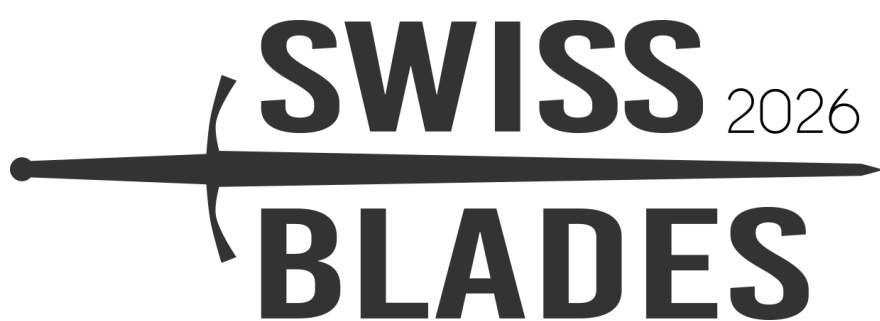




Swiss Blades 2026 Ruleset

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Bout Format

Each bout should maintain a polite quality, and instructions from tournament officials are to be respected. When fencing in a bout a Fencer or Second shall only address the bout Main Judge, and not any other staff members. The Main Judge shall not be addressed by anyone not in the current bout. Spectators (including fencers not currently in the bout) should bring any issues to the tournament manager.

Scoring Type

Bouts will be run using a “Fully Weighted Afterblow” type scoring. The side judge will determine the highest point value achieved by each fencer in the exchange, and the difference between the two will be awarded.

- *Example: 2 red, 3 blue. Blue is awarded 1 point.*
- *Example: 3 red, clean hit. Red is awarded 3 points.*

Bout End

A bout is fought until either:

- One Fencer reaches 10 points.
- The bout clock reaches 3 minutes.

Timekeeping is not paused during normal scoring; if there is a longer break in the bout (for any reason) the Main Judge will call a timeout.

In the pools a bout may end as a tie if the scores are equal when the time is reached. In the eliminations the bout will continue until one fighter gets a point advantage.

Last Exchange

Ten seconds before the time limit is reached the Table will call “Last Exchange!”. The current exchange will be allowed to run to its end, as long as the fencers are actively trying to engage. If the fencing becomes passive the Main Judge will call an end to the exchange. If “last exchange” is called after an exchange has ended, or while scorable actions are being performed, there will be one more exchange, which will be the last.

Penalties/Illegal Actions

Illegal Actions

Penalties are*:

- Influencing the side judge or Main Judge**.
- Refusal to obey the Main Judge.
- Refusal to salute the opponent or to face a contestant who is duly registered.
- Interference with the order on the mat.
- Turning the back to the opponent before “break” has been called.
- Taking the mask off before “break” has been called.
- Striking after “break” has been called.
- Uncontrolled, violent, dangerous, or vindictive action. (Strong strikes to the floor are considered uncontrolled)
- Deliberately striking with a non-scoring surface (including kicking/punching).***

*The Second's, as well as the audience members' behavior (for instance influencing the side judge), also constitute violations and can lead to warnings, penalty hits, and disqualification of the fencer.

**Self-calling hits, correcting the Main Judge, or disputing the scoring is considered a violation (influencing the side judge).

*** Some level of incidental contact is expected in close quarters. Deliberately striking, or striking due to recklessness/negligence, with a surface such as the crossguard is a penalty. Kicks are not allowed, however pushing on the torso with the sole of the foot is allowed.

Escalation

Penalties will be escalated using the following criteria:

1. Yellow Card: Warning.
2. 1st Red Card: 3 points awarded to the opponent.
3. 2nd Red Card: 3 points awarded to the opponent.
4. Black Card: Loss of bout.

