

The E-Newsletter of the Salle Green

Thrust & Cut

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Why fence at Salle Green?

- Salle Green is a United States Fencing Coaches Association Guild Academy
- Walter Green is a Maitre d'Armes of the Academie d'Armes Internationale
- Classes are offered in classical and modern fencing
- Schedules are flexible
- IT'S FUN!

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Improving Your Fencing—Fencing the Ladder

As we have said before in this newsletter, one of the keys to getting to be a better fencer is ... to fence. Research by sports scientists, the observations of experienced fencing masters, and the opinions of elite competitive fencers all point to there being a clear progression of the value of fencing experiences:

... least valuable – just fencing for fun. If you do not care who wins, then any outcome is a good outcome. And if you don't count touches, you clearly don't care who wins. Fencing for fun is a good thing if your goal is to sweat a bunch, lose some weight, and be social. It is a complete waste of your time, and your opponent's time, if you are trying to develop your ability to win.

... more valuable – fencing practice bouts for score. When you record the scores you are starting to generate data that helps you and your coach evaluate how you are doing against other fencers, and whether or not you are improving. We publish reports with this data monthly and post them in the Salle.

... even more valuable – fencing in competition like conditions. We have a

strong competition development program, with quarterly ladder competition, special Salle tournaments, American Fencing League dry fencing meets, and ending with United States Fencing Association competitions. Each level helps you develop your ability to fence for results.

Our quarterly ladder is an important part of this process. To review:



(1) any fencer can sign up for and fence in the ladder in any one of five weapons: foil, classical foil, epee, 1 touch epee, and sabre.

(2) the ladder runs on a fencing quarter – this coming quarter runs August through October.

(3) fencers are initially seeded (ranked) on the ladder in inverse order from

their results on the last ladder. Number 1 on the previous ladder is seeded last on the new ladder.

(4) you can challenge opponents who are up to 2 places above you on the ladder (up to 3 if an intermediate opponent is not available) – if you win, you take the opponent's place, and he or she is demoted one rank.

(5) bouts may be fenced at any time.

(6) starting this quarter the ladder is updated weekly – fencers who do not fence for 3 update periods are automatically demoted one rank each successive week of inactivity.

Last quarter, one weapon squad fenced 6 bouts in 3 months on its ladder – averaging 2 bouts in the quarter for each of the 6 fencers. A reasonable goal is 1 bout a week per fencer (52 bouts a year), and a performance development goal is 2 bouts a week per fencer (104 bouts a year).

So, get to be a better fencer ... and fence the ladder to help you in that development effort.

Report from the 2007 National Fencing Coaches Conference

Coaches from across the United States gathered at Redlands Fencing in Oklahoma City for the 2007 National Fencing Coaches Conference on 10-12 August 2007. This year's conference featured an excellent selection of topics ranging from stage combat to games for training, and provided a unique opportunity to exchange information with peers.

Maitre Green attended an Examiners Seminar, watched a Moniteur examination, and participated in a mock Master's examination as part of the examining panel. The outcome is that we have a much better understanding of the requirements and standard. Key items that candidates for certification should be aware of include the general change from blade cueing of actions to footwork and distance cueing, increased emphasis on student initiation in lessons, the rigid requirement that actions be realistic in modern fencing, and the need to be prepared for the examination with a planned lesson and your own student.

The Certification and Accreditation Board of the United States Fencing Coaches Association has achieved the almost impossible in bringing the examination process to a high standard and in making a tremendous amount of information available to candi-

dates to help them prepare. In 2008 the CAB will start requiring examiner seminar attendance to ensure that those conducting examinations are themselves fully aware of modern trends in both teaching and fencing.

The conference provided an excellent snapshot of current fencing and refereeing. Among the useful perspectives from discussions of elite fencing:

... two years ago it had become apparent that blade-work was largely irrelevant in sabre - that footwork and exploitation of tempo were the dominant components of tactics. This is now true as well in foil and to some extent in epee. The game is so fast that an action properly initiated is very difficult to stop.

... in this context the fencer who commits to a course of action last has a tremendous tactical advantage. Tactics consist of getting the opponent to commit first and then taking advantage of him or her.

... right of way is even more subtle than it was before: (1) all else being equal, the fencer whose blade is coming forward (and down in sabre) has the right of way, (2) if both blades are moving it is the fencer whose arm is coming forward toward the target, and (3) if blade and arm are equal it is the one whose leg is moving first.

... feints with the blade are almost useless except as preparation for second intention.

... the advance lunge is a very powerful tool - it is done at high speed with a very small advance and a medium length lunge. The emphasis is on completing the action as fast as possible. An advance lunge into the first step of a two advance lunge has right of way - similarly an advance lunge met with a simple lunge wins.

... sabre cuts are done at maximum distance with only the very tip of the weapon - hits any deeper than the lower arm run the risk of being timed out by counterattacks.

... percentages are what is important, not wins and losses. Fencers who achieve higher percentages of successful hits will win. This highlights the importance of the data our monthly statistics reports provide. There is a lot of work being done on analyzing individual fencer and individual opponent performance.

