



Armistice Steel Rules

I. GENERAL GOALS

1.0 Goal

To facilitate the practice and study of historical armed combat in both Armored and Unarmored contexts while also fostering a deeper understanding of Medieval Tournament Culture and material culture. Two formats of Armored combat and one format of Unarmored are provided. The first format of Armored Combat being Au Plaisance and the second being De La Outrance. Plaisance combat is in short, counted blows making no distinction in the type of historical armor used, whereas De La Outrance is treated as “Armor as worn.” Unarmored combat is a representation of combat in normal clothing appropriate to the era.

2.0 Regarding Evoking An Historical Environment

2.1 For the Host:

- Historical deeds will be surrounded with AT LEAST a modicum of pageantry.
- The fighting portion of the deed should have a formal opening and closure.
- The combatants in each bout should be introduced before they fight.
- Their weapons in use and any restrictions or modifications to the default rules should be announced.
- The Marshals or Heralds will announce the results of each engagement clearly, and if the score is being kept, the score will be clearly explained.
- The deed will be controlled and monitored by a chief marshal and such assistants as needed/desired under the direction of the host and/or presider.

3.0 Regarding Displaying The Reconstructed Arts:

3.1 General Competence:

- We expect that combatants will have experience in executing the art which they study.
- Combatants should have training in one or more medieval fighting arts, preferably with a focus on historical Armoured and or unarmoured combat as depicted in existing fight books and treatises and other representations in art such as literature and chronicle.
- Combatants will be subject to an authorizing process.
- Combatants will strive to stay within the parameters of the art which they study as judged by the marshals and other fighters.
- Combatants will give and receive proper strikes, which will be detailed below.

4.0 Regarding The Chief Marshal’s Role

- In ALL deeds the chief marshal shall serve as referee, starting and ending bouts and counting well struck blows, calling each out as a fair blow in the case of ‘stop time’ bouts, or tracking them in continuous action bouts. The role of counting the blows may be delegated to allow the Chief Marshal to run the field.
- Safety is of primary importance. All marshals shall act to ensure the safety of spectators, assistants, and combatants.

- The chief marshal should check to confirm that all combatants are wearing appropriate protective gear and using appropriate weapons (see below).
- The deed will be performed as paired matches (called a “bout”) fought to a conclusion.
- The weapons used in a bout to be mutually agreed upon by the combatants, subject to the chief marshal’s approval, or they may be chosen by the host, or pre-set on conditions listed publicly in the announcement of the deed.

5.0 Regarding Chivalric Virtues And Good Sportsmanship

5.1 We expect that:

- All participants will hold themselves to the ideals of a chivalric person.
- All participants will behave with courtesy and respect to all, participants, and spectators alike.
- Combatants are responsible for acknowledging blows received and if they are “set” in a grapple.
- As historical armor is highly effective at doing its job, Marshals may assist with scoring.
- Play nicely and be polite in all cases; especially when you are hot and tired.
- Do not argue over a call. Fight on.
- Polite discussion after the bout will not reverse any results but may improve subsequent judging.
- Each combatant will acknowledge good blows unrecognized by marshals.
- Each combatant will call out a good blow if he/she feels it, whether the marshals call it or not.
- Each combatant will deny any blows called upon their opponent which were not consistent with a fair and proper strike.
- If you know that a blow you struck was not really on target or well structured, be chivalrous and deny the call. This is an exception to accepting whatever the marshal calls. Combatants are encouraged attend closely to the bouts of their companions in the deed that they may be properly informed when choosing the winner.

II. HARNESS COMBAT

1.0 Goal

To facilitate the practice and study of historical armored combat.

2.0 Striking Fair Blows:

- To be deemed “proper, or ‘scoring” a strike should be seen to be properly supported by body structure and using the blow mechanics needed for that weapon to work against the protection on the target. Weapons Efficacy below as well as Armour definitions.
- ‘Immune’ targets are defined as a target that cannot receive a ‘proper’ or ‘scoring’ strike from a particular weapon no matter how well delivered or structured; for example, a cut or concussive blow to plate armour (heavy armour. See below Weapons Efficacy as well as Armour definitions.
- Insufficiently delivered (weak and/or poorly structured) blows will not be counted as “fair blows.”
- Combatants will understand that a deed of arms is an opportunity to display skill and honor, not a venue to display brute power or ruthlessness.
- Excessive power in blows is brutality. Powerful strikes to “immune” targets will be considered unnecessary force, and thus, brutality. ‘Displacement’ is not required for a strike, especially a thrust against maille.
- Striking an unresisting opponent after the marshal calls hold or the opponent has backed away to acknowledge a blow is improper and likely to be deemed ruthless.
- Those who display brutality or ruthlessness should expect to be warned and possibly ejected from the deed. Shield and gauntlet punches are strictly forbidden.

