is one that is printed and mailed to the members of the Division and/or posted on the official web site of the Division or its Section. At the beginning of each fencing season the Division should mail to its members of the current and prior season a postcard with its web site address and date when the schedule of competitions will be posted on its web site. In this way the Division keeps its members informed of the status of the schedule without extra mailings and in a way that all the competitors can access schedule details. It is recommended that the Division mail a printed version of the schedule to the clubs in its area with a note specifying that its web site will post changes to and details of the scheduled competitions. Members who can receive email messages should notify the Division of their current email address.~~

Divisions may, under their auspices, sanction competitions within their territorial boundaries that are organized by current USFA member clubs, individuals or other organizations who must have proper insurance coverage for the event, and for which the Division ensures that such competitions are conducted in accordance with the current USFA *Rules of Competition* and operating procedures. ~~These competitions must be included in the official schedule of Division competitions to be considered “sanctioned” competitions.~~

~~It is a common practice that Divisions will list other competitions that are not “sanctioned” by the Division but rather are to inform its members of other competitive opportunities. The Division and/or Section should indicate which competitions or tournaments are not held under their authority, and therefore are not sanctioned.~~

(Renumber below as appropriate)...

### C. *Scheduling of Competitions*

#### Member Clubs, Division and Section

The USFA fencing season officially begins on August 1 and ends July 31. Member Clubs, Divisions and Sections should adhere to the guidelines specified here.

~~The Division and Section~~ Schedules must include the information described in the following paragraphs.

- 1) ...
  
- 5) Any special regulations or conditions governing the competitions and/or the venue must be specified.
  - a. At the beginning of each season (and not later than October 1) each Section and Division must publish dates of team and individual competitions, including competitions from which fencers can qualify to enter competitions at the Junior Olympic Fencing Championships and/or competitions at the Summer National Championships. The official published schedule is one that is mailed to the members and/or posted on the official web site of the Division/Section.
  - b. In determining dates of competitions and/or tournaments, every effort should be made to avoid scheduling qualifying competitions on the same weekend as the national tournaments, i.e., the North American Circuit (NAC) tournaments.
  - c. Similarly, divisions should strive to avoid, to the extent possible, scheduling Youth14 qualifying competitions to the Summer Nationals on the same weekend as a Super Regional Youth Circuit tournament.
  - d. Division and Sections must give at least four weeks' notice of qualifying competitions to National Championships: Junior Olympics and Summer Nationals.

Each type of competition or tournament must be explicitly described in the schedule published by an authorized agent of the USFA: i.e., Member Club, Division, Section, Regional Youth Coordinator or the USFA. Some examples of competitions that might be held are given below. Competitions at a tournament are gender specific unless the schedule states that the competition will be mixed. The description given in the published schedule of any tournament must specify gender and the weapon which will be fenced.

All tournaments at which fencers can earn qualification to any USFA National Championship competition must be gender specific, i.e., mixed competitions are NOT permitted in any

qualifying competition<sup>1</sup>. In all other cases, if a sanctioning entity ~~Division~~ has determined that a mixed competition will be held if less than a certain number of fencers enter a competition, then that must be so stated: what that minimum number is, below which the competition will combine both the men and women's events in that weapon. Classifications can be earned in a mixed competition – see paragraph D below.

The schedule must indicate the possibility that a single gender competition could become a mixed competition if numbers so dictate or if participants express a desire for it to become mixed. Under no circumstances can a qualifying competition be a mixed competition<sup>1</sup>.

**D. Types of Tournaments**

**Open**

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**Closed**

A closed competition is a USFA competition in which eligibility is limited on the basis of sectional or division membership. Only Divisions or Sections may host tournaments that are limited on this basis and then they may only be restricted to members of the hosting Division or Section as appropriate. In a closed competition athletes must meet the minimum age requirement of 13 years old as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the season or be on the National Junior Point Standings.

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Removal of Sanctioning Status for a Tournament/Competition and Loss of Ability to Sanction Future Events

Should a sanctioned tournament or competition be held that violates the procedures outlined in this Manual the tournament's sanctioned status may be removed after being held using the procedures outlined in this Section.

**Standing to Dispute a Tournament/Competition's Sanctioned Status**

The sanctioned status of a tournament or competition held under the authority of the President of the USFA and the Board of Directors which has delegated the responsibility to the Tournament Committee and the Executive Director may only be disputed by a member of the US Fencing Board of Directors.

The sanctioned status of a tournament or competition held under the authority of a Regional Youth Coordinator and/or the USFA Youth Committee may only be disputed by a member of the US Fencing Board of Directors.

The sanctioned status of a tournament or competition held under the authority of the USFA Regional Open Advisory Group may only be disputed by a member of the US Fencing Board of Directors.

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<sup>1</sup> A specific exemption has been provided for the Regional Youth competitions in that for 6 or fewer entries in a competition, the competition can become a mixed competition for that age category.

The sanctioned status of a Qualifying Competition held under the authority of a Division or Section may only be disputed by (1) a member of the US Fencing Board of Directors or (2) a member of the Division (in the case of a Division Qualifying Competition) or Section (in the case of a Section Qualifying Competition) Executive committee from the Division or Section actually holding the event.

