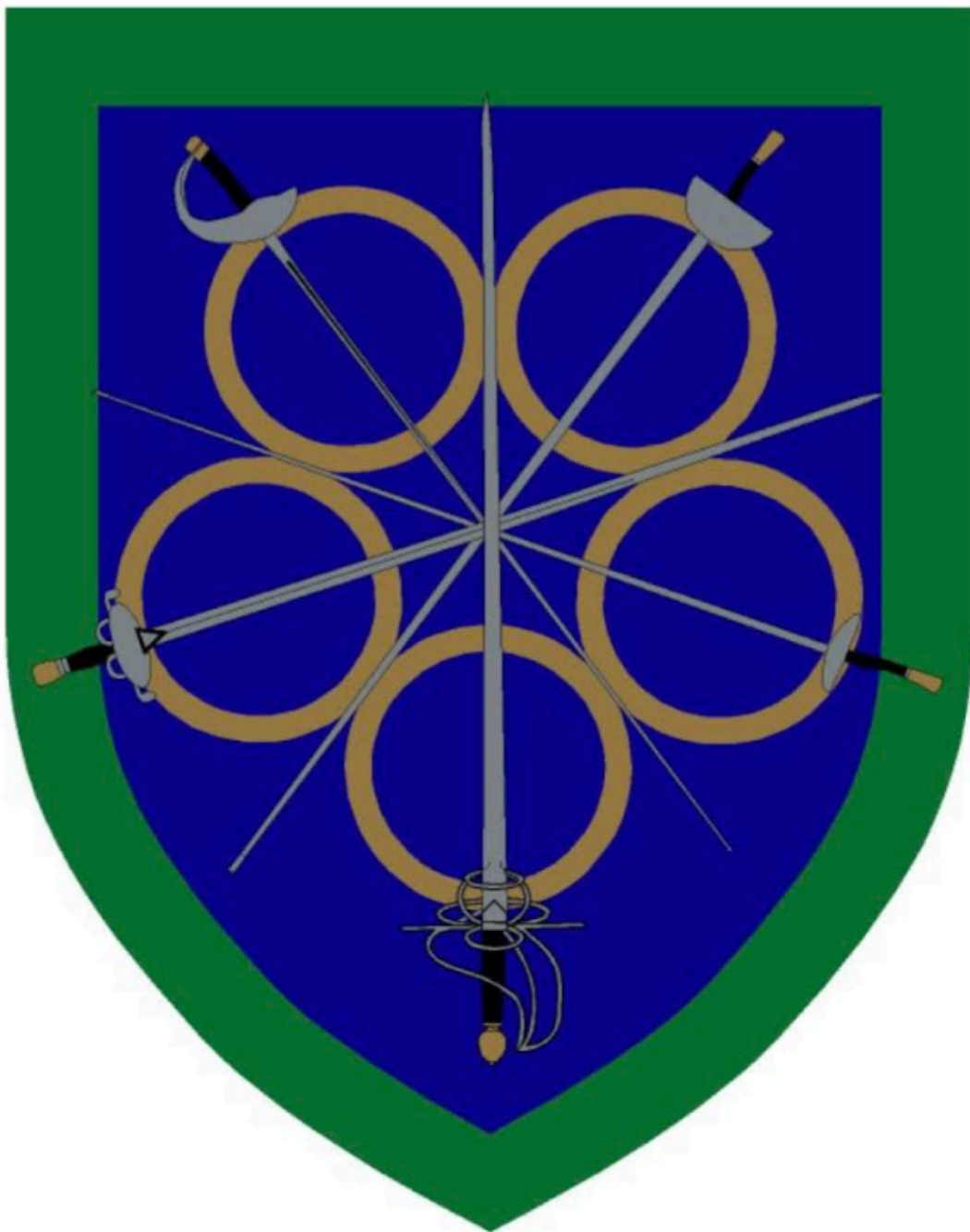


Five Rings Classical

2026



Brought to you by Five Rings Fencing

“When you count all the benefits of swordsmanship,
there are so many as to encompass all the virtues of
heaven and earth.”

—Yagyu Muneyoshi, 17th century

Contact

For questions or concerns, please reach out to Five Rings Fencing at
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A special thanks to all our volunteers that make running an
event like this possible. Also a big thank you to Heartland
HEMA for allowing us to use the Donnybrook rules as a starting
point.

