

Longsword Rules

Helsinki Longsword Open 2020

These rules are subject to change on any notice.

General

The fencers participate at their own risk and discretion as long as they follow the spirit of the tournament rules. Each bout should maintain a polite quality and instructions from tournament officials respected

The fencers will receive red and blue armbands before the bout, and will be known by their colours during it.

The fencers will start the bout in their corners. The bout begins when the referee calls "fence". When the referee calls "break", the fencers must separate and return to their corners, until the referee calls "fence" again. Bouts are fought to 10 points. If the bout time runs out the fencer in the lead will be declared the winner.

If the score is equal when the bout ends, the bout is a draw.

In case of a bout ending in a draw during the elimination round the bout will continue in a sudden death. A sudden death is fought until one fencer scores at least one point more than the other fencer.

Next rules may apply for longsword only. Refer to rapier and dagger rules for the rapier and dagger tournament.

Bout time

A bout is fought for 3 minutes or until one fencer has reached the score cap.

Timekeeping is not paused during the scoring; in case there is a longer break in the bout for any reason, the referee will call a timeout. Ten seconds before the time limit is reached the table will call "last exchange". That exchange will be allowed to be run to its end, as long as the fencers are actively trying to fence. If the exchange becomes too passive, the referee will break it up, ending the bout.

After this the table will announce the score to the referee, who will officially announce the winner of the match and the final score.

Scoring

The following targets are illegal, and are worth no points:

- Back of the head
- Spine

- Groin
- Back of the knee
- Achilles tendon
- Toes

If the point limit is reached, the table will call “match”, and the referee will end the match. After this the table will announce the score to the referee, who will officially announce the winner of the match and the final score. The maximum score for a hit is 3 points.

Only attacks with the edge, point and pommel score points. Strikes with the crossguard are not allowed. All strikes must be executed in a controlled fashion. A strike to the head above the level of shoulders (to clarify, head includes head and neck) is worth 3 points. A thrust to the torso or the head is worth 3 points. Slice to the hands or wrists is worth 3 points.

All other legal targets and pommel strikes are worth 2 points.

Any strike made outside grappling with only one hand holding the sword is worth 2 points, no matter what target is hit.

At the first hit, a judge will call “point”. After giving time for an after-blow, the referee will call “break”. When “break” is called, the fencers must cease attacking, separate, and return to their corners. After this, the referee will call “judges”. Each judge will indicate the highest scoring blow for each fencer that happened within one tempo of the initial hit. This means that if the fencer who struck first can hit a higher-scoring target within one tempo, this hit is valid.

The semaphore is as follows:

Hit on 3 point target - Judge holds the flag vertically up

Hit on 2 point target - Judge holds the flag horizontally sideways

No hit - Judge holds the flag low, crossed in front of his body

No quality (Incidental strike, cut with questionable edge alignment, very light cut with the point or cut made with a very small arc etc) - judge waves a flag low, in front of her body.

Each fencer will score as follows:

When there are two judges:

If two judges agree on the score, the fencer scores that amount.

If two judges agree on hit, but disagree on the score, the lower

score is awarded.

When there are three judges:

If two judges agree on the score, the fencer scores that amount.

If two judges agree on hit, but disagree on the score, the lower score is awarded.

If two judges are showing three points, three points are awarded, no matter what the other judges are showing.

With both two and three judges the referee can overrule the score.

The referee announces the points for both fencers to the scorekeeper. The scorekeeper then subtracts the lower score from the higher score, and announces the final score. To clarify: after-blows are treated the same and both can score regardless of who struck first. The hits from both fencers are scored independently by the judges; the scorekeeper is responsible for calculating the final score of the exchange.

Incidental strikes, cuts with questionable edge alignment, very light cuts with the point and cuts made with a very small arc does not score. In addition double hits do not score.

It is up to the fencers to demonstrate “good” hits. Only indicating attacks with sword or body due to safety reasons will still score, for example indicating a strike to the back of the head during a grappling situation.

Scoring in grappling

In a grappling situation, a fencer can score by striking with the weapon or by specific grappling actions. These special situations are scored by the referee alone; the judges only score strikes with the sword. The referee will halt the action in case of a judge calling “point”, if there is a scoring grappling technique, if the referee thinks there is a safety issue or if the grappling is at stalemate (~ 5 seconds without anything happening). Grabbing and maintaining a hold on a stationary sword is allowed.

The following techniques score in grappling:

If a fencer pushes both feet of his opponent outside the mat, and remains inside with at least one foot. Likewise, if a fencer accidentally leaves the mat with both feet, his opponent is awarded 2 points.

Strikes with the sword by a fencer outside the arena do not score, while strikes with the sword against a fencer outside the arena do score as normal. If a fencer loses his weapon for any reason, and grappling distance is broken, his opponent will score 3 points.

Takedowns that place any other part of a fencer but his feet on the ground, the fencer that remains standing scores 3 points. If both fencers go to the ground and neither is in a clearly dominant position, no score is awarded. If one of the fencers is in a dominant position, for example sitting on top of the other fencer, the dominant fencer is awarded 2 points. Likewise, if a fencer falls outside of grappling distance, his opponent will score two points.

Kicking or punching is disallowed and will be penalized.

Uncontrolled and dangerous throws or takedowns are disallowed and will be penalized.

Double hits

Double hit is when both fencers hit each other at the same time. If the referee determines that the exchange was a double hit they will announce “double hit, no score” and the exchange will be handled as neither fencer would have landed a scoring hit.

Errors and penalties

Each bout should be conducted in a safe and respectful manner. The penalties for errors against these guidelines are:

- Warning
- Penalty hit
- Disqualification
- Loss of match points

The referee will rule according to the tables below.

Format of the bout	First time	Second and following times
Not present during bout call	Warning	Penalty hit
Non regulatory equipment	Warning	Penalty hit

Leave the mat without permission	Warning	Penalty hit
Addressing the referee before the final score for the exchange is announced	Warning	Penalty hit
Unwarranted suspension of the bout	Warning	Penalty hit
Request of suspension of the bout due to injury that is not accepted	Penalty hit	Penalty hit

Safety	First time	Second and following times
Turn the back to the opponent before the referee called "break"	Warning	Penalty hit
Take the mask off before the referee called "break"	Warning	Disqualification
Striking after the referee called "break"	Warning	Disqualification
Uncontrolled fencing	Warning	Disqualification
Violent, dangerous or vindictive action	Warning	Disqualification
Intentional brutality	Disqualification	

Sportsmanship	First time	Second and following times
Refusal to obey the referee	Warning	Penalty hit
Refusal to salute the opponent before the bout	Warning	Disqualification
Refusal to salute the opponent after the bout	Warning	Disqualification

Refusal to face contestant that is duly registered	Warning	Disqualification
Person that interferes with the order on the mat	Warning	Disqualification
To favour the opponent or benefit from unauthorized agreements	Disqualification	
Violation against sportsman spirit	Disqualification	

A warning is valid for the bout at hand. If a fencer commits an error that should result in a warning after already having received a warning the opponent receives 3 points regardless of which the second error is.

Each warning is recorded in the bout protocol. If a fencer, second or member of the audience is disqualified he or she must leave the premises immediately. Violation against the sportsman spirit includes, but is not limited to, using foul language, throwing equipment and threatening tournament officials. In cases where an offense cannot be properly addressed by the referee during the bout it is possible for the referee or any of the fencers to make an appeal to the tournament manager. The manager has the opportunity to remove match points from a fencer for a violation that hasn't been fully addressed during the bout.

Injuries

If a fencer is injured during the bout, the referee 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.

Equipment failure

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

