

# Donnybrook 2025



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We don't always win  
but we always fight

Donnybrook – an inordinately wild fight or contentious dispute; brawl; free-for-all.

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#### 1. Summary

- a. Have proper safety and fencing gear.
- b. Bouts are to 9 points in pools and to 11 in eliminations.
  - i. Medal matches are to 11 points win by 2
- c. The bouts are 1 minute long in pools, and 3 minutes long in eliminations.
- d. Head shots = 3 points, torso shots = 3 points, arm shots = 2 points, and leg shots = 1 point. Controlled disarms = 4 points, ring out = 2 point, pommel strike to mask = 2 points
- e. Afterblows: Head shots = 2 points, torso shots = 2 points, arm shots = 1 point, and leg shots = 1 point.
- f. Attacks are to the whole body, excluding back of head and cervical spine.
- g. Attacks may be; percussive cuts, draw cuts, thrusts, or pommel to mask.

#### 2. Introduction

- a. These rules were composed referencing historical context, historical rule sets, and as well as taking inspiration from contemporary tournament rules. These rules are written to be as comprehensive as possible. In order to foster a deeper understanding of the rules, the reasonings behind the rules are given. The rules are written in outline format to make them flow more logically as well as make referencing any specific rule easier. We are more than happy to answer questions or discuss any matters of concerns you may have.
- b. Please bear in mind that everything is subject to change the day of, at the discretion of the tournament director.

#### 3. Equipment

- a. All equipment will be checked by a duly appointed representative of Heartland HEMA and the Donnybrook tournament before use is permitted.
- b. The gear requirements set forth by Donnybrook are the minimum standards needed to fence safely. If you feel that you are not safe in those minimum requirements, we encourage and recommend you to add more gear and or

protective equipment to make yourself safe.

- i. This is a martial arts tournament. There is inherent risk involved in participation.
- c. Protective gear and clothing
  - i. Mandatory items
    - 1. No bare skin may be exposed by combatants while participating.
    - 2. An Olympic fencing or Hema level jacket
    - 3. Fencing Mask with back of head cover
    - 4. Gorget or some form of rigid trachea protection
    - 5. Gloves for both hands
    - 6. Elbow pads
    - 7. Knee and shin guards
    - 8. Athletic cup for men.
      - a. An external cod piece is not an athletic cup.
  - ii. Highly Recommended but not mandatory items
    - 1. Additional padding for thighs and torso
    - 2. Forearm protection
    - 3. Jackets with extra padding.
    - 4. Ridged plastron.
    - 5. Extra protection for offhand i.e. hard shell or heavier padded glove.
    - 6. Chest protection for women
- d. Weapons
  - i. All weapons must reasonably be able to be classified as the weapons they are based off historically.
    - 1. Tournament director shall have, in their sole discretion, final approval over the acceptableness of any weapon.
  - ii. All weapons must have external tips .
    - 1. It is much preferred that the tips are industry standard rubber/ silicon tips. If that is not a feasible option, leather/ plastic tips may be permissible upon approval by the director.
    - 2. All tips must be securely fastened with tape.
  - iii. All weapons must have been made for the specific purpose of being fenced with.
    - 1. Retrofitted, or broken blades are not permitted.
  - iv. All weapons are to be steel and not synthetic.
    - 1. Bucklers may be synthetic.

#### 4. Rules

- a. Purpose and reasoning
  - i. **These rules are composed to foster a style of fencing that encourages fencers be aggressive with their attacks while remaining defensive in their nature.**
  - ii. This rule set took inspiration from both historical accounts as well as

contemporary modern rule sets.

- iii. The rules were written to balance traditional tournament rules, while still holding true to the principle that these are training weapon for real historical sword fighting.

b. Target

- i. The whole body is target.
  - 1. The only parts of the body that are off target are the cervical spine and back of head.
    - a. This is for safety.
      - i. Given that these parts of the body are off target for safety reasons, attacks to these parts of the body may at the discretion of the referee or director result in a penalty.
    - b. Exposing the back of your head to being struck may at the discretion of the referee or director be penalized as well.

c. Force of hits

- i. It is the view of Heartland HEMA that recreating historical fighting is hypothetical and is greatly dependent upon the context in which it is being presented. Level of clothing/armour, geographical location, time in history, whom would be fighting and under what circumstances, would all change the way a fight would proceed. Different situations would necessitate different actions from the fighters. A battlefield needs different moves and level of force than a duel, which might not require the same actions as a civilian defense situation. Given that the context of any given fight is highly situational and that there will ALWAYS be an exception to any rule that we could possibly write; Heartland HEMA holds the opinion that:

**Not all blows need, nor should be, lethal ones with lethal level of force.**

A blow to the leg, hand, or flank might well be all that is needed in any given fight or pass. following that logic, one is not required to chop off an arm when a solid cut to the hand might do.

