

NSW HEMA Championship Rules

Version 0.9
Event Information

Schedule Per Day

Time	Description
8:00am	Arrival and set-up
9:00am	Safety briefing
9:30am	Pool matches commence
4:00pm	Elimination matches commence
5:30pm	Finals matches finish; pack down

Safety

We want to run a safe event. First aid equipment will be on hand and there will be staff trained in first aid on the day. Please report any injuries, including minor ones. If you suspect a serious injury or concussion please report it immediately.

Spectators

Spectators are welcome and encouraged to attend the tournament. All attendees by being at the event agree to appear in photography or video, which may be posted publicly on social media.

Cheering, chants and general rowdiness to the level of having a good time as could normally be expected from spectators is welcome, however spectators should maintain a safe distance from the piste and not interfere with the conduct of the event.

Contact

For questions or assistance with event details, rules or registration, please contact the Event Coordinator via Facebook or email:

- Emerald Hendry – admin@theoldswordclub.com

Credit

Parts of this ruleset were adapted from other competition rulesets, in particular:

- Friendfecht 2024 — equipment requirements (4.1), scoring rules (7.3), explanation of cards (8.4–8.6)
- Radaelli Cup 2024 — piste diagram, match format (6.4 – 6.6), scoring rules (7.3, 7.7), card table
- HFA General Tournament Procedures under CC BY 4.0 — conduct expectations (2.2), penalty rule (8.2) from version 1.4

Tournament Rules

When the Goths had introduced the custom of single combat, the art of defence became a necessary study: it was confined to certain rules, and academies were instituted to train up youth in the practice of them.

The moderns having adopted the small sword in preference to the ancient arms, it gave rise to a new species of defence, distinguished by the appellation of Fencing, which justly forms part of the education of persons of rank; giving them additional strength of body, proper confidence, grace, activity, and address; enabling them, likewise, to pursue other exercises with greater facility.

Domenico Angelo, The School of Fencing *(1787)*

1. Statement of Intent

The NSW HEMA Championships aims to provide historical fencers with tournament events for popular fencing categories in New South Wales specifically tailored to the interests of regular competitive fencers in their particular disciplines that reflect the philosophies of the fencing cultures these weapons were used in and the current fencing cultures that participate in them. Accordingly, the event utilises an Italianate historical right of way and target convention for sabre, though including false edge cuts due to their popularity, and a simplified simulationist convention for rapier where double touches are ignored. It is the hope of the event organisers that these conventions promote safe and fun fencing for those who wish to compete in these categories.

The goal of this tournament specifically is to provide a safe and supportive environment for people from a diversity of backgrounds and identities to compete. We recognise that when done well, competing in tournaments can be of massive benefit to the emotional wellbeing of participants and aim to conduct an event that provides those benefits to all participants.

2. Conduct Expectations

2.1. Beyond the rules set out in this document, all participants and spectators are required to adhere to The Old Sword Club's Safety Rules and Code of Conduct.

2.2. Fencers are expected to:

2.2.1. Abide by the tournament rules and all directions from the Event Coordinator and Referees,

2.2.2. Act as a line judge during the pool and elimination rounds when not fencing,

2.2.3. Present themselves for matches and gear check/briefing in a timely manner,

2.2.4. Maintain their composure during matches, and

2.2.5. Take deliberate actions not to cause injury.

2.3. Fencers have the right to:

2.3.1. Fair treatment,

2.3.2. Appeal to the Referee over their application of the rules, on the basis that a rule was misapplied, and

2.3.3. Complain about any breaches of The Old Sword Club's Code of Conduct, under which the event and associated social activities are held.

3. Weapon Requirements

3.1. Sabres must be at maximum 89cm long (blade length) and weigh between 620–800g.

Sabres that make weight and length requirements but have a point of balance below 5cm

may be required to be disassembled to weight and ensure the blade weighs a minimum of

200g.

3.1.2. All sabre blades must have adequate flex to deliver a safe thrust. Blades must flex at no more than 10kg pressure when pressed on a scale.

