

## Canadian Fencing Federation Instructional Program

### **Introduction:**

As the CFF moves towards its transition to the Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) model of coaching training and sport delivery, we are putting into place an instructional stream. This stream will develop fencers with; strong technical knowledge, good tactical observation skills and, through this, a capacity for adaptation, and a more complete general knowledge of fencing (which will lead to better fencers, coaches, and officials).

The program is divided into five separate, but related, performance factors; technical, tactical, rules, refereeing, and at the higher levels coaching. Though the actual competence in each of these performance factors is important, it is the delivery of the information that is of greater importance. This document will delineate the actual armband program, an outline of the exam procedure for the levels, the minimum time spent preparing for each level, and a short discussion on age categories. The actual delivery of the program information will be related to the coaches in short workshops directly following the CFF's "Selection Circuit Events".

### **Armband program:**

The full Armband Program is attached to this document below.

### **Exam procedure:**

Before speaking of the exam procedure itself, note must be made of the following. It is required to have the fencers demonstrate these skills in two different contexts;

- 1) within the regular practice of the club,;
- 2) within the context of a "formal" exam.

These two contexts assure the acquisition of the skills under different conditions. The club environment will allow the coach to assess the ease with which the fencer is able to demonstrate the skills in a comfortable, non-"threatening", environment. The exam environment will allow the coach to assess the fencer's ability to perform these skills in a more "pressured" environment (likened, somewhat, to when a coach asks a fencer to perform a certain action on the piste). Education theory has shown these to be quite different aspects of the total acquisition of skills.

For the first two levels (yellow and orange) the club coach is responsible for the exams. Each of the five streams is tested and given a ranking as follows: acquired, being acquire, not acquired (or 3, 2, 1). To be promoted to the next level, a fencer must attain a minimum of two "acquired" marks (3's) and no "not acquired" marks (1's).

For the next two levels (green and bleu), the assessment process must include the club coach and one other coach (preferably from another club, or at minimum one from the same club who is not directly coaching the fencer)<sup>1</sup>. In this case each coach will use the same scale as above and the average of the two rankings will constitute the final assessed mark. The club coach must present the marks for the club environment assessment to the second examining coach.

The final two levels (brown and black), will be assessed at the regional training camps hosted by the CFF. For purposes of this assessment the examining board will consist of three coaches, one of who must be the senior camp coach, in the given weapon. The personal coach can be present at the exam but cannot participate in the examining process. The personal coach must submit the "club environment" assessment to the senior camp coach prior to the board exam. At these levels a more stringent marking scheme is to be used. The fencers will be assessed along a scale between 0 and 10 (for each of the performance factors), and must not receive a mark lower than 5 in any of these to be promoted to the next level.

As the fencers progress through the armband levels, s/he must demonstrate a progression through the stages of skill development. The first table below gives you an outline of the stages, the second table shows you the progression through these stages.

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<sup>1</sup> Two clubs could "share" a training session at which the armband exams for both clubs could be held.

### Stages of skill development

<b>Recommended practice/test conditions</b>	<b>Initiation</b> First contact	<b>Acquisition</b> Movement patterning	<b>Consolidation</b> Correct execution in variable conditions	<b>Refinement</b> Minor improvement	<b>Creative variation</b> Using movements in creative ways
<b>Surrounding environment</b>	Stable and predictable, free of distractions	Stable and predictable, free of distractions	Increased variability and distractions in the environment, but not to the point where movement patterns deteriorate	Competition conditions	Conditions similar to those encountered in the highest level of competition
<b>Decision-making or uncertainty of situations in which the athlete is involved</b>	No decision-making or options to choose from	Simple decision-making, maximum of 2 options	More complex decisions to make, increased frequency of decision-making, and more options (3-4)	Complex decisions, as many options and at the same frequency as in competition	Conditions similar to those encountered in the highest level of competition
<b>Speed of execution</b>	Slow and controlled	At the athlete's own pace	Increased, variable, and close to competitive demands	Similar conditions to competition	Similar to highest level of competition
<b>Importance of being precise and consistent</b>	Not overly important (demonstrate ability)	Moderately important	Precision and consistency are sought	A high degree of precision and consistency are sought	Perfection is sought at all times
<b># of repetitions, or opportunities to execute movements</b>	As needed, depending on athlete's general motor development	High	High	As many as possible	As many as possible
<b>Risk factor and consequences of error</b>	Completely safe conditions, errors of no consequence	Low risk conditions	Less than or similar to what is encountered in regular competition	Similar to a high level of competition	Similar to the highest level of competition
<b>During training the emphasis should be on...</b>	Basic stances and positions; getting the idea of what the movements are about, look like	Global execution and general form of the movement	Maintaining the form of the movement and some performance consistency under varying conditions and under stress	Creating conditions that stress the specific elements that need adjustment	Generating new and unfamiliar situations

