

Tab 1

LONGSWORD TOURNAMENT RULESET LONG TAIL 2025

This document contains the most up-to-date rules for Long Tail 2025. Changes may be made up until the event date.

Notes on Venue and Expected Behavior:

This year, the venue for Long Tail will be somewhat constrained. While there will be plenty of space for spectators and non-fencers to mingle and sit, the tournament rings will be close together.

It is the expectation of Long Tail organizers that all fencers be aware and conscious of the space that they take up, as well as where they stand when on the tournament floor. All gear must be kept in designated gear areas (shelving will be provided), and spectators are expected to keep clear of tournament rings. Each fencer may have one (1!) coach with them at the ring, and coaches should also be aware of the space that they occupy. Those who get in the way of judges and other staff may be asked to leave the tournament floor. Tournament staff must be obeyed at all times. Fencers should be considerate of venue walls, furniture, and support columns.

Events:

Long Tail 2025 will include three events. The tournaments and their requisites are detailed below:

- **Open Longsword:** Open to all fencers of any experience level or gender.
- **GenEq Longsword:** Open to women, nonbinary people, all transgender people, intersex people, and people of any other genders that are historically underrepresented and underserved in sport. Open to fencers of any experience level. Please note that GenEq events are held for the purpose of providing a safe community space for fencers of all underrepresented genders to come together in friendly competition, not necessarily for fencers of the same hormonal makeup and/or sex assigned at birth.
- **Seated Longsword:** Open to fencers of all ability and disability levels. All matches will be conducted in seated fencing chairs, provided by the event. **Note: While this tournament is open to all ability levels, priority in registration will be given to fencers who have expressed a need for seated fencing accommodations. Fencers with such accommodations will be moved higher on the registration list, meaning other fencers who registered beforehand may be shifted to the waitlist.**

Tournament Structure:

Check-In starts 30 minutes prior to each tournament. All fencers must be checked in and geared up by the posted tournament start time. Any fencer who has not done so will automatically be removed from the registration list. As a courtesy to event staff, please notify us ahead of time if you need to drop from a tournament. As our schedule is very tight, we will have flexibility for fencers who are participating in two tournaments in a row.

Weapons will be checked at the beginning of the tournament, and will be marked with tape to indicate whether they pass the weapon requirements. All other gear will be reviewed at the beginning of each pool, including the finals pool. If a sword has been checked in for one tournament, it does not need to be rechecked for subsequent tournaments.

Tournaments will take place across three rounds:

- **Pools:** All fencers will participate in one round of pools. Pools will be comprised of 5 fencers each (may be smaller or larger depending on fencer numbers)
- **Elimination Pools:** Based on the results from round one of pools, the top 60% of the maximum registration capacity (even if that capacity is not met) will fence in elimination pools. Elimination pools will be comprised of 6 fencers each (may be smaller or larger depending on fencer needs).
 - Open Longsword: Reg cap 40/ Elims top 24
 - GenEq Longsword: Reg cap 20/ Elims top 12
 - Seated Longsword: Due to the low reg cap of 10 fencers, all fencers will proceed to elimination pools
- **Finals:** Based on the results from round two elimination pools, top fencers will proceed to a finals bracket. In Open and GenEq Longsword, the top 8 fencers will compete in finals. In Seated Longsword, the top 4 fencers will compete in finals. All finalists will be awarded a medal (awarded at the end of the evening at the awards ceremony).

Each match will consist of multiple passes- passes will continue until either fencer has accumulated a certain number of points for the match. In pools and elimination pools, a fencer accumulating a total of 5 points will end the match. In finals bracket matches, a fencer accumulating a total of 7 points will end the match. There will be no time limit per pass, and passes will continue until a scoring action is made (including doubles).

Fencers will begin each pass at their designated starting line.

