

Swiss Blades 2025 tournament rules

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This regulation is heavily inspired by the official FFAMHE regulations, and we thank them for kindly authorizing its use.

In this document, masculine references are used for readability and apply to all individuals, regardless of gender.

I. General Organization

Combat Area:

- A 6 x 6 m square marked on the ground, in which only the officiating body and the fighters are allowed to enter during the competition, upon indication from the officiating body.

Duration of the Fight:

The fight has two limits:

- The first fighter to lose their 10 lives
or
- Reaching the 3-minute time limit.

The timer starts running when the declaring referee starts the bout with *"Fight!"*. It does not stop when the referee calls *"Stop!"*, unless specifically requested in order to analyse the hits. When 10 seconds remain, the time referee announces *"10 seconds!"*. When the allotted time (3 minutes) is up, the time referee announces *"Time!"*. The declaring referee then chooses to stop the fight immediately or allow the current exchange to finish.

In case of a tie:

- Ties are allowed in the pool phase if the number of lives is greater than 0. A tie at 0 lives results in a loss for both fighters.
- In the qualification/final phases, a 2-minute rest period may be granted. Following this rest, an additional 1-minute fight time is allowed. If there is still a tie, both fighters proceed to sudden death.

The referee or organizers may impose a recovery time without necessarily attributing it to a fighter.

Sudden Death:

In sudden death, the rules for valid hits apply in the same way. The fight ends in two ways:

- One fighter lands a valid hit without being hit and is declared the winner of the duel.
- Both fighters' lives drop to 0, and both are defeated.

The officiating body consists of the following individuals:

Declaring Referee:

- There is 1 declaring referee per ring.
- Positioned in the combat area, they manage the pace of the fight: they have the authority to say *“Stop!”*, send the competitors back to their corners, and to restart the fight with a *“Fight!”*. The decision to say *“Stop!”* is at the sole discretion of the declaring referee.
- At the start of the match, they ensure that their assistants and the time referee are ready.
- They ensure the safety of the fighters and spectators. At the start of the match, they verify the fighters' fitness and check that they are wearing the mandatory protective equipment required.
- They record hits, double hits, and afterblows. After calling *“Stop!”*, they consult the assistants, who indicate via gestures what they observed during the exchange. The declaring referee is the sole decision-maker and may issue a ruling contrary to the assistants' observations.
- They separate fighters when the situation becomes stalled or dangerous.
- They may declare a fighter a loser for dangerous behavior.
- At the end of the fight, they announce the winner based on the results provided by the time referee.
- They may request a pause in the timer if the situation warrants it.
- They are responsible for enforcing the regulations and must comply with them.
- They may expel a coach or fighter from the ring if they fail to respect the regulations or show a lack of respect.

Assistant Referee:

- There are 1 or 2 assistant referees per ring.
- They position themselves to have the best viewing angle for themselves and the officiating body.
- They have the authority to say *“Stop!”* if they deem a situation dangerous.
- They are mobile and move in sync with the fighters.
- They indicate what they observed using codified non-verbal language.
- They share responsibility with the declaring referee for observing the fight, which the declaring referee announces verbally with the weapon phrase.

Time Referee:

- There is 1 time referee per ring.
- They are located at the table facing the combat area.
- They start and stop the timer.
- When 10 seconds remain, they announce *“10 seconds!”*.
- They signal the end of a fight, round, or rest period with an audible *“Time!”* signal. However, it is not their role to end rounds, as the declaring referee may choose to let an action continue beyond the regulation time by saying *“Keep going!”*
- They may request silence around the table if they believe external individuals are disrupting the match.
- During the match, they tally points and, at the end of the fight, provide the results to the declaring referee.
- They announce upcoming matches and prepare the fighters (armbands, equipment checks, etc.).

Arbitration Director:

- They do not officiate matches.
- They cannot be a fighter in any event.
- They serve as a reference in case of doubt or disputes.
- They manage potential arbitration conflicts.
- They may exclude a fighter, referee, or staff member if their behavior is inappropriate.
- They ensure the proper application of the regulations.
- They oversee the smooth running of matches and may intervene to advise referees in case of errors, in accordance with the regulations.

