

Guide to Montgomery High School Fencing



Fencing Basics	1
Basic Fencing Skills	2
MHS Dual Fencing Meets	3
Fencing Tournaments	4
Parent Booster Club Activities	5
Fencing Weapons, Additional Information	6
Equipment	7
Local Fencing Clubs	8
Useful Terminology	9
State Fencing District Structure	10
Skyland Conference High Schools	11

1. Fencing Basics:

A fencing bout (the individual "game" between competitors) consists of two fencers competing against each other using the same weapon type. Sabre, foil and epee are the three weapons used on fencing. Fencers score points or "touches" by hitting an opponent's target area with their weapon. Varying by weapon, only certain parts of the body are considered valid touches/points. Portions of the weapons and of the fencing gear are wired to allow for electronic detection of scored touches/points.

In high school competition, the objective is to score five points before the opponent does. If five points are not scored before time expires, the objective is to have more points than the opponent when time expires. The time for a bout is three minutes. If the score is tied at the end of three minutes, the fencers will complete a one minute overtime session and the first fencer to score a point during the overtime is the winner (If no points are scored, the fencer with "priority" will be the winner by default).

Bouts are officiated by a "director," also known as a "referee." Before each bout the director will inspect and test equipment to ensure proper working. The director starts the bout with "On guard" ("En garde"), followed by "Ready?" ("Êtes-vous prêts?") and finally with "Go" or "Fence" ("Allez"). The director halts the bout at every scored point and after a brief pause; the fencers return to their starting positions and the director restarts the bout.

Fencing is one of the safest sports you can choose:

- Fencers wear protective equipment particularly designed for the sport.
- Fencing has one of the lowest injury ratings among all sports.
- Contact is partially absorbed by the flexibility of the blade
- The weapons are not sharp and the foil and epee are flat, with a spring inside the point

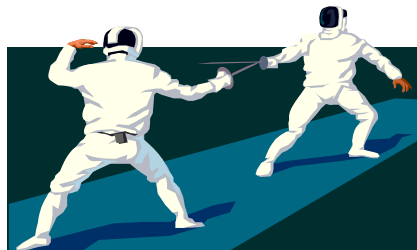
2. Basic Fencing Skills:

Physical size is less of a factor in fencing than other sports, due to the nature of the game and the variety of ways in which touches can be scored. Fencing involves three skills:

Blade Work is an essential skill to master. It permits a skilled fencer to deceive his opponent and reach the target area despite attempts of an opponent to defend themselves.

Footwork is the most physically demanding of the skills and provides tremendous exercise. Mastering footwork helps the fencer move into appropriate positions and distances to effectively utilize blade work to touch the opponent's target area and to quickly retreat from an opponent's attack.

Tactics consist of the plans and counter plans to coordinate use of blade work and footwork against the fencing style of opponents. Fencing is like a physical game of chess and in theory, for every attack there is a defense followed by an attack (parry-riposte).



3. MHS Dual Fencing Meets:

High school fencing teams compete during the winter sports season, with official team practice beginning at the end of November and opening day for competition around mid-December. The teams practice daily at MHS, typically from 3:00 until through 5:30. The teams are sub-grouped into varsity fencers (usually the top six in each of the three weapons) and junior varsity fencers.

MHS typically compete in about 12 dual meets. A dual meet is when the MHS fencing team competes against one other school. These dual meets can be home or away, and fans are welcome in both instances. MHS home meets are held in the common area of MHS (to the right of the main entrance). Dual meets usually are scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays. The meets usually begin at 4:30 and run about 2+ hours to complete.

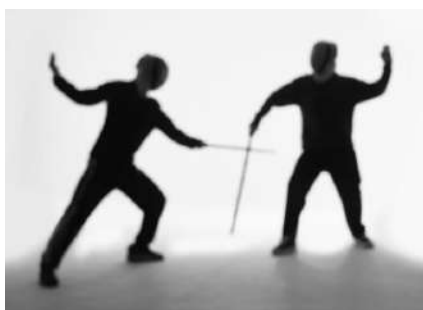
The team is organized into 3 squads, one each for the sabre, foil and epee weapons. Each varsity squad will typically be comprised of around 6 fencers. The top 3 fencers on each squad are considered the “starters” and are often referred to as the “A”, “B” and “C” fencer. The other fencers may serve as substitutes during meets.