In pools, fencers will be ranked based on points against. Ties in pools will be broken, in order, through the following methods:

- Lowest average doubles per match
- Highest percentage of matches won
- Lowest number of cards

In the finals bracket, fencers will be ranked based on direct elimination. The fencers who lost to the 1st and 2nd place fencers will fence each other to decide 3rd and 4th place. 5th-8th place will be tiebroken, in order, through the following methods:

- Highest number of scoring actions made in their bracket match

- Lowest number of doubles in their bracket match
- Highest pool placement

In Open and GenEq Longsword, any fencer may opt to fence their matches seated. If a fencer opts to fence seated, they must conduct all following matches from a seated position. A fencer who starts a tournament seated may not switch to standing. A fencer who starts the tournament standing may switch to seated, but may not switch back after making that decision. A fencer who wishes to fence seated should inform the tournament organizer.

A fencer who is scheduled to fence a seated fencer will be given the option to fence in one of two formats:

1. Both fencers may fence seated. The Seated Fencing Set-Up and Match Protocol defined below will be followed.
2. The fencer may fence standing against the seated fencer. The standing fencer will be contained to a 3ftx3ft square. They may move however they wish within that square, so long as they stay within it. The usual protocol for finding distance in seated matches will be followed, except that the standing fencer will stand in the marked center of their square. The usual targeting for seated fencing matches will apply to both fencers. Chairs are mounted on a 12" high platform, and so are at a height that is comparable to an average person's standing height.

Seated Fencing Set-Up and Match Protocol

A seated match will begin with both fencers seated in parafencing chairs provided by BCHF. The chairs will be angled so that each fencer's dominant arm is forward. To find the distance for the match, the fencer with greater reach will sit upright (not leaning forward or backward) and extend their dominant arm forward, with their elbow bent at a 90° angle. The fencer with lesser reach will sit upright in their chair (not leaning forward or backward), and extend their weapon in front of them. When distance is correct, the tip of the weapon should just touch the outside of the opponent's elbow. The chairs should be adjusted until this distance is achieved.

At the beginning of each pass, fencers will assume a neutral bind position with their swords pointed upwards (fencers may not apply pressure on their opponent's blade). From that position, the director will announce "Fence!" and the pass will begin and proceed as usual.

In seated matches, the torso below the ribs and the legs will be off target. Striking the legs will be subject to penalty. To define the target area, a piece of duct tape will be placed on the front of each fencer's jacket. All areas from the ribs and up will be on target (in accordance with the legal targets defined below). In seated matches, all carding and penalty rules will apply as usual. All scoring rules will apply as usual, and all scoring actions (other than ringouts) that are defined within the ruleset are valid as usual. Judges will start and stop passes as usual. All gear requirements will apply as usual.

Fencers will wear seatbelts to strap them into the chairs. Fencers may not attempt to stand up from their chair during a pass. Doing so is subject to penalty. If a fencer falls out of their chair, a safety hold will be called, and the pass will be reset. While fencers may not stand up from their chair, they may lean or move their upper body in any way necessary, so long as they remain seated. A fencer's feet must remain on the footrest of the chair, and their body must maintain contact with the seat of the chair at all times. If a fencer requires a higher footrest to maintain foot contact, one will be provided. Lifting the body completely from the chair is prohibited.

Scoring

Points will accrue AGAINST fencers (more points=bad!).

Each time a scoring action is made against a fencer, they will be assessed one point. All methods of scoring, regardless of target area or action type, are worth one point against.

Target Areas:

- Standing fencing matches:
 - Target area includes the entire body from the head to 2" above the ankles. Illegal areas include:
 - Back of head
 - Spine
 - Groin
 - Feet
- Seated fencing matches:
 - Target area includes the upper body from the ribs and up, and excludes the lower torso and legs (ribs and up= legal/ below the rib= illegal). Illegal areas include:
 - Back of head
 - Spine
 - Groin
 - Lower torso/ belly/ hips
 - Any part of the leg
 - Feet
- All worn gear will be counted as equivalent to the target area it is worn on, including any protrusions or modifications made to fencing gear (capes, headbands, puffy pants, etc.)
 - **Note on tails:** If a tail is worn, it will count as an on target area, even though a tail is technically an extension of the spine. Don't argue with us on this.
- Blows made to the crossguard (including siderings) or hilt will be considered parried, and will not be considered scoring actions, even if the blows makes contact with a target area after hitting the crossguard.

