Academy of Historical Arts

"Triathlon" Tournament Rules

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Version and Copyright Information

Contents

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1   Round 1: Cutting

Round 1 will be a simple round, testing the ability to cut.

1.1 Cutting the Bottle

Every competitor will be given an opportunity to cut a one-litre milk bottle full of water, suspended by a string. The test is simple: if a competitor cuts the bottle successfully, he will advance through to the next round. If he fails to cut through the bottle completely, then he will be eliminated from the competition. The only requirement is that the cut is successful (not counting any degrees of success in terms of cleanliness, technicality or correctness).

1.2 Provision of Sharp Swords

The Academy will provide a sharp sword to anyone who needs to borrow it. If a competitor has his own sharp sword and would prefer to use that, then he will be welcome to do so.

1.3 Process

The secretary will call the name of the next competitor. If the competitor has his own sword then he will take it and step up to the designated starting point, otherwise he will collect the loaner sword from the armourer and step up to the designated starting point. This should be a marked point on the ground about three metres (twenty feet) away from the target.

The judge will ensure that the cutting range is clear and safe, then will give the command "when you are ready, go!" The competitor must prepare himself, step up to the target and make a single cutting action.

Regardless of the results of the cutting action, the competitor must step back to the designated starting point. The judge will look at the target and pronounce whether or not the cut was successful. If the competitor borrowed the loaner sword then he must now return it to

the armourer, otherwise he must make his own sword safe, then rejoin the rest of the competitors.

1.4 Restrictions

Competitors will have only a single opportunity to cut the bottle. They may not take any measuring swings or check distance with the sword; they must move up to the target, settle themselves, and make a single cutting action. If a competitor makes a measuring swing then he should receive a warning and then be sent back to the designated starting point, to begin his approach again. If a second warning is required then the competitor should be disqualified from the competition.

If the judge believes that the competitor is behaving in an inappropriate or unsafe fashion with the sword, then he should admonish the competitor: "please behave yourself with your sword!" If a second warning is required then the competitor should be disqualified from the competition.

2   Round 2: Technique

Round 2 will be a more complex round that will test how well competitors can display sequences and techniques from the original sources that inform our understanding of historical fencing.

2.1 Sources

A single text or set of texts should be chosen well in advance of the competition. These should be translated in English and should be freely available, so that all competitors have the opportunity to read the material well in advance. The judges will use the same source material as the competitors.

2.2 Sequences

Seven sequences from the source will be selected and published several months before the event. Competitors are encouraged to practice these sequences beforehand, so that at the competition it will not be difficult to demonstrate the sequences competently. On the day, three of these seven sequences will be drawn from a hat, and these will be the sequences for demonstration in each of rounds 2-A, 2-B and 2-C.

Every competitor who reaches round 2 will complete in each of rounds 2-A, 2-B and 2-C. Each round will focus on one of the three random-drawn sequences from the source.

2.3 Staff Members

There will be a couple of staff members whose job will to feed consistent attacks to every competitor, so that all competitors have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their performance against a consistent opponent. Staff members should be chosen for their ability to make cuts in a consistent fashion, and should be provided with good quality protective gear for their own safety.

2.4 Judging Panel

There will be a judging panel of two or three judges. Three judges would be most ideal, but two is acceptable. Needless to say, the same number of judges must judge each competitor. Ideally, each judge should be skilled and experienced in the discipline of the competition; in the event that there are not enough skilled individuals willing or able to perform the role of judging, the judges should be selected from amongst the most skilled and experienced martial artists present, regardless of discipline.

Each judge will give competitors a score between 0 and 2 in each of four categories.

2.5 Scoring

A score of 0 will mean "fail".

A score of 1 will mean "pass".

A score of 2 will mean "excellent".

This ternary scoring system will allow judges to make scoring decisions easily, based on what they see.

2.6 Categories

The categories for judging will be as follows:

Correctness: does the performance match the source? If the source specifies an edge, is that the edge that is used? Does the competitor add steps that don't appear in the description in the source?

