

Commentaries and Procedures for the Judging and Directing of Singlestick Formal Assaults

1.0 General Conditions of the Assault

- A. All assaults shall be fenced in a square 25 by 25 feet wide, hereafter referred to as the "ring". Stepping out of bounds will be penalized as detailed in section 8.0.

2.0 Weapons, Equipment Specifications and Requirements

A. Weapons

- I. All weapons and equipment must be inspected prior to the beginning of the tournament. Each participant is required to bring 2 weapons to be inspected.
- II. Hilt should be sturdy in construction, made of wicker, reed, or leather. They must provide adequate protection to the hand against blows, and must fit in such a way as to allow freedom of movement to the fingers, hand and wrist.
- III. Sticks should be round in cross section and of natural form (not manufactured dowels), should not exceed 1" in diameter, and be free of splinters. The stick should be between 29-33 inches in length and, preferably, ash.
- IV. Fencers must have two weapons in good condition when arriving on the piste.

B. Clothing and Protective Equipment

- I. Three-weapon fencing masks (12 kg punch test) with thick, sewn-in bibs are required for tournaments. No customized masks or attachments of any type will be permitted. Extra 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. All masks must fit properly to ensure maximum protection.
- II. Standard three-weapon jackets or equivalent commercially available protection, which, in order to facilitate judging of touches may be of any solid color EXCEPT BLACK, are required for tournaments. Jackets must be made of strong material, preferably of heavily padded cotton duck or canvas. The jacket must completely overlap the waist of the pants/knickers by a minimum of 2 inches. Long pants or fencing knickers must be worn and must be of a strong, tight weave, non-stretch material.
- III. An underarm plastron is required under the jacket. Breast protectors are required for women, and rigid groin cups are required for men. Heavy plastrons over the jacket are recommended, as is some form of padded protection to protect the upper thigh. A rigid chest protector that covers the collarbones down to the waist is required for both men and women.
- IV. A padded sabre glove for the armed hand, or the equivalent, is required. The cuff of the glove must overlap the sleeve by at least 3 inches and must be made of sturdy leather or equivalent material.
- V. A *manchette* or elbow guard constructed of heavy canvas or leather is required. BMX or similar elbow pads worn over or under the sleeve are also acceptable.
- VI. Excessively baggy clothing is forbidden. Spandex or nylon clothing, warm-up pants and sweat pants are NOT permitted.

NOTE: No bare flesh may be exposed with exception of the unarmed hand and back of the head.



Willow basket singlestick

3.0 Technique and Safety

A. Target Area

The target area shall include the body above the line of the hips, including the arms, the head and the front leg beginning 2 inches above the knee. The back of the head, however, is not a valid target.

B. Thrusts

Thrusts are not allowed.

C. Use of the Unarmed Hand

The use of the unarmed hand is only permitted in disarms.



Hatch indicates valid target areas

4.0 Infighting

A. Infighting is permitted. However, discretion and self-control must be exercised. If the director feels that the action has become irregular or unsafe, he will immediately stop the action. Similarly, if the action becomes obscured so that the director and judges cannot interpret the phrase, the action must be stopped. The action will also be halted upon any clashing of the guards. The adversary who systematically and deliberately causes infighting by force of the action will be dealt with as described in section 8.0.

B. *Corps-a-corps* encounters must be stopped by the director. *Corps-a-corps* is defined as bodily contact and is not permitted in dueling sabre. The adversary who systematically and deliberately causes a *corps-a-corps* by force of the action will be dealt with as violation of the rules as described in section 8.0.

5.0 General Conduct

A. Every touch should be immediately acknowledged, whether good or bad, by the fencer receiving the touch by declaring "touch" in a loud voice.

B. Speaking while under arms (except for acknowledging a touch against oneself) is not allowed except with the permission of the director, gained by making a foot call (an *appel*) and being recognized by the director.

C. When the Director halts the action, both fencers must immediately assume first position (*aplomb*).

D. It is forbidden to hold the weapon with both hands or to change from one hand to the other during an assault.

E. A fencer should not gesture in any form to the audience or judges that he has made a valid thrust or cut or that he disapproves of a decision.