The level of force the club is looking for, is force that would **wound** your opponent.

Force that is deemed insufficient to deliver a true wound, not simply a scratch, will not be counted. Unnecessarily excessive force is not needed and may at the discretion of the referee or director be penalized.

- ii. Attacks that touch an opponent though a good solid parry are very likely not going to be counted. Most of the force that would have been needed to wound your opponent would have been taken away from the attack with the contact to the steel.

1. If a strike clearly and obviously displaces a parry and lands with sufficient force; that is a mal parry, and the strike will most likely be counted.

d. Attacks

i. Attacks are either:

1. Thrusts
2. Percussive cuts
3. Draw cuts
4. Pommel/ buckler to the mask.

ii. Incidental, unintentional contact, and or slop, does not count.

iii. Further explanation

1. Cuts

a. All cuts must be with the perceived edge of the blade.

i. Flats do not count

b. Percussive cuts:

i. Percussive cuts must be made with at least 45 degrees.

ii. Percussive cuts must be with the distal 2/3 of the blade.

iii. Cuts made with the forte/ strong of the blade are not counted.

c. Draw cuts:

i. Draw cuts can only be pulled not pushed.

ii. At least half the blade must be pulled in the draw for it to count.

iii. Draw cuts must be made with sufficient obvious force being applied against your opponent while executing the draw.

1. Simply placing the blade and pulling will be deemed insufficient.

2. Pommel/ guard to the mask:

i. You may deliver a strike to your opponent's mask with the guard, or pommel, of your sword.

1. Quillion/cross guard strikes are not allowed and strictly forbidden. They are simply too dangerous to practice safely.

a. A quillion strike may at the discretion of the referee or director result in a penalty.

ii. These attacks to the mask must **NOT** be delivered with full force. Full force used with these attacks may at the discretion of the referee or director be penalized.

iii. **A presentation or light contact is all that is**

**necessary.**

iv. The attack is judged valid on the bases that you could have delivered the strike with sufficient force against your opponent.

1. Strikes where your arm is tied up with your opponent or other situations in which the judges deem it unlikely you would have been able to deliver a sufficient strike with the attack will not be counted.

v. Pommel/ guard to the mask is worth 2 points.

3. Thrusts:

b. The point needs much less force to pierce than a cut would. Therefore, attacks with the point need significantly less force to be called valid.

c. The thrust must land true. Any attack that is deemed to not have stuck solid and instead slide off your opponent (passe') will be ignored.

e. Scoring

i. The point system is designed to encourage fencers to attack areas of the body that would do the most physiological damage and/or give significant advantage in a sword fight.

ii. Head = 3 points

1. Head is defined as mask and bib.

iii. Torso = 3 points

1. Torso is defined as the shoulder seams of jacket to bottom of the waist (often this is the bottom of the jacket).

iv. Arms = 2 points

1. Arms are defined as outside the shoulder seam to the fingers.  
a. Hands are on target.

v. Legs = 1 point

1. Legs are defined as the waist to the toe.  
a. Knees and below are on target.

vi. Pommels/ buckler to the mask = 2points.

1. In some weapon systems, attacks with the guard count, but quillion shots are illegal and may at the discretion of the referee or director result in a penalty.

2.

f. Afterblows

i. Purpose and reasoning

1. The purpose of the afterblow is to encourage a style of fencing that is **defensive** in nature. The purpose of learning to sword fight is to learn how to survive a sword fight. We wish to foster a style of fencing that would not purposely leave one exposed to being struck, and to eliminate suicidal actions. It is good technique to

not overextend oneself during an attack. It is also good technique to protect oneself after completing an attack by either taking distance or performing a parry. There are many historical accounts, as well as modern, where fencers were able to keep fighting after being wounded. There are also as many examples where a single touch has stopped a fencer from being able to continue fighting.