3.2. Rapiers must be at maximum 115cm long from the cross to the end of the blade, and weigh between 800g and 1250g.

3.2.1. All rapier blades must have adequate flex to deliver a safe thrust. Blades must flex at no more than 8.5kg pressure when pressed on a scale.

3.3. All swords must:

3.3.1. Be in good condition, free from rust, burrs or other damage that could compromise the safety of the weapon; and

3.3.2. Be fitted with a leather (or similar) thrusting tip, and covered with brightly coloured tape.

3.4. Swords may be disallowed at the discretion of the Tournament Organiser if they are not recognisably sabres or rapiers as per the relevant event.

4. Equipment Requirements

4.1. All fencers must wear *at least* the following protective equipment to compete:

4.1.1. Mask designed for HEMA or Fencing rated to at least 350N, with an overlay that provides total protection of the neck and of the whole head,

4.1.2. Rigid protection covering the throat,

4.1.3. Jacket designed for HEMA or Fencing rated to at least 350N,

4.1.4. Rigid protection covering the elbows, and, for sabre, the outside of the lead forearm.

4.1.5. Rigid protection covering the knees,

4.1.6. Rigid protection covering the shins,

4.1.7. Padded gloves designed specifically for HEMA providing full coverage of the hand and wrist, And for sabre with rigid coverage for sections exposed by the guard (knuckles, back of hand), and

4.1.8. Genital protection where appropriate.

Fencers may wear additional protection at their discretion.

4.2. A fencer's PPE must fully cover all of one's skin. Clothing that is not fully enclosed, such as skirts/kilts, must not be worn unless over fully covering clothing. Loose-fitting clothing is permitted where it cannot be moved to expose skin.

4.3. All equipment must be constructed to professional levels of fit, finish, and function.

4.4. If any part of the equipment is found to be insufficient after fencing has begun (e.g. breakage of a jacket, mask or knee protector) the issue should be corrected as per tournament rules.

5. Competition Structure

5.1. The tournament will consist of a round robin pool round followed by an elimination round. The top 8-16 fencers from the combined pool results (depending on the number of entrants) move forward to the elimination round.

5.2. Pools will be seeded by fencers' HEMA Ratings and made up of 6–8 fencers (depending on the number of entrants).

5.3. The elimination bracket will be seeded by the overall results of the pool round. Fencers will be ranked within their pool and overall based on the following criteria in order:

5.3.1. Total number of wins,

5.3.2 Total indicator of a fencer (hits given minus hits received)

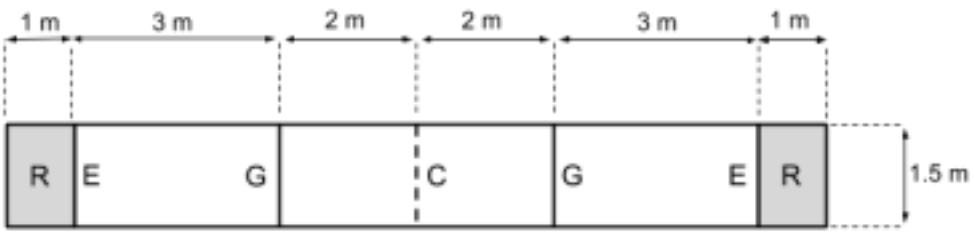
5.3.3. Total number of points scored by a fencer,

5.3.4. Total number of points scored against a fencer, and

5.3.5. Winner of the bout between two fencers who are otherwise tied on other criteria.

6. Match Format

6.1. Matches will be held on a piste 12m long and at least 1.5m wide, marked as below:



C Centre line

G On-guard lines

R Run back (extension of piste)

E End of piste (rear limit)

Diagram taken from the Radaelli Cup 2024 rules

6.2. Each match is fenced for a timed duration or until one fencer has reached a certain number of points, whichever occurs first. The timer will be stopped between exchanges, so that the timed duration of the match will only include fencing time.

6.2.1. During the pool round, each match is fenced for 2 minutes of fencing time or up to 5 points.

6.2.2. During the elimination round, each match is fenced for 4 minutes of fencing time or up to 10 points.

6.3. Play begins on the command from the referee (usually, "On guard. Ready? Fence.") and continues until stopped by a referee with the call of "Halt!"

