

Realms of Avalon

Combat Manual



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Welcome, Fellow Warriors!

We bid you greetings to the wonderful world of re-enacting the martial arts of the middle ages ! While historically these skills weren't always done in fun, *today* we have all pleasure in training our bodies and testing our skills with foes we consider to be our friends. We meet in either single combat or on battlefields full of armies to clash in mighty waves, only to round things off by a good hangout in the tavern or feast afterwards. What a way to make war!

There are two main tracts of combat currently done in Realms of Avalon. The *Armored* tract replicates medieval-era forms and includes Shinai, Waster, and Steel combat styles. The *Rapier* tract replicates renaissance-era forms. In addition to the knighthood tracts, there is also Combat Archery that re-creates missile style combative arts.

One thing to keep in mind is that combat in Avalon while competitive, is not done as a "sport" We do strive mightily to win, but the winning is not the goal of our combat arts. What we are attempting to do at our upper levels is to reproduce as accurately as we can the combat of the middle ages, without the maiming and killing. So while you as a combatant will be attempting to win in combat, you will also be experiencing a close facsimile of combat in the period.

Armored: Shinai

Shinai is the usual first step, and used to train for Waster and armored combat. Shinai is named for the lightweight Bamboo weapons used. Light padded armor is easy for even the newest of members to scrounge, make, or buy, and there is very little financial investment

Armored: Waster

Waster is the intermediate step between shinai and armored combat and uses rattan weapons, heavier than shinai and closer to the feel of real weapons. It is for people who have experience and training, and have learned control of their force, blows, and movements. It requires more sturdy armor and more investment in making or purchasing of gear.

Armored: Steel

Steel combat is only for people who had much experience and training, and have proven that they are not only safe, but dedicated to learning and experiencing historical combat. Sometimes referred to as 'live steel' or "heavy" combat, Steel combat uses real steel weapons and real armor, making it a much more historically accurate style of medieval era armored combat. The edges of all weapons are, of course, blunted and the movements modified for sport. Still, it is still a close experience of armored warfare of old, and thusly

requires appreciation for practice, control, dedication, and investment into equipment.

Rapier:

This style replicates the combative styles of the renaissance (and is sometimes called “Renaissance” combat). It uses a special blunted and strong blade called a “schlager”, often used for stage combat as well as competitive recreation sport. Sometimes surgical-tubing guns to simulate matchlock pistols are used too. While rapier combat shares the same historical roots as olympic style fencing, it is a very different creature in equipment and application. Rapier is also very different from medieval based combat techniques, and so shinai is not a requirement. Rapier is a combative art form requiring a lot of control, precision, and thought. A word to the newbie: don’t let the light weapon fool you. Rapier has the potential to be more injurious than even armored combat using live steel!.

Combat Archery:

Ever wonder what the French said after Agincourt? Archery and missile weapons are an important part of historical warfare, and a fun part of modern sport combat. Light bows and special foam padded missiles make replicating it a lot more fun than it was in history. The use of missile weapons really helps get a closer feel to many historical war scenarios, and can add a realistic and exciting dimension to combat. The details of Combat archery equipment and supplies are mainly included in the Archery Manual and Combat Archery Equipment Guide, though this manual will talk about how combat archers interact on the rules of the field.



Like other re-creation skills in Avalon, those who enjoy spending time on learning certain skills can earn recognition of their efforts by receiving a “knighthood” as they participate in combat. However, anyone with an interest can dabble in combat. There is no requirement that says someone who just wishes to play can’t stay with shinai, or spend time on combat archery, rather focusing on the path to knighthood, if they choose.

Interested in the Combative Arts??

**This manual contains the rules and requirements we use to make sure people learn and play combat as safely as possible.
Read on to learn more!**

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PART ONE: COMBAT REQUIREMENTS

I PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW

A. OVERVIEW REQUIREMENTS:

Combat in the Realms of Avalon is a contact marshal art. As with all forms of marshal arts there is an inherent risk of potential injury for the participants. Each individual who decides to take part in combat activities in Avalon assumes all risk of injury to themselves.

Those who take part in combat in Avalon need to be in sufficiently good physical shape to keep from injuring or endangering themselves. All participants should have a medical check up before beginning combat in Avalon to ensure their health can take physical exertion, heat, and potential injuries.

Under no circumstances will pregnant women be allowed to take part in combat.

Age Requirements:

- Minimum ages of participants are as follows:
 - 13 years for Shinai
 - 16 years for Waster
 - 18 years for Steel
 - 16 years for Rapier
- Combat archers must also follow these age requirements.
- Minors must have parental/guardian consent.

Membership:

Combat is a martial art, thus there are inherent insurance obligations the group must meet in order to provide this activity. Insurance for the group, site use, bystanders, property, and participants is provided through memberships with the Realms of Avalon. All combatants must hold some form of membership to participate in combat. There are, however, two levels of membership cost to suit the inclination of each member for activity and cost.

- **Full Membership** is required to participate in Point Bearing Tournaments and Wars.
- **Associate Members** may participate in practices, classes, non-point bearing tournaments and non-contested (fun) wars.

Combat Tracks:

There are two distinct combat Tracks:

- **Armored**

Progression from Shinai to Waster to Steel

Participants beginning the Armored Combat Track shall begin at the shinai level and then progress to waster and finally live steel. For level advancement, see “Part Seven: Ranks & Knighthood”.

Exception: An exception may be granted in a case where a combatant can demonstrate to a qualified marshal that they have sufficient experiences, are not a hazard to themselves or others, and that they have the equipment to begin at Waster level. A combatant must satisfy the waster requirements within Avalon to advance to Live Steel. Note that these individuals must still complete their required tournament at the required levels before achieving a combat knighthood.

