

Swordplay 2018 – Rules

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General

1. The *Swordplay* event is for the demonstration of technical and philosophical swordsmanship as exemplified by historical masters, and to bring together members of the Australian HEMA and swordsmanship community.
2. *Swordplay* tournaments represent historical *unarmoured* duelling.
3. The event is only made possible through the generosity of volunteers acting as event staff.
4. The reading and following of these rules is mandatory for all participants at the *Swordplay* event.
5. The event will consist of four main tournaments; Rapier, Sword, Longsword, and Sabre tournament. There will also be social fencing, workshops, and other events.
6. Fencing is a martial art involving various weapons. It can be inherently dangerous. **All participants agree take responsibility for themselves, hold their own insurance and be associated with a group, club or school.**
7. Please follow these guidelines for the benefit and enjoyment of all participants:

Be safe. HEMA is an inherently dangerous pastime. Whilst equipment and gear can mitigate risk it is your responsibility to manage both your opponent's and your own safety.

Be organised. A HEMA tournament is a complex logistical event with tight time constraints. Please ensure that you are prepared and ready for workshops and tournament bouts.

Have fun. All participants are here to enjoy themselves – please be considerate.

Safety

8. Safety is everyone's responsibility.
9. It is the responsibility of any and all participants to call 'HOLD' if any safety breach is observed.
10. A call of 'HOLD' shall be repeated if given outside of combat arenas.
11. All activity is to cease when HOLD (originating outside of combat arenas) is called.
12. During tournament bouts the call of 'EVERYBODY HOLD' will be used in any urgent safety circumstances outside of single arenas.
13. Any incidents, injuries, weapon breaks, safety issues, safety warnings, red or yellow cards, etc MUST be immediately notified to the Safety Marshal, and to Event Coordinator as soon as practicable.
14. Event Coordinator, Safety Marshal and Combat Referee have the authority to order an end to any bout if in their consideration fencers have engaged in unacceptable conduct prejudicial to the purpose, safety and objectives of the event (refer Warnings & Penalties).
15. Any current or pre-existing injuries must be notified to the Event Coordinator and Safety Marshal prior to participating
16. [Any injuries received must be reported to event staff](#)

Swordplay event staff

17. Staff include: Event Coordinator, Safety Marshal(s), Combat Referee(s), Flags, Scorers, and Timers.
18. *Swordplay* relies upon the volunteered time of the HEMA community to provide Marshals, Referees, Scorers/Timers, and Flag judges. Please treat them with respect at all times.
19. Any school or group with multiple participants MUST provide event staff; combat referees, flag judges, scorers and timers.
20. The responsibilities of each of these appointments are detailed below:

21. **Swordplay Event Coordinator**

- Key point of organisation for the Swordplay event
- Develops and administers the rules for Swordplay
- Has the final say in venue, combat rules and safety guidelines
- Resolution of appeals by fencers
- Note: Any and all incidents or injuries including safety warnings, red or yellow cards, must be notified to the Event Coordinator as soon as possible
- Gives Safety Warning and Penalties where relevant

22. **Safety Marshal(s):**

- Conducts pre-tournament weapon and armour checks
- Monitors event & tournament safety
- Please note that responsibility for all personal safety remains fully with the individual
- Gives Safety Warning and Penalties where relevant
- Note: there will be one Head Safety Marshal and Assistants
- Note: Any and all incidents, injuries, safety warnings or penalty cards must be notified to Head Safety Marshall as soon as possible.

23. **Combat / Arena Referee(s):**

- Oversees combat between fencers within the Combat Arena
- Supervises Combat Arena Staff (flags / timers / scorers)
- Starts and finishes all combat within their Combat Arena of responsibility
- Controls conduct within the arena
- Monitors intensity and safety of swordplay between fencers
- Determines scoring with the assistance of flag judges
- Gives Safety Warning and Penalties where relevant

24. **Flags:**

- Indicates when successful hits have been landed
- Assists Combat Marshal in determining strikes and awarding of points
- Watch that Combat Arena is kept clear of unauthorised entrants
- Flags roles should be undertaken by event fencers whilst not directly involved in or preparing for a combat bout

25. **Scorer/Timer:**

- Monitors number of pass and announces 'last pass'
- Records strikes as confirmed by the Combat Referee and announces winner (or a tie) at the end of each bout
- Monitors bout time and calls end-time for bouts.
- Scorers / timers are not be involved in calling strikes or points in any way

26. NOTE: Please ensure that event staff, particularly scorers and timers, are not needlessly distracted during bouts or whilst undertaking duties.

