



ACADEMY OF HISTORICAL ARTS

---

# Standard Tournament Rules

---

*Author:*

Ben KERR

Keith FARRELL

Alex BOURDAS

*Version: 03*

*Date: 9th March 2012*

The Academy of Historical Arts is a division within  
Triquetra Services (Scotland), a charitable organisation registered in Scotland:  
registration number SC042086.



## VERSION AND COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

---

*Version: 03*

*Date: 9th March 2012*

*Copyright © Ben Kerr, 2012*

*Copyright © Keith Farrell, 2012*

*Copyright © Alex Bourdas, 2012*

*Copyright © Academy of Historical Arts, 2012*

*Version: 02*

*Date: 26th April 2011*

*Copyright © Ben Kerr, 2011*

*Copyright © Keith Farrell, 2011*

*Copyright © Alex Bourdas, 2011*

*Copyright © Academy of Historical Arts, 2011*

*Version: 01*

*Date: 31st July 2010*

*Copyright © Ben Kerr, 2010*

*Copyright © Keith Farrell, 2010*

*Copyright © Alex Bourdas, 2010*

*Copyright © Academy of Historical Arts, 2010*

For more information about licensing and copyright for this document, please refer to the *Triquetra Services (Scotland) Licensing Regulations* document.

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Scoring</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Scoring System for the Tournament . . . . .	2
1.2	Scoring System for Each Match . . . . .	3
1.3	Disarms, Takedowns and Throws . . . . .	4
1.4	Extended Grappling . . . . .	5
1.5	Double Hits . . . . .	5
1.6	The After-Blow . . . . .	6
1.7	Scrappy Fighting . . . . .	6
1.8	Recording the Scores . . . . .	6
1.9	Signalling the Scores . . . . .	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Matches</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1	Length of Time for Matches . . . . .	8
2.2	Halting and Resetting Matches . . . . .	8
2.3	The Arena . . . . .	9
2.4	Yielding . . . . .	9
2.5	“Gaming the Rules” . . . . .	9
<b>3</b>	<b>Striking</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1	Awarding Points for Clean Blows . . . . .	10
3.2	Strikes Not Using the Blade . . . . .	10
3.3	Dangerous Use of a Weapon . . . . .	11
3.4	Instant Disqualifications . . . . .	11
<b>4</b>	<b>Etiquette</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1	Arguing with the Referee . . . . .	12
4.2	“Safely and with Honour” . . . . .	12
4.3	Etiquette for each Match . . . . .	12
4.3.1	Beginning a Match . . . . .	13
4.3.2	Halting and Resetting a Match . . . . .	14
4.3.3	Announcing the Winner of a Match . . . . .	14

# Chapter 1

## Scoring

This chapter describes the methods of scoring for the whole tournament and the individual matches, along with scoring modifiers such as double hits, the after-blow and scrappy fighting. It will also describe how disarms will affect the way matches are scored, and finally will describe how the scoring is kept by a neutral scribe along with the roles of the referees.

### 1.1 Scoring System for the Tournament

Every tournament will run for a set number of rounds, and every combatant will participate in at least one match in every single round. The rounds may vary in terms of weapons to be used. It is up to the senior referee on the day to decide which rounds will use what weapons, but it is encouraged that a tournament involve a range of weapons and disciplines in order to demonstrate the extended martial prowess of its participants.

Every combatant who wins a match will be awarded one point towards the tournament score. Losing a round will result in no points toward the tournament score. At the end of the set number of rounds, the tournament scores are added up for each participant, and the combatant with the highest number of points (the person who has won the most matches in the tournament) will be declared the winner.

If there are two or more combatants who share the top score after all the rounds have been completed, then another round will be added for those combatants who share the top score. This round will be just like any of the other rounds, just with fewer participants. At the end of the round, the combatant with the top score will be declared the winner; if there are still two or more combatants with the top score then this process will repeat until there is a single combatant with the top score, at which point this combatant will be declared the winner of the tournament.

If time is an issue for the tournament and there are a lot of people participating, then at the end of a set number of rounds the people with the highest scores will go through to another couple of rounds to determine who will finish in which ranking

position. Depending on the number of participants this will have to be decided on the day; a recommendation is to take a short break at the end of the prescribed number of rounds to let the administrators of the event (taking advice from the senior referee) work out how the next few rounds will work given the number of people with the scores achieved.

