

AHSF Conference 2006

Bouting Rules and Safety

As with each Conference, given that many of us may have not bouted together, and given that we are using potentially lethal weapon facsimiles, it is felt that this year's event needs to continue to stress **Safety** and encourage a **Community Spirit**, rather than allowing a "win at all costs" approach to combat.

Combat With Courtesy

To that end, and embracing the spirit of this year's Conference theme, **Mobility in Combat**, we should like to introduce two combat concepts, which are introduced in the work of Gerard Thibault, and which pertain to combat execution, namely; **With Courtesy** and **With Vigor**. Simply put, With Vigor is combat which, as it was originally meant to be, fought in earnest or to the death. We can re-define Vigor to mean combat which is conducted so as to win at all costs, and is the play which would be engaged in at Competitive Tournaments, in which scoring points is the major focus.

With Courtesy however, is combat which is engaged in with an opponent for the purposes of Teaching, Learning and Practicing technique and combat actions, possibly conducted under supervision, and without the need to win at all costs. With Courtesy could be looked upon as a means of work-shopping combat in a one-on-one situation within the bounds of Safety protocols, in which the swordplay itself, and not the winning, is the major focus. The pace of combat is directly dictated by the combatants, and is of a slower controlled nature.

Since this event is promoted as an Historical Swordplay Conference and not a Martial Arts Tournament, the combat engaged in during the Bouting Sessions, shall therefore be of a slower and controlled nature, conducive to Learning and Practicing with others of different styles of combat with Safety – that is, With Courtesy.

The following rules are designed to facilitate these aims, and therefore, we have utilized last year's rules and incorporated the With Courtesy theme in them as follows:

Bouting Combat Rules

The Bouting Sessions will allow a range of weapon facsimiles, such as sword, longsword, greatsword, rapier, and combinations of weapons such as sword and buckler and rapier and dagger. The sessions will also allow a range of non-steel weapon facsimiles such as staff, cudgel, shinai, and singlesticks.

Supervised Bouting Arenas (List Areas)

The Boutng Area of the floor shall be divided into delineated Combat Arenas, so enabling better control between boutng pairs. The Safety and Overseeing of the Boutng Area shall be the responsibility of the President of the Lists.

Each Boutng Arena shall be manned by a Presiding Judge, whose duty is to Supervise the Combat between a boutng pair, on entering the Boutng Arena under his supervision. A Presiding Judge must be someone of Knowledge and Experience in Historic Combat, and shall be selected by the peer group (School Heads & AHSF Committee), prior to the Boutng Sessions. The President of the Lists and Presiding Judges shall be delegated by the organizers, Prima Spada.

Each participant shall seek out an opponent who is willing to engage in a work-shopping combat in a weapon code and/or style that is agreeable to the both of them.

- Ø Each Boutng Pair shall then seek an Arena in which to engage Courteous Combat with another participant, and then seek permission of the Presiding Judge, to enter the Arena.
- Ø If the Boutng Arena is occupied, than the Pair wishing to bout shall wait until the Arena is available.
- Ø To enable everyone to bout within the time allotted in the program, combatants and should be courteous and relinquish the lists after a reasonable time.
- Ø The boutng pair should have decided upon which weapon code they have chosen to bout with before entering the Arena.
- Ø It should be verbally stipulated before commencement of the bout whether head blows shall be allowed between parties.
- Ø All blows must be pulled regardless of target area.
- Ø The Weapon Code should be announced to the Presiding Judge, so as to assist him with the Presiding over the Bout.
- Ø Participants are urged to combat fairly, look to the safety of their opponents and to demonstrate the skills and attributes deemed desirable by the old masters.
- Ø Acknowledgement of blows received to oneself is an act of gentlemanly sportsmanship and is honourable to signal your opponents success.

Safety Equipment for

Workshop Bouting

1 - For steel weapons codes such as Sword and Buckler, Longsword and Great Sword where head blows shall not be allowed, the minimum safety equipment shall consist of the following:

- Ø A fencing mask or safety glasses.
- Ø A gloved or armoured gauntlet on the weapon hand
- Ø a vambrace on the sword arm (both arms for longsword and Great Sword), a stout leather or armoured gauntlet on the off-hand and some form of body armour.

2 - For steel weapons codes such as Sword and Buckler, Longsword and Great Sword where head blows may be included, the minimum safety equipment shall consist of the following:

- Ø A steel metal helmet, with some form of face protection, such as a grill, mask, or safety glasses.
- Ø A gloved or armoured gauntlet on the weapon hand
- Ø a vambrace on the sword arm (both arms for longsword and Great Sword), a stout leather or armoured gauntlet on the off-hand and some form of body armour.

3 - For fencing with staff, cudgel, shinai, singlesticks or similar facimilies, the minimum safety equipment shall consist of the following:

- Ø hand protection (boxing gloves, leather gauntlets, etc),
- Ø groin protection and a fencing mask are required,
- Ø solid breast protectors are suggested for women,

4 - For steel weapons such as Small sword, Rapier, Rapier and Dagger, and any Sword that has a narrow tip, where there is no head shots allowed, the minimum safety equipment shall consist of the following:

- Ø stout leather gauntlets on both hands,
- Ø a fencing mask or safety glasses
- Ø some form of body armour.
- Ø Small swords and Rapiers are to have rubber stoppers taped securely to the tip.
- Ø As an added precaution, if a small metal washer is placed inside the Rubber Stopper, flush with the base, this spreads the load of the tip contact surface, and prevents the Tip puncturing through the Stopper.