II. Tournament Format

II.1. Pools

The pools take place on Saturday and consist of 4 to 5 fighters. Each fighter faces each of their opponents in turn. The number of pools will vary based on the number of participants, with a maximum of 6 pools.

II.2. Eliminations

On Sunday, the elimination phase will take place, with the number of fighters depending on the number of participants.

Matches are determined by the intermediate ranking established after the pools. The loser of each match is eliminated from the tournament, except in the semifinals, where the two losers compete for 3rd place. Each winner faces another winner in the next round until the final match, where the winner becomes the tournament champion.

Note: The tournament organization reserves the right to adjust the schedule, type of elimination (single, double, consolation, ranking, etc.), and match duration if circumstances require.

III. Equipment

III.1. Equipment Verification

The organizing committee will designate one or more individuals responsible for equipment checks. This check will be conducted before the start of each pool.

Fighters must comply with checks of mandatory protective equipment under penalty of permanent exclusion from the tournament by these individuals and/or the organizers, who have full sanctioning authority.

Anyone presenting non-compliant equipment may still be allowed to participate at the organizers' discretion but cannot hold their opponent or the organizers liable in case of an incident or accident.

Masks and clothing must bear the safety standard labels (1600N, 350N, etc.). Weapons checked in this manner will be marked with a distinctive sign; fighters may not use equipment without this control mark under penalty of sanctions.

III.2.Longsword (Fechtfeder):

- The blade must be non-sharp and have a secured tip.
- The tip must be folded back on itself.
- Swords cannot exceed a total length of 135±1 cm.
- The blade must be flexible (rigid blades, such as those used in historical reenactments, are not allowed).
- A simulator in poor condition, deemed unsuitable for our practices, or presenting any risk cannot be used in the context of the event.
- Swords with complex guards (rings) are allowed only if both parties agree. It is possible to exclude hand scoring to balance the fight.

III.3.Protective Equipment

All equipment must be in good condition (no rust on masks, no tears in gloves, etc.). No part of the body should be exposed/uncovered:

- Fencing mask: No deformation/rust spots, and it must not move on the head. To test, the fighter wears the mask with the over-mask, and the inspector presses their hand against the face. If the mask moves or presses into the face, it is non-compliant.

Minimum Required Protections:

- HEMA-specific jacket (certified minimum 350N).
- Mask (certified minimum 1600N).
- Over-mask + occipital protection.
- Reinforced HEMA gloves
 - Allowed: SPES Heavies, Sparring Gloves, Thokk, Pro Gauntlet, etc.
 - Prohibited: Red Dragon, Kevlar Gloves.
- Padded pants (certified minimum 350N).
 - Pants without rigid reinforcement or absorbent foam must be supplemented with thigh protection, such as reinforced thigh guards or rugby-style protective shorts.
- Knee pads (hard-shell).
- Shin guards.
- Elbow pads (hard-shell).
- Forearm protection.
- Groin/pelvic protection.
- Gorget (rigid piece worn under the mask's bib).
- Chest plate (rigid plastic shell worn under the jacket).

IV. Duel Rules

IV.1. Arbitration and Conduct

The field is called the “ring” and will be clearly demarcated for everyone’s safety. Only the fighters, the declaring referee, and the assistant referees are allowed in the ring. The time referee is outside the ring, at the scoring table.

The ring consists of an inner 6x6 m marking reserved for the combat area (and thus for ring-out situations) and an outer marking 1.5 m from the inner marking, forming a safety zone for spectators. Only the fighters, declaring referee, and assistant referee are allowed within the inner and outer markings. The public, coaches, spectators, and the table must remain outside the outer markings.

There are three or four referees:

- One declaring referee.
- One or two assistant referees.
- One time referee responsible for point counting and managing the timer.

The assistant referees do not speak unless explicitly asked for their opinion by the declaring referee. The declaring referee judges hits based on the assistants’ input and awards points. They have the final say and authority over the fighters.

