

Markland Re-creation Combat Rules

• Equipment

1. All weapons used in recreation fighting must be appropriate for use in staged combat. They must meet certain standards of construction and design (see Appendix A. Recreation Weapon Standards). All weapons must be blunt and safe. Non-steel qualified fighters must use a club or other fake weapon that meets with the recreation weapon guidelines. However, they may wear a sword or other weapon if this is a part of their costume for a particular battle so long as it is not used.
2. Metal weapons may only be used by steel qualified fighters (see Becoming Steel Qualified). There are NO exceptions to this.
3. No pine construction on any part of weapons will be allowed.
4. All fighters must wear a rigid helmet made of metal and/or leather. This is a minimum requirement for head protection.
5. Sturdy leather gloves are required to fight. Unlined leatherworking gloves, welding gloves or fencing gauntlets are acceptable.
6. A shield is required of all fighters. Shields must be at least 1/2" plywood or its equivalent. Experienced fighters may fight without a shield as part of a "Special Routine" (see Section C under that heading).
7. All equipment must be inspected by a Steel Qualifier prior to each battle or fighting practice.
8. Armor is not required for fighting in recreation battle. Body protection is recommended however, if appropriate for the era and type of fight you are participating in.
9. Any bow used in recreation combat must have a draw weight of 35 lbs. or less at 29" draw. Any type of self-bow may be used, though an event Battle Master has the right to require more authentic wooden bows at their event.
10. All arrows used in recreation fighting must meet with the standards of Fratricidal Arrows as specified in Section XIV, rule 13 (a-e) of Rules for Fratricidal Combat.

• Battles

1. All fighters must be at least eighteen (18) years of age or older in order to participate in a battle reenactment as a combatant.
2. A "battle" is defined as any action where scripted fighting takes place. The Steel Qualifiers have final say on equipment safety. Steel Qualifiers will check for gloves and helmet, and make sure they are adequate. They will also check the shield and weapon for safety.
3. All battles follow a script. This may be written or verbal. Fighting is never competitive, as the aim is to put on a show. Nobody is to be intentionally injured in a recreation battle.
4. Every battle must have a Battle Master and at least one (1) Steel Qualifier present. All fighters must obey the directions of the Battle Master. All fighters must familiarize themselves with and follow any script or battle plan. It is the responsibility of the fighters to know what is going on. If you are confused, ask someone in charge. The Battle Master has an absolute right to tell any individual to leave the field if they do not follow his or her directions. This includes individuals failing to meet historical garb requirements, or a person who is intoxicated, insubordinate, or a danger to themselves or other people present.
5. Do NOT strike at anyone's body with your weapon, shield, or anything else unless it is part of a Special Routine.
6. When someone wants to die, he will tell his opponent that he will die now. For beginners, it is a good idea to just fall back after proclaiming your death, and fall down screaming in pain. This works very well in large battles where spectators cannot see you. More experienced fighters can say "kill me" to their opponent. The one about to die (the defender), after making sure he is understood, moves his shield aside and the opponent lightly touches, or pretends to touch, the defender's side. The defender then screams, steps backward to clear himself from the fighting, and falls down. If spectators can see this, the touch should be made to look like a blow. The touch is

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accomplished with a sideswing, never a thrust. This is the most dangerous moment, and both fighters should be very careful.

7. Every fighter must report any injuries to the Battle Master and/or the Shire Reeve or his agents. They must also report any rule breaking or unsafe behavior immediately to the Battle Master, Steel Qualifier, or Shire Reeve.
8. If you find yourself fighting someone who is doing something you find unsafe or uncomfortable, tell him to stop, retreat, and tell one of the above people as soon as possible. Do not wait until later, because you could forget the problem. In the meantime, someone could get hurt. Do not use excessive force when wielding a weapon. Excessive force is defined as any blow your opponent believes is too hard, or any blow that a Steel Qualifier believes is unsafe.
9. Noncombatants may be included in recreation battles. A noncombatant is any person who does not engage in combat. They are used to fill a variety of character roles and support roles (including archery) on the field during the battle. If approached within five (5) feet by a fighter they may only do one of the following: Run Away, Surrender, or Fall Down Dead.
10. Persons who are less than eighteen years of age may participate in Recreation Battles with parental consent. They may ONLY participate in noncombatant roles. Their parents must be physically present on site and give written permission.
11. Every Battle must have a first aid kit present.