A Yellow Card (warning) is valid for the bout at hand. If a Fencer commits an offense that should result in a warning after already having received a Yellow Card, they will receive a Red Card (3 points to opponent) regardless of which the second offense is. **Fencers receiving a penalty/warning will not have any points counted may have scored on the exchange.**

Fencers or Seconds are able to appeal decisions to the Main Judge after the conclusion of the bout. If the issue is not able to be resolved the Fencer, Second, or Main Judge may escalate the issue to the Tournament Manager for resolution. In cases where an issue cannot be properly addressed by the Main Judge during the bout it is possible for the Main

Judge, or any of the Fencers, to make an appeal to the Tournament Manager. If there is a violation which has not been fully addressed during the bout the Tournament Manager has the opportunity to adjust the bout score to reflect the proper resolution of the issue.

Even though the penalty cards reset after a bout has ended, if a Fencer or Second repeats violations throughout the tournament the Tournament Manager will address it and has the ability to escalate penalties or disqualify them, depending on the severity of the violations.

Event Disqualification

The following are severe infractions and will result in immediate disqualification. If a Fencer, Second, or Member of the audience is disqualified they must leave the premises immediately.

- Favoring the opponent or benefit from unauthorized agreements.
- Violation against sportsmanlike spirit (including, but not limited to: using extreme/excessive foul language, throwing equipment, and threatening tournament officials.
- Severe violent, dangerous, or vindictive action, or intentional brutality.

Scoring

Scoring Actions

Points will be awarded for cut, thrusts, slices and tournament specific actions (like pommel strikes) in accordance with the rules of the individual tournaments. Scoring actions must display:

1. Deliberate intent and targeting on the part of the attacker.
2. Sufficient depth. Cuts with the tip of the sword or shallow thrusts are not scoring actions.

Cuts

Cuts must be delivered with sufficient cutting plane, body structure, and blade arc.

Cutting plane is defined as the blade moving in line with a deliberate plane (edge alignment) and the sword moving along such a plane for the position of its movement immediately before striking the target.

Sufficient body structure, which is **not** indicated by how hard the cut hits, but in demonstrating connection between the body and sword at the time of impact.

A sword must display rotation before contact with the target, typically in excess of 60 degrees. Arc should not be considered the only determinant of quality, as some strikes may be acceptable given a very good cutting plane and body structure with shorter arc, and cuts with no structure/cutting plane will not be valid no matter how large the arc.

Thrusts

Thrusts must demonstrate the ability to penetrate into the target beyond a superficial depth. This is at a bare minimum of at least 7 cm past the target and can be demonstrated by a bend of the blade or visible force reaction at the point of contact. Same counts for the Blade stuck between gear, for example the thrust goes on the mesh and is forced upwards and gets stuck in the overlay of the mask. Should a fighter deliberately shorten the extension of their arm to lower the force of a thrust it will also be considered as a quality attack.

It is understood that due to the design of HEMA masks a thrust to the mesh will have a high instance of being deflected on contact. It is further understood that the movement of a fighter may allow them to 'roll out' of contact from a thrust. A thrust that 'glances off' is a product of our protective gear, real sword points stick! (Though a thrust that misses and is pushed against the target with the flat is of course not valid, no matter how much the blade bends.)

Slices

Slices are valid against all scoring areas for cuts. The slice must show purposeful placement of the edge with sufficient force to display a clear reaction from the target. This may be demonstrated by pushing the target back at the point of contact, or simply preventing the target from being able to move freely.

Drawing motion is not required to arms/heads, however note that this push requires a high degree of commitment, and is not simply sawing a blade back and forth on the target. Slices to the body require a draw of half of the blade. *Missed thrusts are not slices.*

