

Minutes

Special Meeting of the USA Fencing Board of Directors

June 12, 2013 via Teleconference

3. Motion (Mr. Blake, on behalf of the Tournament Formats Task Force): To accept the recommendations of the Tournament Formats Task Force and incorporate them into the Operations Manual as described in the task force report.

Second:Mr. Baker

The motion was amended to reflect the previously-passed motions regarding youth event formats.

Motion, as amended, passed.

Appendix C

Tournament Formats Task Force Report

The Tournament Formats Task Force was created to clarify and standardize the list of sanctioned tournament formats for all USFA events. The need for this arose from the existing ambiguity in the Operations Manual, as well as divisions running qualifier events using questionable formats. The task force reviewed existing and proposed formats, and makes the following recommendations for integration into the Operations Manual (replacing sections 7.5.1 and 7.5.2), effective August 1, 2013.

Tournament formats approved for awarding classifications

1. Pool(s) to Pool(s) to Pool(s)
2. Pool (s) to standard DE
3. Pool(s) to DE with Repechage
4. Pool(s) to DE with all places fenced
5. Round Robin (one large pool)
6. NCAA Championship Format - Round Robin with super DE (Top 4/8)
7. “Sharks and Minnows” – See Appendix A
8. Super Pools/Canadian Elite (Pools to DE to Pool(s) to DE)

Tournament formats with provisional approval

1. Pool(s) to DE with losers’ bracket to earn third (Wrestle backs).
Note: This format was approved in the September Board of Directors meeting with rationale that would have put it in the provisional category if it existed at that time. We recommend it be listed as Provisional and go through further evaluation before being listed as a standard format.

Tournaments formats specifically excluded from awarding classifications

1. One touch tournaments
2. Tournaments that go straight to DE
3. Tournaments that exempt a given number of fencers at the start.

Rules for all US Fencing tournaments that award classifications

1. All pool bouts must be 5 touches and 3 minutes (Rule o.17).
2. All direct elimination bouts must be 15 touches and three 3-minute periods, or 10 touches and two 3-minute periods for Veterans, or best two-of-three 5-touch bouts for Youth 10 and Youth 12, with one-minute rests between periods. In sabre direct elimination bouts, except Veterans and Youth 10 and 12, the one-minute rest occurs when one fencer’s score reaches 8 or 3 minutes have expired in the first period, whichever occurs first. For Veteran events, the one-minute rest occurs when one fencer’s score reaches 5 touches (Rule o.23-24).

3. There must be at least 50% promotion of fencers between rounds, except when using NCAA Championship format.

Tournament formats for all US Fencing National Qualifiers

Divisional qualifiers, Regional Open Circuit (ROC) and Super Youth Circuit (SYC) are included in this category. Regional Youth Cups (RYC) are not included in this category.

1. One round of pool(s) to Straight DE.
2. Two rounds of pools to Straight DE.

Rules for all US Fencing tournaments that are National Qualifiers

1. All pool bouts must be to a maximum of 5 touches and 3 minutes.
2. All direct elimination bouts must be 15 touches and three 3-minute periods, or 10 touches and two 3-minute periods for Veterans, or best two-of-three 5-touch bouts for Youth 10 and Youth 12, with one-minute rests between periods. In sabre direct elimination bouts, except Veterans and Youth 10 and 12, the one-minute rest occurs when one fencer's score reaches 8 or 3 minutes have expired in the first period, whichever occurs first. For Veteran events, the one-minute rest occurs when one fencer's score reaches 5 touches (Rule o.23-24).
3. There must be at least 50% promotion of fencers between rounds.
4. DEs with Repechage and DEs fenced to all places are not allowed for National Qualifiers.
5. There will not be a fence-off for third place unless it is necessary to determine a single qualifying slot.
6. If there is an absolute tie for the final qualifying slot, there must be a fence-off (15-touch bout, or DE format mandated by age-level of event) to determine the final qualifying slot.

Notification

1. Must be published at least 3 weeks prior to the event
2. Format must be announced when published
3. Format must be announced at the start of the tournament
4. Must meet Divisional rules for Sanctioning.
5. Online posting on AskFRED.net and/or the Division website are acceptable methods of notification.

Consequences for failure to follow the above rules

1. Division can remove sanction and void any classifications potentially earned.
2. ROC and SYC organizers who fail to follow the rules should be reviewed by the ROC Committee/Youth Development Committee and possibly be eliminated from consideration for holding an event the following year.
3. Divisions who chronically fail to follow the rules for qualifiers should be reviewed by the Tournament

Committee who may require an observer be assigned for future such events, all expenses to be covered by the Division.

Approval of tournament formants not listed above

We feel a subcommittee of the TC should be empaneled to hear proposed new tournament formats in two steps:

1. Provisional approval to judge effectiveness.
2. As appropriate, addition to above approved tournament list.

Appendix: Sharks and Minnows Tournament Format

This tournament format is two rounds of pools, followed by a direct elimination tableau. The first round of pools is seeded per normal USFA tournament standards.

Example (Fencers A-Q, seeded in order)

Pool 1: A, F, G, L, M, R

Pool 2: B, E, H, K, N, Q

Pool 3: C, D, I, J, O, P

The second round of pools contains two types, the “shark” and “minnow” pools. The shark pool is the top-seeded fencers to come out of the first round.

Example (Fencers A-Q, seeded in order)

“Sharks”

Pool 1: A, B, C, D, E, F

“Minnows”

Pool 2: G, J, K, N, O, R

Pool 3: H, I, L, M, P, Q

The DE tableau may or may not have a cut. The participants of the “shark” pool are guaranteed the top seeds, which will be based on their second round pool performance. The remaining spots are based on the results of the minnow pools. The resulting DE tableau is fenced as normal until a single winner remains.

Example (Top 16 promoted):

A (1) v. P (16)

B (2) v. N (15)

C (3) v. M (14)

...

G (7) v. J (10)

H (8) v. I (9)

Q, R not promoted

Rationale:

In many areas, local events do not provide a deep field. This is a disincentive for top competitors to fence, because they do not get many bouts at an appropriate level. In addition, lower-level competitors will not get many repetitions, potentially going 0-6 and losing their first DE to a highly-ranked opponent.

The sharks and minnows format attempts to solve this by:

- Providing a higher number of minimum bouts, giving developmental athletes more repetitions.
- Creating an opportunity for higher-level athletes to get competitive bouts against each other.
- Creating a fair opportunity for any fencer to win the event. A fencer who is cut from the tableau has had two opportunities to make it (the second with the top fencers removed from their pool), and an athlete can come from the minnow pool to win the event.