6.4. The referee calls “Halt!” when a touch is scored, a fencer is disarmed, corps-à-corps occurs, immediately when time is reached, or for any other reason they deem necessary. When “Halt” is called, the fencers will immediately rise from their guard and step back out of measure.

6.5. At the beginning of the bout, and after a point has been scored, play begins with both fencers on their respective starting lines.

6.6. After an invalid touch, the referee resumes the bout in the same manner as after a point has been scored, but play begins at the part of the piste where the invalid touch was made.

6.7. If a fencer puts both feet outside the piste along the sides, the referee halts play and resets both fencers. Touches made after a fencer has stepped outside the piste are invalid, but fencers may step outside the piste in the course of performing a valid touch.

6.8. Winning a Match

6.8.1. In the pool round, the winner of a match is the fencer with the most points after 2 minutes, or the first fencer to reach 5 points, whichever is the first.

In the elimination round, the winner of a match is the fencer with the most points after 3 minutes, or the first fencer to reach 8 points, whichever is the first.

6.8.2. A match may not end as a tie. If, at the end of a match, both fencers' scores are equal, a

further minute is allowed to break the tie. A coin is tossed before the beginning of the extra time to determine the outcome of the match if neither fencer is to score within 60 seconds.

7. Scoring

7.1. A scoring touch is worth 1 point, awarded to the fencer who makes the touch.

7.2. A touch may be made with the edge or the point of the sword. Touches made with the edge must show adequate edge alignment (i.e. using the true edge, or the top third of the false edge on a sabre and full false edge of a rapier).

7.3. A touch will not score if it is insufficient in the opinion of the referee. The referee will deem a touch insufficient if:

7.3.1. A touch with the point does not stick,

7.3.2. A touch appears incidental and unintended,

7.3.3. A touch with the edge is given where a touch with the point was clearly intended; a passe thrust, or

7.3.4. A touch is given only superficially through an opponent's parry.

7.4. Touches will only score when made to the target area; touches outside the target area are considered invalid.

7.4.1. The target area for sabre is the body above waist and head, inclusive of all clothing and protective equipment. The weapon hand, back of head and spine, legs, groin and feet are off-target.

7.4.2. The target area for rapier is the body above the feet and head, inclusive of all clothing and protective equipment. The weapon hand, back of head and spine, groin and feet are all off target.

7.5. *After* the referee has determined the outcome of an exchange, fencers may self–call hits to their disadvantage, choosing to disclaim touches they have been awarded or admit to touches on themselves which were not seen. The referee may overrule self–calls at their discretion.

7.6. If one fencer leaves the back end of the piste with both feet, a point is awarded to the other fencer.

7.7. If one fencer is disarmed, a point is awarded to the other fencer.

7.8. If one fencer loses their weapon during the course of play and receives a touch in the same tempo, the touch is allowed. If there is a pause between the loss of weapon and the touch, the hit is not allowed.

7.9. Any attack that is initiated after the opponent's touch is completed (i.e. an afterblow) does not score.

7.10. <u>Adjudicating in the event of a double touch</u>

7.10.1 For Sabre:

Right of way exists to determine the outcome of exchanges in which both fencers are touched

in the same or successive fencing tempos (a double touch).

The fundamental aim of fencing is to hit without being hit. The premise of right of way is thus that if a double touch occurs, then one fencer must be more at fault for being hit, and the fencer who is least at fault is to be awarded the point. Fencers must respect an opponent's attack; the fencer who makes the first attack has right of way, and the other fencer must defend themselves in order to score.

In the event of a double touch, the order of hits is irrelevant, and right of way (thus, the scoring touch) will be determined as follows:

7.10.1.1 When there is an attack and a counterattack, the attack has right of way.

An attack is considered to begin when the hand and sword begin moving towards the target (not any the movement of the leg) in an attempt to touch. Any movement prior to the attack beginning (such as a feint, lifting of the arm or rotation of the sword backwards) is considered a preparation and does not grant the right of way.

Any attack made while moving backwards, standing still or making a small step forward while receiving a lunge, or dodging is likely to be considered a counterattack.