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1. Summary

- a. This summary does not include all of the information a fencer needs to participate. Please make sure to read the document carefully, and pay attention to the details.
- b. All fencers must have proper safety and fencing gear.
- c. Saber

- i. Saber will follow a unique rule set based off the 1800's Italian Military Academy saber fencing rules
 - ii. Pools and Eliminations are to 5 points and 3 minutes long.
 - iii. Scoring
 - 1. All targets are 1 point
 - 2. Priority system in use.
- d. Courtsword and, Sword and Buckler
 - i. Pools are to 11 points and 1 minute long.
 - ii. Elimination matches are to 11 points with a win by 2 condition. Bouts are 3 minutes long.
 - iii. Scoring:
 - 1. Headshots = 3 points, afterblows 2 points
 - 2. Torso shots = 3 points, afterblows 2 points
 - 3. Arm shots = 2 points, afterblows 1 point
 - 4. Leg shots = 1 point, afterblows 1 point
 - 5. Controlled disarms = 4 points, afterblows 3 points
 - 6. Pommel strike to mask = 2 points, afterblows 1 point
 - 7. Ring out = 2 points
- e. Attacks are allowed to the whole body, excluding back of head and spine.
- f. Attacks may be: percussive cuts, draw cuts, thrusts, or pommel/guard to mask.
- g. Any fencer that is not at the ring when their bout is called will receive a 1 minute warning. If they are not in the ring and ready to fence at the end of that count, they will be considered to have forfeited the match.

2. Introduction

- a. These rules were composed by referencing historical context, historical rule sets, and as well as taking inspiration from contemporary tournament rules. These rules are written to be as comprehensive as possible. In order to foster a deeper understanding of the rules, the reasonings behind the rules are given. The rules are written in outline format to make them flow more logically as well as make referencing any specific rule easier. We are more than happy to answer questions or discuss any concerns you may have.
- b. Please keep in mind that everything in this document is subject to change the day of, at the discretion of the tournament director.

3. Equipment

- a. All equipment will be checked by an appointed representative of the Five Rings Classical tournament before use is permitted.

b. Protective Gear and Clothing

- i. Mandatory Items:
 - 1. No bare skin may be exposed by combatants while participating.
 - a. Including back of legs.
 - 2. A 350N+ HEMA/Olympic Fencing jacket.
 - 3. Fencing mask with back of head cover.
 - a. Masks must be in good condition with no discernible rusting, large visible dents, breaches of the mesh, tongue, or bib.
 - 4. Gorget or some form of rigid trachea protection.
 - 5. Gloves for both hands.
 - 6. Hard protective elbow coverings. Must reasonably protect the sides of the joints.
 - 7. Hard protective knee coverings and shin guards. Must reasonably protect the sides of the knees.
 - 8. Shoes must be worn during tournaments.
 - 9. Athletic cup for testicle protection.
 - a. An external codpiece is not an athletic cup.
- ii. Highly recommended but not mandatory items:
 - 1. Additional padding for thighs and torso.
 - 2. Forearm protection.
 - 3. Extra protection for offhand. i.e. hard shell or heavier padded glove.

4. Rigid chest protection for all participants.
5. A padded jacket. 350N+ Fencing jacket is the minimum required protection, but we highly recommend a padded jacket for your comfort and protection.

c. *Weapons*

- i. All weapons must reasonably be able to be classified as the weapons they are based on historically.
- ii. Tournament director shall have, in their sole discretion, final approval over the acceptableness of any weapon.
- iii. All weapons must be tipped.
 1. It is much preferred that the tips are industry standard rubber or plastic tips, such as thermoplastic. If that is not a feasible option, leather tips may be permissible upon approval by the director.
 2. This is for protection of both other fencers, and the tournament space.
- iv. All weapons must have been made for the specific purpose of being fenced with.
 1. Retrofitted, or broken blades are not permitted.
- v. All weapons should be steel. Bucklers may be nylon synthetic.

4. General Rules

- a. These rules are composed to foster a style of fencing that encourages fencers to be aggressive with their attacks while remaining defensive in their nature. This rule set took inspiration from both historical accounts as well as contemporary modern rule sets. The rules were written to balance traditional tournament rules, while still holding true to the principle that these are training weapons for real historical martial sword fighting.

b. *Target*

- i. The whole body is a target except for the following.
 1. The only parts of the body that are off target are the spine and back of head for safety.
 2. Given that these parts of the body are off target for safety reasons, attacks to these parts of the body may at the discretion of the head judge or director result in a penalty.

