

V. RAPIER/FENCING COMBAT

The Rapier/Fencing Marshal-in-Charge is Master Lisabetta von Atzinger.

INSPECTIONS

Hours of operation for inspection will be from 9:00am - 4:00pm starting on Wednesday July 30th and running daily until 15 minutes prior to the last battle on Friday August 8th. The inspection point will close 15 minutes prior to all mass battles, and 30 minutes before the woods battle.

All inspections will be made by a marshal from the fencing combatant's home kingdom. If there is no marshal from that kingdom available, then inspections shall be made by any inspecting marshal to Society standards. Inspections are to be done on the field every day before engaging in combat of any form.

For your initial inspection, you will need to bring proof of your authorization (physical or electronic) and medallion to the rapier/fencing tent to receive an inspection sticker.

CUT & THRUST COMBAT

Fencers interested in practicing Cut-and-Thrust combat may do so on the rapier/fencing field using the Society rules or their own kingdom's C&T rules. Fencers wishing to practice C&T must be supervised by a marshal warranted in C&T.

YOUTH FENCING

Minors wishing to participate in youth fencing activities must first see the Youth Rapier Marshal in-Charge, accompanied by a parent, court-appointed legal guardian, or notarized guardian to complete necessary paperwork. Participation in youth fencing activities shall be governed by the rules in Section VIII: Youth Combat.

PENNSIC WAR 52 FENCING CONVENTIONS

These rules establish standards and conventions for fencing combat at Pennsic for all fencing activities. Kingdoms sponsoring other fencing events at Pennsic will employ these rules at minimum and may add additional rules specific to the kingdom hosting the tournament. These rules are designed to promote safe fencing combat at Pennsic, and all participants in events governed by these rules are responsible for knowing, understanding, and applying them. However, no matter how clear or accurate, rules cannot replace common sense, good judgment, and concern for the participants. If a question arises when applying these standards, choose the response that promotes the greatest degree of safety for all participants.

General Information

Fencing combat shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of the lists of the SCA, the Society-wide rules for fencing combat in the SCA, and these rules.

Per the Society-wide rules for fencing combat, all fencers, prior to every combat or practice, shall ensure their equipment is safe, is in good working order, and has been inspected by a marshal authorized to inspect fencing gear. At Pennsic, such inspection must be performed a minimum of once per day by either a marshal from a fencer's home kingdom to that kingdom's standards or, if a marshal from that kingdom is not available, by any marshal to the specifications described in Society rules.

Marshals have the power and the duty to remove from the field any person who is violating the rules of the list. Such violations include, but are not limited to, non-acceptance of blows, ignoring the rules of engagement, and behavior that is dangerous to combatants.

Marshals should keep in mind that all fencers are honorable people and treat them with courtesy and patience. Remember that honest mistakes do happen. If someone is so removed, the parties involved must go to the next Marshals' Review.

Fencers should remember that the marshals are attempting to ensure the safety of all fencers present and treat them with courtesy. Marshals shall always be obeyed by combatants on the field.

Use of Weapons and Parrying Devices

Valid blows are performed by:

1. Thrusting with the point of the blade (thrust)
2. Sliding the edge of the blade by pulling (draw cut) or pushing (push cut) a minimum of 6" across the target.
3. Placing the tip of the blade upon and then drawing it (tip cut) a minimum of 6" across the target.
4. Spears may be used for thrusts only; spears may not be used to deliver any other type of blow, including cuts. Note: At the discretion of the Rapier/Fencing Marshal-In-Charge, sparring may take place in which spears are used to cut. Such sparring will be monitored by an approved marshal, and no cuts from spears shall be permitted in war point battles, tournaments, or melee battles larger than 3 vs. 3.

Though the gloved hand may be used to parry, it shall not be used to push, grasp or strike an opponent. Blade grasping is not permitted in any War Point event. The use of blade grasping in other fencing activities shall be at the discretion of the marshal in charge of a particular melee or tournament.

Parries may be performed with weapons, parrying devices, the gloved hand, or any other part of the body. Striking an opponent with any part of a weapon or parrying device not approved for that purpose is prohibited. Fleeting contact between opponents is allowed, as long as no grappling, deliberate striking, or other unsafe behavior occurs. Conduct in violation of this rule which creates a significant safety hazard on the field will be grounds for immediate removal from the field.

Blades

There are three classes of fencing in the SCA: light rapiers, rapiers, and cut and thrust blades. The use of light rapiers is prohibited in any War Point battle. Any blade in a given fencing class may be used against any other blade in that same class but not against blades of the other classes. An exception to this rule is such blades that pass the flexibility standards as legal for "both" rapier and C&T. These blades may be used in both "styles" of combat, i.e. rapier and C&T. Check with the Rapier/Fencing Marshal-in-Charge if there is any question as to the legality of a blade for a particular event.