For example, if a tournament is set to involve 12 rounds and there are 10 combatants each fighting one match per round (for a total of 5 matches per round times 12 rounds equals 60 matches in total), let us imagine that the final scores look like this:

- Combatant A: 8 points
- Combatant B: 2 points
- Combatant C: 3 points
- Combatant D: 3 points
- Combatant E: 5 points
- Combatant F: 7 points
- Combatant G: 8 points
- Combatant H: 5 points
- Combatant I: 3 point
- Combatant J: 8 points
- Combatant K: 8 points

So, at the end of the tournament the following people are tied for first place: combatants A, G, J and K. Another round is scheduled, with A and G fighting one match and J and K fighting another. Let us say that combatants A and K win these matches and thus now both sit at 9 points each. One final round is added just for these two combatants, and the person who wins this match will be the winner of the tournament.

If a fifth person in this example had scored 8 points then the administrators and senior referee would implement the most sensible method for finding the final rankings on the day.

## 1.2 Scoring System for Each Match

The points system used for scoring matches is quite simple. Whenever a combatant lands a scoring hit, the combatant will receive one point. Double hits will be treated in various ways as described later in this chapter.

There will be a “threshold” points value that combatants will try to reach. This threshold value will be specified by the event organisers, as different threshold values will create a different sort of competitive environment. The first combatant to reach the threshold value will become eligible to win the match by scoring one more point.

However, if both combatants reach the threshold value, then whoever scores the next point will be awarded “advantage”. If the person with advantage scores again then the match will be won. If the other combatant scores the next point though then advantage will switch to the other combatant; if the same person then scores another point then the match is won, but if the first combatant scores next then advantage switches back. Once combatants start playing for advantage, the score never returns to “deuce” as in tennis, since this would draw out the match for too long. Advantage merely switches between the combatants until one can score a second clear point to win the match.

For example: a match has a threshold value of 5 points; combatant A has already scored 5 points, combatant B has scored 4 points. If combatant A scores one more hit then combatant A wins the fight. If combatant B scores next (making the score 5-5), followed by another point to combatant A, then the score would be advantage to A. If B were to score again then the advantage point would belong to B. If A were to score again then the advantage point would shift back to A; if A were to score yet again then A would win the match.

This system is designed so that a combatant must win the fight by two clear points. In testing, this system has proven to be exciting and entertaining; furthermore, as well as encouraging combatants to demonstrate enough skill to win by two clear points, the advantage system prevents the score from soaring to ridiculous levels as the combatants strive to reach this two point margin. This system keeps the scoring clean and simple, and makes the whole experience more enjoyable for the participants, the referees and the audience.

### **1.3 Disarms, Takedowns and Throws**

Disarms, takedowns and throws do not count for any points during a match, as these merely inconvenience an opponent instead of directly taking the opponent out of a real battle. However, if a disarm, takedown or throw is followed up by a killing or disabling blow or any other cleanly landed strike then the person who performed both the disarm / takedown / throw and the finishing technique will automatically win the match, regardless of the current score. This simulates how these advanced techniques do not necessarily win a battle by themselves, but do greatly decrease the victim’s chances of winning or surviving.

## 1.4 Extended Grappling

Extended grappling will not be allowed in tournaments run by the Academy of Historical Arts unless specific rules are developed for a specific tournament. If this is the case then all combatants will be made aware of these rules prior to the tournament; otherwise it is to be assumed that there should be no extended grappling.

Disarming, throwing and takedowns are allowed in tournaments as long as they are performed safely and with perfect control, as described above. However, the referees should make a point of halting any disarms, throws or takedowns that turn into extended grappling to avoid the inherent safety risks.

## 1.5 Double Hits

Double hits are scored in one of several possible ways:

- 1 point is awarded to both combatants;
- 0 points are awarded to both combatants;
- 1 point is awarded to the combatant who “drives” the double hit;
- 1 point is award to the combatant who landed the “highest” hit (head trumps torso, torso trumps limbs, arms trump legs).