F. It is forbidden to hit hard or to strike with the hilt.

G. The fencer is not allowed to turn his back toward the adversary after delivering a cut.

H. All violations of the general conduct rules will be dealt with as a violation of the rules as described in section 8.0.



First position (*aplomb*)

6.0 Officiating

A. Formal Assault

I. Every formal assault will be presided over by a Director of Combat. The director's function is to ensure that the combat proceeds smoothly and fairly. He must see that the fencing is conducted in accordance to the rules and must halt any swordplay that, in his opinion, is unruly, patently unfair, and/or unsafe. Additionally, the director shall have the power to:

- Commence, halt, or end an assault, and declare a winner.

- Penalize violations of the rules and conventions of fencing, including those written and unwritten rules relating to good conduct.
 - Award touches with the concurrence of the judges and in accordance with the applicable voting procedure.
 - Exercise complete control over the fencers, spectators, judges, minor officials, and such other personnel that may be in the area of the piste. This control extends to whatever means may be necessary to maintain order, including ejecting a fencer or spectator, dismissing a judge, etc.
- II. The Director will be assisted in his duties by 4 judges, the responsibility of whom it shall be to watch for touches occurring during the assault, which they shall signal against the fencer who was touched by raising a hand and declaring "touch" in a loud voice.
- III. Judges shall have 1 vote each and the director shall have 1 votes. A minimum of 1 votes are required to award or deny a touch.

NOTE: The Director of Combat is the sole interpreter of the rules.

7.0 Procedure

- A. All assaults shall be for 3 points, or for a limit of 5 minutes, whichever comes first. Points are scored against the fencer receiving the touch. If the score is tied at the end of this time period, 1 additional touch will be fenced without time limit to determine a winner. The fencer with fewest touches called against them shall be declared the winner.
- B. To begin the assault, the director shall bring both contestants to the center of the piste. Once the director has assured that everything is in order (such as that the fencers are using inspected weapons, wearing the approved clothing, etc.), he shall have them salute and bring them on guard, with the command "on guard." He shall then step back and give the command "fence." The fencers shall cease fencing upon the command "halt."
- C. Upon seeing a touch or the signal for a touch from a judge, the director shall stop the assault and poll the judges as to the validity of the touch. The judges must respond with one of the following: "yes," "no," "abstain," "off target," "*plaque*" (flat), or "*mal parée*" (insufficient parry).
- D. For a parry to be considered sufficient, the attacking blade must be clearly removed from its threatening position with the result that the defender is not touched. Mere contact against the attacking blade is not considered a sufficient parry. If an attack arrives due to an insufficient parry (*mal parée*), the attack is counted as valid.
- E. An intentional well-executed disarm, in which one party removes or disables use of the weapon from the other and presents an immediate threat with one or both weapons, shall count as a touch.
- F. A hit off-target suffices to stop the phrase of arms and annuls any succeeding riposte or counter-riposte.
- G. If a fencer disarms his adversary by beating or transporting the weapon, a hit is good only if made instantaneously as a consequence of that action.
- H. In the case of a double touch (encounter), no touch will be awarded unless in the opinion of the director one touch was clearly out of time.
- I. The fencers may acknowledge any touches they have received, however the director has the final say in awarding the touch.

8.0 Violations of the Rules

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

- 1st Offense: Warning
 - 2nd Offense: Point against
 - 3rd Offense: Loss of the assault
 - 4th Offense: Disqualification
- A. If a fencer steps off any boundary of the *piste* with one foot he will receive a warning. (Meaning any part of the foot outside of the designated boundary lines.) A second occurrence will result in a point being called against that fencer. Once any point has been awarded, all previous out-of-bounds warnings are annulled for both fencers.
- B. Dishonorable conduct, such as attempting to circumvent the rules, will result in a warning for the first offense and ejection for any subsequent offense.
- C. Vindictive acts of any kind will result in disqualification and ejection from the event. The AHF Board of Governors may also ban the offender from all events for a period of any length, up to and including a lifetime ban from Association events.

The AHF Rules Committee
Jeannette Acosta-Martinez, chair
Ramon Martinez, ex-officio
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Rules adapted from Macdonald Academy of Arms, Edinburgh, Scotland.
Thanks to Maestro Paul Macdonald for his kind assistance.

Association for Historical Fencing, Inc. June 18, 2003
Revised March 2009