Weapon and Companion Item Requirements

27. All tournament weapons are to approximate the design, size, and weight of historical weapons in specific categories.
28. Please note that these weapon definitions are not historic classifications, rather standard categories for event purposes.
29. All tournament weapons will be checked by Safety Marshal prior to tournament use.
30. Weapons will only qualify for a single event category.
31. The Safety Marshal has final say over the suitability and classification of any weapon or companion item.
32. Companion Weapons / Items include dagger, cloak, buckler and mailed parry gauntlet (for rapier only), 2nd rapier (for rapier only). Rotella are not permitted in main four tournaments.
33. Other weapons may be used for social fencing and workshops as long as safety is a priority at all times.

Tournament weapons will be categorised as below guidelines:

34. **Rapier:**

Complex Hilt and Straight blade, length over 91cm, and

Forte width no less than 15 and up to 27mm at the cross-hilt

35. **Sword:**

36. Cruciform, sidesword or basic cross guards (no complex, rapier or basket hilts)

Straight blade, length from 45cm to 94cm – Forte width no less than 28mm at the cross

37. **Longsword / feder:**

Straight blade length over 91cm, and

Forte width no less than 28mm at the cross-hilt (or above schilt) (standard feders allowed)

38. **Sabre:**

Curved blade length from 45cm to 91cm, and Forte width no less than approx. 20mm at the cross/hilt

Weapon weight

39. Any weapon possessing a heft that in the opinion of the Safety Marshal would prove too difficult to safely control strikes will not be permitted into the Swordplay tournaments.

Blade flex

40. All weapons must have reasonable flex. This includes daggers.

41. A guide for flex; measured with a 1 kg weight hung from the point of the, the flexibility is between 7-15% (deviation of tip from normal, compared to the length of the blade, multiplied by 100)

- EG flex at tip of 7 cm for a 100cm blade is 7%

42. All weapons must:

- have rebated (blunt) edges greater than 1mm edge and blade point rounded to no less than a 10mm in diameter
- tipped with rubber blunt or leather tip to cover all metal, firmly secured with bright coloured fibre / electrical tape (preferably yellow); tip must not be removable with basic hand pressure
- have quillions less than 40cm in total width
- have no projections from quillions or pommel
- be in a clean condition free of nicks, burrs, & rust

43. Over the course of the event (between bouts) weapons must be checked by fencers to ensure continued safety; tips intact, remove burrs etc

Companion Items

44. **Dagger:** Straight blade length under 45cm

45. **Cloaks:** no weighted edges or be in a state of disrepair such as having tattered holes.

46. **Bucklers:** wood, metal or polycarbonate, wide edge, no dangerous projections. No more than 40cm diameter.

47. **Parrying gauntlets:** mailed palm section sufficient to grasp the opponent's sword

Armour Requirements

48. The **minimum** protective gear (for all events) are as follows:

- Fencing **mask** or fencing helmet of full metal construction with external protective cover
- Back of head / neck covering - minimum rigid material (hardened leather, plastic or metal) and padding
- Fencing **jacket** of padded material.
- **Neck / throat protection;** must meet one of the following criteria:
 - Rigid Gorget; puncture proof, padded
 - Padded only gorget (without rigid plate) **MUST** be accompanied by a mask bib / overlay that incorporates a rigid plate in front of the throat.
- Groin protection and/or breast protection.
- **Gloves**
 - for rapier / complex hilts: Simple gloves
 - for Sword / longsword: highly protective, padded with hardened leather, plastic or steel plating or very high density foam. Custom or commercial, but must cover entire hand and wrist.

(Motorcycle gloves, Lacrosse gloves are not sufficient. Any non-standard (hand-made) gloves are at the discretion of Safety Marshal and Event Coordinator and **MUST** be checked before the event.)

- **Rigid knee and elbow** for all weapons
- **Rigid shin and forearm** protection is required for sword, longsword, and sabre
- **Enclosed footwear** (with ankle support highly recommended); and
- Arms and legs (including all skin) are also to be covered (however kilts are acceptable with long socks)

Weapon & Armour checks

49. All fencers' armour and weapons will be checked at the start of the Swordplay by the Safety Marshal(s), before the commencement of any tournaments
50. Any fencer not wearing minimum armour will be refused entry to tournaments
51. It is a fencers responsibility to ensure they are wearing complete armour as approved for each bout (referees will conduct basic 'sight check' before commencing bout).
52. Fencers are encouraged to wear additional protective gear for their own comfort level. Some form of rigid torso layer is recommended for Longsword. The level of protective gear described is the MINIMUM required to participate in the Swordplay and participants are encouraged to adopt additional protective gear if they feel inclined to do so.
53. Please note that minimum or additional armour does NOT reflect an increase in any tempo or power of strikes delivered in combat.
54. Fencers must provide own weapons and safety equipment. Equipment will not be supplied by event.