- All combatants recognize and acknowledge, regardless of their Armouring choices and prior training, that Armoured combat is a rough game that can result in injury. The choice to participate means that risk of injury has been voluntarily assumed.

3.0 Concerning Squires or other attendants:

In all deeds, it is very strongly recommended that each combatant have a “squire” or other attendant to help with arming, disarming, handling water and refreshments, supplying required weapons and such other duties as necessary to keep the deed efficiently moving. It is recommended that the presider choose one from among the squires to be “captain” of the squires to coordinate their efforts. It is further suggested that this role be filled by accolade in recognition of exemplary service in support of a prior Deed or Deeds. The captain of squires may have a lieutenant.

4.0 Regarding Appropriate Equipment

4.1 Regarding Weapons

We expect that:

- Weapons will be styled after historical models in materials and appearance within the bounds of safety.

We acknowledge that:

- Safety trumps authenticity. This is non-negotiable.
- All weapons shall be of types and styles from within the period covered by the SMA. Weapons will represent known historical analogs. Any weapon from outside this period may be forbidden, limited, or altered by the marshals or host. This has to do with the practicalities of a combination of safety and ease of scoring.
- Sword and dagger blades should be steel and, in the opinion of the marshal and host, flexible and safe.
- Spear points should be steel and, in the opinion of the marshal and host, flexible and safe. Commonly available rubber spear tips such as Revival, Purpleheart, Helgi shall also be acceptable. These will be preferred when combatants have insufficient mail protection over vital areas such as armpits, torso and groin.
- Polearms, mace and hand axe heads should not be steel, but a flexible material, such as thermoset or rubber.
- Butt spikes on spears and poleaxes should be rubber blunts.
- Dagger, sword, and spear points should be either ball tipped, “nail” tipped, or covered with a blunting cap such as hiking stick tips.
- The minimum size for a weapon tip or blunt is 3/8” by 5/8”.
- Spear, maces, hand axes and polearm should have hardwood shafts.
- The weapons in use may vary from the recommended forms and materials at the discretion of the host/presider and any such deviations should be announced to prospective combatants before the deed.
- Use of particular weapons, whether variant or not, in combination with particular Armours is at the discretion of the chief marshal.

5.0 Combat Au Plaisance:

The conventions for fair blows against armour or Combat Au Plaisance:

- Combatants may opt to fight counted blows using the Armour as protective gear, scoring all quality blows that land cleanly.
- This form of combat will usually be fought until five blows are received by one opponent.

- Plaisance Combat duplicates friendly deeds of arms where prowess is displayed in a more sporting context. Combat Au Plaisance is an excellent form of combat when the disparity between two Armours would give an unreasonable advantage to one combatant.

6.0 Combat De La Outrance

- Combat done Outrance is focused on battlefield or judicial duel type combat designed to defeat weaknesses in the opponent's Armour. The conventions for fair blows against armour or De La Outrance:
- Daggers strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armour, ineffective against Heavy Armour.
- Spears strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armour, ineffective against Heavy Armour.
- Swords strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armour, ineffective against Heavy Armour.
- Swords strike fair blows with the edge against Unprotected, ineffective against Light and Heavy Armour.
- Poleaxes strike fair blows with the spear end points against
- Unprotected and Light Armour, ineffective against Heavy Armour.
- Poleaxes strike fair blows with the hammer/blade & back spike against Unprotected, Light and Heavy Armour.
- Maces and hand axes defeat soft Armour and are also effective on head hits.
- Portions of weapons that are blunt in real weapons do not strike fair blows against armour but may be used to set up follow on strikes/techniques.

7.0 Regarding Armour

We expect that:

- Armour will be a best effort analog of historical Armour. Armour with a historical basis in artifactual survivals or art is preferred by far. However, this does not allow Armours that would overly compromise participant safety. In such cases, discrete additions or modern reinforcements may be required.
- Combatants will have armour that fits well and is well maintained.
- Armour should fit its wearer to function properly and safely.
- Using "armour as worn" means different weapons will have different abilities to deal "fair blows" against various armour types. This requires more experience on the part of marshals.
- Using the "safety equipment" form results essentially in an unarmoured fight conducted while wearing armour. We feel this does not represent Armoured combat and should be chosen only for specific purposes.

