

US SEMI discussion of Lancet grips
USA Fencing Armorers <armorers@usafencing.org>
Tue 5/11/2021 9:08 AM

Phillip Karnezis <phillipkarnezis@me.com>

At its meeting on April 1, 2021, US SEMI determined that the Lancet "French MK II" and "Modern French" handles are "orthopedic" grips as defined by rule M.4.6 because it "fixes the position of the hand on the grip". Since they do not meet the requirements of M.6.4.a, they are not legal for USA Fencing competitions.

If you wish to respond to this determination, you may reply to this email, and we will consider your response at our next meeting and finalize our decision. Thereafter, our final determination will be distributed to USA Fencing armorers.

Thank you,
The US SEMI

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USFA Armorers
FIE SEMI



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Ron & Theodore,

Thank you very much for your help navigating the USFA process while we are bringing our grips to market. We would be happy to present our case in person to the committee but thought it would be good to clarify our position in this document so it can be reviewed in advance. Our mission at Lancet Fencing is to continue to help the evolution of the sport of fencing by applying cutting edge designs with next generation manufacturing techniques in order to increase the appeal of our sport. As relatively new entrants to the market, we appreciate all the help we can get!

While we have sent over several of our grips for review the two that seem to have the most questions around them are the Modern French and the Modern French Mk2 pictured below. The goal with these grips was to promote classical good form and technique in a comfortable ergonomic package. Some have questioned if they should be allowed in competition. As the FIE and USFA do not have a grip certification like they both do for other equipment, we would like to seek a ruling of if these grips should unambiguously be allowed or banned from USA Fencing sanctioned tournaments.

At the crux of the question is if these grips would represent an unfair advantage to the user providing both torque (like a pistol grip) and reach (like a French). We believe that they do not provide both and indeed conform to the rules as outlined in the USA Fencing 2020-21 rule book (August 2020) update.

Modern French MK-I



Modern French MK-



The first relevant section is m.4.6 which states:

6. If the handle (or glove) includes any device or attachment or has a special shape (orthopedic) which fixes the position of the hand on the handle, the handle must conform to the following conditions.

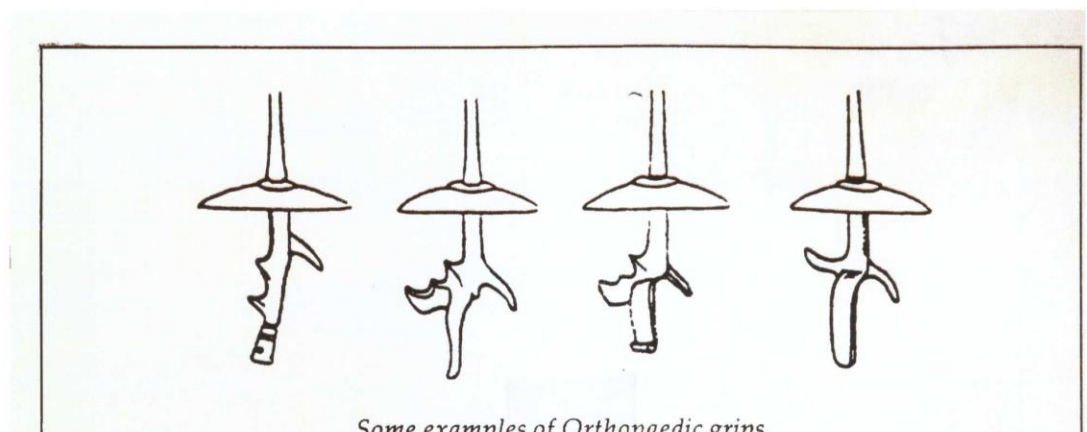
The other relevant section in the rules is section t.21.2 which states:

2. If the handle has no special device or attachment or special shape (e.g., orthopedic), a fencer may hold it in any way he wishes and he may also alter the position of his hand on the handle during a bout. However, the weapon must not be—either permanently or temporarily, in an open or disguised manner—transformed into a throwing weapon; it must be used without the hand leaving the grip and without the hand slipping along the grip from front to back during an offensive action.

Orthopedic, as highlighted above in section m.4.6, is a parenthetical meant to further define and clarify special shape. The dictionary defines orthopedic as “the medical specialty concerned with correction of deformities or functional impairments...”. Perhaps more relevantly, Martini A-Z of fencing by E. D. Morton defines the history in a fencing contents to be:

A grip, or a handle of a weapon, molded to fit the users hand and fingers. It is so-called because, when originally introduced, it was for the benefit of those whose hands were in some way deformed or mutilated. Subsequently the ideas were seized upon with avidity by all who found the French grip and technique complex and troublesome, or who affirmed that they could thus obtain more strength in their parries and attacks.

