

October, 2023



Lord Baltimore's Challenge (and College) was created in an attempt to achieve several goals: to promote historical rapier and cut & thrust fencing on the East Coast of the United States; to bring together combatants from different aspects of the historical martial arts world who don't usually fight together; to bring several of the best historical fencing teachers in the world to one place for a day full of skilled and varied instruction; to host tournaments that are designed around experienced and skilled judging; to hopefully bring together the best of two large historical martial arts communities in a day filled with tournaments.

We hope that you experience challenging and rewarding fights that both encourage your best and take you out of your comfort zone. We expect that you will learn from and be inspired by the classes you choose to attend. But it is our greatest hope that you will first and foremost have fun and meet new friends.

[Minimum Equipment Safety Requirements](#)

[Solo Rapier and Rapier and Dagger](#)

Mask: The face must be covered by either 12 kilogram mesh (e.g, a standard fencing mask) or perforated metal. Such metal must not have holes larger than 1/8" (3 mm) in diameter, with a minimum offset of 3/16" (5 mm) and shall also meet the SCA definition of rigid material (puncture-resistant material that will not significantly flex, spread apart, or deform under pressure of 12 Kg applied by a standard mask tester, repeatedly to any single point). The mask must be in good condition with no discernible rusting, breaches of the mesh, tongue, or bib. The mask must completely cover the participant's ears and below the jaw line and be neither too large nor small to snugly fit the competitor. Other headgear (i.e. steel helmets) will be allowed pending inspection for the criteria as above.

Back of the head protection: Rigid protection for the back of the head is required for all participants who plan to allow their opponents to throw cuts.

Neck Protection: Trachea protection that protects the throat from a direct thrust is required.

October, 2023



Torso: The torso (the chest, abdomen, groin, and sides up to and including the armpits) must be covered with puncture-resistant material (any fabric or combination of fabrics that will predictably withstand puncture). Historical clothing designed to be worn for fencing is acceptable provided it meets these minimum safety standards. A standard fencing jacket, or other jacket designed specifically for HEMA is acceptable, as long as it also meets these minimum safety standards. (A jacket that is otherwise acceptable will not be failed due to ventilation grommets in the back.) Minimum safety standards for SCA are acceptable and found [HERE](#).

(https://www.sca.org/officers/marshal/docs/rapier/rapier_handbook.pdf)

Gloves: Fencers must wear gloves or gauntlets that cover the hand, fingers, and the portion of the wrist nearest the hand. In addition, where cuts are allowed, the fingers, back of the hand, and wrist must be protected from cuts by a complex hilt, and/or padded fencing gauntlets. (for further clarification, if the complex hilt doesn't protect as far as your wrist, something that is more protective than a normal fencing gauntlet must) It is necessary to point out that padded gauntlets are the minimum when cuts are allowed. Fencers should armor up if they feel uncomfortable with the idea of being hit in the wrist or the off hand by a cut.

Groin Protection: Use of rigid groin protection (cup/box) is mandatory for participants with external testicles.

Elbow/Knee Protection: In fights allowing cuts, use of rigid elbow and knee protection is mandatory. The protection must completely cover the knee and elbow.

Footwear: Fencers must wear some kind of enclosed toe footwear.

Sidesword and Sword and Buckler

In addition to the above, for sidesword/sword and buckler:

Gauntlets: Fencers must have rigid protection over the hand, fingers, and the portion of the wrist nearest the hand to protect against cuts to the hand and wrist. Rigid demi-gauntlets paired with a basket hilt or other fully protective complex hilt, such as a swept hilt or pappenheimer, may be acceptable, depending on the coverage of the hilt. Gauntlets that are used *without the added coverage of a protective hilt or buckler* must have rigid or heavily padded protection on the hands and fingers; unpadded gloves alone are

October, 2023



not sufficient. Examples are: SPES Heavy Gloves, Sparring gloves (Fechtschule Gdansk/Ensifers), Neyman Thokks, St. Marks, or modified lacrosse/hockey gloves with significant rigid exoskeleton. Contact us if you have any questions about the acceptability of your gloves. NOTE: The buckler hand need not have rigid protection, but must be at least padded.

Jacket: For cut and thrust tournaments, jackets must also be padded (at least one layer of batting with two layers of fabric, or the equivalent) or made to protect against percussive cuts. Coaches' fencing jackets or padded reproduction gambesons are examples (SPES AP or Fechtschule Gdansk Jackets, NEYMAN HEMA Jacket, PBT HEMA Jacket, etc).

