USFCA Coaches Academy 2025

In-person four-day National Coaching Development Program (NCDP) Clinic offers:
29 Total hours with 4 Formative assessments 3 Course Hours
26 Core Hours - foil /epee 18.5 Core and 7.5 Special Topics Hours - sabre

Academy Location: Nova Fencing Club
3505 Carlin Springs Rd. Falls Church, VA 22041
(703) 999-8077 Host: Greg Kaidanov info@novafencingclub.com

Days	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sunday
Sept	9/11	9/12	9/13	9/14
	9-10:30 Orientation and Coaching Philosophy		8:30-12:00 AM Core Clinic Epee / Foil	
	10:30-12:00 PM Core Clinic	8:30-12:00 PM Core Clinic	8:30-12:00 PM ST = Special Topic Sabre	8-12:15 PM Core Clinic
Lunch 12:00 -12:45 pm (catered paid in advance)				
	12:45-1:45 PM Lecture	12:45-1:45 PM Lecture	12:45-2:45 NCDP Foil / Epee ST Clinic Sabre	Exams 1-3 PM Level 4-5
	1:45- 2:00 PM Break	1:45- 2:00 PM Break	2:45- 3:00 PM Break	
	2-6 PM Core Clinic	2-6 PM Core Clinic	3:00-5:00 NCDP Foil / Epee ST Clinic Sabre	
			5-6 pm lecture	
		7:00 - 8:30 PM Exams	7:00 - 9:00 PM Exams	

These hours can be applied toward a Level 2 or Level 3 Certification, or for continuing education credits for Levels 4 and 5

https://usfca.org/view-clinic-details/?clinicid=155

Schedule: Dates: September 11-14, 2025 Cost: Face-to-face Clinic and Course lecture hours: Members $625 Non-members: $725

To attend September 13-14, Saturday and 1/2 day Sunday: member rate is $375, Non-members $425

If you register for the clinic before August 15th, 2025, there is a $50 early bird discount for in-person coaches.

Cost $100 for students: train all four days and unlimited lessons from coaches (bring full gear for electric bouting during teaching breaks)

Cost for coaches and students catered Lunch Meal Plan: $54 for the three days (or bring your own). Vegetarian option available.

Coach Developers/USFCA staff organizers:
Connie Louie, PhD Clinical Psychology, Maître de Sabre
Jill Feldman, Prévôt d'Armes Allen Evans, Prévôt d'Armes
Rob Handelman, D.C, Maître d'Armes Mark Masters, Maître d'Armes David Sierra, Maître d'Armes

Special Weapon Instructor and lecturer:
Sara Vicenzin, Maître d'Armes

Travel and Lodging Information
Airport: The nearest airport to Falls Church is Reagan Washington (DCA) Airport, which is 7.2 miles away. Other nearby airports include Washington Dulles (IAD) (15.8 miles)

A Hotel Discount is negotiated until August 20th, by Group Housing at the:
Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Alexandria West / Mark Center
Free self-parking Complimentary Breakfast
3.7 miles from Nova Fencing Center: 10 - 13 min by car
Link: https://groups.reservetravel.com/group.aspx?id=86935
Air B&B homes are also available in the Falls Church area.

Clinic description:

Coaches Academy's hands-on, three-weapon clinic features a hands-on instructional clinic and three hours of lectures led by experienced coach developers and world-class coaches. Training sessions will instruct beginning through advanced coaches. All levels of coaches are welcome! Lectures will cover various topics – see below.

Total number of Face-to-Face NCDP Core clinic hours: 26 Foil and Epee Total NCDP Core 18.5 and Special Topics 7.5 hours for Sabre
Total number of Coursework hours: 3 (Can be applied to elective requirements)
16 hours of NCDP Core clinic will contribute to the completion of the course requirements for Moniteur certification (Required online course work and instruction received or equivalency should be completed before the Academy, and logs for lessons given should be completed after.
Go to https://usfca.org/moniteur/ for complete details on the NCDP Pathway to Moniteur. For L4/L5 coaches, the Core Clinic and Special Topics hours count towards continuing education.

Our teaching goal is to have every level coach improve their coaching knowledge and ability to present various coaching cues and preparations. During the gym floor sessions, the lead coaches will explain, demonstrate, guide, correct, and critique with positive feedback coaching methods. The attending coaches will practice the actions immediately with a student (from Nova Fencing or their own). Coaches-in-Training will develop lessons using the fencing elements of distance, timing, tempo, speed, and initiative to help improve their students.

