

A Beginner's Guide To ÉPÉE Fencing Equipment:

Like many sports, Modern Fencing requires a number of specialized items of Equipment. There are specific articles of Clothing, Protective Items and Electrical Equipment.

SHOES: [Athletic - Flexible Stability - Lighter Weight]

A few athletic shoe manufacturers make shoes specifically designed for the dynamics of Fencing. Generally, these shoes tend to sit a bit Lower, have Flexible Soles & Uppers, have a Durable Inner Edge to resist the wear from foot drag on the Lunge and of course have Good Traction. However, Fencing Shoes can tend to be a bit expensive. In **Épée**, forward and rearward movements on the strip are generally not extensive, so many athletic style shoes can be appropriate. Lighter-weight "Court" shoes (Tennis and Volleyball) are commonly used. [Avoid shoes designed specifically for Running, Wrestling or other highly-specialized sports].

The GLOVE:

Fencing Gloves are specific to Fencing. They have long Cuffs of Elastic with a Velcro closure - to prevent blade points from entering the Jacket's Sleeve. Entry-Level Gloves sized "Small, Medium, Large" are fine. However, using a Glove specifically sized to the Fencer is recommended for a proper fit which will allow for better performance. Sizing: Measuring Around the Hand where it is Widest (Not including the Thumb) usually near the knuckles, with a fabric measuring tape (Or some string, and then measuring the length of string with a ruler): For example, a measurement of 8.25" to 8.5", would generally equate to a size 8.5 Glove.

The UNIFORM: [Jacket and Knickers (Fencing Pants)]

The Fencing Jacket is the first layer of protection. Jackets (and usually Knickers) are specifically designed as either Right or Left Handed. They

should be properly sized and be made of a Synthetic Stretch material.

Fencing equipment is available in "Standard/Non-FIE" and "FIE". [The International Fencing Federation - abbreviated "F.I.E.", sets Equipment Safety and Technical Standards]. FIE-rated items offer a higher level of protection and quality of manufacturing - however, they are Considerably More Expensive. FIE-rated Jackets/Knickers/Gloves are made from materials which offer resistance to puncture in the event that an opponent's Blade breaks during a Fencing bout.

Non-FIE uniforms may or may not offer an amount of puncture protection. Wearing Knickers and Up-to-the-Knee Socks is a good idea for protection (Both are required for Competitive Fencing in the U.S.). For the Beginning Fencer, wearing long light-weight sweatpants is sufficient.

It is probably best to purchase Non-FIE Uniforms to start-out with (E.g. Price Point; After being used for Fencing, the size may be found to be not quite just right). Many Fencers who start Competing, will use their Beginning Equipment for Practice, so that they can keep their Competition Equipment in Optimal condition.

SIZING CONSIDERATIONS: [European v. U.S./U.K.]

Always carefully follow each Vendor's Measuring & Sizing Instructions. Be aware that Fencing Jackets and Knickers may be marked with European Sizes. Vendors may sell their items by their European or U.S./U.K. sizes. (Look for Conversion Tables for size confirmation).

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT: [Second/Third Layer Protection]

The UNDERARM PORTECTOR: [Fabric "PLASTRON"]

A Fabric Underarm Protector looks like 3 quarters of a T-shirt with one Half-Sleeve (with Nylon/Elastic straps). They are worn under the Jacket on the Weapon-Side, as a Second Layer of Protection against a puncture from a

broken blade. They Must Always be worn by both Males and Females.

The CHEST PROTECTOR: [Hard Plastic]

Plastic Chest Protectors can also be worn in addition to the Underarm Protector. For Females, they are Required at All times. It is a good idea for All Children to wear them while becoming accustomed to being hit. *It is highly advised that Males wear a Protective Cup.

The MASK:

Epee Masks are sold as either "Epee" or "Combination" (Sold with a Removable Foil Bib Lame) and are available in Non-FIE and FIE. They are usually sized as Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large. Follow the sizing instructions. Their fit should be snug enough to not move on the head during Fencing. [Masks with a Removable Liner/Padding are advantageous as they allow for Cleaning, and for Minor Size/Fit Adjustments].

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:

ÉPÉEs [Complete Weapons]

The Épée is an Electrical Device consisting of approximately 14 component parts. While they are relatively sturdy, Épées require constant maintenance to keep them operating as intended. The Main parts are: The Blade (with 2 Wires glued into the Groove); The Point; The Guard; The *Socket; The Guard Pad and The Grip (with a Washer and a Pommel Nut).