Forearms and shins: Rigid or the equivalent of 8 oz hardened leather shin and forearm protection is recommended. As examples, lacrosse and hockey protectors that protect ½ way around the arm and leg are acceptable.

[Weapon requirements](#)

[Solo Rapier and Rapier and Dagger](#)

Only rapier and dagger blades intended for fencing will be allowed (Del Tin practice blades, Darkwood, Zen Warrior, Balefire, Alchem, Hanwei, etc...). All blades should be checked for flex and nicks.

Swords: Rapier blades shall be between 36 and 45 inches in length (give or take 1/8 of an inch) from the cross guard (quillons) to the tip. They shall be in good condition with an acceptable amount of flex and upon inspection shall be free of nicks and burrs that would tear fabric or skin.

Daggers: Dagger blades shall be no longer than 18 inches in length, measured from the cross guard (quillons) to the tip and upon inspection shall be free of nicks and burrs that would tear fabric or skin. Flexi daggers are not allowed. Daggers will also have an acceptable amount of flex as judged by the weapons' inspectors at the event.

Tips: Rapier and dagger tips MUST be covered with plastic or rubber blunts (Darkwood and Purpleheart blunts are preferable), or an equivalent cap of leather (minimum equivalent of 6 oz, or "strap leather"), held in place with tape of contrasting color. The last 1/8" of tip must be visible and have no tape on it for

October, 2023



visual inspection that the blade has not blown through. No exceptions! Tips that are bare steel or covered merely in tape will not be cleared for fighting.

Sidesword and Sword and Buckler

Sword Blades: Maximum Blade length allowed is 39 inches for all Cut and Thrust swords (give or take 1/8 of an inch) from the cross guard (quillons) to the tip. The blades shall be trainers designed to simulate cutting swords. For that reason, the blades must be a minimum of 1 inch wide at the ricasso. They shall be in good condition with an acceptable amount of flex and upon inspection shall be free of nicks and burrs that would tear fabric or skin. (NOTE: The blades listed below are known to meet the requirements. Even if, in the original manufacturing process, they were ground to just below the acceptable minimums, they will still be allowed. If you have questions or concerns about the blade you plan to use, please contact us.)

Messers and Backswords: Training Messers are not acceptable for 2023. NOTE: All weapons are considered dual-edged for the purposes of judging. I don't expect judges to be able to discern between the 3-6 inches of a false edge that are sharp on many backswords and the rest of the blade.

Side Swords and Guards: Training Side Swords are acceptable. A simple hand guard is allowed. Ports and Side Rings are allowed. Complex hilts such as swept hilts and basket hilts are also allowed.

- Examples of Arming Swords:
 - Albion I:33
 - Arms and Armor Scholar Sword
- Examples of other acceptable blades/swords:
 - Darkwood Sidesword, Spada, or Broadsword blades
 - Arms and Armor Sidesword Trainer, Meyer Rapier Trainer
 - Albion Marozzo
- Buckler requirements (if applicable):
 - Wooden, Steel, or Nylon Bucklers or Targa are acceptable.
 - Max width is 16 inches across at the widest point.
 - Like blades, upon inspection, bucklers shall be free of nicks and burrs that would tear fabric or skin

October, 2023



Tips: All swords must meet the same tip requirements as rapiers. Namely, all tips MUST be covered with plastic or rubber blunts, or an equivalent cap of leather (minimum equivalent of 6 oz, or “strap leather”), held in place with tape of contrasting color. The last 1/8" of tip must be visible and have no tape on it for visual inspection that the blade has not blown through. No exceptions! Tips that are bare steel or covered merely in tape will not be cleared for fighting.

Pool Rules

General Rules that apply to all pools can be found after the specifics.

Combat Pools

Each pool will need volunteers to:

- Time the bouts (90 seconds continuous)
- Keep track of successes

These will be fought to the best of three exchanges, unless time constraints force a reliance on a single pass. In addition, each bout will consist of one 1.5 minute (90 second) round. The time will not pause, so if three passes were not achieved, the exchanges will end regardless.

Each exchange will be fenced until a fencer scores a single, valid lethal hit, or the time elapses. Participants will decide amongst themselves whether to allow cuts in rapier exchanges. (NOTE: if participants allow cuts, see the requirements for armor, above.)