**There is no way of knowing how a fencer would react to being wounded in any given pass.**

Therefore, the assumption that a touch would stop the fencer, and the assumption that the same touch would not stop a fencer, are both equally true and valid. Given that both assumptions are true it is fair to treat an afterblow as real, but not give it as much priority as the initial attack.

ii. Afterblow scoring

1. The scoring system that Heartland HEMA has elected to use is positive in nature, not negative. If both fencers were to take hits in real sword play both would have received wounds. Therefore, both fencers will receive points in an afterblow situation. But as stated above the afterblow should not receive the same weight as the initial attack.
2. A fencer struck with a valid hit has one fencing tempo to **land** an afterblow.
  - a. **If the afterblow lands true, then the fencer that initiated the afterblow gets the points he or she would have received for their attack, minus one.**
    - i. Head = 2 points
    - ii. Torso = 2 points
    - iii. Arms = 1 point
    - iv. Legs = 1 point
    - v. Pommel = 1 point
3. Examples
  - a. Fencer A strikes fencer B in the flank (worth 3 points). In time, Fencer B strikes fencer A on the head (worth 2 points). Fencer A gets 3 point and Fencer B receive 2 points for the pass.
  - b. Fencer A strikes fencer B in the leg (worth 1 point). In time, Fencer B strikes fencer A on the arm (worth 1 point). Fencer A gets 1 point and Fencer B receive 1 point for the pass.
  - c. Fencer A strikes fencer B on the leg (worth 1 points). In time, Fencer B strikes fencer A on the head (worth 2



points). Fencer A gets 1 point and Fencer B receive 2 points for the pass.

- i. Note, that you might end up not coming out ahead if you overextend yourself and don't protect after you attack.

iii. The afterblow is not a double. An afterblow has a distinctly different tempo after the original attack lands.

g. Doubles

i. Two hits that both **land** in the same fencing tempo are considered a double hit.

- 1. Doubles are counted when blows **land**, not when blows start.
- 2. This situation is one that should be avoided, if at all possible.
- 3. No points are awarded for a pass that ends in a double.

ii. In Pools

- 1. Three doubles in a single bout will result in both fencers losing that bout.

iii. In Eliminations

- 1. Three doubles in a single bout will not lose anyone that match. Play will continue until a winner is decided in the normal fashion. However, whomever wins, in their next match, their opponent starts the bout with three points.

h. Grappling

i. Grappling with your opponent's arms or your opponent's hilt is legal.

ii. Grabbing your opponent's blade with your hand is not legal and will count as a hand strike against you.

iii. If a grapple ensues, the referee will **out loud, very loudly, count to three**. If nothing is done by the count of three, then halt will be called, and the fencers will be reset.

iv. **Throws, trips, or take downs are not permitted** and may at the discretion of the referee or director be penalized. An intentional throw may result in a match forfeit.

- 1. This is done purely for safety.

v. A fencer that grapples with their opponent in a manner deemed unsafe by the judges will at the discretion of the referee or director be penalized.

vi. Striking your opponent with your body (punches, kicks, head-butts...) are not allowed and may at the discretion of the referee or director result in a penalty.

vii. Joint locks are strictly prohibited and will at the discretion of the referee or director be penalized.

i. Disarms

i. Disarms must be controlled.

- 1. To achieve the disarm points you must gain and maintain control of your opponent's weapon.

- ii. If your opponent is able to engage with you up in a way that would prevent you from attacking, no disarm points will be awarded.
- iii. Disarming your opponent will result in scoring of **4 points**.
  - 1. To disarm someone would win the fight in a decisive and controlled manner. These moves are difficult to execute but when done properly definitively win the fight. Therefore, disarms receive the most points possible in this ruleset.
- iv. Accidentally dropping your weapon, or a weapon dropped for safety reasons is not considered as a disarm.

j. Time

- i. Pools: bouts are 1 minute long.
- ii. Eliminations: bouts are 3 minutes long.
- iii. The clock will only run-down during play. When play is stopped, the clock will be paused.
- iv. If play is occurring when the time runs out, the play will continue until a halt is called naturally. This will end the match.
  - 1. The play is **not** stopped because the time ran out.

k. Winning the bout

- i. Bouts will go to a score of 9 points in pools and 11 points in eliminations.
  - 1. You must win by 2 points in medal matches.
    - a. Example: Fencer A is losing 8 to 10 and scores a head shot. This puts fencer A at 11 to 10. The match is not over yet. You must win by 2 points.
- ii. If after time has run out AND the play has stopped, there is a fencer with a higher score, he or she wins the match.
  - a. Example: At the end of a match, after play has stopped and time has run out, Fencer A has 13 points and fencer B Has 12 points. Fencer A wins the match.