The method by which double hits are scored is determined by a random draw before the start of each match. This helps prevent anyone from being able to “game the system” by preparing particular strategies beforehand, as no one will know which method is being applied to any given match before the random draw is performed. Alternatively, for simplicity, the senior referee may decide on the day that only one particular method will be used for all matches; this information will be released on the day, so that combatants will not have the chance beforehand to prepare strategies to “game the system” and win unfairly.

Double hits can never be used to win a match, since the very nature of double hits is that both combatants would become dead or seriously injured in an exchange using sharp weapons. Therefore even if one of the above methods that awards points for a double hit is in force for a round, once one combatant reaches the threshold point value, double hits will no longer count for any points for either combatant. Double hits are to be regarded as poor form by both combatants and should be avoided wherever possible.

If the senior referee believes that combatants are initiating too many double hits and that this is causing the fighting to become scrappy, a warning may be issued to the combatant(s) causing the problem. This may lead to applying penalties to a combatant’s tournament score.

## 1.6 The After-Blow

Sometimes a combatant will be in the process of launching a strike, then a hit is taken a split second before the strike lands on the opponent. If a combatant is already in the process of launching a strike when a hit is taken, if that strike lands upon the other combatant in such a manner that it would also score a point, then the two hits are negated down to the level of a double hit and follow the rules described above. Awarding the after-blow is at the discretion of the senior referee; if the senior referee does not believe that the after-blow was already in motion and was in fact thrown as a panic reaction to a strike that had already landed then the referee is not required to call an after-blow.

This rule is not put in place to allow combatants to negate point-scoring strikes, but rather to acknowledge that sometimes strikes are already in motion when a hit is landed, to show that both combatants should try to defend themselves at all times and to encourage combatants to think of their own safety even while attacking. The decision of the senior referee is final with regard to whether or not to allow an after-blow in a given situation.

If the senior referee believes that combatants are initiating too many after-blows and that this is causing the fighting to become scrappy, a warning may be issued to the combatant(s) causing the problem. This may lead to applying penalties to a combatant's tournament score.

## 1.7 Scrappy Fighting

The purpose of the tournaments run by the Academy of Historical Arts is to allow combatants to display their martial prowess against their peers, and for everyone to enjoy themselves. However, this does not give combatants the right to flail on each other, as this is the antithesis of martial prowess and skill. If the senior referee believes that fighting is becoming unacceptably scrappy then a warning may be issued to clean up the fighting and to show more skill. Further warnings to the same combatant for scrappy fighting may result in a -1 point negative modifier to the combatant's tournament score (which is described above).

If the tournament is being run in an elimination format (due to time restrictions, for example) then the combatant(s) at fault may be disqualified from the tournament since tournament score modifiers do not work in such a format.

## 1.8 Recording the Scores

Scores for each match will be recorded by a neutral scribe who does not participate in the tournament, and preferably someone has no special ties to any of the participants.



The scribe should record the points as called by the senior referee, disregarding calls or suggestions by anyone else.

## 1.9 Signalling the Scores

Normally matches will be watched by two junior referees and a senior referee. A third or fourth junior referee may be added if deemed necessary for the provision of accuracy in judging difficult fights.

The junior referees and a senior referee will watch each match and call hits. As soon as any of the referees sees a hit, the command “hold!” should be called loudly and clearly, and the combatants should stop fighting immediately. The referees then briefly compare notes as to what was seen by raising a blue flag, a red flag or both flags to signal the following messages:

- raising a blue flag means a point scored by blue against red;
- raising a red flag means a point scored by red against blue;
- raising both flags signals a double hit;
- crossing the two flags low in front of the body means that the referee did not see precisely what happened.

If only one referee raises a flag to signal a point then it is up to the senior referee to decide whether to call the hit and award the point or to discount the hit as not being worthy enough for two or more referees to signal it. The referees should work as a team to give the most accurate score, so looking at what the other referees signal is perfectly valid and allowable in this system.

Judges are encouraged most strongly to signal that nothing was seen instead of guessing the result. If there is *any* doubt as to what happened in the exchange then the result was not clear enough to be worth awarding a point.