Morton provided some illustrative examples as well



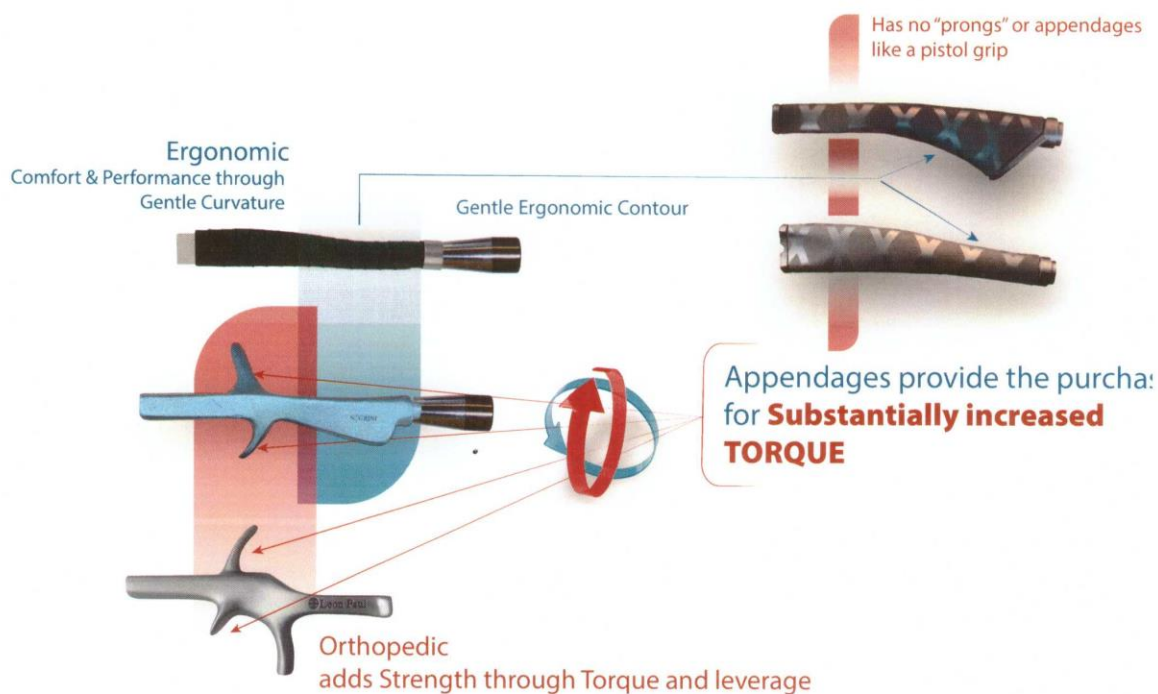
Some examples of Orthopaedic grips.

Nick Evangelista in his book "The Encyclopedia of the Sword" defines orthopedic as:

Orthopedic Grip. A fencing weapon grip **with small prongs or horns around which a fencer wraps his fingers**. Called "orthopedic" because it was originally designed for a hand that had been damaged... today it has gained popularity as a grip that promotes power.

(emphasis added)

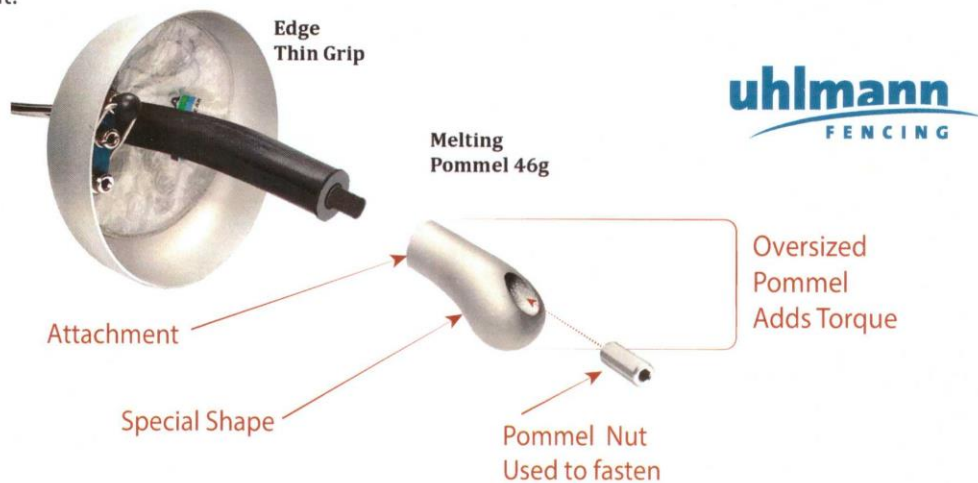
The USFA/FIE rules cited and these definitions comport to the conventional wisdom that grips can provide torque but not reach or can provide reach without a torque advantage. Grips like the Dos Santos are not legal in the USFA or FIE because that grip allows for both. We believe that the Lancet Fencing - Modern French does not allow for the kind of torque provided by a pistol or a Dos Santos style grip.