• **Special Routines**

1. A Special Routine is defined as any part of a battle when two or more individuals stage a complicated bout. In simple English, this means if you do anything other than what is specified under the Section E (Guidelines for Fighting in Recreation Battles) you are fighting a Special Routine.
2. A Steel Qualifier must approve any Special Routine before it may be used in battle. The Battle Master must also give his or her consent before it may be used in a particular battle being staged.
3. As part of a Special Routine fighters may use weapons, equipment, moves and engage in physical contact not normally allowed in a Recreation Battle.
4. Once any Steel Qualifier has approved a particular Special Routine it stays approved for two (2) years as long as none of the participants or weapons are changed. At the end of that time it will have to be re-approved.
5. A simple form listing names of participants and outlining the Special Routines scenario will be filled out and sent to the Shire Reeve or his designee. This form must be signed by the approving Steel Qualifier and dated (see Appendix B.- ???)

• **Becoming Steel Qualified**

In order for a fighter to become steel qualified, he or she must do the following:

1. Fighter must be a paid Markland Member. Pay your dues.
2. Fight in at least 1 recreation battle with wood or non-metal weapons.
3. Participate in at least 2 training sessions under the supervision of a Steel Qualifier.
4. Own their own equipment, shield, helmet, gloves, tunic, and metal weapon of your choice.
5. Fighters must choreograph at least one fight with another fighter to be performed in front of at least two Steel Qualifiers. If approved, the fighter will receive their steel qualification disk, which must be brought to any event where the fighter wishes to fight with steel.

Staying Steel Qualified

1. Keep your Markland Dues Paid.
2. Maintain your equipment.
3. Come to Recreation Battles and Steel Practices.
4. Have your steel disk at battles you wish to fight in.

• Guidelines for Fighting in Recreation Battles

1. Maintain your place in line. Most battles are fought in shield wall formations. If your opponent backs up, do not follow; he may be having trouble or getting tired. Do not crowd other fighters to your sides or behind. Do not move around too much or run around the sides. Aim for the center of your opponent's shield. Do not swing your arm horizontally because you might hit the person next to or behind you. Swing overarm at the person's shield, and watch out for the other guy.
2. Control your weapon. Be aware of the point of your sword. Never thrust. Be able to stop any swing you make. Do not acquire a weapon that is too heavy or long. Your opponent could jump forward, or drop his shield, or anything else, so be ready to stop your weapon. If you do not swing too hard, this should not be a real problem. If it is, you are swinging too hard. Kill with a touch only after you have been asked to do so by your opponent.
3. Keep your shield a safe and steady target. Keep your shield in front of you. Hold it up and out from your body to prevent it from hitting you (HINT: angle your shield away from your body to prevent it from recoiling into your face if you are shield bashed by an accident). Practice with you shield and weapon.
4. Protect yourself. When you die, step back and fall to get out of the fighting. If fighting with a shield, curl up under your shield to protect yourself. If someone or something is going to crush you, get out of the way, even if you are supposed to be dead. Act wounded or whatever, but protect yourself. If you get tired in a battle, tell your opponent and back up. Remember, it is better to look unrealistic than to get hurt. Communicate with your opponent and those around you. Keep your head and use common sense.
5. Look like you are fighting. Scream, yell, act nasty, scared, or whatever seems appropriate. Even though you are not swinging hard and trying to be as safe as possible, try to make it look like you are swinging hard and trying to kill. This is very difficult to do and remain safe, but it is what you should aspire to. The best recreational fighters look like they are trying to cut each other to pieces, but are actually quite safe. This comes with experience, and new fighters should worry about safety only.
6. It is each individual's responsibility to meet any historical requirements for garb, equipment and authenticity set by an event Battle Master. Try to research the battles and their periods. All major events have garb standards. We are trying to recreate medieval fighting. Contact the Battle Master in advance if you have a question about event standards. do not assume that what you have will be allowed on the field if what you have are outside the guidelines published in advance of an event!
7. The word "PAX" should be shouted in case of an actual injury. Fighters in the immediate area should discreetly lend aid.
8. A Special Routine may be used in any recreation fight if it is approved by the Battle Master and a Steel Qualifier. Although many of the standard rules for recreation fighting may not apply in a Special Routine, it is important that safety be maintained.