iii. Ties

- 1. There is a tie if at the end of the last play, after the clock has run out, both combatants have the same score.
- 2. The fencers will continue until there is a pass in which one fencer takes the advantage.
  - a. Example: Fencer A strikes fencer B in the leg (worth 1 points). In time, Fencer B strikes fencer A on the head (worth 2 points). Fencer A gets 1 point and Fencer B receive 2 points for the pass.
    - i. This would win Fencer B the match.

l. Boundary

- i. Purpose and reasoning
  - 1. Besides the purely logistical and safety reasons for having a defined boundary, being mindful of your surroundings is an extremely important aspect of fighting. Given that we are simulating sword fighting, having a boundary in which you are

punished for leaving is the way Heartland HEMA has chosen to simulate obstacles in real life. True, you would probably not have fought next to a lava river or a laser wall, but there could have been a tree, stream, ditch, stair, pot, rock... there are practically limitless examples of obstacles that might have presented a danger in which a fencer would have needed to be mindful of when fighting.

- ii. The boundary for the match will be clearly defined.
- iii. If a fencer is pushed or steps out of bounds their opponent will receive TWO point
- iv. A fencer is out of bounds if both feet have left the defined match area.
  - 1. If the fencer's foot is still on the line, the fencer is in bounds.
  - 2. Going out of bounds anytime during the play will result in your opponent receiving TWO point. This applies even if you have landed a strike.
    - a. Example: Fencer A strikes fencer B in the arm (worth 2 point) and before Fencer B has a chance to land a valid afterblow, Fencer A runs out of bounds (worth 2 points). Both fencers receive 2 point for the pass.
    - b. If a blow lands on a fencer before they step out of bounds, or a blow lands within one fencing tempo of the fencer moving out of bounds; the higher points are scored
      - i. Example: Fencer A is stepping out of bounds (worth 2 point) and within a fencing tempo is struck in the head (worth 3 points). Fencer B would receive 3 points for the pass instead of 2.

m. Penalties

- i. The purpose of this system is to keep fencers from repeatedly putting themselves or others in potentially dangerous situations.
- ii. There is no all-encompassing list of penalties. Generally, be good sports, kind, and respectful, and don't put yourself or other fencers in danger.
- iii. This is a martial arts tournament, which means there is inherent danger involved. It is of the utmost importance that all fighters feel safe while fighting. We are pretending to hurt each other, not actually trying to hurt one another. Fighters are to show respect to their fellow competitors, and the weapons at all times. Fighters are to behave in a sportsman like, and polite manner at all times. Failure to do so may result in a penalty at the referees and or directors' discretion.
- iv. For the same infraction; two official warnings will be given to the fencer. The third time a fence commits the same infraction, will result in the fencer's opponent being awarded one point. If the fencer does the same infraction a fourth time, he or she will lose the bout they are in. If a fifth infraction for the same rule happens, the fencer will be asked to leave the tournament.

1. Director and referees shall have sole discretion in this matter. Egregious or intentional violations acts that put fencers at risk may result in match forfeit or loss of points, or even tournament expulsion without initial warnings.
- v. This system extends throughout the whole of the Donnybrook tournament, not just a single bout or weapon event.
  1. For example; a fencer might be warned three times about excessive force, in three different bouts. On that third infraction the fencer he or she is facing will get an extra point.
- vi. Being warned for different offenses do not compound on one another.
  1. For example, a fencer might be warned about exposing the back of their head, and for excessive force. These are different warnings.
- vii. Penalties are dependent on severity. If the director or referee feels that a particular penalty is especially egregious, he or she may implement a punishment based on their best judgment.
- viii. These penalties are not in place to be overly strict or authoritarian, but to keep everyone safe, happy, and healthy.

## 5. Judging

- a. There will be one referee and two line judges.
- b. Referee
  - i. The referee oversees the bout. He/she starts and stops the play. The referee is in charge of calling the play, awarding points to the fencers, and communicating with the scoring table.
- c. Line Judges
  - i. Line judges will assist the referee by giving their opinion of the play. They may call "POINT" if they believe they saw a strike land. They are there to assist the referee, but the referee has final say on what happened.
- d. Self calls
  - i. You may, and it is highly encouraged, decline any points given to you or you may call a hit upon yourself.
    1. Please note you should not be calling points you believe you landed or denying hits upon yourself.
  - ii. Even in cases where a fencer calls a hit on his/herself or declines points, the referee has ultimate say and may override the fencer if they believe they saw the action more clearly than the fencer did.
    - a. This power should be used extremely sparingly.
- e. Challenging a call
  - i. At any time, you may ask for clarification on a rule. You may also ask the referee to narrate the play of a pass at any time.
  - ii. If there is a particular call that you as the fencer believe was significantly incorrect, you may ask the referee over to your corner to give your concerns. Please do this in a calm, polite, and respectful manner. Please use this privilege sparingly.