Scoring Actions:

- Cuts

- Cuts should make obvious, intentional contact with the target. Incidental contact will not score.
- Cuts must land with the edge of the blade. Contact made with the flat will not score.
- Cuts should be initiated with a chambering action in order to make them discernable and clear to judges.
- Cuts must be made with both hands on the weapon. **One-handed cuts and obvious attempts at one-handed cuts will be penalized.**
- Cuts must be made with the weak or middle of the blade. Cuts with the strong are illegal.
- Thrusts
 - Thrusts should make obvious, intentional contact with the opponent. Incidental contact or passes thrusts will not be considered scoring thrusts.
 - Thrusts do not need to bend the blade or plant the point to score.
 - Thrusts should land at a generally perpendicular angle to the target. A thrust that lands at a generally parallel angle to the target will not score.
 - One-handed thrusts are permitted.
- Slices:
 - Slices are only valid if made to the wrists, arms, shoulders, neck, face, or head (the “U” shape from wrist to wrist). Slices to any other body part will not score.
 - Missed thrusts may not be converted into slices without demonstrating an additional clear chambering/ placement action.
 - A slice must have a clear chambering/placement action, followed by a clear slicing action (drawing forward or backward).
 - A slice must pass the weak and/or middle of the blade over the opponent to score. Slices may be initiated with any part of the blade, contact made only with the strong will not score.
- Grappling:
 - Limited grappling with intention to control an opponent or their weapon is permitted.
 - Takedowns, throws, and joint manipulation are prohibited.
 - Strikes with a body part or any object other than the sword are prohibited.
 - There is no time limit on grappling, but a judge may reset the pass if no progress is being made during grappling.
 - To score via grappling, a fencer must meet ONE of the following criteria:
 - 1. Establish control of the opponent's weapon while keeping their own weapon free.
 - Control may be established by blade grabs, arm wraps, or any other legal action which prevents the opponent from striking with their weapon.
 - Once control has been established, a fencer does not need to indicate a strike in order to score. Their weapon simply needs to be free.

- Fencers may deliver a one-handed thrusts while grappling, but may not strike with a one-handed cut or with the hilt.
- 2. Forcing the opponent to expose their back
 - This may be accomplished by moving around the opponent or by moving the opponent (via elbow push, arm drag, etc.)
 - A fencer does not need to grab their opponent from behind to score via this method, but is not prohibited from doing so. They simply need to perform an action that ends with them facing their opponent's back.
 - A fencer may not strike an opponent whose back is turned under any circumstances.
- Disarms:
 - If a fencer drops their sword for any reason other than those regarding safety (ex. Dropping a sword to alleviate a hard thrust), it will be considered a disarm.
- Ring-Outs:
 - If a fencer steps one full foot out of the ring, that is a ring-out.
 - Any blows made during the same tempo as a ring-out will not score.
 - If fencers are engaged in grappling, and one or both of them step out of the ring, the pass will be reset without score.
 - Pushing an opponent out of the ring is illegal.
- Doubles:
 - If both fencers land blows within the same tempo, a double will be scored. Both fencers will receive one point against them, regardless of scoring actions or target areas. The table will also record the double for use as a tie-breaking metric.
 - One tempo= the time it takes to complete a single fencing action
 - A return blow is considered out of tempo if it needs to be rechambered or initiated after the initial blow lands.
 - A return blow is considered in tempo if it has already been chambered or initiated before the initial blow lands.

