

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The purpose of the Australian Fencing Federation's (AFF) National competition circuit is to determine elite abilities.

It is also necessary that the format of competitions should:

- encourage participation by all eligible athletes
- recognise the limited resources of – equipment, referees and time
- determine champions without placing *unnecessary* physical demand on elite athletes
- not discourage young athletes in junior events through lack of fencing (especially important for the “*not advanced for age*” athlete).

NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

The AFF National competition circuit is known as the “Australian Fencing Circuit” (AFC) and comprises the following events:

- AFC Under-15 Championships (*Men's & Women's individual and teams in all three weapons*)
- AFC Cadet (Under-17) Championships (*Men's & Women's individual and teams in all three weapons*)
- AFC Schools (Individual) Championships (*Men's & Women's individual and teams in all three weapons, 2 grade level categories, fencers representing schools*)
- AFC Schools (Teams) Championships (*Men's & Women's all three weapons, 2 grade level categories, teams representing schools*)
- AFC Junior (Under-20) Championships (*Men's & Women's individual and teams in all three weapons*)
- AFC Under-23 Championships (*Men's & Women's individual in all three weapons, staggered by weapon to coincide with AFC #1 [epee], AFC#2 [foil], and AFC #3 [sabre] below*).
- AFC #1 – DH McKenzie Tournament (*Senior and Veterans Men's & Women's individual in all three weapons*)
- AFC #2 – Robyn Chaplin Tournament (*Senior and Veterans Men's & Women's individual in all three weapons*)
- AFC #3 (*Senior and Veterans Men's & Women's individual in all three weapons, Men's & Women's Club Teams in all 3 weapons*)
- AFC #4 (*Senior and Veterans Men's & Women's individual in all three weapons*)
- AFC Australian Open Championships (*Senior Men's & Women's individual and teams in all three weapons,*)
- AFC Australian Veterans Championships (*Veterans Men's & Women's individual and teams in all three weapons*)

ENTRIES TO TOURNAMENTS

Entries to all AFF events are open to:

- affiliated Australian fencers that meet any age group requirements, on payment of the required entry fee, as long as they are in good standing with both the AFF and their respective State Association; and
- other international fencers affiliated with their national Association/Federation, including Oceania Federations, that meet any age group requirements, with payment of one entry fee irrespective of the number of events entered

Competitive affiliation is required for all AFC event others than the AFC Schools Championships (for which participative affiliation is sufficient).

The AFF accepts registrations for entry as per the Operational Protocol that appears on the AFF web site. There are no limits to the number of entries to events, with the exception of the AFC Schools (Individuals) Championships and the AFC Schools (Team) Championships, where the numbers of entries per State may be limited to facilitate the effective organisation of these events.

AGE CATEGORIES

The FIE rules relating to competitor ages apply for entry to all non-school AFF events. However, o.29.1 applies only for Senior, Under-23 and Junior (Under-20s) events. An exception will be permitted for these events where the fencer has previously achieved a Top 8 final ranking at an Under-15s AFC event, or a Top 16 final ranking at a Cadet (Under-17s) AFC event or is a member of the Talented Fencer Program.

For Cadet (U/17) events, fencers must be at least 12 years old on 1 January in the year of the competition. For U/15 events, fencers must be at least 10 years old on 1 January in the year of the competition. Exceptions from these minimum age requirements may be considered by the AFF Board on a case by case basis.

For the AFC Schools Championships, there are two age categories for both Individual and Team events:

- **Intermediate** – students up to the third year of secondary school;
- **Senior** – open to any school student (including Intermediate fencers)

TEAM EVENTS

The AFF hosts four different types of Team events. These are shown below.

Names of the individuals comprising the team(s) for each team event entered must be lodged by the Team Captains with the Directoire Technique (DT) before the semi-finals of the relevant individual event, if relevant, otherwise, prior to roll call for the specific team event or as requested by the DT during the tournament.

Where there are at least two teams entered, the event will be run (even if both teams are from the same State or club). Where there is only one team entered, that team will be declared the winner by default.

STATE-BASED TEAM EVENTS (AT UNDER-15S/CADETS, JUNIORS, AND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS) - there is a maximum of two teams per State for each weapon/gender. Where other nations are competing, this rule extends to two teams per nation. These events are run as a straight direct elimination, with no ranking matches held for third place or lower.

CLUB-BASED TEAM EVENTS (USUALLY ONLY AT AFC3) - two teams per club are permitted for each weapon/gender. These events are also run as a straight direct elimination, with no separate ranking matches held for third place or lower.

