

Mental Preparation Tips for Competition

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Ready? Fence!

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Being mentally prepared for a tournament is just as important as being physically prepared. A successful fencer requires strong muscles, quick reactions, and refined motor skills to defeat their opponent. Having a strong mind, quick attitude responses, and tailored mental skills gives an equaled matched fencer a distinct advantage over their competition.

Mental preparation involves these four key elements:

- 1) Feeling that you are ready to compete. Developing this important aspect starts long before you actually compete. With each step of preparation for a tournament, you remind yourself that you are getting more and more ready to compete. If you feel that you are not ready, then you have already created a major shortcoming in your preparation.
- 2) Trusting your skills and abilities. The confidence is defined as knowing that you are able to perform certain skills. Feeling that you are a good fencer because you can execute the necessary skills at the necessary time is a huge step in the mental preparation process. There are fencers who have tremendous accomplishments who lack confidence. On the contrary, you can have confidence without your desired accomplishment.
- 3) Focus on fencing well. When you fence well, good things will happen. By focusing on winning alone, you create an unnecessary distraction that pressures you, rather than relaxes you. This step involves having no expectations about your performance. This step involves developing proper self-talk.
- 4) Coping with adversity. I've seen it so many times. A fencer may be struggling in a tough bout, but hanging in there. Then out of the blue, one thing goes wrong and they explode in a fit of anger, or mentally break down. Being prepared for anything puts you ahead of your competition. Fine tuning this skill involves learning about control, and how heavily it affects your ability to keep your head in the bout.

Following this article will be a series of articles that will detail and expand upon each of these key elements. Like learning to master a parry or how to recognize proper attack distance, developing each of these elements require commitment, discipline, and repetition.

Through learning these mental preparation skills, making the effort to improve your overall fencing game can certainly pay off!