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1. Safety Rules

- 1.1. The overriding safety rule is that you must be in control of your weapon at all times. Your opponents will do unexpected things. You must always be prepared to stop your weapon or to pull it back. Failure to do this may result in you eventually injuring someone. Remember that our intention is never to cause our opponent pain or damage.
- 1.2. Any item used offensively in bouting is a weapon and should be treated with the appropriate respect. This is particularly true of bucklers and shields, which are deceptively dangerous.
- 1.3. Any dispute concerning classification of weapons or acceptability of safety equipment shall be decided by the Provosts.
- 1.4. All equipment must have sharp edges, points and burrs removed.
- 1.5. All weapons must be kept clean.

2. Eligibility Of Fencers

- 2.1. Participation in bouting is a privilege, not a right. An individual must demonstrate a degree of competency before a Branch Provost, prior to being allowed to undertake unrestricted bouting.
- 2.2. Any Provost or Usher may at any time stop a bout if they consider that one or both of the fencers to be fighting dangerously, to be contravening these rules, or be using any item of equipment that is unsafe. Any member may at any time stop a bout for any of the above reasons, but must be willing to justify their actions to the responsible Provost or Usher.
- 2.3. Any fencer may refuse to enter into or continue a bout and need not specify a reason for doing so to the other fencer. Their reason must be specified privately to a Provost if asked, as it may have an important bearing on safety within the school.
- 2.4. Any fencer known or suspected of being under the influence of any intoxicating drug (including alcohol) will be barred from taking part in bouting whilst under the influence of that drug. Furthermore, anyone suspected of attempting to fight while under the influence of an intoxicating drug may be barred from further participation at the discretion of the Provosts.

3. Conduct

- 3.1. Bouts shall commence when both participants have clearly signalled to each other or an observer that they are ready to start fencing.
- 3.2. No one shall interfere in a bout in which they are not involved, with the exception of a Provost, or other person supervising that bout, unless they are prepared to justify their actions to the Provosts.
- 3.3. No fencer shall deliberately attempt to injure any other fencer, and every attempt shall be made to avoid accidental injury. To this end all blows must be pulled and all grappling moves controlled.
- 3.4. Deliberate attacks of any kind to any unarmoured parts of the head and neck are not allowed.
- 3.5. Deliberate attacks to unarmoured groin, feet, hands, elbows and knees are not allowed.
- 3.6. Although grappling is allowed in bouts with weapons, it is meant to be used as an adjunct to the weapon. Therefore, any grapple where one fencer has not scored a hit or established a significant advantage (e.g. disarm or throw) within four seconds of the first grappling move, should be considered unsuccessful, and the fencers shall break and resume their guard before continuing. Fencers who have attained the rank of Scholar or above may, with prior agreement, choose to continue grappling beyond this timeframe.

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- 3.7. Grappling moves designed to throw an opponent are not to be completed. In order to make this practical, fencers who have their balance broken as part of a “throw” must under no circumstances continue struggling. Fencers must take special care that in any grappling technique involving joint manipulation they do not damage the joint. Fencers should be aware of the ease with which some joints may be broken and should under no circumstances struggle when a joint lock is successfully applied.
- 3.8. In all bouts a reasonable distance shall be kept between participants and non-participants.
- 3.9. No member shall handle or use another member’s equipment without their permission. No member shall attack another person, with a real or imitation weapon, even in jest, unless prior agreement has been made to enter into a bout.
- 3.10. No member shall act irresponsibly with a weapon at any time during or outside a Stoccata event.
- 3.11. No member shall act in such a way as to bring the Stoccata School of Defence Inc. into disrepute.

4. Discipline

- 4.1. Any member who fails to comply with these rules may be suspended for the remainder of the lesson or event by a Provost or in the absence of a Provost, an Usher acting on behalf of a Provost.
- 4.2. Any member who severely contravenes these rules may be expelled from Stoccata by a majority vote of the Provosts teaching at their branch of Stoccata. Note that in a branch of Stoccata with only one Provost, the vote of that Provost is sufficient to expel the student.

