



**Seize the Vor**  
**Running the Gauntlet**  
**Single Contact Ruleset**  
**Steel Longsword Tournament**  
**Gray, Green, and In-Between**  
**Divisions**





**Tadhg  
Custom Knives**



Indes Ferox Gladio

REGENYEI  
ARMORY



## *Drei Wunder WMA's Three Rules of Fencing*

**One.** *Don't get hit.*

**Two.** *Do not get hit.*

**Three.** *While observing rules one and two, hit your opponent*

### Summary

The Single Contact Ruleset is written to help us explore fencing in a different context than most other competitions are designed to offer. The intent of this ruleset is to highlight the unique pressure of one-on-one duels where there are no second chances. These rules reward defending oneself at all times while still requiring legitimate action to take place.

This tournament is a game, not a simulation. The rules are designed to incentivize the behaviors we are exploring and are never intended to represent all the complexities of life and death duels.

To ensure that all competitors get a reasonable amount of time in the ring, this tournament will use pools to organize matches. Each competitor will get 18 single contact matches in their pool, including a Gauntlet Round that will have each competitor fighting nine exchanges in a row against the other fencers in their pool. While individual matches will be short, the Gauntlet Round will also reward competitors who have good cardiovascular endurance and can manage their energy effectively over a longer series of fights.

This is an experimental ruleset and will require further versions that will help pursue the stated goal. Errors and artifacts exist and the organizers will do everything they can to address them as they develop.

This ruleset stands on the shoulders of many talented members of the HEMA community but notably Jake Norwood and his Longpoint team. The ruleset they designed for their tournament and the design philosophy behind it have been very influential on this work.

The writers of this ruleset want to thank all competitors and staff for their participation, we hope this helps us all understand the Art of Fencing a little bit better.

### Rules Overview

Each match is limited to a maximum of 60 seconds or until the first scoring action is made by one or both competitors.

*While we expect most matches to end with a scoring action, the time limit is included to require competitors engage one another.*

Pools will be run using Gauntlet Rounds where every participant will Run the Gauntlet and fight each competitor in their pool sequentially with a limited rest time.

*This is done to ensure competitors get a reasonable number of exchanges overall and while also testing their ability to manage energy over a string of matches.*

### Scoring Actions

- **Quality hit to shallow targets including the arms and legs, and quality hits to deep targets including the head and torso**
- **Ring outs**
- **Grappling technique that controls the opponent's weapon or takes them to the ground**

*The scoring system here relies heavily on the Longpoint ruleset and will use much of the terminology and point assignment.*

The action does not immediately end when contact is made, directors are instructed to allow a full beat before calling halt, so competitors are expected to defend themselves at all times.

*This is intended to allow actions that have already been started to finish and to avoid attacks that are initiated late as a response to getting hit.*

Matches will account for all scoring actions that occur before Halt is called so Double Hits and After blows are scored as full value for the target.

*While powerful blows can potentially stop combat immediately, fencers are expected to defend themselves at all times while the match is progress. This includes what are traditionally referred to as After Blows and Double Hits.*

Staff will consist of a director, 3 judges, a ring boss, and a table crew that includes a scorer and a timer:

- The director's primary jobs are safety and managing the flow of matches and pools.
- The judges primary responsibility is to call points with a secondary role in assisting with safety.
- The ring boss assists with the flow of events and is in charge of ensuring all competitors are present for their pools, informed on their order of matches, and wearing the correct arm band for competition.
- The scorer is responsible for scoring and assisting in managing the flow of matches and pools.

- The timer is responsible for keeping time and calling “10 SECONDS!” when a match has 10 seconds left on the clock.

*This ruleset uses a reasonably large staff so we will rely on volunteers from the community. Seize the Vor will host a free judging workshop for anyone interested in staffing this or other events.*

## The Flow of Matches

1. **Announcement.** The Ring Boss will announce pools and bring all competitors for the current pool to the ring for a gear safety check. Once cleared, competitors will stay in the ring to wait for their pool to start.
2. **Briefing.** The director will then brief all competitors to make sure everyone is aware of the rules, safety protocols, and to set expectations for behavior in the ring.
3. **Pools.** The competitor that is schedule to Run the Gauntlet will report to the red corner where they will be given a red band to go on their dominant arm. Only the red fighter will be allowed a second in their corner to act as a coach, to handle gear issues, and advocate with staff on behalf of the competitor.
4. **Queueing Up.** All other competitors will report to the blue corner where the Ring Boss will arrange them in the order they will fight, competitors are to stay in the order as announced. They will not be given blue bands for identification and are expected to be ready to fight as soon as their number is called.
5. **Table Ready.** When the red fencer and first blue opponent are in their corners, the director will ask “TABLE READY?” and wait for the reply “TABLE READY!” from the table staff.
6. **Judges Ready.** The director will then ask “JUDGES READY?” and wait for the judges to reply “JUDGES READY!” or a raise of the baton to affirm.
7. **Fencers Ready.** The director then says “FENCERS READY? FENCE!” immediately raising their staff, the match begins without a reply from the competitors. It is expected that anyone in the ring in full gear is ready to defend themselves. The timer starts the time count now.
8. **Point. Judges** will call “POINT!” as soon as they see any scoring action. The director will call “HALT!” a full beat after one or more judges call a hit. This is intended to allow actions that have already been started to finish and to avoid attacks that are initiated late as a response to receiving a hit.
9. **Corners.** Both competitors return to their corners with the red fencer staying and the blue rotating to the next opponent in line.

