

## En garde! MORE Unique Events for Venturers

By M. Robert Marks  
Venturing Crew 306, Kennedy Township, PA

During our Crew's annual program review and activity interest survey, one of the members said "I'd really like to try fencing!" That's all it took for fencing to be added to the list of activities.

Fencing is the Olympic sport of sword fighting which is directly descended from the duel. We learned very quickly this sport requires agility,

intelligence and keen reflexes. We also learned the rules can be very confusing and the bouts are exhausting.

We started with a lesson in weapons and methods of scoring. None of us knew there were three different types:

1. The Foil - a light thrusting weapon; the valid target is restricted to the torso.
2. The Épée - a heavy thrusting weapon; the target covers the entire body.
3. The Sabre - a light cutting and thrusting weapon with a target area that includes almost everything above the waist except the back of the head and the hands.



The ability to "lunge" and retreat quickly is one key to winning.

Fencers wear protective clothing and a mask to prevent injury. The special conductive vest and the weapon are both plugged into wires connected to an electronic scoring board. Every time one of the fencer scores, a red or green light goes on and the buzzer sounds.

BUT that doesn't determine who scores. The referee will verbally analyze the match and determine who scored or was penalized based on a series of rules to determine right of way and proper ways to attack.

We never quite figured out the scoring, but we had a blast!

If your Crew is interested in trying fencing, the local clubs are more than willing to give a demonstration. To find a club, go to the USA Fencing Association website: [www.usfencing.org](http://www.usfencing.org).



Learning to hold the épée properly.



Even a direct hit to the heart might not score if it wasn't done right.



Who attacks first, which side they attack from makes a big difference!



Fencers salute the referee then each other before a match.