• Recreation Fighters Guild

1. **Responsibilities**
 - i. Steel Qualifiers are responsible for safety and safe use of weapons by Marklanders. They are to maintain recreational combat safety.
 - ii. Steel Qualifiers will check all equipment of fighters for compliance with the Steel Rules before any recreational combat event. The Steel Qualifiers present will have the final say on the passing of equipment as outlined in the Steel Rules.
 - iii. Steel Qualifiers will qualify people for the use of steel weapons in accordance with the Steel Fighting Rules. Only safety is to be a concern. Any fighter who is safe is to be allowed to be steel qualified as long as they meet all the other requirements.
 - iv. Steel Qualifiers will remove from any event any fighter who proves himself unsafe.
 - a. Temporary Suspension: Any Steel Qualifier may suspend any fighter's privilege to fight, or fight with steel weapons, pending a decision by the Recreation Fighting Guild or the Shire Reeve.

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- b. Revocation of Steel Fighting Privilege: The judgment for the revocation of recreational fighting privileges, the privilege of fighting with steel, and the removal of a person's steel qualification disk will be based on the severity and frequency of unsafe act(s). Any action taken will be the decision of a simple majority vote of the Steel Qualifiers present at the next Recreation Fighters Guild meeting.

2. **Organization**

- i. The Recreation Fighters Guild (Steel Qualifiers) will have a minimum of two (2) meetings per year and as many additional meetings as deemed necessary. Steel Qualifiers will also meet before each battle for inspection of fighters and afterwards for complaints and evaluations of the event. These meetings will be called and presided over by the Shire Reeve or the head of the Recreation Fighters Guild.
- ii. the Recreation Fighters Guild will vote by a simple majority of the Steel Qualifiers present at any meeting.
- iii. The head of the Recreation Fighters Guild will submit reports of actions of the group to the Shire Reeve. Reports should include any determinations, decisions, ideas, etc. from the meeting(s). Any suspensions of a fighter must include a description of the infraction, plus names of witnesses and a report of the decision by the Steel Qualifiers present at the meeting where this action was brought up.
- iv. The Shire Reeve of Markland will preside over the Recreation Fighters Guild for the duration of his/her term. The Shire Reeve's Duties will be:
 - a. To keep notes on the Recreation Fighters Guild meetings.
 - b. To report any findings or articles to the official newsletter, Althyngs, and Markland Council Meetings.

3. **To Become a Steel Qualifier**

- i. Be steel qualified for a minimum of two (2) years.
- ii. Serve an apprenticeship with a Steel Qualifier for a minimum of one (1) year.
 - a. To help with the qualification of at least three (3) fighters.
 - b. To check equipment.
 - c. To determine any unsafe actions during recreational events.

During this time the apprentice will have limited powers to train and approve new fighters while under the direct supervision of their master. They may not be the person responsible for recreation fighting supervision at an event as specified under rule B-4 (Battles).

- iii. If the apprentice passes the above requirements, as determined by the Steel Qualifier to whom they are apprenticed, he or she will be voted on by the Steel Qualifiers Guild at the next Recreation Fighters Guild meeting. A simple majority vote will determine if the individual is accepted as a Steel Qualifier.