Shinai and Waster are classified as non-knightly combat. Steel is considered to be knightly combat.

- **Rapier/Renaissance**

Participants beginning the Rapier Track are required to have specialized training, as described below. This may be waived at a marshal’s discretion if the individual has prior rapier combat experience. Prior experience in other combat forms such as armored or Olympic fencing shall not be taken into consideration.

Rapier is classified as both knightly and non-knightly combat. In point bearing tournaments there shall be two separate lists run.

B. QUALIFICATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Before being allowed to take part in combat, an individual must be “qualified” for that form of combat.

To be qualified for a combat form, one must:

- Demonstrate a familiarity of the rules pertaining to that particular form, this shall be done verbally by the qualifying marshal.
- Demonstrate functional knowledge of the general rules of combat (found at the end of this manual).
- For Armored Combat, have earned needed participation and win points for prerequisite combat styles.
- Have in possession or access to the appropriate armor for the given combat style.
- Demonstrate that they can participate in their form of combat without being a hazard to self and others.
- For the Rapier Combat Track an individual must have completed a minimum of ten hours of instruction specifically on rapier combat (or more if needed to satisfy the above requirements) with a rapier. In addition the person attempting to qualify needs to demonstrate a working knowledge of distance, as well as the use of at least three different parries and three different attacks. Since rapier combat is potentially the most hazardous of the combat forms, care must be taken to ensure that only those who truly are not a hazard are allowed to qualify.

- A successfully qualifying member will then be issued a combat card by the marshal, allowing them to participate.

C. REVOCATION OF QUALIFICATION FOR COMBAT

Because of the physical nature of the sport, requirements for participation can't be waived, and the Realms of Avalon reserves the right to remove qualification from individuals when it becomes known that these requirements are not met, for either physical, membership or behavioral aspects. Participation in combat may be limited, or removed altogether, until the situation is resolved to the satisfaction of the Marshallate. See the Marshallate Manual for more information on these procedures.

D. MARSHALS AND COMBAT

Marshals are the referees of medieval combat. They are there to direct combat, ensure adherence to the rules, and help maintain a minimum level of safety. At all times, combatants will adhere to these rules and the Marshals of the Field. To learn more about marshals and becoming a marshal, see the Marshallate Manual.

PART TWO: SHINAI COMBAT

I SHINAI ARMOR REQUIREMENTS

- At no time shall bare skin be visible.
- Rigid gender based protection must be worn at all times when on the field during combat (marshals and combatants both).
- Feet must be covered completely in leather footwear. Ankle support is required (support that prevents the ankle from rolling to the floor, such as high top shoes). No Tennis Shoes.
- Armor made of non-period materials must be made to appear period either by painting or covering with a period looking material.
- Armor must be maintained in sound working order, duct tape is ONLY to be used for temporary field repairs and must be approved by the marshal of the field.
- Armor shall be deemed excessive if normal blows cannot be felt through it. (ie, don't wear chainmaile). Steel armor may replace elbow & knee pads and the helm but must be padded to prevent damage to striking shinai.

Arms and Legs:

A single layer of sweat shirt material or equivalent is required, additional padding (1/4") is recommended. Modern plastic elbow pads are required and Knee pads are *strongly recommended*.

Hands:

Leather gloves are required. Padded gloves are strongly recommended for exposed hands.

Torso:

A padded covering of at least ¼ inch thickness. (Examples of the thickness required are a moving blanket, or cotton batting sandwiched between trigger cloth).

Neck:

Gorget (neck protection) is required and should cover the larynx down to the collar bone and around the neck to covering the cervical vertebrae. Gorgets are to be made of 10oz hardened leather, 16 gauge mild steel, 18 gauge stainless steel, or 1/4" inch high density/impact plastic. (keep in mind, the leather and plastic will not be useable in waster, rapier, or live steel combat)

Head:

A three weapons fencing mask is required. A hockey mask or equivalent is allowed. There shall be no opening in the front of the mask large enough to allow the entry of the tip of a shinai. The back of the head must be covered by a padded thickness of 1/4 inch. Rigid protection is recommended.

II WEAPON REQUIREMENTS FOR SHINAI

Only commercially produced bamboo shinai are allowed and shipping threads (typically red bands around the blade) must be removed. As with all equipment, they must remain in good repair, shinai falling into disrepair that could result in breakage or loss of leather strapping must be replaced and will not be allowed on the field. Modifications to the shinai are allowed provided they follow the below guidelines and are approved by the local marshal.

A. SHINAI MODIFICATIONS:

- The modification must be to make the shinai simulate a period weapon.
- Under no circumstances may a shinai weapon have a stabbing point.
- No portion of the blade may contain metal.
- Crossguards may not have an overall length greater than 10 inches and must have ends equal to or larger than the shinai tip.
- Shinai pole arms may be no longer than 7 feet and are to be made by connecting the shinai to wood or relatively inflexible pvc in such a fashion that it will not detach from the shinai during combat.
- Any pvc used must be covered by overlapping duct or strapping tape to prevent injury in case of breakage.
- If a simulated weapon was wielded in period with both hands, the shinai equal must also be wielded with both hands.
- Modified striking surfaces may be no harder than a standard shinai.
- Under no circumstances may the leather and nylon rigging that comes standard on any shinai be removed or modified.

