

Markland Unified Fencing Rules

I. **Styles of fencing in Markland**

There shall be 3 types of fencing in Markland based on the blade type used.

Foil/Epee

Schlager

Bated Rapier

Qualification in one type does not automatically provide qualification in any of the others nor shall it be required to hold a qualification in one in order to use the others except as defined below.

II. **Age and Other Requirements**

Minimum Age - The minimum age for anyone participating in any official Markland fencing activity, including regular local practices, will be 16 years of age, or the youth must provide proof that he/she is an emancipated minor.

Interested minors may participate in NON-CONTACT training for fence before reaching the minimum age provided there is written parental consent on file with both the local marshal and the regional marshal.

Medical Condition - Gentles having medical conditions which may affect or be affected by fencing must provide written permission from their physician before being allowed to participate. Said documents must be put on file with their local group and regional marshals.

Foil/Epee Fencing

I. **Armor Requirements**

Note: No skin will show anywhere on the fencer's body, regardless of the position or stance of the fencer.

- A. *Fencing Mask* - The mask must be a minimum of a 12 kilo mask, must cover the front and sides of the head, and be fastened on in such a manner as will prevent its coming off during a bout. Marshals cannot require a punch test for a 12 kilo mask, but a warranted marshal has the right and responsibility to refuse any mask that he or she deems to be in danger of failing to protect against a hard thrust with an epee. Upon the wearer's request, a mask may be punch tested if the equipment is available. Masks that were not manufactured with a 12 kilo rating may be punch tested semi-annually.
- B. *Thrust Resistant, Resilient Padding for the Throat and Neck* - The throat and neck protection is required from the bottom edge of the jawbone down to the level of the collarbone. The minimum is 4 oz. leather with at least 1/4 inch resilient padding or equivalent. The bib on a modern fencing mask by itself is not sufficient. Additional protection for the throat and neck may be a high, stiff collar, a gorget, a cowl, or the equivalent.
- C. *Thrust Resistant Padding for the Head* - The head must be covered with a skullcap of 4 oz. leather, 4 layers of twill/ trigger/ champion cloth or an equivalent material. As an alternative, the back of the mask may be covered with a piece of 4 oz. leather, 4 layers of twill/ trigger/ champion cloth or an equivalent material, firmly attached to the mask frame, and extending low enough to cover the back of the neck.
- D. *Torso and Arm Armor* - The minimum is 4 oz. leather, 4 layers of twill/trigger/ champion cloth, or the equivalent. This armor will cover the body from the top of the shoulder to

the base of the groin. If closed at the front, the edges must overlap by at least 3 inches, or a packet of 4 oz. leather, 4 layers of twill/ trigger/ champion cloth, or equivalent material must be placed beneath the closure to prevent the entry of a blade. Protection for the underarm area is required to the level of the elbow, and must be 4 oz. leather, 4 layers of twill/ trigger/ champion cloth, or the equivalent. The lower arms must be covered with at least one layer of tight-weave material.

- E. *Gloves* - Leather gloves must be worn on both hands. They must overlap the wrist openings of the sleeves by at least 3 inches, and cover any cuff opening or slashing which does not meet the arm/torso requirement. If gloves designed for electric equipment are used, the openings for wires must be sewn shut.
- F. *Groin/ Breast Armor* - Male fencers will wear a cup secured in such a way as to provide adequate groin protection. Additional breast armor for females is left to individual discretion. However, female fencers are strongly encouraged to wear additional breast armor of at least 1/4 inch resilient padding or an equivalent, such as modern fencing breast protectors.
- G. *Lower Extremity Armor* - The lower extremities must be covered with at least one layer of tight-weave fabric to the level of the knee. Below the knee, tights or socks may be worn so long as they are closely knit enough that skin cannot be seen through the tights or socks. Footwear must be worn, and must not be any type of sandal.

Armor will not be constructed in such a manner as to prevent the wearer from properly calibrating. It is the responsibility of the fencer to be able to calibrate properly even when wearing metal or heavy leather armor. (If your armor prevents you from acknowledging a blow, change your armor!)

II. Weapons Specifications

A. *Rapiers*

Foil and epee blades, including doublewide epees, are allowed. Points must be capped with standard plastic or rubber fencing tips or equivalent, and must be taped with tape that contrasts in color with the blade.

