

Conduct of Bouts & Ruleset – Swordfish XIV

1. Organizational hierarchy

The organizational hierarchy of the tournament consists of multiple elements that all play a vital part in getting such a large undertaking to run smoothly.

Tournament Manager: In charge of the tournament on site and responsible for making all final decisions during the execution of the tournament. Present during the tournament they are responsible for.

Referee: Responsible for running all bouts on one mat. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- starting/stopping bout
- announcing score
- clearing up misunderstandings
- giving out penalties

Judges: Those responsible for judging the fencers and awarding points during the bout based on their impression of what happened during each exchange.

Secretariat: Announces bouts, keeps time and score and makes sure fencers are given red and blue armbands.

In addition to those filling these roles there are three vital components to all tournaments: fencers, seconds (coaches) and audience. For the purposes of this text, “fencers” and “seconds” refers only to the two fencers and up to two seconds who are involved in a bout. All others are considered members of the audience.

For a tournament to run as efficiently and correctly as possible, it is important to establish proper communication channels between all parties involved. If the fencers or the seconds have any concerns during a bout, they can address the referee by calling a time-out. Members of the audience can direct their questions and comments to the tournament manager. The tournament manager can address the referee between exchanges or during the bout should the issue require immediate attention.

Under no circumstances are members of the audience to address anyone involved in the ongoing bout. Anyone who has a question, complaint or comment between bouts is to direct their issue to the tournament manager.

2. General

Fencers participate at their own risk and discretion, so long as they follow the spirit of the tournament rules. Each bout must maintain a polite quality, with instructions from tournament officials respected.

- Fencers will receive either a red or blue armband before each bout and will be known by their color during the bout. Fencers will start the bout in their respective corners.
- The bout begins when the referee calls “fence”. When the referee calls “break”, the fencers must separate and return to their corners, remaining there until the referee calls “fence” again.
- Bouts are fought to:
 - **8 points for Longsword and Sabre**
 - **10 points for Rapier & Dagger and Sword & Buckler**

- or until the bout time runs out (whichever comes first)
- At the end of the bout the fencer with the highest points will be declared the winner.
- In a pool round, a bout ending in a draw will be registered as a half-win.
- During the elimination rounds, a bout ending in a draw will continue to sudden death. Sudden death is fought until one fencer scores at least one point more than the other fencer in an exchange.
- A bout is fought for 3 minutes or until one fencer has reached the score cap (whichever comes first, as previously mentioned)
- Timekeeping is not paused during scoring; in case there is a longer break in the bout for any reason, the referee will call a time-out.
- The table will call “Last exchange!” 10 seconds before the time limit is reached. That exchange will be allowed to be run to its end, as long as the fencers are actively trying to fence. If the exchange becomes too passive, the referee will call “break” thus ending the bout.
- At the end of the bout, the table will announce the score to the referee, who will then officially announce the winner of the match along with the final score.
- The finals will be fought in a 3×3 round format, with best-of-three as winner. As with other bouts, each round will be fought until the score cap is reached (8 points for Longsword and Sabre, 10 points for Rapier&Dagger and Sword&Buckler) or 3 minutes have passed (whichever comes first) with the scoring reset after each round. Should the fencers be tied after 3 rounds, sudden death will ensue (same procedure as with eliminations).

3. Scoring

*Note: During the pools, bouts will be run on 4×8 meter pists with a 1+1 set-up (one referee + one judge). Under this set-up, the referee acts both as a referee and a judge, with ultimate veto rights on calls made and points awarded. The protocol and semaphore are the same as in a 4+1 set-up (one referee + four judges), with the main differences being there is no “majority” to take into account and the referee and judge will naturally interact more closely when making calls. For **some** eliminations and onwards, a 4+1 set-up will be used on larger mats.*

