



## Kingdom of Atenveldt Office of the Earl Marshal

---

# KINGDOM OF ATENVELDT CORPORATE RULES FOR RAPIER COMBAT IN THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM, INCORPORATED

*Last revised 5/24/08*

## INTRODUCTION

These rules set fundamental standards for rapier combat in the Kingdom of Atenveldt in the SCA. All fighters and marshals are responsible for knowing these rules. Rules are designed to promote safe rapier combat in the Society. However, no matter how clear or accurate, rules cannot replace common sense, good judgment, and concern for the participants. If a question arises when applying these standards, choose the answer that promotes the greatest degree of safety for all participants.

## CONVENTIONS

### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. Rapier Combat shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules of the Lists of the SCA, Inc., these rules, and such further rules as are established by the Kingdoms.
- B. All combatants, prior to every combat or practice, shall ensure their equipment is safe, in good working order and has been inspected by a member of the Kingdom Marshallate authorized to inspect rapier gear.
- C. At interkingdom events, for any given Kingdom's tourney, guest combatants shall meet SCA standards for protective gear, but shall comply with whatever weapons standards are being used by the host kingdom for that tourney.
- D. Unless otherwise directed by Kingdom Law, the Crown's representative upon the field and in all matters dealing with Rapier Combat is the Earl Marshal, then the Kingdom Rapier Marshal, then, by delegation, members of the Kingdom Rapier Marshallate.
- E. There are two categories of rapier combat, each requiring separate authorization. These categories are:
  - heavy rapier
  - cut and thrust rapier

Except where noted, all rules apply to both forms of rapier combat. One of the major differences in the two forms is the allowable blades, which are specified in Appendix 5.

Both forms are allowable in tournament in Atenveldt, but blades of one type may not be used against blades of the other (except in the case of blades which fall into both categories - see Appendix 5). If two fighters meet in a tournament and both are authorized in cut and thrust rapier they may use those blades/rules for their bout. If either fighter is not authorized in cut and thrust rapier the default will be heavy rapier.

## 2. BEHAVIOR ON THE FIELD

- A. All fighters shall obey the commands of the marshals overseeing the field, or be removed from the field and subject to further disciplinary action.
- B. Disagreements with the marshals overseeing the field shall be resolved through the established mechanisms outlined in the Marshallate Procedures of the SCA, Inc.
- C. Each fighter shall maintain control over his or her temper and behavior at all times.
- D. Striking an opponent with excessive force, or with deliberate intent to injure, is forbidden.
- E. Upon hearing the call of "HOLD" all fighting shall immediately stop. The fighters shall freeze, check for hazards in their immediate vicinity, and then assume a non-threatening position with their weapons pointed away from their opponents.
- F. Conduct obstructive of normal rapier combat, such as consistent ignoring of blows, deliberate misuse of the rules (such as calling HOLD whenever pressed), or the like, is forbidden.

## 3. USE OF WEAPONS AND PARRYING DEVICES

- A. Valid blows are struck by: thrusting with the point of the blade (thrust) or sliding the edge of the blade by drawing (draw cut).
  - i. Push cuts and tip cuts are treated as valid blows. There is no minimum length for any type of cut.
  - ii. Cut and thrust rapier also includes the use of percussive cuts as a valid blow.
  - iii. Percussive cuts must always be delivered with sufficient control so as not to injure the opponent while still delivering the necessary impact for a valid cut.
- B. Chopping or hacking blows are not permitted in heavy rapier combat. For cut and thrust rapier, they still must be delivered with sufficient control. Fast circular movements (such as moulinets) may be used to place a blade for allowable cuts in both categories of rapier combat.
- C. Parrying devices may be used to move, deflect, or immobilize an opponent's weapon or parrying device, so long as such use does not endanger the safety of the combatants.
- D. Striking an opponent with any part of a weapon or parrying device not approved for that purpose is prohibited.