Gear Requirements:

If you do not have access to any of the required gear, please reach out to an event organizer. We have limited loaner gear available. While gear modification and customization is allowed, any modifications, customizations, or repairs that inhibit the ability of staff to determine the safety or requirement adherence of gear will prohibit that gear from use.

Required Protective Equipment:

- Full skin coverage
 - Including calves and palms of hands
- Closed-toed shoes

- Shoes with heels that are an unsafe height or shape will be prohibited, at staff discretion.
- Fencing mask
 - No dents or holes in mesh, no rust or other major damage
- Back of head protection
 - May be a separate piece from the mask or may be integrated in the mask
 - No major gaps between the back of head protector and the skull are permitted.
 - Note- the AF Deluxe Mask w/ integrated back of head is allowed, but is not recommended, as the back of head protection in this mask is not rigid.
- 350N fencing jacket
 - Must be sufficiently padded for longsword fencing (light longsword jackets are allowed; single-layer jackets or jackets without any padding are not permitted).
 - Jackets must be in good repair- jackets with tears, holes, or insufficiently repaired damage such that the Newton rating is compromised will not be permitted.
 - Must close completely
 - Must have a blade catcher at the throat
- 350N thigh protection
 - Fencing trousers, skirts, kilts, and jackets that cover the upper legs are acceptable, so long as they meet the N Rating requirement
 - Fencing trousers/skirts must be worn as intended. No open zippers, no wearing trousers backwards, no wearing trousers low enough to leave a gap below the fencing jacket
 - Thigh protection must be in good repair- trousers and skirts with tears, holes, or insufficiently repaired damage such that the Newton rating or other puncture resistance is compromised will not be permitted.
- Rigid throat protection
- Rigid chest protection
 - Required for all fencers, regardless of anatomy
 - May not be worn over the jacket
- Hard elbow protection
- Hard forearm protection
 - Gloves with hard protection that extends over the entire forearms are sufficient
- Hard knee protection
 - Knee protection that covers the sides of the knees is highly recommended
- Hard shin protection
- Purpose-built longsword gloves
 - Light gloves and lacrosse gloves are not sufficient. No Red Dragons.
 - **All five-fingered gloves are prohibited. Gloves may have, at maximum, three finger slots (including thumb).**
- Groin protection
 - Required if anatomically appropriate

Longsword fencers:

- Must be a purpose-built longsword feder
 - Kriegsmessers and katanas are not acceptable
 - No curved blades- blade must be reasonably straight
 - Schiltless feders are permitted
- Blade must flex at or below 45 lbs
 - Flex measurement will be taken from the crossguard
- Must be within 33-42 inches in blade length
- Must have a crossguard
 - Siderings are allowed
 - Guards with greater complexity than two siderings will not be allowed
 - Feder should have an enlarged tip (rolled, swelled, or spatulated)
 - Feders without an enlarged tip must be covered with a metal, leather, or plastic covering. Rubber tips are prohibited.
 - Blades must be free of rust, burrs, spikes, and all other major damage
 - Blades with a major set or warp will not be permitted

Gear Failure

In the event that a fencer's gear needs to be repaired or replaced during a match, they will be given a reasonable amount of time to repair or replace their gear (approx. 2 minutes). If a fencer is not able to do so within the time allotted to them by the director, they will incur all remaining points in the match (maximum 3). The fencer will then be given until their next match to repair or replace their gear, and if they are unable to do so, they will incur all possible points in the match (3). This process will continue until the fencer has repaired or replaced their gear, the tournament has ended, or the fencer has decided to discontinue their participation in the tournament.

Penalties

The goal of penalties within this ruleset are to minimize, correct, and- if necessary- penalize reckless or unsafe behavior within the ring. Cardable actions are those which jeopardize the physical, emotional, or mental safety of competitors, staff, and/or spectators. Judges have discretion in deciding if and when to card. Situations that will likely warrant a penalty are defined below, but judges should use common sense when assigning cards. There are no automatically cardable offenses, as judges should consider each situation individually.

