centAtlantic Renaissance Fencing League

Ruleset v1.2

Section 1: Tournament Format and Conduct of Bouts

1.1: Tournament Format:

The tournament will be held in three rounds: Pools, Direct Eliminations, and Finals.
Results of the pool bouts will determine seeding for the direct (single) elimination bracket. The seeding of pools will be based on prior tournament results. 80-100% of competitors will advance to the elimination round, subject to the number of competitors in the tournament.
Seeding for direct eliminations will be ranked based on total victories, and then indicator.
The formula for determining the indicator score is: Hits Scored – Hits Received.

1.2: Winning a pool bout:

Pool bouts: The first competitor to score 5 points, or have the highest score after the time expires wins the bout. In the event that the score is tied, the bout will result in a draw. The time limit for the Pool Bouts will be two minutes (2:00). The clock will pause at each “Halt!”, and resume upon the referee’s command of “Fence!”.

1.3: Winning a direct elimination bout:

Direct Elimination bouts: The first competitor to score 7 points, or have the highest score after time expires wins the bout. In the event that the score is tied, the competitors will fence an additional 1 minute overtime round. Before the start of the one minute overtime, the referee will perform a coin toss to assign one competitor priority. During overtime, the first fencer to score will result in an immediate win; should the score still remain tied after the end of the one minute overtime, the winner of the coin toss will win the match. The time limit for the elimination bouts will be three minutes (3:00) except in matches that continue into overtime.

1.4 Winning the tournament: The competitor who advances to eliminations and wins all their eliminations bouts wins the tournament.

> **1.4.1 Pools:** Competitors will be divided into groups or *pools* of fencers. Each pool will consist of no more than 8 competitors and no less than 5, unless absolutely necessary due to the number of fencers. Pool sizes will be as large as possible to give the fencers the greatest number of matches when circumstances allow. Every competitor will fence

with every other fencer in their pool. The elimination round will be seeded based on pool results.

1.4.2 Direct Eliminations: The format for the elimination round will be *direct (*i.e. single) *elimination*, until the semi-finals. If a competitor loses a match prior to the semi-finals they will be eliminated from the tournament.

1.4.3 Finals: The four competitors from the semifinal round of eliminations will advance to the finals. The two competitors who lost in the semifinals will fence for 3rd and 4th place, and the two competitors who won will fence for 1st and 2nd. The rules for time, score limit etc. for the finals are identical to the other elimination round bouts.

1.4.3 Medals: Medals will be awarded for the top 4 fencers

1.5 Conduct of bout and tournaments:

1.5.1 Tournament Participants: The tournament shall consist of competitors, referees, the tournament administrator, armorer(s) and coaches. Each bout shall consist of two competitors, a referee, an assistant referee, and the fencer's coaches, if present.

Coaches: Each competitor is allowed to have one coach with them during their bout. Coaches must wear a coach badge while at the strip or indicate that they are a coach to the Head Referee prior to the match. If a competitor has a coach at their strip and has a question or a clarification on a call, the coach and not the competitor should ask to speak to the referee. Should the competitor not have a coach, they may address the referee directly. Coaches must stay outside of the strip and may not interfere in any way in the bout. Coaches are subject to penalties for breaking of rules which may be applied to the competitor they are coaching.

Bout Committee: The tournament administrator and head referees oversee the tournament and any and all questions, comments, complaints should be directed to them. If a fencer wants to appeal a call or card, they need to appeal to the bout committee.

1.5.2 Close of Registration: Tournament registration will close the day before the event.

1.5.3 Pool Assignments: After the close of registration, final pool assignments will be announced. All competitors fencing in the first round of pools should then report immediately to the announced fencing strip. Competitors fencing in later pools are free to leave the area, but must return to the strip prior to the start of their pool.

1.5.4 Start of the Pool: At the start of the pool, all competitors fencing in that pool will be given their strip assignment. Fencers not present when called will be issued a red card and have 2 minutes to report to the strip ready to fence. After 2 minutes, the competitor not present will forfeit that match. If they have not arrived prior to the start of their second bout, they will be considered to have dropped from the tournament and will be disqualified.

1.5.5 Gear Check: Prior to competing, competitors must have their gear inspected and approved by the Armorer. Gear will be inspected to ensure it meets the stated requirements, and will then be marked in some way to indicate approval. Gear check will occur at the Armory, and must be completed during check-in.

1.5.6 Announcing the bout: The referee will announce the two competitors now fencing, and will also announce who is "on deck" (i.e. the two who will be fencing next). Competitors not present when called will be penalized and may be subsequently disqualified from the tournament.

