

BASIC SABRE SKILLS: 5



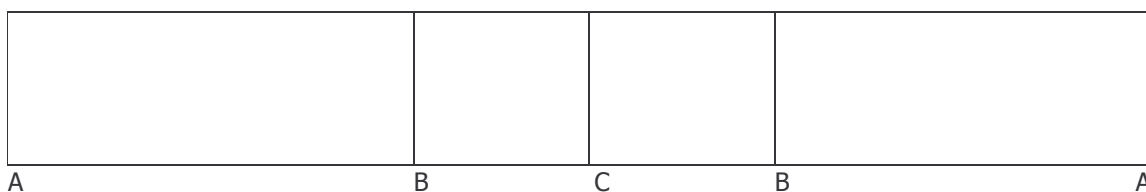
Fencing competitions

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The fencing strip

Competition takes place on a narrow strip (or piste). Opponents face each other and compete to be first to score a predetermined number of hits (touches). This series of actions is called a bout.

14 x 1.5m



Key: A = end of strip, B = en guard line, C = centre line

Officials

The bout is refereed by a president who starts and stops the action, awards points and penalties and ensures safety rules are observed. If the scoring is electric the president check the scoring system. If the scoring is not electric, the president will also supervise the judges at each corner of the strip. The president has final authority over each bout and cannot be challenged except on an interpretation of the rules. The president will usually state what has happened to explain why a hit is awarded to one or other competitor.

Scoring

Points are awarded for each correct offensive contact with the opponent's target. Actions that occur together will be judged either as simultaneous (no hit awarded) or one fencer will be given priority and judged to have scored a hit (attacking action started first, no effective defence). Blade contact off the target area does not stop the action. Hits can be awarded against a fencer as a penalty for rule infringements.

Format

The usual format for an individual event involves splitting entrants into groups of 5, 6 or 7 and competing to 5 hits against every other member of the group. This is known as a poule. Results then decide the seeding for a series of elimination rounds comprising 15 hit bouts, with the winner going through to the next round.

Team events

There is a popular team format known as Italian relay in which teams of three compete against each other in a series of 5 hit bouts to a total of 45 points. Every member of both teams competes against all members of the other team. The team with the lower score at a change can force the next change by leap-frogging the other team's score. The order in which members play off is determined before the start and can have a huge impact on the final result.