

Kingdom of Gleann Abhann Rapier Combat Rules



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Introduction

The purpose of these rules is to establish a consistent and easily understood convention of rapier combat (period fencing) within the Kingdom of Gleann Abhann that complies with Society-wide standards established and maintained by the Society Rapier Marshal.

Rules are designed to promote safe standards of rapier combat. However, no matter how clear or accurate, rules cannot replace common sense, good judgment and concern for the participants. If a question arises when applying these standards, choose the solution that promotes the greatest degree of safety for all participants.

Rules of Combat

General Information

1. Rapier combat shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules of the Lists of the SCA, Inc., The Corporate Rapier Rules and these rules.
2. All combatants, prior to every combat or practice, shall ensure their equipment and protective gear is safe, in good working order and has been inspected by a member of the Kingdom Marshallate authorized to perform rapier inspections.
3. Participants from out of kingdom shall comply with society standards for protective gear but shall adhere to Gleann Abhann weapons standards
4. Unless otherwise specified by Kingdom Law, the Crown's representative on the field and in all matters dealing with rapier combat shall be the Earl Marshal, then the Kingdom Rapier Marshal, then by delegation members of the Kingdom Rapier Marshallate.

Behavior on the Field

1. All fighters shall obey the commands of the marshals overseeing the field. Fighters who do not obey the commands of the marshals or who otherwise conduct themselves in an unsafe manner will be removed from the field and subject to further disciplinary action.
2. Disagreements with the marshals overseeing the field shall be resolved through the established mechanisms outlined in the Marshallate Procedures of the SCA, Inc.
3. This is a re-creation of combat, and as such its participants may experience heightened levels of aggression and competitiveness. Therefore, each participant shall maintain an awareness of this possibility and control his or her temper and behavior at all times.
4. Deliberately striking an opponent with excessive force or with deliberate intent to injure is strictly forbidden, and shall be cause for revocation of one's privileges to participate.
5. Upon hearing *any* call of "**HOLD**" all combat shall immediately cease. Combatants shall first freeze in place, then check their immediate surroundings

for hazards. Combatants shall then assume a non-threatening posture with their weapons pointing away from opponents and marshals (such as at the ground). In melee situations, a non-threatening posture is defined as resting on one knee with the fighter grasping their weapon at the hilt, the point of the weapon on the ground. **In melee situations, only marshals who are overseeing the field may remain standing when a hold is called.**

6. Conduct obstructive of normal rapier combat, such as consistent ignoring of blows, deliberate abuse of the rules (calling “HOLD” when pressed, etc.), or the like is forbidden.

Use of Weapons and Parrying Devices

1. Successful attacks shall consist of thrusts with the point of the blade and cuts with the edge. A draw cut requires at least six inches of blade length being drawn with firm and continuous pressure in a pulling motion.
 - a. Chopping or hacking blows are never permitted. Fast circular movements (such as moulinets) may be made to place a blade for a cut.
2. Parrying devices may be used to move, deflect or immobilize an opponent’s weapon or parrying device so long as such use does not pose a danger to any combatant.
 - a. Striking an opponent with any part of a weapon or parrying device not approved for that purpose is not allowed.
 - b. When cloaks are used, a “HOLD” will be called should the cloak become entangled about either fighter, or about any weapon in such a manner that the weapon cannot be withdrawn. A “HOLD” is not required if the cloak is merely near the face, deflecting a weapon or loosely draped over or weighing a weapon down.
3. Grappling is forbidden. This includes grasping an opponent or the opponent’s equipment (this does not include grasping the opponent’s blade, which will be addressed later in these rules), punching, tripping, wrestling and or pushing the opponent. This does *not* preclude sweeping moves made with the intention of clearing an opponent’s blade(s) from on guard or the intention of preventing a draw cut. Accidental fighter-to-fighter contact may be expected, however deliberate body-to-body contact is not allowed.
4. Any combatant who is disarmed or who drops a weapon must be able to immediately draw another weapon or (in the case of a melee) acquire a weapon from an ally or that combatant must immediately yield. **No hold will be called.** His or her opponent may exploit this earned advantage with no loss of honor or may elect to allow the fighter to retrieve a weapon, at their discretion.
5. Parries may be performed with weapons, parrying devices, the gloved hand or any part of the body. Though the gloved hand may be used to parry, it may not be used to push, grasp or strike an opponent.
6. A combatant may grasp an opponent’s blade as a defensive measure. Any movement of the blade within the grip will be counted as a loss of the grasping combatant’s hand. No grappling or wrestling over the weapon is allowed. The

grip may only be maintained long enough to move an opponent's blade off line or to deliver an immediate counter attack.