Tournament Outline

55. All rules are designed to encourage the display of martial prowess with an acceptable degree of safety.
56. Combat and scoring is premised upon fencers being unarmoured and wearing civilian attire (IE: breeches, loose shirt, doublet and gloves), and participating in a civilian duel.
57. Combat does not represent armoured combat in any way and tempo and power should be considerate of this.

58. Each of the four main Swordplay weapon events will be conducted as:
59. **Round 1:** round robin with pools of 4 to 8 people (dependent upon entrant numbers; where there are more than 32 entrants per weapon event there may be 8 pools). Pools will be drawn at random and adjusted to avoid initial intra-school bouts.
60. **Round 2:** round robin with 4 pools of 4 people consisting of the top 16 from Round 1, determined by number of wins and then ratio of points landed to points received.
61. **Round 3 / Finals:** play-off's of top 4 people (pool winners) from Round 2; this will determine 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th places.
62. **These may be adjusted in the interests of time**

63. **Bouts will be conducted to a number of passes (5) or maximum time limit (3 minutes).**
(This will be finalised based on entrant numbers for each event)
64. Fencers will be penalised points for each blow landed upon them.
65. Winner of each bout will be determined by least points accumulated.
66. If a bout ends with a tie, loser will be determined by the first to receive a blow (Sudden Death).
67. Winner of pools will be determined by number of wins. In case of a draw then ratio of blows landed to blows received will be considered

Women's Tournament

68. A women's tournament will be run where there are sufficient entrants (minimum 6)
69. This will be fencer's choice of weapons, but must be matched type in each bout.
70. Women's event entrants may also participate in Medium or Open events.

Medium and Open Intensity

71. Each Weapon tournament will have a Medium and Open intensity category depending on minimum entrant numbers (minimum 6).
72. Fencers will only be permitted entry to one intensity level per weapon category.
73. **Medium** intensity is for:
 - Fencers with no / little tournament experience, or
 - Fencers who chose not to participate at high intensity (intensity will be closely managed)
 - Medium intensity bouts will NOT include grappling (all Wide Play as default)
74. **Open** intensity is for experienced fencers and those who wish to test skills in an environment of high technical and athletic prowess. It is a fencer's responsibility
 - The expectation is that the intensity will be determined by the fencers, excepting circumstances where intensity is considered to be unsafe.

- It is a fencer's responsibility to be aware of the Open level competition intensity.
- All Open bouts will include grappling (Close Play) by default

Targets and Scoring

For Rapier, Sword and Longsword

75. Scoring is determined based on target struck. Targets are defined as Deep and Shallow

- Deep targets: torso, neck and head (4 points)
- Shallow targets: limbs (arms and legs inc hands and feet) (2 points)
- The lines of demarcation are – the point of the shoulders and the crease of the groin.

For all

76. All blows will be delivered in a controlled manner and only with sufficient force and control to communicate the intent of the blow, warnings will be issued for repeated actions.

77. **No fencer will intentionally or purposefully strike the back of head or neck, spine or groin, appropriated warnings will be issued.**

78. **Blows to the back of the Head, Spine or Groin will not score.**

79. If a fencer executes more than one scoring action in an undefended series IE the follow-on action is in unbroken succession with control, then the action with the higher score takes precedence (multiple scoring actions are NOT cumulative).

- EG a strike to a Shallow target follow by a strike to a deep target – the Deep target strike is scored.

80. All weapons will have at least one hand on the handle/hilt at all times to score a strike

81. Fencers who retreat onto Combat Arena ropes shall be given ONE warning. Continued step outs; 1 point

82. Stepping on weapons is NOT permitted

83. Weapon tip MUST NOT be tapped on the ground

84. Kicks, knees, punches, elbows or headbutts are NOT permitted

85. If at any time an opponent is obviously unable to attempt a defence – full force MUST NOT be used.

86. **A controlled blow (indicative only) that shows the ability to deliver that was controlled to not use full force will still score full points.**

Pommel & Buckler strikes

87. Pommel and buckler strikes will be scored only to head and counted as a deep target (4 points)

88. Pommel and buckler strikes MUST be performed in a fully controlled manner to indicate the intent of the strike, but not land with full force – especially in Medium Intensity bouts (sufficient force to cause injury will be deemed unsafe).

