



Four of Clubs Principles

At Four of Clubs we believe that coaches and parents have a responsibility to promote the happiness and wellbeing of children at competitions. All who coach or accompany children to competitions should observe these principles.

- Competing should be enjoyable and fun for every child. A child who dislikes competition should never be pressured or persuaded to participate. A distressed child should always be given the option of withdrawing from a competition without feeling they will disappoint their parents or coaches. Children who have been knocked out of the elimination rounds should be given ample time to decompress by staying on in the venue to socialise with and support their friends.
- Children have the right to enjoy their achievements for their own sake, not in order to please parents or coaches, and they should be helped to gain the best possible result on the day, relative to their experience and ability – not compared with other children's results.
- Children should NEVER be reprimanded or criticised for their performance. The only exception to this is where the child has behaved inappropriately by losing his/her temper and/or behaving in an unsportsmanlike manner. Parents are asked not to engage in 'postmortems' of the child's performance after the event. Our coaches are expected to always deliver feedback in a positive manner, suited to the individual child.
- We believe that displays of jubilation or indignation by adults over the outcome of fights lead to excessive stress and possible emotional damage for children. All adults should minimise the importance of results and focus on praising improved performance.
- Children should be guided away from focusing on their mistakes and defeats and encouraged to support each other and enjoy the day.
- Children should never have to witness displays of aggression between adults, such as arguments with referees, organisers or other parents. Parents should endeavour to set an example by being supportive of the achievements of all the children in the team.

- In all bouts it should be remembered that both participants are children and one will inevitably lose. Supporting a young fencer should never be at the cost of behaving in a manner that is intimidating or humiliating for the opponent. Our fencers are expected to be friendly and respectful to their opponents before, during and after encounters on the piste.
- Children's dignity and personal space should be respected, and adults should not interfere with a child's equipment at any time without specifically asking if the child requires help.
- Children should be encouraged to come away from competitions proud of what they have achieved

We strongly believe that adults, be they coaches or parents, who use children for the personal gratification of their egos at competitions by pressuring them into winning at all costs, or who act directly or indirectly to humiliate or intimidate their children's opponents, are engaging in a form of child abuse and this is something we do not tolerate.