Acknowledgement of Blows

- 1.** Unless otherwise specifically defined, such as “armor as worn” (metal breastplate, steel gorget, helm, period style mail glove, etc.) all fighters are presumed to be wearing common civil attire of the period, not armor.
- 2.** The entire body, front and back, is considered legal target area. “Death from behind” as in melees is not allowed unless specified in a given scenario. In one-on-one combat an opponent who exposes his or her back (as in a spin or through any other maneuver) may receive a legal blow to their back.
- 3.** Blows struck will be considered as though they had been struck with a real rapier with an extremely sharp point and edge. Any blow that would have penetrated the skin (you feel *any* pressure behind the point) shall be considered a good blow. Any blow that strikes a mask, gorget or helm shall be considered as though it had struck flesh. Fighters shall keep in mind that a “live” tip would not glance or skip off without having caused damage.
- 4.** A good thrust or draw cut to the head, neck, torso, groin, a hand's breadth to the inside of the thigh from the groin, or a hand's breadth to the inside of the arm from the armpit shall be considered incapacitating or a “kill”.
- 5.** A good blow to the arm shall disable that arm for all purposes of attack and defense. A good blow to the hand shall disable that hand. The arm may still be used, with the hand held in a loose fist. A second blow to that hand or to that arm shall disable that arm.
- 6.** A good blow to the foot or leg will disable that entire leg. The struck opponent must fight from either a sitting or kneeling position. No forward or upward movement will be allowed. Circling an opponent who has lost their leg(s) is not permitted; the standing fighter must stay within their opponent's forward 120-degree arc.
- 7.** If an effective blow is thrown before or at the same moment as an event that would stop a fight (a “HOLD” being called, the fighter being “killed” himself, etc.) the blow shall still count. A blow thrown after such an event shall not count.

Weapons and Equipment

General

- 1.** All equipment must be in good repair so as to resist tears, punctures, breakage or otherwise stand up to the stresses of combat.

2. Sharp points, edges or corners will not be allowed on any equipment.
3. Blades shall not have nicks, pits or any jagged edge that might snag on an opponent's armor or equipment or weaken the blade.
4. Any equipment that has a likelihood of breaking a blade or damaging equipment, either through design or repeated mishap, shall not be allowed.

Weapons

1. Acceptable weapons are rapiers, daggers and RGB's (rubber band guns). See the attached index for a complete list of legal blades.
2. A weapon with a blade length greater than 40 inches may only be used with an opponent's consent. Anyone may deny an opponent the use of such a blade without loss of honor or penalty.
3. Commercial suppliers must manufacture all blades. Artisans desiring an exception must apply to the Deputy Society Marshal for Rapier Combat and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. Blades will not be altered by grinding, cutting, heating, hammering or other actions that could significantly alter their temper, flexibility or durability. Normal combat stresses and blade care do not violate this rule. Exceptions are:
 - a. The tang of the weapon may be altered.
 - b. Rapier blades may be shortened so long as such an alteration does not make them too stiff.
5. All blades must be reasonably flexible. Rigid steel "parrying-only" daggers such as those made from cut down blades will not be allowed.
6. All blade tips must be capped with rubber, plastic or leather.
 - a. Tips will have a flat striking surface of at least 3/8 inch (9mm).
 - b. Caps must be firmly taped or glued in place.
 - c. The cap must be of a color that contrasts with the blade in such a manner that its absence will be readily apparent. If tape is used its color must contrast with both blade and cap.
7. Any blade with kinks, sharp bends or cracks shall not be used. Steel blades that develop such defects cannot be repaired and must be retired. Flexi-dagger blades with "S" curves may not be used unless they can be properly re-curved.
8. Weapons may be equipped with a cup hilt, swept hilt or quillions and knucklebow. Quillions may not extend beyond 6 inches from each side of the blade and must be at least 1/4 inch in diameter.
9. Orthopedic or "pistol" grips will not be allowed unless a given fighter has written permission from the Kingdom Rapier Marshal for medical reasons. Such approval will only be granted with supporting documentation from an individual's healthcare provider and must be presented upon demand by any marshal.