During the dual meet, MHS varsity fencers bout against the fencers from one other school and bouts are conducted one at a time on the main fencing strip. On side/informal fencing strips, the MHS junior varsity fencers will typically compete against the junior varsity fencers from the other school. For MHS dual meets held at MHS, both the junior varsity and varsity fencers will attend. For dual meets held at the away school, participation may be limited to only the varsity fencers. When traveling to away competitions, the boys and girls are transported via separate buses.

Keys to the high school varsity dual meet structure include:

- A dual meet consists of 27 individual bouts
- Each weapon squad will complete 9 bouts
- Each fencer will compete in no more than 3 bouts
- Competition continues through 3 rounds
- Each round consists of 3 sabre bouts, followed by 3 foil bouts and then 3 epee bouts
- Within each squad, the fencers rotate order for round two and again for round three. This allows each MHS fencer to match against each of the other teams fencers
- The winner of each bout earns 1 point for their team.
- The first team to earn 14 victories/points will “clinch” a meet win.
- All 27 bouts are always completed, even after the clinch
- Substitutions, can be made at any time during the meet, but are more typical after the “clinch.”

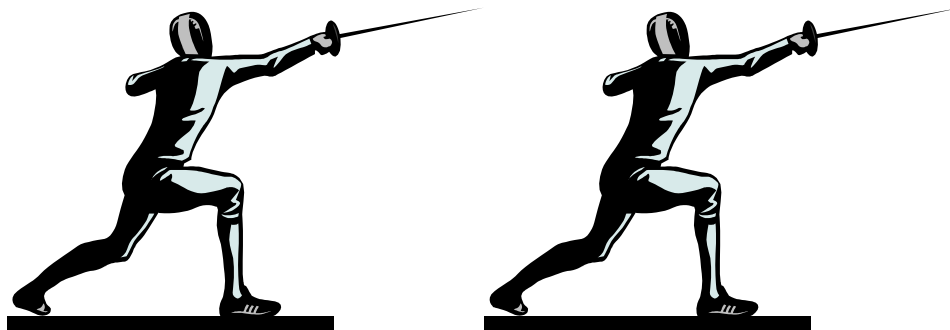
Team fencing began at MHS for the 2005-06 season. During its brief history, MHS has established a very successful fencing program for both the boys and the girls. Kudos for the success go to coach Johanna Snedeker of the girls team, coach Tim Sullivan of the boys team and to Steve Caputo and family, a driving force behind establishing the MHS fencing program.



4. Fencing Tournaments:

MHS competes in several tournaments. Tournaments involve multiple school teams and are typically held on Saturday or Sunday. Tournaments start in early morning and run through end of day.

- Santelli and Cetrulo Championships – These 48+ team tournaments are held early in January, on a weekend, and help kick off the season. The girl's tournament is known as the Santelli and the boy's tournament is known as the Cetrullo. These tournaments involve teams from across the state and are an initial measuring stick for early season state-wide rankings. This tournament is held at the large capacity location (e.g., Drew University, Morristown or Jersey City Armory)
- District 2 Championships – NJ fencing schools are organized into 5 Districts and MHS is a member of District 2. The District 2 Championships are held at North Hunterdon high school and involve all schools assigned to District 2 (12 schools).
 - Championship tournament is held at the end of January or beginning of February.
 - Top 4 School Teams qualify for the end of year state team tournament.
 - Top 4 School Squads (from each weapon) qualify for the end of year state squad tournament
 - Top 4 Individual fencers (from each weapon) qualify for year-end state Individual tournament
- Frosh-Soph Skyland Conference Tournament - This Saturday mid-February tournament provides all freshman and sophomores the opportunity to compete against other freshman and sophomores from the other schools across our Skyland Conference (freshman vs freshman and soph vs soph).
- State Squad Tournament – Squads qualify by finishing in the top four during the district tournaments. The squad tournament is held at North Hunterdon High School the third weekend of February.
- State Team Tournament – Teams qualify for this tournament during the district tournament. The team tournament is conducted as a series of dual meets involving 20 school teams (4 per district). Teams must win to continue. These dual meets run from early February until the overall championship dual meet at Morris Hills High School at the end of February.
- State Individual Tournament – Individual fencers qualify for this tournament during the district tournament. The individual tournament is held on a Saturday at the end of February (or start of arch). The top 20 fencers across every weapon (20 each for boys and girls) fence-off to determine the Individual champions. Livingston H.S. is now the host school (MHS had hosted through 2015).