3. Exposing the back of your head to being struck may, at the discretion of the head judge or director, be penalized as well.

c. Force of Hits

- i. It is the view of the Five Rings Fencing that recreating historical fighting is hypothetical and is greatly dependent upon the context in which it is being presented. The level of clothing/armor, geographical location, time in history, who would be fighting and under what circumstances, would all change the way a fight would proceed. Different situations would necessitate different actions from the fighters. A battlefield needs different moves and levels of force than a duel, which might not require the same actions as a civilian defense situation. Given that context of any given fight is highly situational and that there will ALWAYS be an exception to any rule that we could possibly write; Five Rings Fencing holds the opinion that:
 1. Not all blows need, nor should be, lethal ones with lethal level of force.
 2. A blow to the leg, hand, or flank might well be all that is needed in any given fight or pass.
 3. Following that logic, one is not required to chop off an arm when a solid cut to the hand might do. The level of force the club is looking for, is force that would **WOUND** your opponent.
 - a. Force that is deemed insufficient to deliver a true wound, not simply a scratch, will not be counted.
 4. Excessive force is not needed and may at the discretion of the head judge or director be penalized.
- ii. Attacks that arrive through a good parry are very likely not going to be counted. Most of the force that would have been needed to wound your opponent would have been taken away from the attack with the contact to the steel.
- iii. If a strike clearly and obviously displaces a parry and lands with sufficient force; that is a mal parry, and the strike will most likely be counted.

d. Attacks

- i. Attacks are either:
 1. Thrusts
 2. Percussive cuts
 3. Draw cuts
 4. Pommel to the mask.
- ii. Incidental/unintentional contact, and or slop, does not count.
- iii. Further explanation of attacks:
 1. Thrusts:
 - a. The point needs much less force to pierce than a cut would to hue. Therefore, attacks with the point need significantly less force to be called valid.
 - b. The thrust must land true. Any attack that is deemed to not have stuck solid and instead slid off your opponent (passe') will be ignored.
 2. Cuts:
 - a. All cuts must be with the perceived edge of the blade.
 - b. Percussive cuts:
 - i. Must be made with at least 45 degrees.
 - ii. Must be with the distal 2/3 of the blade.
 - iii. Cuts made with the forte/strong of the blade are not counted.
 - c. Draw cuts:
 - i. Draw cuts can only be pulled, not pushed.
 - ii. At least half the blade must be pulled in the draw for it to count.
 - iii. Draw cuts must be made with sufficient, obvious force being applied against your opponent while executing the draw.
 - iv. Simply placing the blade and pulling will be deemed insufficient.
 3. Pommel/Guard to the mask:
 - a. You may deliver a strike to your opponent's mask with the guard, or pommel of your sword.
 - b. These attacks to the mask must NOT be delivered with full force. Full force used with

- these attacks may at the discretion of the head judge or director be penalized.
- c. A presentation of threat or light contact is all that is necessary.
 - d. The attack is judged valid on the basis that you could have delivered the strike with sufficient force against your opponent.
 - i. Strikes where your arm is tied up with your opponent or other situations in which the judges deems it unlikely you would have been able to deliver a sufficient strike with the attack will not be counted.
 - ii. Quillion strikes are strictly forbidden. They are simply too dangerous to practice safely.
 - 1. A quillion strike may at the discretion of the head judge or director result in a penalty.
 - e. Pommel/ guard to the mask is worth 2 points.

5. Scoring

- a. The scoring system for Smallsword and, Sword and Buckler is the same. There is a unique scoring system used in the saber tournament.
 - i. See the saber section for further details.
- b. The point system is designed to encourage fencers to attack areas of the body that would do the most physiological damage and/or give significant advantage in a sword fight.
- c. Head= 3 points
 - i. Head is defined as hits to the mask and bib.
- d. Torso= 3 points
 - i. Torso is defined as the shoulder seams of the jacket to the bottom of the waist (often this is the bottom of the jacket).
- e. Arms= 2 points
 - i. Arms are defined as outside the shoulder seam to the fingers, thus including the hands.
- f. Legs= 1 point
 - i. Legs are defined as from the waist to the toe, thus including the knees and below.
- g. Pommel/guard to the mask = 2 points.

- i. Quillion shots are illegal and may at the discretion of the head judge or director result in a penalty.