Targets

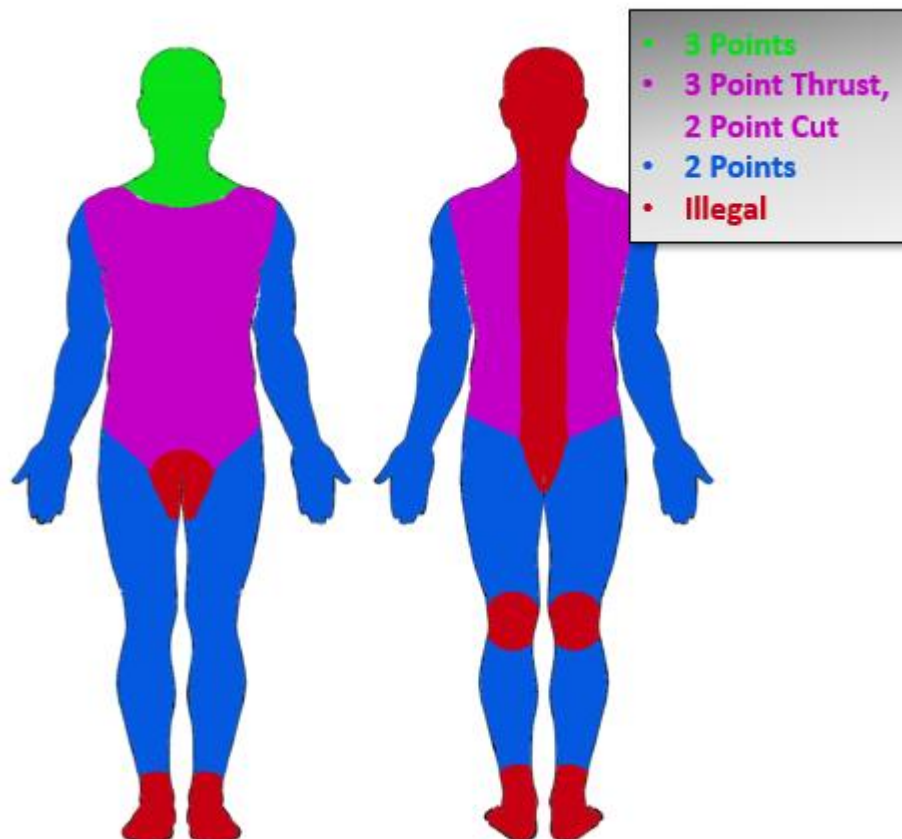
Targets will be defined as either High or Low point value targets.

“High” targets:

- Cuts, thrusts, and slices to the head and neck
- Thrusts to the torso
- Grappling actions (Disarms & Takedowns)

“Low” points:

- Everything else that is not an illegal target
- Ring out



Front

Back

Illegal Targets

The following targets are illegal, and are worth no points. Should the Main Judge determine the Fencer was negligent (or deliberate) in their attacking of an illegal target they will be subject to a penalty.

- Back of the head
- Spine
- Groin
- Back of the knee
- Achilles tendon
- Foot

Indicating attacks to illegal targets will still score (for example indicating a strike to the back of the head during a grappling situation).

Additional Actions

Grappling

Dependent on both fencers agree to grapple before the bout the following occurs. If one of the fencers declines grappling none of the following will score points and the Main Judge will stop the bout as soon as possible. The offensive fencer will be penalized accordingly.

If agreeing fencers are engaged in a grapple the Main Judge will halt the action if either:

1. There is a valid scoring action
2. If there is a safety issue
3. If the grappling is at a stalemate. A stalemate is **3** continuous seconds without either Fencer advancing into a more advantageous position. (This will be counted out audibly by the Main Judge).

Grabbing and maintaining a hold on a stationary sword is allowed.

Disarms: If a fencer is not holding their weapon while their opponent is out of grappling engagement their opponent will be awarded a disarm. This is for any reason, including dropping a sword.

Takedowns: A takedown is defined as having one's opponent place any part of their body other than their feet on the ground. This includes Fencers who fall of their own accord. Should both Fencers go to the ground points will only be awarded if one is in a clearly dominant position, such as sitting on top of the other fencer.

Uncontrolled and dangerous throws or takedowns are disallowed and will be penalized. Joint locks are considered reckless and unsafe actions, and will be penalized.

Ring Outs

A ring out is when a Fencer leaves the ring with both feet. This includes the case where they are pushed out by an opponent who does not also ring out. Strikes with a weapon by a Fencer outside the ring do not score, while strikes with a weapon against a Fencer outside the ring score as normal. In that case the higher value counts.

