

HEMA Longsword Tournament Rule-Set

Group Phase Matches

- Each match shall consist of one round lasting **5 minutes**.
 - Match time may be paused by the judge in the event of a significant interruption
 - At **10 seconds before the end of the match**, the judge will call “**Last Exchange.**”
 - If this exchange lasts more than 10 seconds, the judge will not halt the action until a valid exchange has occurred.
 - If the exchange ends in fewer than 10 seconds, the judge shall call “**Last Exchange**” again, repeating as necessary until the 5-minute time limit expires.
 - If there is a **10-point** difference between the fencers, or if one of the fencers reaches **20 points**, the match ends immediately.
 - In the event of a tie, a **Sudden Death** rule will be applied:
 - The fencers will continue until one gains the lead through a valid scoring action.
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Qualifications

During the pool phase, fencers are ranked according to the following criteria:

1. **Number of victories** (higher is better)
 2. **Point differential** (points scored minus points received; higher is better)
 3. **Number of double hits** (lower is better)
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Semi-Finals, Finals, and Third-Place Match

- These matches consist of **2 rounds of 5 minutes** each.
 - The same timing and “Last Exchange” procedure from the group phase applies to each round.
 - If there is a **10-point** difference between the fencers, or if one of the fencers reaches **30 points**, the match ends immediately.
 - In the event of a tie after both rounds, a **Sudden Death** rule will be applied:
 - The fencers will continue until one gains the lead through a valid scoring action.
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Challenges

- Each fencer has three challenge rights per match. If a challenge is accepted, the right is retained. If the challenge is rejected, one challenge right is lost.
 - If a decision is awarded in favor of a fencer despite them being hit, the fencer may acknowledge the hit. This behavior is strongly encouraged and does not affect their challenge rights.
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Valid Target Areas

The entire body is considered a valid target **with the following exceptions:**

- Genitals
- Back of the neck
- Spine
- Achilles tendons
- Feet

Scoring Zones:

- **Head:** Entire frontal surface of the fencing mask, including mesh, bib, and reasonable overlays.
- **Torso:** Chest and abdomen, from the top of the shoulders to the “beltline.” The groin area is excluded.
- **Arms:** From the shoulder seam to the fingers.
- **Legs:** From the groin (excluding) down to the feet (excluding prohibited areas).

Note: Judges retain final authority over what constitutes a valid target.

Note: Hits landed **after judges call halt/stop** will not be scored.

Scoring Values

1. Valid cuts/thrusts to the head: 4 points
2. Valid cuts/thrusts to the torso: 3 points
3. Valid cuts/thrusts to the arms or legs: 2 points
4. If a fencer disarms the opponent and clearly demonstrates the intent to strike a valid target, the fencer is awarded the point value assigned to that target area
5. Controlled palm strikes to the mesh of the mask: 2 points
6. Controlled pommel strikes to the mesh of the mask: 2 points
7. If a fencer gains control over the opponent and clearly demonstrates the intent to strike a valid target, the fencer is awarded the point value assigned to that target area (e.g.,

gaining an advantageous position behind the opponent and demonstrating a strike to the head – 4 points).

Penalty Points

8. **Leaving the ring** with both feet:
 - 2 points awarded to the opponent

 9. **Intentionally turning one's back**, exposing illegal target areas:
 - The fencer receives a warning for the first offence, a yellow card is issued for the second offence, and a red card for the third offense. Opponents is awarded 2 points for first two offence. (Third offence leads to a red card which will end the match in favour of the opponent).

 - If the opponent demonstrates a clear attack to an exposed illegal target area without making contact, the opponent is awarded the point value assigned to that target area (e.g., 4 points for the head, 3 points for the torso, 2 points for the limbs).

 - If the opponent unintentionally strikes an illegal target area with contact, no points are awarded and the fencer receives a warning. A yellow card is issued for the second offense, and a red card for the third offense.

 10. **Landing a clear hit after "Halt" is called:**
 - First offense: warning
 - Second offense and subsequent offences: 2 points awarded to the opponent
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Clarifications

1. Thrusts are considered valid when executed decisively, clearly, with the blade slightly bending as a result of the tip hitting the target. (If a thrust lands on the mask and the blade does not bend upon impact, the validity of the hit shall be left to the discretion of the judge.)

2. Cuts are considered valid when executed decisively, clearly and with a rotation of the wrist, elbow or shoulder. In order to be considered valid, cuts must hit the target with an edge. (Cuts to the head with the flat of the blade counts as a valid hit.)

3. If a single blow **successfully lands on two valid targets**, it shall be scored according to the **higher-value target**.

4. If a fencer **uses a limb to defend a target area**, and the blow lands on the limb, the **defense is considered ineffective**. The attack is scored based on the target the opponent was clearly aiming for.

Example:

If the red fencer targets the head, and the blue fencer raises their hand in defense—resulting in a hit to the hand—the red fencer shall be awarded **4 points** for a successful head strike.

Afterblow

- The fencer who is struck may deliver **one afterblow**.
 - If a fencer cuts/thrusts to the head of the opponent, there is **no afterblow**.
 - An afterblow must:
 - Be executed **within one fencing tempo** of the initial hit
 - If the response of the fencer starts after the valid scoring action, it's not an afterblow. (out of tempo)
 - Require **no more than one step**, and
 - Land **before the judge calls "Halt."**
 - Both fencers may receive points according to the target areas successfully struck.
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Double Hit

- A **double hit** is defined as two valid strikes delivered by both fencers **within the same fencing tempo**.
 - No points shall be awarded for double hits.
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Non-scoring Actions

- Pushing your opponent with the hands.
- Grabbing the sword, when it's not moving.
- Grabbing the grip of the opponent's sword.
- Disarms.

Prohibited Actions

The following are strictly forbidden and may result in progressive disciplinary action (e.g., yellow/red/black cards):

- If a fencer unintentionally strikes an illegal target area with contact, no points are awarded and the fencer receives a warning. A yellow card is issued for the second offense, and a red card for the third offense.
- Grabbing the opponent's mask (Yellow Card)
- Disrespectful behavior (e.g., yelling, screaming, mocking the opponent) (Yellow card)
- Throws or takedowns that result in the opponent being grounded (Yellow Card)

- Excessive Force (Yellow Card)
- Strikes using the quillons or crossguards (Yellow Card)
- Kicks or foot strikes (Red Card)
- Headbutts, elbow strikes, punching and knee strikes (Red Card)
- Joint locks aimed at causing injury (Red Card)
- Intentionally throwing the weapon (Red Card)
- Striking with the quillons while gripping the blade (e.g., “murder stroke”) (Black Card)
- Intentionally targeting the genitals, back of the neck and head, spine, Achilles tendons, or feet (Black Card)
- Persistent disrespectful behaviors in the tournament hall (Black Card)
- Intentionally trying to injure the opponent (Black Card)
- Threatening anyone in the tournament hall (Black Card)

Punishments

- If an action warrants a yellow card, an official warning is issued for the first offense.
- Yellow Card (Yellow cards don’t carry over between matches; they are cleared before the next bout.)
- Red Card : 2x Yellow Cards in the same match.(If either fencer receives a red card, the match ends immediately, and the opposing fencer wins with a score of 10–0.)
- Black Card : 2x Red Cards (If a fencer receives a black card, he or she is immediately eliminated from the tournament.)