



# Dueling Ladders at SCF

(based on material from Metro Tacoma/Blue Steel and Eastern Michigan University fencing clubs)

Challenge ladders have been used in many sports and in different forms. In fencing salles of the past it was a traditional element of the culture. Often they were used to determine who would represent the salle in competitions. Today this concept can work to provide healthy internal competition.

Fencing the same people over and over isn't necessarily a good thing. Fencers need to fence with a variety of people to learn tactics and improve their skills. A dueling ladder is a great motivational tool that fosters problem solving as a necessary outcome for success.

## **What is a dueling ladder?**

A dueling ladder consists of published results of an ongoing intra-salle tournament. It is used as a way to motivate club fencers to excel. Fencers must bout regularly to maintain their position or to move up the ladder. The ladder may include a visual representation showing the positions of actively competing ladder fencers. Ladders can be created for each weapon, by age group or competitive level, if desired.

## **What are the benefits of a dueling ladder?**

- The ladder becomes a motivational impetus to improve.
- Because it is an ongoing process, students are regularly challenged in order to maintain or increase their ranking. This fosters regular attendance and a desire to improve.
- The ladder becomes a central and lively aspect of the salle's culture.
- The ladder board becomes a lasting legacy of the salle's activity.

## **How are the initial placements in the dueling ladder established?**

The first step in creating a ladder is to hold a competition to establish the initial ranking. This can be done either with a tournament *a la* AFL rules, by simply declaring the initial seeding by fiat, or using some other method.

## **Do I have to participate?**

Of course not! Participation in dueling ladders is purely optional, but strongly encouraged.



# Dueling Ladder Rules

(based on material from Metro Tacoma/Blue Steel and Eastern Michigan University fencing clubs)

## Starting a new ladder

- The staff of SCF will decide when and if a new ladder will start (e.g. for another weapon, age class, etc.).
- SCF staff will determine the initial seeding method used.

## Awards

- If a fencer continuously maintains his or her number 1 spot on the ladder for 88 consecutive days, a silver star will be placed on his or her nameplate.
- If a fencer continuously maintains his or her number 1 spot on the ladder for 365 consecutive days, a gold star will be placed on his or her nameplate and his or her name will be added to that ladder's "hall of fame".

## Participating in the ladder

- Only SCF fencers who have been cleared for bouts in the relevant weapon and who are in good standing (i.e. current on dues) may participate.
- Participation is purely optional; however, all qualified fencers are encouraged to participate.
- The staff of SCF is allowed to participate in the fencing ladder.
- All new ladder participants shall begin at the bottom of the ladder. New participants shall not earn a place on the ladder until they have completed their first duel (victory is

not necessary to get on the ladder – only effort).

- Participants must pay a one-time fee of \$10.00 to the salle to cover the cost of their nameplate for the ladder board. The nameplate remains the property of SCF.
- Fencers who withdraw from participation in the ladder and later rejoin it must begin at the bottom of the ladder again.

## SCF teams for AFL team events

- The top eight fencers on each ladder shall form the salle's first and second teams, respectively, for AFL team events in that weapon in which the salle competes. The top two fencers in each weapon shall form the salle's first and second teams, respectively, for AFL three-weapon events.
- The ladder standings at 12:01 a.m. on the 14th day preceding the event shall be the standings that are used for the purpose of determining the team rosters (e.g. for an event taking place on April 15, the standings as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1 shall be used).
- If one of the fencers is unable (e.g. due to injury or schedule) or unqualified (e.g. due to classification restrictions) to compete in a team event, then that fencer's spot on the team roster shall be offered to the next fencer down the list and so on.

## **Maintaining your position on the ladder**

- If someone challenges you, you must win your duel to retain your position.
- You must duel at least once each calendar month. Failure to duel at least this often will cause your name to be placed “on hold”. The “hold” status will be removed as soon as you fence a duel. Being “on hold” can result in being bumped down the ladder.

