

Appendix A – Rules of Engagement

Safety regulations and Rules of Conduct for Weapons' Demonstrations and the Practice of European Martial Arts

These rules are intended to outline basic parameters for conducting fencing and demonstrating European martial arts in a historical manner. It is not the intent of St. Michael's Salle d'Armes to recreate actual combat. It is impossible to replicate historically authentic personal combat without resorting to actual death or dismemberment.

It is the intent of this regulatory system to insure that those who wish to practice the historical forms of European martial arts can do so in an honorable and reasonably realistic fashion that stresses safety.

It is impossible for any set of rules to guarantee safety or freedom from injury. Participants arm, equip and clothe themselves, and practice European martial arts at their own risk. St. Michael's Salle d'Armes, its officers and members, does not take responsibility for those who may be involved in an incident.

It is, however, the responsibility of all members of St. Michael's Salle d'Armes to be vigilant in maintaining the safety of fellow members, guests, and patrons.

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

All rules listed herein are to be enforced without modification during official St. Michael's guild events. All weapons demonstrations shall be in an area that is roped off from patrons and appropriately marshaled. Exceptions *may* be made when a theatrical demonstration is planned with appropriate boundary guards (members with poles or equivalent) to hold back patrons and other non-participants from harm.

Changes to the rules may only be made by the Board of St. Michael's before commencement of any guild event.

The Rules of Conduct as listed elsewhere in the Bylaws will be posted by the event Site Coordinator for all official St. Michael's guild events. A copy of these Rules of Combat shall also be available via the Site Coordinator and/or Marshal at all guild events. It is the responsibility of the participants to have knowledge of and adhere to all of these rules. **Participants fence at their own risk.**

Participants (whether member or guest) must sign a waiver acknowledging acceptance of the Rules of Conduct and Rules of Safety before participation in any martial demonstration or weapons play. Waivers signed by guild members will be valid for the annual season; those signed by guests will be valid for the event only.

Anyone deemed under the influence of mind-altering substances (e.g., alcohol, prescription or other drugs, etc.) by the Marshal is not permitted to participate in any martial demonstrations or free-fencing.

The ruling of the designated Marshal for an event in regard to appropriateness of weapons and equipment and behavior is final.

If a member discovers or witnesses a behavior or situation that is potentially dangerous or in violation of the above regulations, he or she must bring this to the attention of the Marshal immediately.

B. WEAPON & EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS FOR CONTACT

Permitted weapons forms are: single rapier, rapier & dagger, rapier & cloak, rapier and buckler, case of rapiers, single small sword, small sword & dagger and small sword & cloak, long sword, half –sword and side-sword with or without any of the aforementioned side weapons. Any other combination not specifically mentioned in the list of permitted weapons forms are not permitted at this time *or subject to review of the Marshal*.

All weapons & equipment must be inspected prior to use within the guild.

1. General Weapon Specifications

- a. Rapiers, small swords, long swords, side swords, daggers and bucklers must be constructed in as historically accurate a manner as possible within the realm of safety.
- b. The hilts of weapons must be constructed without any type of eccentricity with regard to the quillons, knuckle bow, or ricasso, and without anachronism, such as offset guards.
- c. The blade must not be mounted obliquely with respect to the quillons. Moreover, the blade must be in good condition, free of rust and burrs, and may have only a single, gradual curve. Blades may be neither too stiff (rigid) nor overly flexible (whippy), subject to the discretion of the marshal.
- d. No “live steel” (sharp edged and/or pointed blades) shall be allowed for free play/contact demonstrations. Live steel may only be used for illustration and non-contact demonstration. Live steel shall never be aimed or swung at any person or living being.
 - i. The point of rapier, small sword and dagger blades must be covered with a winding of waxed thread covered with adhesive tape and then covered with a leather patch or rubber coating. Rubber or plastic buttons, or their equivalent (such as rubber "archery blunts"), are acceptable, but must be secured to the blade with adhesive tape. The adhesive tape should be a different color from the blade to help identify loss of a blunt quickly.
 - ii. Side sword and long sword blade points must be rounded to the circumference of a dime, and edges should be as thick as a quarter.