III SHIELD REQUIREMENTS FOR SHINAI**A. SIZE AND FORM:**

- Shields must be made in a period form.
- Round shields will not exceed 42 inches in diameter.
- Oval, Rectangular, or Kite (flat or teardrop) shall be no larger than 48 x 36 inches.
- Heater shields shall be no larger than 24 x 36 inches.

B. MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION:

- Metal shields may be used provided their edges are rolled or covered to give an edge thickness of 2 inches and prevent damage to blocked shinai.
- Wooden shields may be faced with leather or metal.
- All shields must be painted or stained.
- No weapon like or protrusions are allowed.
- Wooden shields must be edged, padding at a minimum, heavy hose is recommended.
- High impact plastic may be used provided it is completely covered by a period looking material.
- Woods shields must have at least ¼ inch thickness (plywood is ok, oak is better).

C. ALTERNATIVE HAND ITEMS:

- Shinai combatants may use items other than shields for blocking. Almost any item without sharp protrusions or edges that cannot be broken into sharp pieces may be used for parrying. Examples include chairs, boat oars, etc. As PVC is breakable, if used it shall be wrapped in overlapping layers of duct or strapping tape.
- Marshals have the final authority to disallow an object deemed to be unsafe or inappropriate.

PART THREE: WASTER COMBAT

I WASTER ARMOR REQUIREMENTS

- At no time shall bare skin be visible.
- Rigid gender based protection must be worn at all times when on the field during combat (marshals and combatants both).
- Feet must be covered completely in leather footwear. Ankle support is required (support that prevents the ankle from rolling to the floor, such as high top shoes). No Tennis Shoes.
- Armor made of non-period materials must be made to appear period either by painting or covering with a period looking material. (keep in mind, no synthetic materials are allowed in live steel combat)
- Armor must be maintained in sound working order, duct tape is ONLY to be used for temporary field repairs and must be approved by the marshal of the field.
- Armor shall be deemed excessive if normal blows cannot be felt through it.

Arms and Legs:

Arms not covered by shields shall be covered by rigid material (such as hardened leather). Legs must have heavy padding at a minimum. Elbows and knees must be covered by minimum 16 gauge mild /18 gauge stainless steel cops and must be covered at all times.

Hands:

Padded gloves such as welders gloves with no less than ¼ inch of closed cell foam covering/lining them or hockey gloves (if concealed/covered) are required. Half gauntlets with welding gloves are allowed as a substitution when a closed basket guard or a caged guard with 1 inch or less space between the bars is used. Unpadded leather gloves alone shall not be allowed for the shield hand due to the potential for injury when the primary arm is lost and the shield arm is required for sword combat.

Torso:

Minimum 15 oz leather or equivalent over the entire torso is required. Equivalents may include 10 oz leather over ¼ inch padding or chainmaile over ¼ inch padding. If butted chainmaile is used it must be inspected monthly for link damage/spread. The entire stomach, chest, kidneys, and spine must be covered by this material. *Rigid protection over the sternum, kidneys, and spine is strongly recommended.*

Neck and Shoulders:

Gorgets (neck protection) is required and should cover the larynx down to the collar bone and around the neck to covering the cervical vertebrae. Gorgets are to be made of 16 gauge mild steel / 18 gauge stainless steel with ¼ inch padding. The shoulders must be covered by heavy padding at all times such as 15 oz leather, 10 oz leather over ¼ inch padding, ½ inch padding covered by light leather.

Head:

Helms must be a minimum 14 gauge mild steel / 16 gauge stainless steel (useable for live steel) with a minimum of ¼ inch closed cell foam padding or equivalent on the interior. Chin strap is required, no opening greater than ¾ inch in any direction. Optionally, face grills are permissible if they deny entry of a 1 inch dowel into the helm, must be made of 3/16 inch steel, and ensure that there is no exposure of any part of the face or jaw during combat (but keep in mind, a face grill is not allowed for live steel). There shall be no projections from nor sharp edges on helms.

II WEAPON REQUIREMENTS FOR WASTER

- No metal shall be used in any striking surface.
- Waster weapons shall be made of combat-quality rattan.
- The finished weapon will have a diameter of no less than 1 ¼ inch.
- The entire length of blades will be wrapped with duct or strapping tape in such a manner as to prevent rattan splinters from coming free of the weapon.
- Blades must have a clearly marked “edge”.
- Swords must have some form of hand guard (preferably a cage).
- Guards and pommels must be securely attached.
- Guards shall have no protruding points of less than 1 ¼ inch at their end.
- Weapons will have a weight of no more than 1 lb per foot of length.
- Suggested materials for add-on construction (axe heads, protrusions on pole arms, etc.) are thick closed cell and/or open cell foam.

A. WASTER HAFTED WEAPONS:

- The hafts must be of rattan.
- The heads must not be entirely made of a rigid material.
- The head must be securely attached to the haft.
- The construction of the head shall allow some give between striking surface and the haft of the weapon.

B. WASTER POLE ARMS:

- The shafts of pole arms shall be made of rattan.
- No pole arm shall exceed 10 feet.
- The heads of pole arms shall be constructed in a manner similar to hafted weapons.
- Striking surfaces shall be clearly marked.
- No pole arm may have cutting or smashing heads at each end.

C. WASTER THRUSTING TIPS:

- Thrusting tips are permitted at either the end of the blade or as a butt spike.
- Thrusting tips shall be 2 inches in diameter or in cross section shall not protrude more than ½ inch into a legal face guard, and shall have progressively resistant “give” and not allow contact with the rigid material of the blade or haft.

