



**Fighting Conventions
And
Marshaling Concerns
For
Rapier Combat
at
Estrella War 37
2021**

I. Estrella Rapier Marshalling Team

- A. The Estrella War Rapier Marshal in Charge (RMIC) and their designated Deputy will serve as the primary marshals for armor/weapon inspections and marshaling of rapier combat.
- B. The RMIC shall form a Rapier Marshaling Team (RMT) that works together to administer and manage all rapier activities.
 - 1. Each kingdom is responsible for providing volunteers to marshal combat activities. Each kingdom is to bring at least 1 marshal for each 25 fighters they are fielding.
 - 2. The organizers for any rapier tournaments outside of the war scenarios are responsible for recruiting marshals themselves.
- C. The RMT holds primary responsibility for the following:
 - 1. The RMT will work with the current Crowns of Atenveldt and the Outlands and their Heirs to develop the Conventions for combat (since the 2 kingdoms do not have identical Rapier Combat Rules) and the scenarios for the combat itself.
 - a) The RMIC may amend or provide clarification on the conventions at the event as needed to deal with unforeseen issues, loop holes, gaps in the rules, etc. The RMIC shall be guided by the following principles in order of priority:
 - (1) The safety of all combatants and non-combatants participating.
 - (2) Fairness to both armies
 - (3) Promoting the enjoyment of all participants
 - b) The organizers for any rapier tournaments outside of the war scenarios are responsible for the planning of the tourneys themselves. They must coordinate with the Special Events department for scheduling.
 - 2. The RMT will ensure the safety of spectators, unarmored participants, marshals and rapier combatants. In this capacity they are responsible for

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defining boundaries and guidelines to minimize the risk to spectators, participants, and bystanders within the constraints of the site.

- a) The RMT will define the boundaries of the tournament fields, including safety ranges outside of the combat area itself.
 - b) The RMT will inspect the battlefields and tournament fields each morning of combat to determine if they have been negatively affected by weather or other impacts.
 - (1) If there are concerns, the RMIC and the Earl Marshal, with advice from the Estrella War Staff and the Crowns of both kingdoms, will determine if fighting needs to be delayed, relocated, or cancelled.
 - (2) The RMIC will notify the EW Heralds Office so that announcements can be made by the town criers. The RMIC will coordinate with the EW Web Minister on the proper procedures to have an announcement published on the war website.
 - c) Organizers of rapier tournaments must receive approval from the RMIC of any rules or conditions of combat that differ from the current version of the Rapier Marshal's Handbook of the SCA.
 - d) The RMT will hold a meeting at the end of each day of fighting to address any issues of the combat field or the tourney fields.
3. The RMIC needs to be impartial, not favoring one kingdom over the other. The design of the scenarios should not favor one kingdom over the other. Information about the scenarios should be given to both kingdoms. This should be done at the same time, or if this is not feasible, as soon as possible.
 4. The RMIC should seek to promote the enjoyment of the most number of participants as feasible. While not every combatant will enjoy every scenario, every combatant should have the opportunity to enjoy at least one scenario.

D. Communication with the Armies

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1. A meeting shall be held at Estrella prior to the commencement of combat activities.
 2. The meeting shall be attended by the RMIC, the commanders of each rapier army, and any deputies they see fit to invite. The Crowns and Heirs of both kingdoms are invited to attend, but are not required to attend.
 3. The attendees will walk the various battlefields to familiarize themselves with the set up and terrain.
 4. The RMIC will answer questions from the attendees and discuss any concerns they may have.
- E. Field Marshaling
1. At least one member of the RMT must marshal the field during all melee scenarios.
 - a) There shall be at least 1 marshal for each 25 fighters on any melee field.
 - b) There shall be at least 1 marshal for each active arena during tournament combat.
 2. All field marshals will have notepads available to record incidents that arise during the Rapier Scenarios. The RMT may choose to address incidents immediately and/or at a Marshals' Court.
 3. Marshals on a combat field where projectile weapons are in use must use eye protection. They may opt to wear safety glasses or a fencing mask. However, if they wear a fencing mask, they must wear a tabard or baldric to identify themselves as marshals, and not be mistaken as combatants.
- F. The conventions for Rapier Combat at Estrella War are based on the April 2020 version of the Society Rapier Marshal's Handbook and the July 2020 version of the Kingdom of Atenveldt Rapier Marshal's Handbook. Where the conventions are not explicit about a topic, it is to be assumed that the Kingdom of Atenveldt's handbook shall govern.
- G. The conventions apply to all rapier combat, including Cut and Thrust, unless specifically noted otherwise.