### Relationship between skill development and Armband level

Armband / Stage of skill development	Yellow	Orange	Green	Blue	Red	Black
<b>Initiation</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Acquisition</b>		Yellow	Orange	Green	Blue	Red
<b>Consolidation</b>			Yellow	Orange	Green	Blue
<b>Refinement</b>				Yellow	Orange	Green
<b>Creative Variation</b>					Yellow	Orange

If desired, a coach could continue with this pattern of increased skill development till the athlete achieves the creative variation stage. This would be similar to “Dans” in oriental martial arts.

#### **Preparation time per level:**

It is up to the coach to determine the time necessary for the athlete to attain these levels. The coach should assure that the athlete is challenged by the program but not intimidated by it, especially at the earlier levels. Remember that at the early levels we are trying to produce a FUN environment for the athletes, while giving them the basics to encourage continuing participation and eventually to compete.

#### **Age categories:**

Some research was undertaken to determine whether or not this program should be divided into or proscribed for certain age categories<sup>2</sup>. The conclusion is that there is more to be gained by having this program opened and mixed as opposed to closed or divided. The program measures performance factors that transcend age categories.

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<sup>2</sup> This research was undertaken in France as a fencing specific study. There has also been research of this, as used for karate kata competitions, in Japan and the US.

## EPEE ARMBANDS

Armband	Footwork and technical elements	Preparations and proposed tactical action plan	Rules	Refereeing	Coaching
YELLOW	<p><b>Footwork:</b> step forward, step backward, lunge, half-lunge, combinations.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> grip, on guard position, offence and counter-offence to the hand, to the arm, to the body (direct and indirect); Offence by remise and redouble; Counter-offence by 6 and 8 opposition; Beat 4; Engage 6 and 8.</p>	No content at this level	Valid target The dimensions of the piste Method of scoring hit	Corner judging Refereeing with the coach Identifying the actions executed.	Take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson teaching yellow armband actions. Final stretching.
ORANGE	<p><b>Footwork:</b> cross-over forward and backward, fleche, redoublement, combinations</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> prise de fer attacks (taking the blade) : opposition and bind; Derobement; Circular and semi-circular parries (6, 2, 8); Compound attacks to the hand, to the arm, to the body; Beat 8 and 7.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> engage 4 and 6 while stepping forward; Invitation in 4; Slow step.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> identify actions to execute based on the opponent's position. Identify the distance, and choose the action based on the distance identified. Develop the logical behaviour of anticipating the actions. Offensive, defensive and counter-offensive actions executed from the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	Conventions Role of the Referee (succinctly) Role of the floor judges.	Referee 4 bouts using the correct commands, and describing the actions executed.	Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson teaching orange armband actions. Final stretching.

GREEN	<p><b>Footwork:</b> Jumps, half-steps forward, half-steps backward</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Angulated attacks; Counter-attacks with angulation to the advanced target; Opposition parries; Simple attacks on preparation; Actions on the bending of the opponent's arm.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> jumps in place, forward and backward. Beats. Invitations.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Identify the distance, and choose the action based on the distance identified. Develop the logical behaviour of anticipating the actions. Offensive, defensive and counter-offensive actions executed from the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	Rules about the field of play: boundary rules and sanctions.	Referee 4 bouts applying the field of play rules  Keeping a pool sheet	Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching green armband actions. Final stretching. Ability to demonstrate the technical aspects of the yellow and orange armbands to beginner fencers.
BLUE	<p><b>Footwork:</b> combinations of yellow, orange and green armbands footwork.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Ceding parries; Attacks on the opponent's return to on guard position; Attacks with croisé; Attacks with envelopment; Counter-time (with bind and with opposition); Riposte with croisé; Counter-attack.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> body feints, false attacks, feints of attack.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Identify the distance, and choose the action based on the distance identified. Develop the logical behaviour of anticipating the actions. Offensive, defensive and counter-offensive actions executed from the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	Rules regarding the annulment of hits.	Referee a full pool of 5 fencers (with weapon checks)	Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson teaching green armband actions. Final stretching.  Ability to teach the technical aspects of the yellow and orange armbands to beginner fencers.
RED	<p><b>Footwork:</b> combinations of yellow, orange and green armbands footwork. Development of footwork based on the global match plan.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Counter-time (with croisé); Compound counter-attacks; Counter stop-hits; Compound prises de fer.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Optimization of the preparations developed in the preceding armbands.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Development of the global match plan.</p>	Rules regarding the validity or priority of hits.	Referee a full pool of 5 fencers: using all checks and keeping both time and score.	Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching red armband actions. Final stretching.  Ability to teach the technical aspects of the yellow and orange armbands up to the development phase of the corresponding fencers.

