

WELCOME

What can I say? I love to fence. And if you give our team the chance, you will love to fence, too. For me, it started out as a way to meet people and as a way to relieve stress (stabbing people with swords - what could be better?!). I intended it to be a hobby, but fencing quickly became a passion for me. I got wrapped up in the “poetry in motion” ideal, the athleticism, the strategy, the finesse, and the competition of it all.

But it wasn't just the sport itself that clinched my enthusiasm. The team itself was laced with hard-core fencers and athletes, and it carried members just out to have fun and to get exercise. Along with practice, Friday night trips to Friendly's and pasta parties gave me the chance to know people better and to make some very close friendships. We even joke within the team that we're also a Dating Service, as many couples develop on the fencing team.

Our club can brag about our affiliations with a world-renowned referee and coach (Jon Moss), internationally competitive and nationally rated assistant coaches (Brian Grant, Jess McKillop, and Jim Gillispie), and an assistant coach who turned a 2-year old women's epee team into the #1 epee squad in New England collegiate fencing (including club and varsity teams). Our women's team also won 1st place for the club league at the 2001 New England's Collegiate Fencing Championships. Being a part of this winning team is really a privilege and we want to give you the opportunity to be a part of it as well.

I realize that not everyone who decides to fence will get as involved as I have, and I know that not everyone who reads this info packet will decide to fence. It takes tough, dedicated individuals to succeed on our team (as well as anywhere). We'd like to invite you to take a stab at it though. Bad pun – see, aren't we fun? At any rate, welcome to the UNH Fencing Team!

GENERAL INFORMATION

Practice times

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 7:30-10 pm
Fencers are encouraged to show up early to stretch.

Location

Hamel Recreation Center, ground floor, Studio #2

Coaching Staff

Head Coaches: Oliver Frates and Jon Moss
Assistant Coaches: Paul Harris

Captains

Team: Kate Dusinberre
Epee: Jeff Muhl
Foil: Julie Costantino and John Green
Sabre: Tyler Marcotte and Ashley Riley

Dues

\$35 per semester

Affiliations

United States Fencing Association
Friends of UNH Fencing
New England Intercollegiate Fencing Conference
New England Women's Intercollegiate Fencing Association

THE WEAPONS

Epee

Epee is a direct descendant of the duel fought to first blood. Touches are scored with the tip, and the target is the entire body. Whoever hits first scores the touch, regardless of who initiates the attack. Because of this, epee fencers usually try to hit the closest target to them (which is also very often the smallest).

Foil

Foilists tend to be versatile, thoughtful and athletic. They need to have the ability to move quickly, but also to have the knowledge of when it is better to take a slower approach. This, of course, comes with time and experience. Foilists can take on many fencing styles/attitudes – aggressive or passive, graceful or brutal. All styles can work in foil. As for movement, there's a lot of dancing back-and-forth and much blade work. The target area for foil is the torso. The only way to score a touch during a bout is to poke/stab/pierce/puncture the target area while you have the right-of-way. See below for a brief explanation.

Sabre

Sabre is the fastest and flashiest of the three weapons. The style is derived from the fighting tactics of the old cavalry. For this reason, the target for sabre is everything from the waist up, including the head and hand. This is also the only weapon in which you can both stab and cut or slash your opponent.

The other fencers at UNH and, well, pretty much the entire fencing community, affectionately refer to the sabrists as “knuckle-dragging behemoths”. They are stereotyped to be loud and aggressive. Good sabrists are fast and they know how to play mind games with their opponents. They cannot, however, simply bulldoze their opponents because they must pay attention to right-of-way.

What the heck is “right-of-way”?

In foil and in sabre, fencers need to pay close attention to what is called “the right of way” in fencing. Right-of-way can be explained by comparing a fencer to the serving team in a volleyball match – only the serving team can score points in volleyball, and only the fencer with the right-of-way can score a touch (with some exception that can be explained by the coaching staff). You can earn right of way by starting an attack before your opponent does, or by parrying (blocking) your opponent's attack. Right-of-way can be complicated, but it gets easy with time, and a fencing coach can answer any questions you may have about it.

The most important thing to keep in mind when choosing a weapon is to choose the style that fits your personality. There will be lots of pressure from returning fencers for you to try their weapon, but pick the one that suits you most. And if you can't decide, then keep trying weapon styles until you find one that you like.