II. Conduct on the field and fighting conventions

A. Honorable Combat

1. All activities and actions on the battlefield are to be based on the concept of honorable combat.
2. Valid blows are to be acknowledged by the one receiving them. If there is an issue with a dealt blow, we ask that the participants remember that this is a multi-kingdom event and that there may be misunderstandings on calibration. Combatants should communicate with each other, and a marshal, if necessary to resolve conflicts.
3. Fighters who have a conflict should accompany each other to a marshal. The name of each combatant and the nature of the dispute will be heard and recorded. The issue can be resolved either immediately or at the Marshals' Court. Barring the need to seek medical attention, fighters leaving the field without pursuing this process forfeit their right to make a legitimate complaint at a later time.
4. Combatants may not actively deceive their opponent as to their status of being alive or dead. A fighter cannot lie, call "dead" to get out of a tight spot, and then attack again without resurrecting. Retreating and running away is allowed.
5. Combatants may not actively deceive their opponent as to which side they are on by taking off or obscuring the colored tape used to identify sides. However, a fighter may take advantage of inattention.
6. Rules cannot replace common sense, good judgment, and concern for the safety of all participants. We depend on each combatant to use all three when governing their behavior on the field.

B. Valid Blows and Cuts

1. All blows listed in the glossary are considered valid blows, except for the following:
 - a) Percussive blows are only allowed in Cut and Thrust combat.
 - b) Push cuts are only allowed in tournaments.

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C. Loss of Limbs

1. Arms

- a) Unless a scenario specifically forbids it, a combatant that loses the use of both arms/hands may step off the line of combat and remain active. If any armed opponent then enters engagement distance, the “disarmed” fighter must immediately yield and quit the field.

2. Legs

- a) Legged fighters may stand, kneel, or sit.
 - (1) If they opt to stand, their feet must be no farther than shoulder width apart and they will remain stationary except to rotate to engage an opponent.
 - (2) If they kneel due to a blow to the lower leg, they may knee walk to a new location.
 - (3) If they sit due to a blow to the upper leg, they may “drag” themselves to a new location.
 - (4) Legged fighters may also be moved by being “carried” by 2 other fighters. The carrying fighters must have a free hand to hold the arms of the legged fighter.
- b) Legged fighters cannot “suicide” and kill themselves in a resurrection battle. However, a team mate can perform a “mercy killing” to allow the legged fighter to die and resurrect, if the legged fighter wishes.

D. Hold/Safety Hold

1. Holds are global, so all fighting will stop. Fighters are to assume a non-threatening stance with their weapons pointed away from opponents and check their local area for hazards. This includes checking the tips on their weapons.
2. Combatants are asked to please avoid using the phrase “hold the line” or similar phrases that might be confused with a safety hold.

E. Running

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1. Please refer to the glossary for definitions of running and walking.
Combatants may run on the battlefield while fighting is going on as long as they are outside of the field of engagement of any opponents. They must slow to a walk before engaging an opponent. Combatants carrying a spear are allowed to run with it as long as the spear is carried with the tip up above head height. The spear may be lowered once the combatant has slowed to a walk.

F. Dead

1. Combatants, once they have been killed, must assume a non-threatening posture (tips pointed up to the sky or down to the ground), call out loud “Dead” or a similar phrase to inform their opponent, and extricate themselves from the scrum in the least obstructive way they can manage.
2. Stalling to block or obstruct opponents, or using a “dead” fighter as a barrier, is expressly forbidden.
3. “Dead” fighters are also forbidden from communicating with their team on the status of the battle until they have resurrected.

