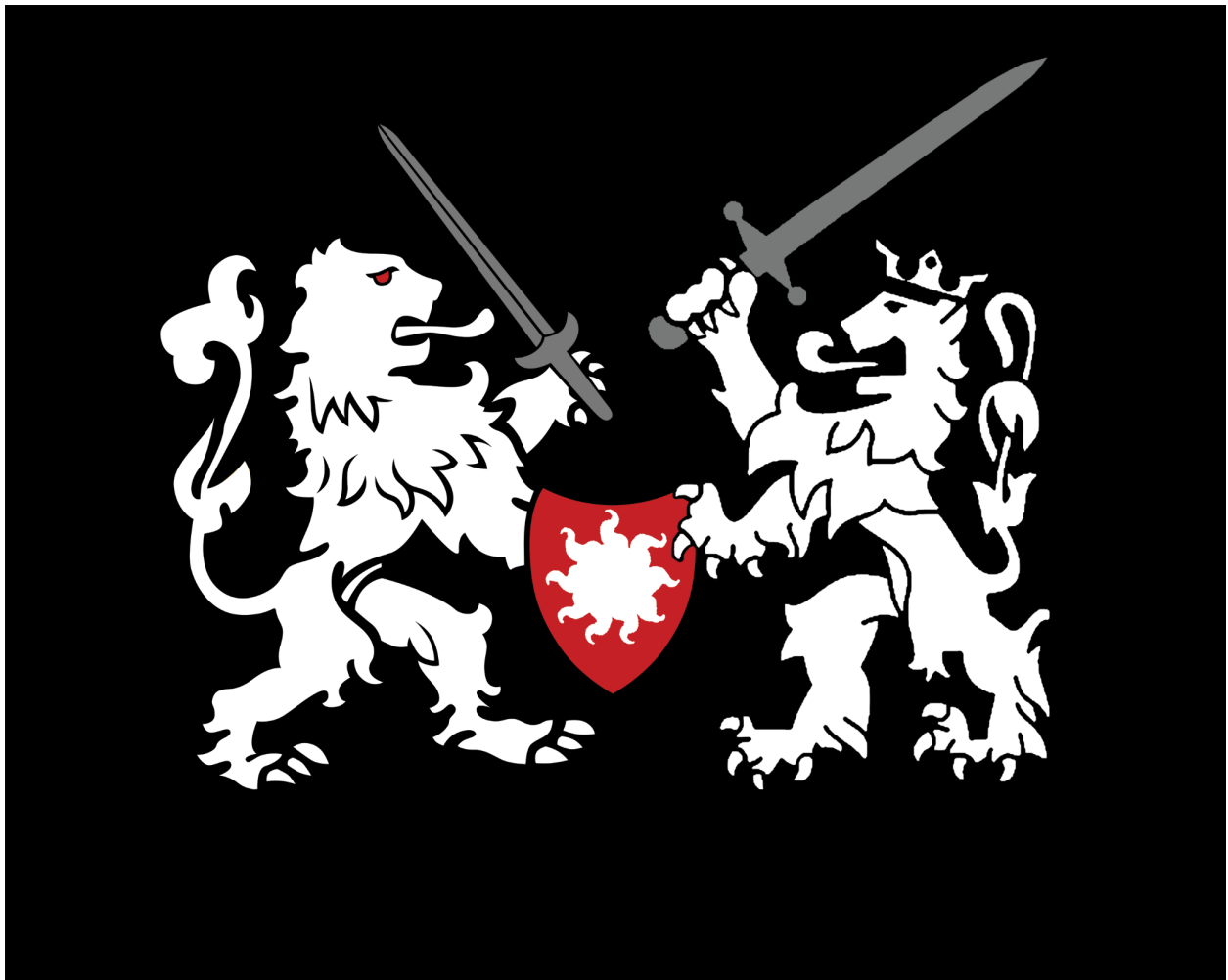


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Longsword ruleset



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1. Tournament structure

General structure

For the scoring system and match procedure, see Chapter 2.

Pool phase

The tournament will begin with a pool phase, which may consist of multiple rounds depending on the number of participants, disciplines, and divisions. In the pool phase, each participant will fight against every other participant in their group to determine their ranking and seeding for the elimination bracket.

The number of participants advancing to the elimination phase will be determined by the organisers based on the total number of entrants.