2. Permitted weapons* include:

- a. Rapier: These must be of the cup, shell, or swept-hilt variety and mounted with blades that are either double-wide epee (also sold as "musketeer" blades), Del Tin Practice Rapier blades, or practice schlaeger blades (either oval or diamond in cross-section). Blades must be between 35 and 45 inches in length. The blades must be flexible.
- b. Small sword: Hilts must be of the French or Italian type. The guard of the weapon can be no wider than 4.5 inches and the quillons must not protrude more than one inch beyond the circumference of the guard. Blades must be standard epee, double-wide epee, or schlaeger blades, with a minimum length of 29 inches and a maximum length of 35 inches. Blades must be flexible.
- c. Side sword and Long sword: This includes mortuary swords, broad swords and back swords. Hilts must be historically accurate as described by Oakeshott. Blades must be dulled ("rebated") to the thickness of a quarter on the edges. The points must be rounded to the circumference of a dime. Quality of the blades will be taken into consideration.
- d. Dagger: Daggers shall have hilts of either the ring, cross, or shell variety, and must have quillons. Blades must be of the flexible fencing dagger type (the "flexi-dagger," "safety-flex", or similar type). Daggers made from cut-down epee or foil blades, and any trick blades specifically designed to catch or break an opponent's blade are all specifically prohibited.
- e. Cloaks: Cloaks may be of any stout material which will not snag on an opponents blade. Cloaks cannot be weighted on the edge, nor may they in any way present a danger to the fencer. Cloaks that are tattered, have holes, or are in a state of disrepair may not be used.
- f. Bucklers/Shields: Bucklers or shields must be constructed **in a historically accurate manner within the realm of safety**. There shall be no sharp edges or protuberances designed to catch or trap a blade. Such pieces may be in the Marozzo style, or target style.
- g. Single Stick: Singlestick weapons shall consist of a wooden "blade" (preferably ash) of a length between 29" and 33" excluding the hilt/grip. Sticks shall be round in section, and of natural form, and shall not exceed 1" (one inch) in diameter. They must be free of splinters. Hilts shall be made of wicker, reed or leather, with a sturdy construction. They must provide adequate protection to the hand and fit in such a way as to allow freedom of movement to the fingers, hand and wrist.
- h. Wooden Swords: Wooden swords (or "wasters") shall consist of a wooden blade of materials not prone to splintering/shattering easily, for example, ash, hickory or oak. The edges and points shall be rounded. Hilts must have quillons and/or knucklebow, and they must be of sturdy construction. Japanese style shinai are acceptable if they are in good condition and if they have been modified to include hand protection (quillons).

* Reference: Oakeshott, Ewart, *Records of the Medieval Sword*, Boydell Press, 1991.

iii. Clothing and Protective Equipment

- a. Masks:
 - i. Three-weapon fencing masks which are FIE* rated and will withstand a 12 Kg Punch test with thick, sewn-in bibs are required for fencing. These masks may have leather or fabric attached over the back to cover the strap.
 - ii. A historical helm with a tight grate/perforated plate protecting the eyes/face may be used in place of a standard mask but must pass both inspection by the marshal and a punch test. The face must be covered by either 12 kilogram mesh (as in the standard FIE rated 3 weapons mask described above) or perforated metal (18 gauge or better). 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 definition of rigid material.
 - iii. Additional protection for the throat, such as a gorget made of steel or leather (no less than 4 oz) is required, and must be sufficiently padded to provide impact protection.
- b. Garb: Fencing garb must be made of strong material, preferably of heavily padded cotton duck, wool or canvas. Protective garb must be of a strong, tight weave, non-stretch material. Thigh high boots are recommended if one is wearing short pants. No bare flesh may be exposed. Breast protectors are required for women and highly recommended for men. Groin protection is required for men. If one prefers, a standard fencing jacket can be worn under garb. For full-contact heavy weapons, the additional use of plastrons or padded jack over the doublet are recommended, as are elbow protectors, padded sleeves, padded leg coverings, kneepads, shin guards, etc. Breast protectors are required for women, and rigid groin cups are required for men. These can all be made in a historical fashion or be worn under period garb.
- c. Gloves: Gloves for both hands are required. The cuffs of the gloves must go over and cover the sleeves by at least three (3) inches, and construction must be of sturdy leather or equivalent. Gauntlets may be used over the required gloves. They shall not have any "fantasy" adornments or sharp/pointed edges. Elbow protection of a historically accurate appearance can be used in addition to the required gloves as described above.
- d. Belts: Period belts may be worn during combat. However, they must not have any objects attached, i.e., belt pouches, eating knives, mugs. Belts with such items must be removed.

C. TECHNIQUE AND SAFETY

- I. Target Area: The target area shall include all parts of the body except the back of the head or neck.

* FIE: Federation Internationale D'Esclime: the organization that regulates the sport of fencing internationally, www.fie.ch Reference also www.britishfencing.com for the English language version of the FIE rules.