... teams are critical to the medal count in international competition. Increased emphasis and research is being devoted to team performance.

... effective strip coaching between points and in the one minute intervals in direct eliminations is critical. In discussion with the psychologist doing research in this area for

*"Shrimp may attack
dragons in shallow
water.."*
*Traditional Chinese
Proverb*

May—July Walpurgis Cup Goes to Classical Foil

The Salle's Classical Foil fencers are the repeat winners of the Walpurgis Cup for the ladder quarter May through July. Classical Foil also won the first time the cup was offered in February-April 2007. Standings were as follows:

1st Classical Foil - 23 bouts fenced with no penalty points - 23 points
2nd 1 Touch Epee - 16 bouts fenced with no penalty points - 16 points
3rd Epee - 15 bouts fenced with no penalty points - 15 points

4th Sabre - 9 bouts minus 2 penalty points for fencers who did not fence - 7 points
5th Foil - 6 bouts with no penalty points - 6 points.



The Walpurgis Cup is awarded to the weapon squad with the most bouts fenced during the quarterly ladder. It is named for Walpurgis, the first fencing student whose name we know and the first female fencing student recorded in history. Walpurgis appears in the sword and buckler instructional manual known as Tower Manuscript I.33, written in approximately 1300.

“When you are the anvil, be patient, when you are the hammer, strike.”
Arabian Proverb

May—July Quarterly Ladder Results

MAY-JULY QUARTERLY LADDER RESULTS

The May-July 2007 ladder has been completed - full results are posted on the Salle website. Medal winners in each weapon are:

CLASSICAL FOIL

1st John Shields - Gold Medal (7 victories, 4 defeats) 2nd Linda Barrett - Silver Medal (6 victories, 2 defeats) 3rd Brian Ainley - Bronze Medal (7 victories, 2 defeats)

FOIL

1st David Allan - Gold Medal (1 victory) 2nd Joseph Iaquinto - Silver Medal (3 victories) 3rd Lindsey Carr - Bronze Medal (3 defeats)

EPEE

1st Pat Norman - Gold Medal (5 victories, 3 defeats) 2nd James Greer - Silver Medal (1 victory, 3 defeats) 3rd Brett Colbert - Bronze Medal (4 victories, 2 defeats)

1 TOUCH EPEE

1st Brett Colbert - Gold Medal (6 victories) 2nd James Greer - Silver Medal (2 victories, 3 defeats) 3rd Pat Norman - Bronze Medal (2 victories, 6 defeats)

SABRE

1st Joseph Iaquinto - Gold Medal (3 victories, 1 defeat) 2nd Sam Archer - Silver Medal (2 victories, 2 defeats) 3rd Raymond Watson - Bronze Medal (1 victory, 1 defeat)

2007 Fencing Coaches Conference con't.

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the United States Fencing Association, our model of a standard interval routine for each fencer seems ideally designed to insert quick tactical guidance, either verbal or by hand signal.

The character of blade actions at the international level is evolving. Parries are now very quick and executed fairly far forward as active parries. Both parries and beats are increasingly executed with the foible and are small, subtle actions. An action by a fencer which is met by the opponent's blade before it hits is parried, pure and simple.

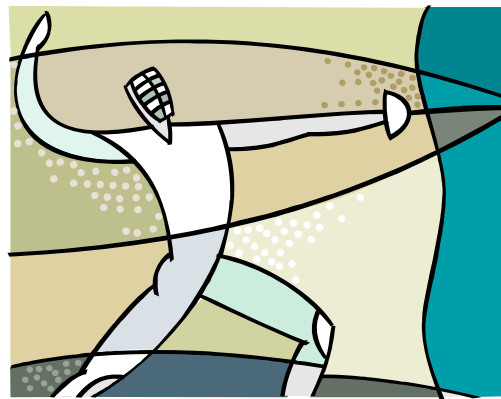
The adjustment for timing in both foil and sabre have changed these games, much as did the

introduction of electrical scoring. Proper timing of actions in attack, defense, and counter offense have the potential to lock out an opponent's action, eliminating the impact of strange refereeing.

And we had an excellent conversation with members of the US wheelchair fencing team, both about coaching fencing for wheelchair athletes and about the challenges we have faced in our efforts to develop a wheelchair program. The performance of these athletes is amazing, and in their field of play, they are formidable opponents for any able bodied fencer.

Next year the National Fencing Coaches Conference will be in New Jersey, possibly in conjunction with a week long workshop designed to help coaches complete Moniteur,

Prevost, and Maitre requirements. We hope that we can take all of our coaches, so we will make sure you know the scheduled dates as soon as they are confirmed.



PAFA? What is a PAFA?

In 2000 Maitre d'Armes Vinnie Bradford, four times US women's epee champion, founded the Pan American Fencing Academy in San Antonio, Texas, to provide a structured training program to develop fencing masters. Over the next 6 years PAFA conducted a first rate series of weekend seminars, and became the third most frequently used source of training for professional fencing coaches in the United States. This year, because of changing work commitments, Maitre Bradford was forced to discontinue this program.