III SHIELD REQUIREMENTS FOR WASTER

A. SIZE AND FORM:

- Shields must be made in a period form.
- Round shields will not exceed 42 inches in diameter.
- Oval, Rectangular, or Kite (flat or teardrop) shall be no larger than 48 x 36 inches.
- Heater shields shall be no larger than 24 x 36 inches.

B. MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION:

- Metal shields may be used.
- Wooden shields may be faced with leather or metal.
- All shields must be painted or stained (unless metal).
- No weapon like or protrusions are allowed.
- It is recommended that wooden shields be edged with heavy hose for longevity.
- High impact plastic may be used provided it is completely covered by a period looking material.
- Woods shields must have at least ½ inch thickness (plywood is ok, oak is better).

C. ALTERNATIVE HAND ITEMS:

- Waster fighters may use items other than shields for blocking. Almost any item without sharp protrusions or edges that cannot be broken into sharp pieces may be used for blocking. Examples include boat oars, chairs, etc. Only Rattan may be used in their construction, no plastic or PVC.
- Marshals have the final authority to disallow an object deemed to be unsafe or inappropriate.

PART FOUR: LIVE STEEL COMBAT

I LIVE STEEL ARMOR REQUIREMENTS

- At no time shall bare skin be visible.
- Rigid gender based protection must be worn at all times when on the field during combat (marshals and combatants both).
- Feet must be covered completely in leather footwear. Ankle support is required (support that prevents the ankle from rolling to the floor, such as high top shoes). No Tennis Shoes.
- Armor MUST be made of non-synthetic period materials (ie, leather/steel). Synthetics may be used for padding provided they are disguised.
- Armor must be maintained in sound working order, duct tape is NOT to be used (except as padding disguise if its silver).
- Armor shall be deemed excessive if normal blows cannot be felt through it.

Arms and Legs:

Must be covered by chainmaile (welded is strongly recommended, butted shall be inspected visually before each bout) over a minimum of ½ inches of padded material or rigid material. Elbows and knees must be covered by minimum 16 gauge mild/ 18 gauge stainless steel winged cops and must be covered at all times. Shins must be covered by rigid material (ie, 10 oz hardened leather or equal at a minimum).

Hands:

Full gauntlets of at least 16 gauge mild / 18 gauge stainless steel are required. Basket hilts on weapons do not lessen the requirement for full gauntlets.

Torso:

Rigid protection over sternum, spine, and kidneys is required (minimum 10 oz hardened leather).

Body:

Must be covered by one or more of the following:

- **Brigantine or Coat of Plates:** 16 gauge mild / 18 gauge stainless steel plates attached to leather or heavy material such as canvas. If worn alone the plates shall overlap. If worn over hardened leather, plates may have no more than ½ inch gap between them.
- **Hardened Leather:** Hardened 10 oz or unhardened 15 oz leather. The hardened leather may be segmented but there may be no gaps caused by the movement.
- **Plate:** 16 gauge mild or 18 gauge steel covering the entire stomach, chest, and spine. Must overlap the gorget by no less than ½ inch.
- **Chainmaile:** All chain must be of at least 16 gauge mild / 18 gauge stainless steel over ¼ inch of padding. Maximum interior dimensions of links shall be as follows: 14/16/18 gauge – ½ inch, 12 gauge – 7/8 inch.

Neck and Shoulders:

Gorget (neck protection) is required and should cover the larynx down to the collar bone and around the neck to covering the cervical vertebrae. Gorgets are to be made of 16 gauge mild steel / 18 gauge stainless steel with ¼ inch padding. The shoulders (including shoulder blades) must be covered at all times by a minimum of 16 gauge mild / 18 gauge stainless steel or 10 oz hardened leather or 15oz non-hardened leather under 18 gauge mild / 20 gauge stainless steel. If chain with sleeve is worn the point of the shoulder being covered by rigid material will suffice.

Head:

Helms must be a minimum 14 gauge mild steel / 16 gauge stainless steel (useable for live steel) with a minimum of ¼ inch closed cell foam padding or equivalent on the interior. Chin strap is required, no opening greater than ¾ inch in any direction. There shall be no projections from nor sharp edges on helms.

II WEAPON REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVE STEEL

- The striking surfaces of all weapons must be made of metal.
- No portion of any weapon may protrude into a legally constructed helm more than ¾ of an inch.

A. STEEL EDGED WEAPONS:

- Blades of 18 inches or longer may be used for slashing or for thrusting if an approved thrusting tip is in place.
- Blades under 18 inches in length are for thrusting only and require legal thrusting tips.
- Blades must have a 1 inch blade width measured 2 inches from the tip.
- The ends of blades shall be rounded such that they do not come to a chisel point.
- The total weight of one handed weapons shall not exceed 5 pounds.
- The total of two handed or hand-and-a-half weapons shall not exceed 8 pounds.

B. STEEL HAFTED WEAPONS

- The weight of the head shall not exceed 2.5 pounds.
- The total weight shall not exceed 5 pounds.
- Edges of blades shall be no thinner than 1/8 inch.
- Hooks shall protrude no more than 4 inches from the haft and have a diameter no smaller than 1 inch.
- Total length shall not exceed 36 inches.
- Hammer heads shall be no smaller than 1 inch in diameter and have all square edged rounded off.
- Hafted weapons may have thrusting tips and/or butt spikes.

C. STEEL THRUSTING TIPS:

- Thrusting tips shall be made of either a sphere of at least 1.5 inches in diameter or a flat surface of at least 1 inch in size.
- Butt spikes shall be readily identifiable and be constructed in the same manner as thrusting tips.

