

# Cutting Rules

Helsinki Longsword Open 2020

These rules are subject to change on any notice.

## Equipment

Participants will be provided with a suitable, historically accurate sharp longsword.

## Safety

Observe the following safety guidelines at all times. A violation of these guidelines may result in a warning or immediate dismissal from the tournament at the sole discretion of the tournament staff (\* denotes an offense that warrants dismissal):

1. Always follow the instructions of the tournament staff without hesitation or argument.\*
2. Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
3. Do not swing your sword if there are people near you and especially behind you.\*
4. Do not cut over your leading leg (if your left leg is forward, do not cut down from right to left). The only exception to this is the krumphau. This does not apply to cuts from below or horizontal cuts.
5. Make sure your hands and hilt are dry before cutting.
6. Do not handle tatami mats during the tournament. Competition staff will set up your mats and remove your debris.
7. The tournament staff will indicate when you are ready to cut. Do not cut before that.\*
8. Always approach the target from the specified direction.\*
9. Always remember that you are holding a deadly weapon that can easily maim or kill with the slightest misstep.
10. When cutting, keep both hands on the hilt at all times.

## Tournament Staff

The following is a list of the tournament staff and their roles.

**Tournament Manager:** The Tournament Manager is responsible for the running of the tournament and is the primary/head judge. The Tournament Manager's decision in all matters related to the tournament is final.

**Technical Judges:** The Technical Judges (one of which is the Tournament Manager) are responsible for observing the cutting actions of the participant and assigning penalties as necessary.

**Auxiliary Judges:** These judges will be responsible for timekeeping, observing form, and/or functions that support the technical judges.

### **Tournament format**

The tournament will be two rounds, with 3 finalists advancing to the second round.

### **Starting Position**

Each round will have a marked standing position. When your name is called, go to the designated starting position with your sword. The judges will ask you if you are ready. If you answer in the affirmative, the judges will instruct you to begin. When you are finished with your pattern, say, "Done" and leave the tournament floor. Whenever you are walking to or from the starting position with your sword, carry it in a safe manner with the sword pointing in a safe direction (straight up or straight down).

### **Scoring**

Scoring will be percentile based, except in the final round. A perfect score will be 100% (higher is possible with bonus cuts), and deviation from perfection will result in penalties. Scoring will be based on three categories, weighted unevenly.

The three categories are Technical, Speed and Form. The Technical category scoring is based on a perfect score of 100% with points deducted for mistakes or failures. Both the Speed and Form categories may result in additional deductions. The Technical category represents the most important aspect of scoring, while the Speed and Form categories are intended as tie breakers.

The scores will be reset for the second and every finalist will start on equal footing

### **Technical**

Cutting standards are presented later in this rule set. Deviation from these standards will result in subtraction of percentage points. The reduction will be based on the total number of penalties, as well as the seriousness of the penalties. Some penalties (e.g. striking the cutting stand) may result in immediate elimination. The cutting penalties listed are not the only penalties you can receive, through all penalties will be matched/fit to one of those listed and scored accordingly. A perfect cut is a cut with straight trajectory that severs the target cleanly at the specified angle

and causes the severed piece to fall gently away from the remaining target (not go flying). Any and all deviations from this will be penalized, though certain cuts (e.g. mittelhau) will not incur penalties for sending the severed piece flying. Additionally, not all scoring criteria apply to all cuts. For example, some angle penalties may not apply to certain advanced cuts (e.g. Krumphau, Schielhau). If you make multiple mistakes during a single cut (e.g. scalloped and big mountain) you will be penalized only for the mistake that incurs the highest penalty loss (in the preceding example, you would be penalized for a big mountain only).

The following mistakes will incur a 2% penalty:

- Piece goes flying
- Angle off a little
- Rough/Frayed Cut

The following mistakes will incur a 4% penalty:

- Sprayed tatami debris
- Angle off a lot
- Small mountain

The following mistakes will incur an 8% penalty:

- Hit floor lightly
- Mat falls off of stand
- Piece hanging
- Big mountain
- Shallow cut
- Scalloped/Scooped

The following mistakes will incur a 12% penalty:

- Miss mat
- Hit the floor hard\*
- Cut peg
- Sword stuck/no cut
- Wrong cut (e.g. pattern call for Krumphau but participant executes regular oberhau)
- Hit stand\*
- Stand falls

\* Depending on the severity of these mistakes, you may be eliminated from the tournament.

## **Speed**

Scoring in this category depends on the actual performance of the participants during each round. Each participant will be timed and, at the conclusion of the round, the times will be scored in tiers. The fastest participants will be ranked Tier 1 and will not be penalized. The next fastest participants will be ranked Tier 2 and will receive a 1% penalty. The third ranked participants, Tier 3, will receive a 2% penalty. The slowest participants, Tier 4, will receive a 3% penalty. The speed category is intended to be a tie breaker, as the focus of the tournament is to display technical ability. That said, among participants with closely matched skills, a 2% difference can be significant.

## **Form**

Your form is how closely your cutting adheres to martial principles. This category is both subjective and objective, in that the determination is based entirely on the opinion of the judges, but there are concrete standards that the judges use.

Behaviors that will result in penalties are:

Over-swinging: making big swings with the sword point behind you and unnecessarily exposing yourself to danger (if the mat was a real opponent)

Cocking back/winding up: any preparatory action such as dipping the point back from a high guard (cocking back).