What can Level 4-5 Prévôts and Masters Coaches expect from classes on the gym floor?
The technique in all three weapons will focus on individual Teaching and Option lessons with application to the high-level competition bout.

Learning Objectives for all Three Weapons
All coaches, Level 3-5, will learn:

- How to use the different individual lessons for training varied levels and ages of fencers
- Technical drills to develop aspects of competitive one-tempo fencing situations
- Drill progression methods for:
  - Footwork
  - Lesson Progressions
  - Coach vs student-initiated actions

Level 4-5 Prévôts and Masters will learn how to integrate advanced techniques in option lesson formats with:

- Tactical situational drills
- Two tempo actions and preparations
- Second intention actions with tactical situations - foreseen (premeditated) vs. unforeseen actions
- Varied timing, distance, tempo, speed, and unpredictable reactions of high-level opponents

Materials Recommended in Preparation for the Academy:

- Coaches are expected to attend the clinic fully equipped to give an individual lesson (coach jacket, mask, glove, sweat pants, weapons, etc.)
- It would be helpful to come with another coach or student
- A notebook or a video recorder is allowed

Suggested Reading or Viewing:

- *Vass - Epee Technique and Terminology*
- *Lukovich - Electric Foil Fencing*
- *Wojciechowski, Z. 1986. Theory, Methods, and Exercises in Fencing. Datchet Berks, England: Libra Printing.*
- *Taking Foil Groups to the Competitive Level,* Vinnie Bradford, 1994
- *Fencing Sabre: A Practical Training Guide for Coaches, Parents and Young Athletes*, Handelman and Louie, Second Edition 2015, Pattinando Publishing, San Francisco, CA
- *Fencing Foil: A Practical Training Guide for Coaches, Parents and Young Athletes,* Handelman and Louie, 2015, Pattinando Publishing, S.F., CA
- USFCA Everything Epee Course

Live Lecture Classes: available for remote attendance

All lecture classes are included in the face-to-face tuition. The three-hour of courses will count as elective CEU credit for all levels of certification.

Lecture Classes:

Please supply any questions in advance for all sessions. Email to robhandelman@gmail.com

Thursday, Sept 11:

12:45-1:45 pm EST *Youth Training program concepts to build a Y10/ 12 program, all weapons - Connie Louie-Handelman and staff*

Friday, Sept 12:

12:45-1:45 pm EST *Competitive Strip Coaching: USFCA staff*

Saturday, Sept 13:

5:00-6:00 pm EST *"Modern Epee Fencing: Preparation, Actions, Distance, and Considerations for American Epee Coaches"* - Damien Lehfeldt

Testing for certification

Practical exams will be available to **schedule in advance** for **Prévôt or Maître** levels 4 and 5 coaches - contact ***robhandelman@gmail.com***

To be eligible to take a practical exam at the Coaches Academy, you must:

- Be a member of the United States Fencing Coaches Association
- Take the online written exam through the USFCA website and pass with 75% before the practical exam
- Have a completed thesis for Maître
- One-on-one practical exams (scheduled at the Academy) must be passed with 75% to earn certification.

What to bring to the practical exam

- Proof of membership, and you should know your membership number
- Proof of passing the written exam
- Proof of payment for the practical exam
- Candidates must be FenceSafe Certified and have a current background check on file with USA Fencing

Diversity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility Statement:

The USFCA Coaches Academy is committed to the diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility espoused by the USFCA. Specifically, students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives will be welcomed and served by this Academy, students' learning needs will be addressed both in and out of class, and the diversity that the students bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. We intend 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.