D. STEEL POLE ARMS:

- All pole arms must have metal on at least one end to be considered lethal for armored combat.
- Pole arms shall weigh no more than 8 pounds overall.
- Pole arms weighing more than 5 pounds may not be used single-handedly in offense.
- Pole arms shall not exceed 10 feet in length.
- Single handed thrusting spears shall not exceed 5 feet in length

III SHIELD REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVE STEEL

A. SIZE AND FORM:

- Shields must be made in a period form.
- Round shields will not exceed 42 inches in diameter.
- Oval, Rectangular, or Kite (flat or teardrop) shall be no larger than 48 x 36 inches.
- Heater shields shall be no larger than 24 x 36 inches.

B. MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION:

- Metal shields may be used.
- Wooden shields must have a thickness of no less than ½ inch and may be faced with leather or metal.
- All shields must be painted or stained (unless metal).
- No weapon like or protrusions are allowed.
- It is recommended that wooden shields be edged with heavy hose for longevity.
- Man made materials (such as plastic and rubber) can only be used for padding and must be made to look period.

PART FIVE: RAPIER (RENAISSANCE) COMBAT

I RAPIER ARMOR REQUIREMENTS

- At no time shall bare skin be visible.
- Rigid gender based protection must be worn at all times when on the field during combat (marshals and combatants both).
- Feet must be covered completely in leather footwear. Ankle support is required (support that prevents the ankle from rolling to the floor, such as high top shoes). No Tennis Shoes.
- Armor made of non-period materials must be made to appear period either by painting or covering with a period looking material.
- Armor must be maintained in sound working order, duct tape is ONLY to be used for temporary field repairs and must be approved by the marshal of the field.

- Armor shall be deemed excessive if normal blows cannot be felt through it. Steel armor may be used sparingly, provided it is not excessive and does not create areas where a rapier could become lodged or broken.

Arms and Legs:

A single layer of non-tearable material is required (such as heavy cotton, silk, or trigger cloth). Modern plastic elbow pads or armored cops are recommended.

Hands:

Leather gloves are required. Padded gloves are strongly recommended for exposed hands. Chainmaile gloves are allowed and provide cut-proof but not thrust proof protection.

Torso:

Four layers of trigger cloth, 10 oz leather or equivalent. This protection shall extend to the hips and cover the underarm.

Neck:

Gorget (neck protection) is required and should cover the larynx down to the collar bone and around the neck to covering the cervical vertebrae. Gorgets are to be made of 16 gauge mild steel, 18 gauge stainless steel or equivalent metal.

Head:

A three weapons fencing mask with permanently attached bibb is required. Straps on the mask shall be in good repair and must keep the mask from falling off. Alternately, a full helm with fencing mask type mesh is acceptable as long as it will not permit a blade to enter the mask in any head position, utilizes a chin strap, and is padded with at least ¼ inch of internal padding. The back of the head must be covered by a padded thickness of ¼ inch. Rigid protection is recommended.

II WEAPON REQUIREMENTS FOR RAPIER

- All offensive and defensive parrying weapons used in rapier combat must be approved by the Field Marshal.

A. BLADES:

- Schlager blades, main gauches, or other metal weapons must come from a dealer of repute or an accomplished forge and be designed for sport combat.
- No handmade blades are allowed in rapier.
- All blades used in rapier combat, including daggers, must have a minimum flex of 5 inches. Blades are tested for this by inverting the blade and with point to floor pressing down on the pommel 5 inches. The blade must return to it's original shape and may have one gradual curve in it's memory. Blades with a recurring "s" curve will be retired as they pose a greatly increased breakage hazard.
- Schlager blades shall be a minimum of ½ inch in width, with blunted tip and dull edges.

B. TIPS AND POINTS:

- Before use in combat a rubber archery blunt (like those sold for bird hunting) must be attached to the tips of all rapiers & daggers. To increase the lifespan of the blunts, it is recommended that a steel washer of the largest diameter possible be squeezed into the tip of the blunt so the steel tip of the rapier presses into the flat of the washer and not into soft rubber.
- The blunt shall be held on by heavy tape in such a way that it shall not easily come off. Alternately, a minimum of 3 coats of handtool rubber dip may be used in place of the tape.
- Tips shall be of a bright color so it can easily be seen. This is to help ensure that if a tip should snap off a blade, it will be noticed before injury occurs from the jagged edge.
- The tips of parrying daggers shall be no smaller than ½ inch after blunts are affixed to them.

C. NON-BLADED WEAPONS:

- Non-bladed parrying items may have no sharp points and must not be breakable into pieces with sharp points. Marshals will inspect non-bladed items for suitability (both in safety and time period).
- Guns designed to fire surgical tubing are allowable melees, war combat scenarios, and “fun” combat scenarios or tourneys provided they are of a roughly period design. As there is no minimum range on them, Guns must be of suitable material to withstand or block a blow. Guns are not allowed in point bearing tourneys.

D. ADDITIONAL TRAINING-ONLY TOOLS:

- In some cases an olympic foil may be used for beginner training for renaissance combat. This is particularly useful in the cases of someone with distance/control difficulties (foils leave less bruises) or those whose wrists do not have the muscle development required to use a rapier for more than a few minutes. In order to do this, the training marshal must have a special authorization on his card allowing him to do so. However, foil training cannot count towards the ten hours of instruction required to qualify for Rapier Combat.
- Foils used for this purpose must be kept in good repair (rust & burr free), cannot have a recurring “S” curve in the blade, and may only be used against other foils. Under no circumstances will a foil be used against any other weapons and hand parrying is forbidden.