This will be scored simply on a "pass" / "fail" basis: either it matches the source or it does not. Competitors will score either 0 or 1 points for this category; it is impossible to score 2 points.

Safety: was the competitor hit during the performance ("fail", 0

points)?

Did the competitor perform without being hit ("pass", 1 point)?

Did the competitor exhibit such control of the situation that there would be no opportunity for his opponent to land a hit ("excellent", 2 points)?

Stance, posture & balance: was the competitor off balance, or did he display significant problems with stance or posture ("fail", 0 points)?

Did the competitor perform with reasonable but not exceptional stance, posture and balance ("pass", 1 point)?

Did the competitor exhibit such control of his body that the performance was a pleasure to watch ("excellent", 2 points)?

Effectiveness: did it look like the competitor's strikes were not threatening or damaging at all, or did he hurt his opponent through lack of control ("fail", 0 points)?

Did it look like the competitor would have caused some damage to his opponent ("pass", 1 point)?

Did the competitor exhibit such control of his strikes that it was clear his strikes would cause severe damage if thrown at full power with a sharp weapon ("excellent", 2 points)?

2.7 Interpretation

The judges will not award points or penalise performance of the sequence in terms of the interpretation that you have chosen to use. Even if the judges prefer a different interpretation, they will be instructed to judge based on the merits of your performance. You are free to show whatever interpretation of these sequences that you want, and the judges will award scores based on the correctness, safety, effectiveness and balance of your performance.

2.8 Aggregation of Scores

These four categories will give a potential score of anywhere between 0 and 2 + 3 + 3 + 3 = 11 points per competitor, per round.

Therefore, after rounds 2-A, 2-B and 2-C are complete, competitors should have a score of between 0 and 33.

2.9 Advancement

If there are at least twelve competitors in round 2, then the eight competitors with the highest scores will go through to round 3. If there are fewer than 12 competitors in round 2, then only the four competitors with the highest scores will go through to round 3.

Only the top performing people who can cut AND who can perform the sequences from the sources at a high level will be allowed to progress to round 3.

3   Round 3: Sparring

Round 3 is the sparring round, to test how well competitors can apply their historical fencing skills in a competitive and uncooperative sparring environment.

The rules governing this round will be as set out in the AHA Short Play Rules, with the exception that the format for advancing is direct elimination, where the winner of the fight will go through to the next round, and the loser will not advance.

Since either 8 or 4 people will come forward into this round, the tournament will be conducted in an elimination format. If 8 people advance to round 3, then they will compete in the quarterfinals; the 4 winners will go through to the semi finals, and the 2 winners of the semi finals will go through to the final round. If only 4 competitors advance to round 3, then they will go straight to the semi finals.

3.1 Seeding

In the first set of fights in round 3, the competitors will be seeded against each other using the points from round 2. So the person with the highest score from round 2 will face the person with the lowest score in round 2; the people in places 4 and 5 will fight each other.

For example, if the following 8 people come through from round 2:

Person A has 24 points: ranking 6th out of 8.
Person B has 26 points: ranking 5th out of 8.
Person C has 23 points: ranking 7th out of 8.
Person D has 32 points: ranking 1st out of 8.
Person E has 29 points: ranking 4th out of 8.
Person F has 30 points: ranking joint 2nd out of 8.
Person G has 22 points: ranking 8th out of 8.
Person H has 30 points: ranking joint 2nd out of 8.

They would be seeded as follows:

Fight 1:   Person D (32, 1st)   vs   Person G (22, 8th)
Fight 2:   Person F (30, j.2nd)   vs   Person C (23, 7th)
Fight 3:   Person H (30, j.2nd)   vs   Person A (24, 6th)
Fight 4:   Person E (29, 4th)   vs   Person B (26, 5th)

3.2 Advancement and Elimination

The winner of each fight will advance to the next round and the losers will be eliminated from the competition.