10. **Score.** The Director will read the judges' semaphores and determine a call with options being a clean hit, after blow, double hit, or no exchange. After blows will count the same as doubles, but only count if contact is landed in the immediate beat that follows the initial contact. In other words, no chasing the opponent down after an obvious blow.

12. **Time.** The table will call "10 SECONDS" loudly when there are 10 seconds remaining on the match clock. Once 60 seconds has elapsed, the timer will call out "TIME!" which immediately ends the bout.

## Scoring

**Do Not Get Hit - 1 point** is awarded to a competitor who does not receive a point against them for the duration of the match.

**Shallow Target - 1 point** is awarded for a successful hit on a shallow target.

**Deep Target - 3 points** are awarded for a successful hit on a deep target.

**Ring Out - 1 point** is awarded for a ring out.

**Takedown - 3 points** are awarded for a takedown.

**Control - 3 points** are awarded for a technique that also meets the criteria for control.

**Disarm - 6 points** are awarded for disarming your opponent while retaining your own weapon in a fashion that would allow you to attack. Do not attack a disarmed competitor, points will not be awarded for hitting an unarmed fencer.

**Doubles - 0 points** for both fighters if an exchange ends in a double. (defending one's self is more important than scoring a hit).

**Afterblows** - full points will be awarded based on target.

**Non-quality Hits - 0 points** for no exchange or any attacks that lacked the necessary qualities in order to inflict significant damage such as acceleration, rotation, edge alignment, or structure.

*Point awards are cumulative so a competitor will receive each point value listed above that they qualify for with the exception, of landing a shallow and deep target hit in the same exchange. In this case, they will be awarded the higher of the values available. For example, a competitor could receive 1 point for not getting hit, 3 points for striking a deep target, and 3 more for controlling their blade for a total of 7 points in one match. Depending on the outcome of the match, **additional points** may be awarded, see **Advancement** section for more details.*

## Scoring Actions Defined

Thrusts, Cuts, and Slices are all valid scoring actions if they land with the technique and force that would impart significant damage as determined by the judges.

**Thrust** - an attack that lands with the point that would penetrate at least an inch or two into the target.

**Cut** - an attack that lands either edge with enough acceleration and technique to significantly injure the targeted area.

**Slice** - an attack that applies the edge to the target but causes its damage with pressure and a slicing motion.

**Shallow Target** - arms from the shoulder seams to the hands, and legs from the top of the pelvis to the bottom of the shin.

**Deep Target** - torso and head from the seam of the shoulder inward and the top of the pelvis and up.

**Ring Out** - occurs when a competitor has both feet out of the ring but not necessarily on the ground.

**Takedown** - successfully applying a technique that results in the opponent going to the ground. A competitor is considered "on the ground" when any part of his/her torso, hips, head, a single elbow or shoulder, or both knees touch the ground. If both competitors go to the ground, the fencer with dominant position as soon as they are "on the ground" receives the points. In cases where the scoring action is not clear, the judges and director will use their discretion.

**Control** - successfully applying a technique that denies the target the ability to respond with their own attack. This can be done by a competitor using their sword to manipulate their opponent's sword such that they cannot attempt an afterblow. For takedowns, this requires the initiating fencer retains control of their own weapon and the thrown opponent while also remaining on their feet.

*Examples of Control include counter cuts like the Zornhau, counter thrusts like Absetzen, grappling like Schwertnehmen or sword takes, slicing actions like Hande Drucken or hand pressing, and takedowns while retaining control of both their own weapon and the thrown competitor and staying on their feet.*

**Single Handed Attacks** - all competitors will only be allowed to earn points on a single handed attack once in the tournament. These strikes will be awarded points based on their target but cannot earn Control points. Any successful strikes after the first will earn no

points and be given a verbal warning before escalating to penalty cards. This does not apply when competitors are engaged in a grapple.

## Prohibited Actions

**Prohibited Targets** - include the back of head, spine, or feet from the ankle down. Any competitor who is in a position to hit their opponent on these targets is asked to show control. If a director believes any competitor is moving in a way that increases the likelihood of receiving an attack on a prohibited target, they will be given verbal warnings that can escalate to penalties and ejection from the event for repeated instances.