2025 Coaches Academy Schedule

Date	***Time***	***Presentations***		
Thursday September 11	9:00- 9:30 AM	Sign in, registration, *Introductions, daily schedule, learning outcomes, facility gear storage, etc.* *Assign areas for student lessons, free fencing, and rest during the main instruction demos*		
	9:30 -10:30 AM	Coaching Philosophy Workshop and Technique: Led by David Sierra and USFCA Staff		
	10:30 -12:00 PM	Foil Coaching with USFCA Staff	Epee Coaching with USFCA Staff	Sabre Coaching with USFCA Staff
	12:00 - 12:45 PM	**Lunch - catered meal plan**		
	12:45-1:45 PM	Youth Training program concepts to build a Y10/ 12 program all weapons: Connie Louie, Staff		
		1:45- 2:00 PM Break		
	2:00-6:00 PM	Foil Coaching with USFCA Staff	Epee Coaching with USFCA Staff	Sabre Coaching with USFCA Staff
Friday September 12	8:30-12:00 PM	Foil Coaching with USFCA Staff	*Epee Coaching with USFCA Staff*	*Sabre Coaching with USFCA Staff*
	12:00-12:45 PM	**Lunch - catered meal plan**		
	12:45-1:45 PM	Strip Coaching Communication for Competitive Fencers: Staff		
		1:45- 2:00 PM Break		
	2:00-6:00 PM	Foil Coaching with USFCA Staff	Epee Coaching with USFCA Staff	Sabre Coaching with USFCA Staff
	7:00 - 8:30 PM	PRACTICAL EXAMS		

Saturday September 13	*8:30-12:00 AM*	*Foil Coaching with USFCA Staff*	*Epee Coaching with USFCA Staff*	*Sabre Coaching with Sara Vicenzin, Assisted by USFCA Staff*
	12:00-12:45 PM	**Lunch - catered meal plan**		
	12:45-2:45 PM	*Foil Coaching with USFCA Staff*	*Epee Coaching with USFCA Staff*	*Sabre Coaching with Sara Vicenzin, Assisted by USFCA Staff*
		2:45- 3:00 PM Break		
	3:00-5:00 PM	*Foil Coaching with USFCA Staff*	*Epee Coaching with USFCA Staff*	*Sabre Coaching with Sara Vicenzin, Assisted by USFCA Staff*
	5:15-6:15 PM	"Modern Epee Fencing: Preparation, Actions, Distance, and Considerations for American Epee Coaches" by Damien Lehfeldt		
	7:00 - 9:00 PM	Exams		
Sunday September 14	8:00-12:00 PM	NCDP Core Hours – Foil Epee Sabre Coaching Advanced lesson techniques (all three weapons): Option and teaching lessons 4 hours of NCDP core training, integrating the new actions learned into the lessons. USFCA Coach Developer Staff		
	12:00-1:00 PM	**Clinic ends at Noon Lunch for examiners**		
	1:00-3:00 PM	**PRACTICAL EXAMS – Levels 4-5 - If needed**		

Presenter and Staff Biographies

Sara Vicenzin, Maître d'Armes

Sara has been involved in Fencing for over 45 years and in 2024 was appointed the sabre coach at Columbia University. She was first introduced to the sport as an athlete. Following her athletic career, she found her passion in coaching and has been coaching for the past 25 years. In 2005, she earned her "Maestro of Fencing" Degree in Italy at the National Academy of Fencing. Additionally, Sara earned a Sports Management Degree and a Social Community Manager Degree in Rome, Italy.

Her first job was coaching students in her competitive fencing club in Italy. There, she was able to produce several cadet and junior world championship medalists, World Cup medalists, and national team members. She then traveled on to work with the Italian National team for 14 years. In addition to working with the national team, Sara helped many foreign national team fencers as well.

Connie Louie, PhD., Maître de Sabre

Dr. Connie Louie, a competitive foil fencer for 16 years, trained with the French national team and has competed internationally. Dr. Louie was on the US Olympic Training Squad for three years and fenced with the US Women's Foil Team in Europe. Dr. Louie received her Maître in Sabre from the US Fencing Coaches Association in February 2013.

In 1994, Dr. Louie earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from an accredited APA internship and school. After graduation, she received specialized training in Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, hypnosis, timeline therapy, and Emotional Freedom Techniques, along with traditional training in cognitive-behavioral techniques, psychodynamic therapy, and humanistic therapy. Now retired, and while in private practice, she specialized in sports psychology with competitive fencers.

She is a co-author of two fencing texts that are both used to train coaches in the US, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia, and fencers all over the world - *Fencing Sabre: A Practical Training Guide for Coaches, Parents, and Young Athletes* (2010 & 2015 2nd ed.) and *Fencing Foil: A Practical Training Guide for Coaches, Parents, and Young Athletes (2014).*

While serving in Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom 2011-2012, Captain Louie, an Army psychologist, was the officer-in-charge of a combat stress control unit at a forward operating base. When off duty, she taught sabre classes to soldiers, which helped them stay fit and uphold their fighting spirit. She authored *The Hidden War: PTSD on the Front Lines* (2018).

