

Conventions Concerning Rapier Combat and Combatants

A. General Conventions

1. *No matter how clear or accurate, rules cannot replace common sense, good judgment, and concern for the participants and observers.*
2. Barring specific changes noted in this document, the War will follow the rules laid out in the January 2024 version of the SCA's Rapier Marshals' Handbook. Tournaments may be fought under different rules at the discretion of the tourney organizer, after review and approval by the Rapier Marshal in Charge. *Text in italics* is a quote from the Rapier Marshals' Handbook.
3. Exceptions/Additions
 - a) Knee walking is not allowed in the Ravine.
 - b) All fighters are engaged at lay on.
 - c) Running
 - (1) Fighters may run to engagement if they can do so safely. Fighters within active engagement range may run to maintain engagement (i.e. if your opponent runs in an effort to break engagement, you may pursue), and may throw shots while doing so.
 - (2) All fighters are responsible for their own safety and that of others, and may not run nor throw shots while running if it is unsafe to do so.
 - (3) Due to the uneven ground , running is not permitted in the ravine. A double-time walk to engagement is permitted.
 - d) In melee combat, when not in a line, a single fighter shall not be engaged by more than three enemy fighters. This does not apply to the last person in a line that has been flanked or routed.
 - (1) That enemy fighter may request single combat, but there is no requirement to honor that request.

B. Range of Engagement:

1. Unless explicitly mentioned otherwise, the 180 rule of engagement will apply.
 - a) *"Combatants may strike any single opponent they can safely reach with any legal blow if they are within a 180 degree arc of the opponent's front as defined by the opponent's shoulders, and at an angle they can be reasonably seen by the opponent. Combatants may strike any opponent who is part of a line if the attack is delivered within a 180 degree arc relative to the local line the opponent is a part of. A combatant may not deliberately ignore an attacker behind them, or repeatedly maneuver to keep their back to an attacker (thereby preventing an attack on them)."*

2. Death from Behind (DFB) is only permitted in war points that allow it as part of the scenario.
 - a) *"Killing from behind is achieved by laying the weapon over the opponent's shoulder, so that the tip is visible to the opponent, while calling out clearly "You have been killed from behind" or other short clear phrase. The combatant must take care not to strike their opponent with the quillons, guard, or other part of the weapon."*
 - b) DFB can not be performed with a dagger or a rapier spear or a projectile weapon. It can only be performed with a sword.
3. Combat archers may not use their bow or cross bow as a parrying device.

C. Death

1. Fighters in any battle may call themselves dead at any time.
2. Dead fighters are expected to remove themselves from the field as soon as they can safely do so. Dead fighters may not 'die through' the opposing line unless told to do so by a marshal or opposing fighter. In all cases, dead fighters are to make an effort not to interfere with live fighting.
3. Fighters who are killed should make obvious their status, such as by holding their weapon(s) over their head or calling out "Dead. Dead. Dead."
4. Dead fighters may not give orders or information other than their status as dead.
5. Dead fighters may continue to walk off the field during holds. For those scenarios where fighters can resurrect, dead fighters must wait at the resurrection point during the hold. They may walk back to engagement only after the hold has been released.
6. Resurrection lines must be fully crossed by the entire body. Resurrection points must be touched with a hand or weapon.

D. Holds

1. *Upon hearing the call of "Hold" all fighting shall immediately stop. The fighters shall freeze, check for hazards in their immediate vicinity, and then assume a non-threatening position with their weapons pointed away from their opponents. Any person may call a hold, including the combatant(s), marshal, or bystander. Holds are to be called for any safety reason. Holds are not to be called for the loss of a weapon unless that weapon may be a tripping hazard.*
2. Exceptions / Additions:
 - a) All holds are general, unless otherwise announced.
 - b) Fighters may not discuss tactics during holds.
 - c) Unless otherwise ordered by the marshals, armor is not to be removed by fighters on the field during holds (masks stay on).
 - d) In timed battles, holds will stop the clock.
 - e) Please be mindful of word choice when giving orders on the field (for example, use "gap" instead of "hole" in the line, "maintaining" a

line instead of “holding” a line, etc). Fighters that cannot follow this rule may be asked to leave the field.

E. Weapons and secondaries

1. Category of Weapons: War Point Scenarios are to be fought with Heavy Rapier weapons only. Cut and Thrust weapons and Light Rapier weapons may be used in tournaments where explicitly allowed to by the rules of the tournament or where both combatants in a particular round agree to it and are both authorized in it.

a) Exceptions / Additions:

- (1) Two Handed weapons will not be allowed in the Ravine.
- (2) Non-standard weapons or secondaries must be approved by the RMiC before use.

2. Spears

- a) Rapier spears are only permitted in war point scenarios where explicitly allowed.
- b) *The only valid blow with a spear is a Thrust. For single tournament combat, this type of weapon is considered a non-standard device. An opponent may decline to face a non-standard device without forfeiting a bout. A fighter may not "set" this weapon by bracing the base in the ground or against the foot or body, or locking the back arm. "*
- c) Spears shots may be thrown with one hand. Fighters must maintain control of the spear at all times though.

3. Shields/Bucklers

a) Two types of shields/bucklers will be allowed at Gulf Wars.

(1) Small Shields/Bucklers

- (a) Total area of the face may not exceed 453 square inches (the equivalent of a 24 inch diameter round shield).
- (b) Allowed in all war point scenarios and tournaments unless explicitly noted otherwise.