Participants will agree before the bout on the calibration and targeting. The default targeting is below.

Default Target areas

- Thrust or cut to head: Lethal
- Thrust to body: Lethal
- Cut to arms and legs (true edge and false edge): Non-lethal (Combatants choose whether to lose the limb when it is struck.)
- Thrust to arms and legs: Non-lethal (Combatants choose whether to lose the limb when it is struck.)

October, 2023



- Cut to body (true edge and false edge): Not valid

General Rules for all Tournaments

These are self-call bouts. The ring director/marshal is there to start and stop the fight, watch for safety hazards, and opine on the result of the exchange when requested.

Thrusts: A valid thrust requires controlled pressure in line with the point.

Cuts: A valid cut requires deliberate pressure in line with the edge. Incidental contact with the edge will not be considered valid.

A percussive strike with the edge must be done with sufficient force, simulating the cutting mechanics of an actual sword. Note that this does not mean that the strike should hit hard, but it does mean that the fighter must perform a proper cut to be awarded the touch.

Slicing cuts (push and draw cuts) to the head are valid in those exchanges that allow cuts. An adequate slicing cut must be done with sufficient pressure and blade length with a pushing or pulling of the edge along the target, and will be scored the same as any strike with the edge. Note that incidental contact on the target is not enough to score.

Excessive Force: Fencers who use excessive force will be warned once. If it occurs a second time, that fencer will be removed from the pool.

Stapling: If a fencer covers his or her valid target area with either arm or hand and receives a hit that would have landed on the body or head (thus, "stapling" it to the other target), the hit may be counted as having hit the deeper target. The application of this rule is at the discretion of the ring directors/marshals.

Invalid Targets: A competitor's back and back of the head will not be targets. Any attempt to purposely target these areas will be cause for penalties at the discretion of the ring directors.

Halts: In all fights, the ring director/marshal will stop the bout when there is a safety issue or when the time elapses.

Doubles and Failed Withdrawals (after-blows)

October, 2023



A Double is where both Fencers strike each other within the same action or tempo. In the case of a double, both combatants take a loss.

A Bad or Failed Withdrawal (e.g. an after-blow) is when a fighter lands a successful hit, but fails to defend themselves in the tempo afterward (while recovering). Once a blow is struck, the wounded fighter has one tempo or motion to attempt an **after-blow**. In order to achieve a successful after-blow, it must be done in the time it takes to make one step following the successful hit. An after-blow will be treated as a double (see above). NOTE: Some strikes would almost certainly render an opponent incapable of an after-blow. A thrust to the eye, for instance. *Fencers must discuss with their opponents if they wish to fight with after-blows!*

Special Techniques

Disarms: Disarms are discouraged due to the inclusion of complex hilts in all tournaments. If a disarm occurs, the bout will be halted and the combatants reset.

Running of a Bout

Each bout will be officiated by a ring director/marshal.

The ring director will be responsible for starting and stopping the bout, determining the validity of a hit if asked by one or both combatants, and announcing who scored for each exchange.

The bouts shall end when either opponent wins two exchanges, or the time (90 seconds) runs out.

A fencer shall never attempt to call a hit against their opponent, or argue that an opponent's hit against themselves was invalid. Doing so will result in a loss, as determined by the director/marshal. Multiple attempts will result in removal from the pool.

Penalties and Injuries

Fencers must act in a prudent and reasonable manner at all times in order to avoid injury to themselves, their opponents, tournament staff, and spectators.

October, 2023



Any Fencer who acts in an unsafe or malicious manner may be disqualified from further participation in the pools at the discretion of the ring directors or LBC administrator. Hard hits will not be penalized if the ring director/marshal overseeing the fight feels the excessive hit was the result of the receiving fencer's own action (i.e. lunging into the opponent's attack).

Roles of the Staff

Ring Director/Marshal

The ring director/marshal starts and stops the fight, communicates with the fencers, ensures all participants are ready, controls safety in the ring, interprets the actions when asked, and announces points for the scorekeeper.

Goalkeeper

The Goalkeeper for each bout tracks the successes for the participants, however the participants want to define that.

Timekeeper

Anyone nearby participant can keep track of timing for the bouts.

College Rules V.1 – 10.04.23

The staff of Lord Baltimore's Challenge reserves the right to clarify or change these rules as the event is being planned.