- Upon first successful hit during an exchange, a judge will call “point”
- After giving tempo for an after-blow, the referee will call “break”
- The fencers must cease interacting, separate, and return to their corners
- After giving the judges a moment to reflect upon the exchange the referee will call “judges”
- Each judge will indicate the highest scoring blow for each fencer that happened within one tempo of the initial hit. *This means that if the fencer who struck first can hit a higher-scoring target within one tempo, this hit is valid.*
- **The semaphore is as follows:**
 - Hit landed on 3(2)-point-target: judge holds the flag vertically up
 - Hit landed on 1-point-target: judge holds the flag horizontally sideways
 - No valid hit landed: judge holds the flag low, crossed in front of their body
 - Insufficient quality: judge waves flag low in front of their legs
- **Each fencer will score as follows (relevant only for 4+1 set-up):**
 - If two or more judges agree on the score, the fencer scores that amount
 - If two or more judges agree on a hit, but disagree on the score:
 - Two judges for higher score, one for lower score — higher score awarded
 - One judge for higher score, two for lower score — lower score awarded
 - One judge for higher score, one for lower score — lower score awarded
- The referee announces the points for both fencers to the secretariat

- The secretariat then subtracts the lower score from the higher score, and announces the final score for the exchange

Note: after-blows and simultaneous (double) hits are treated the same and both score regardless of who struck first. The hits from both fencers are scored independently by the judges. The secretariat is responsible for calculating the final score for the exchange.

- Incidental strikes, cuts with questionable edge alignment, very light cuts with the point and cuts made with a very small arc do not score. It is up to the fencers to demonstrate quality, intentional hits.
- Marking attacks with sword or body which are held back for safety reasons will still score (for example, indicating a strike to the back of the head).
- The following targets are illegal, and are worth no points:
 - Back of the head
 - Spine
 - Groin
 - Back of the knee
 - Achilles tendon
 - Feet

3.1 Scoring with Longsword

- Only attacks with the edge, point or pommel score points
- Strikes with the cross-guard are not allowed
- All strikes must be executed in a controlled fashion
- A strike, thrust or slice to the **head or neck area** is worth **2** points
- A **thrust to the torso** is worth **2** points
- **All other** legal attacks and pommel strikes are worth **1** point
- Any strike made outside of grappling with **only one hand** holding the sword is worth **1** point, no matter the target hit

3.2 Scoring with Rapier & Dagger

- Only attacks with the edge, point or pommel score points
- All strikes must be executed in a controlled fashion
- A **thrust** with the rapier to the **head, neck or torso** is worth **3** points
- **All other** legal attacks are worth **1** point, including all attacks with the **dagger** and **all cuts**

3.3 Scoring with Sword & Buckler

Scored the same as Longsword, with the following additions/exceptions:

- Controlled strikes with the **boss of the buckler** to the **front of the mask** are worth **1** point (*strikes with the edge of the buckler are not allowed*)
- An attack from the bind warrants **1** additional point, to be given by the referee
- The last point in section 3.1 is, obviously, not relevant for S&B

3.4 Scoring with Sabre

Scored the same as longsword with the following additions/exceptions:

- Strikes must be executed with the front edge to score
- Controlled strikes with the **basket to the front of the mask** are worth **1** point

- The last point in section 3.1 is, obviously, not relevant for Sabre

3.5 Scoring During Grappling

In a grappling situation, a fencer can score by:

- striking with the weapon(s)
- using grappling actions
- demonstrating dominance

These special situations are scored by the referee alone (the judges only score strikes with the sword) and by the following protocol:

