

Sport Terminology

Terminologie du sport

As of WED 21 OCT 2026

Term	Definition
Advance	To step forward.
Allez	It is the French word for "go", and in fencing terms, it is the word that the referee uses to start a bout.
Analysis	The process of describing actions occurring in a fight, usually in the phase preceding a hit.
Annulment of hit	A valid hit, disallowed because of an infringement of the rules or because of a technical fault.
Apparatus	Scoring device (machine, box, etc.) that indicates touches using red and green lamps, and, only in foil, white lights for touches off target; yellow lights indicate attempts of competitors to avoid receiving a touche by short-circuiting their equipment (e.g. by making contact between weapon and metallic vest); usually a stop watch and a scoreboard display are linked to the machine.
Arrêt (stop hit)	Counter offensive action to the opponent's attack.
Assault	A friendly combat between two athletes is called an assault; if the score is kept (as for a competition), it is a bout.
Assistant Referee (Corner judge)	The Assistant Referee assists the Referee in determining the validity of a hit, and with the correct use of the rear hand/arm of the athlete.
Attack	An initial offensive action made by extending the sword arm and continuously threatening the opponent's target area.
Blade	The main component of a sword on which the hilt is mounted.
Bout	One fight in a phase (i.e. qualification, direct elimination or final) for individual competition or in the team event it is one fight of the series of bouts in a match. An individual bout can last for either 15 touches (five touches in preliminary phases at World Championships or World Cup events) or for three times three minutes. In a team event, with six bouts, each bout can last for three minutes or five touches (i.e. competitors change at 5, 10, 15, etc. touches), while touches are accumulated to reach a number that can be divided by five. This means an athlete can make up for his teammate's inefficiency during his three minutes and score up to the number of touches that correspond to five times the number of the bouts within the match.
Bout time	Bouts in individual events last for three times three minutes with one minute breaks in between; the stop watches at the piste ends display the time remaining of these three minute elements. In team events, a bout lasts for a maximum of three minutes (or five touches).
Breeches	Athlete's trousers.
Brutality	Actions performed with an unacceptable level of force or violence, which causes discomfort to the opponent.
Calculated index	The calculated index is the ratio of the total number of wins to the total number of matches during the pool stage.



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Category	There are two categories in Fencing competition: Men Women and both categories are subdivided into: Individual Team
Compound actions	Two or more single actions performed together as one continuous action.
Compound attack	An attack comprising one or more feints.
Compound prises de fer	Two or more consecutive engagements of the blade, alike or different, with no loss of blade contact.
Compound riposte	Riposte comprising one or more feints.
Coquille	Bell-shaped guard of a foil or épée.
Corps à corps	Bodily contacts between the athletes in a bout.
Delegation Leader (Head of Delegation)	The Delegation Leader is responsible for checking the pre-draw lists for all events, correcting mistakes and must be present at the Delegation Leaders' meeting and the public draw that is held on the day before the competition starts.
Delegation Leaders' meeting	The Delegation Leaders' meeting is the official meeting of the DT (Directoire technique) with the representatives of all participating delegations. It will be held on the day before the first event at a time and place set by the DT. The meeting will be used: To finalise the pre-draw lists for all events To correct any remaining mistakes To check that all athletes/teams are present To hold the public draw which establishes a ranking for the unranked participants (i.e. Olympic Seeding) To hold the draw for the top or bottom position on the direct elimination table of the individual events
Direct	Actions made without passing the blade under or over the opponent's blade.
Direct elimination	Competition format in which the winner of a fight advances to the next phase and the loser is eliminated.
Directoire Technique (DT)	The Directoire technique (Technical directorate) has the following responsibilities: Administration (e.g. facilities, entries and procedures) Supervision (draw, bouts/matches, etc.) Running the competition
Disciplinary code	By taking part in a Fencing competition, athletes give their word of honour to comply with the rules of competition and with the decision of judges, and to show respect for the president and the members of the jury.