III SHIELD/BUCKLER REQUIREMENTS FOR RAPIER

A. SIZE AND FORM:

- Shields/Bucklers must be made in a period form.
- Round bucklers will not exceed 18 inches in diameter.
- Square bucklers will not exceed 16 inches on a side.

B. MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION

- Wooden bucklers will be of no less thickness than ¼ inch.
- Metal bucklers must either have a rolled edge of ¼ inch thickness or edged in hose/leather.

C. ALTERNATIVE HAND ITEMS:

- Rapier fighters may use items other than shields for parrying in rapier combat. Almost any item without sharp protrusions or edges that cannot be broken into sharp pieces may be used for parrying. Examples include batons, mailed gloves, boat oars, etc. As PVC is breakable, if used it shall be wrapped in overlapping layers of duct or strapping tape.
- Marshals have the final authority to disallow an object deemed to be unsafe or inappropriate.

PART SIX: RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

I GENERAL RULES

- All combatants will have proof of membership and a signed combat card from their Realm indicating which forms of combat the individual is qualified to compete in.
- Before engaging in combat, every participant must have their armor and weapons inspected by the marshal of the field or his designated assistants.
- Before engaging in combat, each combatant will have signed a waiver of liability (Usually this will be the List Sign-Up, and the Event/Activity Sign-in).
- Combat shall only take place in supervised designated areas as indicated by the marshal of the field from which bystanders can be separated. Safety of bystanders shall always be a primary consideration in selection, setup, and in using the combat area. All combatants shall at all times conduct themselves in a safe and courteous manner. Unsafe or incourteous behavior shall be grounds for immediate removal from the field of combat in the most severe cases, and will warrant a warning in other cases (see the Marshallate Manual for more information).
- Warnings and reminders will be given to any combatant who violates the rules of combat. Depending on the violation or number of violations, further action may be taken by the Marshallate. Again, see the Marshallate Manual for more information.
- Prior to combat, the marshal shall set any unusual conventions for combat, shall point out any possible hazards, and shall ask all combatants if they are prepared.
- Upon verification that all combatants are ready, combat will commence at the command of “Lay On” being called by the primary field marshal.
- Combat will cease immediately upon the command of “Hold”.
- All combatants will submit to the decision of the marshal of the field.

II THE WORD “HOLD!”

- A “Hold” is called when there is a safety concern on the field. It is not to be called if a combatant becomes confused about where they should go or whose army they are with, nor shall it be called to prevent a blow from counting – in these circumstances a warning will be issued.
- Anyone on the field or in view of the field, be they Marshal, Combatant, or Bystander, has the right to call a hold for safety concerns and shall not be punished for doing so.
- Upon hearing a hold, all combat will cease. Combatants are to point their weapons at the ground, repeat the call of “hold” and not move unless in immediate danger. Unless instructed to do so, combatants will not remove any safety equipment during a hold.
- Combatants in a “Hold” will not speak or rearrange themselves except at the direction of the Marshal. On a hold, time ceases to move forward and all combat halts, this is not a time for discussing tactics or making plans, nor is it a time to “reload” ranged weapons. Marshals will find who began the “Hold” and address the safety concern.
- Lastly, anyone on or near the field during combat should try to avoid saying words that sound like “hold”, such as “hole, gold, fold, etc” as they may be mistaken for “hold”. Mistakes do happen; you will not be issued a warning for doing this (unless you do it every 2 minutes...) but frequent holds do slow down the combat and make it less realistic.

III COMBAT MOVEMENT

- Combatants may not strike with the edge of their shields.
- Punch blocks with shields, ie punching forward to meet your opponents’ weapon, and shield hooks, ie using your shield to catch the edge of your opponents’ shield to pull it aside are allowed. No combatant may kick, punch, or attempt to grab an opponent or their equipment (see Optional Knight-Level Rules for exceptions for one-on-one combat). Grasping an opponents weapon will be treated as a wound to the offending arm (ie, put it behind your back).
- Striking a prone opponent is not allowed, nor is throwing a blow while prone, this is a safety issue. In tournament the combat shall pause (ie “Hold” is called) and the combatant shall be allowed to regain his/her feet or knees as appropriate for their wounds. In melee (more than two combatants), the standing combatant may ask his prone opponent to yield or declare him dead.
- Combatants may only thrust if their weapon has an approved thrusting tip.

IV BLOWS

A. LEGAL TARGET AREA:

- The entire body excluding the hand up to one inch above the break of the wrist and excluding the leg below a point one inch above the knee.
- No combatant shall attempt to purposely strike their opponent outside of these target areas. Purposely striking non-target areas will be treated in the same manner as excessive force.
- Exception: Non-target areas placed by the combatant in areas to prevent blows to vital targets become legal targets. Example – when using the offhand to parry blades, the entire hand and wrist become targets. The same goes for lifting a leg to make the opponent's blow strike below the knee.

B. FORCE OF BLOWS:

- At no time shall combatants strike an opponent harder than needed to ensure that the blow is felt by the opponent. Force of blows is considered a significant safety issue and will be treated accordingly.
- The marshal may disallow any blow they deem to have been delivered with excessive force. As a rule of thumb, if a blow still has significant “sting” after a ten second count, the blow may be considered to have been given with too much force.
- All combatants should feel free to let their opponents and marshals know when too much force is being used, and combatants should take such friendly reminders with politeness and correct their force.
- Remember that in live action combat, it is sometimes difficult to gauge blows and excessive hits will occur. Neither party should take offense at an excessive blow, this is a martial art and accidents will happen.
- If combatants will not (or cannot) reduce the force of their blows, then they shall be warned, and then subject to removal of combat qualification pending demonstration of retraining (See Marshallate Manual for more information).
- Refusal to accept legal blows (aka rhino-hiding) is considered a safety issue as it leads to heavier force of blows. Force and mass, even without sharp edges, can lead to serious injuries. Individuals who consistently refuse to acknowledge fair blows will be checked for excessive armor and warned. Continued refusal to acknowledge fair blows may lead to removal of combat qualification pending demonstration of retraining (See Marshallate Manual for more information).