## 4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF BLOWS

- A. In judging blows, all fighters are presumed to be wearing common civil attire of the period, not armor.
- B. Tournaments may be held which define areas of the body as if armored, and to what degree, so long as all the participants are made aware of these special conditions prior to the start of combat.
- C. In rapier combat, blows will be counted as though they were struck with a real blade, extremely sharp on point and edge. Any blow that would have penetrated the skin shall be counted a good blow. Any blow that strikes a mask, helm or gorget shall be counted as though it struck flesh.
- D. A valid blow to the:
  - head,
  - neck,
  - torso,
  - inner groin (to the fighter's hand width down the inner limb), or
  - rmpit (to the fighter's inner hand width down the limb)

shall be judged incapacitating, rendering the fighter incapable of further combat.

- E. A valid blow to the arm will disable the arm. A valid blow to the hand shall render the hand useless. The arm above the incapacitated hand may be used to parry.
- F. A valid blow to the foot or leg will disable the leg.

- i. For heavy rapier, the fighter must then fight sitting or kneeling on the ground.
  - ii. For cut and thrust rapier, valid blows to the leg or foot are considered incapacitating, rendering the fighter incapable of further combat.
- G. Parries may be performed with weapons, parrying devices, the gloved hand or any other part of the body. Though the gloved hand may be used to parry, it shall not be used to grasp or strike an opponent. Fleeting contact between opponents is allowed, as long as no grappling, deliberate striking or other unsafe behavior occurs.
- H. In heavy rapier and cut and thrust rapier, fighters may choose to grasp blades, rather than parry them. If the blade that is grasped moves or twists in the grasping hand, that hand is deemed disabled. Grasping techniques shall be used only to immobilize a blade, not to bend it or wrest it from the opponent's grip. Prolonged wrestling over a grasped blade is sufficient grounds for calling a "hold" and forcing a release of the blade.
- I. If an effective blow is thrown before, or on, the same moment as an event that would stop a fight (a "HOLD" being called, the fighter being "killed" himself, etc.), the blow shall count. If the blow is thrown after the hold, killing blow, or other event, it shall not count.

## WEAPONS AND PARRYING DEVICES

1. Sharp points, edges or corners are not allowed anywhere on any equipment.
2. All equipment must be able to safely withstand combat stresses.
3. Equipment that is likely to break a blade or damage other equipment is prohibited.
4. BLADES:
  - A. Blades will be specified as to which type of rapier combat they are allowed for. This list is kept in Appendix 5. Some blades may be allowed in more than one type of rapier combat so care must be taken by the fighters as to agree on which set of rules (i.e. which category of rapier combat) apply to each bout.
  - B. All are subject to the following:
    - i. Any rapier or dagger blade in a given rapier class may be used against any other blade in that same class, but NOT against blades of the other class. Remember that some blades are allowed in more than one category and so can face a wider range of other blades. Blades must follow all restrictions for a category to be used in it.
    - ii. Only blades listed in Appendix 5 – Blade Types and Conventions are permitted for use. Fighters or marshals desiring an exception must apply to the Deputy Society Marshal for Rapier Combat and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Atenveldt will accept any steel heavy rapier, cut and thrust and dagger blade (except flexi-daggers) approved at the Society level.
    - iii. Steel blades will not be altered by grinding, cutting, heating, hammering, or other actions that could significantly alter their temper, flexibility or durability. Normal combat stresses and blade care do not violate this rule. Exceptions are:
      - a. The tang of the weapon may be altered.
      - b. Heavy rapier and cut and thrust rapier blades may be shortened so long as they maintain acceptable flexibility.
      - c. A nut or other blunt metal object designed to spread impact may be welded to the tip of heavy rapier and cut and thrust rapier blades so long as care is taken to prevent damage to the temper of the blade. The blunt object will still need some form of coverage, per 4.B.v. below.
    - iv. All steel blades must be reasonably flexible. Rigid steel "parrying-only" daggers such as those made from cut down blades will not be allowed.
    - v. All blade ends must be capped with rubber, plastic, or leather.
      - a. Tips will have a blunt striking surface, presenting a cross-section of at least 3/8 inch (9 mm) diameter.