G. Lay On

1. Marshals shall use this term or a similar one to indicate fighting shall commence. All combatants on the field when a “lay on” is called must be in full armor (mask, gloves, etc). Combatants may not remove any safety equipment until they have fully exited the active melee field.
2. Combatants who arrive at the battlefield after “lay on” has been called are to wait until the next scenario before participating. The RMT, at their discretion, may allow a fighter to join the combat late if it is a resurrection battle scenario and it does not negatively affect the balance of the number of fighters on each side.

H. Edge of the World/Field

1. Marshals shall use the phrase “edge of the world,” “beware the edge,” or other similar phrasing to warn combatants when melees approach the edge of the combat field. This phrase in no way implies a hold.

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2. Any fighters that continue to move and cross the edge of the field with either or both of their feet are “killed.” Marshals will try to notify combatants that they are dead when this happens, but we will also depend on the honor of each combatant to call themselves dead when they notice that they have crossed the line.
 3. This applies as well to notional terrain like a cliff edge that would kill the combatant if crossed.
1. Field of engagement
 1. The attacker may deliver a standard blow to their opponent if they are within the front zone. If an attacker is in the rear zone, attacks will be performed as “Death from Behind” attacks. Refer to Field of Engagement in the glossary for the definition of front and rear zones.
 2. Additionally, attackers should consider the area of their opponent’s attention. If they are within the front zone of the opponent, but the defender’s attention is elsewhere, they are encouraged to either wait until their opponent notices their presence or to place their blade in front of their opponent. An example would be to place the blade in front of the opponent’s mask just far out enough that when they turn their head around, they do not run into it. Defenders in this situation should consider this a courtesy and accept it as a valid attack even though no contact was made.
 3. Death from behind (DFB)
 - a) When executing a DFB, the attacker’s hand may not cross the vertical plane of the defender’s shoulders. It must stay behind the defender.
 - b) The defender is considered dead upon seeing a blade over their shoulder, feeling the touch of the blade, or hearing their opponent call them dead, whichever happens first. Fighters may not spin, dodge or otherwise evade a properly executed DFB.
 - c) Defenders are encouraged to accept blows if they turn towards an opponent either in the midst of executing a DFB or when they are

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close enough to have actually been struck by the opponent from behind. In a real combat situation, you would be dead.

d) Legged fighters

(1) Legged fighters in a kneeling or sitting position cannot execute a DFB. If an opponent is backing up towards a legged fighter, the legged fighter should notify the opponent with the phrase “Watch out behind you!” or something similar to avoid being tripped over.

(2) Legged fighters in a standing position may execute a DFB.

(3) Legged fighters can be killed by a DFB. Attackers should take extra care when attacking as sitting or kneeling fighters can fling themselves back to the ground to avoid a frontal attack.

e) Weapons: RBG’s and thrown weapons may not be used to execute a DFB. All other weapons may be used.

(1) For a DFB with an arrow, lay the arrow on the shoulder of the defender so that the tip is visible to them. Once used in this manner, the arrow is considered to be “fired” and is not to be used again in that scenario.

(2) For a DFB with a dagger, lay the dagger on the shoulder of the defender, so that the tip is visible. Be wary of the guard / quillions that might hit the defender. “Throat slitting” is not allowed. Please see the glossary for a definition.

(3) For a DFB with a spear, lay the spear on the shoulder of the defender or hold it just above the shoulder, so that the tip is visible. Be careful not to bang the spear on to their shoulder.

(4) A fighter may only perform a DFB on one opponent at a time.