C. GENERAL BLOWS:

- All combatants are honor bound to acknowledge fair blows received in combat.
- Any clear unobstructed blow shall count. Obstruction is a block by any object in the opponent's possession that noticeably reduces the momentum of the blow.
- No blow will be thrown with greater force than is needed to allow ones opponent to recognize that a fair blow has been struck.
- If the combatants cannot agree on the outcome of an exchange of blows, the marshals will call the blows. In addition a combatant may at any time ask for a ruling from the marshals. The ruling of the marshal is final. If the marshal cannot determine the outcome of the blows the entire combat round is negated and combat will start over from the previous “lay on”.

- If the marshals see valid blows not being acknowledged, they will call the blow valid, check for excessive armor, issue a warning, and explain the rules for accepting blows. If the marshal is continually required to call valid blows on an opponent, the marshal may remove the combatant from the field and possibly remove his combat certification pending additional training.
- Thrusts with legal weapons are always unobstructed.
- Draw cuts are allowed in rapier and shinai combat. A draw cut is where the blade is placed on the opponent and sharply drawn across the target area. Note, for rapier the draw must be edge-on to count.
- A blow to the arm renders that arm unusable. The arm must be held behind the body until the next round (unless retaining wounds). A blow to the hand makes it unusable; however the combatant may close it in a fist and continue to use the arm only. A combatant who has lost the use of both hands (and/or arms) may be asked to yield or be declared dead. In melee combat they may be allowed to live at discretion of their opponents.
- A blow to the hip or leg renders that leg unusable. The combatant must go down on that knee or sit. The combatant may move or pivot on that leg as long as the knee remains on the ground. When both legs have been made inoperable the combatant assumes either a kneeling (sitting on heels) or sitting position on the ground. He may not rise up from that position, and may not move or pivot using his legs. He may however drag himself with hands or weapons.
- A combatant with two injured legs may be “carried” by another combatant. The “carrier” places both hands on the injured individual and they both move off the field or to another location on the field. When the “carrier” removes his hands from the shoulders of the wounded individual, that person must return to his sitting position. While transporting the wounded, the “carrier” may be killed in the same manner as an archer.
- A clear unobstructed blow to the head, torso, groin, or underarm is a killing blow.
- There may be double kills in the case of simultaneous attacks. Attacks are considered simultaneous if the slower attack has begun before the faster attack has landed.
- If a situation arises where the outcome of an exchange of blows cannot be determined by the combatants or marshal the round will be re-fought.

V. WAR AND MELEE COMBAT:

Marshals are allowed to call blows at any time during melee or war combat, declaring combatants dead or injured as is appropriate under the circumstances.

A. DEATH FROM BEHIND:

- No blows may be thrown from behind. A kill is made by placing a weapon on the opponent’s shoulder (into his field of view) and calling “Dead My Lord”. All three words must be spoken before moving onto the next target, failure to do so will result in a warning and the kill may be negated by the marshal. The opponent is considered dead the moment the blade comes into view (as this symbolizes it

- protruding from their chest). They may not “whirl” around an attack/defend, as they are dead.
- When killed from behind the combatant may not talk or call out any warning other than yelling “dead”.
 - Individuals who are prone are not to be struck, nor strike, and may be verbally called dead at weapon point by their attacker.

B. MISSILE WEAPONS:

- Archers are not to be purposefully struck with anything but a missile weapon unless they set their bow aside and draw a melee weapon (in that order). Once they do so they are no longer considered archers but are treated as standard combatants.
- Archers may not use their arrows as a single hand weapon.
- Archers may not fire at a range of less than ten (10) feet.
- Archers may be called “dead” if a combatant comes within ten (10) feet of an undefended archer.
- A defended archer is one with a friendly combatant interposed between him and the attacker and actively trying to defend the archer. If the combatant interposed is ignorant of the attacker or unarmed the archer can be called dead.
- Small missile weapons such as arrows and throwing axes may be blocked by shields, but may not be purposefully blocked by weapons. Anyone who blocks a small missile weapon with a weapon will be called dead by the marshals. A missile weapon which accidentally strikes a weapon is considered to have missed.
- Bows/Arrows/Crossbows may NOT be used to block blows.

C. GUNPOWDER REPLICA WEAPONS:

- Gunpowder replica weapons such as rubber band rifles and pistols may be used in conjunction with melee weapons. Combatants using these weapons are considered standard combatants and may be struck. These weapons have no “minimum” range as surgical tubing shot poses no danger at close range.
- For more information on combat missile weapons, consult the archery manual.

VI. SINGLE AND TOURNEY COMBAT:

- Whenever possible, there should be at least two qualified Marshals present for single combat. At least one is required.
- Combatants shall always have the right to refuse a challenge for any reason without loss of honor. However, in tournament combat, groundless refusal to fight may result in a loss (Marshals’ call).
- Combatants may refuse to accept a challenge with a specific weapon.
- Combat challenges are NEVER allowed for the purpose of settling real arguments or disputes. Anyone caught doing so may be subject to loss of fighting privileges at the Marshal’s discretion (see Marshallate manual for more information).
- In tournament combat, a combatant may always ask for a ruling on the safety or legality of a specific weapon. If a weapon is found safe, a combatant may forfeit

- rather than compete against it. If a combatant does not choose to compete against a qualified opponent, the combatant may forfeit the match.
- Shields may only be used defensively. No shield bashing or grappling is allowed.

