

POST'S
GUIDE
to the
PAN AM
GAMES



FENCING

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

BY NICK FARIS, NATIONAL POST

Venue

CIBC Pan Am/Parapan Am Aquatics Centre and Field House

Venue acronym

PAC

Landmark status

Built in the lead-up to the Games, the Field House part of the Scarborough venue features four large gymnasiums, to be used for various purposes. Organizers have pegged the \$205-million complex as “the largest investment ever in Canadian amateur sport history.”

Other events at venue

Diving, modern pentathlon,

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

roller speed skating, swimming, synchronized swimming

Transit options

Limited paid parking will be available on site for \$20.

There are some options if you want to take public transit:

There is a shuttle — the conveniently named Aquatics Centre Rocket, also known as the 194. It leaves from Don Mills Station (on Line 4) and is non-stop to the Aquatics Centre Loop, a short walk from the venue. Other options: the 198 U of T Scarborough Rocket express bus from Kennedy Station (Line 2); the 95 York Mills from York Mills Station (Line 1). If you're on the GO train,

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

take the Lakeshore East train to the Eglinton stop and get on the TTC's 116 Morningside bus, which lets you off near the venue.

For exact directions, try:

Triplinx.ca

[TTC trip planner](#)

Schedule

July 20 Individual sabre

July 21 Individual épée

July 22 Individual foil

July 23 Team sabre

July 24 Team épée

July 25 Team foil

[See the full competition schedule at the Pan Am website](#)

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

How it works

Fencing has three complex variations, all of which involve two opponents jabbing at each other with a pointy sword.

In sabre bouts, connecting with any part of the opponent's upper body (except for their hands) counts as a point. In *épée*, fencers can aim for their opponent's entire body, but can only connect with the tip of their sword (not the sides) to register a hit. Foil is the most restrictive version only shots with the tip of the sword to the opponent's torso are valid.

Individual matches run for nine minutes, ending earlier if one of the fencers scores 15 successful

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

hits. Team events involve nine total matches, each played up to three minutes or five hits.

Nations competing

A total of 156 fencers from 17 countries. Canada, Brazil, the United States and Venezuela all qualified the maximum slate of 18 athletes.

Canada's team

Men

Épée Hugues Boisvert-Simard, Quebec City; Maxime Brinck-Croteau, Markham, Ont; Jean Lelion, Montreal

Foil Anthony Prymack, Calgary; Eli Schenkel, New York; Maximilien Van Haaster, Montreal

Sabre Shaul Gordon, Richmond, B.C.; Mark Peros, Toronto; Joseph

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

Polossifakis, Montreal

Women

Épée Malinka Hoppe, Montreal; Leonora Mackinnon, Newbury, England; Alexis Rudkovska, Toronto

Foil Alanna Goldie, Calgary; Eleanor Harvey, Hamilton; Kelleigh Ryan, Ottawa

Sabre Pamela Brind'Amour, Sainte-Martine, Que.; Gabriella Page, Blainville, Que.; Marissa Ponich, Edmonton

Tournament format

Every individual event starts with a “round of poules,” meaning preliminary or “pool” play. From there, the top 16 fencers compete in a single-elimination bracket. Bronze medals are awarded to

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

both losers of the individual semi-finals.

Team events start in the quarter-finals; winners move to the semi-finals — after which the three medalists are determined — while losers face off in classification matches for fifth through eighth places.

Results from 2011

The United States laid a smack-down on the Pan Am fencing community, winning gold in 11 of 12 events. Their only defeat came in individual sabre, at the hands of Canadian Philippe Beaudry, who also won Canada's only fencing gold at the 2007 Games.

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

Why it's worth watching

Putting low-hanging Princess Bride references aside, fencing might be especially fun to watch if you're American, for the aforementioned medal haul and for the rare opportunity to shine. International fencing is traditionally dominated by European countries, including Italy and France, who have won a combined 236 Olympic medals over the years. (The U.S. has 21; Canada has none.)

Competition outlook

The Americans are obvious favourites in nearly every event, and particularly men's foil, where 2011 champ Alexander Massialas will lead a strong four-man corps. Canada will be without Beaudry,

GUIDE TO THE GAMES

the two-time Pan Am champion in sabre.

Two of the U.S.'s three individual women's champions from 2011 return this year: Mariel Zagunis in sabre and Lee Kiefer in foil. Top-ranked American Katharine Holmes, a 21-year-old neuroscience major at Princeton, likely holds an edge entering the épée events.