4. **To Remain a Steel Qualifier**

- iii. Attend and serve as a Steel Qualifier for 2 out of the 3 major training sessions or battles per year. The Shire Reeve will determine which events are considered the major events fitting this description.
- iv. Attend at least one (1) mandatory meeting per year.
- v. Be willing to train new people, and go out of your way to train and qualify new people (i.e. travel long distances).
- vi. Set an example of safety.
- vii. Each Steel Qualifier will possess the following:
 - a. A list of current Steel Qualifiers.
 - b. A list of current apprentice Steel Qualifiers.
 - c. A list of qualified fighters.
 - d. A copy of the current recreational fighting rules.
 - e. Information on each fighter who wants to be steel qualified, which will consist of:
 1. Name and persona name.
 2. Address.
 3. Telephone number.

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- viii. The Shire Reeve will be responsible for insuring that records are kept and all Steel Qualifiers have appropriate records available.

5. **The Revocation of Steel Qualifier Status**

A Steel Qualifier will have his Qualifier status suspended or revoked if he proves himself unsafe, lacks in his duties, or teaches people unsafe techniques. If this occurs, his privileges as Steel Qualifier will immediately be suspended by the Shire Reeve until a meeting of the Recreation Fighters Guild is convened. The judgment for the suspension or revocation of Steel Qualifier's status will be based on the severity and frequency of unsafe act(s). Any action taken will be the decision of a simple majority vote of the qualifiers present at the next Recreation Fighters Guild meeting.

6. **Guidelines for Steel Qualifiers**

The following guidelines should be used by all Steel Qualifiers in qualifying individuals to fight with steel:

- i. Two (2) Steel Qualifiers must be present.
- ii. A person may qualify immediately if neither Qualifier has any reservations as to the safety of the "routine."
- iii. If there are any reservations however, the Steel Qualifiers will ask to see a part or the whole "routine" over again and will ask a third Steel Qualifier (if present) to review the "routine" and form a decision.
- iv. If a third Steel Qualifier is not present, the Qualifiers will submit in writing a report to the Shire Reeve their opinions of the "routine" and the Shire Reeve will make a decision with the Qualifiers on the "routine."

Appendix A. Recreation Weapon Standards

General: No weapon that has been sharpened may be employed in a Battle, Special Routine or present on the field (exception - small personal knife that is part of garb and secure in scabbard).

Sword

Construction: Iron or steel alloy only. Blade may be of low carbon stock metal or high carbon alloy steel.

Length: minimum blade length - 16"

Edge: All edges should be bated with a minimum edge equivalent thickness of a U.S. or Canadian penny. No sharp burrs should be present on cutting edge.

Point: Point must be acute, but must be rounded off with all surfaces meeting as with edge.

Hilt: Should either have a cross guard or be recessed in way to enclose hand (e.g. Roman Gladius-type swords). Other swords or knives may be used for Special Routines as long as they generally adhere to edge and point specifications.

Axe

Construction: cast aluminum or ferrous metal may be used for head, and any wood for haft as long as not pint.

Length: No minimum on cutting edge length as long as it is reasonable. Minimum overall weapon length of 20".

Edge: All edges should be bated with a minimum edge equivalent thickness of two U.S. or Canadian pennies.

Point: Axes are assumed to not have points. Should one have any counter edges or spike, they must be rounded off completely and meet minimum edge requirements of the axe in general.

Club or Mace

Construction: Any wood is acceptable except pine.

Length: Minimum overall length of 20".

Weight: No minimum or maximum so long as the weapon may be wielded safely by the user. Steel Qualifiers may ask for a demonstration of ability to wield before approving use of a particular weapon of this type.

Spear

A spear may be carried on the field as long as it is not sharpened and it may be used as props carried by noncombatants. Spears may only be utilized as part of a Special Routine with approval of a Steel Qualifier. Spears used in routines are subject to inspection and may be rejected at the whim of the Steel Qualifier. Pine is not allowed.

Faux (Simulated) Weapons

Weapons made of rubber, leather, cardboard, etc., and all wood construction axes and swords are allowed as long as they are deemed safe and of an authentic appearance by the Steel Qualifier or Battle Master at an event.

A Steel Qualifier may make case by case decisions to allow any weapon they deem appropriate for use.