1.5.7 Conducting the bout:

-The fencers will begin at their respective starting lines.

-The referee will ask the assistant referee if they are ready and wait for confirmation.

-After the confirmation from the assistant, the referee will instruct the competitors to salute. The competitors must give a signal of respect with their swords to show they are ready (such as raising the blade up so that the cross guard is in front of the face and then lowering the blade). The referee will then say "On guard. Ready? Fence!" The competitors will begin to fence and will continue until halt is called by a referee.

- Any time a fencer is struck by their opponent, there is a safety concern, a technical issue or other disruption, the referee(s) will call "Point, Halt!" and will stop the clock. Fencers must stop fencing and return to their lines immediately upon the halt. Fencers who continue to fence after the halt has been called will be penalized.

- When a fencer hits, the referees will give the opponent a tempo in which to make an attack in response before calling halt. This is a true tempo, i.e. a single fencing action.

-The referee will confer with the assistant referee to whether a scoring action occurred and update the scoreboard accordingly. In the case of an unclear action, the referee will throw out the exchange.

-The bout will proceed until time has expired or the score limit has been reached. Should time expire, the referee will immediately halt the match. Any action that occurs after time has expired will be discarded.

-At the end of the bout, the referee will announce the result: “Match X”, or “Draw”. The referee will tell the fencers, “Salute” and ask them to confirm the score, after which the referee will finalize and record the score of the match.

-After all fencers have finished their pool bouts, the pool sheet will be submitted to the bout committee. Once all results have been tallied, seeding will be posted and strip assignments will be announced and eliminations will begin.

*Note: In case of left handed fencers, the head ref must be placed facing the non dominant side of both fencers.

1.5.8 Injury: In the event of an injury or medical emergency, the fencer has 10 minutes to report to the medical staff on duty and be cleared to return to fencing. If the medical staff does not clear them to return, or the fencer is unable to return within 10 minutes, the fencer will forfeit the match and/or receive a medical disqualification as needed.

1.5.9 Conflict of Interest: In the event of a known conflict of interest (i.e. family ties, same club etc.), the bout committee and head referee will work to the best of their ability to assign or reassign a referee to a bout to avoid a conflict of interest when possible.

1.5.10 Addressing the referee: Coaches and/or competitors may address the referee in matters of clarification only on the proper application of rules, to address a perceived scoring mistake, or for clarification on the reasoning behind the giving of a penalty card. Coaches and competitors may not dispute matters of fact; i.e. the nature of a call, although they are allowed to decline points. Competitors should only address the referee in the absence of a coach; if a coach is present the coach should address the referee on behalf of the fencer. If a referee is to be addressed, the coach or competitor will raise their hand and wait to be called upon by the referee. Attempting to speak to the referee without being called upon will be penalized.

1.5.11 Addressing the Other Competitor: Addressing another competitor during the match before the halt or before the referee has completed scoring the exchange will be strictly penalized. Addressing the other competitor during a halt and after the exchange is scored will be penalized unless it is a sign of “good faith,” e.g. to inquire about the other competitor’s well being or to congratulate them on the last exchange. Referees have full discretion on what constitutes “good faith”.

1.6 Fencing Strip Dimensions:

1.6.1 Dimensions: The fencing area in which the bout will be held (otherwise known as a lane or fencing strip) will consist of a rectangle with the following dimensions:

1.6.2 Length: No less than 8 meters and no more than 12 meters.

1.6.3 Width: No less than 4 and no more than 6 meters.

1.6.4 Starting lines: Fencers will begin approximately 4 meters apart on the designated starting lines at the beginning of each exchange.

1.7 Gender and Age Exclusive Tournaments:

1.7.1 Goals: Our Gender and Age Exclusive tournaments are intended to provide a safe, competitive environment for fencers who fall outside of established norms.

1.7.2 Under-Represented Genders (Formerly Women's): Our "URG" (Under-Represented Gender) tournaments are exclusively for Cisgender or Transgender Women, Transgender Men, or Non-Binary people. Fencers may compete in URG tournaments consistent with the athlete's self-expressed gender identity throughout the entire tournament irrespective of the sex listed on the athlete's birth certificate and regardless of whether the athlete has undergone any medical treatment. Please contact the tournament organizers with any questions about the applicability of this policy.

1.7.3 Veteran's (40+): Our Veteran's tournaments are exclusively for fencers who are of, or above, 40 years of age as of the first day of the tournament.

1.7.4 Cadet's: Our Cadet's tournaments are exclusively for fencers who are below 20 years of age as of the first day of the tournament.