- The referee will halt the action when:
 - A judge calls “point”
 - A fencer executes a scoring grappling technique
 - A fencer demonstrates dominance
 - The referee thinks there is a safety issue
 - The grappling is at stalemate (approx. 5 seconds without clear dominance)
- All throws and takedowns must be executed with control and respect for the opponent.
- Unarmed strikes (save from strikes with the elbows and knees) are allowed but do not score points
- Grabbing and maintaining a hold on a stationary sword is allowed
- The following scores **1 point in grappling**:
 - If a fencer pushes both feet of his opponent outside the mat, and remains inside with at least one foot
 - Likewise, if a fencer accidentally leaves the mat with both feet, his opponent is awarded **1 point** (*strikes with the sword by a fencer outside the arena do not score, while strikes with the sword against a fencer outside the arena score as normal*)
- The following is only applicable for Longsword, Sword & Buckler and Sabre (*for Rapier, takedowns are disallowed and will result in a warning*)
 - If a fencer uses a takedown placing any part of the opponent other than the feet on the mat, she is awarded **2 points**
 - If a fencer should fall on his own, his opponent is awarded **1 point**
 - Going down on one knee or touching the mat with one hand outside grappling does not award the opponent any points
 - Takedowns intended to land the opponent on their head are not allowed
- **Disarming** an opponent’s sword scores **2 points** (**3 points** in Rapier) if grappling distance is broken
- If a fencer **loses their sword** for any reason outside of grappling distance, their opponent will be awarded **2 points** (**3 points** in Rapier)
- Scoring by grappling is secondary to scoring with strikes of the sword. If a fencer is struck with a sword while executing a grappling technique, only the strike with the sword will score
- Striking an opponent that is disarmed or on the ground is not allowed

4. Double hits

Even though simultaneous hits score fully, they are often a result of poor swordsmanship. Because of this the referee is obliged to (after the scoring is determined) decide if the action was an obvious double hit. If so, it still scores, but the double hit is noted by the secretariat. **Two double hits lead to the removal of 1 match point for both fencers.**

5. Errors and penalties

Each bout should be conducted in a safe and respectful manner. The penalties for violations against these guidelines are, in order of escalation:

1. Loss of point
2. Loss of bout
3. Disqualification from tournament
4. Expulsion from premises

The referee will rule according to the guidelines below:

Offense	Lowest Penalty
Late to ring for own bout	Loss of point
Non-regulatory equipment (post gear check)	Loss of point
Leaving the mat without permission	Loss of point
Addressing the referee before the final score for the exchange is announced	Loss of point
Unwarranted suspension of the bout	Loss of point
Turning the back to the opponent before the referee calls “break”	Loss of point
Taking the mask off before the referee calls “break”	Loss of point
Striking after the referee calls “break”	Loss of point
Uncontrolled fencing	Loss of point
Violent, dangerous or vindictive action	Disqualification from tournament
Intentional brutality	Expulsion from premises
Refusal to obey the referee	Loss of point
Refusal to salute the opponent after bout	Disqualification from tournament
Interfering with order on the mat	Disqualification from tournament
Unauthorized agreements	Disqualification from tournament

Violation against the sportsman spirit includes, but is not limited to:

- using foul language
- throwing equipment
- disrespecting the referee
- threatening members of staff

In cases where an offense cannot be properly addressed by the referee during the bout it is possible for the referee or any of the fencers to make an appeal to the Tournament Manager. The TM has the opportunity to remove match points from a fencer for a violation that hasn't been fully addressed during the bout, after the bout.

6. Injuries

If a fencer is injured during the bout, the referee will call a time-out and the medical staff will examine the fencer. If the medical staff clears the fencer to continue, and the fencer wishes to do so, the bout may proceed. If the bout cannot continue within 3 minutes the injured fencer will forfeit the bout. While medical staff is active on one mat, all fencing on other mats will be paused until the

medical staff gives the clear for fencing to continue. This is to give medical staff the room to work undisturbed and to prevent any new injuries to occur while the medical staff is busy.

7. Equipment failure

The referee will call a time-out when equipment being broken or displaced is noticed. If a fencer or judge notices an equipment failure, they should point it out to the referee. If a piece of personal protective gear is broken, the fencer has 3 minutes to find a replacement. If this is not possible the fencer will have forfeited the bout.