8.0 Requirements (include but are not limited to)

8.1 Head:

- Helmets will be worn and will have full face protection.
- Helmets should have a minimum 14-Gauge skull and sides.
- Visors must lock, latch, or be buckled or tied closed and may not be able to be opened with a blow to the base of the visor or any other part.
- Any opening in the visor must not allow a 1/4" x 1/2" bar to enter unimpeded in such a way that the wearer's face can be touched. Any other
- gaps in the helmet must not allow unimpeded access to the wearer by a 1/2"
- square bar. Wider eye slots and other openings must be protected by perforated steel as a safety measure.
- Pierced steel plate used as face protection, if of a historically appropriate style and size, will count as plate. Other perforated face protection shall be counted as Light Armour.
- The use of "open-faced" helmets is allowed with the addition of perforated plate to cover any open areas of a helmet. Such perforated plate is considered as "Unprotected" for the purposes of determining armour protection.

8.2 Neck/Throat:

- Solid neck protection for cervical area, clavicles, and larynx protection will be worn, regardless of its historical suitability for the armour style chosen. Preferably be of period form such as a plate gorget or bevor.
- Neck protection may be impact resistant modern materials if such are concealed.
- A maille pisane (standard) with a concealed trauma plate for the throat is acceptable.
- A maille aventail alone is insufficient to protect the front of the throat.
- Cloth or padded aventails without reinforcement are not suitable. Cloth aventails under maille aventails are deemed suitable and safe.

8.3 Hands, Arms and Legs:

- Steel gauntlets will be worn that protect the hand, fingers, and wrist with a minimum of 16-gauge unhardened steel.
- Hardened leather Armour, preferably splinted, is the minimum amount of Armour over forearms, elbows, knees and shins.
- Concealed hard synthetic protective gear may be worn but will not count as Armour in De La Outrance.

8.4 Body:

- Other plate should be a minimum of 16-gauge unhardened steel.
- A maille shirt, made with riveted rings, that covers the armpit and any such areas of the torso not covered by plate, will be worn. Sleeves must be secured to the arm at the "cuff" to prevent accidental entry of a thrust, and the shirt must be belted or otherwise secured at the waist.
- Suitable separate items such as voiders and separate skirts that work with the plate armour worn are acceptable, at the marshal's discretion. A combatant's maille will be riveted or welded. It may not be butted unless backed by an arming garment sufficient to protect from a broken blade. 350 Newtons resistance or 3 layers of tight weave linen or its equivalent will meet this criterion. 350 Newton rating shall be sufficient armpit protection without mail but will be treated as an unarmoured area. Shark maille is not of historical weight and will only count as protective gear to prevent blade penetration.
- Safety trumps authenticity. Combatants are expected to wear modern elements of protection to provide a safety margin where historical kit does not.
- Modern Requirements include:
 - Groin protection (an athletic cup or "box") for men.
 - Solid chest protection for women. A modern plastic fencing plastron worn under the arming coat or gambeson is acceptable when the combatant is not wearing a formed steel or other breastplate.

9.0 Armour Definitions

Whatever armour a combatant actually wears is to be judged to fall into one of three generalized categories: Unprotected, Light Armour, and Heavy Armour. The category defines how weapons can strike fair blows.

See Combat De La Outrance:

- *Unprotected*: This is anything (including required modern equipment that protects gaps in a combatant's armour) that does not fall into the other armour categories, such as soft leather and lightly padded and unpadded cloth. It specifically includes perforated plate (such as fencing mask mesh). Any blow struck against an Unprotected target is a fair blow and may be deemed 'fight ending' by the marshal.
- *Light Armour*: This is maille (which, being the default exemplar, is often used as a shorthand term for the category), hardened leather, splinted soft leather, properly constructed padded garments and other Armours. Unless otherwise specified, Light Armour is proof against cuts but vulnerable to thrusts.

- *Heavy Armour*: This is steel or iron plate, whether hardened or not. Armour of small plates properly overlapped can also count as Heavy such as brigandine or lamellar. Hardened leather with splints will count as plate. Unless otherwise specified, Heavy Armour is proof against all blows.
- *Shields*: Shield shall be made to the proper dimensions and weight of historical shields and should ideally also be appropriate to the user's Armour.
- *Footwear*: Non-historical footwear should be a natural color and generally unobtrusive or hidden beneath sabatons or maille coverings.