- b. Tips must be firmly taped or glued in place. The tip must be of a color contrasting with the blade so that the tip's absence is readily apparent. If tape is used, it must contrast with both blade and tip.
- vi. Any blade with kinks, sharp bends, or cracks shall not be used. Steel blades that develop these defects cannot be repaired and must be retired.
- vii. Weapons may use a hand guard such as a cup hilt, swept hilt or quillons and knucklebow. The ends of quillons must be blunt.
- viii. Orthopedic (or "Pistol") grips will not be used unless the fighter has approval for medical reasons, supported by documentation from their health care provider.

## 5. PARRYING DEVICES:

- A. Solid parrying devices will be made of sturdy, lightweight materials, resistant to breakage and splintering. Any documentable period design may be used as long as it is determined by the marshallate to be safe.
- B. Soft, non-rigid devices such as cloaks may be made of cloth, foam, leather and similar materials. They may be weighted with soft material such as rope or rolled cloth; they shall not be weighted with any rigid material, nor with materials which are heavy enough to turn the device into a flail or impact weapon.
- C. Devices that predictably cause entangling of an opponent or their equipment, either by design or by repeated mishap, are not allowed.
- D. Offensive bucklers will be considered non-standard devices. These devices must be approved on a case by case basis, in accordance with rules established by each kingdom's Rapier Mrshallate. An opponent may decline to face non-standard devices without forfeiting a bout. Offensive bucklers shall be made of soft flexible materials such as cloth, tape, foam and golf tubes.

## 6. PROJECTILE WEAPONS

- A. Combat archery, throwing weapons, and/or mock-gunnery gear (such as rubber-band guns) may be used in rapier melee combat, as long as safety standards for those arts are met.
  - i. The use of any projectile weapon is forbidden within formal rapier Tournament lists (single combat), or in any situation where spectators cannot be separated from the potential line of fire by more than the effective range of the projectile weapons to be used.

## PROTECTIVE GEAR

- 1. In order of increasing resistance:
  - A. Abrasion-resistant material: material that will withstand normal combat stresses (such as being snagged by an unbroken blade) without tearing. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    - broadcloth
    - a single layer of heavy poplin cloth (35% cotton, 65% polyester; "trigger" cloth)
    - sweat pants
    - opaque cotton, poly-cotton or lycra/spandex mix tights
 Nylon pantyhose and cotton gauze shirts are examples of unacceptable materials.
  - B. Puncture-resistant material: any fabric or combination of fabrics that will predictably withstand puncture. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    - Four-ounce (2 mm) leather;
    - four layers of heavy poplin cloth;
    - ballistic nylon rated to at least 550 Newtons;

- commercial fencing clothing rated to at least 550 Newtons.

Kevlar is not an acceptable material, as it degrades rapidly. These materials need only be tested at the marshal's discretion; all other materials must be tested the first time new gear is used, or if no marshal on the field knows a given piece of gear to have been tested. (Refer to Appendix 1 on Testing Standards.)

- C. Rigid Material: puncture-resistant material that will not significantly flex, spread apart, or deform under pressure of 12 Kg applied by a standard mask tester, repeatedly to any single point. Examples of rigid material are:
- 22 gauge stainless steel (0.8 mm)
  - 20 gauge mild steel (1.0 mm)
  - 16 gauge aluminum, copper, or brass (1.6 mm)
  - one layer of hardened heavy leather (8 ounce, 4 mm)