VII. KNIGHT LEVEL OPTIONAL RULES:

The following rules are optional and are available for tournament play only, all parties involved (combatants and marshals) must agree to their use prior to lay-on for any/all of them to be invoked. Combatants will not be punished or have losses counted against them for refusal to allow optional rules. There is no loss of honor for opting to not use an optional rule.

- Shield Bashing may be allowed.
- Grappling may be allowed.
- Grappling of weapons/shields may be allowed. However, closing the hand about a blade is still forbidden and will result in loss of limb. In rapier, the blade may be controlled by placing it in the “L” of the thumb and fingers, but they may never be closed.
- Pommel strikes in Waster and Live Steel ONLY may be allowed.
- Knee, Lower Leg and Foot as valid targets for cuts in Rapier only may be allowed.
- Hand and wrist as valid targets for Rapier only may be allowed.

When grappling is allowed for Rapier combat, the combatants will have rigid back of head protection. This can be in the form of hardened leather overlapping bands, a fencing grill or other heavy wire mesh “clamshelled” to the rear of the mask, or a full steel helm. This is to prevent cuts to the back, which become much more common when grappling, from impacting the back of the skull.

PART SEVEN: RANKS AND KNIGHTHOOD

Rapier and Armored track combat knighthood requirements are the same, except for minor modifications as listed. The modifications take into account the differences in combat and tournament styles. Knighthood/experience in one track does not bestow the rights and privileges of that level in the other.

SERGEANT

- Eight shinai tournament participations, one of which must be a win, at which point the combatant must move to waster for tournament combat unless the age requirement is not met. No further shinai points are counted.
- Eight rapier tournament participations, one of which must be a win.
- Two participations in demonstrations open to the public, that pertain to some aspect of historical combat in our period. (discussion modern sport combat does not count).

KNIGHT BACHELOR

- The combatant must have attained the rank of sergeant.
- Ten tournament participation in waster, one of which must be a win.
- Ten additional participations in rapier, one of which must be a win.
- One participation in an official war for that combat track.
- Three additional participation in demonstrations open to the public, that pertain to some aspect of historical combat in our period. (again, modern sport combat discussion does not count).
- Combat track note: Upon successful attainment of Knighthood, the combatant must move to Live Steel for tournament combat unless the age requirement is not met.

KNIGHT BANNERET

- The combatant must have attained the rank of Knight Bachelor for that track.
- Eighteen steel tournament participations, five of which must be wins.
- Rapier, eighteen additional knight-only tournament participations, five of which must be wins.
- Five additional war participations in that combat track.
- Five additional participations in demonstrations open to the public, that pertain to some aspect of historical combat in our period. (again, modern sport combat discussion does not count).
- The combatant must also become a qualified Field Marshal, if not already so.
- And finally the combatant must demonstrate a working knowledge of historical combat in that track. This may be done by producing a research work on some aspect of period combat, producing some historically accurate item pertaining to period combat produced by the combatant, or by passing an examination on the practice of combat in period. This examination will be setup by the Imperial Marshallate, or by the BoD if the Imperial Marshallate has yet to be established.

KNIGHT COMMANDER

- The combatant must have attained the rank of Knight Banneret.
- Thirty-six total steel tournament participations, ten of which must be wins.
- Rapier, an additional eighteen knights-only tournament participations, ten of which must be wins.
- Ten additional war participations in that track.
- Ten additional demos open to the public as previously described.
- The individual must demonstrate a mastery of some aspect of combat in period. This can be done by producing a research paper or by making an item pertaining to period combat, either of which must be of a master work quality for an arts and sciences entry. Alternatively, a candidate for Knight Commander may take an examination on a specific subject area pertaining to historical combat in our period. The subject area will be chosen by the candidate and the examination will be made up by the Imperial Marshallate or the BoD if the Imperial Marshallate has yet to be formed.

PART EIGHT: MODIFICATION OF RULES, CLAIRIFICATION, AND ADDENDA:

I. MODIFICATION OF COMBAT RULES:

- The rules within this document may not be modified at a local or realm level. Changes may be proposed through the Imperial Marshallate and tested on a local level but are not enforceable unless noted within this document. This is to ensure that all members can travel freely between realms without the need to worry about different armor/weapon/engagement rules.
- The only exception to the above rule is where local mundane laws influence the rules within this document, in that case mundane law takes precedence.
- Clarifications and Addenda may only be added by the Imperial Minister of Joust and War.
- Clairifications are added only to clairify a specific section of the rules, not to change them.
- Addenda are added only when an issue has arisen that requires immediate modification of the rules. They are dated and must pass an Imperial Vote (see Codecils) within six months or be negated.

II. CLAIRIFICATIONS:

Rigid Gender Protection –

- For men this is a male athletic cup of plastic or and equivalent such as a steel or aluminum codpiece.
- For women this is at a minimum a padded groin protector (such as used in martial arts) and a leather or hard plastic chest protector. Woman may NOT use a male athletic cup.

Grappling-

- The act of grabbing or pushing an opponent's physical body. When the torso's or helms of two opponents touch it is also treated as grappling. Grabbing an opponents weapon or blocking device is also considered grappling.

III. ADDENDA:

HAVE FUN AND PLAY SAFE!