1.8 Reasonable Accommodations for Medical Conditions:

1.8.1 ADA Compliance: We will accommodate any competitor, coach, or spectator who requests a reasonable accommodation. We ask that all requests for reasonable accommodations for medical conditions be given as soon as possible, either via email to the organizer, where there will be space provided alongside Emergency Contact information for requests. We ask to receive information as soon as possible to help us better ensure all needs are met. Please be aware that we do not control our venue and wish to be mindful of all event attendees.

1.8.2 Fencers using a Wheelchair: For all matches including fencers using a wheelchair, the following rule changes will be offered to the fencer as accommodations, at their discretion:

1.8.2.1 Target area (2.1.2): is redefined to only include above the waist for all fencers, indicated either by their jacket or a tied belt (if necessary). Below the waist, including legs and feet, will be considered an Illegal Target, and treated as defined in Section 3.1.6 Striking Illegal Targets.

1.8.2.2 Corps-a-corps: Corps-a-corps (body-to-body) contact and grappling is allowed in a limited manner (2.3.5): corps-a-corps and grappling will not be allowed, and attempts to do so will be strictly punished under section 3.1.16 Brutality. Grasping of the opponent's blade is likewise not allowed and will be penalized at the discretion of the referee. Pressing the blade with an open hand is allowed.

Section 2: Scoring Criteria

2.1: Point Values for Scoring Actions for Longsword, Rapier, Sword & Buckler, Saber, and Smallsword:

2.1.1 Scoring action: Any time either fencer's blade touches the opponent's target area, halt is called. The referees will then determine whether a scoring action occurred or not. Scoring actions include cuts and thrusts, and striking with the edge, point, and flat may all score depending on the situation. The referees will determine whether it was a valid touch depending on the following criteria.
2.1.2 Target area: Target area is the entire body, with the exception of the back of the head or neck, spine, and groin. The foot is a valid target for thrusts, but cuts below the ankle are not allowed and will result in a penalty. Any strike to the groin is non-scoring; intentional strikes to the groin are illegal and will be penalized. All equipment is considered a valid target and counted as part of the fencer, whether it makes contact with the body or not.

2.1.3 Score value: Any touch that is awarded, regardless of target, is worth 1 point.

2.3 What Constitutes a Valid Scoring Action:

2.3.1 Cut: a strike with the edge, flat, or tip*. Scoring via cut occurs with an intentional strike with the edge or flat, or performing a slicing action with the edge, or slashing with the tip of the sword. The strike does not need to hit hard, and excessive force will be

penalized. There is no threshold for too light a degree of force, as a fencer may choose to give the opponent a light tap with the edge when they could have struck them full force, thus demonstrating their control of the weapon and timing. Strikes with the flat of the sword to the hands and head will score. Strikes that are obviously with the flat to targets other than head or hands will not score, however any strike where the referee is unsure of whether the strike was with the edge or not will be scored as if it was with the edge.

****Addendum on cuts:*** cuts do not score with the smallsword.

2.3.2 Slice: a slicing action with the edge: A slice must be done with intention by means of a drawing of the edge along the target, and will be scored the same as a cut with the edge. Note that merely laying the weapon on the target and sliding it along is not enough to score; The competitor must be attempting to displace the opponent with pressure. Example: A thrust that misses the head and happens to slide along the side of the mask is considered incidental contact (non-scoring); however an opponent who misses the thrust and then uses that opportunity to make an intentional drawing slicing motion can score.

2.3.3 Thrust: an attack with the point. A thrust is defined as an attack with the point of the sword arriving to the opponent's target area. Due to the difficult nature of judging the quality of a thrust on account of the interference of protective gear, any thrust where the tip of the sword touches the opponents target area will be scored. There is no requirement for the blade to bend. A thrust where the tip touches and then slides past is a valid touch. Referees must exercise their judgment when deciding whether or not a thrust has landed and then slid past, or in fact missed.

2.3.4 Pommel or Buckler strikes: Due to safety, risk of concussion and serious injury, pommel strikes, buckler strikes, and strikes with the crossguard or schilt that makes physical contact with the target is illegal and non-scoring. An exception to this rule occurs when a fencer has control over the opponent and demonstrates the ability to execute a pommel strike while refraining from making actual contact; e.g. a fencer presses the opponent's arms to the sides and raises the hilt and demonstrates that they can pommel but do not strike the opponent; this is considered a valid action and will score. This exception does not apply to the buckler. Pommel and buckler punches that connect with the fencer will receive at minimum a red card, and may result in a black card depending on the situation. Intentional Strikes with the edge of the buckler will result in an immediate black card and ejection from the premises.

