

NSW State Fencing Championships Under-11s & Under-13s Boys and Girls Updated (September 2011)

Dear Parent,

For a few 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.

2010 was the best year ever, with the Bandits taking out first, second, third, fifth and sixth (U13 boys) and second (U11 girls). All Victorians finished in the top 40% of their respective events.



For each year of Victorian attendance, there has also been a New Zealand team of fencers at the event, and last year we were joined by a Queensland competitor. In 2011, a team of Japanese children has been invited to attend.

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, and retained it in 2010 (45-44). In 2011, this was renamed "The Friendship Cup".

The success of this tournament has meant that this year, it will be opened up to epeeists and sabreurs (previously it has just been for foilists). Also, it has been changed to a 2-day event.

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 2008-2011 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 / Qld / NZ / Japan).

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.

Many parents take the opportunity to spend a few days before or after the competition day staying in Sydney for sight-seeing, a short (family) holiday, or visiting relatives, especially since Sydney is characteristically a little warmer than Melbourne at that time of year.

Details of the Competition

The 2011 competition has been expanded to a two-day event.

On Saturday, 22 October (8am – 1:30pm), the Team event will be held at the University of NSW Sports and Recreation Gymnasium, Main Hall Level 1, High Street, Kensington. This event is a combined Under-11 and Under-13 Foil competition in the format of a Team foil event (Friendship Cup). There is no cost for entry for this event, and the Team members will be selected prior to the event. However, to be eligible for selection, attendance at the VicBandits camp (see below) is required.

The 2011 NSW State Championships are on Sunday, 23 October (times below, all events need to be finished by 5pm). The tournament will be held in Marrickville, at the 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 events to be competed for the NSW State Championships are:

- Under-11 Foil: 9:30am
- Under-11 Epee: 1:30pm
- Under-11 Sabre: 12:15pm
- Under-13 Foil: 9am for boys, 9:30am for girls
- Under-13 Epee: 1:30pm
- Under-13 Sabre: 1:30pm for boys, 12:15pm for girls

The times above mean that it is possible to enter two weapon events on the day, but not two age groups for the same event. For example, it will be possible to enter U11 foil and U11 epee, but it will not be possible to enter U11 and U13 foil.

Last year, which was foil only, there were about 70 children competing in total across the various events, and increase on 2009 of about 20%.

The competition entry cost is \$25 per event.

Pre-Requisites

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

For the 2011 competition, Under-11 means born in 2000 or later and Under-13 means born in 1998 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 weapons, size 0 or 2 (see note below).
- One or more body wires

It is **not** necessary to have FIE-standard equipment, but epeeists **must** wear breeches.

Equipment Requirements - Weapons

Although there are no special rules for sabre weapons, the NSWFA has mandated that size 2 or smaller foil and epee blades are required for this level of competition. Please note that this is **different** to Victoria. We have confirmed that we will be able to hire from NSWFA size 2 or 0 foils for our fencers. These foils 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. Epees cannot be hired.

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 foils 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 – Foil / Sabre Lames

Children grow, lames do not. In the en guard position, foil lames need to cover the groin area, and foil / sabre lames should cover 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

This year, Fencing Victoria will be allowing us to use a special section of their online transaction facility for the money side of things, which will be open for use at the beginning of September. This facility will be used to cover the competition entry cost, camp cost, VicBandits t-shirts (see below), NSW weapon hire if required, etc.

Trip T-Shirts

This year we will again be looking at producing VicBandits t-shirts for children and parents (navy with white woven logo). Cost is again likely to be \$25-\$30. For the last couple of years, the NSWFA has also produced special event t-shirts.

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.

Coaching Assistance

The deliberately less formal approach to this trip has meant that there is no “team coach”. However, in previous years, we have been lucky enough to have been accompanied by some fencer parents, Pieter Leeuwenburgh (National Coaching Director and State Development Manager) and Rob Di Pasquale (State Development Foil Coach and 2010/2011 Under-15s/Under-17s Team Coach). This year, Brook Dunstan (2010 Under-20s Team Manager, and Fioretto Junior Development coach) will be accompanying the group with his son as the “unofficial official”.

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. This year, a camp will be held on Sunday 9 October. As the State Fencing Centre in North Melbourne will be in full use that day with the Junior Championships, the camp will be held at the Fioretto Fencing Club in East Oakleigh (access off Turnbull Ave, F.E. Hunt Reserve). This will see the children come together as a squad and prepare for the competition. This is two weeks before the trip North. The cost of the camp is expected to be \$35 per child. All coaches are welcome to attend the camp, and give lessons to their students if desired.

During the camp, we would also be willing to run a parent briefing session from about 1:30pm – 2:30pm, which may also serve 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-11 or Under-13 State Championships in the month previous to the competition (being September 18), and the Club Challenge (being October 16, the week after the camp and the week before the trip).

What Next?

If you are interested in your child possibly going to Sydney, please call Brook Dunstan on 0431 744 906 or email vicbandits@fencingvictoria.org, along with any questions you may have. Please note that this is not a Fencing Victoria initiative (although it is fully supported by Fencing Victoria), nor is it tied to a specific fencing club, so the most accurate information for this event will be via VicBandits.