(2) Large Shields

- (a) Total area of the face may not exceed 707 square inches (the equivalent of a 30 inch diameter round shield).
- (b) Only allowed in war point scenarios where explicitly noted.

4. Projectile Weapons and Rapier Combat Archery (RCA)

a) Projectile weapons are only permitted in war point scenarios where explicitly allowed. Due to the danger to spectators and

passers by, the use of projectile weapons in non-war point scenarios must be approved by the RMIC prior to the event.

- (1) The only projectiles allowed to be used at Gulf Wars war points are arrows, crossbow bolts, and RBG rubber bands.
- (2) Throwing "hatchets", projectiles made of one or several balls, and anything else beyond what is listed above are not allowed in war point scenarios.

b) All projectiles must meet the following requirements:

- (1) All projectiles must have a mass no greater than 1 lb (460 g).
- (2) Projectiles must have a minimum diameter of 1/4 inch (6 mm) in any direction during flight.
- (3) The striking surface of a projectile must be made of a material with at least 1/4 inch (6 mm) give.
- (4) No part of the projectile, including the support material underneath the padding, can be sharp.
- (5) Material that could flake off when hitting an opponent must not be used on striking surfaces.

c) All hand bows, crossbows, RBGs, and ammunition must be inspected to the following standards. A projectile firing apparatus must be of a mechanism that can be readily checked by a marshal on the field, using equipment that is readily available in the Society, such as a bow poundage gauge.

- (1) Handbows
 - (a) Must have a draw strength of 20 lbs or less at a draw of 28 inches. Handbows must be designed to be drawn at least 28 inches.
 - (b) Compound bows and non-period aids are not to be used. Some examples of non-period aids are sights, flipper rests, clickers, and string release aids.
- (2) Crossbows
 - (a) Must have a draw weight of 450 inch-pounds (518 kg-cm) or less.
 - (b) A crossbow's draw weight is calculated by taking the poundage of the bow measured at the lock, multiplied by the distance (in inches) from the front of the string at rest, to the front of the string when it is in the cocked position. In the SCA, we refer to this measurement as "inch-pounds", which is not to be confused with units of torque.

(c) Modern pistols grips are not allowed.

(3) Rubber Band Guns (RBGs)

(a) A rubber band gun or similar apparatus that fires flexible projectiles using the elasticity of the projectiles as the sole propulsion force may not have a draw strength of greater than 30 lbs (13.6 kg) per projectile.

(4) Ammunition

(a) All ammunition must be marked in a way that makes it clearly identifiable.

(i) Arrows and bolts should be marked to identify the owner, their branch, and kingdom in a language identifiable in the region where the event is taking place.

(ii) RBGs must be uniquely identified to allow owners to find their own ammunition.

(b) No metal may be used in the construction of ammunition.

(c) Shafts must be solid pultruded fiberglass between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch diameter. Shafts must be covered in sturdy tear resistant tape, such as strapping, electrical, or duct tape, from behind the blunt to the front of the nock.

(d) All ammunition has a maximum length of 28 inches (711 mm) from the back of the head/blunt, to where the string rests on the nock.

(e) Fletches are allowed as long as they are securely attached and made of a soft material. Fletches may not project more than $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch from the shaft.

(f) Commercially manufactured blunts with no padding are not allowed. For example, Baldar blunts, Fathead blunts, and Star blunts.

(g) Ultra-high molecular weight (UHMW) polyethenlene blunts are the only blunts allowed on the rapier field. UHMW polyethylene cores are constructed of at least 1 1/4 inch (31.8 mm) diameter UHMW polyethylene rod with a hole drilled in it to accept the shaft. The shaft hole must be at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) deep, and there must be at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) of polyethylene in front of the shaft. At least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) and at most 1 1/4 inch (31.8 mm) of padding must be added in front of the UHMW core.

This padding must have progressively resistant give and be at least the same diameter as the blunt after taping. The side of the head must also have padding that provides progressively resistant give that extends from the tip of the padding to at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) over the UHMW core that brings the total diameter of the head to at least 1 1/2 inch (38.1 mm) after taping. The front edges of the blunt must be rounded over. All sharp edges must be eased. As long as all other requirements are met, the blunt is allowed to have material removed for aerodynamic or weight-reducing purposes.

- (h) Blunts must be securely attached to the shaft using tape, glue, cable ties, etc. One piece of sturdy, tear-resistant tape, must extend over the front end of the blunt and be securely attached to the shaft on both sides. Attachment of the blunt will be tested by grabbing and pulling on the blunt with moderate force while twisting slightly. If it detaches or moves length wise along the shaft, it fails. Rotating around the shaft is acceptable.
- (i) Anti penetration devices used at the nock on ammunition on the armored combat field are not required on the rapier field.
- (j) Fighters must inspect their ammunition after each iteration of each scenario to make sure they are still in good condition before reusing. Gleaning (picking up and using spent ammunition, whether your own or that of others) in an iteration of a scenario is not allowed. This applies to bolts, arrows, and RBG “bullets”.

5. Types of Blows Allowed

- a) Thrusts and Draw Cuts are valid blows and must be accepted by all fighters.
- b) Tip Cuts and Pull Cuts can be rejected by fighters if their home kingdom does not allow them.
- c) Blows from projectile weapons are to be treated as equivalent to a sword thrust. So a fighter who has been hit by a projectile on their leg would lose the use of their leg and need to go their knees or stand with their feet together.

- d) Projectiles can be knocked out of the air by a weapon or blocked by a shield or buckler. Fighters can move or dodge to avoid a projectile.