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Fencing: Past and Present

Jaw-dropping swordplay and charged up entertainment are not just found in the latest pirate epic on the silver screen. The sport of fencing has all the excitement of swordplay, without the messy results! The use of swords in battle goes back to the ancient eras, and by the middle ages, it had become particularly popular among the English gentry. Fencing evolved into a sport of its own, and within a few hundred years, rules emerged to define the sport. [fencing equipment](#) evolved right alongside the sport itself.

The Olympic governing body added an event for the foil to the roster of Olympic events in 1896. The foil is the [fencing gear](#) used most commonly in the sport, both by experienced and beginners alike. The foil began as a training tool in the 1700s, something beginners used before taking up a small sword. The torso of the body is the typical target for one using a foil. In later year, the Olympic committed added events to the fencing competition, including the epee and the saber. The epee is not considered wildly different from a foil, though it is heavier with a three-sided, stiffer blade. When engaging with the epee, the target area is not restricted to the torso.

The saber excels at cutting and thrusting, which is one of the reasons that competitors can use the edge of the blade to earn what are considered valid touches in competition. In the case of the foil and the epee, where the point lands determines a valid touch.

Women's saber fencing was introduced in 2004, and epee prior to that in 1996. One goes back to 1924 to find the first women's foil fencing showcased as an event. Individual and team events comprise the competition. Fencing continues into the London 2012 Olympics with some slight rule changes to make the sport more viewer friendly and was broadcast live for 2008 on NBCOlympics Web site.

Fencing gear includes protective clothing that helps guard against injury. One should never fence without appropriate gear, since serious injury could otherwise occur. Gear used includes a chest protector for women, gloves, jacket, mask, under-arm protector, shoes/socks, and pants.

The story of competitive [fencing](#) goes back for many years. Taking part in the sport of fencing is a unique experience, and one that gives you a taste of a history. You could be a participant in the middle of the action, or you could just be a fascinated observer; in any case, there is so much to enjoy about the exciting sport of fencing.

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