5. Weapons Categories

- 5.1. Boffer
Foam covered weapons with a rigid plastic core, typically of no more than 500 g in mass. Used as a basic safe introduction weapon for drilling and bouting purposes, especially for minor age fencers.
- 5.2. Training Weapons
This category includes plastic, shinai based and dussack weapons used for introductory training purposes. Plastic weapons include commercially available plastic training swords, such as (but not limited to) the Rawlings synthetic range. Shinai are weapons made from bamboo slats and bound with leather fittings and string. They may be modified into other replica weapons forms, as long as the blade construction remains unchanged. Dussack are single-handed wooden core weapons with the blade contained within a thick leather sleeve, typically used as a training weapon for German-style fencing. Because of the variety of materials and construction used in training weapons, necessary and appropriate safety requirements for training weapons shall be determined for particular weapons by the Provost of the branch.
- 5.3. Olympic
Weapons constructed utilising foil, epee, or sabre blades designed for use in modern Olympic-style or competition fencing.
- 5.4. Smallsword
Single handed swords with short thrust orientated blades of up to 96 cm (38”) in length using heavier blades than Olympic style blades, typically of a triangular shape and predominately used for thrust attacks. Diamond shaped blades of the same blade length replicating the

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spadroon or shearing sword or daggers that may also be used for cuts also fall into this category.

5.5. Rapier

Single handed swords with long thrust orientated blades of 96 cm (38") or greater using heavier blades than Olympic style blades. Predominantly used for thrust attacks, but also used for cutting attacks.

5.6. Single Handed Sword

Single handed swords using blades suitable for cut or thrust attacks. Category covers arming swords, spada, sideswords, rapiers, shortswords, broadswords, backswords, and sabres.

5.7. Longsword

Swords capable of being used in one or two hands with a total length of less than 150 cm (59"). Category covers longswords, bastard swords, federschwert, and two-handed swords.

5.8. Greatsword

Swords used in two hands with a total length of more than 150 cm (~59") . Category covers greatswords, spadone, montante, zweihanders, claymores and two-handed swords.

5.9. Polearms

All weapons mounted on a wooden shaft or pole. Category includes staves (long & short), spears, partisan, glaives, bills, halberds, and pollaxes.

6. Summary of Protective Equipment Requirements

- 6.1. During class lessons or drilling activities or slow play under direct supervision, the required protective equipment shall be as directed by a Branch Provost. In the event of no direct instruction, masks and gloves are assumed to be the minimum requirements for these activities.
- 6.2. In contact bouting and free fencing the following requirements shall apply. The weapon category being used by the opponent shall determine the protection equipment requirements for each fencer.

Required Protection	Weapon Category								
	Boffer	Training Weapons	Olympic	Small Sword	Rapier	Single Handed Sword	Long sword	Great sword	Pole arms
mask	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
mask cover						Y	Y	Y	Y
semi-rigid back of head		P				Y	Y	Y	Y
rigid back of head							R	R	R
gorget		T		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Leather glove	Y	P	Y	Y	Y				
semi-rigid glove		P				Y			
rigid glove		P					Y	Y	Y
no bare skin		P	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
350N neck to knee			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
padded torso						Y	Y	Y	Y
rigid torso								R	R
forearms		P				Y	Y	Y	Y
semi-rigid elbows		P				Y	Y	Y	Y
semi-rigid knees		P				Y	Y	Y	Y
groin protection	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
breast protection	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R

Y = Required

R = Recommended

T = If Thrusting

P = As required by Branch Provost

7. Materials Definitions

7.1. Material Categories

The categories of protective materials in increasing order of protective capability are:

- 7.1.1. Puncture Resistant Material
- 7.1.2. Semi-Rigid Padding
- 7.1.3. Rigid Material

7.2. Puncture Resistant Material

Puncture resistant material is any fabric or combination of fabrics and materials that is capable of reliably withstanding puncture. Acceptable materials are either:

- 7.2.1. Commercial fencing clothing with a 350 N / CE1 rating or better;
- 7.2.2. Material / material combinations that successfully pass the 1.5 joules fabric drop test;
- 7.2.3. Rigid materials.