The assistant referee may raise their hand to draw the declaring referee’s attention.

The declaring referee signals the start of the fight with a “*Fight!*” and stops it with a “*Stop!*”. If they observe a valid hit and/or an assistant raises their hand, the declaring referee may say “*Stop!*” and halt the fight. They must, however, allow one arm action (see section 4.3.1) after a valid hit before saying “*Stop!*” to allow an opportunity for an afterblow.

In case of doubt, the referee may ask their assistant to meet in the center of the ring, with the two opponents remaining at opposite corners and not speaking to anyone. Their opinion will only be sought if the declaring referee requests it. If doubt persists, no points are awarded, and the duel resumes (point replayed).

Assistant referees may be other tournament competitors, provided they are not in the same group during the qualifying phase or the same bracket in the final phase.

Referees do not have video assistance.

Claims:

Fighters must raise their hand to interact with the declaring referee, who may allow them to speak in two specific situations:

- They disagree with the referee’s decision, and their claim is against their opponent. They may make only one such claim per match.

- They wish to provide information in favor of their opponent in a spirit of fair play. They may make as many such statements as they wish.

All claims must be made respectfully toward the declaring referee and the opponent.

Any breach of this rule will result in sanctions (see table of faults and penalties, section V.5).

IV.1.a. Referee Language

- “To your corners!”: Both fighters position themselves at opposite ends.
- “Salute!”: Both fighters salute each other and the referee.
- “Are you ready?” or “Ready?”: The referee looks at both fighters. In the absence of a negative response or upon an affirmative response, they signal the start of the match.
- “Fight!”: Both fighters begin or resume the bout.
- “Keep going!”: Both fighters continue the bout.
- “Stop!”: Immediate halt of the fight.
- “10 seconds!”: The time referee indicates 10 seconds remaining.
- “Time!”: The time referee indicates the time is up.

Triggering the “Stop”:

During an exchange, the “Stop” can be triggered when:

- A hit is perceived by one of the referees.
- A safety issue is detected by one of the referees.

IV.1.b. Validity and Quality of Hits

Valid types of strikes:

- Cut (executed with a strike from the edge of the simulator).
- Slice (executed by pushing or pulling the edge of the simulator in contact with the opponent).
- Thrust (executed with a strike from the tip of the simulator on the opponent).
- Pommel strike to the head.

For strikes to be valid, they must be:

- Clear.
- Intentional.
- Thrusts must be pushed: there must be contact, and the blade must slightly bend.
- Slices must be pronounced.

Quality of Strikes:

We place great emphasis on the quality of hits; however, this remains at the referee's discretion. To provide more precision, here are "objective" points to judge insufficient quality:

- If the striker's structure is broken: excessively arched back with fully extended arms and/or unstable footing.
- If the strike is made while collapsing, falling to the ground, or with knees on the ground, the hit is not valid.
- If the hit results from the rebound of a "dead" blade, i.e., one that was parried and then placed on the opponent without a striking motion (see previous point).

Example: Fighter A strikes Fighter D, who parries the attack and transforms their parry into a hit. A's blade rebounds off D's parry and lightly strikes with minimal arm/body movement. A's strike is not valid, but D's is.

The evaluation of strike quality is at the discretion of the referee. If the officiating body, under the declaring referee's direction, deems a hit insufficiently clear, they reserve the right not to count it. Referees are the only ones authorized to judge the quality of a strike; fighters and coaches cannot make judgments on quality.

Strikes must be executed with proper physical structure. An attack performed with obvious imbalance or exposing the fighter's back will not be considered valid.

A hit deemed violent and/or dangerous may be excluded from the point count. Repeated warnings from the referee in response to such strikes may lead to the fighter's permanent exclusion from the competition (see table of faults and penalties, section V.5).

A strike with the flat of the sword is not prohibited but is not considered a valid hit and scores no points.

