

Sword Fighter - Sparring Rules and Etiquette.

Sword Fighter WMA is dedicated to the study, interpretation and reconstruction of the lost medieval art of fencing. All studies are based upon teachings laid down in the various Fecht Buch (fencing manuals) of the fencing masters of the medieval and renaissance periods. These lost Arts of Defence are not about slogging it out with your opponent but rely upon the intelligent use of physics and body mechanics to best your opponent. It is a graceful, nimble and fast moving art form. Sword Fighter aims to promote this ancient form of fencing which is skilful, artful and makes use of martial technique.

Sword Fighter members and visitors are required to behave in a courteous and respectful manner to the instructors and other members of the club at all times.

Sword Fighter members and visitors are required to act with restraint and self-discipline in all drills, sparring and club activities. Personal safety and the safety of others is the foremost concern and responsibility of each club member.

The Rules of Engagement - Sparring.

Fighters will engage in sparring until one has been contacted (struck, cut or stabbed) anywhere on their body. Where upon they will cease sparring and say aloud to their opponent - "Good" and indicate to their opponent which part of their body has been contacted. Fighters will then retire to their starting position before re- engaging in sparring.

No Second Prize - It is unacceptable for a member to at any time strike their opponent after they themselves have already been struck. The fighter must show restraint call "Good" and step back. Hitting your opponent when they have already closed "distance" and triumphed is considered to be taking unfair advantage and as such very unsportsmanlike. Any members behaving in this way will be given a warning and will be asked to "sit out" the sparring session by the Instructors or Marshall in charge.

The Sword is not an Iron Bar - Swords shall not be used to bash against weapons, shields, armour or bodies. Swords should be used in the correct manner as demonstrated by the Instructors in the drill training sessions.

The sword is a cutting/slicing and stabbing weapon it is not used to bludgeon your opponent. Bashing also includes "blocking" with extreme force. This kind of behaviour risks damage to weapons and people.

Extreme Force - Hitting your opponent with unnecessary force is unacceptable. Fighters

should at all times control the amount of force with which their strikes and stabs are made. Fighters must always endeavor to "pull" their strikes and stabs before they reach their opponent with maximum impact. While it is not always possible to achieve this due to the swirling melee that is sword fighting, a fighter must always endeavor to do so. Fighters who repeatedly strike with extreme force shall be given a "Warning" by the Instructor/Marshall and may be asked to "Sit Out" the sparring session.

We Are Not Pugilists - Punching and kicking are not to be used at any time in Sword Fighter sparring sessions. Any fighter who punches or kicks will be asked to "sit out" the sparring session by the Instructor/ Marshall.

Percussive Hits - Strikes using the Buckler are disallowed. Any fighter who uses the buckler to "punch" or "strike" the opponent will be given a warning by the Instructor/Marshall and asked to "sit out" the remainder of the sparring session.

Pommeled to Death - Use of the Pommel is permitted, but...must be used with extreme control. When using the pommel it need only be tapped lightly upon the mesh part of the fencing mask. This will be sufficient to indicate "intent". Your opponent must accept this as a defeat, break and retire to their starting position. Any fighter using the pommel with extreme force will be given a warning by the Instructor/ Marshall and may be asked to sit out the session.

Grappling - Is permissible and may continue until one fighter has a clear advantage and has "dominated" their opponent. The Instructor/Marshall may call a halt to any grappling if they deem one fighter to have gained the advantage or if they deem that the fight has become unsafe. Throws and trips are permissible in the grapple but fighters must endeavour to do this without risking injury to their opponent.

You'll 'Ave Someone's Eye Out - Fencing masks must be worn at all times when on the training floor unless otherwise instructed by the Instructor/Marshall. Periodically, the Instructor/ Marshall will call "Helm Off" and fighters will remove their masks/helms. When helms are off weapons will be sheathed, put down or held in such a manner so as not to injure other fighters. Continued sparring or swinging of weapons during this time is not allowed.

Sparring Bouts - Sparring up to 3/4 speed is permissible whilst there is an instructor on the floor. Fighters must adhere to all rules and regulations. Self-discipline and restraint is mandatory. Broken tempers and aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated. Instructors/Marshalls will issue warnings and ask any fighter not abiding by the rules to sit out the session.

Full speed sparring will only be conducted under the guidance of a Marshall.

The Marshall may be assisted by 1 or 2 Deputies.

The Marshall will explain the requirements for the Bout. All fighters must obey the

Marshall's commands and respect his/her decisions.

Fight! - Upon taking the floor, fighters are required to take their corner.

When the Marshall is ready he will ask the fighters to "Salute", where upon they will salute their opponent. The Marshall will then call "En Garde", where upon fighters will take their guard. The Marshall will then call "Fence" where upon the fight shall commence.

When a fighter strikes a blow, cut or stab the Marshall will call "Hold" where upon fighters will cease any actions immediately. The Marshall will then award points to the winner of that engagement. The Marshall may confer with the Deputies as to the awarding of points.

Fighters will then move back to their start positions and await the Marshall's instruction before the next engagement.

Bouts will last for a predetermined length of time.

Hold! - Whenever the command "Hold" is heard fighters must cease all actions immediately.

A "Hold" may be called by any person when a potentially dangerous situation arises. The Marshall will check to see what the threat is and deal with it accordingly. When the situation has been rectified the bout may recommence under the command of the Marshall.

Point Scoring - Scoring criteria and point values will be determined before sparring commences.

Double Kill - Simultaneous strikes often occur during a bout. In the event of a "Double Kill" neither fighter will be awarded points. Fighters are encouraged to improve their defensive skills to avoid being struck. The objective is to win the fight not die trying.

Harness Fechten - You are not a Tank. Fighting in Armour should not be a Slug Fest. The various Fecht Buch indicate that fighting in armour once again relies on physics and body mechanics to defeat your opponent. They do not instruct us to beat our opponent to death! For the interim and until we begin training in this field proper, rules for Fighting in Harness will be:

Strikes with the sword will be no harder than against an unarmoured opponent.

Areas covered with plate armour are a non-scoring target for swords.

Fighters will endeavor to strike, cut or stab to unarmoured target areas.

Halfsword techniques and grappling from this guard are encouraged.

Fluidity of movement and nimbleness will be rewarded. Standing in place either giving or taking a beating is to be discouraged.

Future training will include weapons such as the Pole Axe which will alter the rules to a degree.

The Last Word - All club members and visitors are required to adhere to all of the above Sword Fighter WMA Club Rules. Fighters and visitors who repeatedly have to be "warned" by the Instructors and/or Marshalls of Sword Fighter WMA will be asked to leave the club and will no longer retain their membership status. If the Instructors of Sword Fighter WMA

perceive any person to be verbally or physically abusive, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, menacing or threatening in any way to club members or visitors they will be asked to leave the premises and the Police will be contacted.

I _____
agree to and will comply with all of the above mentioned rules of Sword Fighter WMA.

Signed _____ Date _____