

Sword Fighter Mandatory Gear

DO NOT BUY ANYTHING THAT IS NOT LISTED HERE UNLESS YOU HAVE CLEARED IT WITH PAUL OR ALEX. NO EXEMPTIONS.

WE DO NOT WEAR STEEL WE DO NOT WEAR LEATHER – THIS IS HEMA NOT LARP OR THE SCA.

We have made this list to help you organise your future gear purchases and save you from wasting money on sub-quality equipment. In our experience, purchasing bad gear has been the most costly aspect of our martial art. The brands recommended here are the most effective pieces of equipment for modern HEMA. Although the brands listed as ‘best and recommended’ may at times be more expensive, they are always of a superior quality and better value for money. Following this list should minimise or eliminate the need for upgrading purchases and prevent bad gear purchases. It is important you stick to this list, we have uniform requirements for our gear just like any other sport. Non-sanctioned gear will not be permitted for use in the club, no exceptions.

Gear from this list is available for resale within the club. Sword Fighter has a ‘buy-back’ scheme for redundant equipment. Also other members are always looking for second-hand equipment. Resale of non-approved items is strictly prohibited.

For beginners in order of priority

Item	Best and recommended	Secondary choice (ask us before you buy)
*Fencing mask	WMA Shop Mask	Medieval Fight Club
*Gloves	Red Dragon (cheap shipping)	Red Dragon
*Gorget	Steel Gorget	
*Buckler	Knight Shop or Medieval Fight Club or Esford	Make your own
Nylon Sword (rawlings)	Medieval fight club	HEMA shop

Fencing mask: we would recommend you start off with the WMA Shop Mask. The protection in this model is unrivalled at this price range. Alternatives may be \$10 cheaper but there is a significant quality reduction. When stocks are unavailable try the Medieval Fight Club option.

Gloves: we would recommend you buy the red dragon gloves. They are a little bit more expensive than other variants but they are by far the best for the price. We would not recommend you purchase other cheaper variations (such as lacrosse gloves) as you will simply have to upgrade in the near future. Check both links for a quote and see which is cheapest including shipping. Red Dragons are great for nylon and low speed steel training, they are a valuable addition to your kit; even if you quickly move on to steel training you will often find use for them. Steel gauntlets are prohibited for safety reasons.

Gorget: You need to protect your throat, get a steel one and it will last you years. For the best protection get a steel gorget from MFC. 'soft' gorgets are a safety risk – don't buy them.

Buckler: Sword and buckler is part of our syllabus so you will need a buckler as quickly as possible (after mask, gloves and gorget). You can buy one from the above suppliers or make your own. Make sure you get a 12 inch one. Check all the suppliers for the cheapest deal but beware ones under a kilogram, they may not last long.

Nylon Sword: we use the Rawlings Nylon or Synthetic wasters, you will need a longsword and a single hand sword (not a messer or cutless). Shop around and find the cheapest option, make sure you include shipping in this cost. We have spare swords for loan – we would prefer you to get a mask, gloves, gorget and buckler first. Worry about swords when you have these items.

Chest: once you start sparring more we also require to you get some form of chest protection. Most new fencers will purchase some form of motocross roost. Equally you could move straight to a fencing jacket and save yourself the future upgrade (see below).

More experienced fencers (buying for steel sword training)

this equipment can be expensive but we will not settle for inappropriate equipment. It is up to you how quickly you equip yourself however. If money is an issue, take your time and save up for the correct gear, there is no rush.

Item	Best and recommended	Secondary choice (ask us before you buy)
Knees and shins	HEMA Shop or SPES	WMA Shop (no shin protection)
Elbows	SPES (forearm and elbow)	WMA Shop
Fencing Jacket	Leon Paul or SPES	SPES or better SPES
Back of Head	Leon Paul or SPES	
Fencing Pants	LEON Paul or SPES	Absolute force
Gloves for Steel	The Sparring Glove or Koning Glove	SPES

Knees and shins: for a very usable and cheap set of lower leg protectors try the 'red dragon'. They work quite well and cover the whole knee. Likewise SPES make a pair of shin and knees that look good but cost a little more. If you are on a budget the WMA Shop knees will do the trick but they lack shin protectors.

Elbows: SPES make a great lower arm set that will protect your whole lower arm from hard hits. If you are on a budget the WMA shop elbows will do but they lack lower arm protection, they are not as well made and they do not look as professional.

Fencing Jacket: Leon Paul make the best fencing jacket on the market. It is extremely well padded and looks professional, it is well worth the additional money. You will also save on shipping costs as it is Australian. There can be issues with sizing however. If you cannot get

the Leon Paul go with SPES. SPES make a range of fencing jackets of varying price points, all are fantastic but the more you pay the better the protection. A good fencing jacket will last you years and is well worth saving up for. DO NOT buy gambesons and medieval kit, they don't suit what we do and are generally a huge inconvenience for you as the wearer. Consult with us before going off this list, you may be saving a little bit of money but you will be paying for it with a bad experience.

Back of head: there are a few options for back of head however the Leon Paul is the best made and the most stylish. It provides excellent cover and will help prevent serious head injuries. There are other brands of interest such as AF and WMA shop however these are not of the same quality.

Fencing pants: fencing pants/breeches come with padding to protect the upper thighs from hard cuts. The best on the market is the Leon Paul, with thick padding, good material, very durable and stylishly cut. However there can be sizing issues with these. If sizing is an issue you can have SPES make you a tailored pair for only a little bit more money, the SPES pants are of excellent quality however the padding is not as good. This perhaps could be fixed by simply cutting your own padding inlays out of a thicker material. Finally the AF fencing pants provide a little bit of protection at a cheap price, while still looking good. Shipping can be expensive with the AF so be sure to group order to cut down on costs. Once again, shipping with Leon Paul is very cheap which makes the brand very competitive.

Gloves for Steel: hands have been broken in the past. Red Dragon Gloves are NOT acceptable for steel longsword sparring. Good gloves may be expensive but they are worth it for the safety of your hands. Currently the best in hand protection comes from a company called 'The Sparring Glove'. It is a crab claw design that will protect your hand better than anything else on the market. It also has a long cuff which is excellent for protecting your forearm. Movement can be restrictive but most fencers adapt and are not worried by this. Alternatively the SPES heavy gauntlet is also good. It is very protective of the fingers and hands. It is quite bulky however and this can be restrictive. Alternately you may seek to get the new Koning Gloves, we cannot recommend them as we have not tested them at this point. We have pairs on order currently, they are assumed to be good but purchase at your own risk.

Full Set

Item	Best and recommended	Secondary choice (ask us before you buy)
Full set	Leon Paul	nil

Buying a full set would be an excellent way to save hundreds of dollars. This Leon Paul set comes with all of the best branded gear and would have you ready for the hardest of tournaments almost immediately. If tournament sparring is the way you want to go, perhaps you should just go for this deal straight away. It is very unlikely you will have to upgrade this equipment for many years.