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Doublé	A compound attack, in order to avoid the opponent's circular parry.
Doublé action	Both athletes commence an offensive action at exactly the same moment.
Doublé touche	When both athletes register a hit on each other simultaneously, the difference of time between the two hits being less than 1/25 of a second.
Draw	This is a public random draw carried out by the Directoire Technique in order to determine the order of athletes and/or bouts during a competition. The draw is organised during the Delegation Leaders' meeting.
Duration of bout	Actual fencing time allowed during a bout, i.e. a stop clock starts at the beginning of a bout, stops each time the Referee halts the athletes, and starts again when the bout is restarted.
Electrical apparatus	An electric box with red and green lights to register valid hits at foil, épée and sabre, and white lights to register non-valid hits at foil. The apparatus is mounted centrally, adjacent to the piste, and connected by floor leads to spools with retractable cables placed at both ends of the piste, to which the athletes connect their body wires.
En garde	It is French word for "on guard", and is uttered by the referee before the start of the bout to signify to the athletes that they should get into position.
Épée	A Fencing discipline where the entire body of a competitor is the target area and only ground hits (to the piste) are invalid. Touches are scored with the point of the weapon only. (See "Weapons")
Fight	See: Bout and/or Match.
Flight	A table of 32 athletes on four fencing pistes is divided into four flights. A maximum of eight athletes can fence at a time - therefore there are four flights of eight athletes needed to complete the table of 32. Flight one therefore describes matches 1-4; flight two -matches 5-8, etc.
Flip-Flop	Action to randomly decide the final order of seeding pairs during the draw.
Foil	As in épée, touches can only be scored with the point, not with cuts. The target area is the torso (front and back, excluding the head, arms and legs).
Glove	Made of leather or similar material which must be worn on the sword hand and which must have a gauntlet long enough to cover the sword arm sleeve mid-way between the hand and the elbow.
Grip (of weapon)	The handle part of the hilt.
Guard (of weapon)	The part of the hilt to protect the sword hand.
Jacket	A jacket made of durable white material without any fastenings on the sword-arm side, which covers the valid target area and has a double coating of material on the front and on the sword arm.
Jury d'appel	At a competition, an athlete or team captain may ask for a jury d'appel to be convened if he believes a misapplication of the rules has occurred. The Jury will consist of one representative of each competing country, or members of the organising committee.



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Mask	Wire mesh covering worn on the head to protect the face, sides of the head and neck.
Piste	This is the surface on which athletes compete. Dimensions are 17 to 18 metres long by 1.5 meters wide. The piste is usually made of copper or aluminium (in order to be grounded).
Piste Assistant	Assistant who is responsible for: Ticking off the touches given/received on the bout/match form Ensuring that the Referee, Athletes and Team Captains sign the form after the bout/match (after verification)
Plastron	Half-jacket with no underarm seam, worn for extra protection on the sword arm under the Fencing jacket; also a padded over jacket worn by a Fencing coach during individual training.
Point	See "Touche(s)"
Prêt	French for "ready", prêt is one of the three words that the referee utters before the start of the bout. The sequence of commands is as follows: engarde, prêt, allez.
Presidents/Presidents de Jury	Qualified Referees/Judges for bouts and matches from the French "Presidents de Jury". The FIE is currently attempting to establish a pool of qualified presidents for World Championships and Olympic Games in order to ensure their quality. The referees have responsibilities in the following areas: Control duties Management duties Disciplinary duties Judging duties
Priority	The right of way gained by the athlete at foil and sabre by extending the sword arm and continually threatening the opponent's target.
Quadrant	An elimination table consisting of four quadrants (i.e., quarters) with a specific seeding (first vs. last, second vs. last but one, and so on) in order to make it probable that the best athletes/teams do not fence each other before the final.
Referee Delegate	A representative of the Refereeing Committee appointed by the Executive Committee of the FIE. The Referee Delegate proposes a list of potential referees to the FIE DT.
Relay number	A match in a team event consists of nine bouts in a set sequence. The relay number is the number of the current bout within a match.
Remise	The renewal of an action after being parried by replacing the point on the target in a different line compared to the original action.
Renewed actions	The continuation of the original offensive action following the opponent's parry.
Reprise	The renewal of an action made with a lunge, after having returned to guard (forward and backward).
Retire	To step back.



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Riposte	An offensive action following a successful parry of an attack.
Sabre	The sabre is the only weapon where touches can be scored with the point and with the cutting edge of the blade. The target area in sabre is everything above the waistline (i.e. front and back of head, arms, torso). (See "Weapons")
Salute	The acknowledgement of respect shown to an opponent, fencing coach or training partner before and at the end of a bout. A refusal to salute leads to a Black Card.
Score sheets	There are several different kinds of score sheets. In all competitions there are score sheets for individual bouts, as well as for a phase or quadrant. In team events, one score sheet is used to record the entire sequence of bouts within a match. The information required by the FIE on these different forms varies; therefore sample documents and a table indicating requirements, and desirable elements, has been included in the ORIS Fencing document.
Target (épée only)	The whole of the body including the back, hands, feet, and head.
Target (foil only)	The trunk of the body, excluding the head and limbs. The upper limit is the collar up to 6cm above the collarbones; at the sides the limits are the seams of the sleeves, which should cross the head of the humerus. The lower limit follows a horizontal line across the back joining the tops of the hip bones, thence following in straight lines to the junction of the lines of the groin.
Target (sabre only)	Any part of the body above a horizontal line drawn between the top of the folds formed by the thighs and by the trunk of the athlete when in the "On Guard" position.
Temps d'escrime (Fencing time)	The time required to perform one simple Fencing action.
Touche(s)	A valid touch; the tip of the sword; an attack made with the point (i.e. a thrust).
Valid hit	A hit that is made correctly on target.
Video Referee	The Video Referee assists the referee with the review of video footage of problematic athlete actions.
Weapons	There are three types of weapons - corresponding to the events: Épée, Foil and Sabre

Note:
For further information please consult: fie.org