1. From there, it is up to the referee on how best to proceed. They may gather more information from the line judges, overturn the call, provide further explanation as to why the call was made, or dismiss the concerns.
    - a. If this privilege is abused by a fencer, the referee may start dismissing their concerns outright.
- f. Play
- i. The fencers will be assigned a color, go to their respective corners, salute their opponent, the referee and line judges. The referee will ask if each fencer is ready and start the match.
  - ii. The referee and the line judges watch the play. If any observe a strike land, he/she will call out "POINT". The referee will give one fencing tempo to allow for an after-blow then call "HALT".
    1. It is up to the referee to end the pass by calling HALT. If the referee doesn't call HALT the fighting continues.
      - a. A call of "point" does not stop the play
        - i. Keep fighting and keep your guard up until HALT is called.
    2. **ALL** action must stop at the call of HALT. Any action that is initiated after the call of HALT may at the discretion of the referee or director result in a penalty.
      - a. HALT should be called by any person, refer, line judge, fighter, spectator, etcetera, that sees a safety concern.
  - iii. After a pass is stopped, the referee and line judges will determine the play. The referee will relate the play to the fencers and award points. If fighters wish to acknowledge hits upon themselves or deny points awarded to themselves, this is the time to do so. The referee will then announce a final time to the table what the points are. The table will then announce back the points and current score before the referee proceeds to the next pass.
    1. Communication with the table is key to a smooth-running tournament.
  - iv. In a situation in which the play was stopped but no points were awarded (this includes doubles) the fencers will be reset in "the Danger Zone"
    1. We will have designated lines that will be at about lunging distance. It is here that the fencers will reset themselves.
  - v. At the end of every match, you must salute your opponent and the judges.
    1. Fighters are invited to check the score of the match before leaving the ring
    2. Once the match has been submitted **no changes will be made to the score.**
      - a. Speak now or forever hold your peace.

## 6. Progression

- a. Pools
    - i. There will be round robin pools to determine seeding.
    - ii. The pools will be assigned randomly
      - 1. An attempt will be made to make it so people from the same club are not in the same pool as much as possible.
      - 2. If a “murder” pool is randomly made, the director will move fighters around to increase fairness of pools
  - b. Seeding
    - i. Seeding will be determined first by win loss record
    - ii. If there is a tie, points scored against you will be the second variable used.
    - iii. If there is still a tie, number of doubles will be the third variable used
    - iv. If there is still a tie, number of afterblows will be the fourth variable used.
    - v. If there is still a tie, points scored for you will be the fifth variable used.
    - vi. If there is still yet a tie, a match will be fought for placement.
  - c. After round robin pools, a single elimination tournament will begin.
    - 1. **ALL fighters will break into brackets portion of the tournament. No one will be cut.**
  - d. See Longsword rules for special conditions
7. Rules applying to specific weapon tournaments.
- a. If any rule in the weapon specific rules sets contradicts a rule in the general tournament section, the weapon specific rule overrides the general rule.
  - b. Smallsword
    - i. Weapon specifications
      - 1. All weapons must, at director’s discretion, reasonably be able to be classified as a Smallsword.
      - 2. The blade may not be longer than 32 inches, from the guard to tip.
      - 3. All blades must be triangular in shape.
        - a. ONLY TRIANGULAR BLADES WILL BE ALLOWED IN THIS EVENT!
        - b. **Flat, foil, rectangular, square or diamond cross-section blades are not triangular and will therefore not be counted as a smallsword nor allowed in this event.**
          - i. No Spadroons
          - c. Colichmarde blades are allowed, if still triangular.
        - 4. No modern orthotic or pistol grips will be permitted in this event.
      - ii. The smallsword was a civilian personal defense weapon. This is as much a brawl as it is a duel. Grappling with your opponent’s arms and guard is highly encouraged.
      - iii. The smallsword is a thrust only weapon.
        - 1. Cuts do not count.
        - 2. The blade had only a slight edge to it. Therefore, wrapping your opponent’s blade in your arm is permissible.