Cards do not automatically escalate, but escalation is recommended for repeated offenses.

- Levels of Penalty:
 - **Verbal Warning:** no point penalty
 - **Yellow Card:** 2 point penalty (counts towards match total)
 - **Red Card:** point penalty equivalent to the number of points required to end a match (5 in pools + elims, 7 in finals) (counts towards match total). Yes- this

means you could potentially end a match with up to 10 points in pools. Yes- this is very bad for your score. Don't get red carded.

- **Black Card:** ejection from tournament
 - If a black card is issued, the receiving competitor may be ejected from other tournaments, if they are registered for multiple. They may also be prohibited from future BCHF events. Such decisions are made on a per-case basis.

A fencer may not be awarded a scoring action in the same pass that they receive a card. A fencer may be awarded a scoring action in the same pass that they receive a verbal warning. In the case of a double, the fencer who did not receive a card will still be awarded their scoring action, and a double will not be recorded.

- Cardable Actions:
 - Exposing the back of the head
 - Striking an off target area
 - Striking with the hilt or strong of the blade
 - Attempting to use a piece of equipment that is explicitly illegal or that has failed gear check
 - Failing to cease all action after a hold
 - Arguing with or disobeying a staff member (including influencing the judges)
 - Performing any action that a judge deems to be reckless, dangerous, or excessive, including, but not limited to:
 - Striking with too much force
 - Making leaping or jumping attacks
 - Pushing or shoving an opponent
 - Attempting to throw an opponent
 - Removing protective gear during a pass
 - Performing any other illegal action
 - Exhibiting any other conduct within the ring which creates a hostile or unsafe environment
 - Throwing gear
 - Insulting or yelling at other persons
 - Responding with excessive anger to ranking, rules, or judge decisions
 - Displaying any form of discrimination or harassment

Fencer's Rights

- Fencers may have up to one coach accompanying them at the ring.
 - Coaches may not speak to fencers or judges during an ongoing pass, except in the case of a safety concern. They may not yell out advice, encouragement, etc. to fencers during an ongoing pass.
 - Fencers and their coaches may ask questions, request clarification on judge decisions, or raise safety concerns with the judges. They may not argue with or make friendly conversation with the judges.

- Fencers will not be penalized for their coach's actions, but coaches may be removed from the ring and/or the event for disruptive behavior.
- Fencers have the right to deny a scoring action. This includes in the case of a double. Fencers must wait until the director has announced the score and any penalties before denying a point.
 - Fencers may not deny scoring actions made by their opponents.
 - Fencers may not deny penalties.
 - If a fencer denies a scoring action made during a double, the pass will still be marked as a double for tiebreaking purposes. Only the point against their opponent will be negated.
- Fencers may not self call in any way
- Results from all tournaments will be submitted to HEMA Ratings. By registering for Long Tail, fencers agree to this. If a fencer wishes to have their results anonymized, it is their responsibility to contact HEMA Ratings to request this.
- By registering for Long Tail, fencers agree that they may be recorded or have photographs taken of them. If a fencer does not wish to have their likeness posted on BCHF social media and websites, it is their responsibility to contact event organizers. BCHF and Long Tail are not responsible for any photos or videos that may be taken by attendees.

Judging Style and Language Guidelines

There will be two judges per ring- one Director and one Assistant Judge. Each judge will be equipped with a wooden marshaling pole to make visual indications of instructions.

Judges should wait to declare score decisions or begin a match until both fencers are at their starting lines.

- Director's Script:
 - "Table ready? Judge ready?"
 - This phrase should only be asked before the first pass of a match, or after an extended interruption in passes.
 - This is a question, you should wait for visual or verbal confirmation from both staff members that they are ready before continuing.
 - "Fencers, ready!"
 - This phrase addresses both fencers. It is a command, not a question. Do not wait for confirmation from fencers before continuing. Only wait if a fencer indicates that they are NOT ready to proceed.
 - "Fence!"