In the semi finals, the winners of fights 1 and 2 will fight each other, and the winners of fights 3 and 4 will fight each other. If only four people made it through to round 3, then these four people will move immediately into the semi finals, seeded as before by their score from round 2.

For the finals, the two winners from the semi finals will fight each other for 1st and 2nd place, and the two runners up from the semi finals will fight each other for 3rd and 4th place.

3.3 Dealing with Draws

If a fight ends in a draw, then the person with the highest score from round 2 will receive priority and will win the fight. This is to reward skilled technical performance of sequences from the sources.

Competitors that would normally "lose" a fight by "doubling out" from double hits, afterblows or scrappy exchanges will not be eliminated. Instead, the fight will reset to the very beginning, and the fighters will start again after each completing 10 pushups. If a competitor cannot complete the 10 pushups (with a straight back, elbows in tight to the body and full dips to the ground (without touching) and back up) then they automatically lose.

Cleanliness and security of the fighting are to be stressed and emphasised.

4 Rationale

The rationale behind this method of conducting a competition is that if you do not have edge alignment, you cannot do damage with your sword, therefore it is pointless to test any other skill while this most basic skill is undeveloped and flawed. Hence round 1.

If you do possess the skill of edge alignment and the skill to make your cuts count, but you cannot demonstrate sequences from the sources, then you are not very good at "historical fencing" and need to improve your knowledge of the basic techniques and sequences. Hence round 2.

Only the top for or eight people who can cut AND who can perform the sequences from the sources at a high level will be allowed to progress and participate in the sparring round. However, only ever practicing cutting and the sequences from the sources in a sterile or cooperative environment is not good enough, there has to be an uncooperative element to one's practice as well. Hence round 3.

Any monkey can do sparring, but only a well-trained historical fencer can cut with good edge alignment and can reproduce sequences from the sources in a skilful and convincing fashion while also performing well at sparring. This competition seeks to test how well people perform historical fencing and is not a slugfest or a brawling match for the unskilled.

5   Staffing Arrangements

This chapter describes ideal staffing arrangements to allow a tournament to run smoothly and to time.

5.1 Round 1 Staff

Armourer: The armourer should maintain the sharp sword that may be lent to competitors.

Judge: There shall be a single judge who will make the Boolean decision as to whether or not the milk bottle has been sliced through successfully.

5.2 Round 2 Staff

Judging Team: There will be a judging panel of two or three judges. Three judges would be most ideal, but two is acceptable. Needless to say, the same number of judges must judge each competitor. Ideally, each judge should be skilled and experienced in the discipline of the competition; in the event that there are not enough skilled individuals willing or able to perform the role of judging, the judges should be selected from amongst the most skilled and experienced martial artists present, regardless of discipline.

Fencing Staff: There should be a team of at least two staff members who can feed consistent attacks to every competitor. This team should be large enough that the staff members do not receive an unfair or uncomfortable amount of hits.

5.3 Round 3 Staff

Full Judging Teams: Each judging team should contain one senior referee and three junior referees. Each individual should possess a red flag and a blue flag, with which to signal hits.

Partial Judging Teams: Sometimes, because of a lack of trained staff, it is impossible to recruit a full judging team for each fighting arena. If this is the case, then a partial judging team may be substituted. A judging team must always contain a senior referee, but might have just one or two junior referees to assist the senior individual.

Timekeeper: There should be a timekeeper for each arena to ensure that the fight runs to time and does not exceed the limit of three minutes. This task should not be delegated to one of the judging team, as these individuals cannot afford to split their attention between watching the fight and watching the clock.

5.4 Staff Required Throughout

First Aider: There must be a qualified first aider with a well-stocked first aid kit present at the event, to deal with any minor issues and to take responsibility for contacting an ambulance in case of more serious injury. Ideally, the designated first aider should not be one of the other staff members; certainly, the designated first aider should never be one of the combatants, as the competitors run the highest risk of receiving an injury and needing attention from the first aider.

Secretary: There should be an event secretary to keep track of the tournament score for every competitor, including notes about number of doubles/afterblows suffered.