Half-Swording:

The use of half-swording is allowed only in the following situations:

- In second intention, meaning it follows a first attack or responds to an opponent's attack after a parry. Thrusts and slices are considered valid techniques in this scenario.
- To reinforce a parry, it is permitted to place the second hand on the blade to strengthen the parry.
- Placing a hand on the blade preventively is prohibited unless the fighter is in the situations described above.

Grappling:

Throws, takedowns, and joint locks are prohibited. Grabs or pushes to the arm, shoulder, wrist, etc., are allowed. All actions must be controlled. If grappling is unsuccessful after five seconds, the referee will end the exchange.

Grabs of any part of the opponent's stationary simulator are allowed.

When there is a blade grab (or elbow push) followed by a one-handed hit, it scores the same points as a two-handed hit.

Entering grappling after a valid hit does not cancel the defender's opportunity for an afterblow. However, a hit must be landed within the afterblow time to be valid.

Disarmament:

Disarmament causing the complete loss of the simulator is possible, provided the action is fully controlled and without unnecessary violence.

Dropping one's own simulator and then disarming in a second action is not considered valid.

The person performing the disarmament must retain their weapon during the disarmament phase. A simulator falling to the ground ends the exchange.

Pommel Strike:

Pommel strikes are allowed only to the head.

They must be delivered with control and without intent to injure the opponent. A fighter in control of the situation (e.g., controlling the opponent's arm) may demonstrate their ability to deliver a pommel strike by miming it. In this case, the strike is awarded.

Exiting the Combat Area:

An exit is counted as valid when both of the fighter's feet are outside the combat area.

The first exit by a fighter does not award points to the opponent. Subsequent exits are counted as a single hit.

An exit may be involuntary or under pressure from the opponent.

Charging (running and pushing) the opponent is prohibited and will result in a red card.

If a fighter exits the combat area, whether involuntarily or under pressure from the opponent, the referee interrupts the match, awards the appropriate point to the exiting fighter, and resumes the fight (see table of faults and penalties, section V.5).