**Flanking** - competitors know when they have been flanked, and points will be awarded if a fighter makes a mimed attack to those areas. A strike that has too much power to those targets will result in no points awarded and possible warning from the director.

**Pommel Strikes** - to be made with control or mimed and will only score if the face of the mask is the intended target.

**Joint Manipulation** - attacks to joints, small appendages like the fingers, or any other damaging techniques that could result in serious damage are expressly prohibited.

**Takedowns** - all throws and takedowns are expected to be controlled and as safe as possible. All martial artists should practice breakfalls but since that is not a standard, all competitors are warned to treat their opponents with a high degree of safety in throws and takedowns.

**Disarms** - competitors are prohibited from attacking disarmed fencers, points are awarded the showing the ability to use the sword but not actually launching the strike.

## Penalties

The directors have full autonomy to issue verbal warnings, yellow, red, or black cards at their discretion and event staff is instructed to support them fully in all decisions.

Competitors are expected to display good sportsmanship including showing respect to other fencers and staff. This includes but is not limited to respectful speech, honoring judges and directors' calls, not throwing gear or weapons, and any other etiquette related behavior.

Executing prohibited techniques include - Grappling intended to attack joints, small

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## Advancement Criteria

### Advancement Bonus Points

In addition to earning points for scoring actions, fencers can gain bonus points based on the outcome of each match.

**Win** – If a fencer lands a scoring action while their opponent does not, they win the match and receive **7 bonus points**.

**Tie** – If neither fencer lands a scoring action during the 60-second exchange, the match ends in a tie, and each fencer receives **5 bonus points**.

**Loss** – If a fencer receives a scoring action against them and does not land one themselves, they lose the match and receive **3 bonus points**.

**Afterblow** – If the match ends with an afterblow, the fencer receives **0 bonus points**.

**Double** – If the match ends in a double, the fencer receives **0 bonus points**.

### Cards

**Yellow Card** – Each yellow card results in a **1-point déduction** from a fencer's total score. Yellow cards serve as a tool for the director to ensure fencers follow the rules and maintain safety.

**Red Card** – A red card during a match result in an automatic loss equivalent to a ring-out, with no additional scoring penalty. A red card outside of a match result in a **4-point déduction**.

**Black Card** – A black card results in the fencer's removal from the tournament. Depending on the severity, further consequences, such as a ban, may apply. Any remaining fights on the fencer's schedule will be recorded as ties.

### Injuries and No-Shows

If a fencer in a pool is unable to continue fighting for any reason, all their remaining matches will be recorded as ties.

### Advancing Out of Pools

The top three fencers in a pool will be determined by their total points, which include scoring points, advancement bonuses, and any card penalties.

### Tiebreaker

If a tiebreaker is required:

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1. Total points scored against will be considered.
2. If still tied, a duel will be fought under standard tournament match rules.
3. If a double or an afterblow with equal targeting value occurs, additional duels will take place until a winner is determined.

### Elimination Pools

Elimination pools will consist of nine fighters and follow the standard tournament format. The top three fencers will advance to the placement pools. Note, for the Green Division there will be no Eliminations Pool, but there will be a Placement Pool (see below).

### Placement Pools

The placement pools will follow the standard tournament format, with final scores will consist of three fighters and will determine first, second, and third place.

### Technical Award

The Technical Award will be given to the fencer with the **most control points**. If there is a tie, the **tiebreaker rules** will be used to determine the winner.

### The Patch of Honor

Each fencer will receive a patch to award to their favorite opponent from the event. Winning this patch will enter that fencer into a raffle for some of the best prizes available. While certificates will be given to the winners, this will be the most coveted recognition of the day.

These patches are more than just an entry into a raffle—they are a mark of respect and camaraderie. Fencers are encouraged to sew their earned patches onto their jackets as a point of pride, showcasing the admiration of their fellow fencers.

### Etiquette

**Listen to Staff** - all competitors are to obey the director and event staff at all times. Failure to do so may result in being asked to leave the event.

**Sportsmanship** - any displays of poor sportsmanship will be punished with verbal warnings, penalty cards, and possible ejections from the event. Competitors are asked to keep any fist bumps, hugs, high fives, and sword taps as brief as possible to help maintain the flow of matches.

**Be Ready** - all competitors are expected to be ready to fence as soon as the director calls for it, any fencer in the ring is expected to defend themselves at all times.

**Seconds** - The red competitor will be allowed to bring their own second with them to the ring while the blue competitors will have the Ring Boss available to them to serve in this capacity. Seconds are responsible for assisting with gear issues and addressing the director in the case of a disputed call.

**Self-Call** - For the Green and In Between divisions, **no self-calls are allowed**. The judging staff is responsible for making all match related calls and has been trained with this competition in mind, fencers are expected to focus on their matches. If there is a legitimate dispute to be made, it is recommended that the competitor's second addresses the director.