***[2021 Pending Rule Change for Competitions: Sockets with (2) Holes/Tunnels for the Blade Wires to be routed thru].**

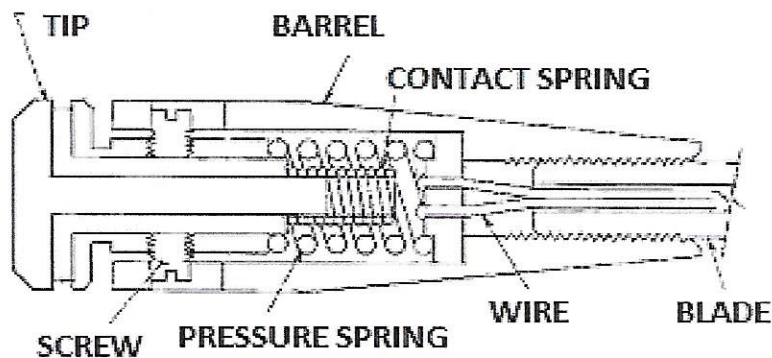
Blades are cut to fit specific length Grips and are Set (Bent) for either a Right or Left Handed Grip. Blades are sized #5 for adults/teens (Size 2 for kids under age 10). Guards are sized for the #5 (Smaller guards may be available for use on #2 Blades). There are different Strength/Weight Guards available. Grips are either "French" or "Pistol". Choice of Grip will be based upon each Fencer's Experience level and Fencing Style. French

Grip Length Blades can be cut for use with a Pistol Grip. There are different Styles and Sizes of Pistol Grips. ["German" style Wiring and Points/Parts (Allstar or Uhlmann) are more common, and are Preferred]. "Inside" Pommel Nuts are used for Pistol Grips (Requiring a 6mm "Allen Key"), and Hand-Tightened Pommels are used for French Grips.

Weapon Maintenance

All Blades eventually Break (life-span depends upon amount of use and how they were used. Improper use shortens their life). A slight Downward bend should be maintained in the Forward to Mid-section of Blades. Blades often break during straightening, so use the floor and the bottom of your shoe to avoid injury. FIE blades tend to last longer, however, they can be a bit heavier/stiffer. Pommel nuts and Tip Screws need to be kept Tightened. Tips Become "Crunchy" (No longer moving Smoothly) and as the result, may fail to signal Touches on the Scoring Box. This is caused by too many hits to hard surfaces, which results in scarring on the inside of the Barrel and/or mis-shapen Tip Screws. Barrels may become Loose [The Barrel is Tightened on the Blade CLOCKWISE (looking Down at the Tip of the Point). NEVER turn the Barrel Counter-Clockwise - that will Break the Wires, Disabling the Weapon]. The Wire connections on Sockets need to be kept tightened and the Wires kept protected inside the Guard. Springs weaken, so do not store weapons in a manner that causes the Tips to be Depressed.

The Conventional ÉPÉE Point [In Cross-Section]:



***BODYCORDS: [Extension Cord Worn Inside the Jacket]**

The Bodycord connects the Épée to the Club's Floor-Cord Reel, which is connected to the Scoring Box. [As with All electrical cords, NEVER Unplug Cords by pulling on the Wire - USE the PLUGs]. The Wires inside the Bodycords weaken and start breaking while fencing (the end near to the Weapon Socket, close to the Fencer's wrist). Breaks in the Bodycord wires eventually result in Electrical Malfunctions. It is a good idea to label one end of Bodycords (Small marks or Piece of tape) and designate it as either the Reel or Weapon end of the cord. This helps when diagnosing and repairing the Cords (Shortening the end of the Cord past the Break and then reconnecting the Wires inside the Plug). Never coil or wrap Bodycords around anything. Store them so that they are protected from moisture. ***[Competitions May Require the use of Clear Plugs].**

SOURCES OF FENCING EQUIPMENT:

On-line Vendors: The Fencing Post; Absolute Fencing Gear; Alliance Fencing Equipment; Leon Paul USA (In the U.K.).

Confer with the Coach or more experienced Fencers for additional information regarding equipment issues.

Shawn [Updated: 2021]

PISTOL-GRIP EPEES:

"The Fencing Post" - (Thefencingpost.com) California.

"Absolute Fencing" - (Absolutefencinggear.com) New Jersey.

"Leon Paul USA" - (Leonpaulusa.com) Located in the U.K.

It is easier to purchase Complete Epees - beginning with choosing the Blades:

It is best for beginners to use the much less expensive "Non-FIE" Blades (With German-style wiring). Brands to choose from are Allstar; Uhlmann; Leon Paul; STM; FOLO.