10. Combat Context

- No combatant will be compelled to fight with or against any weapon (or opponent) that he/she deems to pose an unacceptable risk.
- If the issue is a weapon, the combatant may simply express the wish to "not fight with that." Reasons need not be given. The combatants should choose a different weapon.
- If the opponent is the issue, the declining combatant may do so by simply expressing a wish to "not have this fight." Reasons need not be given. Other pairings should be found for the combatants.
- Any combatant may, without reproof, request a limitation of targets/blows struck due to lack of or inadequate armour or due to concern for a pre-existing physical condition.
- Bouts shall be completed when an appropriate conclusion is achieved. Herein is a list of historically based conclusions to deed of arms bouts.

11. Historically Based Scoring and Bout Conclusions:

11.1 Option A: Halted Scoring

In the first format, the action is stopped after each fair blow is called, and the fighters return to their corner of the lists.

11.2 Option B: Continuous Combat

- In the second format, action is continuous. Fighters strike blows and continue; one fighter may achieve an advantage such as a lock or grip and continue to maintain it, or chivalrously allow his opponent release. This appears more in the spirit of Medieval deeds of arms but is more difficult for the Fighters or Marshal to call; can be less safe and can lead to very one-sided bouts. On the other hand, it provides a deeper Medieval experience and may, in fact, help the combatants to use period techniques; a pommel strike may lead to a grapple, for example:
- In both options, the following conditions are held to end a bout so long as these conditions were fairly announced before the start of the deed:
- The agreed upon number of fair blows have been struck. A "fair blow" is one which would score against the armour, or lack thereof, against which it is targeted. The number of blows to be counted varied historically. Five blows, in total, is a good number for well-paced bouts.
- One combatant is driven from the field. If both combatants fall from the list at the same time, the bout is halted momentarily, and the combatants have returned to a standing position in the middle of the lists before combat resumes. If a combatant willfully leaves the lists, he/she is effectively calling for quarter and yields the bout to the opponent. This may be counted as 'one fair blow' or as a bout-ending victory.
- One combatant is disarmed of his last weapon. This may be counted as 'one fair blow' or as a bout-ending victory.
- Grappling is permissible by agreement of the fighters. Shoving and pushing are normal components of this form of combat and are baseline acceptable. Fighters may agree to fight to throws or to "Set" where one fighter believing they have structure to affect a throw will yell SET! The fighters will freeze in place

and with the assistance of the marshals determine if a throw was possible. Fighters may agree to not grapple beyond the baseline pushing and shoving. Disarms are legal under all conditions.

- One combatant is thrown to the ground with the other in clear control of the situation, such as by remaining standing (a follow up blow to the downed opponent is not necessary or desired). If both are carried to the ground and one combatant does not immediately establish a position of dominance, the bout is halted momentarily, and the combatants have returned to a standing position in the middle of the lists before combat resumes. This may be counted as 'one fair blow' or as a bout-ending victory.
- Slipping or tripping is not considered a bout conclusion.
- One combatant achieves a secure bind upon the other.
- One Combatant is rendered unable to continue. This may come from injury, but it may also be declared if the chief marshal or the marshal in charge of the bout decides it is unsafe for a combatant to continue.
- One combatant calls for quarter and yields the bout to his/her opponent.
- Groups electing private conclave are encouraged to accept input from other fighters as to whom they considered deserving of praise.

12.0 Definitions

- *Assistants* – Staff of a DEED such as the Host, the Marshal, assistant Marshals, Herald, Notary, non-fighting squires providing direct support to combatants, etc.
- *BOUT* – A single encounter or combat between two combatants, defined for any given DEED as ending with pre-announced victory conditions.
- *Combatants* – Armed participants in a DEED. The host, the marshals, and some squires may sometimes be combatants and other times be assistants.
- *Deed* – A passage of arms or contest of Arms
- Historical Deed – A contest of arms that attempts to model both the physical activity and the cultural context of the historical period and culture in which the martial art occurred.
- *Fair Blow* – A strike that is properly supported by body structure and uses the blow mechanics needed for that weapon to work against the protection on the target. See 5.1.1 Weapons Efficacy above as well as 5.2.1 Armour definitions for weapon/armour interactions.
- *Marshal* – The senior referee of a DEED (n.) or the action of being marshal for a bout (v.). May also participate as may other sub-marshals; may never be winner of a deed. No one may marshal a bout in which they are a participant. A marshal is required for all combats.
- *Notary* – The assistant responsible for pairings in a formal deed, for noting the style of the combatants, the weapons used, and the outcomes on behalf of the Marshals.