5. Fencing Parents Booster Club Supported Activities:

School funding pays for such things as our head and assistant coaches, buses, meet referees, equipment, etc. but much more is needed to support a successful program. Parent involvement supports the additional needs of the MHS fencing program, most of which are listed below. All parents are asked to contribute financially via an annual \$200 booster club fee to help pay for the activities listed below. Aside from this booster fee, there are no fundraising activities. If possible, parents are also asked to volunteer time, where they can, to lead or support the various booster club activities listed below:

Pasta Night:

The Booster Club treats the fencers to a pasta night feast after one of the practices (there may be a second night depending on scheduling). It's a relaxed fun time for everyone. The Fencing Booster Club arranges everything for the event and additional parent volunteers are always welcome.

Senior Green and Gold Night:

Senior night is a chance for the team to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the seniors. It is a chance for seniors to thank their parents, teachers, etc. for their support and encouragement. An informal ceremony takes place and all parents are encouraged to attend. The night is great fun for all and a memorable time. Volunteer parents from the junior, sophomore and freshman classes are asked to provide small gifts for the seniors, the honored teachers and light refreshments. Senior night is held in mid-February followed by an intra-team competition.

End of Year Team Banquet

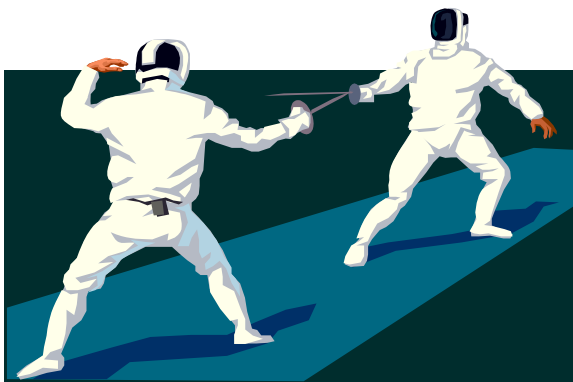
The Fencing Team Banquet punctuates the year with friends, food, music, dancing, acknowledgments and awards (including Montgomery Fencing Award, Leadership Award, Sportsmanship Award, MVP Award, and Freshman Rookie Award). The Booster Club coordinates the banquet with additional parent volunteers chipping in. The banquet is held at season end, usually a Friday/Saturday in March. Funds raised by the booster club are used to offset the cost of the banquet for the fencers and parents, siblings and guests are all invited to purchase a ticket and attend. Awards include the Montgomery Fencing, Leadership, Sportsmanship, MVP, Freshman Rookie, etc.

Guest Weapon Trainers:

Guest weapons consultants/trainers from local fencing clubs periodically join with our MHS coaching staff to provide advice regarding skill development and conditioning drills that contribute to the overall team growth.

Other:

MHS insignia socks, occasional snacks/meals as necessary



6. Fencing Weapons, Additional Information:

The 3 weapons have each have slightly different rules, which are explained below:

Weapon	Appearance of Weapon	Part of Weapon for Touches/Scoring Points	Target Area to Score a Touch	"Right-of-Way"
Sabre	Light cutting & thrusting weapon	Scored by tip or blade	Full body above waist	Yes
Foil	A light, thrusting sword with a small, circular hand guard and a flexible, rectangular blade	Scored only with tip	Torso (including back), neck, groin	Yes
Epee	Thrusting sword similar in length to foil but heavier, with a larger guard and a stiffer blade	Scored only with tip	Entire body	No

Sabre - Sabre is the modern version of the slashing cavalry sword, similar in length and weight to the foil. It is a point-thrusting weapon as well as a cutting weapon. The target area is from the hips (front & back), to the top of the head, simulating a cavalry rider. The fencer's uniform includes a metallic jacket (lamé), covering the target area. The mask has a metallic covering since the head is also a valid target area in sabre. Lights on the scoring machine, one green and one red, indicate which fencer has scored a touch. A touch landing outside the valid target area is indicated by a white light. "Off target" hits don't count in the scoring, but do stop the fencing action temporarily.