Note: For information regarding the 1.5 joules fabric drop test, refer to the instructions in the appendices of the SCA rules of Rapier Combat. (<http://www.sca.org/officers/marshal/combat/rapier/>)

7.3. Semi-Rigid Padding

Semi-rigid padding is any material capable of absorbing impact and returning to shape after deformation. Acceptable materials include:

- 7.3.1. 5 mm closed cell foam (eg yoga mats, camp mats etc) under a layer of medium weight cloth
- 7.3.2. 3 mm natural tanned leather
- 7.3.3. 3 mm rubber compound (eg shoe sole material, EVA foams, styrogum)
- 7.3.4. Commercial pads for knees and elbows (eg skate pads, volleyball pads etc)
- 7.3.5. 5 mm wool felt under a layer of medium weight cloth
- 7.3.6. 5 mm of quilted fabric layers
- 7.3.7. Cotton tubing stuffed with cotton rag waste, fibre or horsehair to a minimum thickness of 10 mm.

7.4. Rigid Material

Puncture-resistant materials that will not significantly flex, spread apart, or deform under pressure. Examples of materials that may comply with the standard for rigid material are:

- 7.4.1. 0.8 mm stainless steel;
- 7.4.2. 1.0 mm mild steel;
- 7.4.3. 1.6 mm aluminium, copper, or brass;
- 7.4.4. One layer of hardened 4 mm leather (water hardening, or wax, or epoxy impregnation);
- 7.4.5. The mesh of a standard fencing mask;
- 7.4.6. 3 mm Kydex or equivalent plastics.

8. Protective Equipment Requirements

8.1. General Requirements

- 8.1.1. All equipment shall be approved for use by a Branch Provost prior to its initial use.
(Note: Ushers shall perform this duty if no Provost is present.)
- 8.1.2. All equipment may be reviewed by a Branch Provost for suitability at any time.
- 8.1.3. All equipment must be in good repair before commencing fencing.
- 8.1.4. For all weapons categories, except for boffer fencing, all visible skin should be covered by cloth to prevent minor cuts and bleeding injuries. The back of the lower legs may be left uncovered if allowed by the Branch Provost for heat management purposes.
- 8.1.5. For all weapons categories, except for boffer or training weapon fencing, Puncture Resistant Material must cover the fencer from the neck to 3 cm below the knee. This may be provided by the combination of worn equipment, and should not display any gaps in use.
- 8.1.6. All steel blade points must be covered with plastic, rubber or leather tips, which must be firmly taped or glued in place in such a way that they will not come loose during normal bouting, presenting a cross section of at least 6 mm. Exceptions to this may be made on a case by case basis by the Branch Provost where this is deemed to be impractical due to the width of the blade.

8.2. Head Protection

- 8.2.1. In all weapons categories, the face and head must be protected by a fencing mask or fencing helm. Perforated metal used for the construction of fencing helms must not have holes larger than 3 mm (1/8") in diameter, with a minimum offset of 5 mm (3/16") and shall also conform to the rigid material standards.
- 8.2.2. All commercial fencing masks must be covered with a sabre coaches mask cover or equivalent when fencing with single-handed sword, longsword, greatsword and polearms, to mediate the impact of cuts to the head.
- 8.2.3. The back of the head must be protected by a minimum of semi-rigid material when fencing with single-handed swords, longswords, greatswords and polearms. This may also be required for some training weapons, as per the directions of the Branch Provost.
- 8.2.4. The use of rigid materials for back of the head protection in longsword, greatsword and polearm fencing is recommended due to the leverage these weapons may generate.
- 8.2.5. All commercial HEMA specific back of the head protectors shall be accepted as semi-rigid materials, and depending on construction may be accepted as rigid material by the Branch Provost.