2.3.5 Grappling: Grappling is defined as when a fencer's body makes contact with the other fencer's weapon or body.

> **Permitted Grappling:** Permitted Grappling is defined as when a fencer uses their arms or hands to attempt to control the other fencer's arms or weapon; i.e. a parry with the hand, perform a disarm, grabbing a weapon, etc. This is allowed,

and the action will be allowed to continue. The referee will call halt if Permitted Grappling goes on beyond a 5 count without either fencer showing clear control of the situation or if there is any concern over safety.

Corps-a-corps: Corps-a-Corps, a type of grappling, is defined as when the fencer's chests come into contact with each other. Whenever Corps-a-corps occurs, action will not be allowed to continue. Halt will be called and the fencers will be reset with no penalty. A fencer who continuously closes into corps-a-corps will be penalized.

Illegal Grappling: During any Grappling, throws, trips, punches, kicks, or joint locks are strictly forbidden and will result in a red card and/or a black card

Rapier and Sword and Buckler Tournament Grappling Addendum: Grappling is further limited for rapier and sword and buckler due to safety concerns with the finger being wrapped around the ricasso of the sword. Fencers are allowed to use the hand to press an opponent's arm out of the way or grasp or wrap an opponent's weapon or arm provided they are not twisting it or doing any unsafe actions. Fencers who grasp the blade and attempt to exert control by twisting the blade will be penalized with a red card.

2.3.6 Disarms: Disarming is defined as a fencer losing his/her weapon through the result of the opponent's action. If a fencer is legally disarmed the opponent is awarded a point in the case where they demonstrate dominance during the disarm. Dropping a weapon will result in an immediate halt and not result in a point unless the opponent hits or would have hit when halt is called. Dropping the weapon during a grapple doesn't necessarily constitute a disarm. Dropping the weapon in order to halt the action is considered stalling and will be penalized. Any disarm that relies or results in joint manipulation or locks is illegal and will be penalized.

Rapier and Sword and Buckler Addendum: Disarming is a prohibited action in rapier and sword and buckler due to safety concerns with the finger wrapped around the ricasso.

Additionally, if 5 doubles happen in a match, both fencers lose the bout.

2.4 Additional Notes on Scoring:

2.4.1 Incidental Contact: A touch may be ruled as incidental contact and therefore is non-scoring, but will still result in a halt. This is defined as a light brush with the blade or

any other type of superficial or unintentional contact. These actions do not score and will be thrown out.

2.4.2 Multiple Strikes: In the event that an opponent is struck more than once before the halt, the scoring fencer only receives a single point.

2.4.3 Illegal Targets: The back of the head, spine, and groin are considered Illegal Targets for safety reasons, and intentionally striking it will be penalized (see below). Similarly, intentionally turning the head/back to avoid being hit will also be penalized.

2.4.5 Blade Grabs: A fencer may grasp a non-moving sword blade. If the opponent twists and turns the blade, a halt will be called and the blade grab will be treated equal to a cut to the hand. In Sword and Buckler or Rapier, twisting and turning the blade after a grab will result in a red card.

2.4.6 Out of Bounds : Out of bounds is defined as a fencer having placed two points of contact to the ground outside the line of the strip at the same time. If a fencer steps out of bounds on the side of the strip before any strike occurs, they will be reset inside the warning line at their end of the strip. If they go out of the back of the strip with both feet and are not followed by the opponent, the opponent will receive a point. If both fencers go out of bounds simultaneously, or near-simultaneously, then no point is scored and the fencers will be reset to their starting lines. A fencer may be struck as they step out of bounds. If they step out of the back of the strip at the same time as they are struck, only one point is awarded. A competitor who is intentionally running off the side of the strip to avoid being hit or to stall for the clock will be penalized.

2.4.7 Unclear Action: In the event that the referees see that something has happened, but it was too difficult to score (e.g. unclear fencing or multiple quick hits may make it difficult to tell whether a hit was incidental or not or which fencers landed first), then the Referee has the right to call “Unclear Action” and throw out the exchange.

2.5 Tempo and Interpreting the action:

2.5.1 Clean touch: A clean touch occurs when one fencer touches the other fencer without receiving a hit in return prior to the halt. The fencer who touches the other fencer scores.

2.5.2 Double touch: A double hit occurs when both fencers touch each other prior to the halt. A double hit can occur in two ways: Simultaneous touch, & Double-in-Tempo.

2.5.3 Simultaneous Touch: Both fencers make contact simultaneously or near simultaneously as the both attacks are already in tempo. With a simultaneous touch, neither fencer scores.

