

2023- USA – Prepared by Rita Comes – Member of the FIE Veteran Council

The number of Veteran Fencers in the United States has continued to increase. Veteran National Events and Regional Events are well attended by the Veteran Fencing Community. United States Fencing Association Members include Senior, Youth, Veteran and Para Fencers as one united organization.

It was unfortunate that the 2021 FIE Veteran World Championships had to be postponed due to the world Covid crises. We recognize the hardship and loss that so many suffered during this crisis. We are extremely excited to host the 2023 FIE Veteran World Championships in Daytona Beach, Florida during October 2023. All information – the website and invitation letters for the 2023 FIE Veteran World Championships have been published and forwarded to all Federations.

The United States Fencing Association (USFA) currently has about 39,000 (38,289) members. 3,936 are identified as Veteran Fencers. Veteran Fencers represent more than 10% of all USFA members. There are 626 individual Veteran Fencers that are competing in a variety of events during the 2023 USA Nationals Championships in July – 19 of those Veteran Fencers are over the age of 80. The 2023 National Championships and July Challenge in Phoenix, Arizona had over 5,300 participants and is considered the largest fencing tournament in the world.

Team Participation

Veteran Team Events have increased over the years. Many competitions are adding Veteran Team Events to Local and Regional Events. This has been proved a successful addition for marketing and profitability at competitions. The US will demo the FIE Veteran's Team format at a future event.

Veteran Camps and Competitions

There has been a significant increase in Veteran workshops, Camps and Veteran Competitions across the United States with members traveling long distances to participate. Many Veteran Fencers are able to attend camps and competitions around the world and have appreciated the openness and help of the world fencing community. An increase of Regional (ROC) events in the US allowed for reduction of travel expenses and more participation of the fencers to compete and qualify for the US National Championships without having to travel to National Events during the year. There is an increasing number of Veteran Fencers that continue to participate in tournaments around the world and use these opportunities as a destination travel event.

Strategies for promotion of “older fencers”

Regarding the strategies for promotion to “older fencers” our largest initiative has been starting the V80 category at our North American Cup (NAC) events since December 2018. As predicted, the Vet80+ women's participation has continued to increase in the US. The participants of the 80+ Events are very grateful for the experience, but more information will have to be gathered from other Countries before proposing to seriously consider suggesting that it be included as an event at the FIE Veteran World

Championships.

USFA has also increased the Social Media presence for Veteran Fencing - interviews, photos, memorabilia, and historical stories have really helped promote the image of Veteran Fencing.

A private USA Fencing Veterans Face Book (FB) page (1,900 Members) that was started in 2018 has grown by an additional 400 members in the past year. This page is used so that official and fun information could be shared amongst the Veteran Fencers around the world, there is also a private US Women's Veteran FB page (617 members). During the pandemic, a Veteran Women's Fencing Support Group was formed and had weekly then bi-monthly and now monthly Zoom meetings to support each other during this difficult time.

In leading up to the 2023 FIE Veteran's World Championships, we have an eager team of competitive fencers that fought their way for the spots on the USA Veteran Team. The Team has high hopes of receiving another recognition medal from the FIE for the 2023 Event as it did for the 2022 FIE World Championships. Promotion for the Daytona Beach, Florida Event and Veteran Fencing overall has brought a lot of attention to Veteran Fencing in the US and beyond.

We look forward to welcoming the World to Daytona Beach in October.



Rita Comes 2023