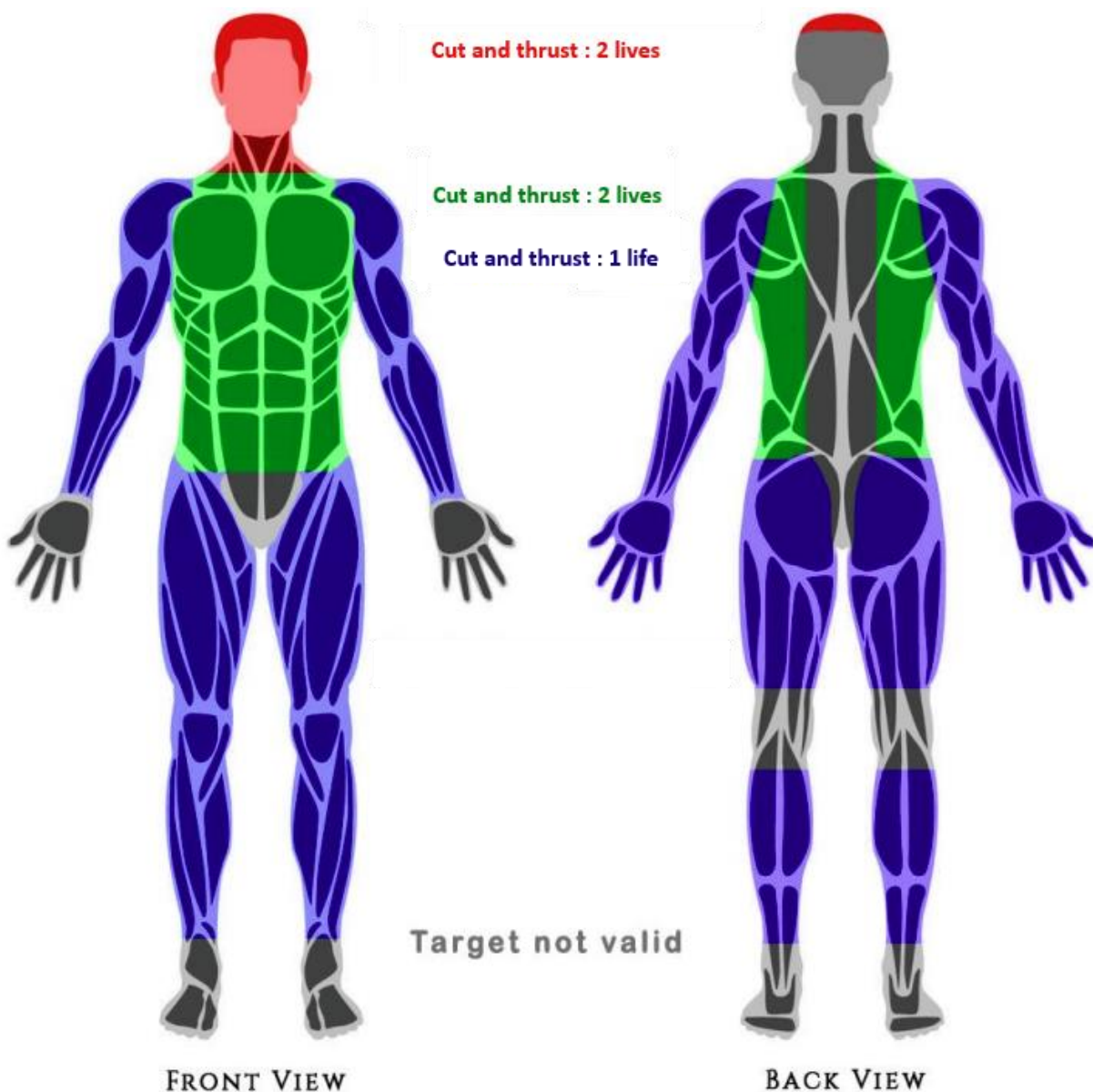
IV.1.c.Hit Weighting

2 Lives:

- A valid hit to the head (from the top of the skull to the base of the neck). The mask's bib also counts as the head for a thrust.
- A disarmament.
- A valid thrust to the torso (from the trapezius to the waist).
- A one-handed longsword strike with control of the opponent's blade and/or armed arm.

1 Life:

- A valid cut or slice to the torso (from the trapezius to the waist).
- A valid strike to the arms (from the shoulder to the fingertips) and legs (from the waist to the ankle).
- A pommel strike to the head.



IV.2. Double Hit and Afterblow

IV.2.a. Definitions

Arm Action Tempo:

An arm action refers to a single, direct offensive action performed without interruption or rearming. Leaving the bind is considered an arm action, as is delivering a strike. If these two actions are performed consecutively, they constitute two distinct actions, thus excluding the qualification of an afterblow. An arm action may be accompanied by a simple movement.

For an afterblow to be valid, it must begin within the arm action tempo immediately following the previous hit. If this arm action tempo elapses without an afterblow starting, the window for a valid afterblow is closed.

Real Combat Time:

Consequently, the afterblow is also time-limited.

However, the referee must allow one arm action time after a hit before calling “Stop!” to give the hit fighter an opportunity to perform an afterblow.

Double Hit:

If Fighter A hits Fighter B, and B hits A in return, this is considered a double hit if B initiated their attack before the end of A’s offensive action.

In other words, the hits do not need to be perfectly simultaneous for the exchange to be considered a double hit.

A double hit counts as two distinct hits, each with lives deducted according to section IV.1.c.

Afterblow:

When a fighter delivers an attack that hits, and their opponent, after being hit, also delivers an attack within one arm action tempo.

- The declaring referee must allow one arm action time after a valid first hit before saying “Stop!” to allow an opportunity for an afterblow.
- An attack delivered after the “Stop!” is not an afterblow.
- Any attack delivered after a valid afterblow does not count.

Afterblow Validity:

To be validated as an afterblow, a strike must be initiated after the hit, within a maximum of one arm action tempo, and before the declaring referee’s “Stop!”.

Afterblow Cancellation:

In the following cases, the afterblow is not valid:

- The attacker successfully executes two valid hits before the defender initiates their afterblow.
- The attacker performs a valid thrust to the head.