Parrying Devices

1. Standard parrying devices shall consist of:

- a. Scabbards made of lightweight break resistant material such as ABS type PVC or similar material. The end facing an opponent shall be capped or plugged to prevent blade trapping.
 - b. Bucklers may be any of any size. Those greater than 16 inches in diameter (200 square inches) require an opponent's consent.
 - c. Cloaks may be of any size or shape. Any weights or stiffening must be designed in such a manner as to pose no risk to any combatant. Cloaks may be wrapped about the user's arm to protect from **draw cuts only** on the arm covered by the cloak.
2. Use of non-standard parrying devices (hats, mugs, mail glove, etc.) shall be at the discretion of the marshal(s) overseeing the field and with the consent of one's opponent.
 3. Items that would predictably cause entanglement of an opponent or their weapon, either by design or repeated mishap are prohibited.

Projectile Weapons

1. Throwing weapons and RBG's may be used in melee combat only.
2. The use of such weapons will only be allowed in situations where spectators may be separated from the fighting field by at least the range of any projectile weapon being used.
3. RBG's may be constructed of any material that is appropriate to the weapon being simulated. As with all other equipment, no sharp points or edges will be allowed.
4. An RBG may be used as a rigid parrying device during combat. An accidental discharge has the potential to hit a combatant and in such a case should be considered as a valid hit. Note that one may be wounded or "killed" in such a manner by one's own weapon or by an ally's weapon.
5. Damage from a projectile weapon should be considered in the same manner as a thrust.

Protective Gear

Definitions, in order of increasing resistance:

1. Abrasion resistant material – material that will withstand normal combat stresses, such as being snagged by an unbroken blade, without tearing. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. Broadcloth
 - b. A single layer of heavy poplin cloth (35% cotton, 65% polyester)
 - c. "Trigger" cloth
 - d. Sweat pants
 - e. Opaque cotton
 - f. Poly-cotton or lycra/spandex tights

2. Puncture resistant – any fabric or combination of fabrics that will predictably withstand puncture. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. Four ounce leather (2mm)
 - b. Four layers of heavy poplin cloth
 - c. Ballistic nylon rated to at least 550 Newtons
 Kevlar is **not** an acceptable material.
3. 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 applied repeatedly to any single point. Examples include:
 - a. 22 gauge stainless steel
 - b. 20 gauge mild steel
 - c. 16 gauge aluminum, copper or brass
 - d. One layer of heavy leather (8 ounce or 4mm)

The following are Kingdom minimums for protective gear. Individuals desiring additional protection are free to pursue such. It is advised that individuals weigh the potential benefits of more rigorous protection against the risks of heat illness, exhaustion and stroke due to heavier and more confining clothing. An individual must also retain the ability to accurately acknowledge blows, despite any additional protection worn.

Head and Neck

1. The front and top of the head must be covered by rigid material to below the jaw line and behind the ears. Standard 12 Kg fencing masks meet this requirement. Fencing helms built to this standard are also acceptable.
2. The face must be covered by either 12 Kg mesh or perforated metal. Such metal must not have holes larger than 1/8 inch in diameter, with a minimum offset of 3/16 inch and shall also meet the definition of rigid material.
3. Masks and helms must be secured to the fighter so that they may not easily be dislodged during combat. The combination of a snug fit and the spring-tongue in a conventional fencing mask is **not** sufficient to secure the mask.
4. Both modern fencing masks and rapier helms, when inspected, shall comply with the rigid material standard provisions on facial coverage and shall show no evidence of impending failure (e.g., rust which weakens the metal involved, dents or other defects which spread open the mesh, broken weld points, etc.). If concern exists about the mesh of a modern fencing mask it should be subjected to a test with a standard 12 Kg mask punch by a qualified marshal.
5. The rest of the head and neck must be covered by at least puncture resistant material, as in a hood or arming cap.
6. The throat and cervical vertebrae shall be covered by a gorget constructed of rigid material backed by either puncture resistant material or ¼ inch of open-cell foam.

Torso and Other Killing Zones

1. The entire torso (chest, back, abdomen, groin, and sides up to and including the armpits) must be covered with puncture resistant material.
 - a. Acceptable minimum armpit coverage is provided by a triangle of puncture resistant material extending from the armpit seam, covering the lower half of the sleeve at the seam and extending down the inner/under arm one third the distance to the fighter's elbow.
2. Male fighters shall wear rigid groin protection. Any ventilation holes (as in a cup) large enough to admit a broken blade must be covered from the outside by at least puncture resistant material.
3. Female fighters shall wear puncture resistant groin protection.