Falls & Disarms

89. Disarm opponent of main weapon; 2 points.

90. If followed immediately (within the same action) by a controlled strike to deep target; total 4 points.

91. If a fencer falls the Combat Referee will allow time to recover (unless there is a safety concern).

92. A fallen, still armed, fencer can still score through an effective strike upon opponent.

93. The standing fencer may show intent of a strike upon a fallen/disarmed opponent, avoiding over powered/ uncontrolled strikes and must not strike spine or back of head.

Doubles and Afterblows

94. **A double is defined as blows that land before the call of Point, 4 points (deep target) will be scored for each fencer.**

95. **An afterblow is defined as any blow that occurs between the calls of Point and Hold, and is worth 1 point.**

96. **Three doubles in a match will result of a draw for that match**

97. **Any fencer intentionally ignoring an incoming attack will receive a warning or penalty card, and any points will be negated for that fencer for that pass**

98. Rapier Tournament

- Medium rapier will allow for a choice of Rapier and companion Item in each bout
- Open Rapier Round 1 will be rapier alone
- Open Rapier Round 2 and Finals will allow for a choice of Rapier and companion Item
- Scoring strikes in Rapier will be limited to:
 - Thrusts to all targets
 - Cuts and pommel strikes to the face mesh only

99. Sword Tournament

- Sword will be a Sword and Buckler only (Medium and Open Intensity)

100. **Sabre Tournament**
101. Bouts will be to a total number of 5 touches or 3 minute time limit (whichever is reached first).
102. Number of touches and time limit may be changed based on entrant numbers.
103. Touches upon opponent will result in a HOLD call by the Combat Referee, touch awarded and bout resumes.
104. Cuts and thrusts will be scored as one touch regardless of target.
105. All Sabres will be considered to have 6 inches of sharp edge on reverse edge tip.
106. There will be no companion items.
107. No grappling. Open hand (brief) pushing and redirection of the weapon holding arm is acceptable.
108. No striking with pommel, or guard.
109. Double / simultaneous kills will be penalised as a two touches (one each) but no touch awarded to either fencer (thus reducing total number of touches available).
110. It is possible that after 3 simultaneous / double kills (and no single touches awarded) that there is no winner and both on 0 points – this will not trigger a ‘sudden death’ outcome – both fencers lose the bout.
111. Scored draw (touches been awarded to each fencer), result in ‘sudden death’ - first touch wins bout.
112. If there are 3x simultaneous / double kills during sudden death, there will be no winner

Grappling

113. Medium intensity will be conducted at ‘wide play’ (no grappling) only.
114. Open intensity bouts will be conducted with ‘close play’ (grappling) included.
115. All participants must consider safety and control as the priority in all actions, especially grappling.
116. **‘Wide Play’ (no grappling)**
- No grasping, grabbing or holding of opponent; there is to be no intentional body contact, including shoving, pushing, shouldering, barging, charging etc. There may be incidental contact; however any contact, considered by the Referee to be, purposeful, uncontrolled or potentially injurious will result in a warning; repeated instances may result in disqualification.
 - Blade redirection is allowed.
 - Brief blade grabs are allowed; more than 3 seconds without a scoring strike will result in HOLD and reset.
 - Pommel and buckler strikes are allowed however must be performed with full control to show intent only
 - Where ‘no grappling’ is allowed (Medium Intensity), any grappling will be penalised as per Safety Penalties.
117. **‘Close Play’ (grappling)**
- Allows for grabs upon opponent’s arms and body, and safe unbalancing techniques. No grappling technique will score any points on its own – only accompanying strikes.
 - Grappling lasting more than 5 seconds without a strike landed will be called to HOLD and fencers reset.
 - If a Referee feels that grappling is unsafe there will be a HOLD called and fencers reset.
 - At no stage will any fencer attempt dangerous movements such as limb breaks or joint dislocations.
 - Dangerous throws EG risking an opponent landing upon their head, a weapon, or other are NOT allowed.

Conduct of Bouts

118. **Combat Referee will:**
- call fencers to Arena and announce next bout fencers to prepare
 - do quick sight armour check on fencers and check red / blue armbands
 - check readiness of fencers, scorer / timer, and flags
 - commence the bout
119. **Calling points:**
- When a strike is landed, a moment will be provided for potential afterblow, then HOLD called by Referee.
 - Fencers will reset to distance
 - Referee MUST consult Flags
 - Referee will announce strikes landed:
 - EG “Deep target on Blue” or “Shallow target on Red”
 - Scorer will mark scoresheet

- Referee will recommence fencing
- Time will continue during point allocation. This process should be fast and clear.