7.10.1.2. When there is a riposte and a remise/reprise/redoublement, the riposte has right of way.

When the riposte is delayed such that the remise lands at least one tempo *before* the riposte, the riposte is considered late and the remise/reprise/redoublement has priority.

7.10.1.3. When there is a point-in-line (i.e. a threatened thrust with the arm and sword pointed straight at the opponent's target) and an attack, the point-in-line has right of way as long as it was established before the attack was initiated.

7.10.1.4. When there is an attack made on the blade (such as a beat, prise de fer or engagement immediately followed by an attack) and an attack made directly, the attack on blade will have right of way. An attack on blade is considered to be successful if there is contact with the opponent's blade that noticeably displaces their sword.

An unsuccessful attack on blade (where there is no or insufficient contact) does not grant right of way.

7.10.1.5. When both fencers initiate attacks in the same tempo, neither fencer has right of way.

7.10.2. For the rapier event, in the event of two touches made in the same fencing moment, or tempo, defined by when the final action of the later touch is started before the earlier touch makes contact, No touch will be awarded.

8. Penalties

8.1. Cards will be issued by a Referee to address behaviour that is disallowed in accordance with the penalty table below.

8.2. Cards may be given during the match, or retrospectively, and so alter results after a match has finished. A fencer awarded a card outside of a match setting, shall have the card applied to their next match at the start of their bout, or to their last match should all of their matches be completed.

8.3. If a fencer incurs a card during a fencing phrase resulting in a touch made by that fencer, their point is annulled.

8.4. Cards will carry the following effects:

8.4.1. Yellow Card: an official warning valid for the duration of a bout.

8.4.2. Red Card: a point is awarded against the offender.

8.4.3. Black Card: the offender is ejected from the event, and withdrawn from the competition, and their results for all bouts completed within the competition are altered to a complete loss.

8.5. All offences with the pattern of yellow, red, and red for the first 3 offences are considered a shared group of offences.

8.6. If a fencer has received a red card for committing an offence from the group of offences, any further group offence they commit will result in a red card rather than a yellow.

Penalty Table

OFFENCE	**PENALTIES**		
Non presentation on the piste ready to fence when ordered by the referee	**1st call**	**2nd call**	**3rd call bout loss**

OFFENCE	**PENALTIES**	
1st group	**1st offence 2nd offence**	**3rd offence**
Leaving the piste unpermitted	**YELLOW RED**	**RED**
Unnecessary interruption of the bout		
Presenting to the piste without proper equipment		
Refusal to obey the referee		
Irregular movements on the piste; violent hits or hits incorporating the momentum of falling over		
Contradicting/casting doubt on the decision of the Referee on a point of fact		

Entering the piste area without permission		
Covering a valid target or exposing the back to the opponent unnecessarily		
Deliberate wrestling to the body, hand parrying or grabbing the opponent's blade in sabre, or wrestling beyond the arm or grabbing a moving blade or the top 10cm of an opponent's blade, or attempting to hand parry a cut in rapier,		
Missing control marks from weapon check	**RED RED**	**RED**
Dangerous, violent, or vindictive actions, hits given with the hilt		
Passivity (no scoring or non-scoring action made in a 60 second period)		

OFFENCE	**PENALTIES**	
2nd group	**1st offence**	**2nd offence**
Any person not on piste disturbing good order. In the most serious cases, the referee may award a black card immediately	**YELLOW**	**BLACK**
Warming up or training without wearing appropriate protection		
Anti-sporting behaviour, acts of disrespect, taunting, showboating, threatening behaviour		

Competitor disturbing order when on the field of play. In the most serious cases, the Referee may award a black card immediately. **RED BLACK**

Dangerous action		
Dishonest fencing		

OFFENCE	
3rd group	**PENALTY**
Fraudulent equipment, using control marks that were not rightly obtained	
Refusal to fence	
Refusal to salute the opponent	
Deliberate or reckless brutality	
Offence against sportsmanship	**BLACK**

Sexual conduct; nudity; public undressing that exposes what would be covered by shorts or a sports bra

Solicitation

Gambling

Unleashing an animal

(Adapted from the Radaelli Cup 2024 rules)

Version Control