

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need prior experience?

Probably 95% of our fencers start their fencing careers with UNH, so absolutely no experience is necessary. In fact, it's often easier to coach members with no experience because we don't have to break any bad habits or attitudes.

Does it hurt?

Sometimes. A lot? No, usually not. If you wear all proper protective gear while fencing - mask, jacket, underarm protector, long pants, breast protectors (for women), protective cup (for men) - then pain will be minimal. Any bruises or welts that may come about are usually compared at the end of the night with the other fencers', and the person with the largest and most heinous injury is revered by his/her teammates and is instructed to parry better or improve his/her footwork.

What should I wear to practice?

Comfy workout clothes are just dandy - anything that will allow full mobility. Sneakers are necessary. Pants are highly suggested for blade work, though not mandatory. However, we don't want to hear you whine when you get hit in the leg. It's also a good idea to bring a water bottle to practice as well as a change of clothes if it's cold out.

Footwork is boring. Why do I have to do so much of it?

You don't have to if you don't want to. But your opponents will thank you and you'll get hit a lot. Footwork is fundamental to good fencing. Footwork *is* fencing. It is imperative for good offense and defense, and the better your footwork is, the better these things are. And you're right, practicing footwork *is* boring.

Do I have to come to every practice?

Since this is a club sport, you are not required to do anything but act civil (and even that rule is bent). You can (though not usually encouraged to) show-up late, leave early, or skip a practice. However, just like any sport, the more time you invest in practice, the more you will get out of it. Also, captains and coaches will be more likely to work with and give lessons to dedicated fencers in comparison to the fencer that shows up once every two weeks. Finally, the more committed you are to the team, the more likely it will be that you will get a spot on the starting line-up when the competitive season starts.

I fenced before I came to UNH. Do I have to change my style?

No, you don't. If you've developed good fundamentals (footwork, etc) before you came to UNH, we'll work from there. We encourage all of our fencers to develop their own styles. You may be bringing in something new that other people on the team will adopt.

Do I have to compete?

It is not mandatory, though you will be encouraged to compete if you go to practice regularly. The competitions are fun and low-key, and provide the best way to bond with the team. They give you more experience with fencing different people and that will

improve your mental game. If you want to build up to competing by watching one first, that is fine.

What if I want to compete, but I'm not very good at fencing yet?

First of all, you are probably better than you think you are. The people who are chosen to start the competitions are chosen first by dedication to the team, and then by ability. A first-year fencer that comes to every practice will start before an experienced UNH fencer that only comes to practice once a month.

What if I really like competing and want to do more of it?

You can join the USFA (United States Fencing Association) for \$40 for a membership period of July 1 - August 31. This will permit you to participate in local USFA competitions in Manchester, Concord, Portland, Boston, and many other places around this area (and around the country). If you don't have a vehicle on campus, you better get really friendly with someone that does have one. To find out more info about USFA and what it offers, check out their WebPage at www.usfencing.org

Do I have to buy my own equipment?

It's nice to have your own, but definitely not required - the club will provide it. The advantage of having your own gear is that no one will grab the stuff you like before you get to the equipment closet, and that you can get stuff that will fit you well. That, and no one else will sweat in your stuff. If you are looking to buy some of your own gear, a good idea is to start out with a pair of low profile, supportive shoes. Chunky, worn-out sneakers can slow you down and will not provide traction. There are companies that sell fencing sneakers, but any refined athletic sneaker will do fine. If you want more info about buying your own equipment, ask a coach, captain, or "seasoned" team member (seasoned with experience, not garlic or pepper).

Why do we have to pay dues?

The dues that you pay are used to buy fencing equipment so that you don't have to get your own. Even a cheap one costs around \$150, so \$30 a year is (really) 29.5 dollars a year. Even a cheap one costs around \$150, so \$30 a year is (really) 29.5 dollars a year. Even a cheap one costs around \$150, so \$30 a year is (really) 29.5 dollars a year.