It is the responsibility of the senior referee to apply the appropriate result for double hits (including determining which combatant “drives” the double, if necessary), along with the task of officially starting and ending combats. It is up to the senior referee to dispense warnings and disqualifications if necessary, although the advice of the two junior referees should probably be taken into account.

Any referee at any time can stop a combat for safety reasons.

# Chapter 2

## Matches

This chapter will provide further information about the matches and how they are conducted and organised.

### 2.1 Length of Time for Matches

Each match will last for a length of time chosen on the day of the tournament by the senior referee — the length may be chosen based on a range of factors. Every match will last for the entire length of time chosen unless a winning point is scored before time is up, in which case the match is officially over. If no combatant has scored a winning point before the match officially ends then the combatant with the most points is declared the winner of the match; the combatant who has “advantage” will win the match if the match has progressed to that stage; if both combatants have the same number of points (and no one has scored an “advantage” point) then a draw is declared (or a final “sudden-death” exchange may be implemented).

### 2.2 Halting and Resetting Matches

Combatants will be halted after a hit is seen by the referees. The points will then be awarded as appropriate, the combatants should be reset, and then the next exchange may begin. However, combatants should not fall into the habit of landing a strike then freezing and looking to the judges to announce what just happened. If the referees saw a hit then they will acknowledge it, if they did not see a hit then standing perfectly still will not help to influence their decision.

## **2.3 The Arena**

Matches will be fought in an arena that should be roped off or otherwise cordoned off from where spectators may stand or sit. The size and dimensions of the arena will be determined on the day of the tournament by the senior referee. If a combatant is pushed or forced out of the ring then the match will be reset — scrappy fighting is not what the tournament is testing. If a combatant voluntarily steps out of the ring then he or she will forfeit the match.

## **2.4 Yielding**

As described in the above section, one may yield and forfeit the match by stepping out of the ring voluntarily. Alternatively, by calling “Yield!” a combatant may forfeit the match voluntarily. This is not a recommended way to finish a match but sometimes it may be necessary to avoid problems or issues.

## **2.5 “Gaming the Rules”**

If the senior referee believes that a participant is “gaming the rules” and trying to win the tournament by devious or underhanded methods then a warning should be issued to the participant to stop this behaviour. If the senior referee believes that the behaviour has continued and that the participant is still trying to win by exploiting the rule set then the participant should be disqualified from the tournament. The advice of the junior referees should be sought to see if they have noticed any such behaviour from the participant, but the decision can only be made by the senior referee.

# Chapter 3

## Striking

This chapter will describe the kinds of strikes that will result in scoring points, along with kinds of strikes that may or may not be allowed on the day. It will also cover the types of striking that will always be forbidden for safety reasons.

### 3.1 Awarding Points for Clean Blows

Points will only be awarded for a clean killing blow or for a clean disabling blow, and only for strikes made cleanly with the point or edge of the blade that are struck in a controlled fashion with intent. On-target flailing will be discounted; uncontrolled flailing on the other combatant will be discounted (and should be punished); taps that would barely scratch an opponent if in actual combat will also be discounted. The only strikes that will be rewarded with points will be controlled strikes that hit a correct target and that would kill or disable the opponent if made at full power with a sharp weapon. This is to encourage correct technique and to discourage combatants from merely swinging wildly.

### 3.2 Strikes Not Using the Blade

Pommel strikes and other forms of strikes may be allowed or disallowed at the discretion of the senior referee on the day of the event. This decision will usually be made for safety reasons: perhaps some of the weapons present have flanged pommels that are unsafe for use, perhaps some of the combatants have not studied unarmed combat and so elbow and knee strikes would not be appropriate. The senior referee will make all combatants aware of what techniques are allowed and what techniques are not allowed before the tournament rounds begin.

### 3.3 Dangerous Use of a Weapon

Dangerous use of a weapon will result in a warning from the senior referee, followed by disqualification from the tournament for a second infringement. This is measured across the whole tournament, it is not one warning per match. If a combatant is warned about control and safety in the first round of a ten round tournament and then shows dangerous techniques or a lack of sufficient control in the final round then in that final round the combatant will be disqualified because of the warning in the first round. This is very draconian in terms of punishing participants for lack of control, but for that very same reason participants will be exposed to fewer unsafe or uncontrolled techniques and opponents. The overall goal of these rules about safety is to both increase safety for participants and to encourage participants to display appropriate control over their weapons.