Timing

The highest scoring action for each fencing in the valid attack timing will be counted. This means a fencer may afterblow for a higher point value than the initial attack, and that a fencer can follow up to a deeper target for a higher point value.

- *Example: Red cuts to leg while Blue is chambered. Blue then cuts forward to the head immediately when they are hit. Red: 2 points, Blue: 3 points.*
- *Example: Red cuts onto Blue's hands and continues forward with a thrust to the torso. 3 points Red.*

An afterblow is defined as an attack that is already chambered to launch when the initial hit lands. Any movement backwards, hesitation, or struggle, by the hand after the initial hit lands will make the afterblow a compound action, and not a valid scoring action. All double hits and afterblows are considered equally.

- *Example: Red and Blue run on to each other's points simultaneously. Red: 3 points, Blue: 3 points.*
- *Example: Red runs onto Blue's point, then thrusts forward immediately. Red: 3 points, Blue: 3 points.*
- *Example: Red runs onto Blue's point, then zwer's around to cut Blue in the head. Red brought the point backwards after being hit, and thus their attack is not valid. Blue: clean hit, 3 points.*

Equipment

Weapons

LONGSWORD

- Minimum length is 116cm
- Maximum length is 138cm
- Maximum weight is 1600g
- Minimum weight is 1300g
- “Federschwert” type sparring longswords with fattened or rolled points. **Longsword blunts (including the Sigi King) are not permitted**
- Side rings of reasonable size are allowed. Cross-guards and schilts must be well rounded and not prominently pointed.
- Regencyei ‘Tulip’, ‘Tulip Maestro’, and ‘Crown’ schilts, or similar, are unsafe and **not allowed**.
- The Feder must exhibit a sufficient amount of flexibility. Regencyei medium hardness steel is permitted, as well as Sigi Standards. Regencyei hard steel hardness is not permitted.
- Examples are: Regencyei Standard, Tranva and Schiltless (light and medium), Kvetun (1570 and Lichtenauer), Sigi (Standard, Concept, Maestro, Gothic, Schiltless), Aureus

Gear

All fencers are responsible for their own equipment being functional and meeting the tournament rules. Equipment needs to be intact and in good general condition.

The equipment checks that take place during the tournament are only to help the organizer monitor the compliance to the regulations, and aid fencers to comply with them. Equipment checks may not be invoked to eliminate fencers’ responsibility in the case of a violation of requirements or malfunction of gear.

Fencers are to dress professionally and in a manner appropriate to a serious tournament. Loose sweatpants, college trousers or similar are inappropriate. Clothes and gear must overlap: **skin must not be exposed at any time or in any guard position**.

The following equipment is mandatory for all fencers:

- **Mask** - The mask must be in good condition, with no tears or large dents. The mask must fit the fencer; a mask that comes off too easily will be disallowed. The mask must include a protection for the back of the head.
- **Throat Guard** - The throat guard must be reasonably rigid and constructed so that it will stop a thrust from a broken blade.
- **Protective Jacket** - The protective jacket must be reasonably padded and constructed so that it will stop a thrust from a broken blade. Jackets with armpit holes or jackets that are open in the front are not allowed.
- **Gloves** - Gloves must protect all fingers, the back of the hand and the wrist. When using open palm-gloves such as Sparring Gloves, use of an underglove is mandatory. (There is no requirement for the underglove other than it needs to be in good condition.)
 - Longsword: Purpose-built Heavy HEMA Gloves (eg: Thokk or better). *Lacrosse / Red Dragon style gloves, regardless of modification, are explicitly not allowed.*
- **Elbow and Knee Guards** - Elbow and knee guards must also protect the side of the joint and should not displace during normal fencing movement.
- **Shin Guards** - Shin guards must protect the shinbone from the knee guard down, more or less, all the way to the foot.
- **Shoes** - Shoes must enclose all toes. Hardened (such as steel) soles or caps are not allowed.
- **Athletic Cup** - The athletic cup must be reasonably rigid and may be metal.