Match points

Match points determine a participant's placement in the elimination phase. These are based on the outcomes of the matches during the pool phase. If two or more participants finish with an equal number of match points, ranking will first be decided by the number of points received, and then, if still tied, by the number of points scored.

When online software (such as *HEMA Scorecard*) is used, these calculations will be made automatically.

Eliminations and finals

The pool phase is followed by the elimination rounds. Qualification for this phase is based on results from the pools. Pairings for the elimination matches are determined according to ranking: the top-ranked fighter will face the lowest-ranked qualifying fighter, the second-ranked will face the second-lowest, and so on. Unlike the pool phase, only the winner of each match advances to the next round.

Matches continue until four fighters remain, after which the tournament proceeds to the finals. Final matches are usually held one by one in the central arena, allowing spectators to follow the matches.

Divisions

The Open Longsword Tournament is divided into two divisions: A and B. Participants will be assigned to a division based on their HEMA Ratings score, as listed on hemaratings.com. Competitors without a registered HEMA Rating will be placed in Division B.

The Women's+ Longsword Tournament has a single division. However, if a sufficient number of additional participants register on the waiting list, the organisers may consider adding a third pool in the form of a Beginner Women's+ division.

Participation requirements

This tournament is open to all participants aged 18 and above who have paid the registration fee.

Roles and responsibilities

During the tournament, the following officials and staff members are present who hold specific responsibilities beyond participation in the competition itself:

Event Manager	The Event Manager is primarily responsible for overseeing all organisational aspects of the tournament that are not directly related to the matches themselves. This includes matters such as registration, reception, logistics, and facilities management.
Tournament Manager	The Tournament Manager is responsible for the overall conduct and flow of the tournament. They serve as the primary point of contact and arbiter for referees in cases of dispute or uncertainty. This role is sometimes also referred to as the Head Referee.
Volunteer Coordinator	The Volunteer Coordinator oversees all volunteers and may be approached regarding any questions or uncertainties about volunteer duties and responsibilities.
The three roles listed above share joint final responsibility for the tournament and represent the organising clubs, federation, or other governing body hosting the event. They hold ultimate authority during the event — except in matters concerning safety or medical emergencies, in which case the First Aid team has the final say.	
Referees	Referees are responsible for the conduct and scoring of the matches, as well as general supervision of their assigned field. They are authorised to issue warnings and penalties in accordance with the tournament rules, consulting the Tournament Manager when necessary. Referees are expected to apply and uphold the tournament rule set as accurately and impartially as possible. They must adhere to the established regulations and refrain from allowing personal opinions or preferences to influence their decisions.
Judges	The Judges are responsible for signalling valid hits and assisting the referees in determining points within their assigned pool or match area.
Table Crew	The Table Crew is responsible for announcing matches, keeping score, and managing match documentation. They also assist with general tournament operations wherever needed.
First Aid (EHBO)	The First Aid team is responsible for providing immediate medical assistance in the event of an injury or medical incident. In such situations, the First Aid personnel always have the final authority and determine whether additional medical intervention is required.

2. Match procedures

Match duration

Pool phase and eliminations

Matches in both the pool phase and elimination rounds last **3 minutes**, or until one of the fighters reaches a **point cap of 15** with a **minimum lead of 4 points**.

If a fighter reaches the point cap but the required four-point lead has not been achieved, the match continues until either the time limit expires or the four-point lead is established.

During the pool phase, if both fighters have the same number of points at the end of the match, the result is declared a draw.

During the elimination rounds, the match will continue until there is at least a one-point difference and a clear winner has been determined.

Finals

Finals consist of 3 rounds of 2 minutes each, with **no point cap**.

Between each round there is a one-minute rest period for the fighters, unless safety considerations require additional time, in which case the break may be extended. If the final ends in a draw — for example, one fighter wins a round, the other wins a round, and one is drawn (or all rounds are drawn) — a one-minute extension will be fought as a decisive round.

If no winner emerges after this, the match proceeds to “*sudden death*”, during which the match continues until there is at least a one-point difference and a clear winner is determined.

Scoring

Each match is officiated by 1 referee and 1 judge. If sufficient staff are available, the management team may elect to expand this to 1 referee and 2 judges.