## Required Gear

Mask w/ Back of Head Protection: 3-weapon mask in good condition with no discernible rusting, breaches of the mesh, tongue, or bib. The mask must completely cover the participant's ears and be neither too large nor small to snugly fit the competitor. Other headgear (i.e. steel helmets) will be allowed pending inspection for similar criteria as above.

Neck Protection: Some form of rigid neck protection that covers the larynx must be worn.

Gloves – This tournament requires modern, HEMA specific built longsword grade gloves to compete. Some common models include, but are not limited to, Absolute Force gloves, Black Lance gloves, Comfort Fencing gloves, Destroyer Modz gloves, St. Mark Koning gloves, Sparring gloves (“Ensifers”), SPES plastic clamshell gauntlets, and the CHFG Gabriel glove. Alternate hand protection such as steel gauntlets or heavily modified lacrosse/hockey/Red Dragon gloves require approval prior to competing. Please email [mosesujones@seizethevor.com](mailto:mosesujones@seizethevor.com) with any questions or to request approval of a non-standard option. Any exceptions to the HEMA specific gloves must be pre-approved. No exceptions will be granted on the day of the tournament.

Groin and Breast Protection: Use of rigid groin protection (cup/box) is mandatory for Fencers with testicles. Rigid breast protection is mandatory for fencers with breast tissue. Rigid chest protection is recommended for all participants.

Jacket: Fighters must wear a padded jacket that completely covers the torso, back, and arms. Fencing coaches 'jackets or padded reproduction gambesons are recommended. Gaps in the armpits are not acceptable. An unpadded jacket is acceptable if combined with a padded under-layer such as a hockey shirt.

Elbow Protection: Use of rigid elbow protection is mandatory. The protection must completely cover the three points of the elbow.

Leg Protection: Rigid or semi-rigid shin and rigid knee protection is required for all participants.

Footwear: Fighters must wear some kind of non-marking, enclosed toe footwear. Historical reproduction footwear is acceptable as long as they do not damage the flooring, as are minimalist shoes.

## Accepted Weapons

Fighters will provide their own sword from this approved list, all of which have seen extensive use in international competitions (or comparable events) and have reputations for durability, safety, and quality. Fighters wishing to use a sword not on this list must inquire with [mosesujones@seizethevor.com](mailto:mosesujones@seizethevor.com) at least one week before the tournament date. The Tournament staff and administration will not review off-brand/off-model weapons on-site at the event unless previous arrangements have been made.

All models of sword not featuring an integral safety tip/button/rolled tip at least 1 cm wide must be tipped with a metal washer (or equivalent) and sturdy leather or arrowhead blunt properly secured with strong tape.

Approved makers and models for this event include:

- Albion Meyer
- Arms & Armor Fechtenspiel
- Arms & Armor Fechtbuch Sword
- Baltimore Sword and Knife Works Feders
- Black Horse Feders
- Castille Armory Feders
- Chlebowski Feders
- Comfort Fencing Dobringer Feder
- Danelli Feders
- Darkwood Armory Feders
- Ensifer Feders
- Kvetun Feders
- Neyman Feders
- Pavel Moc Feders
- Purpleheart VB Feders
- Regenyei Feders
- SGT Blades Feders
- Sigi Feders including the Schilt-less models

If you don't see your Feder above, do not fear, there are plenty of other quality makers out there and additional models may be approved in advance by contacting [mosesujones@seizethevor.com](mailto:mosesujones@seizethevor.com) if it will be helpful to include either a link to the makers site and contact information including photos with measurements (include weight,

length of blade, length of hilt, point of balance, edge width at narrowest point, blade width 6 inches from the point).

## Exhibition Steel Longsword Self Call - Gray Division

Fighters will be on their honor to not game the system. The point of the rules is to set the tone for the new fighters, and showcase technical skills.

The fighters will self-call their hits

The director will act as a tie breaker in case the fighters can-not determine what happened during their exchange

The director may call halt if they witness an exchange that may have resulted in contact, but will consult the fighters to determine if contact was made or not

Both director and fighters can call a ring out

## Green Division Junior Steel Longsword and In Between Division Open Steel Longsword

There will be three judges. The judges will come from the Gray Division.

The director will act as a tie breaker/or throw out the exchange in case the judges cannot come to an agreement.

The director must have two judges in agreement for an exchange to be scored.

The director may call halt if they witness an exchange that may have resulted in contact, but will consult with the judges to determine if contact was made or not, otherwise it is up to the judges to call for a point.

Both director and judges can call a ring out.

The director does have the right to overrule judges, but only in a case were the outcome is clear.

*Rules written by Moses Jones and Brent Lambell of Seize the Vor School of Medieval Combat, December 2024.*

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