120. **Flags:**

- When seeing a strike land call "POINT" - this does not halt bout
- When asked by the Ring Marshall, hold vertical colour flag of fencer struck
- For doubles or afterblows flags crossed above head (4 points to each fencer)

121. **Fencers:**

- Can call strikes landed upon themselves after HOLD called – score remains at Referee discretion
- May negate a strike landed upon opponent as ineffective (eg flat or tippy)
- Will NOT comment about landing a strike upon an opponent
- Will NOT make a call of being struck on Shallow Target when Referee and Flags announce Deep target
- (Referee will NOT ask a fencer if they landed a strike on opponent)

Forfeits

122. Any fencer is entitled to forfeit the bout without judgement or loss of honour.
123. A forfeit counts as loss of the bout.
124. If forfeit occurs prior to start of bout, a WILD card fencer will take their place if possible.
125. If a fencer discontinues a combat:
- Due to accidental injury: scores are tallied at that time
 - Due to forfeit during bout: Opponent wins however points remain
 - Due to safety violation / disqualification: Disqualified fencer score is discarded and Opponent wins.
126. Either the Safety Marshal or Combat Referee can halt combat if they consider the tempo of bout is leading to an imminent danger of injury being inflicted. (Refer Warnings & Penalties)
127. Note: The Combat Referee has authority to restrict intensity between fencers, where safety is at risk
128. If in doubt, Combat Referee MUST check if fencers are comfortable continuing at current intensity
129. If a Combat Referee is not confident to judge high intensity bouts then they MUST swap out

Warnings & Penalties

130. Swordplay uses a 3-level safety system which can be enforced by the Event Coordinator, Safety Marshal(s) and Combat Referees. These penalties relate only to safety and behaviour issues.
131. All Warnings and Penalties will be recorded and reviewed by the Event Coordinator, Safety Marshal and relevant head of School/School Representative.
132. 1st level: Verbal Warning
- For accidental / incidental offenses.
 - Allows marshals to communicate unacceptable behaviour to competitors / participants.
 - A second Verbal Warning for similar issue will result in a Yellow Card.
133. 2nd level: Yellow Card
- Any action which carries sufficient risk, or is disruptive enough to require an active penalty to discourage the behaviour, or is warranted due to repeated warnings.
 - A second Yellow Card in a bout, is equivalent to a Red Card, will immediately disqualify a fencer from a bout and be recorded as a loss.
 - Repeated yellow cards across bouts may result in removal from tournament.
 - Can be for a single circumstance or for multiple Warnings.
 - No points can be scored of a blow that results in a yellow card
134. 3rd level: Red Card
- Will result in disqualification from the bout, tournament, or event as appropriate.
 - Where a fencer presents an immediate and serious risk of injury to themselves, participants, staff or spectators.
 - Can be for a single circumstance or for multiple Yellow Cards.
 - No points can be scored for a blow that results in a red card
 - Any blow that results in your opponent having to be checked for concussion will result in a red card.

Warnings or penalties may be given for the following reasons:

135. **Dangerous Behaviour**

Any action which puts any participant, event staff or spectators at increased risk of injury.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Exceeding intensity or grappling options
- Deliberate dangerous striking
- Striking with hands, feet, knees or elbows
- Failing to heed halt or safety warnings
- Deliberately and repeatedly blocking with hands or arms
- Throwing a “Mordschlag” style strikes (or striking with the quillons)
- Intentional hard striking directed at back of neck, spine or groin
- Dangerous play not in accordance with tournament rules
- Endangering fellow participants (in or out of the arena)

136. **Unsporting behaviour**

Any actions that give an opponent an unfair advantage outside the scope of normal competition.

Examples include but are not limited to;

- Moving out of bounds to avoid hits
- Dropping weapons to avoid hits
- Call halt without reason

137. **Disruptive Behaviour**

Any behaviour that disrupts the smooth running of the tournament, match or atmosphere of the tournament.

Examples include but are not limited to;

- Abusive or offensive language to any participant, event staff or spectator.
- Arguing with the Referees or other staff.
- Repeatedly being unready for the start of bouts
- Throwing of gear
- Seriously detracts from the smooth running of the event or enjoyment of other participants / spectators

Spectators & Coaching

138. Spectators may encourage their chosen fencers from the sidelines; EG “Go Blue!”, “C’mon Red!”, “Well Done (fencer name)”, “Good Call” etc

139. There is to be NO coaching comments, name-calling or use of foul language from spectators. Any spectator warned about their conduct but continues to act so shall be asked to depart the tournament venue.

140. One coach per fencer is allowed. This coach will remain at fencer’s corner.

141. Spectators will not disturb event staff (timers, scorers, referees) during bouts.

142. Spectators will not make comments or enter into discussion about scoring or Referee decisions.

143. The only spectator comments beyond encouragement will be safety calls.

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