Additional information

- Use of additional protective gear is allowed and encouraged.
- Metal protection, aside from the mask mesh and athletic cup, is not permitted.
- Throat guards, athletic cups and optional chest protectors are to be worn under the outermost layer of clothing.
- Seconds are to be dressed in a professional way, preferably in club clothing or jacket and dress shirt/blouse, but it is permitted for fencers in gear to coach other fencers.

Specific Rules

Scoring

Pommel Strikes

Longsword is the only tournament where pommel strikes are valid. Pommel strikes are only allowed to the mesh on the front of the mask, and must not contact with impact.

1-H Strikes

Any attack made with one hand holding the sword (outside of a grapple) will only receive 2 points, regardless of the target hit.

Appendix: Procedures

Pool/Bracket Advancement

Pool round

The fencers will be seeded and split into pools. The pools will only be finalized after check-in on the day of the tournament. Each fencer will have one bout with all the other fencers in their pool. The result from the bout will be scored as follows:

- Win: 9 match points
- Draw: 6 match points
- Loss: 3 match points

After the pool rounds, all the fencers are ranked, based on the following criteria (according to “Match points” system):

1. Highest match points
2. Highest wins
3. Highest ratio of hits given to taken
4. Lowest number of hits taken.

If after all these have been considered two fencers are still ranked the same, their internal bout result decides who will rank higher. If such a result does not exist their internal order in the ranking is decided by drawing lots.

During the pool round the fencers in the current pool must remain in the designated area with their equipment on.

If a fencer forfeits a bout, the result for that bout will be recorded as a victory for the opponent with the relevant maximum points (10) to 0 points. This applies regardless of the current score at the time of the forfeit.

If a fencer withdraws from the tournament or is disqualified during the pool round, that pool will be handled as if the fencer never participated in the tournament. This applies regardless of the number of bouts fought in the pool.

Elimination Rounds and Finals

The results of the pool round will be used to seed a single elimination bracket. Seeding will be of the standard style, with the highest seeded fencing in the bracket facing the lowest seeded fencer in the bracket, etc.

The number of fencers advancing to the elimination rounds will be decided based on the number of participants at event check in. The size of the bracket will be determined and made public prior to the commencement of the pools. Depending on the size of the bracket higher seeded fencers may have a ‘bye’ past the first round of the eliminations.

If a fencer withdraws from the tournament or is disqualified before the elimination bracket is published, the fencer is removed from the ranking and everyone below moves up one place. If a fencer withdraws from the tournament or is disqualified after the elimination bracket is published, the fencer will be considered to lose the forthcoming bout, resulting in their opponent moving directly to the next round of eliminations.

Bout Incidents

Injuries

If a Fencer is injured during the bout, the Main Judge will call a time-out and the medical staff will examine the Fencer. If the medical staff clears the Fencer to continue, and the Fencer wishes to do so, the bout can proceed. If the bout cannot continue within 3 minutes, the injured Fencer will have forfeited the bout.

If an injured party is not known to be stable (i.e. the first-aid staff could leave them temporarily unattended) all fencing in the hall must cease until the first-aid is in a position to respond to any new emergency. All Main side judge, side judge, Fencers, coaches and spectators must clear the area and not disturb the medical staff while they work.

Equipment Failure

The Main Judge will call a time-out when equipment being broken or displaced is noticed. If a Fencer, Judge or Second notices an equipment failure, they should point it out to the Main Judge. If a piece of personal protective gear is broken, or repeatedly slips out of place, the Fencer has 3 minutes to find a replacement. If this is not possible the Fencer will have forfeited the bout.

Staff Procedures

Bout start

The Fencers will receive red and blue armbands before the bout, and will be known by their colors during it. The Main Judge shall only refer to the Fencers by their named colors, and the term “fencer”.

The Fencers will start each exchange of the bout in their corners. The exchange begins when the Main Judge calls “fence” or “fight”.

Exchange End

When a valid scoring action is observed the side judge will call “point”. After giving time for an after-blow, the Main Judge will call “break”. The Main Judge can call “break” even if no “point” has been called, e.g. in the case that they are acting as a judge (see Scoring), when judging non-sword actions (grappling, ringouts, etc), or for safety reasons.