- This phrase begins a pass. Say it only once, loudly and clearly. Only use this phrase when you and the other staff are ready to begin the pass.
- Do not use any phrases other than “fence” to begin a pass, such as “begin,” “fight,” or “go.”
- “Hold!”
 - This phrase ends a pass. Say it only once, loudly and clearly (unless fencers do not respond to the initial call). The call should last approximately one second. Both the director and assistant judge may call a hold.
 - Do not use any phrases other than “hold” to end a pass, such as “halt,” “point,” or “stop.”
 - Fencers must immediately cease all action and return to their starting lines upon hearing a hold. Actions taken after a hold may be penalized. Fencers should continue fencing until they hear a hold, even if they believe a scoring action has been made.
- “What happened during that pass?”
 - If judges are unsure about a safety/behavior/penalty issue, they may individually ask each fencer to describe what happened during the pass. They may not ask leading questions (ex. “Did they hit you in the back of the head?” “Did you try to throw them?”), and they must speak to each fencer privately. Judges will ultimately have to make final decisions, but they are encouraged to take into account fencer feedback when considering safety/behavior/penalty decisions.
 - Judges may not ask fencers for feedback when considering scoring decisions.

When a judge opts not to award a point for an action, they must provide the reason why that decision was made.

When a judge assigns points, they must recount the action that scored and announce the fencer(s) that received the point(s).

- The phrase “One point AGAINST fencer” should be used to avoid assigning points in reverse.

When a judge gives a penalty, they must provide one of the reasons detailed in the “Penalties” section below.

Judges should spend a minimal amount of time on deliberation, and should opt to re-fence a pass that they cannot agree on a score for. EFFICIENCY is key!

Reset of Pass:

If a judge resets a pass, no score is awarded, and the fencers will re-fence that pass. A judge may reset a pass for the following reasons:

- A hold was called for a non-scoring action (safety, penalty, premature hold, etc.)
- Fencers have circled a complete 180 degrees
- If three consecutive resets are made due to circling, both fencers will incur 1 point against them.

When a pass is reset, fencers must return to their starting lines and begin the new pass from their starting lines.

Fencers must return to their starting lines upon a hold. Judges should wait for both fencers to return to their starting lines before announcing score/ penalty.

Judges should allow a reasonable amount of time for fencers to speak to their coaches between passes.

Costume Contests

There will be two costume contest divisions. held at Long Tail. The first will be Best Fencing Kit/ Sparring Safe Costume. Costumes in this division may be regular sparring kits, or decorated sparring kits. The second division will be Best Halloween Costume. Costumes in this division may be of any variety, and do not need to integrate fencing gear. Winners will be determined by popular vote. Costumes containing offensive, hateful, or discriminatory imagery will not be permitted. There may be children and families present, so do also keep in mind that costumes should be, at most, PG-13 in content.

Virtue Prizes

Throughout the course of the entire Long Tail event, judges will be looking for fencers who embody Fiore's Four Virtues. These Virtues are the attributes of a great fencer, and special prizes will be awarded to the fencer(s) who best demonstrate each of them. One prize will be given for each Virtue. The same fencer may earn more than one Virtue Prize. These prizes are extremely subjective, and are not meant to be a seriously competitive aspect of the event. This is for fun. The Four Virtues are listed below:

- **Audacity/ Daring**
 - *More than I, the lion, none carries a more daring heart. I invite all to battle.*
- **Celerity/ Swiftiness**
 - *I, the tiger, am so ready to run and turn that a bolt from the sky could not outpace me.*
- **Fortitude/ Strength**
 - *Elephant I am, a castle I carry for cargo. And I do not kneel, or lose my footing.*
- **Prudence/ Judgement**

- *Better than I, the lynx, no creature sees. And to that he puts all to compass and to measure.*

(Credit to our sponsor, Ian Carmichael of Carmichael translations, for the above translations)