

HEMAC HEMATHLON 2025 RULESET

Chapter 1. Equipment Minimum Requirements

HR. 1a. Protective Gear for Steel Longsword

Head: HEMA mask or HEMA FIE Mask 1600N, HEMA back of the head protector, gorget and/or blade-catcher fold as part of a HEMA jacket.

Body: HEMA padded jacket or gambeson 350N minimum. Mandatory: chest protector for female competitors and groin protector for male competitors.

Arms: Forearm and elbow protectors with high impact absorbing foam and plastic protective plates and HEMA heavy sparring gloves with padded protection and plastic, leather or metallic plates (metallic parts must be covered with leather, plastic, cloth or tape to be 'silenced' and make a different sound when hit than the sound of a hit on the blade or the cross-guard).

Legs: Knee and shin protectors with high impact shock absorbing foam and plastic protective plates and HEMA padded skirt or padded breeches 350N minimum, with extra padding or semi-rigid protection for the thighs.

HR. 1b. Tournament Longsword

Longswords must be either of standard or 'feder' type, with or without cross-guard rings and schilts with rounded tips. Their overall length must not be greater than 138cm and their blades must be flexible in their last 1/3 with a folded or large and rounded tip. The point of the blade must be covered with a rubber tip held in place with adhesive tape.

HR. 1c. Protective Gear for Steel Rapier

Head: HEMA mask or HEMA FIE Mask 1600N, HEMA back of the head protector, gorget and/or blade-catcher fold as part of a HEMA jacket.

Body: HEMA padded jacket or gambeson 350N minimum. Mandatory: chest protector for female competitors and groin protector for male competitors.

Arms: HEMA light sparring gloves, that cover the wrist and at least half of the forearm and rigid, elbow protectors. *Full, separate forearm protectors are optional.

Legs: Knee and shin protectors with high impact shock absorbing foam and plastic protective plates. HEMA padded skirt or padded breeches 350N minimum or FIE fencing breeches 350N minimum with semi-rigid overlay protectors for the hips and the thighs.

HR. 1d. Tournament Rapier

Rapiers can be either cup-hilt or swept-hilt and their overall length must not be greater than 128 cm, with a flexible blade in their last 1/3 and a folded or large rounded tip. The points of their blade must be covered with a rubber tip held in place with adhesive tape.

HR. 1e. Clothing for All Weapon Competitions

Clothing or uniforms must cover all body parts. No exposed skin will be permitted inside the ring and during the bouts.

HR. 1f. General Rules for all Gear and Weapons

All competitors are obliged to provide their own weapons and protective gear. Borrowing equipment from co-athletes is acceptable as long as a fighter is ready to fight when asked to enter the ring, without delaying the bout.

There will be NO weapon and protective gear Material Quality tests made by Tournament Officials. The competitors are responsible for providing equipment that is manufactured and tested for HEMA Tournaments, guaranteed and also preferably stamped or marked by the manufacturer.

Equipment checks will take place during the registration of competitors by Tournament Officials and also before the fighters enter the ring by the Referee of the bout. These tests will be only to confirm that the competitors are fully clothed and geared, their equipment is in good condition (not broken or having snapped straps etc) and are proper according to the abovementioned rules. Equipment inspection and checks is NOT a warranty that a fighters' weapon and gear are made of good quality material.

Any piece of equipment that will be considered, for any reason, as 'unsafe' by the Tournament Officials or the Referees, its owner is obliged to replace it with a proper one (owing a secondary or borrowing from a co-athlete).

Chapter 2. Permitted Actions during a Bout**HR. 2a. Valid Cuts and Thrusts for All Weapons**

A cut is considered valid when the point of the blade of a fighter has described at least an arc of 65 degrees. Very small movements and tag-hits will be ignored by the judges.

A thrust is considered valid when the blade of a fighter bends while striking the opponent's body and/or when a thrust is accompanied by a step or a movement of the body. Very small movements and tag-hits will be ignored by the judges.

In any case, valid hits are up to the judgment of the referee and the judges. So, play fair, fence in earnest and avoid tag-hitting.