BLACK	<p><b>Footwork:</b> combinations of yellow, orange and green armbands footwork. Development of footwork based on the specific match plan.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Beat parry and riposte; Angulated attacks and counter-attacks preceded by a beat.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Refining of the preparations developed in the preceding armbands.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Development of the specific match plan.</p>	The sanctions.	Provincial refereeing exam	Obtain Aide-moniteur accreditation.
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### FOIL ARMBANDS

Armband	Footwork and technical elements	Preparations and proposed tactical action plan	Rules	Refereeing	Coaching
YELLOW	<p><b>Footwork:</b> step forward, step backward, lunge, combinations</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> grip, on guard position, Defence in 4 and 6; Engage 4 and 6; Simple offence (direct and with disengage); Immediate riposte (direct and indirect).</p>	No content at this level	<p>Valid target</p> <p>The dimensions of the piste</p> <p>Method of scoring hit</p>	<p>Corner judging;</p> <p>Refereeing with the coach;</p> <p>Identifying the actions executed.</p>	<p>Take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions.</p> <p>Collective lesson, teaching yellow armband actions.</p> <p>Final stretching.</p>
ORANGE	<p><b>Footwork:</b> jump forward, jump backward, fleche.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Compound attacks; Circular parries; Octave parry; Direct attack on preparation; Counter-ripostes.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> feint straight, engagement, body feint</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	<p>Conventions</p> <p>Role of the Referee (succinctly)</p>	<p>Referee 4 bouts using the correct commands, and describing the actions executed (phrase).</p>	<p>Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions.</p> <p>Collective lesson, teaching orange armband actions.</p> <p>Final stretching.</p>
GREEN	<p><b>Footwork:</b> balestra; fleche; combinations.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Attack on preparation; Prise de fer attacks (opposition, bind); Remise of attack; Beat attack (attack on the blade); Compound attack (with the blade); Counter-attack; Line.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> pressures; beats; changing the position of the point (high, low).</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Identification of strategies against an opponent using the other hand. Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	<p>Rules</p> <p>Explain the fencing phrase.</p>	<p>Referee 4 bouts analysing the action (summary only).</p> <p>Keeping a pool sheet</p>	<p>Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions.</p> <p>Collective lesson, teaching green armband actions.</p> <p>Final stretching.</p> <p>Ability to demonstrate the technical aspects of the yellow and orange armbands to beginner fencers.</p>

BLUE	<p><b>Footwork:</b> Half steps forward and backward; feints of attack (forward and backward); jump backward (in order to control the parry and riposte).</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Attack on the return to on guard; Compound attacks with multiple feints (double); Prise de fer attacks (croisé; envelopment); Counter-attack with opposition.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Absence of blade; Preparations using distance.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	Rules about the field of play: boundary rules and sanctions.	<p>Referee 4 bouts analysing the action (complete analysis);</p> <p>Demonstrate easiness and composure in the analysis.</p>	<p>Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching blue armband actions. Final stretching.</p> <p>Ability to teach the technical aspects of the yellow armband up to the development phase of the corresponding fencers.</p>
RED	<p><b>Footwork:</b> Combinations of footwork from the other armbands. Optimization.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Counter-time; Cut-over attacks; Parries (2 and 1); Ceding parries; Delayed riposte («temps perdu»); Target displacement (in place; closing distance); Close quarters; Reprise of attack.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Preparations using timing and rhythm.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> General plan for the match. Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations. Identification of the fighting logics based on one's strengths.</p>	Limits and extensions to the target area. Rules regarding corps à corps and in-fighting. Judging: only the attacker is hit.	<p>Referee a full pool of 5 fencers: Keeping time</p>	<p>Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching red armband actions. Final stretching.</p> <p>Ability to teach the technical aspects of the yellow and orange armbands up to the development phase of the corresponding fencers.</p>
BLACK	<p><b>Footwork:</b> Combinations of footwork from the other armbands. Refinement.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Sweeping parries («balayages») and ripostes with flick; Interception parries; Refining the other armbands' technical elements.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Preparations using distance. Preparations using timing and rhythm.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Specific match plan. Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above mentioned preparations. Identification of the fighting logics based on one's strengths and the opponent's weaknesses.</p>	The sanctions.	Provincial refereeing exam	Obtain Aide-moniteur accreditation.