The scoring system for longsword is as follows:

3 points (Deep target): Thrusts, cuts, or slices to the head; thrusts to the torso; or wrestling dominance. May be executed with one or two hands.

2 points (Shallow target): Other valid hits, including cuts or slices to the torso, and thrusts to the limbs.

1 point: ring-out, opponent steps outside the ring.

HEMA scorecard and score signalling

The tournament uses HEMA Scorecard. Points are recorded net (absolute value).

For example, if one fighter scores 3 points (red) and the opponent scores 2 points (blue), the scoreboard will show the difference of 1 point as a result.

The semaphore for signaling actions is as followed:

- Flag raised upward – 3 points, flag held sideways – 2 points
- Flag to the chest – no quality
- Flag in front of the eyes – no scoring action observed

Quality of actions

All scoring actions must demonstrate sufficient quality to be considered valid. The referee decides whether an action meets this criterion, though they may consult the judges for clarification if needed. If uncertainty remains, the referee may declare a “no exchange”.

Guidelines for thrusts

If a thrust slides off the target surface (such as a mask or smooth plastic protection), the referee determines whether it is considered a hit.

A valid thrust must visibly strike the target and ideally show a slight bend in the blade, or cause the opponent to move backward involuntarily, demonstrating applied pressure before withdrawal of the weapon.

Guidelines for cuts

A cut must have a clear arc in its motion and be executed with the cutting edge of the blade. Hits made with the flat of the blade do not count.

A cut where only the tip makes contact without the weapon’s motion being halted by impact is of insufficient quality to score.

Guidelines for slices

A slice must be made with the cutting edge of the blade, using at least half of the blade’s length in the motion.

While moving the opponent physically is not required, the intention behind the action must be clear.

Guidelines for grappling (Ringen)

To score, a fighter must demonstrate clear control over their opponent (for example, the ability to deliver a valid hit with the point or cutting edge) or occupy a dominant position. It is permitted to grip the opponent’s weapon or arm to establish control while delivering a valid strike or thrust or demonstrating the possibility thereof with the point or cutting edge.

Dominance and disarm actions must always be performed with sufficient control.

Once a grappling action is initiated, the referee will begin a five-second count. If dominance is not achieved within this time, a “no exchange” will be declared.

Afterblow

An afterblow is a scoring action that occurs immediately after a valid hit from the opponent, within a time frame of 1 tempo. A tempo is defined as the time required to perform a single fencing action, such as an attack, parry, or riposte.

For example:

- A single thrust or cut = **1 tempo**.
- A parry followed by a riposte = **2 tempi** (one to defend, one to counterattack).
- A feint followed by an attack = **2 tempi**.

Thus, the window for an afterblow is one riposte without a feint. Withdrawing the sword to initiate a new attack counts as a new tempo.

An afterblow scores 1 point, regardless of target area, which is deducted from the original scorer's points.

For example:

- A 3-point deep hit followed by an afterblow counts as **2 points**.
- A 2-point superficial hit followed by an afterblow counts as **1 point**.

Double hit

A double hit occurs when both fighters strike each other simultaneously, within the same tempo. If this results in unsafe or reckless fencing, penalties may be issued to one or both fighters.

For example, if a fighter consistently ignores an opponent's actions in favour of striking without regard for their own safety, they will first receive a warning, followed by penalties if this behaviour persists.

For scoring purposes, no distinction is made between a regular scoring hit and a double hit. Both fighters receive the normal points corresponding to their actions.

Ring-out

A ring-out occurs when a fighter steps outside the designated boundary.

- If a fighter places **both feet** outside the boundary, the match is stopped, and the opponent is awarded **1 point**.
- It is **not** permitted to intentionally push the opponent out of the ring.
- The referee may issue penalties for misuse or repeated infractions.

Match procedure

Each match follows a standardised sequence:

1. The referee announces the beginning of the match and confirms that all participants and field staff are ready.
2. The referee begins the match with a clear command, such as:
"Fighters ready?" – "Salute each other." – "Fight!"
3. The fighters attempt to execute valid scoring actions.
4. When a clear hit occurs, the referee or a judge calls *"Hit!"*
5. The referee calls *"Break!"* and halts the match. Fighters return to their designated corners.
6. The judges indicate what they observed using the semaphore signals.
7. The referee decides how many points to award, considering afterblows, doubles, or fouls.
8. Fighters return to their start positions, and the referee resumes the match.