Arms and Legs

1. Hands shall be protected by gloves made of abrasion resistant material that overlap any sleeve openings by at least 2 inches, regardless of stance or movement.
2. Feet shall be protected by boots, shoes or sandals made of at least abrasion resistant material. No blatantly modern footwear will be allowed.
3. Abrasion resistant material shall be required on the arms and legs and anywhere else not specifically addressed in these rules.

General

1. **There shall be no bare skin showing at any time.**
2. There shall be no gaps between separate articles of clothing, regardless of stance or movement.

Rules of the List

1. All fighters are expected to be aware of and familiar with "The Rules of the Lists of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc."
2. At least one warranted marshal is required to oversee the field for any tournament, duel or melee and at least one RmiT for any other combat (i.e., practice).
3. Fighters may only engage when the overseeing marshal has received *verbal* acknowledgment of readiness from all combatants and has then given the command to begin.
4. Marshals may use the term "edge of the world" or "matte" to warn combatants when they are approaching the edge of the field. **No "HOLD" has been called in such an instance.** Fighters are to cease movement towards the edge of the field, however a fighter need not give up an earned advantage unless ordered by the marshal to "center up".

Melee Considerations

1. In melee scenarios fighters are engaged with all opponents immediately upon the command to lay on.
2. Fighters may strike any opponent with any legal blow so long as they are within that opponent's front 180-degree arc, and that opponent has a reasonable ability to be aware of their presence (i.e. eye contact has been made or a loud, clear verbal challenge has been issued). A fighter may not strike an opponent from behind.
3. In some scenarios, "Death from behind" may be allowed. To properly perform a death from behind, a fighter shall lay his or her weapon, to a third of the blade, upon the opponent's shoulder and in a clear voice call "Dead, m'lord" (or some other short, courteous notification). Reaching around the opponent's neck shall not be allowed in any circumstance. The opponent shall be considered "dead" from the moment the blade was laid on, and may not spin, duck, dodge away or otherwise attempt to engage their killer in any manner, including 'death throes'. A fighter who deliberately ignores an attacker behind them, or who maneuvers to keep their back to an opponent to avoid an engagement may be considered to be abusing the rules.
4. There may be special scenarios in which marshals may find it necessary to apply additional restrictions, at their discretion.
5. In some scenarios marshals may allow special tactics, such as assisting a legged comrade to move. In no case shall such tactics be allowed if they present a valid safety concern.
6. When "dead" combatants shall raise their weapon(s) above their head and immediately leave the field, except in scenarios where the "dead" are to remain where they have fallen.

Authorizations

There shall exist the following authorizations:

- Rapier – Allows use of a single rapier, in either hand.
- Dagger – Allows use of a single dagger or combination of sword and dagger.
- Rigid Parry – Allows use of buckler, scabbard, cane, etc.
- Soft Parry – Allows use of a cloak, hat, puppet, etc.
- Case – Allows use of two weapons of similar length

A fighter may use any combination of weapons for which he or she holds authorizations.

To Authorize, one must:

- Be at least 16 years of age.
- Read and become familiar with these rules.
- Have experienced some training in rapier combat.

- Present a current membership card for the SCA or must have a signed waiver on file with his or her Group Rapier Marshal and present a copy to the Kingdom Authorization Deputy Rapier Marshal.
- Successfully complete an Authorization Exam performed by a warranted Gleann Abhann Rapier Authorization Marshal.

Appendix I: Approved Blades

The following is a list of blades approved for use within the Kingdom of Gleann Abhann. No other blades may be used, by any individual for any combat purpose unless done so by explicit request from the Kingdom Rapier Marshal to a specific individual. *

Rapiers

- Del Tin practice rapiers
- Del Tin bated rapiers
- Zamarano
- Scotty
- Alchem SafeFlex rapiers **
- Angus Trim
- Tripplette rapier blade (T03)
- Tripplette schlager blade (T01)
- Hanwei
- Darkwood

Daggers

- Flexidaggers
- SafeFlex daggers
- Scotty daggers
- Triplette daggers (T05)
- Angus Trim Daggers
- Darkwood Wideflex
- Darkwood Diamondflex

Fiberglass and rattan blades are not allowed for any purpose. Sidesword weapons (and techniques) are not currently allowed within Gleann Abhann.

* An exception to this list shall exist for the purposes of Gulf Wars, for which specific conventions, rules and guidelines will be published by the Gulf Wars staff.

** The curved blades from Alchem have *not* been approved at this time. They are currently the subject of a Society experiment.