

Rules

We reserve the right to change the rules at any time.

Summary

- Bout lasts three minutes, or until 10 point cap.
- Wins and small amount of doubles matter for pool progression.
- Longsword, Sabre and Sword & Buckler: 3 points for hits to head and thrusts to torso. 2 points for other hits.
- Rapier and dagger: 3 points for thrusts to head or torso. 1 point for other hits.
- Afterblows and doubles: both scores counted against each other.
- Clean disarms score maximum points. Clean ring outs minimum points.
- Other grappling does not score but can be used to control the other fencer. Throws, joint locks, and kicks are prohibited.

The following rules apply only for longsword :

- One-handed longsword techniques can only score one point less than equivalent strike, performed with two hands (i.e. 2 points for strike to head or thrust to body, 1 point everything else), except in a grappling situation when they can score fully as above.
- Strike with the longsword pommel score 2 points.

Tournament structure

Stages in the tournament

The structure of the tournaments depends on the number of participants in the particular tournament:

Tournaments with **7 or less participants** will be fought in **one single pool stage**, with every competitor fencing every other competitor once. 1st, 2nd and 3rd place will be determined based on their ranking after all fights.

Tournaments with **8-16 participants** will be fought using **Swiss pairing system, followed by eliminations**:

- A round consists of each fencer having one fight (in case of odd number of participants, someone will have to skip a round, but no more than once per tournament). After the round the competitors are rated based on their performance in all the rounds so far. In the next round everyone gets the opponent with as similar ranking as possible (subject to prohibition of fencers fencing each other more than once at the Swiss stage).
- Swiss system will go for 4-5 rounds, after which 4 or 8 top ranked competitors will proceed to elimination.
- Winner of an elimination fight proceeds to the next round, until semifinal. Winners of semifinal fence for the gold medal, and losers of a semifinal fence for bronze medal.

Tournaments with **more than 16 participants** will be fought in **pools, followed by eliminations**:

- Everyone has one bout with everyone else in their pool.
- After all pools, an overall ranking will be constructed across all pools. The top 8 or 16 in this ranking (depending on overall number of participants) will progress to eliminations.
- Winner of an elimination fight proceeds to the next round, until semifinal. Winners of semifinals fence for the gold medal, and losers of semifinals fence for bronze medal.

Bout result – pools

- During the pool stage a fencer will get **3 match points for a win**, and **1 match point for a draw**.
- Every **second double** in a bout **decreases match points by 1 point for both fighters**.

Examples: if each fencer scored 6 points, and there was one double, 1 match point is awarded to both (only every second double results in penalty).

Eg. If fencer A scores 2 points, fencer B scores 1 point, and there were 5 doubles, the match points awarded are: 1 to A, -2 to B.

- The match points serve as a main criterion for ranking the opponents after the pool / Swiss stage.

Bout result – elimination

- The fencer scoring higher after the elimination bout wins the fight. If the score is equal, the fight continues until one of the fencers gains a score advantage (sudden death).

Bout outline

- A bout is fought for **3 minutes** or until one fencer has reached the **score cap of 10 points**. Timekeeping is not paused during simple scoring but may be stopped in case of protest, discussion, equipment failure or safety issues.
- **Ten seconds before the time limit** is reached the table will call “**last exchange**”. That exchange will be allowed to be run to its end, as long as the fencers are actively trying to fence.
- After this the table will announce the score to the referee, who will officially announce the winner of the match and the final score.

Exchange rules

Exchange Outline

- Fencers begin each exchange in their corners.
- The referee will confirm that they are ready to begin, then call “**Fence!/Fight!**” to begin the exchange.
- Upon observing a scoring action, or other reason to halt the match, the referee will call “**Halt!**”. Both fencers **must then cease offensive actions immediately**. Parrying late attacks from the opponent is permitted but continuing to attack the opponent after halt is called is a foul.

[NB- A fencer or their coach may also call “Halt!” if there is **equipment failure, injury, or other immediate safety concern**. These are the only reasons for calling “Halt!” by someone who is not a referee.]

- The referee will consider the exchange. If unclear, they may consult the assistant referee. If still unclear they may consult the fencers for their recollection. They will then **describe the scoring exchange, and the score resulting**. Examples:

“Cut to hand, no return. 2 points.”

“Attacked with thrust, fell short, hit to head, parry failed, afterblow late. 3 points.”

“Attack to hand, parried with thrust to mask, afterblow cut to leg. 3 points to 2, overall 1 point.”

Protests and Discussions

Fencers are encouraged to demonstrate awareness, honesty and sportsmanship in assisting the judges.

If a fencer wishes to **concede a hit** against themselves they can **indicate this to the referee**, however they are **also welcome to challenge a verdict**, offer information on a hit they believe they have made, or seek clarification on a referee's decision using the following procedure:

- If a referee has given their verdict after an exchange and a fencer disagrees with it materially, they may **protest by returning to their corner and raising a hand**.
- The referee will give an opportunity for the fencer to **briefly explain their position**.
- They are not bound to accept this but will take into account the information offered by fencers and judges and arrive at an appropriate synthesis.
- They may also decide that the exchange is insufficiently clear and award no points.

Note that repeatedly protesting to raise spurious or irrelevant points will be frowned upon and may attract a warning.