2.5.4 Double-in-Tempo: A double-in-tempo, also known as an afterblow, occurs when one fencer hits and the other fencer attacks in response in tempo and hits prior or with the halt being called. *In tempo* is defined in a historical sense: the fencer who is struck has one tempo, or one attack, with which they can respond; while the time it takes to execute the attack is relevant, the fencer will be allowed time to complete their attack.

In case of a double-in-tempo, the fencer who hits first will score IF the responding fencer hits them on a shallow target: hands, arms elbow and below, legs, foot.

The fencer who hits first will not score if the responding fencer strikes a deep target (head, torso, or arms above the elbow).

In short, the fencer who was touched first can only negate the opponent's touch by responding with an attack that hits a deep target.

If a fencer hits the opponent, and then manages to hit the opponent a second time before the referee calls halt, the opponent is unable to have a double-in-tempo called, as they failed to make an attack before they were struck again.

2.5.5 Calling Halt: The referee will allow one tempo to pass after a touch is seen before calling halt.

Section 3: Prohibited Actions and Penalties:

3.1 Prohibited actions:

The following actions and behaviors are prohibited. Disregard for the rules may result in penalization or expulsion from both individual tournament and the overall event.

3.1.1 Stalling - Stalling refers to any action by a competitor which slows or delays the conduct of a bout in order to gain an advantage or stop the clock. Examples include, but are not limited to delaying returning to the starting line when instructed by the referee, intentionally dropping the sword or falling down to stop the clock, intentionally stepping out of bounds, or feigning injury*. A competitor who intentionally steps out of bounds will receive the penalty for stalling in addition to the opponent receiving a point for the strip out. A competitor who feigns injury will be disqualified.

3.1.2 False Start - A false start occurs when a competitor moves from the starting line before the command of “Fence” is given by the referee. A single false start will receive a "halt' and reset. After the initial false start the fencer will be penalized.

3.1.3 Failure to halt* - Fencers must cease any and all attacks upon the first command of “Halt” from the referee. Continuing to attack or advance toward the opponent with the intention to attack after halt will be penalized.

3.1.4 Influencing Referees - Fencers are strictly forbidden from making any indication, verbal or non-verbal, about the location or quality of a hit received from their opponent in order to influence the referee’s call. As a show of good sportsmanship, competitors are allowed to request the referee to not award them a point for a hit they didn’t believe they scored, the referee is allowed to disregard the fencer and award the point regardless. The decision is at the referee’s discretion.

3.1.5 Exposing the Back of the Head or Spine - Exposing the back of the head or the spine during the bout, whether intentional or unintentional is strictly forbidden.

3.1.6 Striking illegal targets- Striking the fencer’s back, back of the head, neck, groin, or any target whatsoever when the fencer's back is turned to the opponent, whether by intention or carelessness, is illegal and a non-scoring action. The referee is expected to use their discretion in these instances, and may present the offending competitor with a yellow, red, or black card depending on the needs of the situation. In the event that a fencer has turned away and is struck, both fencers may receive a penalty at the referee’s discretion. A strike to the groin is not a valid target and will not result in points awarded. Intentional or repetitive strikes to the groin will result in a penalty.

3.1.7 Equipment malfunction - An equipment malfunction is defined as a piece of equipment that is not working as intended, but is not broken or failed; For example, a competitors shin or elbow guard is loose and moves out of position requiring the bout to be halted for safety purposes until it is put back into its proper place. After the second occurrence of an equipment malfunction, the fencer will be given two minutes to fix or replace the item. After two minutes they will receive a yellow card and an additional two minutes to replace or fix the equipment, and present themselves at the strip ready to fence. If the fencer has not returned after two minutes, they will be issued a red card, and given an additional minute to return ready to fence. If they have not returned after the final minute, or are unable to find a suitable piece of equipment to replace their weapon, they will forfeit the match. Fencers are expected to have backup equipment at the ready and near the fencing strip to avoid delays.

3.1.8 Equipment Failure - Equipment failure occurs when a required piece of equipment breaks or is no longer safe to use; e.g. a broken blade or a crumpled mask. In the event of an equipment failure, the fencer will be given two minutes to replace their equipment. After two minutes they will receive a yellow card and an additional two

minutes to replace the failed equipment, and present themselves at the strip ready to fence. If the fencer has not returned after two minutes, they will be issued a red card, and given an additional minute to return ready to fence. If they have not returned after the final minute, or are unable to find a suitable piece of equipment to replace their weapon, they will forfeit the match. Fencers are expected to have backup equipment at the ready and near the fencing strip to avoid delays.

