

United States Fencing Association

Fencing Officials Commission

Guidelines for US Referees traveling to Competitions outside the US.

I. General Principles

a. When you are contacted by the National Office

- i. Reply quickly. - Assignments are usually first come - first selected.
- ii. Confirm your assignment with Corinne before proceeding.
- iii. If in doubt, ask. If the National Office isn't communicating, contact George Kolombatovich, Greg Massialas, or Bill Oliver (contact information below.)

b. You're on your own. It's rare to have help with travel arrangements, hotel, food, etc.

- i. Check with Corinne to see who the coaches are, and if any parents are going.
- ii. Contact the coaches/parents to see if arrangements are being made, what hotel the team is staying at, when they are arriving, departing, and if there are any plans for the team to travel together, at any stage of the process.
- iii. Don't wait for someone to do it for you. Take charge.

c. Responsibilities

- i. Once you get there, you will be responsible for the team, unless there's a team captain.
- ii. In either case, before you leave, get a list of competitors from Corinne
- iii. Make sure they have all checked in and paid their entry fees before the close of registration.
- iv. It's a good idea to get Euro cell phone numbers of the competitors, if possible. (It's also a good idea to have a euro cell phone yourself, but not often practical.)
- v. **COMMUNICATE!!!** Don't wait until the last minute with questions.

d. Representation

- i. You are representing the United States.
 1. It's a good idea to wear non-descript clothing, with no obvious US logos, etc, during your travel. The US State Department has guidelines on recommended attire for US citizens traveling abroad. <http://www.state.gov.travel>
- ii. Once at the competition, wear proper Referee attire, per the Referee Handbook. (http://www.fencingofficials.org/Info/HandbookForReferees.html#_Toc976809)
- iii. Be sure to affix the US International patch to the left breast pocket of your blazer (available from ProPrintwear <http://www.proprintwear.com>)

e. Information

- i. Download the info sheet on the comp, if Corinne doesn't send you one. You can get it from the FIE web site <http://www.fie.ch>. This sheet will have information on:
 1. ground transportation
 2. the address of the venue
 3. a list of hotels, with addresses and phone numbers
 4. start times for the competition.
- ii. It's usually in French, so you might need to get some help translating.

f. License

- i. Make sure you get your FIE license before hand, and verify that you're on the referee list on the FIE site. Some countries can be nit-picky. Contact Corinne for the current procedures.

g. Travel Tips

- i. Don't take much cash - 50 Euro is plenty.
- ii. Use a credit card, and get cash in destination city, as needed.
- iii. Plan on using credit cards for Hotel and restaurants.
- iv. Plan on having cash for taxi fare, snack money at the venue (they often don't provide lunch), perhaps a couple of tips.
- v. The total cash out of pocket for a one-day world cup is about \$250 - 300. Add about \$100 for each extra fencing day.
- vi. Many European businesses don't accept debit cards, American Express, or Discover. Visa or MasterCard.
- vii. ATM's are common in major cities.

II. Before you leave the US

- a. Check to see if a visa is needed to get into the destination country. This information can be obtained from the US consulate in your area, from many sources online, or from the National Office. <http://travel.state.gov/travel/foreignentryreqs.html>. Bear in mind that visas often take weeks to obtain, so plan ahead.
- b. Make sure you have a current passport.
- c. Download the FIE report and expense forms from the FOC website <http://www.fencingofficials.org/International>

III. Travel arrangements

- a. Book your plane ticket at least 4 weeks in advance.
- b. Go to one of the on-line travel agencies to find out the best flights, make note of the flight numbers, departure and arrival times, connecting cities, and the price.
 - i. <http://www.orbitz.com>
 - ii. <http://www.travelocity.com>
 - iii. <http://www.expedia.com>
- c. Call Anthony Travel (1-800-332-4123) to book the flight.
 - i. Give them the flight number, destination city, departure time, etc to assist in booking the correct flight.
 - ii. We have about a \$75 margin, between one flight and another similar flight. If you prefer United, and there's a Delta flight that's \$200 cheaper, take the Delta. No one expects you to take a flight with a 16-hour layover, just to save a few bucks. Use common sense.
- d. If the ticket is more than \$600, or so, investigate near-by cities. It might be much cheaper to fly into a neighboring city, and take a train. This is reasonable, if the savings are enough, and it doesn't mean you have to spend an additional day traveling.
- e. Car rental is possible, but look for other options, as Car Rental is often difficult in Europe.

