

## York Fencing Club - Frequently Asked Questions

The York Fencing Club has been in existence since the late 1920's. It was established by the late, and great, Walter "Jack" Hesperheide. YFC has a diverse membership of young and old, new and experienced, and recreational and competitive fencers. YFC meets year round at the York YMCA, at the corner of Newberry St. and Philadelphia St. in downtown York, PA.

### Fall-Spring hours:

#### Tuesdays:

Beginners: 6:30-7:15pm

Intermediates Levels 1 & 2 :

7:20-9:00pm

### Fridays:

Beginners: 6:30-7:45pm

Intermediates Levels 1 & 2 :

7:20-9:00pm and later

Summer hours: Intermediates only

Tuesdays and Thursdays:

6:30-9:00pm or later

Free parking for YMCA participants and visitors is located on Clark Ave. (actually it's an alley) that runs between Newberry St. and Roosevelt Ave. The main entrance (the one that you want to use to enter the building) to the YMCA is located directly across Clark Ave. The YFC classroom is directly across from the YMCA's registration/check-in area. Just look for white uniforms and listen for the clashing of blades...

### What is the cost?

\$25 per month, payable to the York YMCA one week prior to the beginning of each month. New sessions start early September and March.

### Who teaches the class?

Head coach: Kim Bleecker. Kim currently holds 4 coaching certifications from the USFA (U.S.Fencing Assoc.), and has been involved in fencing since 1985. Assistant coach: April E. Kauffman: April currently holds 1 coaching certification from the USFA and has been involved in fencing since 2002. Both are members of the U.S. Fencing Coaches Association.

### Do I have to be in great shape? Is there an age limit?

There are advantages to being physically fit when starting out, but it is certainly *not* necessary. In fact, many people join our club to *become* fit via fencing since it is an interesting and challenging sport. As you progress in your lessons, your body will become stronger and more adept at performing the various skills necessary for fencing, such as lunging, balance, and speed. They say that "if you can "skip", you can fence"... Most of our younger beginning students are about 10, and older beginning students can be into their 60's and beyond. The founder of YFC, the late Jack Hesperheide was still fencing and coaching at 97 years of age!

### Do I have to have any previous fencing experience?

Not at all! YFC has members from different skill and experience levels, from absolute beginners to recreational fencers to competitive fencers. Some of our long time members started out as beginners, with no previous experience, and have gone on to compete and/or coach.

### Do I need my own fencing gear prior to starting a new session?

No, we provide most of what you need to get started: Mask, jacket, and a foil (weapon). After you have had a few months of classes you will mostly likely want your own fencing gear. We can give you guidance, or assist you in getting an order together for a beginner's kit (approx. \$110). There are many reputable fencing supply companies and club discounts are available.

### Is fencing a dangerous sport?

Generally no, it is a safe sport due to all of the protective gear, and by following the proceeding requests. Like other sports, there are inherent risks such as bruises, muscle strains, and aches and pains. Flesh

wounds, and worse, can occur, but they are not common.

**Is there anything that I should bring, wear, or not wear to class?**

Yes! Fencing is a sport, so proper clothing and gear is very important. We care about our students, their health, and reducing the possibility of injury. The following requests are in the best interest of all students.

**Please bring:**

Slim fitting leather or suede glove for your dominant hand to wear during blade work. Or, a glove that has leather or suede pads over the fingers and palm (like an Isotoner driving glove).

Ladies/Girls-it is imperative that you wear a chest protector when you progress to learning "attacks", (since you will be receiving them as well). Attacks are taught within a few weeks of a beginner's class. Chest protectors can be purchased at sporting goods stores, or from fencing suppliers.

Water always. Water/sports drink, and energy snacks, are important as you progress in intensity and are "bouting" (actually fencing). It is easy to become dehydrated and depleted. Energy snacks include dried fruit, nuts, and granola bars. A banana or apple is an excellent snack post class to replenish glycogen levels which aid in restoring energy. Also, make sure you eat and drink liquids before class! Nothing too heavy, but you do need food (energy) to burn going into class to do your best.

**Please wear:**

Properly fitting warm-up pants, not loose baggy pants as they obscure body positioning.

Slim fitting sneakers with laces, and a flatter sole, not Velcro sneakers with 2" spring-loaded soles and excessive upper materials. These types of sneakers lead to loss of balance, possible injury, and improper footwork.

Ladies- a sports bra as fencing is a highly aerobic activity.

**Please do not wear:**

Shorts, especially when you progress to bouting. Even though the legs are not a target area in foil, attacks landing off-target are prevalent, especially with beginners. You will not participate in blade work if shorts are worn!

Jeans, they don't allow for proper leg range of motion, especially when lunging. Looser fitting styles provide opportunity for off target hits to become entangled and cause unnecessary injury.

Any kind of footwear that is not a proper sneaker, i.e.: sandals, flip-flops, Croc's, slip-on's, street shoes, work boots, etc... Anyone wearing such footwear will not be permitted to participate in class at that time.

**I'm interested in checking out a class before signing up...**

We strongly encourage visits to YFC to meet us, watch classes in progress, and to ask questions. Just stop in during the regularly scheduled class times. If you want to let us know that you will be visiting us, refer to the contact info below for email addresses.

**Am I expected to compete in tournaments after I reach a certain skill level?**

No, that is an individual student decision.

**I have more questions, who can I contact?**

For payment questions: YMCA: 717-843-7884

For fencing questions: Kim Bleecker: [kebleecker@comcast.net](mailto:kebleecker@comcast.net)

April Kauffman: [ursoolala@aol.com](mailto:ursoolala@aol.com)

Useful websites: [www.usfa.org](http://www.usfa.org)

[www.fencing.net](http://www.fencing.net)

<http://www.jescrime.com/yorkfencing/index2.html>

**Please contact us with any questions, and we look forward to seeing you at YFC!**

*Kim + April*