The sanctioned status of any other tournament or competition may be disputed by any of the following:

- 1) A member of the US Fencing Board of Directors;
- 2) A member of the Division Executive Committee from the Division in which the competition or tournament was held;
- 3) Any member of the USFA from the Section in which the competition or tournament was held.

### **Adjudicating Body**

Disputes brought by a member of the USFA from the Section in which the competition or tournament was held will be heard by the relevant Division Executive Committee.

Disputes brought by members of the US Fencing Board of Directors, as members of a Section Executive Committee or as members of a Division Executive Committee will be heard by the US Fencing Board of Directors or by a body delegated by the Board to hear disputes.

Individuals who are members of the Division Executive Committee or the US Fencing Board of Directors may choose to act only as members of the relevant section in the cases where they have the choice to act in either capacity.

### **Timing and Method of Disputes**

All disputes must be submitted in writing no more than 30 days following the end of the relevant event. The postmark or shipping date will determine if the time period was met.

### **Dispute Procedure**

Interested parties adjudicating a dispute must recuse themselves from the discussion and any vote held. Interested parties are defined as any of the following:

- 1) A member of any entity which collected entry fees from the event in dispute.
- 2) A member of any entity (generally a member club) of which the person making the dispute is also a member (not including the USFA as a whole or any of its Divisions or Sections).

1. Disputes involving tournaments or competitions from Member Clubs must be sent to the appropriate Division's Secretary or President at the address delineated on the most recent Division mailing or on the Division's website accompanied by a check or money order for \$25. If the dispute is upheld the monies will be reimbursed. If the dispute is not upheld the funds will be forfeit.

Upon receipt of the dispute, a copy shall be provided to the Member Club's representative by the Division's Secretary or President no later than 10 days after the postmark or shipping date of the dispute. This written notification will be sent to the address of record of the Member Club. The Division's representative may redact information from the written dispute if it is deemed appropriate to do so. Any response from the Member Club must be postmarked or shipped no later than 10 days after the postmark or shipping date on their written notification.

Divisions are responsible for convening a meeting of their executive committee within 30 days of the postmark or shipping date of the submitted dispute. The written submissions of the disputing party and any response from the Member Club should, along with any other information the Division Executive Committee deems relevant, be taken into account. The Division's executive committee may make any of the following rulings:

1. The dispute is not upheld. The tournament retains its sanctioned status. The dispute deposit is forfeit. Both the member club and the disputant must be sent the result in writing. This result must be postmarked or shipped no later than 10 days after the meeting.
2. The dispute is upheld. The dispute deposit must be refunded. If the dispute is upheld the following may be the result:
  - i. The problem was sufficiently minor to allow the results of the tournament to stand as a sanctioned event. A written warning must be issued to the Member Club's representative with the problems identified. This is a ONE TIME EXCEPTION. Any dispute of a similar nature submitted a second time may not be considered minor and must result in one of the following actions. Both the member club and the disputant must be sent the result in writing. This result must be postmarked or shipped no later than 10 days after the meeting.
  - ii. The problem was significant and invalidates the tournament's sanctioned status. Any ratings earned will be cancelled. No further action on the part of the Division need be taken. Both the member club and the disputant must be sent the result in writing. This result must be postmarked or shipped no later than 10 days after the meeting.
  - iii. The problem was extremely significant. The tournament's sanctioned status is invalidated. Any ratings earned will be cancelled. In addition, the Division recommends that further action be taken and that the Member Club's ability to conduct tournaments should be suspended for a period of time. In this case the Division must send both the dispute and any response from the Member Club to the US Fencing National Office along with the findings of the Division executive committee with a recommendation for further sanction and the reason for this recommendation. Both the member club and the disputant must be sent the result in writing along with the recommendation for further action. This result must be postmarked or shipped no later than 10 days after the meeting.
3. Either the Member Club or the Disputant may appeal the decision of the Division Executive Committee by following the procedure set forth below.

2. Disputes involving any other sanctioned tournament or competition or appeals of the decisions of Division Executive Committees must be sent to the US Fencing national office by mail at the US Fencing National Office accompanied by a check or money order for \$100. If the dispute is upheld the monies will be reimbursed. If the dispute is not upheld the funds will be forfeit.

Upon receipt of the dispute or appeal, copies shall be provided to all relevant parties including the Member Club's representative, the disputant, and the Division's/Section's Secretary or President as appropriate no later than 10 days after the postmark or shipping date of the dispute. This written notification will be sent to the address of record of the Member Club, disputant and/or Division/Section. The US Fencing National Office may redact information from the written dispute if it is deemed appropriate to do so. Any response from the Member Club, disputant and/or Division/Section must be postmarked or shipped no later than 10 days after the postmark or shipping date on their written notification.