HR. 2b. Valid Actions for Steel Longsword

It is permitted to i) cut with the sword-edges handling the sword with one or both hands on the grip or by half-swording with one hand on the grip and the other on the blade, ii) thrust with the point handling the sword with one or both hands on the grip or by half-swording with one hand on the grip and the other on the blade, iii) strike the opponent's mesh of the mask with the pommel of your sword having one or both hands on the grip or by half-swording with one hand on the grip and the other on the blade, controlling the force of the impact, iv) strike the opponent's mesh of the mask with the palm of your hand, controlling the force of the impact, v) grab the opponent's arm anywhere from the shoulder to the wrist in order to deliver a strike with your sword at the same or the following tempo but you must release it immediately after your action or stop when the referee shouts 'Halt' or 'Break', vi) grab the opponent's grip, guard or pommel in order to deliver a strike or disarm him/her until the referee shouts 'Halt' or 'Break', vii) grab the opponent's blade to disarm them or deliver a strike with your sword at the same or the following tempo but you must release it immediately after your action or stop when the referee shouts 'Halt' or 'Break', viii) push the opponent out of ring while pressing your blade against his/her blade.

HR. 2c. Scoring with the Longsword

i) Valid cuts and thrusts while handling the sword with one or both hands on the grip, or by half-swording, ii) striking the opponent's mesh of the mask with the pommel of your sword or the palm of your hand, controlling the force of the impact, iii) disarming the opponent taking away their weapon iv) stepping with both feet out of the line of the ring and v) pushing the opponent out of ring pressing your blade on their blade, All count for One (1) Point.

HR. 2d. Valid Actions for Steel Rapier

It is permitted to i) cut with the sword-edges, ii) thrust with the point of the blade, iii) strike the opponent's mesh of the mask with the pommel of your rapier, controlling the force of the impact, iv) grab the opponent's arm anywhere from the shoulder to the wrist in order to deliver a strike with your rapier at the same or the following tempo, but you must release it immediately after your action or stop when the referee shouts 'Halt' or 'Break', v) grab the opponent's guard or pommel in order to deliver a strike or disarm him/her until the referee shouts 'Halt' or 'Break', vi) displace the opponent's blade with the palm of your hand open and without holding it (slapping the blade), vii) disarm the opponent, taking away their weapon.

HR. 2e. Scoring with the Rapier

i) Valid cuts and thrusts to the mask, the legs and the arms, ii) valid thrusts to the chest and the abdomen, iii) striking the opponent's mesh of the mask with the pommel of your sword, controlling the force of the impact, iv) disarming the opponent, taking away their weapon, v) stepping with both feet out of the line of the ring and vi) pushing the opponent out of ring pressing your blade on their blade, All count for One (1) Point. vii) Cuts to the chest and the abdomen, award NO points.

HR. 2f. Double-Hits and After-Blows for All Weapons

A double-hit occurs when both fighters hit each other on the same tempo, either striking simultaneously or near simultaneously.

An after-blow occurs when someone responds with a valid hit in one tempo and immediately after receiving a valid hit from his opponent. It is a two-tempo sequence where in the first tempo one fighter delivers a successful first-strike and in the next tempo, their opponent responds with a successful after-strike.

Double-hits and First-strike/After-blow sequences count for Zero (0) Points, for both fighters.

In Longsword competition, successful first-strikes on the head nullify the After-blow. In Rapier competition, successful first-strikes either on the head or the sword-arm, nullify the After-blow. In such cases, in both weapon competitions, only the fighter that delivered the first-strike is awarded with a Point.

HR. 2g. Loss-of-Weapon

In case a fighter drops their weapon intentionally or it falls from their hands unintentionally, their opponent will be awarded with One (1) point without it being considered as an exchange, thus No Exchange will be counted on the score sheet.

HR. 2h. Out-of-Ring

A fighter is considered 'out-of-ring' when he/she steps with both feet out of line. If they deliver a hit while running or jumping out of line with their feet still in the air or with one foot inside the ring and the other out of line, the strike is considered valid, as any strike from the opponent that is delivered before both his/her feet reach the ground 'out-of-ring'.

Either stepping out of ring by your own, or being pushed out of ring while your opponent presses their sword on yours, the opponent will be awarded with One (1) Point and the action will also be counted as an Exchange in the score sheet.

Chapter 3. Forbidden Actions and Strikes

It is forbidden to i) strike your opponent using your legs, ii) strike your opponent with your arms (with the only exception of open palm strikes to the mesh of their mask, controlling the force of the impact, in Longsword competition), iii) intentionally attack with force the back of the head, the spine and the groin, iv) push after thrusting or cutting towards the neck or the bib of the opponent's mask, v) strike the opponent with your cross-guard, vi) push with your free hand, your feet or your body the opponent out of ring, vii) use trips, sweeps and throws or any kind of ground fighting, viii) grab or lock the opponent's mask, head, body and legs, ix) attack the opponent while their mask has fallen off, x) grab and hold the opponent's Rapier-Blade, xi) striking repeatedly on an exposed, undefended target with the blade, the pommel or the palm of your hand.

