

FENCING TOURNAMENTS



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introduction

The 2019-2020 fencing season is upon us. Time to renew your USA Fencing membership. If you are planning to compete at a sanctioned event you will need a competitive membership.

It is time to talk to your coach and talk to other parents who have been doing this for a while. Figure out your game plan for what tournaments you and your kids will attend. Some events like the Junior Olympics or the Summer National Championships requires one to qualify. And it may not be right for everyone.

age groups

Age groups are by birth year through the end of the season.

Youth 8 (Y8) refers to fencers ages 8 and under before the New Year and requires that fencers be born 2011-2014. The Y8 age group is not sanctioned and a full USA fencing competitive membership is not required. All other sanctioned events require a competitive membership. The sanctioned birth years for this season include:

Y8 – birth years 2011-2014

Y10 – birth years 2009-2012

Y12 – birth years 2007-2010

Y14 – birth years 2005-2008

Cadet (U17) – birth years 2003-2006

Junior (U20) – birth years 2000-2006

Senior (open) – born 2006 or earlier

Veterans (40 years old and older) – old

what do you qualify to fence?

Generally, a tournament will list any requirements which are mainly age, gender, and rating. A youth tournament will only allow kids in the right birth

years (unless you possess national points in an older age group in which case you can fence one age group older). If it is a senior event a fencer needs to either be born in 2006 or before (or have earned Junior national points).

There are some events that require one to have a certain rating. Unrated senior events mean that you need to be born 2006 or earlier (be at least 13 years old) and have not earned a rating. It is more of a beginner event. A senior mixed open event is the most challenging and would include both genders ages 13 years old or older and allow fencers with any rating. Common ratings for senior tournaments include open, C and under (division 2), D and under (division 3), E and under, and unrated for local events. Youth events are not limited by rating.

tournament types

Local. Events in our area are terrific for all levels of fencers and found on AskFRED.net with a QR code below for you to scan to limit the region to Washington and Oregon. Local youth events are not as frequently held as senior events (13 years old and older) but can be very well attended.



Regional. These events are one qualifying pathway to the Summer National championships for the youth fencer called Regional Youth Circuit (RYC) events. There are similar events called the Regional Junior and Cadet Circuit (RJCC) to help a

Cadet or Junior fencer qualify for the February Junior Olympics which is designated as the national championships for these older age groups (in order to form the US national team before the world championships). These regional events are a good way to get experience fencing harder fencers in the area, and a lot of fencers travel between Washington State and Portland, Oregon to attend. They are more expensive. They are supposed to be a practice for national events. You need to sign up on the USA Fencing website though the organizers generally (though not always) post information on AskFRED also. I would recommend these events for our kids, particularly if they are in Seattle or Bellevue. Due to the growing number of RYC and RJCC events sanctioned by USA fencing I have noticed that the turn-out for these tournaments are not as good as they used to be particularly later in the season when the good fencers have earned whatever points they need to qualify for their national event.

Super. There are a few events that are a mini-national tournament and bring out fencers from all over the country. The Super Youth Circuit (SYC) event for youth fencers will award national points to the top 40% of finishers. There are about a dozen of these events held throughout the year around the country. We are lucky this year as two SYC events are very close and do not need airfare.

Northwest Fencing Center, Beaverton, OR
February 7-10, 2020

Rain City Fencing Center, Bellevue, WA
May 1-4, 2020

Fencers who have been practicing and competing for a while may want to try some harder competition and plan to attend these tournaments, particularly if you are thinking of going to a national event. It is a bit soul-crushing to lose every pool bout by a lot if you are not ready and you travel to nationals—it is also fairly painful on the wallet. It is a bit less soul-crushing at a Super Youth event that you did not have to fly to and not all the best fencers in the country attend. If you are in Oregon you can enjoy tax-free shopping to help you feel better. Or if you are in Bellevue you can stop by Din Tai Fung for some Asian dumplings which we highly recommend.

There are two Super Junior and Cadet Circuit (SJCC) events held this year. You will need to fly. These events only give a fraction of the points awarded at the national events. The competition is

not as hard as at Nationals as a lot of the top fencers will not attend but instead spend their money on the national and international events that are harder and also “worth more points.” This year they are held at:

Salt Lake City, UT December 13-15, 2019

Anaheim, CA March 15-17, 2020

National. North American Cup (NAC) events are held monthly for various age groups and skill levels. Before spending the time and money on such a big trip please talk to your coach and other parents. These things are expensive because you will fly and get a hotel room. Entry for these events is something like \$150 per event. For a number of the age groups there is a cut after pools so not everyone gets to fence direct eliminations. For Y12 and Y14 events there is a plan to have a cut at Summer Nationals for the first time ever this season. Some parents are freaking out. If you are a beginner and not ready for this level of competition you are better off spending your money on fencing camps and private lessons rather than fencing 6 people to 5 points in the pools and then going home. And for the brave beginner the Super Youth Circuit events is a better way to go. But if you are badass this is how you earn national points and brag to colleges and earn a place on the national team. For the Cadet and Junior age groups this is how one earns points to qualify for international competition.

International. This is the Olympic qualifying year so the USA teams are working hard and competing at every big event. You can follow them on Facebook under USA Fencing. Cadet and Junior fencers who are high enough on the national points list can register for international competition. If you think the North American Cup events are expensive this takes it to an entirely new level. But those who qualify get an experience of a lifetime.