3.1.9 Competitor not present for start of bout - At the start of the pool, or for any subsequent bout whether in the pool or in the elimination round, competitors must be present when called. The fencers name will be announced 3 times; fencers not present after the 3rd will be issued a red card for the start of the bout and have 2 minutes to report to the strip ready to fence. After 2 minutes, the competitor not present will forfeit the match. If they have not arrived by their second match they will be disqualified from the tournament.

3.1.10 Disrespectful Behavior* - Competitors are expected to remain professional and in control of their emotions at all times, and to be respectful to all competitors, staff, participants, spectators, and the venue. Disrespectful behavior includes the following (but not limited to):

a. Disrespectful Vocalization: Fencers are allowed to vocally show excitement or frustration, however taunting, swearing, excessive celebrating to attempt to deceive the referees, rude and disrespectful comments, gestures, or behaviors to staff or competitors etc. are disallowed.

b. Arguing with the Referee or staff: Competitors and coaches are allowed to ask the referee to clarify the exchange if they did not understand the call, or to dispute the enforcement of a rule if it has been incorrectly applied by the referee. While they are allowed to respectfully express their disagreement with a call, no arguing or disputing with the referee about a point of fact is allowed.

c. Loss of Temper: A fencer who loses control of their temper, yelling or screaming in anger at the referee, competitor, or anyone present, is throwing equipment in anger, or other such displays of a loss of emotional regulation, etc. will receive an immediate black card from the event.

3.1.10 Disruption of the Bout Committee table* Competitors, coaches, spectators, etc. are explicitly prohibited from interacting in any way with the bout committee table during or between bouts. Anyone who disregards this rule may be ejected from the event.

3.1.11 Unjustified interruption of the bout* Any competitor, coach, spectator, etc. who interrupts, disrupts or halts a bout without justification will be penalized and may be ejected from the event, including competitors leaving the bout at an unauthorized time.

3.1.12 Distracting the fencers* Only referees, other officials, or the competitors designated coach are allowed to speak to the competitors during the bout; this includes

shouting advice to competitors, or attempting to distract or confuse a fencer. Coaches are only allowed to shout advice to their own fencer. Cheering for a competitor from the gallery is allowed as long as it remains respectful and not distracting, excessive, or deemed an attempt to influence the referee per the referee's discretion. Any cheering deemed inappropriate by the referee or bout committee will receive one warning, and ejection on second infraction.

3.1.13 Reckless behavior* Reckless and uncontrolled behavior is strictly prohibited. This includes (but is not limited to) strike the floor due to loss of control, running out of the strip and into spectator areas or other fencing strips, shoving the opponent out of the strip, throwing the weapon, off-balancing oneself by running or leaping to attack, purposefully falling to attack, jabbing with a thrust etc.

3.1.14 Excessive Force Excessive Force is defined as any force applied to a target area in excess to what is necessary to touch the opponent. Referees are empowered to penalize any instance they deem excessive force was used, and to scale the penalty based on the level of excessive force that was used. Referees are also empowered to let fencers know when the maximum amount of force allowed is used, so that fencers can calibrate their force to event expectations.

3.1.15 Intentionally Striking at Unauthorized Times* If a competitor intentionally attempts to hit an opponent when the bout is not in progress then the fencer will receive a black card for the tournament or the event, based on referee and bout committee's discretion; e.g. After "Halt" is called and the fencing has stopped, or before the command of "Fence!" is given, a fencer strikes the other fencer out of anger, malice, or for any other reason, OR strikes anytime when the opponent is defenseless, such as when their back is turned or they are disarmed.

3.1.16 Use of prohibited techniques* Use of prohibited techniques will result in serious penalty and/or ejection. This category includes but is not limited to punches, kicks, joint manipulation or breaks, pain compliance, chokes, throws, sweeps, trips, holding the weapon by the blade and striking with the cross guard and hilt etc.

3.1.17 Brutality * Competitors who strike or fence intentionally to cause injury, or who cause injury due to reckless behavior or excessive force, will be disqualified. Due to the nature of the activity, injuries can and will happen, and a competitor will not necessarily be penalized for an injury to the opponent, unless the injury occurred due to negligence or use of brutality, a prohibited technique, reckless behavior, etc.
Examples of brutality include: drawing the fist back to punch (i.e. a "haymaker"), purposely jabbing with a thrust, using the weapon or pommel or buckler to repeatedly strike the opponent, coiling up before striking a defenseless opponent, striking an opponent who has fallen, defenseless, or unarmed, use of unnecessary levels of force, forceful corps-a-corps contact etc.

3.1.18 Cheating Any participant found to be cheating will be disqualified and ejected from the tournament and event, and may be subject to a ban from future events. Cheating includes but is not limited to: intentionally using disallowed equipment, removing required equipment after gear check, attempting to alter scoresheets, attempting to influence or coerce referees, etc.