This process continues until the time limit expires or a fighter reaches the point cap. At that point, the referee calls *"Break!"*, announces the end of the match, and the fighters salute each other.

Scores are then totalled, and the winner is determined by points. In case of a tie, applicable tiebreaker rules such as *"sudden death"* apply.

3. Coaches and sportsmanship

Coaching

Each participant is permitted to have one coach during a match. The coach must remain outside the fighting area at all times and clearly positioned in their fighter's designated corner.

A coach may request a time-out from the referee under the following circumstances:

- A malfunction or damage to the fighter's equipment
- For medical reasons
- For the fighter's mental composure
- Other urgent medical or safety-related reasons

Time-outs may not be used to disrupt the opponent, delay the match, or interfere with the flow of the match. Abuse of time-outs, such as repeatedly calling during active fighting or unnecessarily extending breaks, may result in a warning or penalties for either the coach or the fighter.

The standard duration of a time-out is one minute, though the referee may extend or shorten this period if circumstances require.

Sportsmanship

When a scoring action has taken place and the referee has halted the match to assess the exchange, a fighter is permitted to acknowledge being hit by raising their hand, if the judges have not seen the action. This may only be done to one's own disadvantage, not to one's advantage.

For example, a fighter may indicate that a judged superficial hit was in fact a deep target, but not the reverse.

The referee and judges may disregard this indication if they have a clear view of the exchange. Any misuse or excessive behaviour in this regard will be handled under the tournament's foul and penalty system.

General safety

All participants and spectators must follow the instructions of the designated tournament staff at all times. Boundaries and "no-go zones" must not be crossed without explicit permission.

- Participants must not approach the scoring or IT tables to avoid disturbing staff.
- Spectators must remain within designated viewing areas and are not permitted to enter the fighting fields.

If a fighter's equipment becomes detached or damaged, and this is not noticed by the referee, judges, or the fighters themselves, any person present (including coaches or staff) is permitted to draw attention to it in the interest of overall safety.

4. Prohibited actions and disciplinary measures

Prohibited actions

The following actions are strictly not permitted at any time during the tournament:

- Use of excessive force: Any action in which the applied power clearly exceeds what is necessary for a controlled hit, thereby endangering the opponent's safety. Such actions may result in a warning or penalty.
- Deliberately turning one's back (head or body) to the opponent.
- Attacking prohibited target areas:
 - Groin, back of the body, feet
- "Bull-rushing" – charging forward at high speed and force without control, distance management, or clear technique. This includes attempts to overwhelm the opponent through excessive pressure, body weight, or constant uncontrolled forward motion.
- Executing throws in which the opponent is driven or forced onto the ground.
- Chokeholds or joint-breaking techniques.
- Punches, headbutts, kicks, or other forms of excessive physical violence.
- Offensive use of the crossguard or quillons.
- Throwing one's weapon.
- Striking the floor with the weapon.
- Arriving late to a match.
- Continuing to fight after the referee has called "*Break!*"
- Conceding or disregarding awarded points (fighters may not deliberately "give away" scored points or refuse valid scoring in their favour).
- Swearing, shouting, or displaying aggressive or disruptive verbal or physical behaviour.
- Speaking to the table crew or judges during a match.
- Arguing with tournament officials.
- Any conduct contrary to the principles of sportsmanship or fair play.

Offences

An offence is defined as the performance of a prohibited action by a participant. The progression of offences and their corresponding consequences is as follows:

- Warning: For unintentional or minor misconduct
- First offence: Recorded, 1-point deduction
- Second offence: Recorded, 3-point deduction
- Third offence: Loss of the match
- Fourth offence: Disqualification from the tournament

Warnings and offences are cumulative throughout the entire tournament. Referees may consult the Tournament Manager at any time when determining appropriate penalties.

In cases of severe or excessive misconduct, the referee, in direct consultation with the Tournament Manager, may impose one or more of the following penalties immediately:

- Point deduction (one or more points)
- Loss of the match
- Disqualification from the tournament

Authority and discretion

In cases of uncertainty or where the rules do not explicitly cover a particular situation, the referee may make a decision in the spirit of the rules. It is recommended that the referee consult the Tournament Manager in such instances.

The decision of the Tournament Manager is final and binding.