3. Grabbing your opponent's blade with your hand will not be allowed.
  - a. The smallsword was edged enough that you would get cut if you tried to grab the blade with a hand.
- iv. Knee, shin, and elbow padding is not mandatory in smallsword.
  1. No skin may be showing.
- c. Single stick
  - i. Weapon specifications
    1. All weapons must, at director's discretion, reasonably be able to be classified as a singlestick.
      - a. Length of the "blade" from the guard to tip is not to exceed 34 in
      - b. Leather or plastic guards are allowed
      - c. Only Rattan sticks will be permitted
        - i. Hardwood sticks are not permitted for safety reasons.
      - d. Singlesticks do not need to have a tip.
      - e. Tape can not be placed on the blade.
  - ii. Thrusts
    1. Given that these devices do not bend as normal fencing swords do, thrusts are extra dangerous.
    2. To perform a legal thrust in this tournament, the fencer must loosen their grip as they thrust and **very obviously** slide their hand and guard up the shaft of the blade.
      - a. No means of faceting the guard to the single stick are allowed.
        - i. i.e. you can't tape the guard or use straps to keep the guard from being loose. It is supposed to be loose. That is how it was built and intended to be used.
      - b. If a thrust is performed without obvious sliding of the hand up the blade, the fencer may automatically **LOSE** the bout.
- d. Longsword
  - i. Weapon specifications
    1. All weapons must, at director's discretion, reasonably be able to be classified as a Longsword
    2. The blade may not be longer than 40 in, from the guard to the tip.
  - ii. Extra hand protection is needed for longsword.
    1. Higher level gloves with ridged protection, such as SPES, pro gauntlets or Koning, are required.
      - a. Red dragon gloves or gloves with less protection are not allowed in longsword.
      - b. If you have questions about your gloves, please do not hesitate to ask.

- iii. You may grab your opponent's blade at the strong (1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the blade closest to the guard) with your hand if the blade is stationary.
      - 1. If your opponent pulls against you with their sword, it will count as a hand cut.
    - iv. One handed strikes with the longsword
      - 1. A one-handed thrust with a longsword will be accepted as a valid strike.
      - 2. A one-handed cut with a longsword
        - a. One handed cuts with the longsword will be counted if it is made with the dominate hand (the hand near the hilt).
          - i. Proper edge alignment must still be observed by the judges and referee.
        - b. One handed cuts with a longsword will NOT be counted if it is made with the non-dominate hand (the hand near the pommel).
    - v. Progression in the Longsword event
      - 1. Pools.
        - a. There will be open pools with all fighters for longsword
        - b. Placement in the pools will determine seating and bracket placement
      - 2. Brackets
        - a. The top forty seeded fencers for the pool will progress to tier A
        - b. The bottom forty seeded fencers for the pool will progress to tier B
- e. Rapier
  - i. Weapon specifications
    - 1. All weapons must, at director's discretion, reasonably be able to be classified as a Rapier.
    - 2. The blade may not be longer than 43 in, from the guard to the tip.
      - a. Make sure to measure from guard to tip and not ricasso to tip.
        - i. The exposed usable part of the blade outside of the guard.
    - 3. Triangular blades are not permitted in rapier.
  - ii. Off handed devices may be used
    - 1. You may use any devices that would have reasonably been used with a rapier historically.
      - a. Some examples are; dagger, second rapier, buckler, cape, mug...
        - i. Excluding shields
    - 2. You are not obligated to match what your opponent brings.
      - a. For example
        - i. fencer A has a dagger and fencer B has a buckler.



- ii. fencer A has a dagger and fencer B is fencing with only a single rapier
- 3. If your opponent chooses to not use any offhanded device (single rapier) you are not obligated to match single rapier. You may still bring in an off handed device of your preference.
  - a. **However**, if one fencer does not have an off handed device and one does, the fencer without the off handed device starts the match at POSITIVE THREE points.
    - i. This rule is designed to encourage fencers to fight the style they most feel comfortable fencing in.
- 4. You may not switch, add, or remove the style of offhanded device during a match. You may change in between matches.
- 5. Dagger
  - a. Dagger blades may not be longer than 20 in from the guard to the tip.
  - b. All dagger blades must be specifically made for the intended purpose of being a dagger to fence with. No broken or modified blades are allowed.
  - c. Only thrusts from daggers count. Cuts are not counted. Dagger thrust receive the same amount of points as any other strike would have.
- 6. Buckler
  - a. The director shall have sole discretion over acceptable bucklers shapes.
  - b. Only a true to size buckler will be allowed.
    - i. This is not a battlefield situation so rotellas and other large shields are not allowed
  - c. The buckler may not be longer than 16 in diameter.
    - i. If using an odd or irregular shaped buckler it can be no longer than 16in at the widest part.
  - d. The buckler may be presented to the mask similarly to a pommel strike.
- 7. Capes
  - a. Strikes to the offhand through the cape
    - i. If a thrust lands through the cape, it is counted
    - ii. If a cut lands through the cape (that is properly wrapped around the arm), it is not counted.
      - 1. If the cape has unraveled, a cut that is deemed by the judges to have been likely to go through the cape is counted.
    - iii. If a fighter has the cape properly wrapped around their hand, they are able to grab their opponent's blade.
      - 1. But if your opponent pulls against you with

their sword, it will count as a hand cut.