Groups hosting a particular fencing event may specify the types of blades to be used at that event. If a tournament specifies allowed blades only by general type, i.e. light or heavy, then all blades allowed at Society level in this category will be allowed.

Parrying Devices

Parrying devices shall follow the SCA Fencing Marshals' Handbook, with the additional rule that shields/bucklers cannot be more than 40" on any diagonal and may only be wielded in one hand.

No passive shields, bucklers, armor bits, etc. Unless combat is happening in an "Armor as worn" convention, any worn objects are treated as part of your body and any legal blows delivered to the objects should be recognized as legal blows. IE You can wear a finger buckler for personal protection, but if struck, you must take the blow, the buckler does not "stop" the blow. Similarly, you cannot strap a shield to your back and be protected. Sword and dagger guards, active shields, etc., act as normal.

Spears and Pikes

Spears that follow Society Rules are permitted for thrust only use in fencing activities and for war points as announced beforehand. Note: any spear head that has had any filler added is not permitted.

Rubber Band Guns

Rubber band guns ("RBGs") are approved for use under the following conditions:

1. RBGs are allowed if it has been announced beforehand.
2. Everyone on the field during a melee using RBGs must have eye protection of some kind, including marshals and water bearers.
3. When a hold is called, all loaded RBGs should be aimed at the ground, or if this is not possible, aimed away from all persons. In the case of rubber band cannons, a fully armored crew member must stand in front of the cannon blocking any accidental shot.
4. At the end of melees, the fighters must unload all RBGs before leaving the field.
5. RBGs are only approved with surgical tubing shot. Use of tubing containing any liquid, sand, beads, or any other material is not legal.
6. RBGs should mimic the appearance of a period firearm. A dagger blade may be attached to an RBG pistol to mimic a bayonet, but such a blade must meet flexibility requirements.
7. RBGs must pass the same safety requirements as a rigid parrying device if they will be used as such.
8. If an RBG is shot and the bullet bounces off anything and into a valid target, the shot is good.
9. The validity of any given shot from an RBG shall be judged by the recipient of that shot.

MARSHALING CONCERNS IN FENCING COMBAT

Excessive impact: combat at Pennsic poses risks to the participant. This recognition, however, does not excuse fighters from exercising control of their techniques. If a fighter throws blows which force his opponent to retire from the field from a real injury (even one which only causes brief incapacitation), the marshal responsible for the field shall take such steps as are appropriate to stop the problem from recurring.

In scenarios allowing Death From Behind (DFB), the thrower of the DFB must come to a complete stop. Hyper-DFBs or machine gunning (“deadmylorddeadmylorddeadmylord...”) is forbidden.

Additional melee rules for Pennsic 52:

1. Blind shots are illegal. Combatants must have visual contact before throwing a shot at an opponent. Note: this is a safety rule, not a scenario rule (i.e. a “hay bale wall” does not create a “blind shot” for purposes of this rule. It is unsafe to throw a blow when you cannot physically see where you are throwing).
2. Daggers and spears may NOT be used for DFBs.

3. Running from place to place in melee is permitted. Running TO engagement is permitted. Running FROM engagement is permitted.
 - a. Running attacks, either against a line or an individual, including running engagements or running through engagements, are prohibited. Combatants must come to a complete stop before beginning an attack, fouling a blade or otherwise engaging any opponent(s). Combatants may NOT throw shots at an opponent who is running toward them. Combatants violating this rule will get one warning from the marshals; a second offense will be grounds for rejection from the battle.
4. A combatant who steps off the Edge of the World is considered dead. They will get one loud, verbal warning from the witnessing marshal when they are approaching the edge, but the onus is on the combatants to always know their surroundings. Edge of the World deaths mean the combatant must leave the field or return to their resurrection point (if applicable).
5. All defeated or disabled fencers should remove themselves from the melee field. Fencers withdrawing from the field should do so with weapons held above their head to indicate non-combatant status. Fencers who have lost both hands or arms are considered disabled.
6. Fencers may not pretend to be dead or purposely hide themselves among the dead. If asked by a marshal or another combatant, combatants must answer truthfully whether they are alive or dead.
7. Dropped weapons do not need a hold unless they present an immediate safety issue.
 - a. Combatants may not steal an opponent's dropped weapon.
 - b. Combatants are not required (but are encouraged) to allow opponents to pick up their dropped weapon.
8. Dead fighters may only say they are dead. They may not give orders or other information. During a hold, fighters are welcome to discuss safety concerns with their teammates, or engage in good-natured conversation, but must not discuss tactics or strategy.
9. Fighters in any battle may call themselves dead at any time. In a resurrection battle, a fighter can always walk back to resurrection point.
10. Except for hay bales used to secure flags and flag systems to the grounds, combat over the hay bales is not allowed.

In any tournament or melee, additional restrictions may be imposed by the marshals as needed.