2. The following are the Kingdom norms for protective gear.

3. HEAD AND NECK:

- i. The front and top of the head must be covered by rigid material to below the jaw line and behind the ears. Standard 12 kg fencing masks are known to meet this standard. If built to this standard, fencing helms are also acceptable.
- ii. The face must be covered by either 12 kilogram mesh (e.g, a standard fencing mask) or commercially produced perforated metal. Such metal must not have holes larger than 1/8" (3 mm) in diameter, with a minimum offset of 3/16" (5 mm) and shall also meet the definition of rigid material.
- iii. Masks and helms must be secured to the fighter, so that they cannot be easily removed or dislodged during combat. The combination of snug fit and the spring-tongue in a conventional fencing mask is NOT sufficient, by itself, to secure the mask to the fighter.
- iv. Both modern fencing masks and rapier helms, when inspected, shall comply with the rigid material standard, provisions on facial coverage, and shall show no evidence of impending failure (e.g., rust which weakens the metal involved, dents or other defects which spread open mesh, broken weld points, etc). If there is concern about the face mesh of a modern fencing mask, it should be tested using a standard commercial 12kg mask punch. Marshals doing the testing shall be trained in the use of the punch. The Kingdom Rapier Marshals may elect to designate certain deputies to administer such testing.
- v. The rest of the head and neck must be covered by at least puncture resistant material.
- vi. Additional throat protection is required; it shall consist of rigid material, as noted above, covering the entire throat, and shall be backed by either puncture resistant material (as a hood), one quarter inch (1/4") (6 mm) of open-cell foam, or their equivalents. The cervical vertebrae shall also be protected by rigid material, provided by some combination of gorget, helm, and/or hood insert.
- vii. For cut and thrust rapier, the back of the head must also be covered by rigid material, as noted above sufficient to protect against percussive cuts.

4. TORSO AND OTHER KILLING ZONES

- i. The entire torso (the chest, back, abdomen, groin, and sides up to and including the armpits) must be covered with puncture-resistant material.
- ii. Acceptable minimum armpit coverage is provided by a triangle extending from the armpit seam, covering the lower half of the sleeve at the seam, and extending down the inner/under arm, one-third the distance to the fighter's elbow.

- iii. Male fighters shall wear rigid groin protection. Any ventilation holes large enough to admit a broken blade must be covered from the outside with at least puncture-resistant material. Female fighters shall wear puncture resistant groin protection.
5. ARMS AND LEGS
    - i. Hands shall be protected by gloves, made of abrasion resistant material, that overlap any sleeve openings as below. Feet shall be protected by boots, shoes, or sandals, comprised of at least abrasion-resistant material.
    - ii. Abrasion-resistant material is required on arms (save as noted above for armpits), legs, and any area not otherwise mentioned in these rules.
    - iii. No skin shall be bared. There shall be sufficient overlap between separate pieces of protective clothing, regardless of the fighter's stance or movements, that the minimum protection for that body area be preserved.
    - iv. For cut and thrust rapier, elbows must be further protected by a minimum of an athletic pad or equivalent materials.

## MARSHALLING CONCERNS IN RAPIER COMBAT

1. AUTHORIZATIONS: Competence in other SCA combat styles does not automatically mean competence in rapier. Separate warrants and authorizations in rapier combat are required. There are separate authorizations required for heavy rapier and cut and thrust rapier. An authorization in heavy rapier is required for a minimum of six (6) months before an authorization can be given for cut and thrust rapier.
2. MARSHALS: There are 2 types of marshals in Atenveldt: field marshals and authorizing marshals. Field marshals may oversee rapier combat activities (such as marshalling bouts, weapons and armor inspections and running tournaments) at official practices and events. Field marshals may not conduct authorizations for rapier combat. Authorizing marshals may conduct all of the above activities as well as conduct authorizations for rapier combat. There will be separate authorizing marshals designated for heavy rapier, cut and thrust rapier and minors. Authorizing marshals are appointed by the Kingdom Rapier Marshal; field marshals are appointed by the Kingdom Rapier Marshal or his designated representative(s). Authorizing marshals must either currently be or have at some point been authorized rapier combatants.
3. BROKEN BLADES: Marshals and fighters shall pay special attention for missing tips or broken blades. A hold will immediately be called upon observance of either.
4. CLOAKS: When cloaks are used, "HOLD" should be called if the cloak becomes tangled about either fighter, or about one of the weapons such that the weapon cannot be withdrawn. "HOLD" need not be called if the cloak is merely near the face, deflecting a weapon, loosely draped over, or weighting down the blade.
5. BLADE GRASPING: Blade grasping is allowed in heavy rapier and cut and thrust rapier. When a blade has been grasped by an opponent, "HOLD" shall be called if wrestling about the blade occurs.
6. EXCESSIVE IMPACT: Combat in the Society poses risks to the participant. This recognition, however, does not excuse fighters from exercising control of their techniques. If a fighter throws blows which force their opponent to retire from the field, from a real injury (even one which only causes brief incapacitation), the marshal responsible for the field shall take such steps as are appropriate to stop the problem from recurring.