3.1.19 Drug/Alcohol use Competitors may not compete within 6 hours of using alcohol or any other prescription or nonprescription drug that may slow or impair actions.

3.1.20 Disputes/Appeals If a competitor feels that a rule has been unfairly or incorrectly applied, an appeal may be made to the bout committee and head referee. No decision on a question of fact can be the subject of an appeal. All black cards/disqualifications will be automatically reviewed by the Bout Committee.

3.1.21 Misc.: Any incident not explicitly outlined in the rules will be adjudicated at the discretion of the referee and/or bout committee. Rules for penalties apply for fencers, coaches, and spectators. In certain cases non-competitor penalties may be applied to the associated fencer; (i.e. a fencer is penalized or disqualified due to the actions of their coach).

Penalty Chart

Penalties are divided into 3 categories: Yellow Cards, Red Cards, and Black Cards. In most cases a Yellow Card (warning) must be given before a Red Card is given (see exceptions below). Penalty cards do not carry over into other bouts, but penalties are recorded and may result in later disqualification.

Yellow Card	Warning and scoring action annulled
Red Card	1 Point to opponent and scoring action annulled
Black Card (Tier 1)	Ejection from tournament
Black Card (Tier 2)	Ejection from all tournaments and event premises

Offense	Penalties		
	1st offence	2nd offence	3rd offence
Stalling	YELLOW	RED	RED
False Start	YELLOW	RED	RED
Striking After the Halt*	YELLOW	RED	RED
Interposition	YELLOW	RED	RED

Intentionally Turning the Back of the Head	YELLOW	RED	RED
Equipment malfunction	YELLOW**	RED***	RED***
Equipment failure	YELLOW**	RED***	BLACK1
Competitor not present for start of bout	RED**	BLACK1	n/a
Excessive Force	YELLOW*	RED*	BLACK1*
Striking Illegal Targets*	YELLOW	RED	BLACK1
Disrespectful Behavior*	YELLOW	RED	BLACK1*
Disruption of the Scoring table*	RED	RED	BLACK1
Unjustified interruption of the match	RED	RED	BLACK1
Reckless behavior*	YELLOW	RED***	BLACK1*
Intentionally Striking at Unauthorized Times *	RED	BLACK1	BLACK2
Use of prohibited techniques*	RED	BLACK1	BLACK2
Brutality *	BLACK1	BLACK2	n/a
Cheating	BLACK2	n/a	n/a
Use of prohibited substances	BLACK2	n/a	n/a

* Higher penalty may be applied at referee's discretion.

** The fencer receives an additional 2 minutes

***The fencer receives an additional 1 minute

Section 4: Equipment Requirements and Specifications

4.1 Apparel requirements for Longsword, Rapier, Sword and Buckler, Smallsword, & Saber for All Age Categories

All equipment used by competitors must be approved by the armorer at gear check prior to the start of the tournament, and any item that does not fit the following criteria or is deemed unsafe by the staff will be disallowed and an appropriate substitute must be found. There can be no skin exposed.

4.1.1 Jacket - A minimum of 350N rated fencing jacket is required. If the jacket is not rated at a minimum of 350N, then a 350N or higher rated plastron(s) that protects the chest and armpits must be worn under the jacket.

4.1.2 Pants - Minimum of 350N rated fencing or HEMA knickers or pants, and long socks that do not expose any skin are required. All skin must be completely covered, and there must be complete overlap between the pants and jacket at all times even when lifting arms.

4.1.3 Mask A fencing mask with back of the head protection is required. The back of the head protection can be integrated, or it can be a separate add-on to the mask. Mask must be in in good repair and free from large dents, rust, or other damage that compromises the integrity of the mesh.

4.1.4 Gloves:

Longsword & Sword and Buckler: Protective gloves made for HEMA tournament usage are required. Steel/aluminum gauntlets are also acceptable but must be approved by the armorer. Lightweight gloves are acceptable for the buckler hand, but padded gloves at a minimum are recommended. Light fencing gloves are allowed for the sword hand if a basket hilt that provides full protection of the hand is used.

Rapier: Padded or leather light gloves are acceptable for rapier; a lacrosse glove or heavier is recommended for the Dagger/off hand.

Saber: Padded or lacrosse gloves or similar. Light gloves are acceptable provided the guard sufficiently protects the hand.

Smallsword: A light leather or fencing glove.