6. Afterblows

- a. The purpose of the afterblow is to encourage a style of fencing that is defensive in nature. The purpose of learning to sword fight is to learn how to survive a sword fight. We wish to foster a style of fencing that would not purposely leave one exposed to being struck, and to eliminate suicidal actions. It is good technique to not overextend oneself during an attack. It is also good technique to protect oneself after completing an attack by either taking distance or performing a parry. There are many historical accounts, as well as modern ones, where fencers were able to keep fighting after being wounded. There are also as many examples where a single touch has stopped a fencer from being able to continue fighting.
- b. **There is no way of knowing how a fencer would react to being wounded in any given pass.**
 - i. Therefore, the assumption that a touch would stop the fencer, and the assumption that the same touch would not stop a fencer, are both equally valid. Given that both assumptions are true it is fair to treat an afterblow as real, but not give it as much priority as the initial attack.
- c. **Afterblow Scoring**
 - i. The scoring system that the Five Rings Fencing has created to use is positive in nature, not negative. If both fencers were to take hits in real sword play both would have received wounds. Therefore, both fencers will receive points in an afterblow situation. But as stated above the afterblow should not receive the same weight as the initial attack.
 - ii. A fencer struck with a valid hit has one fencing tempo to land an attack.
 - iii. If the afterblow lands true, then the fencer that initiated the afterblow gets the points he or she would have received minus one - to a minimum of one point.
 - 1. Head = 2 points
 - 2. Torso = 2 points
 - 3. Arms = 1 point
 - 4. Legs = 1 point
 - 5. Pommel strike to mask = 1 point
 - 6. Controlled disarms = 3 points

- d. The afterblow is not a double. An afterblow has a distinctly different tempo after the original attack lands.
- e. Examples:
 - i. Fencer A strikes Fencer B in the flank (worth 3 points). In time, Fencer B strikes Fencer A on the head with an afterblow (worth 2 points). Fencer A gets 3 points and Fencer B receives 2 points for the pass.
 - ii. Fencer A strikes Fencer B in the leg (worth 1 point). In time, Fencer B strikes Fencer A on the arm with an afterblow (worth 1 point). Fencer A gets 1 point and Fencer B receives 1 point for the pass.
 - iii. Fencer A strikes Fencer B on the leg (worth 1 point). In time, Fencer B strikes Fencer A on the head with an afterblow (worth 2 points). Fencer A gets 1 point and Fencer B receives 2 points for the pass. Note, you might not end up ahead if you overextend yourself and don't protect after you attack.

7. Doubles

- a. Two hits that both land in the same fencing tempo are considered a double hit.
- b. Doubles are counted when blows land, not when blows start.
- c. This situation is one that should be avoided, if at all possible.
- d. No points are awarded for a pass that ends in a double.
- e. In Pools:
 - i. Three doubles in a single bout will result in both fencers losing that bout.
- f. In Eliminations:
 - i. Three doubles in a single bout will not lose anyone that match. Play will continue until a winner is decided in the normal fashion. However, whomever wins, in their next match, their opponent starts the bout with three points.

8. Grappling

- a. Grappling with your opponent's arms or your opponent's hilt is legal.
- b. Grabbing your opponent's blade with your hand is not legal and will count as a hand strike against you.
- c. If a grapple ensues, the head judge will out loud, very loudly,

count to three. If nothing is done by the count of three, then the fencers will be reset.

- d. Throws, trips, or take downs are not permitted and may at the discretion of the head judge or director be penalized. An intentional throw may result in a match forfeit or if severe enough removal from the tournament.
 - i. This is done purely for safety.
- e. A fencer that grapples with their opponent in a manner deemed unsafe by the judges will at the discretion of the head judge or director be penalized.
- f. Strikes to your opponent with your body (punches, kicks, head-butts, etc.) are not allowed and may at the discretion of the head judge or director result in a penalty.

9. Disarms

- a. Disarms must be controlled.
- b. To achieve the disarm points you must have purposely disarmed your opponent, and still be able to present a threat to your opponent.
 - i. If your opponent is able to engage with you in a way that would prevent you from attacking, no disarm points will be awarded.
- c. To disarm someone would win the fight in a decisive and controlled manner. These moves are difficult to execute but when done properly definitively win the fight. Therefore, disarms receive the most points possible in this ruleset.
- d. Disarming your opponent will result in scoring 4 points.
- e. Accidentally dropping your weapon, or a weapon dropped for safety reasons is not considered as a disarm.