7. MELEE: Melee combats present special challenges to all involved. Kingdom norms are as below:
  - A. In melees, fighters are engaged with all opponents immediately upon the call to lay on.
  - B. Fighters may strike any opponent with any legal blow if they are within the 180 degree arc of the opponent's front. A fighter who approaches an opponent from behind shall not deliver a blow until he is within that frontal arc. A fighter may never deliberately strike an opponent from behind.
  - C. Killing from behind is allowed if it has been announced beforehand. The Society norm for "death from behind" in melees shall be: If a melee scenario allows killing from behind, a fighter does so by laying the rapier blade over the opponent's shoulder, to at least a third of the blade, while calling "Dead, my lord" (or other short, courteous phrases) in a loud, clear voice. Reaching around the neck is forbidden. The opponent will be deemed "killed" from the instant the blade touches his shoulder and shall not attempt to spin, duck or dodge away. If death from behind is not allowed in a given melee, a fighter who deliberately ignores an attacker behind them, or repeatedly maneuvers to keep their back to an attacker (thereby preventing any attack on them) may be considered for misuse of the rules and obstructive behavior.
  - D. In special scenario melees (e.g., bridge or town battles), additional restrictions may be imposed by the marshals as needed.
  - E. Cut and thrust rapiers may not be used in melees.
8. MINORS: The minimum age for training and authorization in rapier combat is 14. When fighters under the age of 18 undertake training and authorization, the Kingdom Rapier Marshal (or his designated representatives) shall ensure that the minor's parent or legal guardian has observed rapier combat, is aware of the risk of injury inherent in this martial art, and has signed a statement explicitly acknowledging the above. The Kingdom Rapier Marshal shall appoint individuals to act as authorizing marshals for minors. Authorizations for minors shall be conducted only by these designated representatives.
  - A. A minor rapier fighter must be 16 years of age or older to participate in melees with other rapier fighters.
9. PERIODIC TESTING OF PROTECTIVE GEAR: Kingdoms shall require all gear to have been formally tested (including fabric and mask tests, as appropriate) at least once every two years. Compliance is the responsibility of the individual fighter. Any protective gear may be formally tested if there is concern that the gear may have lost protective ability due to age, wear and tear, or other factors. Refer to Appendix 1 on Testing Standards.
10. DROPPING/THROWING EQUIPMENT: No fighter will drop or throw any equipment within the list field. Fighter who have lost a hand or arm and must give up the use of any equipment will hand the item to a marshal or spectator or set it outside the list field in a safe fashion.
11. UNFORESEEN SITUATIONS: Should a situation arise not explicitly covered by Corporate or Kingdom rapier combat rules, the marshals should NOT assume that the situation is forbidden or inappropriate. Again: However, no matter how clear or accurate, rules cannot replace common sense, good judgment, and concern for the participants.

Additional information can be found in the following appendices on the Society Marshal Rapier Combat Rules Regulations and Policies web page, located online at:

<http://www.sca.org/officers/marshal/combat/rapier/index.html>

- Appendix 1 - Testing Standards For SCA Rapier Combat
- Appendix 2 - Procedures For Experimentation In Rapier Combat

- Appendix 3 - Procedures For Creation Of A Drop Tester
- Appendix 4 - Procedures For Use Of A Drop Tester
- Appendix 5 - Blade Types And Conventions

These Guidelines are confirmed by Our Hands on this, the 24th Day of May, Being the Year 2008 in the Common Reckoning.

***Phelan***

Rex Atenveldtus

***Amirah***

Regina Atenveldtus

***Tighearnain***

Atenveldt Earl Marshal