iv. Capes may not be thrown

1. This is for purely safety concerns

b. Due to the offhand being so exposed, extra protection is required.

i. See longsword rules.

8. Random items

a. Other random items, i.e. mugs, may be used if they could reasonably be historically paired with a rapier.

b. These items must be inspected and approved for safety by the director

c. These items are to be for defense only. No offensive action may be taken by them

f. Old Guard Saber (OG)

i. Participants in the old guard tournament must be 45 years of age or older.

1. For participants that will be turning 45, their birthday must be within 6 months of the event date.

ii. Weapon specifications

1. All weapons must reasonably be able to be classified as a saber

2. The blade may not be longer than 34 inches, from the guard to the tip.

3. Trooper/heavy or dueling/officer sabers are allowed

a. This would probably give the advantage to the lighter weapon but historically both were used.

4. Modern Olympic saber blades and the straight Hanwei blades are not permitted.

g. Stout Sword

i. The general idea is this is a tournament for swords that do not get to be used in tournaments much. Examples of swords we are looking to see are: heavy sabers, messers, arming swords, katanas, sideswords, claymore (basket hilt broadswords), dussacks ...What we are not looking for are rapiers. There is a dedicated rapier tournament. We at Heartland HEMA love rapiers. This event is not meant to be a rapier tournament. We know that there is transition, and that some sideswords can look like rapiers and vice versa. If you have any doubt if your sword is a rapier, it probably won't be permitted in the event. Please do not try and game these rules. Instead enjoy the opportunity to use swords you do not get to fight with or against often.

ii. No rapiers, longswords, smallswords, or dueling sabers will be permitted in this event.

iii. Weapon specifications

1. The blade may not be longer than 36in, from the guard to the tip.

2. The Blade must be one inch or wider width somewhere on the

blade.

- a. This refers to the “usable” portions of the blade. If the blade is one inch at the ricasso but after the guard is less than one inch, that will not be permitted.

iv. Off handed devices may be used

1. You may use any devices that would have reasonably been used historically with your chosen sword.
  - a. Some examples are; dagger, second sword, buckler...
2. You are not obligated to match what your opponent brings.
  - a. For example, fencer A has a dagger and fencer B has a buckler
3. If your opponent chooses to not use any offhanded device (single sword) you are not obligated to match single sword. You may still bring in an off handed device of your preference.
  - a. **However**, if one fencer does not have an off handed device and one does, the fencer without the off handed device starts the match at POSITIVE THREE points.
    - i. This rule is designed to encourage fencers to fence the style they most feel comfortable fencing.
4. You may not switch, add, or remove the style of offhanded device during a match. You may change in between matches.
5. Dagger
  - a. Dagger blades may not be longer than 20 in from the guard to the tip.
  - b. All dagger blades must be specifically made for the intended purpose of being a dagger to fence with. No broken or modified blades are allowed.
  - c. Only thrusts from daggers count. Cuts are not counted. Dagger thrust receive the same number of points as any other strike would have.
6. Buckler
  - a. The director shall have sole discretion over acceptable bucklers shapes.
  - b. Only a true to size buckler will be allowed.
    - i. This is not a battlefield situation so rotellas and other large shields are not allowed
  - c. The buckler may not be longer than 16 in diameter.
    - i. If using an odd or irregular shaped buckler it can be no longer than 16in at the widest part.
  - d. The buckler may be presented to the mask similarly to a pommel strike.
7. Capes, are not allowed in this event for safety concerns
  - i. These weapons are going to be mostly cut centric and the mass will be greater than that of rapiers.

Therefore, capes will not be permitted in this event.

