

Commentaries and Procedures for the Judging and Directing of Dueling Sword (Épée) Formal Assaults

1.0 General Conditions of the Assault

- A. All assaults shall be fenced on a *piste* 30 feet long by 6 feet wide. Stepping out of bounds will be penalized as detailed in section 8.0.
- B. Each fencer must adhere to Classical dueling sword technique in style and form.

2.0 Weapons, Equipment Specifications and Requirements

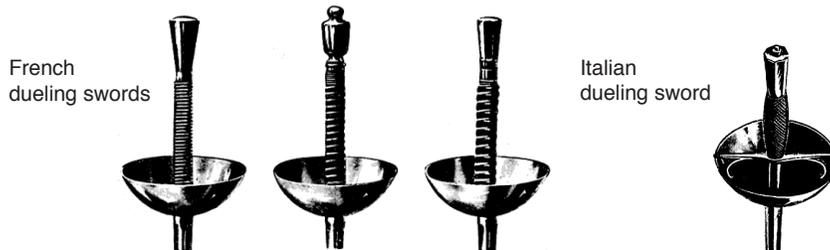
All weapons and equipment must be inspected by officials prior to the beginning of the tournament. Each participant is required to bring 2 weapons to be inspected.

A. Weapons

- I. Only French, Italian, traditional Spanish or *Scuola mista* hilts are permitted. All dueling swords must be equipped with a properly mounted *pointe d'arrêt*. Blades must be clean and free of rust. No part of the blade can be covered by tape with the exception of the point.



pointe d'arrêt



- II. Only standard non-electric épées will be permitted. Orthopedic grips of any type are forbidden. Blades mounted with dummy electric tips are forbidden. *Pointe d'arrêt* that are screwed on are not permitted at this time.
- III. The use of a martingale or a wrist strap is optional.
- IV. Fencers must have two weapons in good condition when arriving on the *piste*.

B. Clothing and Protective Equipment

- I. Three-weapon fencing masks (12 kg punch test) with thick, sewn-in bibs are required for competition. No customized masks or attachments to the masks will be permitted. All masks must fit properly to ensure maximum protection.
- II. Three-weapon jackets are required for tournaments. These must be made of strong material, preferably of heavily padded cotton duck or canvas. The jacket must completely overlap the waist of the pants/knickers by a minimum of 2 inches. In order to facilitate judging of touches jackets must be white or of a natural canvas color. Long pants or fencing knickers must be worn and must be made of at least 12-ounce duck or the equivalent and can be of any light (muted) or dark solid color. Socks must match the color of the knickers and may not display corporate branding or logos. Shoes must be predominantly white, black or gray.
- III. An underarm plastron is required under the jacket. Breast protectors are required for women and rigid groin cups are required for men.
- IV. A glove for the armed hand is required. The cuff of the glove must overlap the sleeve by at least 3 inches and must be made of sturdy leather or equivalent material.

- V. Excessively baggy clothing is forbidden. Spandex or nylon clothing, warm-up pants and sweat pants are NOT permitted.

NOTE: No bare flesh may be exposed with the exception of the unarmed hand and back of the head.

3.0 Technique and Safety

- A. Target Area
The whole body is valid target.
- B. Thrusts
Thrusts must land clearly and distinctly on target, and the blade must bend sufficiently on impact to demonstrate penetrating power. Jabbing or punching actions are forbidden and do not qualify as thrusts. However, actions such as the *appuntata* or replacement of the point are permitted as they are valid technique.
- C. Use of the Unarmed Hand
The use of the unarmed hand is NOT permitted, with the exception of the *passata sotto*, in which the unarmed hand makes contact with the ground.

4.0 Infighting

- A. Infighting is permitted. However, discretion and self-control must be exercised. If the director feels that the action has become irregular or unsafe, he will immediately stop the action. Similarly, if the action becomes obscured so that the director and judges cannot interpret the phrase, the action must be stopped. The action will also be halted upon any clashing of the guards. The contestant who systematically and deliberately causes infighting by force of the action will be dealt with as described in section 8.0.
- B. Passing the adversary (changing positions on the *piste*) in the course of an assault is permitted if it is done as a consequence of a *phrase d'armes* and does not stop the action.
- C. The "fleche", or any type of running attack, is prohibited. However attacks by means of a passing step are permitted, since they are not executed as running attacks.
- D. *Corps-a-corps* encounters must be stopped by the director. *Corps-a-corps* is defined as bodily contact, and is not permitted in dueling sword. The adversary who systematically and deliberately causes a *corps-a-corps* by force of the action will be dealt with as described in section 8.0.