J. Blind shots

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1. Blind Shots are not allowed in melee. A fighter must be able to see the target to effectively judge the safety of a shot.
2. A “Blind Shot” is defined as any attack around the edge of any obstacle that obscures the attacker’s vision of the target. For example, an attacker may be standing behind a tree. They can see the sword of an opponent sticking past, but not the opponent themselves. The attacker may attack the sword, but not the body of the opponent. However, if the opponent steps forward and their arm is now visible to the attacker, the arm is now a valid target.
3. The blind shot rule does apply to notional obstacles. For example, a line of haybales may define a full height wall that cannot be fought over. A fighter may not throw a shot around the end of the wall even though, in reality, they can see the target.

K. Projectile weapon safety

1. Loaded weapons will not be pointed at non-combatants like field support, spectators, or marshals.
2. Loaded weapons will not be pointed at any person not on the melee field.
3. Loaded weapons will not be pointed at anyone while combat is inactive (either between scenarios or during a hold).
4. Loaded weapons are RBGs with a round in place, crossbows with a bolt in place, and bows with the arrow nocked or drawn back any amount.

III. Inspections

- A. Inspections must be from a member of the RMT or a marshal designated by them, with the exception of the tournaments which will provide their own marshals.
- B. Inspections for war fighting will be available at Rapier Marshals’ Point.
Inspections for tournaments will be available at the tournament site.
 1. RMIC may allow fighters to be inspected in their home kingdom camp.
- C. All combatants on the rapier field must have a current fighter authorization from their home kingdom and may be asked to provide proof of it at any time by any marshal.

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1. All combatants must follow their home kingdom's rules for additional/supplementary authorizations for specific weaponry, such as spear.
- D. Fighters must meet the armor requirements of their home kingdom, but not less than the requirements listed in the Society Rapier Handbook. Armor must be inspected once per day of fighting.
- E. Youth Fighters
1. Youth fighters may only be inspected at Marshals' Point by a Youth Marshal, one of the Principal Kingdom KRMs, or the RMIC.
 2. They must have a parent or legal guardian or responsible adult on site at the event and with them at daily inspection to sign paperwork.
 3. Youth fighters must be marked with a yellow diamond on each hand, on their chest, and on the front of their mask.
- F. Refer to the sections below on individual weapons for specifics on inspections of those items.

IV. Weapons and Defensive Objects

- A. Weapons and defensive objects must meet the requirements listed in the Society Rapier Handbook except as noted below:
- B. Weapons are divided into 2 categories: standard and non-standard.
1. Standard weapons are always allowed to be used in tournament and melee combat unless specifically noted otherwise in the description.[For example, a dagger only tournament.] They are: single handed swords, two-handed swords, and daggers.
 2. Non-standard weapons are only allowed to be used in tournament and melee combat if explicitly stated as such in that scenario or tournament description, except as follows:
 - a) Projectile weapons like RBGs, thrown weapons and archery may only be used in melee combat.
 - b) Spears may be used in a tournament without explicitly being allowed. However, if they are not explicitly allowed, they are

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considered a non-standard weapon and an opponent may decline to fight against it without forfeiting the bout. If spears are explicitly allowed in a tournament, then they are considered a standard weapon and cannot be refused without forfeiting the bout.

C. Rapier Blades and Offensive secondaries

1. Must meet the regulations called out in the Atenveldt and Outlands Rapier Marshal's Handbooks except that Light Rapier blades (epees) will not be permitted.
2. Blades and offensive secondaries must be inspected each day of use.
3. Non-standard offensive secondaries, such as a buckler mounted with spear tips, are to be approved by the RMI prior to use.

D. Shields, Bucklers, and Defensive parrying devices

1. Must be inspected at least once during the War. Fighters are encouraged to inspect their secondaries after heavy use.

E. Spears / Pikes / Polearms.

1. These weapons shall meet the rules listed in the Society's Rapier Handbook with the following exception:
 - a) The Heavy Duty Spear head found at Armouricum and the PHA Spear Tip found at Purpleheart Armory are not allowed.
2. These weapons must be inspected each day of combat.
3. The quantity of spears used by either army may be limited by the scenario.
4. All blows from such weapons are to be taken as thrusts only. No edge cuts or tip cuts are allowed.
5. The maximum length of the spear shall be 9ft for both the melee and tournament fields.
6. Spears may be carried in one hand. Fighters may use a defensive secondary only when carrying a spear.
7. Pool cueing is allowed. Full extension thrusting is allowed. Please refer to the glossary for definitions of these terms.