Bad footwork: not stepping with cuts when stepping is called for (schielhaw, krumphaw), poor balance, slipping, etc.

Each observed form violation will cost the participant a 1% penalty.

**NOTE: there will be no remounting or straightening of mats under any circumstances.** Participants may check their mats prior to commencing their rounds and request a mat be re-spiked or replaced (tournament staff may or may not honor this request at their discretion).

## **Miscellaneous Penalties**

Participants are not permitted to measure their distance. For example, you may not approach the target, place your sword on or near the target to make sure your distance is correct, then cut. Doing so may result in a significant penalty, a score of 0 for that round, or immediate dismissal from the tournament, at the Tournament Manager's discretion.

## Standards

Any cuts that deviate from these standards will incur penalties.

1. All diagonal cuts from above and below should be 45 degrees.
2. Horizontal cuts should be 90 degrees.
3. Cuts must not hit the area of a previous cut. This is called a "mountain." A mountain is bad because hitting your old cut means you have to cut through a lot less mat, which makes the cut significantly easier. Since this is not desirable (and against the rules), hitting your old cut means you missed your intended target. This includes striking the area of a previously failed cut.
4. Cuts should be straight and not scooped or scalloped.
5. Cuts should not spray tatami debris.
6. Leading leg: DO NOT cut diagonal descending cuts over your leading leg (e.g. if your right leg is forward, do not cut a descending diagonal cut from above from left to right). If the judges notice that you cut over your leading leg, you will be warned. This is a safety issue, and repeated offences will lead to disqualification

Extreme Penalties: the following will either incur massive penalties or disqualify the participant, at the discretion of the judges.

Striking the floor HARD

Striking the stand HARD

Tripping and falling over a mat fragment or other debris is an instant disqualification. Any injury to yourself or others will result in immediate disqualification.

## Cutting Patterns 2020

The following are the cutting patterns for Helsinki Longsword Open 2020. **These patterns are subject to change.** There are no do-overs. If you completely miss a cut, you should proceed to the next cut. You may attempt it again, but since the scoring is penalty based, there is no reason to do so (you may incur additional penalties if you fail or make more mistakes on the second attempt) as you have already incurred the maximum penalty for that cut.

### Round 1:

Target 1:

- Three long edge diagonal descending cuts (hereinafter called oberhau), alternating sides (one right, one left, one right)
- Two long edge diagonal ascending cuts (hereinafter called unterhau), alternating sides (one right, one left), in any order. You may execute these cuts with the short edge, but it is not recommended.

## Target 2:

- Shielhaw. This must be a descending diagonal cut in the oberhau line performed with the short edge. At the start of the cut it is not allowed to have the false edge facing forward. Hands must remain at least chest high at the end of the cut. You must step laterally to the target with the right foot before or during the cut
- Right Unterhaw
- Right Krumphau, long edge. This is a diagonal descending oberhau that starts from a right side guard but comes in the line of a left oberhaw, though there are no angle penalties except that anything not diagonal descending will be penalized as a wrong cut. Hands must be crossed at the conclusion of the cut. If the judges do not see that your hands are crossed, you will be penalized for wrong cut. You must also step laterally to the target with the right foot before or during the cut (or suffer a Form penalty)
- Left Oberhaw
- Right Oberhaw

## Target 3: Thrust to double oberhaw

- For this target you will approach the mat, and immediately when within reasonable range, thrust to the center of the target, then withdraw the sword. Thrust with the sword oriented vertically, as the target must remain intact. You will not be penalized for thrust angles, but if you sever or otherwise mangle the target with your thrust, you will not be able to complete the pattern.
- After withdrawing the blade out, immediately without hesitation perform two oberhaws (alternating sides), without pause between the cuts.
- After this, perform two mittelhaws, alternating sides. (You can take your time here)

## Finals:

### Pattern 4 – Thrust into Double Cut

- Thrust to the center of the target, then withdraw the sword. Thrust with the sword oriented vertically, as the target must remain intact. You will not be penalized for thrust angles, but if you sever or otherwise mangle the target with your thrust, you will not be able to complete the pattern. Hint: withdrawals are very important here.
- Perform one of the following four double cuts from the side of your choice (left or right). A double cut is a pattern that begins with a rising diagonal cut to the lower portion of the mat (as low as you can go without striking the peg). If this cut is executed cleanly, the severed portion of the mat will hesitate briefly before falling. You must then cut that severed portion before it falls, with one of four cuts. These are listed in order from least to most difficult. Choosing the least difficult option will not grant bonus points. Choosing the next most difficult options will grant an

incrementally higher number of bonus points (while it is theoretically possible to achieve a score higher than 100% because of the bonus points, the odds of this happening are astronomically low).

In order of difficulty:

- Diagonal ascending cut from below followed by a diagonal descending cut from above.
- Diagonal ascending cut from below followed by a horizontal cut from the opposite side.
- Diagonal ascending cut from below followed by a diagonal ascending cut from the opposite side.
- Diagonal ascending cut from below followed by a diagonal ascending cut from the same side.

Target 2 & 3:

- Semaphores – this will consist of unknown number of basic cuts (oberhaws, unterhaws and mittelhaws ) and an unknown number of advanced cuts (False edge to any of the 6 possible angles ). The judge will indicate which cut to make, after which you have to immediately make the cut and return to guard. Unnesery shuffling, hesitation etc will be penalized.
- Stepping with all cuts is necessary for the part.

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