The Lancet Fencing - Modern French is **ergonomic** NOT orthopedic. It has no "prongs" or appendages like a pistol grip that provide the purchase for substantially increased torque. Additionally we feel like many other manufactures that are routinely accepted in USFA/FIE

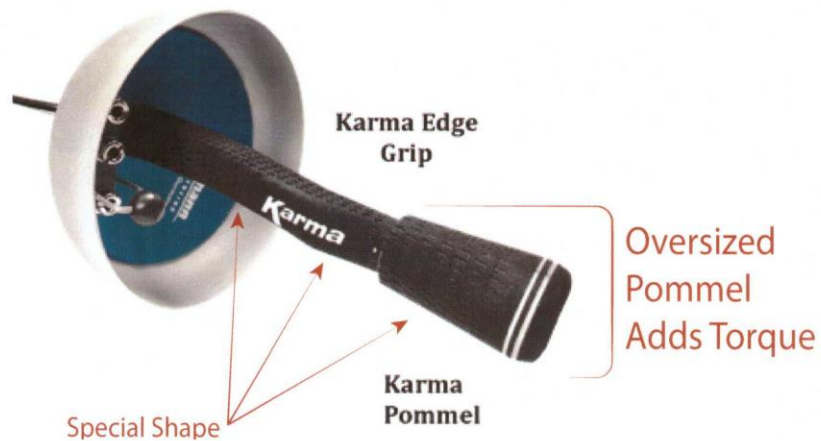
UHLMAN EDGE

The edge grip is a truncated french grip that is designed to be mated to various pommels such as the "melting pommel" shown below. Together these provide both the reach when posted and increased torque because of the shape and the mass of the pommel which is not being used to fasten the blade as it is described in the rules, rather a visconti style nut is actually attaching the blade to the "false" pommel which is instead acting like a counter weight.



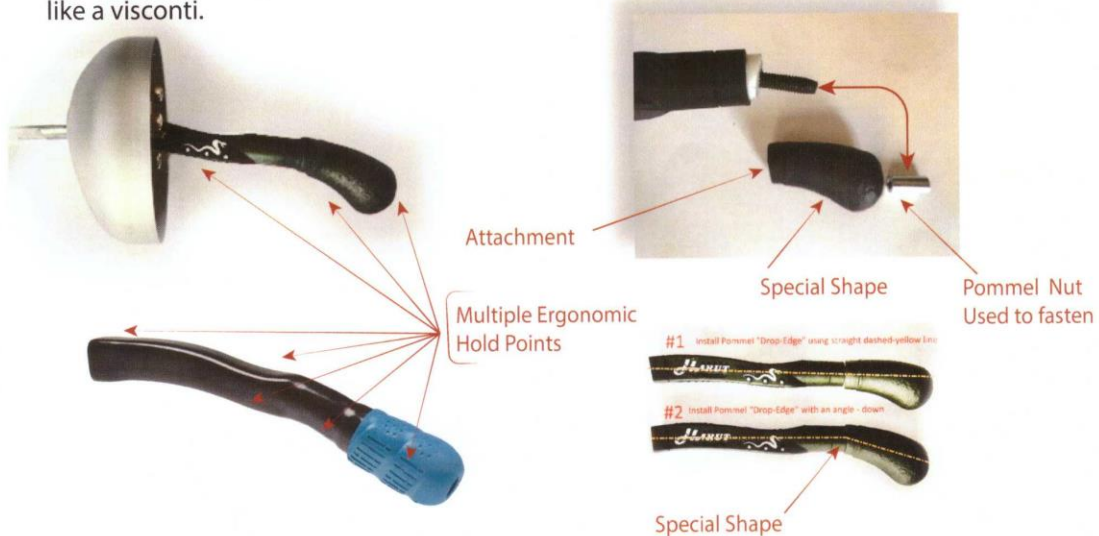
KARMA

Another variation of the edge grip this time by Karma and mated to a Karma pommel which provides more torque while posting by increasing the amount of volume to ergonomically increase the purchase generated by the wielder's hand.