IV.2.b.Exchange Examples

Below is an example of exchanges between an attacker A and a defender D:

- A thrusts D in the head. D hits A in afterblow to the hands: 2 lives deducted for D; D's afterblow is not valid due to the head thrust.
- A attacks D in the head. D does not parry in time. Clear hit for A, 2 lives deducted for D.
- A attacks D in the head. D hits A in the head simultaneously: 2 head hits = 2 lives deducted for each.
- A attacks D in the head. D hits A in afterblow to the leg: 1 life deducted for A, 2 lives deducted for D.
- A attacks D in the head. D hits A in afterblow to the head: 2 head hits = 2 lives deducted for each.
- A attacks D in the head. D hits A in afterblow to the torso: 1 life deducted for A, 2 lives deducted for D.
- A attacks D in the torso (thrust). D hits A in afterblow to the arm: 1 life deducted for A, 2 lives deducted for D.
- A attacks D in the leg. D hits A in afterblow to the head: 2 lives deducted for A, 1 life deducted for D.
- A attacks D in the leg. D hits in afterblow to the head. A hits D again in the head: 2 lives deducted for A, 1 life deducted for D; A's final hit is not valid.
- A attacks D in the hands, then the head. D hits A in afterblow to the arm: 2 lives deducted for D. In this exchange, A's two hits cancel any afterblow opportunity. The highest-scoring hit is counted for A.

V.Faults, Warnings, and Sanctions

V.1.Definitions

Fault:

An action contrary to the tournament regulations. It may result in a warning or sanction.

Warning:

An oral intervention by the declaring referee to one or both fighters, informing them of the non-compliant direction their fight is taking.

Sanction:

Imposed by the declaring referee due to non-compliance with the regulations and/or a committed fault.

V.2.List of Prohibited Actions

- Remove the opponent's mask.
- Kicks, knees, punches, elbows, headbutts, crossguard strikes.
- Grabbing a moving blade.
- Left hand on one's own blade.
- Charging.

V.3.List of Dangerous Actions

- Joint locks.
- Chokes.
- Sword used by holding the weak part with a full hand and striking with the pommel or crossguard.
- Throwing the weapon at the opponent.

V.4.List of Prohibited Zones

- Spine.
- Nape of the neck.
- Groin.
- Back of the knees.
- Feet.
- Inside of the hands.

V.5.Table of Faults and Penalties

Ref N°	Nature of the Fault	Sanctions			
		1st Warning	2 nd Warning	3rd Warning	4th Warning
1	Abnormal movement	Verbal warn.	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card
2	Speak out loud during the match	Verbal warn.	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card
3	Disruption of the fight by the coach's behavior	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card	
4	Not being ready at the start of the match	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card	
5	Equipping or unequipping during a bout	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card	
6	Contesting arbitration in a discourteous and/or repetitive manner	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card	
7	Shouting during the bout	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card	
8	Continuing the fight after the "Stop"	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card	
9	Striking the opponent with excessive force	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card	
10	Involuntarily striking a prohibited zone with the weapon	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card	

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11	Involuntarily presenting a prohibited or invalid zone to the opponent	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card
12	Involuntarily substituting a valid zone with a prohibited or invalid zone	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card
13	Coach presence in the combat area	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card
14	Non-compliant equipment per the regulations	Yellow Card	Red Card	Black Card
15	Performing a prohibited action	Red Card		Black Card
16	Voluntarily presenting a prohibited or invalid zone to the opponent	Red Card		Black Card
17	Voluntarily substituting a valid zone with a prohibited or invalid zone	Red Card		Black Card
18	Voluntarily exiting the combat area	Red Card		Black Card
19	Voluntarily striking a prohibited zone			Black Card
20	Performing a dangerous action			Black Card
21	Intentional brutality			Black Card
22	Refusing to salute the opponent or officiating body			Black Card
23	Refusing to face an opponent			Black Card
24	Insulting an opponent, official, or coach			Black Card
25	Intentionally injuring an opponent			Black Card
26	Engaging in a proven rigged fight			Black Card
27	Non-compliant equipment due to blatant fraud			Black Card

	Legend		
1x	Yellow Card		Warning
2x	Yellow Card	=	Red Card
1x	Red Card	=	-1 life
2x	Red Card	=	Black Card
1x	Black Card	=	End of fight
2x	Black Card	=	Disqualification from the tournament

Red Cards are reset at the start of each duel.

