NCDP Special Topic Clinic: Building Your Coaching System

Dates: April 11–12, 2026

Coach Developers

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Location

Badger Fencing Club
7333 Mineral Point Road
Madison, WI 53717
608-931-0335

Parking: Free parking in our dedicated parking lot outside of the building.

PLACES TO STAY

AmericInn by Wyndham Madison West (0.5 mile)
516 Grand Canyon Dr, Madison, WI 53719
608-535-4712

Best Western West Towne Suites (0.5 mile)
650 Grand Canyon Dr, Madison, WI 53719
608-833-4200

Hampton Inn & Suites Madison-West (1 mile)
483 Commerce Dr, Madison, WI 53719
608-271-0200

Clinic Meeting Times

Saturday: 8:30am–12:30pm; 1:30pm–5:30pm
Sunday: 8:30am–12:30pm; 1:30pm–5:30pm

Continuing Education Hours: 16

Cost: $300 for USFCA members, $400 for non-members

Weapon Focus: epee and sabre

Equipment Needed: Coaching equipment and athletic attire; epee coaches must have knickers or long pants. Street shoes are not allowed on the fencing floor. Coaches will participate in drills and lessons.

Workshop Description
The best coaches have a "through-line" in the training they provide: a consistent, scalable set of ideas, techniques, and approaches that can be applied to any fencer of any skill level. Whether those students are new beginners or world-class competitors, a coach who has and understands their system doesn't reinvent exercises, they simply adapt them.

Few of us have had the good fortune, however, to be formally trained as coaches in such a system. Instead, we take what our own coaches did and add bits and pieces that we pick up from clinics, videos, and observation. If we're not careful, our coaching becomes a "bag of tricks" rather than a unified approach. Not only can this lead to more work for us, but it becomes very easy to get stuck in a loop of middling success.

In this clinic, Coaches in Training will learn how to begin systematizing their coaching with the goal of having a through-line in their teaching that can carry students to the highest levels of success. Through lots of hands-on practice and short discussions, we'll examine the fundamental forces (including distance, tempo, and timing) that shape the sport. We'll ask ourselves how we can take what we already do and make it applicable to all levels of fencer skill. We'll then practice lesson skills that make a through-line possible in our coaching.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the clinic, Coaches in Training will be able to…

- Explain what a coaching through-line is, how it shapes group and individual instruction, and why it is important to have
- Construct the fundamental framework for their own coaching system or approach
- Consciously and thoughtfully make decisions about their coaching choices
- Provide clear, consistent cues in a lesson
- Examine, evaluate, and decide whether or not new coaching approaches they encounter would be a good fit in their own through-line
- Develop exercises, classes, and lessons that mutually support each other and follow a systematized approach to coaching

Clinic Daily Schedule

SATURDAY
8:30am–12:30pm

1) Introductions
2) Overview of building blocks of a coaching system
3) Identifying a coaching approach and developing a through-line
4) Putting an approach into practice and building content for large groups and teams

1:30pm–5:30pm

1) Discussion of progress benchmarks for fencers
2) Overview of periodization and building training for a season
3) Practicing tactical progression in large-group settings; how to mix levels of experience in the same class
4) Class demonstrations
5) Hands-on practice for working with groups

SUNDAY

8:30am–12:30pm

1) Examination of how to incorporate new ideas into our own approach
2) Examination of the through-line in lessons
3) Practice developing consistent cues with other coaches

1:30pm–5:30pm

1) Lesson demonstrations
2) Building lessons
3) Re-examining and refining the through-line

Diversity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility Statement

This clinic is committed to diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility espoused by the USFCA. Specifically, students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives will be welcomed and served by Badger Fencing Club and this clinic, students' learning needs will be addressed both in and out of class, and diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Presentations will be accessible to individuals with mobility disabilities and will mitigate the effects of other disabilities that might present a barrier to attendees.