- v. One, or two-handed swords may be used in this event as long as they meet the above restrictions.
- vi. All weapons must be approved by the tournament director.
- vii. Due to the hands being in more danger in this event, extra protection for the hands is required.
  - 1. See longsword rules.
  - 2. If the weapon and or the offhanded device offers protection to the hands, then no extra protection is required

h. Harnisfechten

- i. HEMA armored combat (often referred to as “Harnisfechten” – Armored Fighting) is conducted in full harness as would have been worn in the 14<sup>th</sup> thru 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- ii. Armor is fought “As Worn” – the openings and vulnerabilities of each combatant are unique to their particular armor. Plate armor is considered “proof” against cuts from swords, as is maille. The way to defeat a fully armored combatant is to find ways to get around the plate to the vulnerable areas covered in maille or no armor at all, such as the throat, armpits, inside of elbows, palm of the hand, back of the knee, etc.
- iii. Weapons used in the Deed of Arms list are Sword, Dagger, Spear and Poleaxe. Thrusts against mail with a sword, dagger or spear with good structure are considered valid strikes and score points. Blows from a poleaxe are considered good against both plate and maille due to the powerful nature of the weapon.
- iv. Other ways to defeat an armored opponent are to throw them to the ground while maintaining control or to “Show them the Gate” – drive them from the list field through one of the two gates.
- v. We will be fighting under the rules of the DeKoven Concord which can be found at <https://chivalricfighting.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/dekoven-concord-revision-2.pdf>
- vi. Please review the Dekoven Concord, and contact Bruce Rawitch directly if you have any questions on equipment or combat conventions.  
[brucerawitch@yahoo.com](mailto:brucerawitch@yahoo.com)

8. Extra awards

- a. We will be offering three extra awards that will run concurrently with the tournaments. These extra awards extend throughout all the weapon events that are held at this tournament. The more events you fight in, the more likely you are at winning one of the adjunct awards.
- b. Iron Duelist
  - i. This award goes to the best overall fencer.
  - ii. Scoring

1. The top four fencers in each event will receive points toward a total overall score for all events. This means that the more events you fence, the more you increase your odds of winning.
2. The total number of fencers you placed ahead of is the base score you receive toward Iron Duelist
  - a. Example
    - i. 1<sup>st</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 20 points
    - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 19 points
    - iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 18 points
    - iv. 4<sup>th</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 17 points
3. Winning is heavily rewarded
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> place receives 10 additional points, 2<sup>nd</sup> 5 additional, 3<sup>rd</sup> 2 additional points, 4<sup>th</sup> no additional point.
    - i. Example
      1. 1<sup>st</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 30 points
      2. 2<sup>nd</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 24 points
      3. 3<sup>rd</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 20 points
      4. 4<sup>th</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 17 points
  - iii. At the end of all events the score will be tallied, and the Iron Duelist will be crowned.
  - iv. Only tier A Longsword will generate points towards this award.
- c. The Iron Club award
  - i. Those individuals that gain points toward the iron Duelist award will also gain those same number of points toward their respective clubs. At the end of Donnybrook, the club with the most points will be crowned the best overall Iron Club
  - ii. Only Tier A Longsword will generate points towards this award.
- d. The Iron Amazon award
  - i. This award goes to the best overall woman fencer.
  - ii. Scoring
    1. The women fencers in each event will receive points toward a total overall score for all events. This means that the more events you fence, the more you increase your odds of winning.
    2. The total number of fencers you placed ahead of is the score you receive toward Iron Duelist
      - a. Example
        - i. 1<sup>st</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 20 points
        - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 19 points
        - iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 18 points
        - iv. 4<sup>th</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 17 points

- v. 5<sup>th</sup> place out of 21 fighters receives 16 points
    - vi. And so on and so forth.
  - iii. At the end of all events the score will be tallied, and the Iron Amazon will be crowned.
- e. The Hand sniper
  - i. We will keep track of the total number of attacks a fencer lands that are below the elbow.
  - ii. At the end of Donnybrook, the score will be tallied, and the Hand Sniper will be crowned.
- f. The Scholar
  - i. The scholar award goes to the fencer that fought in the most technically correct and proficient manner. This award is completely independent of a fighters win/loss record, or points scored for or against.
    - 1. It will be voted on by the fencers that take part in any of the specific tournaments.
      - a. You should vote for the fencer you most felt fought most true to their art. Regardless of how the fencer placed.
    - 2. At the end of each event, the scholar for that event will be awarded
      - a. Rapier scholar, longsword scholar...
    - 3. At the end of all events the score will be tallied, and the Grand Scholar will be crowned

Final thoughts: Thank you everyone for joining us in our tournament. This promises to be a fun and exciting event. Do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have. Hope to see everyone there.