Foil - Foil is the modern version of the dueling rapier with a flexible rectangular 35 inch long blade, weighing under a pound. Points are scored by the blade tip landing on the torso (i.e., shoulder to groin), front and back (no arms, neck, head or legs). Foil uniform includes a metallic vest (a lamé) which covers the target area. A small, spring-loaded tip is attached to the foil point and is connected to a wire inside the blade. The fencer wears a body cord inside the uniform which connects the foil to a reel wire, connected to the scoring machine. There is a green and a red scoring light on the machine to indicate which fencer has scored a touch to the target area. A touch landing outside the valid target area is indicated by a white light (for foil and sabre) and these "off target" hits do not count in the scoring, but do stop the fencing action temporarily.

"Right-of-Way" – "Right-of-Way" rules apply to Sabre and Foil and are used to resolve situations of "simultaneous" or "double" touches. If two fencers touch simultaneously, a point is awarded to the fencer who acquired priority, or in other words, the fencer who was the last to make a clear action, whether offense or defense. If referee cannot determine priority of the action, no points are awarded. For epee, both fencers are awarded a point for simultaneous touches. "Right-of-Way" can be difficult to assess due to the speed or obstruction by a fencer's body. In foil, a white light indicates that the fencer touched off-target (e.g., arm, leg), but an off-target touch can be considered the last clear action. For example, if fencer 1 touches off-target and fencer 2 touches on-target, but the fencer 1 had right-of-way, no point would be awarded because the fencer 1 had priority without scoring.

Epee - The epee (pronounced "EPP-pay") descends from the dueling sword and is similar in length to the foil, but is heavier, weighing about 27 ounces. The epee also has a larger guard (to protect hand from a hit) and a much stiffer blade. Touches are scored only with the point of the blade and the entire body is a target area. Epee blade is wired and has a spring-loaded tip at the end that completes an electrical circuit, when it is depressed with a pressure of 750+ grams. There are two scoring lights on the machine, one green and one red. Lights indicate which fencer has scored a touch. (note the "*Fleche*" running attack used in Foil and Epee, is not allowed in high school). Because the entire body is a valid target area, the epee fencer's uniform does not include a lamé. Epee fencers always are dressed entirely in white. In comparison, foil fencers wear an armless grey vest over their whites and sabre fencers wear a grey jacket that is complete with full sleeves that cover the white.

7. Equipment involved in fencing:

- Chest protector (or chest guard): required for female, but optional for males
- Underarm protector
- Jacket
- Lamé (which is the electric vest used for foil or sabre, not epee)
- Mask (weapon-specific)
- Gloves (foil/epee gloves are different from sabre gloves)
- Equipment carrying bag
- Foil, epee, or sabre (weapons sometimes fail, so a spare is recommended)
- Body cord (or body wire)
- Mask cord (for foil/sabre only)
- Knickers (required for competitions, depends on specific club whether required during training)
- Long socks (required for competitions, depends on specific club whether required during training)
- Fencing shoes (basically light sneakers)

All equipment, with exceptional service, can be found at Absolute Fencing Gear (www.absolutefencinggear.com) in Bridgewater. A discount is afforded to the Montgomery High School team



8. Local Fencing Clubs:

Several fencing clubs in our area can help with year-round development and they provide private and/or group lessons ranging from beginner to competitive. Website information for popular local clubs include:

Medeo Fencing Club
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Phone: 732-469-2244
<http://www.medeofencing.com/>

Premier Fencing Club
Monmouth Jct, NJ 08852
(732) 355-0967
<http://www.premierfencingclub.com/>