F. Rubber Band Guns (RBGs)

1. The gun itself

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- a) Non-standard RBGs will be considered on a case by case basis with final say belonging to the RMIC. Non-standard includes, but is not limited to, RBGs modified to serve as a dagger, sword, or spear in addition to its RBG function.
 - b) RBGs (and objects that look like RBGs) may not be modified to falsely appear loaded. Menacing with unloaded RBGs is permitted.
 - c) RBGs must be inspected at least once during the War.
 - d) The quantity of RBGs used by either army may be limited by the scenario.
 - e) RBGs may be used as a rigid parry device.
2. RBG ammunition
- a) Ammunition may not be filled with material or otherwise artificially weighted.
 - b) Ammunition needs to be inspected each day of use.
 - c) The quantity of ammunition used by either army may be limited by the scenario.
 - d) Ammunition, once fired, is considered dead in that scenario. It may not be gleaned from the battlefield. Ammunition that has not been fired may be scavenged from “dead” fighters.
 - e) Fighters hit by RBG rounds will treat them as they would any other blow. Fighters may take hands, arms, legs, suffer a stapling attack, and be “killed” as a result of RBG attacks.
 - f) Once discharged, RBG rounds may NOT be dodged, ducked, parried, or blocked. Bullets are considered to pass through bucklers/shields and weapons to strike the body behind. Fighters will treat such hits as though they would have continued and struck the body part in its path. Fighters MAY throw themselves in front of incoming RBG rounds, sacrificing themselves to spare the intended target.
 - g) For our purposes, RBG rounds are considered “dead” after they hit the first surface/target. Hitting a single target (fighter, wall, etc)

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removes all deadly force from a fired round. Fighters subsequently hit by a ricochet have the option to accept the hit if they find it amusing, but are not required to.

3. Thrown Weapons

- a) May be commercially purchased foam weapons specifically for throwing, and modified for SCA rapier combat.
 - (1) Javelins are specifically not allowed.
 - (2) Thrown weapons will be inspected and approved on a case-by-case basis by the RMIC.
 - (3) Fighters wishing to bring thrown weapons of their own construction must have them inspected and approved by the RMIC. It is recommended anyone with questions contact the RMIC early to determine acceptability.
- b) Thrown weapons need to be inspected each day of fighting.
- c) The quantity of thrown weapons used by either army may be limited by the scenario.
- d) Thrown weapons may be used as rigid parrying devices
- e) Thrown weapons may only be used to attack at range; they may not be used to strike an opponent while held in the hands of the wielder. Thrown weapons may be employed within engagement distance by throwing them.
- f) Any mostly unimpeded hit by a thrown weapon is considered a valid blow and the fighter should react appropriately for the area struck. Fighters should not try to determine if the hit was with a blade or haft; ALL such hits are considered injurious.
 - (1) Glancing hits as a result of impeding a thrown weapon or a thrown weapon rebounding are considered non-injurious.
- g) Thrown weapons may be blocked, parried, caught on weapons and defensive devices.
- h) Thrown weapons may be gleaned by either side.

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(1) Thrown weapons may be handed off by dead fighters to living fighters by dropping them to the ground where they die.

- i) Thrown weapons may NOT be caught in a fighter's hands. Such practice will result in the loss of the fighter's hand catching the weapon.

G. Combat Archery

1. The bow itself

- a) Bows will be inspected at the beginning of each day of combat by the RMT.
- b) The quantity of archers used by either army may be limited by the scenario.

2. The arrows/bolts

- a) Arrows and bolts will be inspected at the beginning of each day of combat by the RMT. Between each scenario archers will inspect their own arrows to insure their continued safe use.
- b) The quantity of ammunition used by either army may be limited by the scenario.