### SABRE PROGRAM

Armband	Footwork and technical elements	Preparations and proposed tactical action plan	Rules	Refereeing	Coaching
YELLOW	<p><b>Footwork:</b> step forward, step backward, lunge, backward jump, combinations</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> grip, on guard position, Simple offence, direct and indirect (head, flank, chest, point); First defensive triangle (4, 5, 3); Immediate riposte (direct and indirect); Defence using distance (make the opponent fall short), immediately followed by offence.</p>	No content at this level	Valid target The dimensions of the piste Method of scoring hit.	Corner judging; Refereeing with the coach; Identifying the actions executed.	Take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching yellow armband actions. Final stretching.
ORANGE	<p><b>Footwork:</b> half-step forward; half step backward (linked with steps forward and backward); Slow steps forward, linked with fast steps forward; Differentiate between preparation steps (slower or in control between series) and steps for attack (fast).</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Indirect attacks; Attacks to the hand; Counter-attacks to the hand followed by opposition.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Preparations with the point on guard in 3; In the middle of the piste, slow steps forward, linked with the offensive, defensive or counter-offensive action; Defence with the point threatening the opponent.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Identification of actions to execute based on the opponent's position; Identification of the distance, and choice of the action based on the distance identified; Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	Conventions  Role of the Referee (succinctly)	Referee 4 bouts using the correct commands, and describing the actions executed (phrase).	Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching orange armband actions. Final stretching.

GREEN	<p><b>Footwork:</b> Feints of attack; body feints (backward).</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Attack underneath (direct and indirect) (inside and outside); Compound attacks; Attacks on preparation; Beat attacks (during the step, before the lunge); Counter-attacks to the head and with opposition; Low 3 and 4 parries; Compound parries.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Preparations with the point horizontal; In the middle of the piste, half-step backward, linked with the offensive, defensive or counter-offensive action; Body feint backward.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Identification of actions to execute based on the situation; Acquire the logical behaviour of anticipating the offensive, defensive and counter-offensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	<p>Rules. Explain the fencing phrase.</p>	<p>Referee 4 bouts analysing the action (summary only).  Keeping a pool sheet</p>	<p>Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching green armband actions. Final stretching. Ability to demonstrate the technical aspects of the yellow and orange armbands to beginner fencers.</p>
BLUE	<p><b>Footwork:</b> Step backward; fleche landing both feet at the same time; fleche on the forward leg; redoublement; control steps forward; control steps backward.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Counter-attack with beat; Beat attack (beat during the preparation step); Line; Attacks with pressure; Parry 2; Parry 1.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Preparation with two little steps, followed by a stop; Link with offensive, defensive or counter-offensive actions; Preparations using distance.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations.</p>	<p>Rules about the field of play: boundary rules and sanctions.</p>	<p>Referee 4 bouts analysing the action (complete analysis);  Demonstrate easiness and composure in the analysis.</p>	<p>Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching blue armband actions. Final stretching.  Ability to teach the technical aspects of the yellow armband up to the development phase of the corresponding fencers.</p>

RED	<p><b>Footwork:</b> Combinations of footwork from the other armbands. Optimization. Footwork based on the general match plan.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> False attacks and variations; Remise; Redouble; Counter-time; Counter-attack with flick to the hand.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Preparations using timing and rhythm.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> General plan for the match. Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations. Identification of the fighting logics based on one's strengths.</p>	<p>Limits and extensions of the valid target. Rules regarding corps à corps and in fighting. Judging: only the attacker is hit</p>	<p>Referee a full pool of 5 fencers: Keeping time</p>	<p>Know and take part in warm-up sessions, and basic footwork sessions. Collective lesson, teaching red armband actions. Final stretching.</p> <p>Ability to teach the technical aspects of the yellow and orange armbands up to the development phase of the corresponding fencers.</p>
BLACK	<p><b>Footwork:</b> Combinations of footwork from the other armbands. Refinement. Footwork based on the general match plan.</p> <p><b>Technical elements:</b> Perfecting the elements of the general match plan, and identifying the elements of the specific match plan.</p>	<p><b>Preparations:</b> Preparations using distance. Preparations using timing and rhythm.</p> <p><b>Action plan:</b> Specific match plan. Offensive and defensive actions executed based on the above-mentioned preparations. Identification of the fighting logics based on one's strengths and on the opponent's weaknesses.</p>	<p>The sanctions.</p>	<p>Provincial refereeing exam</p>	<p>Obtain Aide-moniteur accreditation.</p>