8.3. Neck Protection

- 8.3.1. Except for fencing with boffers and Olympic weapons, the neck and throat, including the hollow of the throat and the cervical vertebrae, shall be protected by rigid material that is backed by a minimum of puncture resistant material.
- 8.3.2. Neck protection as per 8.3.1 is only required with training weapons when thrusts are being used during the bout.
- 8.3.3. Commercial HEMA throat protection shall in general be accepted as equivalent to a gorget of rigid material, subject to a review by a Branch Provost.

8.4. Torso Protection

- 8.4.1. For all weapons categories, except for boffer and training weapon fencing, the torso shall be covered by puncture resistant material.
- 8.4.2. The requirements for training weapons shall be determined by the Branch Provost, depending on the training weapons in use.
- 8.4.3. When fencing with single-handed swords, longswords, greatswords and polearms the front and sides of the torso must be padded with the equivalent of 5 mm wool felt. Acceptable torso padding examples include coaches fencing plastrons, commercial HEMA fencing jackets or commercial arming jackets.
- 8.4.4. When fencing with greatswords or polearms the use of rigid material protection over the chest, kidneys and spine is recommended.

8.5. Arm Protection

- 8.5.1. For all weapons categories, except for boffer and training weapon fencing, the arms shall be covered by puncture resistant material.
- 8.5.2. The requirements for training weapons shall be determined by the Branch Provost, depending on the training weapons in use.
- 8.5.3. When fencing with single-handed swords, longswords, greatswords, and polearms the bones on the top and bottom of the forearm, and the elbow, must be protected by semi-rigid material.

8.6. Hand Protection

- 8.6.1. For boffer, Olympic, smallsword and rapier fencing the hand and wrist bones of each hand must be covered by a leather glove or equivalent. Acceptable examples include Riggers gloves, TIG welding gloves and standard fencing gauntlets.
- 8.6.2. The requirements for training weapons shall be determined by the Branch Provost, depending on the training weapons in use.
- 8.6.3. For single-handed sword fencing the back of the hands, fingers and wrist bones of each hand must be covered by semi-rigid padding or equivalent. Acceptable examples

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include complex hilt with demi-gauntlet, Street Hockey Gloves, Kombat Gloves from Gajardoni, Red Dragon Hema gloves, Lacrosse gloves.

- 8.6.4. For longsword, greatsword and polearm fencing the back of the hands, fingers and wrist bones must be covered by rigid material.
- 8.6.5. The gripping surfaces of the hand and fingers are only required to be covered by leather as part of items 8.6.3 & 8.6.4 above.
- 8.6.6. Depending on construction, commercial gloves may require supplementary padding or protection to cover exposed areas. For example, some of the articulation slits in the padding on the fingers.

8.7. Leg Protection

- 8.7.1. For all weapons categories, except for boffer and training weapon fencing, the legs shall be covered by puncture resistant material down to 3 cm below the knee.
- 8.7.2. The back of the lower legs may be left uncovered if allowed by the Branch Provost for heat management purposes.
- 8.7.3. The requirements for training weapons shall be determined by the Branch Provost, depending on the training weapons in use.
- 8.7.4. When fencing with single-handed swords, longswords, greatswords, and polearms the knees must be protected by semi-rigid material.

8.8. Groin Protection

- 8.8.1. External reproductive organs must be protected by an athletic cup of rigid material.
- 8.8.2. It is recommended, but not required, that the pubic bone area be covered by groin protection of semi-rigid padding or equivalent.

8.9. Breast Protection

- 8.9.1. It is highly recommended, but not required, that those with breasts wear breast protection of semi-rigid material or equivalent.

9. Revision History

Version	Revision Date	Revision
1.0	14 Dec 2019	First Issue, approved by the Provost sub-Committee 14 Dec 2019
1.1	17 Dec 2019	Corrected 8.6.3 from "...complex hit..." to "...complex hilt..."
1.2	25 May 2023	Added sections 8.8 & 8.9, covering groin and breast protection requirements. Summary table in section 6 updated to reflect these requirements. Approved by the Provost sub-Committee 12 Mar 2023