Deliberate brutality will be punished with immediate disqualification from the tournament.

Chapter 4. Tournament Phases for All Weapons

HR. 4a. Pools

Each bout will last Seven (7) Exchanges between the fighters. i) A clean, valid strike delivered by one of the fighters, ii) a double-hit, iii) a first-strike/after-blow sequence, iv) a disarm, v) stepping out-of-ring and in general, any valid action described in paragraphs HR. 2c, 2e, 2f and 2h, are All considered as One (1) Exchange. Any case of Loss-of-Weapon, as described in paragraph HR. 2g, will Not be counted as an Exchange on the score sheet.

In a Rapier bout, for example: Fighter A thrusts Fighter B, who does not respond successfully, to the mask and thus, Fighter A is awarded with One (1) Point (=1st Exchange, Score 1-0). Then, Fighters A and B strike each other simultaneously (double-hit) and none of them is awarded with points (=2nd Exchange, Score remains 1-0). Then, Fighter A cuts to the leg and Fighter B achieves a successful after-blow to the head, so neither of them is awarded with a Point (=3rd Exchange, Score remains 1-0). Then, Fighter B steps with both feet out of the ring and his opponent, Fighter A, is awarded with One (1) Point (=4th Exchange, Score 2-0). Then, Fighter B thrusts Fighter A, who does not respond successfully, to the chest and thus, Fighter B is awarded with One (1) Point (=5th Exchange, Score 2-1). Then, Fighter A drops their sword unintentionally, so Fighter B is awarded with One (1) Point, while the action is not counted as an exchange (=No Exchange, Score is now 2-2). Then, Fighter B achieves a successful disarm of the opponent's weapon and is awarded with One (1) Point (6th Exchange, Score 2-3). Then, Fighter B manages to come close and deliver a controlled pommel strike to the mask of his opponent and thus, Fighter B is awarded with One (1) Point (7th Exchange, Score 2-4). Since Seven (7) exchanges are completed, the Bout is over and Fighter B achieves a Victory with a final score of Two (2) – Four (4).

The qualifiers for the next phase will be determined by i) number of victories, ii) total points scored (the higher, the better), iii) total points against (the lower, the better). In case there is an absolute tie (in all number of victories, points scored and points against) between two qualifiers, the fighter who achieved a victory at the bout between the said two, will gain the higher position in their pool. If the bout between these two fighters was a draw, then they will have to fight a Sudden-death match, where the one who delivers the first Clean-strike (double-hits and after-blows will Not be counted) will win the higher pool placement.

HR. 4b. Single Elimination Phase

At the single elimination phase, from the Round of 16 to the Round of 8, the winner of each bout will be the one who will either i) score Five (5) Points first, or ii) will have a score advantage after a time limit of Three (3) minutes. If the said time limit is reached while there is a draw between the two fighters, they will continue fighting until one of them delivers a successful Clean-strike (double-hits and after-blows will Not be counted) in order to win the bout.

HR. 4c. Finals and Semi-Finals

At the Finals and Semi-Finals, the winner of each bout will be the one who will either i) score Seven (7) Points first, or ii) will have a score advantage after a time limit of Five (5) minutes. If the said time limit is reached while there is a draw between the two fighters, they will continue fighting until one of them delivers a successful Clean-strike (double-hits and after-blows will Not be counted) in order to win the bout.

HR. 4d. Assistants and The Right to Object

In all phases of the tournament, a fighter is allowed to have an Assistant, being either their coach or a co-athlete cornerman, during each of their bouts. The Assistant, is forbidden to instruct and must remain silent and outside the ring during the exchanges. They are permitted to give instructions to their fighters at their corner before the beginning of the bout and also if, and only if, the referee or the judges call for a Time-out. The Assistant has the Right-to-Object against a referee's decision only once per bout, raising their hand and shouting 'Object'. When an Assistant shouts 'Object', the referee is obliged to give a Time-out and call the fighters, the assistants and the judges at the center of the ring for a very brief discussion of the situation, which must not take more than one minute. After the referee takes a final decision, no matter if the objection was considered valid or not, the Assistant loses the right to object again during the same bout. Nevertheless, a referee can call the judges, the assistants and the fighters at the center of the ring, for any reason, by his/her own decision, as many times as deemed necessary without wasting the Assistants' right to object. If a fighter has no Assistant assigned at their corner, the right to object as described above and only once per bout, is transferred to the fighter themselves.