HARUT

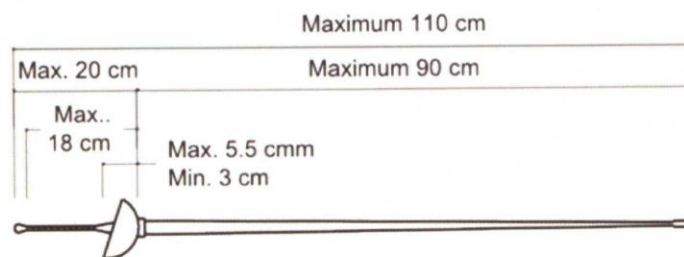
Harut Fencing has a similar grip called the Mamba T2020. This grip clearly has an ergonomic shape intended to increase the contact with the users hand with multiple hold points over the length of the grip. It is sold with a drop pommel option that similar to the Ulhman, allows for more torque and purchase while posting. Also like the Ulhman the pommel itself is "false" with the tang being attached using a nut that is tightened like a visconti.



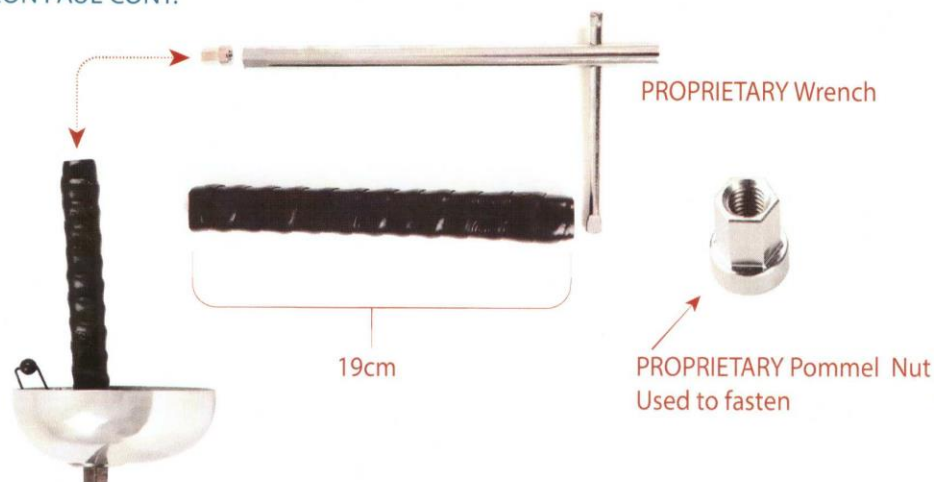
LEON PAUL

Leon Paul has taken another approach with the Slimline Pure Carbon grip. While not ergonomic in the same way, this grip is attempting to exploit the maximum length allowed in the rules at measuring 19cm in length without the pommel. Interestingly from our read, this seems to violate section m.4.1 which states:

The maximum length... 18 cm, measured between lines B and D.



LEON PAUL CONT.



CONCLUSION

In short, we feel like it is a good thing for the sport that manufactures are experimenting and moving fencing forward through technology. While we are not as tenured as the mentioned companies above, we ask that we also have the liberty to pursue our market differentiation in our own way while always being true to the spirit and the letter of the law. Just like in the sport of fencing, all we ask is for a fair shot at success.

We believe our Lancet Modern French and the Lancet Modern French MK2 are legal for the following reasons:

- 1** They are not orthopedic, they are ergonomic and do not afford the torque to the wielder that is present in a visconti or a Dos Santos because of the lack of prongs/appendages.
- 2** With a standard size pommel they are well within the maximum allowable length for both the grip and the pommel.
- 3** They allow a user to reposition his / her hand without requiring a release of the grip as cited in section t.21.2

Thank you again for your time and for your council as we work through this process. We are at your disposal for any opportunity to plead our case and solicit feedback.

Best Regards,
Phil Karnezis & Joe Inzerillo

Lancet Fencing Grips Discussion Conclusion
USA Fencing Armorers <armorers@usafencing.org>
Sun 5/23/2021 7:10 AM

Phillip Karnezis <phillipkarnezis@me.com>

At its May 13th meeting, the SEMI Commission of USAFencing concluded that the "Modern French Mk-1" and the "Modern French Mk-II," marketed by Lancet Fencing, conform to the rules governing handles (M2 and M4) and are approved for use in all USAFencing competitions.

Thank you,
The US SEMI

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