****When you order Replacement Wired Blades : Do Not Handle or Remove the Plastic/Paper wrapping covering the Wiring at the Tang of the Blade. It is EASY to Damage the wiring there - Making the weapon UN-USABLE without considerable Expense and Effort. Store and Transport the Blades in the Shipping Box/Tube.**

GUARDS: Guards are made of Aluminum or Titanium or both. Guards in the 102 Gr. to 106 Gr. weights are good for Pistol Grip Epees. Lighter Guards can tend to Dent rather easily.

SOCKETS (2-Hole): *Ask for Sockets with 2-holes/tunnels for Blade Wire attachment. Allstar; Uhlmann; Leon Paul.

GUARD PADS: (Provide protection for the Wires) Get CLEAR ones.

GRIPS: "Visconti" Design, by Uhlmann or Allstar.

SIZING & BRAND: Be consistent, so the Feel and Aim Point is the same for all your weapons. Each brand's design will be slightly different. (Postsport grips are heavier).

POMMEL NUTS - INSIDE HEX FOR PISTOL GRIP And LOCK WASHERS:

*You will also need a 6MM Hex/Allen Key wrench.

SPARE EPEE TIP SCREWS: Get "ALLSTAR" brand Only [Not the "FWF" brand].

Tip Screws are constantly falling-out or needing to be changed - have spares with you.

SCREWDRIVER: A 1.5mm Slotted Screwdriver (Magnetize it). I suggest a "Wiha" brand - #26015, 1.5 x 40mm (AMAZON) a 1.8mm will also work].

BODYCORDS (Clear Plugs): Allstar/Uhlmann; Leon Paul (The Best/Easiest to Repair).

Shawn [Updated: 2021]

FRENCH-GRIP EPEEs: [Ultra-Lightweight - If "Pommelling"]

Fencing with a French Grip by holding it at the End of the Grip - "Pommelling" or "Posting", allows one to significantly extend their reach. This Fencing style differs completely from using a Pistol Grip. **Use the Lightest-Weight Epee as possible.**

FROM: "LEON PAUL USA" (*They are located in the U.K.): (Leonpaulusa.com)

*Leon Paul equipment is made in and shipped from the U.K. - So, additional Fees & Shipping costs may be involved. (Their High Quality is worth the bit of extra cost).

WIRED BLADES:** LEON PAUL - Standard Blade (Size 5 / Non-FIE). The Lightest blades made - "V" shaped - High Quality and Very Long Lasting. These are the ones to get.

****[When you order Wired Blades: Do Not Handle or Remove the Plastic/Paper wrapping covering the Wiring at the Tang of the Blade. It is EASY to Damage the wiring there - Making the weapon UN-USABLE without considerable Expense and Effort. Store and Transport the Blades in their Shipping Box/Tube].**

SOCKETS: LEON PAUL - "Lightweight FIE Epee Socket" / (21 Gr.). They have the 2 Separate Tunnels for attaching the blade wires (*Most likely soon to be Required for U.S. Competitions) And are Ultra-Light. Otherwise ALLSTAR / UHLMANN (31 Gr.).

GUARD PADS: "Pro-Range EPEE Pad" - Clear.

BODYCORDS: *Get ones with the Clear Plugs (*Likely soon to be Required for U.S. Competitions). LEON PAUL's are the Best and the Easiest to Repair.

[Other Vendors: **THE FENCING POST:** California, Or **ABSOLUTE FENCING:** New Jersey]:

GUARDS: For Pommelling, I would recommend using a Guard no heavier than 86 Gr. ALLSTAR/UHLMANN make them. "FWF" (Fence With Fun) makes one in 72 Gr.

(Marked "TL" on the Front) however, at 1MM Thickness, they tend to dent rather easily.

GRIPS: There are many available - Try the "Absolute Leather French Grip" - ABSOLUTE FENCING. Or the UHLMANN "French Plastic Core" - THE FENCING POST.

EPEE FRENCH GRIP POMMEL NUTS: THE FENCING POST - "KARMA" Ultra-Light (86-88 Gr.). These are the ones to get (May be available in different colors).

LOCK WASHERS For FRENCH GRIPS: THE FENCING POST.

EPEE TIP SCREWS: Get ALLSTAR brand Only. [NOT the FWF brand]. Tip Screws are constantly falling-out or are needing to be changed - have spares with you.

SCREWDRIVER: You will need to get a 1.5mm Slotted Driver & Magnetize it. I suggest a: "Wiha" Brand - #26015, 1.5 x 40mm - AMAZON. A 1.8mm will work as well.

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