

Gary M. van der Wege

Gary has been involved in sport fencing since 1979. In 1991, he was in a motorcycle accident that left him with permanent damage to his legs. During the long recovery process, he began to focus on coaching and officiating as a way to “give back” to the fencing community that helped him through the difficult times.

Gary became a National level referee and Certified Referee Instructor. You can find him officiating at most of our NACs and National events. He trains and certifies referees and maintains active internationally with licenses for IWAS and Modern Pentathlon.

In 2000, he began training in Para (Wheelchair) Fencing winning six US National Championships (Four in Epee, one in Foil and one in Sabre). He qualified for and represented the US in numerous World Cups, the Paralympic Games in both Athens (2004) and London (2012), and was at one time ranked #8 in the world. He organized the first Para-World Cup to be held outside of Europe, bringing the 2002 IWAS World-Cup and Zonals to Texas.

Gary began his formal coaching training through many sessions of the USFA Coaches College. He is now a Master in both Foil and Epee, and Prevot in Sabre. He has served as South Region VP for the USFCA Board, gives and coordinates coaching seminars and certifies new coaches in his region. Gary organized the first major USFCA Coaches Academy in 2017.

Gary’s Master Thesis on adapting able-body coaching techniques to wheelchair, is the foundational training manual for the USFCA’s *Para-Coaching Certification Program*, which he also created.

Gary is the Head Coach of VANDERWEGE ACADEMIE D’ARMES. His students range in age from 7-72. He teaches Fencing at St. Edwards University (Austin, TX) and the community program at University of Incarnate Word (San Antonio, TX)