

Equipment Guide - AFC

Before You Buy

Things to consider

Buying Online vs. Buying at Tournaments

For the most part you will buy your equipment online; you will have the widest range of choices and prices online (see **Vendor** list below). Some of the larger tournaments in Texas have an equipment vendor on-site; buying directly has the advantage of letting you see and try on equipment, but there is less choice available. You can check with Coach Eric to find out which tournaments will have vendors; you can also look at the online tournament database, www.askfred.net, for tournament listings.

Recreational vs. Competitive

Recreational fencers are welcome to use the club gear for their first six months of fencing. Recreational fencers who want their own gear can in general opt for inexpensive items, and should buy in this order: mask/mask cord, foil(s) & body cord(s), lame, bag. (Glove & jacket are provided with your registration fee.)

COVID update: due to coronavirus concerns, AFC is no longer loaning **masks** to beginner/recreational fencers. Fencers returning to training after the shutdown should plan to buy and bring their own masks. We can still loan you foils and electric equipment as these are easier to sanitize.

Competitive fencers are expected to buy and maintain their own gear. Competitive fencers should opt for good-quality gear that provides a higher level of durability and safety. Competitive fencers need all the equipment on this list.

Requirements for **competing** in tournaments are:

- minimum 2 weapons (Youth-10 must use the shorter #2 blade)
- minimum 2 body cords
- minimum 2 mask cords
- mask with electric bib; must pass conductivity and punch test
- lame that fits properly and passes a conductivity test
- glove; must be free of holes
- fencing knickers worn with tall socks that fully cover the leg
- fencing jacket
- underarm protector

- chest protector for females of any age; please note the new 2018 rule requirements noted below

How Much To Spend?

There is a wide range of prices for fencing gear. In general, the younger and newer to the sport a fencer is, the cheaper you can go. Young fencers can quickly outgrow jackets, lames, knickers and masks, so beware of over-spending. Fencers who compete should buy sturdier equipment, which generally means more expensive; you will need to balance the cost of items the fencer may outgrow vs safety and durability, and Coach Eric can provide advice on what to buy. Adult fencers who compete should buy the best equipment their budget allows.

Equipment List

Mask (\$53-300)

Foil fencers need a mask with a **conductive bib**. Epee fencers do not need the conductive bib. Try on several masks at the club to get an idea of your size.

Vendors also typically have detailed sizing information online. An inexpensive mask is fine for younger fencers who are still growing. Adults and competitive youth fencers may want to buy a more durable (i.e., more expensive) mask.

Mask Cord (\$7-10)

This connects your mask to your lame for electric scoring. Recreational fencers need one mask cord; competitive fencers must have at least two.

Body Cord (\$15-35)

This connects your weapon to the scoring equipment. Foil fencers buy **two-prong foil** cords. Allstar/Uhlmann brand is recommended but not required.

Foil (\$42-150)

There are many options with foils, so if you are in doubt, check with Coach Eric before buying. Competitive fencers need at least two weapons.

- Blade length: #5 for most. Under-10s compete with a #2. Buy a #5 unless you **compete** in Youth-10 events. Competitive fencers should choose the more durable maraging blades when possible.
- Left hand vs right hand: specify your preference
- Foil point/tip: German
- Grip: French, unless Coach Eric has specifically moved you up to pistol grip.
- Foil socket: 2-prong
- Guard: cheapest option is fine. Choose whatever you prefer.
- Foil pad: cheapest option is fine. Choose whatever you prefer.

Lame (\$50-200)

This is the metallic vest used for electric fencing. When buying, choose men's vs women's (kid sizes are often unisex) and right-handed vs left-handed. Try some lames at the club to get an idea of your size. The younger and newer to fencing you are, the cheaper you can go. Adults and regularly-competing youth fencers should consider buying a higher quality lame for durability. For serious competitive fencers,

it is a good idea to have an inexpensive practice lame and a higher-quality competition lame.

Bag (\$75-350)

Bags are extremely durable, so buy one for the long term. AFC recommends a rolling/wheeled bag with separate sections for weapons and uniform (prevents rust on both)

Glove (\$12-50)

Regular members (i.e., not adult beginner or summer camp program) fencers are provided a glove with their registration. You can buy gloves at the club for \$12, or choose a different style of glove online.

Jacket (\$35-300)

Regular members (i.e., not adult beginner or summer camp program) fencers are provided a jacket with their registration. If you are buying your own online, try some club jackets to determine your size. Children's jackets are typically unisex; for adults and larger youth fencers, there are men's and women's options. You will need to specify left-handed vs right-handed.

Knickers (\$30-200)

Knickers are required only for competition; sweatpants are fine for training at the club. The club has knickers to lend for kids who compete only occasionally, but competitive fencers should buy their own.

Chest Protector (\$25-40)

Mandatory for females of any age; optional but recommended for younger male fencers. **Important update for 2018: a new rule requiring a soft fabric, foam, or EVA covering for all chest protectors means that AFC's current stock of chest protectors no longer meet competitive regulations.** Unfortunately, our female fencers must now purchase their own. Take care to buy a protector that meets the new 2018 covering requirement!

Underarm Protector/Plastron (\$15-100)

A safety item that is required for competition.

A Note About Shoes

Nike and Adidas both make shoes specifically for fencing; they are expensive and are probably only worth it if you are a serious competitive fencer. In general, any indoor-court shoe with a low sole is perfectly suitable for fencing. Volleyball and racquetball shoes are a good choice.

Vendors

Blue Gauntlet

Absolute Fencing

The Fencing Post

Alliance Fencing Equipment

Sword Masters

Leon Paul USA