Black Cards are permanent throughout the tournament.

V.6. Withdrawals, Exclusions, Forfeits

A fighter's withdrawal or forfeit for any reason other than injury, or their exclusion for violence or inappropriate behavior by the referee, results in their opponent's victory with a score of 6 to 0, voiding all points earned in the duel up to that point.

Fighters must be present in their ring 5 minutes before the start of matches to attend the briefing by the declaring referee. If a fighter is not present at the start of their match, the declaring referee calls their name at 1-minute intervals. If they do not appear after 3 calls, they forfeit the match. After 2 forfeited matches, they are **excluded from the tournament**.

V.7. Injuries

The declaring referee may impose a recovery time for a fighter if they deem there is a risk to their safety. The recovery time cannot exceed 20 seconds (2 maximum per fight).

During the match, the declaring referee must stop the fight if one of the fighters meets the following conditions:

- A fighter shows a state of physiological or psychological weakness that prevents them from continuing the match.
- A fighter is stopped by the referee more than twice in the same match for recovery (recovery time).

In case of injury to a competitor, the match will be stopped only for the time necessary for a doctor or medical team to determine if the injured fighter can continue. If a referee deems a competitor unfit to continue due to injury or any other physical reason, the fight will be stopped, and the winner will be decided based on the context. The referee, after consulting the doctor, has the authority to make such a decision. In the pool phase, the fighter may resume subsequent matches normally; in the direct elimination phase, they are eliminated.

If a fight must be stopped due to an injury, the referee and two judges must decide:

- Who caused the injury? Is the responsibility shared?
- Was the injury intentional or not?
- Was the injury due to faulty protection?
- Was the injury caused by an unauthorized technique?

After this, appropriate sanctions must be applied.

If an injury is severe enough to force the affected fighter to stop the competition, they are declared a general forfeit; the general forfeit is final and irrevocable.

VI. General Conditions

VI.1. Registration

Every registered person (having completed the registration form) commits to having read and respecting these regulations and the officiating body.

Participation is at the fighters' sole responsibility, with a waiver of any recourse against the organizers in case of damage or subsequent consequences that may arise from the event.

The organization reserves the right to refuse a registration without being required to provide explanations (in compliance with the law, non-discrimination rules, and the association's statutes).

VI.2. Admission Conditions

The tournament is characterized by a defined level of engagement requiring a certain intensity and physical interaction inherent to martial arts practice. However, referees will remain attentive to excessive violence.

The fighter must be in good physical condition and certify that no known medical issues or contraindications conflict with their participation in this sporting event.

VI.3. Coach

The coach is a person designated by the fighter to guide them mentally and tactically during the match. Their interaction can only occur during non-combat phases, i.e., between *"Stop!"* and *"Fight!"* without delaying the resumption of the bout.

The coach is positioned in the fighter's corner and may not move around the ring. They must remain behind the outer corner of the ring corresponding to the fighter.

We remind you that referees are the only ones authorized to judge the quality of a strike; fighters and coaches cannot make judgments on quality.

The coach does not have the right to make claims; only the fighter has this right. The only case where a coach may speak on behalf of the fighter is if the fighter can no longer express themselves clearly (e.g., due to injury or exhaustion).

If the coach disrupts the smooth conduct of the match, the officiating body may penalize the fighter associated with the disruptive coach if deemed necessary (see table of faults and penalties, section V.5).

A fighter may revoke their coach at any time, and the revoked coach will be asked to leave the ring and join the audience.

If one fighter has no coach and their opponent has one, the fighter without a coach may request that their opponent not be accompanied by their coach during the match. This ensures fairness for the fighters during matches.