When “break” is called, the Fencers must cease attacking, separate, and return to their corners. This is true at all times, even if no hits have been registered.

After this, the Main Judge will call “side judge”. The Judge will indicate the highest scoring action executed by each Fencer.

The Main Judge will observe the side judge calls, and announce the points for both Fencers to the scorekeeper. The scorekeeper then will subtract the lower score from the higher score, and announce the total points awarded.

If the point cap is reached before the time limit is reached, the table will call “Match!”, and announce the score to the Main Judge. The Main Judge will declare the winner of the bout (or continue to sudden death as necessary.)

Judging

- If the Main Judge and the judge agree on the score, the fencer scores that amount.
- The Main Judge has the right to overrule the side judge scoring. He is obligated to get informations from the judge beforehand.

Each warning is recorded in the bout protocol.

Appendix: Organization

Registration & Assumption of Risk

The fencers must be at least 18 years old and Members of Swiss HEMA. They participate at their own risk and discretion as long as they follow the spirit of the tournament rules.

Organizational Hierarchy

Tournament Staff

The organizational hierarchy of the tournament consists of multiple elements that all play a vital part in getting such a large undertaking to run smoothly.

Tournament Manager – The person in charge of the tournament and for making all final decisions during the execution of the tournament. Will be available during the tournament.

Main Judge – The person responsible for running all bouts on one mat. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, starting/stopping a bout, announcing score, clearing up misunderstandings, giving out warnings and disqualifications. He also side judge all exchanges in a bout and award points based on their impression of what happened during each exchange.

Side Judge – The judge side judge all exchanges in a bout and award points based on their impression of what happened during each exchange.

Table – Announcing bouts, keeping time as well as score and making sure fencers are presented with red and blue armbands.

Event Participants

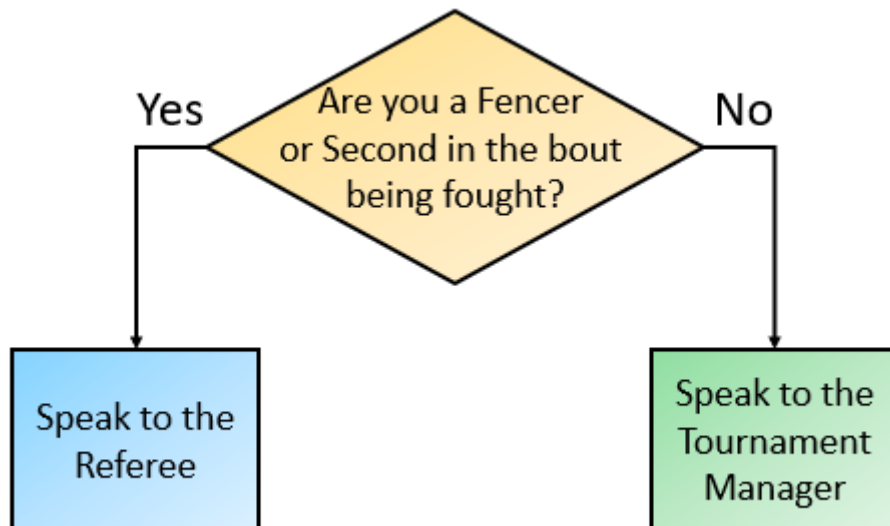
In addition to the people filling these roles, there are three vital components to all tournaments:

Fencers - The two contestants in the bout at hand.

Seconds - The coaches of the Fencers in the bout being fought. Seconds are not required, and a Fencer may only have a single Second.

Audience - All other individuals not currently involved in the bout. This includes other Fencers/Seconds who are not currently fencing.

In order for a tournament to run as efficiently and correctly as possible, it is important to establish proper communication channels between all the elements involved.



If the fencers or the seconds have any concerns during a bout they can address the Main Judge by calling a timeout. Members of the audience must direct their questions and comments to the Tournament Manager, and at no point should a member of the Audience approach the bout staff.