

NSW State Fencing Championships Under-11s & Under-13s Boys and Girls

Dear Parent,

For 4 years now, Victorians having been going North for the NSW State Championships for Under-11s and Under-13s.

History of the Event

In 2007, the “team” consisted of five fencers, gaining an equal third (U11 boys); two equal fifths and an eleventh (U13 boys); and a fifth (U13 girls). A picture of this team just before the competition can be seen at www.fencingforkids.com (top right-hand image).

In 2008, the team consisted of four of the five 2007 fencers, plus some extras, who gained a second (U13 girls); a second, sixth, ninth, and seventeenth (U13 boys), and a second, equal third, and a sixteenth (U11 boys).

In 2009, we named the team “The Vic Bandits”, the largest team so far – 10 boys and girls. The Bandits took out an equal third (U11 boys), a second (U13 girls), and half of the top 8 in the U13 boys, including gold and silver medals. Mezographic also provided sponsorship in the form of a large VicBandits banner.



For the last four years, there has also been a New Zealand team of fencers at the event.

Also as part of the tournament in 2008, one of the Victorian parents sponsored a trophy for a round-robin team competition, where each of Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand put up their top three or four U11 and U13 boys and girls as a single team. NSW narrowly won against Victoria in 2008 with a final score of 44-42, with New Zealand coming third. In 2009, Victoria won the trophy.

Benefits for the Children

This trip is a great development opportunity, as it represents (for many children) the first time that they will compete against other fencers who they would not normally encounter. Typically, the NSW competition is also larger than the Victorian state titles. For those children wanting to progress, this is also a good stepping stone, with many of the past fencers subsequently competing (and medalling) in the 2008-2010 Australian National Under-15 Tournaments. For many children, this is also a good first chance to experience a teams event.

As this is **not** a Club-specific event, we encourage all of the children to wear the Fencing Victoria badge on their arm, as this helps engender a spirit of camaraderie and support against the common foe (NSW / NZ).

It's not Just About the Fencing

On the social side, it has also been fun in previous years, with the children visiting Sydney's Luna Park, Powerhouse Museum, Maritime Museum, or Aquarium on the afternoon prior to the competition, and the children and parents having an optional group dinner as well.

Details of the Competition

The 2010 NSW State Championships are on Sunday, 17 October:

- Under-13 Boys: 9am
- Under-11 Boys: 11am
- Under-11 and Under-13 Girls: 10:30am

The individual competitions should finish just after lunchtime, and if the team competition happens again this year, this will follow straight after. Typically there are about 50-60 children competing in total across the three events. Under-11 boys will not be able to also compete in the Under-13s unless they have been knocked out in the DE by 10:45am (or withdraw from the Under-13s).

The tournament will be held in Marrickville (Steel Park Leisure Centre, 531 Illawarra Road, Marrickville), which is about 15 minutes' walk from Marrickville train station, and 15 minutes' drive from the airport.

The competition event entry cost is \$25.

Pre-Requisites

Any fencer wanting to compete needs to have a Junior Affiliation with Fencing Victoria (see www.fencingvictoria.org).

For the 2010 competition, Under-11 means born in 1999 or later and Under-13 means born in 1997 or later.

Equipment Requirements - General

Children without the necessary equipment will not be permitted to compete. The full equipment requirements are on the NSWFA website, at www.nswfencing.org.au/equipment_nswfa.htm. In summary, these are similar to those required by Fencing Victoria:

- White fencing breeches or long tracksuit pants and long socks (i.e. no shorts or jeans). VicBandits may wish to wear special Fencing Victoria socks.
- Breastplate (mandatory for girls, optional for boys).
- Underplastron and white fencing jacket
- Fencing glove
- Mask
- Two or more foils, size 0 or 2 (see note below).
- One or more body wires

It is **not** necessary to have FIE-standard equipment.

Equipment Requirements - Weapons

The NSWFA has mandated that size 2 or smaller foil blades are required for this level of competition. In Victoria, we have no restrictions on blade size, with the exception of Under-11s (size 3). We have confirmed that we will be able to hire from NSWFA size 2 or 0 weapons for our fencers. These weapons are all “bayonet” (i.e. not two-prong) style weapons. The hire cost is \$5 per item for the day, so the hire of two weapons and a body wire would be \$15.

Last year, some parents indicated a preference to go to Sydney already prepared with the correct weapons. As there is no requirement to have FIE equipment, parents may wish to consider the purchase of some non-FIE size 2 blades from their own sources, or (at about \$40 each) from either Victorian Fencing Academy (Pieter Leeuwenburgh), contact: teapea@internode.on.net or Fencing Imports Australia (Kayt Spano), contact: fencingimportsaustralia@ozemail.com.au.

Equipment Requirements - Lames

Children grow, lames do not. In the en guard position, lames need to cover the groin area, and the top of both hip bones. If your child's lame is too small, or your child is going through a growth spurt, or they are reporting that there is a “dead spot”, it may be better to look at a replacement lame very soon.

Payments

Last year, we used an online facility to make things easier for various payments. This facility was used to cover the competition entry cost, camp cost, VicBandits t-shirts (see below), NSW weapon hire if required, etc. It is almost certain we will do this again this year.

Trip T-Shirts

This year we will again be looking at producing VicBandits t-shirts for children and parents (navy cotton with white woven logo). Cost is again likely to be \$25-\$30.

Travel and Accommodation

Parents are asked to arrange for their own travel and accommodation. If you wish to send your child up with others and not go yourself, this can be arranged; parents who have previously travelled with their children to interstate competitions will most likely also be going.

There are not really any accommodation options close to the Marrickville venue, so something closer to the city would be okay.

In previous years, we have found that flying into Sydney about 11am on the Saturday and out again after about 7:30pm on Sunday represents a fairly unrushed trip.

Coaching Assistance

When there have been five or more children competing, Fencing Victoria's State Development Officer (and Level 3 coach) – Pieter Leeuwenburgh – has travelled in previous years with the children to the competition to offer coaching assistance, encouragement and general team support. In 2009, the State Development Foil Coach (and 2010 Under-15s/Under-17s Team Coach) Rob Di Pasquale also accompanied the VicBandits.

Any other coaches are more than welcome to be part of this trip, if desired.

Competition Preparation

In previous years, a number of training sessions or a camp were held with most of the squad in the weeks preceding the competition. It is proposed that this would also happen this year, with a camp to be held on the afternoon of Saturday 9 October, from 1pm – 5pm, at the State Fencing Centre in North Melbourne. This will see the children come together as a squad and prepare for the competition. This is the week before the trip North. The cost of the camp is expected to be \$30 per child. All coaches are welcome to attend the camp, and give lessons to their students if desired.

Last year, on the same day as the camp, we ran a parent briefing session from about 1:30pm – 2:30pm, which also served as an opportunity for the parents to meet each other before the trip.

It would also be expected that all squad members participate in the Fencing Victoria Under-13 State Championships in the month previous to the competition (being September 19).

What Next?

If you are interested in your child possibly going to Sydney, please email Adam Reynolds at adam@proficio.com.au, along with any questions you may have.