5.0 General Conduct

- A. Every touch should be immediately acknowledged, whether good or bad, by the fencer receiving the touch by making a foot call (an *appel*) and declaring "touch" in a loud voice.
- B. Speaking while under arms (except for acknowledging a touch against oneself) is not allowed except with the permission of the director, gained by making a foot call (an *appel*) and being recognized by the director.
- C. When the director halts the action, both fencers must immediately assume first position (aplomb).
- D. It is forbidden to hold the weapon with both hands or to change from one hand to the other during an assault.
- E. A fencer should not gesture in any form to the audience or judges that he has made a valid touch or that he disapproves of a decision.



First position (aplomb)

- F. Neither fencer is allowed to leave the point of his weapon fixed on the adversary once the halt is called.
- G. The fencer is not allowed to turn his back toward the adversary after delivering a thrust.
- H. Emotional outbursts or displays of temper before, during or after an assault are forbidden. Participants must exhibit self-control and good manners.
- I. All violations of the general conduct rules will be dealt with as a violation of the rules, as described in section 8.0.

6.0 Officiating

A. Formal Assault

- I. Every formal assault will be presided over by a Director of Combat. The director's function is to ensure that the combat proceeds smoothly and fairly. He must see that the fencing is conducted in accordance to the rules and must halt any exchange that, in his opinion, is unruly, patently unfair and/or unsafe. Additionally, the director shall have the power to:
 - Commence, halt, end an assault, and declare a winner.
 - Penalize violations of the rules and conventions of fencing, including those written and unwritten rules relating to good conduct.
 - Award touches with the concurrence of the judges and in accordance with the applicable voting procedure.
 - Exercise complete control over the fencers, spectators, judges, minor officials, and such other personnel that may be in the area of the piste. This control extends to whatever means may be necessary to maintain order, including ejecting a fencer or spectator, dismissing a judge, etc.
- II. The director will be assisted in his duties by 4 judges, the responsibility of whom it shall be to watch for touches occurring during the assault, which they shall signal against the fencer who was touched by raising a hand and declaring "touch" in a loud voice.
- III. Judges shall have 1 vote each and the director shall have 1 votes. A minimum of 1 votes are required to award or deny a touch.

B. Scoring for Excellence of Technique and Form

- I. Scoring for technique and form shall be determined by a separate panel of 3 judges. Each judge in the panel will award to each fencer in each assault a point value from 0 through 5 (0 being worst, 5 being best). When a separate panel cannot be assembled, then the award shall be determined by a consensus of the officiating director(s) and/or judges.
- II. The technical points are utilized to distinguish between those who are adhering to sound martial principles and those who are merely interested in scoring points.

NOTE: The Director of Combat is the sole interpreter of the rules.

7.0 Procedure

- A. All assaults shall be for one point with a 7-minute time limit. If no touch is scored by the 5-minute mark, the timekeeper will announce a 2-minute warning. Points are scored against the fencer receiving the touch. If no touch is made, the assault will be scored as a double defeat, and each fencer will receive a touch against.
- B. To begin the assault, the director shall bring both contestants to the center of the

piste. Once the director has assured that everything is in order (such as that the fencer is using inspected weapons, wearing the approved clothing, etc.), he shall have them salute and bring them on guard with the command “on guard.” He shall then step back and give the command “fence.” The fencers shall cease fencing upon the command “halt.”

- C. Upon seeing a touch or the signal for a touch from a judge, the director shall stop the assault and poll the judges as to the validity of the touch. The judges must respond with one of the following: “yes,” “no,” “abstain,” “off target,” “insufficient penetration,” “*passé*” (passed) or “*plaque*” (flat).
- D. Double touches (encounters) will be scored against both fencers (double defeat) unless one of the fencers, in the opinion of the director, resorts to it in order to bring the score equal, in which case the thrust of the other is good, not his. If, in the opinion of the director, one touch was clearly out of time, then the touch arriving on time is the only valid one.
- E. If a competitor disarms his adversary by beating or transporting the weapon, a hit is good only if made instantaneously as a consequence of that action.
- F. When a touch is made in the course of a passing action, the touch made immediately on the pass is valid.

8.0 Violation of the Rules

Violations of these rules will be dealt with in the following manner, unless otherwise noted elsewhere in the rules:

- 1st Offense: Warning
 - 2nd Offense: Point against
 - 3rd Offense: Loss of the assault
 - 4th Offense: Disqualification
- A. If a fencer steps off any boundary of the *piste* with one foot (meaning any part of the foot outside of the designated boundary lines) he will receive a warning. A second occurrence will result in a point being called against that fencer. Once any point has been awarded, all previous out-of-bounds warnings are annulled for both fencers.
 - B. Dishonorable conduct, such as attempting to circumvent the rules, will result in a warning for the first offense and ejection for any subsequent offense.
 - C. Vindictive acts of any kind will result in disqualification and ejection from the event. The AHF Board of Governors may also ban the offender from all events for a period of any length, up to and including a lifetime ban from Association events.

“This method of judging is based upon the idea that the contest is intended as an exhibition of skill as well as the securing of touches.”

—*Amateur Fencer’s League of America Fencing Rules*, 1891

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