Sebastiani Fencing Academy
Princeton, NJ 08540
(609) 578-0765

sebastianifencing.com

Hub City Fencing
Edison, NJ 08817
(908) 248-2232

9. Useful Terminology:

Strip	Fencing area, 14 meters long by 2 meters wide.
Advance	Taking a step towards one's opponent.
Attack	Movement or series of movements by which a fencer tries to score a point. In foil and saber, the fencer who attacks first acquires the "right-of-way." In order to execute an attack properly (i.e. one that the referee will acknowledge), the fencer's hand must be clearly extending towards their opponent's valid target in a threatening manner.
Beat	Sharp tap on the opponent's blade to initiate an attack or provoke a reaction.
Disengage	Evasive action in which the fencer avoids the opponent's attempt to take their blade.
Engagement	Contact between the fencers' blades - often as the prelude to an attack.
En Garde	Position taken before fencing commences.
Feint	A false attack intended to get a defensive reaction from the opposing fencer, thus creating the opportunity for a genuine attack ("feint-disengage attack")
Fleche	Explosive and running attack used in Foil and Epee only, <i>but not allowed in high school</i>
Flunge	Action unique to saber - a combination of a lunge and a fleche. Evolved recently after the FIE modified saber rules in 1992 to prohibit running attacks.
Blade	The hitting part of a sword from the guard to the point
Grip	The handle of a weapon.
Guard	Part of the weapon between the blade and handle; protects the hand (also: "bell-guard")
Point	The blade end, which must touch the opponent's target area to score a point (foil & epee)
Parry	Defensive action in which a fencer blocks his opponent's blade (also counter-parry).
Lunge	Most common attacking technique, in which the fencer launches themselves at their opponent by pushing off from their back leg (which generally remains stationary).
Opposition	"Thrust with Opposition" - To simultaneously deflect the opponent's point with one's guard while making an attack of one's own. Commonly used in epee to avoid a double touch.
Point-in-Line	Action in which the fencer, who is generally out of attacking range, points their weapon at their opponent with arm extended. A fencer who establishes a point in line has right of way, and their opponent cannot attack until they remove the blade from line by executing a beat.
Recover	The return to the en garde position after lunging.
Remise	Attacking again immediately after the opponent's parry of an initial attack.
Riposte	Defender's offensive action immediately after parrying their opponent's attack.
Second Intention	A tactic in which a fencer executes a convincing, yet false, action in hopes of drawing a true, committed reaction from their opponent.
Priority	In the event of a tie, one fencer is randomly given priority in a one minute sudden death. If no points are scored the fencer with priority wins.
Stop Hit, Stop Cut (Sabre)	A counter-action made at the moment of an opponent's hesitation, feint, or poorly executed attack. To be awarded the point, the fencer attempting a <i>stop hit</i> must clearly catch their opponent's <i>tempo</i> . Hence, if their Stop Hit is not "in time," the referee may award the touch to their attacker.

10. State District Structure:

Schools with fencing programs are grouped into 5 districts and tournaments are conducted within each district to determine the Teams, Squads and Individuals to represent in state-wide competition. MHS in in district 2.

	District 2		District 1		District 5
1	Bernards	1	Chatham	1	Bergen Tech
2	Gill St. Bernard	2	Hackettstown	2	Bayonne
3	Hunterdon Central	3	Morris Catholic	3	Columbia
4	Montgomery	4	Morris Hills	4	Holy Angels
5	Moorestown Friends	5	Morris Knolls	5	Montclair Kimberly Acad.
6	North Hunterdon	6	Morristown	6	Montclair
7	Princeton	7	Randolph	7	Passaic Valley
8	Ridge	8	West Morris Central	8	St. Peter's Prep
9	St. Augustine's Prep	9	West Morris Mendham	9	Teaneck
10	Voorhees			10	West Essex
11	West Windsor-Plainsboro North				
12	West Windsor-Plainsboro South				
	District 3		District 4		
1	Christian Brothers	1	Butler		
2	Gov. Livingston	2	Don Bosco Prep		
3	Kent Place	3	Fair Lawn		
4	Livingston	4	Indian Hills		
5	Milburn	5	Lakeland		
6	Newark Academy	6	Northern Highlands		
7	Oak Knoll	7	Pompton Lakes		
8	Oratory Prep	8	Ramapo		
9	Pingry	9	Wayne Hills		
10	Ranney School	10	West Milford		
11	Somerville	11	Wayne Valley		
12	Watchung Hills				

11. Skyland Confernce High Schools include:

Montgomery
 Watchung Hills
 North Hunterdon
 Hunterdon Central
 Voorhees
 Bernards
 Basking Ridge
 Somerville