

Minutes of USFA ExCom meeting May 23, 2015

In attendance:

Peter Burchard
Kristin Vines
Tom Strzalkowski
Bob Lightner
Wang Yung (non voting)

Benefits:

- More members, better web site,
- Jerry Benson talks to Chris E (USFA) on reviving Coaches College with us providing the coaches. This means it will be up to USFA to provide venue and collect money and advertise; if we are the Coaches College, that will halt some of the division and rivalry
- Even if we don't get USFA help we have offers from others to host (Brandis &)

Cons:

- Liability, standards lowered, only three hour class for coaching - TS
- More people, less training of coaches, less exposure to fencing BUT will have bigger numbers
- Will what we stand for be compromised?
- We'd like to be able to certify certifiers for these 2 levels with your consultation. #4 and We'd like to get "Credentialed" as a credentialed for these lower-level coaching levels so we can credential new coaches and credential our own lower level credentialors (not a word I know). #7 We are not real happy with this.
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Questions:

1. What would be the mutual benefit for FITS – USFCA regarding the new lowest category of coach? How will the proposed testing system benefit all concerned?

Fencing In The Schools Benefit:

- The new level(s) would provide an added layer of legitimacy for our program and training of teachers.
- Teachers are required to get a certain number of professional development hours and this will make it easier for our training to count towards those hours.
- It would provide us with another "thought partner" on providing high quality materials and training to new teachers

USFCA Benefits:

- Assist in the spreading of fencing in schools and grassroots program
- Aligning with the largest introductory program in the country.

2. Please clarify The FITS vision of the levels of coach and their jobs and restrictions such as age?

Certified Introductory School Fencing Coach

- (Open to discussion) I think our idea is that these teachers would be certified to teach a specific introductory course or course(s) within a controlled set of skills and objectives. I.e. teach some basic maneuvers well.
- They would not be able to coach at clubs, give private lessons or work outside of that scope without additional training

Certified Varsity Fencing Coach:

- I think the idea here again is to provide a set of basic standards and operating procedures for after-school and varsity school coaches.
- There are a ton of people coaching in NJ, as an example, with no training or programs running doing after-school with no set curriculum. These Varsity coaches would be “more advanced” than the Certified Introductory Fencing Coach and would have more latitude but still operate within an approved Varsity Team curriculum or after-school curriculum
- Please Note: we haven’t yet created a Varsity Team Curriculum but we are in the midst of an 10 lesson after-school saber curriculum
- Safety, code of ethics, insuring a fun program etc. are as important to us as the technical skills at the lower levels.

3. Would the lowest level of test be purely online or would it require USFCA examiners to review video?

- Currently we train our PE school coaches with a 3-hour in-person training session plus online reinforcement and they also receive observations from our local fencing coordinators. With new coaches who have never done fencing before, I think having an in-person training experience is actually very important if they have never taught or done fencing before.
- If they have some experience with fencing, I could see online, but I’d prefer in-person for new people to fencing.
- For Varsity Coaches: Same idea. I think it matters if they have fencing experience or not. My vision for our training and certifying of these levels are “in-person” trainings for new people to fencing.

4. Who will the examiners be?

- This is an important aspect for us to grow fencing is certifying people to certify. **We’d like to be able to certify certifiers for these 2 levels with your consultation.** Currently, Olympian Jeff Spear and myself current conduct our

teacher trainings but we will need to grow that number next year as we are adding 30+ more schools across our 9 regions.

- These certifiers would just be at either the introductory school program level and/or the Varsity level

5. Explain how Fencing U will work

- Fencing University is the online portal for educational resources and content vs. Fencing In The Schools that is the actual programs and trainings.
- Fencing University is being built out with different units to teach fencing, after-school units, articles and soon it will include virtual coaching and we hope virtual certification as well with you.
- We are looking to build Fencing University into a community for coaching and training in the sport of fencing.

6. How will the money be handled/allocated?

- This is a function of the tool we use within Fencing University that is still in BETA version. For our pilot, the money is going into a Fencing U. bank account that we are then paying directly to our virtual coaches.
- We are in the process of trying to find a tool where the coaches can post their own schedules and have payment directly then you can set up a USFCA bank account for the training sessions and/or pay your certifier directly (this is what we intend as final solution)

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7. Is it the vision of FITS to have the examining and credentialing of coaches under USFCA auspices?

- We'd like to get "Credentialed" as a credentialed for these lower-level coaching levels so we can credential new coaches and credential our own lower level credentialors (not a word I know).
- Basically, we need to be mobile and able to scale easily as we intend to train thousands of coaches over the coming years.

8. What is the curriculum of the FITS program? How long does it last and what must be taught with an eye to USFCA-written exam?

- **Our Unit 1 can be found at Fencinguniversity.org use**
 - **Login: peter_burchard@hotmail.com**
 - **Password: fencing**

9. How many of these students from FITS continue into club fencing outside the school?

10. How long is the training process for the FITS coaches?

- The PE teacher training session is a 3 hours hands-on training session. I can send you the training document for the session if that's helpful.

11. Could you please send us the packet of info that the coaches for FITS receive for purposes of composing exams and for our greater understanding of your organization?
- The curriculum that includes training videos, core principals etc. is all on Fencing University. That's probably the best starting point and this is everything we teach them in Unit 1.