US Fencing is responsible for convening a meeting of the body appointed (hereby known as the Tournament Dispute Group or TDG) by the US Fencing Board of Directors within 45 days of the postmark or shipping date of the submitted dispute/appeal. Any information deemed relevant may be taken into account. The TDG may make any of the following rulings:

- a. The dispute is not upheld. Either (a) the tournament retains its sanctioned status, if this is the body of first hearing, (b) no further sanction is deemed appropriate, in the case of a referral for additional sanction by a Division Executive Committee, or (c) the appeal is denied. The dispute deposit (if any) is forfeit. The member club, disputant, and/or Division/Section as appropriate must be sent the result in writing. This result must be postmarked or shipped no later than 10 days after the meeting.
- b. The dispute/appeal is upheld. The dispute deposit (if any) must be refunded. In the case where the TDG is the body of first hearing disputes upheld result in the following:
  - i. The problem was sufficiently minor to allow the results of the competition or tournament to stand including any ratings or points earned and any qualification to further events. The TDG may require the sanctioning authority to comply with specific procedures the next time a competition or tournament is held. Failure to adhere to these requirements at a subsequent competition or tournament will automatically result in the loss of sanctioning and will move to item ii of this section of the Operations Manual.
  - ii. The problem was significant and should invalidate the tournament's sanctioned status. The findings of the TDG must be referred to the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee for a determination of next steps and what will happen to any points/ratings/qualifications earned.
  - iii. The decision of the TDG may be appealed to the full Board of Directors by either the disputant or the respondent. In this case, there is a \$250 deposit and the procedures will be as outlined below in section D2c below.

In the case where the TDG rules that a decision of a Division Executive Committee must be overturned any of the repercussions listed above in this section of the

Operations Manual D1 may be applied. In addition, the TDG may refer the case to the Board of Directors as outlined in section D2c below.

- c. The Board of Directors has responsibility for the following:
- i. To determine next steps in the case of a significant problem where the TDG was the body of first hearing. In this case the TDG should provide a recommendation as to how to solve the problem and must vote on any dispute that was received by the TDG more than 30 days prior to the meeting of the Board.
  - ii. To act as a final appellant body in the case where a dispute by the TDG is appealed. Any remedy listed above or below. The Board may overturn any decision made by the TDG or apply additional remedy it deems appropriate.
  - iii. In the case where the TDG recommends that a Member Club be denied the ability to sanction tournaments for a period of time the Board may determine whether or not to remove this privilege and for what period of time, may issue a warning that repeat offenses will be so decided or may decline to penalize the member club further.

## **Chapter 4: Tournament Management**

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*Jury of Appeal*

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### **Composition**

#### **1. Member Club or Division**

The Jury of Appeal at a *member club* or divisional competition shall be composed of all current members of the Board of Directors...

## **Section 5: Crisis Management Group (formerly "Act of God" Committee)**

### **B. Sections, ~~and~~ Divisions, and Member Club**

Sectional, ~~and~~ Divisional, and *member club* competitions and/or tournaments may be cancelled, delayed, rescheduled or reformatted by the decision of a group composed of the BC chair, the organizing committee and all members of the Sectional or Divisional Executive Committee who are present at the competition...

## **Chapter 6: Classification System**

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*Types of Competitions for Ratings*

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### **Restricted**

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MIXED: A Division or club may schedule competitions open to both men and women...

The ~~Division's~~ *Schedules* shall specify the conditions under which competitions will change from gender specific to mixed competition.

### *Administration of Classification*

1. ... To avoid questions with respect to individual fencers, each ~~Division, through its Executive Committee or other designated officer or committee,~~ *Sanctioning body* should certify all classification changes (both major and minor) to the National Office...

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6. Classifications can be earned only in regularly scheduled competitions run by the USFA, its Sections, its Divisions, *its member clubs*, or through official regional youth tournaments *or regional open circuits*. Classifications can only be awarded if adequate notice of the competition has been given to the members of the organizing body ~~via such means as a published schedule on the Division's web site, newsletter, or notices sent to all USFA clubs within the Division or Section as outlined in Chapter 3, Section 1, C, 3.~~ Classifications can be earned in competitions sanctioned by a body of the USFA but not run by that body (e.g., State Games) only after the sanctioning body has determined that the competition has been run in such a manner as to justify the awarding of classifications.

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### **Notes to Table 2: USFA Classification Reference Chart**

Changes in classifications are allowed at USFA sanctioned individual competition restricted to Veterans and to Junior fencers: *Member Club*, Division, Section and Regional Youth and Cadet competitions must meet or exceed criteria for C1 to award changes in classification. (BOD, July '02, July 03).

## **Chapter 7: Competition Procedures**

### *Seeding*

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#### Division and Regional Competitions

... Since those rankings reflect performance of the fencers among themselves, those may be more meaningful in seeding Division *or member club* competitions if the participants in the competition are just members of the Division...

In *Member Club*, Division and Sectional competitions, seeding can use the national rolling point standings within each classification or it can use just the classification, letter and year, for seeding.

### *Formats*

#### General

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If the *Member Club or Division* sees a need for additional direct elimination bouts then it can

add repêchage to its format in the direct elimination round, whether at complete tableau of 32 or of 16...

Whatever format the *Member Club* Division or Region decides to use, it must be announced and posted before the start of the competition.