



PISTE SIDE TIPS FOR PARENTS

Competitive fencing can be very stressful. Watching friends and family in competition can be an even more stressful exercise. Friends and family can be very helpful on the side of the piste but more often than not, they are a deterrent. Competing on the piste can be very lonely and a friendly face on the side of the piste is always welcome. Be careful what you say. By following these tips you'll be a more affective piste side supporter/coach:

- ☛ If there is a coach on the side of the piste, encourage your fencer but do not give advice. Communication between fencer and coach should be concise and consistent. Communication from more than 1 person always causes confusion.
- ☛ Only give simple positive advice that offer solutions. Stating a problem only reinforces it. For example, If your fencer is getting hit while attacking and you want to communicate to him/her not to attack, give a solution without stating the problem: "Be defensive", "Be patient", "Use your Parries" are all positive simple solutions. Saying "Don't attack" offers no solution and fencers generally process the last thing they hear. This type of comment is negative and usually leads to more attacks.
- ☛ All advice must be given with positive words with a cool calm voice. Fencers on piste will feed off of others body language. Even if you are nervous, always give the impression that you are cool, calm and collected, this will calm your fencer and reassure them that everything is OK.
- ☛ Remind your fencer to drink and eat throughout the day, tell them to stay hydrated and fuelled. Avoid drinking caffeinated drinks and chocolate as this causes dehydration.
- ☛ Advice following a loss is not useful. Give your fencer some time to deal with the disappointment. If they want advice they'll ask for it, otherwise just offer support.
- ☛ Negative talk from a fencer before a bout should always be turned into neutral or positive comments. Comments such as "I can't" should be redirected to "let's see what happens" or "fence well" or give generic technical advice such as "stay low and use lot's of legs".
- ☛ Never doubt your fencer's ability. Friends and Parents will be impressed by an opponent and often accept defeat for their fencer before the bout has even happened. Comments such as: "Fencer XXX is ranked # 1 therefore he/she will never beat them". If you accept such comment fencers will start to believe that their opponent is unbeatable. Everyone is beatable!
- ☛ Encourage your fencer to apply the skills taught in the club at all times. Developing skills for a successful career is always more important than 1 good result.
- ☛ Encourage good sportsmanship and fair play at all times!
- ☛ Avoid asking the question: Did you win? Ask questions like: Did you fence well? Where you moving well? Winning should be the part of the process of fencing well.
- ☛ Participate in our parents learn to fence program and at least 1 ODFC to get a feel for what your fencer goes through.