Dr. Louie is the creator and trainer of the face-to-face course "Sports Psychology for Parents and Coaches" and the USFCA online course "Strengthen the Communication between Coach and Athlete."

Rob Handelman, D.C., Maître d'Armes

After fencing on the Binghamton University varsity sabre team, coached by Paul Pesthy, Rob was accepted in 1972 to the Fencing Master School at the Institut National des Sports (INS) in Paris, France. He spent nearly three years earning his Fencing Master credential in all three weapons (sabre, foil, and épée). He is one of only three Americans to ever graduate from the INS. He was an A-rated competitor and fenced in many European World Cup competitions.

Maître Handelman was the head coach for the NCAA varsity team at UC Berkeley, taught coaches' clinics for the US Fencing Association at the Olympic training center at Squaw Valley, and training camps for our top junior fencers. He has coached US teams at the Olympic Sports Festivals and Junior World Championships, and he continues to coach at World Cup Events.

As a coach developer, he has organized and taught all three weapons at international clinics in Canada, China, Hungary, Australia, and national clinics throughout the U.S. for the USFCA.

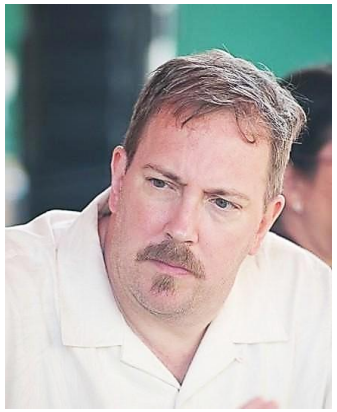
Former co-owner/head coach of the SF Youth Fencing program at Halberstadt Fencers' Club from 2006 to 2022. He instructed 7 – 18-year-old competitive youth fencers from beginning to elite levels. (The last two years he ran the SF Youth program, his fencers ranked second in the number of national medals earned by sabre clubs in the U.S.) His students have been national finalists, national team members, and national champions in all three weapons.

He has a Doctorate in Chiropractic and specialized in sports injuries from 1983 until he retired from chiropractic in 2010. He served on the USA Fencing Medical Commission for 4 years.

For six years, Maître Handelman was the chair of the USFCA's certification and accreditation board and started the system to allow one weapon master. Currently, he is serving as the President of the USFCA, helping to create, develop, and implement a National Coaching Developmental Program (NCDP) for the USA. He is also the current Vice President of the AAI (Académie d'Armes Internationale).

Maître Handelman is the co-author of two internationally used fencing texts: *Fencing Sabre: A Practical Training Guide for Coaches, Parents and Young Athletes* (2010 & 2015 2nd ed.) and *Fencing Foil: A Practical Training Guide for Coaches, Parents and Young Athletes (2014).* He authored *The Addendum (2015),* a digital companion supplement for *Fencing Sabre and Foil books, covering c*oncepts for fencing training and physiology. Recently, he created two online courses offering certification hours for the USFCA: a 50+ hour online épée Zoom training course for advanced coaches and a Sports Safety Foundational course.

Allen Evans, Prévôt d'Armes



Allen Evans has been active in Fencing since the 1970s as an athlete, coach, referee, and administrator. As a coach, he holds the title of Prévôt d'Armes from the USFCA and the AAI. In addition, he holds Level 4 Certificates in foil and epee and a Level 3 Certificate in saber from the USA Fencing Coaches College, where he was named "top student" on numerous occasions. He is also a graduate of USA Fencing's Leadership Academy.

Allen has competed in all three weapons and currently competes nationally as a Veteran Epee fencer, having been ranked as high as 15th in the United States in his age group. He is also a past national finalist in the Vet-40 age group and earned a team bronze at the 2024 Can-Am epee tournament.

Allen is the editor and author of numerous articles on the "*Fencing Coaches Compendium*" website. He continues to contribute to this website, and his articles have been cited in numerous Fencing Master Theses. In 2008, he was named a "Fencing Expert" by Fencing.net

Currently, Allen is the Chair of the USA Fencing Coaching Committee and acts as a consulting coach for numerous clubs in the United States. He has organized, taught, and attended numerous coaching workshops and clinics with National and International coaches, including Leon and Yve Auriol, Gary Copeland, Vladimir Nazlymov, Ro Sobalvarro, Bucky Leach, Michael Marx, Sebastian Dos Santos, and Michel Sicard.