Scoring in the exchange

Hit quality:

All strikes must be executed **with control**. Scoring strikes do not need to be hard but must **demonstrate quality**:

- Only attacks with the **edge, point or pommel** score points.
- The referee may **disregard** hits they consider **mechanically insufficient**: Incidental strikes, cuts with questionable edge alignment, very light cuts with the point, light flicks with the tip, and cuts made with a very small arc.
- **Slicing cuts** require the edge of the sword to move across the target area (pushed or pulled), with positive pressure onto the target- a missed thrust that simply glides past, or a weapon held against the body in a grapple would be insufficient.
- **Thrusts** must fix the point onto the target with positive pressure.

Illegal targets:

The following targets are illegal, and are worth no points:

- Back of the head
- Spine
- Groin
- Back of the knee
- Foot

Fencers should avoid presenting their back to their opponent and may receive a warning for doing so and penalties for repeated infractions.

Blade hits will score:

For longsword, Sabre and Sword & Buckler:

- **3 points** for a cut, slice or thrust made to the **head**.
- **3 points** for a **thrust to torso**.

- **2 points** for other valid hits (**valid strike to a limb or cut/slice to torso**)
- **1 point** for buckler strike (**only strike to mask mesh, with boss of the buckler**)
- **One handed strikes- outside a grapple can only score one point less than equivalent strike, performed with two hands (i.e. 2 points for strike to head or thrust to body, 1 point everything else) (longsword only). During a grapple (ie. while using the other hand to control the opponent) score fully as above.**

For rapier and dagger :

- **3 points** for thrust made with rapier to the **head or torso.**
- **1 point** for other valid hits (**valid strike to a limb or cut/slice to torso or head or any dagger strike**)
- **Grappling is not allowed**

Other ways to score points:

- Longsword only: **2 points for pommel strikes.** These can only be made with the **end of the pommel** (not by swinging sideways! I.e. mordschlag) and only **to the mesh of the mask.** Pommel hits should be executed in a **controlled** manner. Hits with the crossguard of the longsword or any part of the hilt of the sabre are prohibited.
- **3 points for disarm** Disarming an opponent will score if the opponent's control of their weapons is removed and control of one weapon (either fencer's) is kept, and grappling distance is broken. (please notice, that for rapier & dagger and sword & buckler, both weapons should be disarmed, and for rapier & dagger grappling is not allowed)
- **2 points for ring out (1 for r&d).** Ring out is scored as a way of showing control of the fighting area and the opponent, through either grappling or threat. It will be scored when one fencer leaves the ring with both feet, and the other remains with one foot *clearly* within the ring.

NB-

- **Throwing or shoving the opponent, without control,** such that they fly backwards, or are knocked over out of the ring, presents an **unacceptable risk** given proximity of spectators and lack of matting beyond the fighting area. **This will be penalised.**
- To score a ring out, the scoring fencer must be able to stay in the fighting area- at least **one foot must remain clearly in the fighting area.**
- Strikes made once both feet have left the mat will be discounted.

Note on grappling

Grappling is allowed but must be controlled. **Throws, joint locks and kicks are NOT allowed.** This is a safety consideration. To score in a grapple, fencers must either strike with the weapon or achieve a clean disarm or ring out.

If grappling lasts for a long time without any scoring hit, or if any fencer is on the ground, referee will call "Halt" and reset the exchange. The referee may also interrupt grappling at any time if they judge it is becoming dangerous.

Afterblows and Doubles

After a scoring hit with the weapon, there is an opportunity for the struck fencer to attack back:

- **Afterblows** must be made within one tempo after the initial attack.

Scoring the afterblow: the scores of the two hits will be weighted against each other, with no

favouritism to the first hit.

Eg- [Red] strikes to the arm, [Blue] fails their parry then returns a strike to the head = [Red] 2 points, [Blue] 3 points = 1 point for [Blue]

- **Double** is scored when both fencers attack and hit in the same time.

Doubles will be scored in the same way as afterblows but also recorded by the scorer.

During the pool stage- every second double will deduct one match point for BOTH fencers.

You cannot “afterblow” a disarm or ringout, nor may they be used to “afterblow” a hit.

Fouls and Penalties

In general the guiding principles are:

- **CONTROL (do not use excessive force, prohibited techniques and targets etc.)**
- **GOOD CONDUCT (respecting the boundaries of the fight, showing respect to fencers and staff)**

Referees are given wide powers of discretion in both deciding what is a foul, and what penalty is appropriate.

Penalties

- As a rough guide: **most infractions will initially incur a verbal warning** from the referee.
- A warning is a notice to fencers to adjust their behaviour. **If fencers are unclear** on the reason for a warning, or how to respect it, **they should seek clarification.**
- **Penalties** will be applied where fencers do not respond appropriately, and may include **point deductions or disqualification.**
- Where a fencer has been **warned previously** in the tournament, **a penalty may be applied without warning** for repetition of the same behaviour.
- **Severe or malicious infractions:** may lead to application of penalty without warning.

Examples of fouls:

- Failing to obey or ignoring a referee’s instructions, including continuing to attack after a halt is called.
- Deliberately or negligently injuring an opponent (or dangerous actions likely to do so) this covers not just banned techniques such as joint locks, but also uncontrolled strikes with the weapon
- Deliberately hitting illegal targets.
- Striking the floor
- Throws and kicks
- Turning the back to the opponent
- Interfering with the conduct of the bout, calling halts without reason, repeated protests against referee’s calls without reason etc.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct, verbal abuse of opponent or officials, displays of disrespect etc.