4.1.5 Additional Required Protection for Longsword, Sword & Buckler, Rapier, & Saber:

- Neck protector
- Elbow protectors
- Forearm Protectors
- Knee Protectors
- Shin Protectors

4.1.6 Additional Required Protection for Smallsword

-Neck Protection

4.1.7 Recommended Protection:

- Rigid chest protector
- 350N (or higher) plastron
- Groin protection

4.2 Weapon requirements for all Categories:

All weapons will be subject to a flex test by the armorer to determine safety and are subject onsite to approval or denial by the tournament organizers/bout committee.

4.2.1 Longsword: Participants must use a steel fencing sword appropriate for competition. Single or double ring hilts are allowed, however strikes to the ring may be called as a hit to the hand. Blade length must be a maximum of 105 centimeters from the cross guard, have a maximum of 14.5kg flexibility, be in good repair with no jagged nicks or gouges and free from active surface rust, with no s-curve in the blade. A slight bend is acceptable. All blades must be tipped with rubber, leather, bullet casing, or tape, even if the weapon has a rolled or spatulated etc. tip. All weapons will be subject to a flex test by the armorer to determine safety.

4.2.2 Smallsword: Participants must use a weapon with a smallsword or foil guard, and with an epee or foil blade no more than 90 cm (a standard size 5 Olympic blade). Pistol or orthopedic style grips are not allowed. The blade must be completely free of burrs or heavy nicks. Blades must be free of s-curves or hard, dangerous bends (a slight bend is acceptable.) The blade must have a rubber blunt over the point.

4.2.3 Saber: Participants must use a weapon with a historical saber, spadroon, or baskethilt guard, and with a blade no more than 97 cm, and a weight of no less than 600g and no more than 900g. The blade must be flexible, completely free of burrs or heavy nicks. Blades must be free of s-curves or hard, dangerous bends (a slight bend is acceptable.)

4.2.4 Rapier: Participants are required to use a flexible rapier simulator designed specifically for historical rapier fencing. The blade must be flexible on the thrust, blunt and completely free of burrs or heavy nicks. Blades must be free of s-curves or hard, dangerous bends (a slight bend is normal and acceptable.) Blade length must be between 90 – 115 cm (including the ricasso of the blade). Modern fencing weapons (foil, saber or epee) are not allowed, however rapiers with doublewide or "musketeer" style epee blades are allowed. Blades must be capped with a rubber blunt or leather wrapped over the point and affixed with tape, even if the blade has a nail head or rolled over point. The final decision as to whether a weapon is acceptable or not lies with the tournament staff. Hilt design can be any reasonably historical style from the 16th to 17th century. No blatant fantasy designs are allowed.

4.2.5 Dagger (when allowed): Participants are required to use a flexible dagger simulator designed specifically for historical rapier fencing. The blade must be flexible on the thrust, blunt and completely free of burrs or heavy nicks. Blades must be free of s-curves or hard, dangerous bends (a slight bend is normal and acceptable.) Blade length can be no shorter than 20 centimeters and no longer than 45 centimeters. All blades must be capped with a rubber blunt or leather wrapped over the point and affixed with tape, even if the blade has a nail head or rolled over point. The final decision as to whether a weapon is acceptable or not lies with the tournament staff. Hilt design can be any reasonably historical style from the 16th to 17th century. No blatant fantasy designs are allowed. Cold steel synthetic parrying daggers are acceptable.

4.2.6 Sword and Buckler weapon: Participants will use a steel single hand arming sword, sidesword, or messer intended for HEMA use. The style of sword should represent a historical one handed weapon from the 14th to 17th centuries. Participants may also use a Saber or Broadsword from a later time period for this event as long as it meets the Saber requirements in 4.2.3. Complex and basket hilts are allowed. Longswords held in one hand are not. Modern fencing weapons, blades, or hilts (foil, saber or epee) are not allowed. Blade length may not exceed 38 inches from the cross guard. The weapon is expected to be in good repair, filed down with no jagged nicks or gouges in the blade that could rip an opponent's protective gear, and no dangerous bends or s-curves in the blade (a slight bend is acceptable). All blades must be tipped with rubber, leather, bullet casing, or tape, even if the weapon has a rolled or spatulated etc. tip. All weapons will be subject to a flex test by the armorer to determine safety.

4.2.7 Buckler: Participants may use a buckler that is steel, wooden, hardened leather or synthetic. The buckler may not be larger than 18" in diameter. The buckler may not have any protrusions on the face (***such as spikes or anything designed to catch a blade***). The buckler must be in good repair free of jagged edges. The buckler, by definition, is a gripped weapon, not strapped or tied to the arm in any way. A buckler that has a strap attached is not necessarily disallowed, but a fencer using the strap to affix the buckler to their arm or body will be immediately disqualified.

4.2.8 Round Shield: Participants may use a round strapped shield that is