

Fencing

History of



Fencing developed from an ancient form of combat and is one of the few sports that has appeared on every Olympic Program since the first Modern Games in 1896. German fencing masters organized the first guilds in the 15th century, however, in 1570, Frenchman Henri Saint-Didier named most of fencing's major movements and his classifications continue to be used in fencing today.

The popularity of fencing as a sport increased in the 17th century with the advent of three new modifications that greatly reduced the likelihood

of a fencer sustaining an injury.

- The first was the creation of a new 'foil' or flattened tipped sword. This light practice weapon was padded which also helped decrease injuries.
- The next innovation was the implementation of a set of rules limiting the target area to specific areas of the body.
- The last addition was the quadrille, a wire-mesh mask that protects the face.

At the Olympics

Since its debut in the 1896 Olympic Games, men's fencing has been contested in three disciplines: the epee, the foil and the sabre. Contrastingly, women's fencing has made a gradual appearance on the Olympic program. The foil competition was added in 1924, the sabre in 1996 and finally epee was contested for the first time at the 2004 Games. In addition to the individual events, a women's team sabre event and men's team events in all three disciplines are contested.

Competitions are held in a single elimination format. Matches consist of three, 3-minute long rounds with a 1-minute break between rounds. Competitors attempt to strike their opponent in the approved target areas to score points.

Target areas varying according to the blade used. The first athlete to score 15 valid hits or the athlete with the greater number of hits by the end of the match wins. If the match is tied at the end of regulation time, one minute of overtime is played and the first athlete to score a valid hit on her opponent wins.



The team competition is made up of teams of three athletes and the first team to score a total of 45 hits, or the team with the greater number of hits by the end of the match - wins. If the teams are tied at the end of regulation, one minute of extra time is added and the first team to score a hit wins the match.

Getting Involved

Fencing is truly a fast-paced sport and mental strategy is just as important as the physical prowess. To get involved in this fierce sport, visit www.fencing.ca for a complete list of fencing clubs nearest you.