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Unwillingness to Fight Rule to Go Into Effect at USA Fencing Competitions Beginning Feb. 14, 2019

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By USA Fencing

All USA Fencing members are advised that t.124 of the USA Fencing Rulebook, "Unwillingness to Fight" has been updated and will be in use at all USA Fencing events beginning on Feb. 14, 2019, including the 2019 Junior Olympic Championships.

This rule change is being made in accordance with the changes made by the Federation Internationale d'Éscrime to the FIE Rulebook, effective Jan. 1, 2019 and following the release of the FAQ on t.124 by the FIE on Jan. 29.

[USA Fencing t.124 Full Text](#)
[USA Fencing Rulebook, Updated February 2019](#)
[USA Fencing Penalty Chart, Updated February 2019](#)
[FIE Unwillingness to Fight Frequently Asked Questions](#)
[USA Fencing Referees' Commission Rules Blog on Unwillingness to Fight Rule](#)

The following is a summary of the primary changes to t.124 in the USA Fencing Rulebook:

- **Single criteria for "Unwillingness to fight"**: There is now only one criterion for applying t.124, and that is one minute of elapsed bout time without a hit scored (or a hit scored off-target in foil). It is the duty of the referee to track the time since the last hit and apply t.124 as necessary.
- **t.124 no longer advances the bout to the next period in individual DE matches, or the next relay in team matches.** After a referee has applied t.124 and issued the requisite P-Cards, the bout or relay continues as normal.
- **P-Cards are not cumulative with other penalties.** P-Card penalties exist independently of other penalties incurred during a bout. For example, a fencer with a P-Yellow Card and no other penalties who commits a Group 1 offense should be sanctioned with a Yellow Card.
- **P-Black Cards in team events:** A P-Black Card in a team event disqualifies *the fencer currently on the strip*. That fencer can be replaced by the reserve if the reserve is available (i.e. they have not already been substituted during that match), and the team can continue to fence. Any team fencer sanctioned by a P-Black Card is disqualified for the remainder of the event and cannot participate in subsequent matches, however.

Complete text of T.124 is as follows:

Unwillingness to Fight t.124

There is unwillingness to fight when there is one minute of fencing without a hit or without a hit scored off the target. When there is unwillingness to fight, the Referee will immediately call "Halt!"

Individual events - Direct Elimination

When there is one minute of unwillingness to fight, the Referee sanctions one or both fencers with a P-card as follows:

- a. If the fencers are equal: the Referee sanctions both fencers with a P-card.
- b. If the fencers are not equal: the Referee sanctions the fencer who has the lower score with a P-card.

P-card sanctions are as follows:

- a. For a fencer's first P-card sanction, the fencer receives a P-yellow card.
- b. For a fencer's second and third P-card sanction, the fencer receives a P-red card.
- c. For a fencer's fourth P-card sanction, the fencer receives a P-black card.

If the fencers are equal and receive P-black cards simultaneously, the fencer with the higher initial seeding wins the bout, as determined at the start of the competition.

Team events

When there is unwillingness to fight and a team has already received two P-red cards, that team receives a P-black card. In the case of a P-black card, the fencer currently on the strip is disqualified.

However, the team may continue to fence in the current and subsequent matches by substituting their reserve fencer, if one is available, and provided a replacement has not already been made previously for tactical or medical reasons. If a replacement is made after receipt of a P-black card, no further replacement may be made, even for medical reasons. The disqualified fencer may not take part in any further matches during the competition; however, the P-Black Card is not transferred to any subsequent matches in which the team participates, but the disqualified fencer remains eligible for any awards the team may earn.

If no replacement can be made following receipt of a P-black card (because there is no reserve fencer or because the reserve fencer has already been used previously), the team sanctioned by a P-black card loses the match.

If the teams are equal and receive P-black cards simultaneously, the team with the higher initial seeding wins the match, as determined at the start of the competition.

Both Individual and Team Events

- a. The P-yellow (warning) and P-red (penalty hit) cards received during any one bout or match are valid only for that bout or match. These penalties are not transferable to the following bout or match.
- b. The P-black card means disqualification for repeated unwillingness to fight. The fencer or team sanctioned keep their position in the ranking and the points obtained up to the moment of the disqualification.
- c. The referee must record these P-yellow, P-red and P-black cards separately on the score sheet. The sanctions awarded for unwillingness to fight are not cumulative with any other sanction awarded.
- d. In both individual and team competitions, if, at the end of the regulation time, there is equality of scores, articles t.40.3 and t.41.5 will apply.

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