Because of the significance of PAFA to American fencing coaching, we made arrangements with Vinnie to keep PAFA alive in a format that will reach fencing coaches anywhere to provide the knowledge they need for qualification as Assistant Moniteurs, Moniteurs, Prevosts, and Maitre d'Armes. Our goal is to develop a full range of Internet based courses that will teach the knowledge components tested in United States Fencing Coaches Association examinations. The Assistant Moniteur course is almost complete. Plans call for one course a year to be added to the offerings so that in 2010 PAFA will once again be in a position to take fencers all the way to fencing master in a structured training program.

What does this mean to Salle members? If you are interested in becoming a coach for modern competitive fencing (we already have the online programs of the Classical Academy of Arms for classical coaching), you will have a single source for a structured program that will give you the knowledge to pass the United States Fencing Coaches Association's written examinations. And that source will be very good - we are working with the Executive Committee of the USFCA to become a recognized training vendor, and with the USFCA's Certification and Accreditation Board to ensure that our training meets the USFCA's knowledge expectations at each level.

Salle Green Internal Teams

One of the lessons of the 2007 National Fencing Coaches Conference is that (1) team competition is a vital part of the medal chase at the international level, and (2) that we do not do enough at every level to develop the skills of fencing as teams. As a Salle we have held team championships during the past two years, but we have not regularly conducted internal team competitions. If we are to do our small part toward developing team fencing, we need to start now to promote team competition in the Salle.

To do this:

... we will be randomly assigning every Salle member to one of four teams - GREEN, BLACK, SILVER, and GOLD.

... each team will have a Captain chosen by its members.



... each team will field a squad of four fencers for intramural competition - foil, classical foil, epee, and sabre.

... we will run a scheduled team versus team dual meet at least once a month - Team captains will be responsible for arranging these. There will be an annual league trophy cup to record the winning team in league play.

... all matches will be fenced relay system for 20 touches with 3 minute bouts. The order to be fenced in each case will be determined by draw.

Salle Green Qualifiers for the AFL National Championships

The Central Virginia Division qualified the following Salle members for entry to the American Fencing League National Championships in Salem, Oregon, the last weekend of this month:

Foil: Joseph Iaquinto (Junior) and Walter Green (Novice)

Epee: Joseph Iaquinto (Junior), Terri Noll (Novice), Jonathan Iaquinto (Junior), and Brett Colbert (Junior)

Sabre: Walter Green (Junior) and Joseph Iaquinto (Novice)

3 Weapon Team: Salle Green A

The Divisional Qualifiers are held solely for the purpose of qualifying and determining the placing of fencers for entry to the AFL National Championships. They do not result in award of AFL classifications or the award of Central Virginia points toward the Division's annual points championship.

Salle Green versus Amelia Steel

A team match fenced in dry foil with the Amelia Steel Fencing Club from Amelia County, coached by Mark Logan, was held at Salle Green at 2:00 pm on 21 July 2007. Salle Green's Junior Foil team won the first match against Amelia's A Squad 44 to 38, and tied the second match against their B Squad 43-43. Both matches were hard fought with the lead changing hands 5 times in the first match and 6 times in the second. Look for a second match this Fall.

Salle Green Junior Foil (44) versus Amelia Steel A (38)

Salle Green				Amelia Steel A			
Bout	Fencer	Touches	Score	Score	Touches	Fencer	Bout
1	Callahan, Kelsi	4	4	4	4	Skelton, Jonathan	1
2	Carr, Lindsey	6	10	6	2	Womack, Samantha	2
3	Seal, Aaron	4	14	11	5	Hall, Isaac	3
4	Carr, Lindsey	0	14	18	7	Skelton, Jonathan	4
5	Callahan, Kelsi	9	23	20	2	Hall, Isaac	5
6	Seal, Aaron	7	30	22	2	Womack, Samantha	6
7	Carr, Lindsey	2	32	30	8	Hall, Isaac	7
8	Seal, Aaron	1	33	37	7	Skelton, Jonathan	8
9	Callahan, Kelsi	11	44	38	1	Womack, Samantha	9

Green Junior Foil (43) versus Amelia Steel B (43)

Amelia Steel B				Salle Green			
Bout	Fencer	Touches	Score	Score	Touches	Fencer	Bout
1	Dean, Billy	5	5	0	0	Carr, Lindsey	1
2	Scott, Tiffany	2	7	9	9	Callahan, Kelsi	2
3	King, Micah	6	13	12	3	Seal, Aaron	3
4	Scott, Tiffany	3	16	18	6	Carr, Lindsey	4
5	Dean, Billy	8	24	24	6	Seal, Aaron	5
6	King, Micah	5	29	27	3	Callahan, Kelsi	6
7	Scott, Tiffany	1	30	35	8	Seal, Aaron	7
8	King, Micah	1	31	38	3	Carr, Lindsey	8
9	Dean, Billy	12	43	43	5	Callahan, Kelsi	9

Would you like to contribute your tournament pictures or other items of fencing interest for consideration in the Cut & Thrust Newsletter? If so, send your information to [Walter Green](#).