10. Boundary

- a. Besides the purely logistical and safety reasons for having a defined boundary, being aware of your surroundings is an extremely important aspect of fighting. Given that we are simulating sword fighting, having a boundary in which you are punished for leaving is the way Five Rings Fencing has chosen to simulate obstacles in real life. True, you would probably not have fought next to a lava river or a laser wall, but there could have been a tree, stream, ditch, stair, pot, rock... there are practically limitless examples of obstacles that might have presented a danger in which a fencer would have needed to be mindful of when fighting.
- b. The boundary for the match will be clearly defined.

- c. If a fencer is pushed or steps out of bounds their opponent will receive 2 points.
- d. A fencer is out of bounds if both feet have left the defined match area.
 - i. If the fencer's foot is still on, or above, the line or further inside, the fencer is in bounds.
- e. Going out of bounds anytime during the play will result in your opponent receiving two points. This applies even if you have landed a strike.
 - i. Example: Fencer A strikes Fencer B in the arm (worth 2 points) and before Fencer B has a chance to land a valid afterblow, Fencer A runs out of bounds (worth 2 points). Fencer A receives 2 points and Fencer B receives 2 points.
- f. If a blow lands on a fencer before they step out of bounds, or a blow lands within one fencing tempo of the fencer moving out of bounds; the higher points are scored
 - i. Example: Fencer A is stepping out of bounds (worth 2 points) and within a fencing tempo is struck in the head (worth 3 points). Fencer B would receive 3 points.

11. Time

- a. Saber
 - i. Matches are to 3 minutes.
- b. Courtsword and, Sword and Buckler
- c. Pools: bouts are 1 minute long.
 - i. Eliminations: bouts are 3 minutes long.
- d. The clock will only run-down during play. When play is stopped, the clock will be paused.
- e. If play is occurring when the time runs out, the play will continue until a halt is called naturally. This will end the match.
- f. The play is not stopped because time ran out.

12. Winning the Bout

- a. Smallsword and, Sword and Buckler
 - i. Pools will go to a score of 11 points.
 - ii. Elimination matches are to 11 points with a win by 2 points condition.
 - 1. Example: Fencer A is losing 9 to 10 and scores an arm shot. This puts fencer A at 11 to 10. The match is not over yet. You must win by 2 point
 - iii. If after time has run out AND the play has stopped, there is a fencer with a higher score, he or she wins the match regardless of the "win by 2" condition.
 - 1. Example: At the end of a match, after play has stopped and time has run out, Fencer A has 13 points and fencer B Has 12 points. Fencer A wins the match.
 - iv. In pools, if after play has stopped, there is time still on the clock, and both fighters have reached a score of 11 or higher, sudden death will commence.
- b. Saber
 - i. Matches are to 5 points.

13. Ties

- a. There is a tie if at the end of the last play, after the clock has run out, both combatants have the same score. In the event of a tie, sudden death will commence.
- b. Sudden death
 - i. The fencers will continue until there is a pass in which one fencer takes the advantage.
 - 1. Example: Fencer A strikes fencer B in the leg (worth 1 points). In time, Fencer B strikes fencer A on the head with an afterblow (worth 2 points). Fencer A gets 1 point and Fencer B receives 2 points for the pass. This would win Fencer B the match.

14. Penalties

- a. The purpose of this system is to keep fencers from repeatedly putting themselves, the event space, or others in potentially dangerous situations.
- b. There is no all-encompassing list of penalties. Generally, be good sports, be kind, be respectful, and don't put yourself or other fencers in danger. A list of common actions that may result in penalties is provided at the end of this section.
- c. This is a martial arts tournament, which means there is inherent danger involved. It is of the utmost importance that all fighters feel safe while fighting. We are pretending to hurt each other, not actually trying to hurt one another. Fighters are to show respect to their fellow competitors, the event staff, and the space/equipment at all times. Fighters are to behave in a sportsman like and polite manner at all times.
- d. In order to keep the flow of the event moving, any fencer that is not at the ring when their bout is called will receive a 1 minute warning. If they are not in the ring and ready to fence at the end of that count, they will be considered to have forfeited the match.
- e. For the same infraction; two official warnings will be given to the fencer. The third time a fencer commits the same infraction, will result in the fencer's opponent being awarded one point. If the fencer does the same infraction a fourth time, he or she will lose the bout they are in. If a fifth infraction for the same rule happens, the fencer will be asked to leave the tournament.
 - i. Director and judges shall have sole discretion in this matter. Egregious or intentional acts that put fencers at risk may result in match forfeit or loss of points, or even tournament expulsion without initial warnings.
 - ii. You may hear these warnings referred to as "Yellow cards" - regardless of the terminology the head judge uses the process is the same.
- f. This system extends throughout the whole of the Five Rings Classical tournament, not just a single bout or weapon event.
 - i. For example; a fencer might be warned three times about excessive force, in three different bouts. On that third infraction the fencer he or she is facing will get an extra point.
 - ii. Being warned for different offenses does not compound on one another.