HR. 4e. Timekeeping

At the Single Elimination Phase, the Semi-finals and Finals, timekeeping will Not be paused during fighting, scoring and while fighters are talking their place at their corners between exchanges. The bout watch will only stop whenever the Referee or the Judges, for any reason (damage or loss of equipment, objection by an assistant etc), call for a 'Time-Out'. Ten (10) seconds before the time limit of a bout is reached, the Timekeeper must call 'Ten Seconds Left, Last Exchange', loud and clear for all. When the time limit is finally reached, the Timekeeper must call 'Time Over, End of Bout'. Any exchange taking place after the Timekeeper's call for Time Over, will not be counted by the Referee and the Scorekeeper.

HR. 4f. Recording with Cameras and Mobiles

No Mobiles and Cameras are allowed to record the bouts inside the arena and near the rings, unless they are meant for media coverage in agreement with the event organizer, or part of the Hemathlon Tournament as tools for the Official Camera Judges and the Secretary. If any Tournament participant wishes to have their bouts recorded, they must give their phone or camera to any friend sitting at the Spectator's area, outside the arena.

Chapter 5. Offences and Penalties

Offences committed by athletes, fighters and their assistants (coaches/cornermen), will result in the said Tournament participants to be carded, either with a yellow, a red or a black card. In general, Yellow cards are essentially Warnings, Red cards award the opponent with One (1) Point and Black Cards will lead to the Loss of a Bout, zeroed score for the offender and One (1) awarded Point to their opponent. Black Cards may also lead to a disqualification from a competition, or even an expulsion from the Event and the whole Tournament. Fighters who get Disqualified from one competition do Not lose their right to participate in any other competition that follows and at which they are already registered. Eg if a Fighter receives a black card that Disqualifies them from the Longsword competition, they do not lose their right to participate at the Rapier competition, if Rapier comes after Longsword according to the Tournament Schedule. On the contrary, a Black card for Expulsion means immediate leave from the Arena, losing the right to participate in any following competitions or weapon categories, even if a fighter is already registered at, and without receiving a refund of the registration fee.

The following table covers the most typical Offences and Penalties. Bout Referees and the Arena Manager may penalize a Tournament participant (athlete, fighter or assistant) for any other reason not mentioned in the said table, according to their own judgement.

OFFENCES	PENALTIES	
	1st Call	2nd Call
Category 1 - Fighters		
Not Present During Bout Call	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Delaying to Take Place at Your Corner After a Referee's Call	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Leaving the Ring/Corner Without Permission	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Taking your Mask Off Before the Referee calls Halt/Break	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Not Saluting the Opponent when the Referee calls 'Fighters Ready?'	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Unintentional Uncontrolled Fencing	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Unintentionally Striking a Forbidden Body Part/Area	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Demanding a Break/Time-Out deemed Unjustified by the Referee or the Doctor	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt

Category 1 - Assistants and Co-Athletes		
Giving Instructions during a Bout Without a Call for Time-Out	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Demanding a Break/Time-Out deemed Unjustified by the Referee or the Doctor	Warning	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt
Category 2 - Fighters		
Throwing Objects/Equipment in Anger on the Floor after a Referees Decision	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt	Competition Disqualification
Intimidating Actions or Behavior to Bully the Opponent	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt	Competition Disqualification
Addressing the Referee or the Judges Without having Asked for a Time-Out	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt	Competition Disqualification
Addressing the Opponent during a Bout	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt	Competition Disqualification
Refusal to Shake Hands with the Opponent at the End of a Bout	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt	Competition Disqualification
Category 2 - Assistants and Co-Athletes		
Addressing the Referee or the Judges Without having Asked for a Time-Out	Opponent Awarded 1 Pt	Competition Disqualification
Category 3 - Fighters		
Intentionally Striking a Forbidden Body Part/Area	Competition Disqualification	Tournament Expulsion
Intentional Violent Behavior and Strikes or Deliberate Brutality	Competition Disqualification	Tournament Expulsion
Use of Foul Language towards any Event Participant, Staff or Spectator	Competition Disqualification	Tournament Expulsion
Refusal to Obey the Referee or the Arena Manager	Competition Disqualification	Tournament Expulsion
Category 3 - Assistants and Co-Athletes		
Use of Foul Language towards any Event Participant, Staff or Spectator	Competition Disqualification	Tournament Expulsion
Refusal to Obey the Referee or the Arena Manager	Competition Disqualification	Tournament Expulsion
Recording a Bout inside the Arena using a Mobile or Camera	Competition Disqualification	Tournament Expulsion

*** The Referees and the Arena Manager can penalize Category 3 Offences straight with Expulsion from the Tournament, without a 1st Call for Disqualification, if deemed necessary.