5 - For steel weapons such as Small sword, Rapier, Rapier and Dagger, and any Sword that has a narrow tip, where there may be head shots allowed, the minimum safety equipment shall consist of the following:

- Ø stout leather gauntlets on both hands,
- Ø a fencing mask and steel helmet with grill or safety glasses
- Ø some form of body armour.
- Ø Small swords and Rapiers are to have rubber stoppers taped securely to the tip.
- Ø As an added precaution, if a small metal washer is placed inside the Rubber Stopper, flush with the base, this spreads the load of the tip contact surface, and prevents the Tip puncturing through the Stopper.

Rules

Authority

Authority to interpret these rules will reside in the President of the Lists.

Hits and Combating With Courtesy. Combat may not necessarily be a combating bout, but a workshopping bout.

- Ø Since this is **not** a Competitive Tournament, and being specifically a Work-Shopping exercise, Hits need only be suggestive, and are not required to be delivered With Vigor.
- Ø Pulling blows is expected, as this encourages good play, without fear of running onto an aggressively aimed attack.
- Ø Scoring Hits is up to the discretion of the Bouting Pair.
- Ø It is good etiquette and gentlemanly behaviour to acknowledge all blows to oneself and therefore a call of hold may be required to do so.
- Ø The aim is to work-shop and experience differences in combat with others, rather than testing if one person's style or ability is superior to another.

Safety Protocols

- Ø The overriding safety rule is that you must be in control of your weapon at all times.
- Ø If the command of **HOLD!** is given, then all combat pertaining to that Arena must cease immediately.
- Ø All Combat should be performed with a soft approach, ie, With Courtesy.
- Ø Your opponents may do unexpected things, but if these are in controlled time, and delivered With Courtesy, it can be used as a good work-shopping opportunity, without a compromise to Safety.
- Ø You must always be prepared to stop your weapon or to pull it back. If a blow is not pulled, and combat looks too Vigorous, then the Presiding Judge shall call **HOLD!** The Presiding Judge shall put a stop to the combat, and remind combatants of any hazard and remind the combatants of the With Courtesy policy.
- Ø Failure to abide by this may result in injury.
- Ø Remember, that although we are bouting with weapons and techniques designed to kill (With Vigor), our intention is never to cause our opponent pain or injury.
- Ø Lack of control over yourself and your weapon, and combating in an aggressive hard nature (With Vigor), may eventually cause you to end up hurting someone, therefore, **exercise control** in your combat..
- Ø All equipment must have sharp edges, points and burrs removed. All weapons should be checked by the presiding judge to meet safety requirements.
- Ø All weapons must be kept clean.

Eligibility of Combatants

- Ø The Presiding Judge and/or President of the Lists, may at any time stop a bout if they consider that one or both of the combatants to be fighting dangerously, to be contravening these rules or be using any item of equipment that is unsafe. The Combatants are **not** at liberty to continue or argue with the Presiding Judge in any circumstances.
- Ø Any combatant may refuse to enter into or continue a bout and need not specify a reason for doing so to the other combatant. The organisers would appreciate the reason being specified to them after the tournament, as this may affect safety for the remainder of the event.
- Ø Any combatant known or suspected of being under the influence of any intoxicating drug (including alcohol) will be barred, by the President of the Lists, from taking part in combat whilst under the influence of that drug.

Conduct

- Ø No one shall interfere in a combat in which they are not involved, except of course, the Presiding Judge supervising the combatants of that Arena.
- Ø No combatant shall deliberately attempt to injure any other combatant, and every attempt shall be made to avoid accidental injury.
- Ø All blows must be pulled and all grappling moves controlled —**Use With Courtesy combat.**
- Ø No grappling or Brawling action is to be used that has a wrenching, abrupt nature. That is, disarming or grappling techniques are to be executed slowly and with care as the receiving party may be unaware of the technique. This is so he may learn how to deal with the technique safely. **THIS IS NOT A MARTIAL CONTEST**

Target Areas

- Ø Deliberate attacks of any kind to any unarmoured parts of the head, face and neck are Not Allowed.
- Ø Preferably, target areas should be torso between nipple line and upper thigh, excluding groin, and arms, excluding the joints.
- Ø If head blows are to be allowed, these must be pulled, and aimed directly downward if a sword blow.
- Ø Thrusting to the face whether the face is guarded by masks or glasses, should be avoided as a rapier or sword has enough leverage to cause either damage to the mask, whiplash to the neck or penetrating to the face. Therefore, it should always be pulled short of the face.
- Ø In all blows, a touch is all that is required to simulate a successful technique.
- Ø Deliberate attacks to the groin, feet, hands, elbows and knees are Not allowed.

- Ø Although Grapple, Brawl, Kick, or throwing techniques are allowed With Courtesy, it is meant to be used as an adjunct to the weapon. Therefore any unarmed action, where one combatant has not scored a hit or established a significant advantage (e.g. disarm joint lock or potential throw) of the first grappling move, the bout shall be halted, and the combatants shall be ordered to break and resume their ward before continuing.

Discipline

- Ø Anyone deemed by the President of the Lists, or any of the Presiding Judges, to be in contravention of these rules may be asked by the President of the Lists to modify their behaviour. In extreme cases the President of the Lists may choose to remove a participant from the rest of the Bouting Session.

If you have any further questions please direct them to Sharon Beattie:

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