1. For example, a fencer might be warned about exposing the back of their head, and for excessive force. These are different warnings.
- g. Penalties are dependent on severity. If the director or head judge feels that a particular penalty is especially egregious, he or she may implement a punishment based on their best judgment.
- h. Common Actions Resulting in Penalties:
 - i. Striking the Floor: Fencers are asked not to strike the floor due to potential to damage the court. Excessive striking of the floor may result in a penalty or removal from the bout.
 - ii. Any strike thrown with unrestrained force on the part of the attacker. Should a safety issue arise, a fighter must do everything in their power to arrest their strike in progress.
 - iii. Striking the spine or back of the head to the opponent. Note that if your opponent does expose such targets it is still your responsibility to do what you can to arrest the power of your strike.
 - iv. Exposing the spine or back of the head to the opponent. Kicks, repetitive punching, throws, 'Mordschlag'.

15. Judging

- a. There will be one head judge and one to two line judges per each ring.
- b. Head Judge
 - i. Oversees the bout. They start and stop the play. They are in charge of calling the play, awarding points, and notifying the scoring table.
- c. Line Judges
 - i. Will assist the head judge by giving their opinion of the play. They may call "POINT" if they believe they saw a strike land. They should not call "HALT" unless they see a safety issue. They are there to assist the head judge, but the head judge has final say on what happened.
- d. Safety
 - i. Anyone at the tournament may call "HALT" if they notice an impending equipment failure or other safety risk. Fighters are expected to stop in place, until the head judge directs them otherwise.
 1. Examples of the time to use this would be: a

participant's gear has a critical failure, a blade is snapping, a sword tip flies off, a random child runs into the ring, a medical event, etc.

e. Self Calls

- i. You are highly encouraged to decline any points given to you or call a hit upon yourself should you believe the judge made such a call in error.
- ii. Please note you should not be calling points you believe you landed or denying hits upon yourself. You may only make self calls that benefit your opponent.
- iii. Even in cases where a fencer calls a hit on his/herself or declines points, the head judge has ultimate say and may override the fencer if they believe they saw the action more clearly than the fencer did.
 1. This power should be used extremely sparingly.

f. Challenging a call

- i. At any time, you may ask for clarification on a rule. You may also ask the head judge to narrate the play of a pass at any time.
- ii. If there is a particular call that you as the fencer believe was significantly incorrect, you may ask the head judge over to your corner to give your concerns. Please do this in a calm, polite, and respectful manner. Please use this privilege sparingly.
- iii. From there, it is up to the head judge on how best to proceed. They may gather more information from the line judges, overturn the call, provide further explanation as to why the call was made, or dismiss the concerns.
 1. If this privilege is abused by a fencer either excessively or disrespectfully, the head judge may start dismissing their concerns outright.

16. Play

- a. The fencers will be assigned a color, go to their respective corners, salute their opponent, the head judge and line judges. The head judge will ask if each fencer is ready and start the match.
- b. The head judge and the line judges watch the play. If any observe a strike land, he/she will call out "POINT". The head judge will give one fencing tempo to allow for an after-blow then call "HALT".
- c. It is up to the head judge to end the pass by calling "HALT". If

the head judge doesn't call "HALT" the fighting continues.

- d. A call of "POINT" does not stop the play.
- e. Keep fighting and keep your guard up until "HALT" is called.
- f. ALL action must stop at the call of HALT. Any action that is initiated after the call of "HALT" may at the discretion of the head judge or director result in a penalty.
 - i. In case of a safety concern, "HALT" should be called by any person, head judge, line judge, fighter, or spectator that sees the safety concern.
- g. After a pass is stopped, the head judge and line judges will determine the play. The head judge will relate the play to the fencers and award points. If fighters wish to acknowledge hits upon themselves or deny points awarded to themselves, this is the time to do so. The head judge will then announce to the table what the points are. The table will then repeat back the points and current score before the head judge proceeds to the next pass.
 - i. Communication with the table is key to a smooth-running tournament.
- h. Danger Zone
 - i. In a situation in which the play was stopped but no points were awarded (this includes doubles) the fencers will be reset in "the Danger Zone" and asked to cross swords.
 - ii. The Danger zone will be at about lunging distance. It is here that the fencers will reset themselves.
- i. At the end of every match, you must salute your opponent and the judges.
- j. Fighters are invited to check the score of the match before leaving the ring.
- k. Once the match has been submitted no changes will be made to the score. Speak now or forever hold your peace.