Jill Feldman, Prévôt d'Armes

Coach Jill Feldman holds a Moniteur diploma from the United States Fencing Coaches Association and certifications from the United States Fencing Association's Coaches College Program in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in all three weapons. In 2018, she completed the four-month FIE Coaching program in Budapest, Hungary, earning a Level 3 Sabre Coaching certificate. Jill is also a certified Parafencing coach and has attended numerous coaching camps and clinics, including working with the national Parafencing team members.

Jill comes from a strong competitive background, having won 1st place in the Mid-Atlantic Sectional Qualifying tournaments (sabre) for five straight years (1996-2000). In 1997, she won the Division III Summer National Championships, and in 1999, she finished 3rd in the Division IA Summer Nationals.

In addition to coaching and competing, Jill has held offices in the Capitol Division and the Mid-Atlantic Section of the US Fencing Association, and in 2024 was elected as the Southeast Vice President for the USFCA executive committee. She often serves as a member of the National Tournament Staff and has chaired many North American Cups and US National Championships. Jill also referees at the local and collegiate levels in all three weapons.

David Sierra, Maître d'Armes

David Sierra is the Head Men's and Women's Fencing Coach for the Division I NCAA program at Wagner College and a Certified Coach Developer for the USFCA. He also holds the Diploma Courso Panamericano de Formación de Maestros from the Confderación Panamericana de Esgrima. David served on the USFCA Certification and Accreditation Board from 2016-2022 and was the CAB Chair from 2020-2022.

David serves as a staff member for the USFCA, managing the USFCA's education missions and providing staff support to the CAB, NCDP Oversight, Parafencing Task Force, and ParaBlind Task Force. He is the lead developer for the National Coaching Development Program (NCDP), managing a diverse group of over 40 contributors.

David's Coaching Philosophy is centered on the long-term development of the athlete, focused on technical and tactical excellence, a collaborative learning environment, and a strong code of ethics and accountability. Before becoming the Head Coach at Wagner, he ran a highly successful sabre club in Fort Worth, Texas, and placed students on several NCAA teams, including Notre Dame, Ohio State, Air Force, Stevens, and Brandeis. He is particularly dedicated to Veteran fencing and runs a popular series of veteran sabre clinics on the East Coast that attract participants from across the country.

Damien Lehfeldt, Maître d'Épée

Damien Lehfeldt has been a dedicated member of the fencing community for nearly 30 years. Widely recognized for his contributions to the sport of fencing, he is a USFCA Maestro of Epee and has coached numerous national medalists and an Olympian in Modern Pentathlon. He is the creator of "The Fencing Coach," a blog that has provided valuable resources to athletes, coaches, and parents for over a decade and has had over 3,000,000 reads on his articles.

Lehfeldt previously served on the Men's Epee National Team as the director of strategy and analytics, where he created a proprietary methodology used to provide critical insights on top-tier opponents- a role that came directly from his research for his USFCA Maestro thesis. He currently serves as the President/Chairman of USA Fencing, where he leads with a mission to make fencing more accessible to the community.

In addition to his fencing career, Damien has built a successful professional career in management consulting. He specializes in change management, communications, Agile methodologies, organizational effectiveness, and learning & development. His expertise has primarily been applied in the financial services sector. He resides in Virginia with his wife and two children.

Mark Masters, Maître d'Armes

Head Fencing Master and founder of Fencing Academy of Philadelphia, Mark Masters is a certified fitness instructor from the American College of Sports Medicine. In addition to his certifications from the US Fencing Coaches Association and the International Academy of Arms as a fencing master, Maestro Masters holds a degree as Master of Arts & Education in Recreation Programming and Management. Maestro graduated Cum Laude from Wayne State University with a Master of Arts degree in Education.

As a competitor, Maestro lived and trained abroad with some of the best European fencing masters. Leading the first full-time professional fencing business in the country, Maestro has inspired many other clubs and coaches. Maestro Masters has had numerous personal and coaching achievements in the sport of fencing. He takes pride in these significant results, such as training Olympic gold medalist Maia Weintrub, world champions Graham Wicas in épée and Delia Turner in saber, as well as Junior World team fencers in all weapons.