## **Moving up the ladder**

- To attempt to move up the ladder, you must challenge a fencer above you.
- *The Rule of Three:*
  - You may challenge any person who is one, two, or three rungs higher than you on the ladder. Fencers “on hold” do not count toward the rule of three -- i.e. you can skip over them.
  - Positions 1-10 on the dueling ladder are exempt from the rule of three – i.e. you must claw your way up to the top, one by one. However, fencers “on hold” may still be skipped.
- You may not challenge the same person more than once in a one-week period unless one of the duelists has subsequently settled a new duel.
- You may not challenge a person already challenged until that duel is settled.
- If the challenger wins the duel, he or she takes the other duelist’s place on the ladder. The other duelist and everyone below him or her (including fencers “on hold”) will be moved

down one rung on the ladder until there are no gaps in the ladder.

- If the challenger loses the duel, no changes are made to the ladder.

## **Making a challenge**

- To challenge a fencer, you must notify the other fencer and reach agreement as to the time and place of the duel. This communication can be carried out in person or by phone, letter, e-mail, carrier pigeon, etc.
- A challenge log will be maintained. It will include the duelists’ names, the names of the seconds, and the date of the *challenge*. Duels must be completed in the order entered in the log. Always check the log first!
- When a challenge is made to someone who is two or more rungs higher on the ladder, the fencers in between challenger and challengee are “frozen” until the duel is resolved. Frozen fencers can be challenged, but they may not contest a duel until the duel that caused them to be frozen has been resolved, unless the outcome of the frozen fencers’ duel will not affect the other duel. Challenges issued to frozen fencers may be invalidated if the result of the other duel places the challengee beyond the reach of the challenger.

## **Conducting a duel**

- The challengee is allowed to determine when the duel may be settled, subject to the restrictions below. Challengees are strongly encouraged to work with the challenger to find an agreeable time for the settling of the affair.

- Duels must be completed within one week of the challenge date as recorded in the logbook. If one week passes before a duel is resolved, the challenge becomes void.
- Duels must take place at the salle during open fencing times except by special permission of the staff.
- Failure to accept or appear for a duel will result in a forfeit.
  - If a duelist contacts the studio or his or her opponent by telephone at least one hour prior to the agreed-upon time for the duel, the duel may be rescheduled or forfeited without further penalty.
  - If a duelist fails to contact the studio or his or her opponent at least one hour before the agreed-upon time for the duel, that duelist shall forfeit the duel. Mr. Heggen may, at his discretion, make exceptions to this rule for circumstances that are beyond the duelist's control.
- Equipment for duels shall follow the requirements of the American Fencing League, including equipment requirements (except that fencers below place #15 on the foil ladder may fence in sweatpants instead of knickers).
- The director shall inspect the duelists' equipment and clothing for compliance and safety prior to the duel. The director shall apply the AFL penalty chart for non-conforming equipment; thus, equipment problems may result in forfeiture of the duel.
- The duel shall comply with AFL rules for the weapon in question.
- The touches of the duel shall be recorded in the challenge logbook. Completed logbook sheets shall be signed by the director and the duelists and retained in the logbook.
- Black card offenses shall result in the immediate forfeiture of the duel and the loss of ten "rungs" on the ladder. Additionally:
  - On the first black card offence, the offender shall suffer a one-week suspension on that ladder.
  - Two black card offenses within a two-month period (even if they occur on different ladders) shall result in suspension from all dueling ladders and ineligibility to represent the salle in competition for a period of one month.
  - Three black card offenses within a three-month period (even if they occur on different ladders) shall result in suspension from all dueling ladders and ineligibility to represent the salle in competition for a period of two months, as well as a two-month period of probation, during which a subsequent black card shall be treated as if it were the third black card in two months.
  - Black card offenses that call for suspension (see AFL penalty chart) shall result in the immediate forfeiture of all standing on that ladder, as well as an additional one-month suspension from participation on that ladder (on top of any other penalties).