18. Progression

- a. Pools
 - i. There will be round robin pools to determine seeding.
 - ii. The pools will be assigned randomly with the following exceptions:
 - 1. An attempt will be made to make it so people from the same club are not in the same pool as much as possible.
 - 2. If a "murder" pool is randomly made, the director

can move fighters around to increase the fairness of pools.

- b. Seeding
 - i. Seeding will be determined first by win/loss record.
 - ii. If there is a tie, points scored against you will be the second variable used.
 - iii. Points scored for you will be the will be the third variable used
 - iv. Number of doubles fourth variable used.
 - v. If there is still a tie, a match will be fought for placement.
- c. After round robin pools, a single elimination tournament will begin.
 - i. ALL fighters will break into brackets for the elimination portion of the tournament.

19. Sword and Buckler Specifics

- a. All weapons must, at the director's discretion, be reasonably able to be classified as NOT a rapier.
 - i. Examples of swords we are looking to see are: heavy sabers, messers, arming swords, sideswords, claymore (basket hilt broadswords), dussacks ...What we are not looking for are rapiers
 - ii. The blade may not be longer than 36 inches, from the guard to the tip.
 - iii. Triangular blades are not permitted
 - iv. If you are unsure if your guard fits these requirements, please reach out to us at mark@fiveringsfencing.org
- b. Bucklers have the following requirements:
 - i. Bucklers must be true to size. No buckler may be longer in any dimension than 16 inches.
 - ii. Bucklers may not be affixed to your arm with a strap.
- c. Bucklers may be presented to a mask similar to a pommel strike.
 - i. See rules for pommel strikes above - these must NOT be delivered as full force.
- d. Given the heavier profile of many sword blades allowed in sword and buckler, it is recommended that fencers use gloves with rigid hand protection if their chosen sword does not have a complex guard that will properly protect their hand.

20. Courtsword/ Smallsword

- a. All weapons must, at director's discretion, reasonably be able to be classified as a Courtsword.
 - i. The blade may not be longer than 32 inches, from the guard to tip.
 - ii. All blades must be triangular in shape.
 - 1. ONLY TRIANGULAR BLADES WILL BE ALLOWED IN THIS EVENT!
 - 2. Flat, foil, rectangular, square or diamond cross-section blades are not triangular and will therefore not be counted as a smallsword nor allowed in this event.
 - a. No Spadroons
 - 3. Colichmarde blades are allowed, if still triangular.
 - iii. No modern orthotic or pistol grips will be permitted in this event.
- b. The smallsword was a civilian personal defense weapon. This is as much a brawl as it is a duel. Grappling with your opponent's arms and guard is highly encouraged.
- c. The smallsword is a thrust only weapon
 - i. Cuts do not count
 - ii. The blade had only a slight edge to it. Therefore, wrapping your opponent's blade in your arm is permissible. Grabbing your opponent's blade with your hand will not be allowed.
 - 1. The smallsword was edged enough that you would get cut if you tried to grab the blade with a hand
- d. Knee, shin, and elbow padding is not mandatory in smallsword.
 - i. No skin may be showing.

21. Saber Specific rules

- a. Saber will run on a different rule set than the other two events. This event will run off rules based on the 1800's Italian military academy ruleset.
- b. Weapons
 - i. All weapons must reasonably be able to be classified as a saber
 - ii. The blade may not be longer than 34 inches, from the guard to the tip.
 - iii. Trooper/heavy or dueling/officer sabers are allowed. This would probably give the advantage to the lighter weapon

but historically both were used.