SCHOOL-BASED TEAM EVENTS (AT AFC SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS) - each State is permitted to enter up to two Teams for each weapon/gender. All members of each team must be from the same school. However, where there are less than sixteen teams competing, any vacant places will be filled from additionally nominated teams pro rata according to State membership numbers. The event is usually run as a pool unique format. However, the specific format of the competition will be determined by the Tournament Management Commission and Tournament organisers once the number of entries is finalised.

VETERAN TEAM EVENTS (AT AFC VETERAN NATIONALS) - each State is permitted to enter up to two single-gender teams. If at the time of team declaration (i.e. at the semi-finals of the corresponding individual event), there are only one or two single-gender teams entered, the event will be declared mixed. If an event is declared mixed, then (a) existing entries may be re-organised to accommodate the change, (b) additional entries may be made by any State, (c) each State is permitted to enter up to two mixed teams. Alternatively, if an event is declared as a separate Men's and Women's event, made up of single gender teams, a State that would otherwise be unable to enter a team in either event, may then elect to enter one mixed team into the Men's team event.

TOURNAMENT FORMATS

To achieve the aims of the Federation, the following competition formats will be used:

CADET, JUNIOR, U/23 AND OPEN TOURNAMENTS

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

For all national circuit tournaments, including the National Championships, individual competitions will be fenced as:

- one round of pools of six and / or seven, wherever possible, all fencers to promote
- appropriate direct elimination phase (either complete or incomplete tableaux, with no repechage)
- at the final four (semi-finals), an introduction of the semi-finalists in bout order pairs and presentation of the fifth through eighth medallists, if required.
- on completion of finals, a medals ceremony of the top four finalists (according to final ranking) for presentation of finalists medals.

TEAM EVENTS

Teams are seeded on the basis of the team scores. Team scores are based on the named team members' final ranking in the comparable individual events. Any team member who did not fence in the comparable individual event, is assigned a ranking equal to the last fencer for that event plus one.

In determining the team score, only the final ranking of the top three ranked team members are totalled to determine each team's score. Teams are placed on the direct elimination tableau according to their team score (lowest being first seed).

Each team match comprises a 45 Hit Relay format bout.

VETERANS TOURNAMENTS

Entries for veterans events will be accepted under the following five age categories – 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and 80+. Rules for Non-Veterans Tournaments apply with the following exceptions.

Special rules apply in relation to Veterans Individual events:

- Where there are six or more fencers of both genders present, separate men's and women's competitions will be held
- An exception to this is where four or five fencers of either gender are present, competitions will include fencers of both genders in the pools round only, and separate men's and women's direct eliminations will be held;
- An exception to the two rules above is that competitions will include fencers of both genders in the pools round and direct elimination rounds if there are three or fewer fencers of either gender;
- Separate medals will be awarded to men and women based on the current medal-to-entry ratios and structure documented below.

Where a fencer withdraws from a Veterans event at any time up to and including roll call for the reason that it will be a fully or partially mixed event, that fencer will be entitled to receive a full refund of their entry fee for that Veterans event.

Poule bouts are fenced to five hits while bouts in direct elimination are fenced to 10 hits. In both cases there are no hits handicapped for age category differences between fencers.

SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

The format of team and individual competition will to some degree depend on the number of individual and team entries. The following formats are indicative and may be changed at the discretion of the Tournament Management Commission and the Directoire Technique (with AFF approval) once final entries are known.

INDIVIDUAL:

Two rounds of pools (bouts to 3 hits in 2 minutes) with no direct elimination round. Final placings to be decided by the overall results from pools subject to a barrage for medals if required.

TEAMS:

One round of pool matches. The format of pool bouts (hits/timing) to be decided when entry numbers are known. Pools to be seeded based on individual results. Placings will be based on overall results from pools.

AWARDING OF MEDALS

All competitor numbers are taken from entries at the official close of entries excluding any late entries that may subsequently occur. For events with less than four competitors, the event will not be run.

For other events, the AFF will award medals as follows:

- for events with four or more competitors, a gold medal will be awarded;
- for events with eight or more competitors, then additionally a silver and two equal bronze medals will be awarded

For Veterans events, additional awards relate to age categories:

- The highest placed fencer for each age category will be awarded a certificate of recognition (1-3 fencers) or medal (four or more fencers).
- Age categories, starting with oldest, are merged down with next youngest age bracket until the cumulative number of fencers reaches the minimum number required for a medal to be awarded, repeated starting from the age category below where the medal was just allocated.
- No medal or certificate is awarded for an age category if the winner of the category finishes behind the winner of an older age category

At all Team events, gold medals are awarded to the winners, with silver and equal bronze medals also awarded (regardless of the number of entries). Where a Veteran's team event is mixed, a single set of medals will be awarded.