- f. If you need to take a train to get to the destination city, go to the Eurail (www.raileurop.com) site and download the train schedule. Trains are frequent, cheap, and reliable. Far better than renting a car. If you have to take a train, be sure to get on the express. Locals are crowded, don't often have seats, and are usually cold.
- g. Plan on arriving in the host city the day before the competition starts, in case you need extra travel time. Don't plan on leaving on the last day of the competition, since you can rarely get evening flights back to the states.

IV. Lodging arrangements

- a. If no one on the cadre is coordinating rooms, contact the hotels on the info sheet for a room.
 - i. Try to stay in the host hotel. There are usually shuttles or rides to the venue.
 - ii. You can often find information on the hotels online. It's usually worth a look. (Contact Corinne to see if you're alone or if another referee is going. Coordinate with the other referee, if possible. It's nice to have someone to travel with...)
 - iii. Book your hotel early, since they fill up.

V. At the beginning of the Competition

- a. Report to the Directoire Technique (tournament committee).
- b. Tell them that you're the referee from the US.
- c. Make sure they spell your name right.
- d. Find out if there are any problems with the American team.
- e. Also find out if there are any special conditions that apply to that competition.
 - i. There are occasional variations from the standard competition format (like repechage), special rules (like men can't wear hard chest protectors) that apply only to that competition.
- f. Be sure to communicate this information to the team.
- g. Dress just like at a NAC. (See section C above)

- h. The organizers will provide weights, shims, clocks, and cards.
 - i. It's a nice touch to have your own cards, especially if they're nice ones.
 - ii. Bring a stopwatch, in case the timer on the box fails.
- i. Before you leave, download and print out the FIE referee report form from the FOC website. Fill it out as you go, and send it to George Kolombatovich (address below) after the competition.
<http://www.fencingofficials.org/International/FIERefereeReportForm.html>

VI. On the strip

- a. Remember that competitions in Europe are very serious. Follow correct protocol at all times.
- b. Be calm, confident, professional
- c. *Don't rush.*
- d. Use French when directing.
 - i. Even if you don't speak it. It'll keep you from saying too much!
 - ii. If you need to explain something, and can't do it in French, you can resort to English without too much problem. Most fencers and coaches speak adequate English.
- e. Use all the hand gestures.
 - i. Many referees are judged on appearance. Hand gestures are an important part of a referee's image.
- f. Don't volunteer information while refereeing.
 - i. Make the calls, don't elaborate.
- g. Follow protocol exactly when checking a weapon, both before the bout, and when presented after a failed touch

- h. Stay close to the bout committee table between assignments.
 - i. There are seldom good PA systems at these competitions, and it's very hard to hear announcements.
 - i. Don't coach or cheer for Americans, while you're on duty.
 - i. It's acceptable to sit with the team before the competition, and to relay information to the team during the day, but remember that you are impartial, and should present yourself so.
 - ii. Once you've been released, remove your referee attire (at least your jacket) before cheering for Americans.

VII. At the end of the competition

- a. Complete your FIE report form.
 - i. This form should reflect details of your performance during the competition, details of your travel arrangements, lodging arrangements, and any other information that might be helpful for the next referee who will work that city.
- b. Gather the post competition reports (results) from the Organizers.
 - i. Even if the coach, Captain, or athletes collect this report, be sure to get one for yourself. This is sometimes the only record of how many points our athletes will receive for their placement in the competition.
 - ii. Send the results in to Corinne, at the National Office. (Contact information below)

VIII. When you return

- a. Fill out the Expense form and send it in promptly.
 - i. Keep all receipts
- b. Use your current rating, the appropriate honorarium for each day you referee, and \$20 per diem for each day you spend on the trip.
- c. Send in your report forms promptly.

IX. Contact Information

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