- iv. Modern Olympic saber blades and the straight Hanwei blades are not permitted.
- b. Scoring
 - i. Bouts will go to a score of 5 points.
 - ii. All targets are worth 1 point.
 - iii. Bouts are 3 minutes long, stop time.
- c. The saber tournament rules are based on the 1800's Italian military academy dueling saber rules. There is the essence of right of way present in this rule set. It is not true right of way as seen in modern sport fencing, but the spirit is here in these rules. For people that do not have right of way experience, please look up the USFA rules to have a better understanding. In military saber, unlike the rest of the tournaments, there is no situation in which both fencers are awarded points in a single pass. If a true double hit occurs, where no fencer is at fault, then no one is awarded points or priority. And there is no penalty for a true double. If a double hit occurs where one fencer was at fault (didn't have right of way) then the fencer that was not at fault is awarded priority but no points are awarded in that pass. What priority means is; the next time a double hit occurs for any reason at all, the fencer with the priority will get the point for that pass (even if he/she was at fault and did not have right of way). After that pass priority is reset. There are no afterblows.
 - i. Quick and dirty introduction to right of way. Right of way really is quite simple. The idea behind it is, during training for a real duel, which is what we are doing, fencers don't fence like they would if live blades were being used and injury was really going to happen to them. Right of way rules are there to try to encourage a style of fencing that would work and make sense if actual live blades were being used. Right of way only applies when there is a double hit. If only one fencer makes a touch, then it does not matter if they have right of way or not.
 - ii. That is the theory, here is an overview of right of way If fencer A starts an attack, then fencer A has taken right of way.
 - 1. To start an attack is defined as the blade moving toward fencer B in a threatening motion. The arm, not the leg, must be the part of the body that

moves to begin an attack. Being out of distance means you are not making a threatening motion.

- a. Fencer B may not attack fencer A until he/she has taken right of way from fencer A or fencer A has lost right of way.
2. In order to take right of way; Fencer B must parry fencer A or fencer A must lose his/her attack.

iii. Examples

1. Fencer A attacks fencer B. Fencer B counter attacks Fencer A. Both attacks land in the same tempo. Fencer A was in the right of way. Fencer B did not have right of way and should have parried or retreated.
2. Fencer A and Fencer B both attack in the same tempo. Both fencers land. Right of way was not established by either fencer and this is a true double. Nothing is done and the fighters are reset to their sides.
3. Fencer A attacks, fencer B parries and riposte (counter attacks after a parry). Fencer A remises (continuation of the original attack without right of way). Both fencer's land. Fencer B is in the right of way. Fencer A should have retreated after he/she was parried or counter parried fencer B's riposte
4. Fencer A starts an attack but then falters and hesitates. Fencer B counter attacks in the lost time. Fencer A renews the original attack. Both fencer's land. Fencer B was in right of way. Right of way only lasts for one fencing tempo. It is not held indefinitely. Once fencer A stopped his/her attack he/she lost right of way. It is important to note that withdrawing your hand while attacking, ends the current attack and therefore loses the fencer right of way.
5. Fencer A attacks fencer B. Fencer B parries but hesitates on his/her reposts. Both fencers start new attacks at the same time and both land. Neither fencer had right of way. ▪ Fencer B had right of way after his/her parry but hesitated and lost it. Right of way only lasts for one fencing tempo. It is not held indefinitely

22.Awards

a. Each tournament will have medals for the top 4 fencers.

b. Heart of Steel - Best Overall Fencer

- i. The top four fencers in each event will receive points towards a total overall score for all events. This means that the more events you fence, the more you increase your odds of winning.
- ii. The total number of fencers you placed ahead of is the base score you receive toward Heart of Steel.
 1. Example with 21 fighters.
 2. 1st place out of 21 fighters receives 20 points
 3. 2nd place out of 21 fighters receives 19 points
 4. 3rd place out of 21 fighters receives 18 points
 5. 4th place out of 21 fighters receives 17 points
- iii. Winning is heavily rewarded:
 1. 1st place receives 10 additional points, 2nd 5 additional, 3rd 2 additional points, 4th no additional point.
 2. 1st place out of 21 fighters receives 30 points
 3. 2nd place out of 21 fighters receives 24 points
 4. 3rd place out of 21 fighters receives 20 points
 5. 4th place out of 21 fighters receives 17 points
- iv. At the end of all events the score will be tallied, and the Heart of Steel will be crowned.

c. Iron Amazon

- i. This award goes to the best overall woman fencer.
- ii. Participants are required to opt-in to this award during registration.
- iii. Scoring
 1. The women fencers in each event will receive points toward a total overall score for all events. This means that the more events you fence, the more you increase your odds of winning.
 2. Iron Amazon uses the same scoring system as the Heart of Steel award.