2. Cuts: Cuts are blows delivered with the edge of the blade. Such blows should be “pulled,” that is, delivered with less than full force. Cuts may be considered “brutal” if they are delivered with excessive force, or if they are made by hacking, chopping, whipping or bludgeoning. Brutal cuts are strictly prohibited, and may be grounds for disciplinary action.
3. Thrusts: Thrusts are blows delivered with the tip or point of the blade. Thrusts must land distinctly on target. Thrusts aimed at the mask (head, face or throat) shall be pulled by all combatants with all weapons. Thrusts aimed at the body with a flexible rapier may be struck with sufficient force to bend the blade (to demonstrate penetrating power). Thrusts with side sword or long sword should be pulled at all times. Blows that do not meet these criteria will be considered brutal and may be grounds for disciplinary action.
4. Use of the Unarmed Hand: The use of the unarmed hand is permitted. The unarmed hand may be used to parry at the option of the fencer. The unarmed hand may be used to check, push or pull the adversary. The unarmed hand may be used to seize the blade (which may lead to disarming).
5. Seizing of the blade: A fencer may seize the opponent’s blade, but may do so only momentarily. Twisting or pulling of the blade is prohibited. The defending fencer, in order to avoid injury to the fencer who has seized the blade, must not twist or pull his weapon away when it is seized. Permissible actions in this case include letting go of the weapon (which is counted as a disarmament) or employing a counter seizure. If a counter seizure is employed, the Marshal may call a halt to ensure safety and forestall grappling.
6. Disarming techniques by means of seizing the arm, forte of the blade, or hilt of the adversary's weapon, are permitted.
7. Checking, pushing, or pulling the adversary is permitted, using the unarmed hand. Checking or pushing is also permitted using the weapon.

D. GENERAL CONDUCT & INFIGHTING

1. Participants are expected to follow the general rules of good-sportsmanship. This includes but is not limited to the Rules of Conduct as listed in Article III Section D of the Bylaws of St. Michael’s Salle d’Armes.

Dishonorable conduct, such as attempting to circumvent the rules, will result in a warning for the first offense and ejection for any subsequent offense. Emotional outbursts or displays of temper before, during, or after a bout is forbidden.

Vindictive or abusive acts of any kind will result in disqualification and ejection from the event. No warning is required. Such actions will be reviewed under the Grievance Procedure as listed in Article III Section E of the Bylaws. The penalty may ban the offender from all events for a period of any length, up to and including a lifetime ban from guild events.

2. Infighting occurs when the combatants are within arm's length of each other (rather than sword length). Infighting is permitted, as long as discretion and self-control are exercised. If the marshal feels that the action has become irregular and unsafe, he must immediately stop the action. Similarly, if the action becomes obscured so that the marshal cannot interpret the phrase, the action must be stopped.
3. Ducking, weaving, and slipping, and all evasive displacements of the body, including those in which part of the body comes in contact with the ground, for the purpose of avoiding being hit are permitted, provided the action remains controlled. This constitutes displacement of the target. However, should the marshal feel that the action is uncontrolled or constitutes a fall, he shall halt the action.

E. OFFICIATING

Every formal fence/weapons demonstration will be presided over by a Marshal, as determined by Article II Section B Subsection 3 of the Bylaws of St. Michael's Salle d'Armes. The Marshal's function is to ensure that the combat proceeds safely and fairly. He must see that the fencing is conducted in accordance to the rules and must halt any swordplay that, in his or her opinion, is unruly, patently unfair, and/or unsafe.

The Marshal can be assisted in his duties by designated judges or assistants, the responsibility of whom it will be to watch the action occurring during an event, and help maintain the safety of patrons and participants.

The fencers/combatants shall cease all action upon the command "Hold," "Halt," or "Stop," no matter who calls it.

The Marshal has the additional authority to:

- Commence, Halt or End a bout, and Declare a winner,
- Penalize violations of the Rules of Conduct or Rules of Combat,
- Exercise control of both participants and spectators (including patrons) in order to ensure safety of all.

Violations of these rules will be dealt with in the following manner, unless otherwise noted elsewhere in the regulations:

- 1st Offense- Warning
- 2nd Offense-Point against
- 3rd Offense- Removal from the bout/event

F. PATRONS

While one goal of St. Michael's Salle d'Armes is to educate and entertain the public, patrons must not interfere during a demonstration in any way. Patrons must remain outside the designated boundary during any fencing or weapons play. Patrons may be individually invited within the boundary to participate. Patrons may only handle weapons (whether "live steel" or rebated) under the direct and strict supervision of St. Michael's guild members.

Patrons or non-members of St. Michael's may not participate in free-fencing or full contact unless they have proper protective equipment and are known to have proper skill as demonstrated to the Marshal.

Patrons or non-members behaving in an unruly manner, creating a nuisance, and/or preventing orderly proceeding of the event will be warned, and if they persist in their actions, ejected.

Minors must have parental or guardian permission to handle weapons.