### 3.4 Instant Disqualifications

The following will lead to an instant disqualification from the tournament:

- misuse of correct finishing methods against an opponent on the ground. While simulating a strike to the head by stamping in a controlled manner on the ground *beside* the head counts as a valid finishing move, for example, stamping *on* the head is very dangerous and will not be tolerated.
- intentionally throwing an opponent in a dangerous fashion so that he or she lands in a compromised position, for example by landing on the head or neck. This is very dangerous and will not be tolerated.
- any behaviour with the intention of actually damaging an opponent. At any time, a bout can be stopped by either of the junior referees or by the senior referee in order that the referees may discuss the perceived intention of one or both of the combatants. If the referees decide that one or both of the combatants acted with malice then disqualification will ensue. This behaviour is very dangerous and will not be tolerated.
- deliberately attacking an opponent who is not currently wearing critical safety equipment. If a combatant's helmet is knocked off for example, then both combatants *must* stop until both combatants are safely equipped again.

# Chapter 4

## Etiquette

This chapter describes the etiquette by which all participants and audience members are expected to comport themselves.

### 4.1 Arguing with the Referee

Arguing with any of the referees carries the same penalty as dangerous use of a weapon; any and all calls by the referees are final. Fans or audience members who argue with or heckle the referees will be summarily removed from the tournament location. Other participants who argue with a call made by a referee, on behalf of another combatant, will risk disqualification both for himself or herself and for the other combatant. This is also very draconian, but the purpose is encourage self-discipline and to provide a safe and pleasant environment in which the referees may discharge their duties.

### 4.2 “Safely and with Honour”

It is the duty of all of the referees to ensure that the tournament is carried out safely and with honour. If at any point any referee believes that safety is being threatened or that honour is being disregarded then the match should be stopped and the combatant(s), or other individuals involved, given the appropriate warning, penalty or dismissal. If a combatant feels excessively threatened during a bout then the combatant may voluntarily step outside of the ring and forfeit the match; this is to discourage combatants from claiming unsafe conduct on the part of a winning opponent in order to gain an advantage. The referees will have received specific training in order to recognise and call unsafe conduct, so combatants should trust their referees.

### 4.3 Etiquette for each Match

This section describes the etiquette that begins and ends each match, so that all referees and combatants know what is supposed to happen at each stage in each match.

### 4.3.1 Beginning a Match

Every match should begin as follows:

- Combatants will enter the arena fully prepared (for example, masks on and secured, gloves on and secured, etc) carrying their weapons in their hands. They will face each other across the arena.
- The senior referee will address both combatants to confirm that they are prepared for the bout. He will say: “Salute your opponent.”
- The combatants will salute their opponent in a manner appropriate for their weapon.
- The senior referee will then say: “Salute the referees.”
- The combatants will turn to the senior referee and salute as above; this salute only happens towards the senior referee, but acknowledges the presence and input of the junior referees also.
- The senior referee will then say: “Combatants at the ready.”
- The combatants will turn to face each other again and will take up their weapons in a ready position.
- The senior referee will then make eye contact with each of the junior referees, who should nod to show their readiness to begin the task of refereeing.
- Finally, the senior referee will state clearly: “Lay on!” This is the command to begin the match, combatants should never start fighting before this command is issued.

### **4.3.2 Halting and Resetting a Match**

If a match is to be halted and reset after each hit scored, then each reset bout of the match should begin as follows:

- The combatants will move apart, face each other again and will take up their weapons in a ready position for the next bout.
- The senior referee will call out who scored the last point and will call the current score, so that the combatants and the audience know what is happening.
- The senior referee will then make eye contact with each of the junior referees, who should nod to show their readiness to continue the task of refereeing.
- Finally, the senior referee will state clearly: “Lay on!” This is the command to begin the bout, combatants should never start fighting before this command is issued.

### **4.3.3 Announcing the Winner of a Match**

After the final point in a match has been scored, the senior referee should call “Halt!” and stop the match. The score should then be called out and the winner of the match announced. The combatants should then remove their masks, shake hands and leave the arena.