



The Path to Nationals

Or,

How Do I Qualify For the AFL National Championships?

The National Championships are different from most other AFL fencing tournaments in that you must qualify in order to enter the tournament. Just like the name says, the goal of this tournament is to determine this season's national champions in each of the four individual events (foil, épée, sabre, and three-weapon), as well as in the four team events.

All qualifications will be done at the divisional level—i.e. you must qualify through your division. All AFL members belong to a division. There are two organized divisions at this time:

Central Virginia Division (includes the central Virginia counties of Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, and Chesterfield, as well as the cities of Richmond and Petersburg); and

Pacific Northwest Division (includes Oregon, Washington, and the northern California counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Siskiyou, Shasta, Lassen, and Modoc).

If you are not in one of these two divisions, then you are automatically a member of the **National Division**.

The **organized divisions** can qualify between 3 and 10 individual fencers for Nationals as follows:

1. Each division can qualify a minimum of 3 fencers per event.
If the division has 26-50 members (inclusive) on the day of its divisional championship, it can qualify 4;
if the division has 51-100 members (inclusive) on the day of its divisional championship, it can qualify 5; and, if the division has more than 100 members on the day of its divisional championship, it can qualify 6.
2. Furthermore, each division can qualify additional fencers if there are 10 or more competitors in an event in its divisional championship, with:
10-19 competitors allowing 1 additional fencer to qualify;
20-29 competitors (inclusive) allowing 2 additional fencers to qualify;
30-39 competitors (inclusive) allowing 3 additional fencers to qualify; and
40 or more competitors allowing 4 additional fencers to qualify.

While it is up to each division to determine the method by which it selects its qualified fencers, it is customary to hold a divisional championship, with the top X fencers (where X is the number of fencers the division may qualify) in each event qualifying for Nationals and alternates being designated in descending order of placement. If the number of competitors showing up at the divisional championships in a given event is equal to or less than the number of fencers that the division is able to qualify for Nationals in that event, all fencers automatically qualify.

The secretary of each division shall send a list of qualified fencers in each event, including alternates, to the AFL secretary at 1020 Liberty Street NE, Salem, Oregon 97301 **no later than June 30th**.

Because the **National Division** is so geographically scattered, all fencers in the National Division are invited to Nationals as “wildcard” entries. They will fence a preliminary round of one or more pools (as necessary) in each event that they enter. Between 3 and 10 fencers per event (using the same formula as for the organized divisions) will then be promoted to fence with the qualified fencers from the other divisions for the national championship in each event. If the number of wildcard competitors in a given event is equal to or less than the number of fencers that the National Division is able to qualify for Nationals in that event, all fencers will be automatically promoted and will not need to fence a wildcard round.

For **team events**, the organized divisions can each qualify a maximum of two teams per event for Nationals, regardless of the division's membership. Teams must represent a club that is recognized by the AFL. No club may qualify more than one team for Nationals.

All clubs in the **National Division** are invited to send up to two teams per club to Nationals as “wildcard” entries. Each wildcard team will fence a preliminary round of one or more pools (as necessary) in their event. The top two National Division teams in each event will then be promoted to fence with the qualified teams from the other divisions for the national championship. If the number of wildcard teams in a given event is two or less, all teams in that event will be automatically promoted and will not need to fence a wildcard round.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact Nanci Keatley, AFL secretary, at secretary@americanfencingleague.org or at her salle d'armes at 503-375-9209.