3. Combat Archers may not fire at anyone within a minimum range of 10 feet. Arrows will NOT be thrown at fighters. Arrows will NOT be used to stab/thrust at an opponent manually. Refer to section II. I. 6 a) for how to execute a DFB with an arrow.

4. There will be two categories of Combat Archers:

- a) Armed Archers are an individual with a secondary offensive weapon on the field such as a rapier, dagger, etc. Armed Combat Archers may choose to join the fray at any time if they are made ineffective due to range or depletion of their arrows.
- b) Unarmed Archers are an individual with no secondary weapon. Unarmed Archers must call themselves as dead when an armed opponent comes within engagement distance. The opponent need not actually touch or strike the archer.

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5. Ammunition may not be gleaned during the scenario.
 - a) Fighters are to avoid stepping on spent arrows on the ground, but a melee situation may not always allow fighters to notice them.
Archers must understand that some damage may be unavoidable.
 - b) Spent arrows may be moved out of the way to avoid damage.
6. Any mostly unimpeded hit by an arrow should be considered a valid blow and the fighter should react appropriately.
 - a) Glancing hits on secondary targets as a result of impeding an arrow or an arrow rebounding are considered non-injurious.
7. Arrows may be blocked, parried, and caught by the shaft.

V. Glossary

- A. *Cuts*: Tip, Push, and Draw cuts as defined by the Society Rapier Handbook are all valid blows in combat, with the following clarifications:
 1. *Tip Cut*: The blade must travel at least 4 inches on the body to be valid. If the blade is drawn all the way across a limb or the throat and this distance is less than 4", this shall also be considered a valid draw cut.
 2. *Push Cut*: The blade must travel at least 4 inches along the length of the blade to be valid; merely laying the edge of the blade against an opponent is not sufficient to be considered a valid cut. No contact should be made with either the quillions or any other part of the guard during the execution of a push cut.
 3. *Draw Cut*: The blade must travel at least 4 inches along the length of the blade to be valid; merely laying the edge of the blade against an opponent is not sufficient to be considered a valid cut.
- B. *Field of Engagement/Range of Engagement*:
 1. The area around a fighter within which an opponent is considered to be engaged in active combat regardless of whether any blows are exchanged or which direction the combatants are facing. This area is defined as a 360 degree circle with a radius of 10 feet with the center at the head of the fighter.

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2. 180° Engagement is a safety convention that defines the front and rear zones of an opponent for determination of delivering Death from Behind attacks. The division between front and rear is defined by a straight line drawn between the opponent's shoulders. However, if the opponent is part of a line of combatants, the division is defined by the orientation of the local line of combatants with front being determined by the direction of attention of the majority of the line.
- C. *Full Extension Spear Thrust*: A method of spear thrust where a combatant starts throwing a spear thrust with both hands on the weapon, then releases the hand near the blade, allowing the hand near the butt end to continue forward past the body to full extension. This may or may not include a step forward.
 - D. *Glean/Gleaning*: To pick up ammunition for RBGs, archery, or thrown weapons, whether spent or accidentally dropped, from the ground with the intent to reuse it in the same scenario.
 - E. *Notional Terrain/Obstacles*: This refers to battlefield features that represent an actual obstacle or terrain. For example, a line of hay bales may represent a tall castle wall or a line painted on the ground may represent the edge of a cliff. Scenarios shall call out specifically if crossing the line of such terrain kills the fighter.
 - F. *Pool Cueing*: A method of spear thrust where both hands remain on the spear at all times, but the hand nearer the blade slides along the length of the spear towards the hand near the butt end.
 - G. *Running*: to move at a speed faster than a walk, where both feet are off the ground at the same time.
 - H. *Throat Slitting*: To kill an opponent from behind where the weapon is brought around to the front of the opponent and dragged across the throat or face. This involves the attacker's hand moving forward of the vertical plane of the defender's shoulders.
 - I. *Walking*: to move at a regular pace by lifting and setting down each foot in turn, never having both feet off the ground at the same time.