Foil, epee, and saber bells are permitted. Bells with openings large enough to admit a standard, capped sword point must be blocked with rigid material. Quillons can be no longer than 12 inches. The ends must be blunted and all edges rounded. Quillons must be fixed in place. Orthopedic and pistol grips are prohibited.

Blades may have a single, gradual curve. Sharp bends, or more than a single curve are cause for prohibiting the use of the blade. Blades curving more than 4 inches from center line should be replaced. All weapons will be fought as light two-edged weapons with a point. Marshals will disqualify weapons that are in danger of breaking.

B. *Daggers*

The maximum allowable dagger length, pommel to tip, is 25 inches for a flex-dagger.

Bells, grips, and quillons will follow the specifications for rapiers (See 3.A.3 above).

Flex daggers score touches in the same manner as foils or epees.

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C. *Bucklers*

When being used with foils and epees, the allowable maximum area for a buckler is 315 square inches (20 in. diameter circle).

Bucklers will be constructed of lightweight, rigid material, such as 1/4 inch plywood.

Buckler edges will be covered to prevent splintering, and will not jagged or rough.

Striking with the buckler is strictly illegal.

D. *Cloaks*

Cloak size, shape, and weight are left to the discretion of the user, subject to the condition that it actually be wearable as a cloak. Hem weights are permitted, but will be padded. Rigid weights, such as bars, rods, chain, or strips of metal are prohibited.

The cloak may be used to entangle an opponent's weapon. It may not be used against parts of the body.

Cloaks will be allowed to take multiple hits without being considered to have sustained ruinous damage to the fabric. However, if the marshal sees things getting out of hand, he or she may step in and advise the fencer that the cloak is no longer useful. A thrust or cut will penetrate a cloak and do damage to the fencer.

E. *Other Parrying Devices*

Virtually any object may be used as a parry item. For instance, sword sheaths, riding crops, coiled whips, beer mugs, etc. may be used, provided that the object poses no threat to the safety of the combatants. Marshal discretion regarding the safety of the parry item is the deciding factor as to whether or not it will be permitted into the list.

III. **Weapons Forms**

Rapier - The form will consist of a single rapier, with the second hand empty. The fencer may use the empty hand for defense.

Case of Rapier - The form will consist of two rapiers, one held in each hand.

Rapier and Blocking Implement - The form will consist of one rapier and one blocking implement, such as buckler, mug, cloak, hat, etc. Daggers are excluded from this form.

Rapier and Dagger - The form will consist of one rapier and one dagger.

IV. **Conduct Rules**

A. *Fencing Rules:*

- The standard of calibration will tend toward the lightest touch which a fencer can reasonably expect to feel. The maximum allowable pressure is that which would cause a bend of two inches in a standard #5 foil.
- All fencers are considered to be wearing cotton, linen, or wool street clothing of the period that these rules are intended to simulate. Skirts are to be no longer

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than ankle length. Corseting, bum rolls, or anything that drastically changes the form of the body is prohibited.

- It is the responsibility of each fencer to determine what weapons his or her opponent is using and resolve any questions about them before combat. Any portion of the body is a legal target.
- A fleche or any other running attack is prohibited. Cuts should be performed as draw-cuts using wrist action. Whipping, hacking, and modern saber cuts are prohibited. Draw cuts, push cuts, and tip cuts are all considered to be valid cuts.
- Wrestling with an opponent is prohibited.
- Striking with any portion of the weapon other than the blade is prohibited, as are other street fighting techniques such as kicking, whipping with the cloak, chopping with the buckler edge, and grabbing or trapping an opponent's blade.
- A fencer is considered armed so long as one offensive weapon is retained. Hold will not be called for dropped weapons so long as both combatants retain an offensive weapon. If one combatant no longer has an offensive weapon, a hold will be called. At that point, the fencer who retains an offensive weapon has the option to either (a) return the opponent's weapon and continue the bout or (b) declare the opponent disarmed and defeated, thus ending the bout.
- Parries with the empty hand while using single rapier are permitted and are not considered as wounding so long as the blade, not the point, touches the glove (Mail gauntlet/ mailed fist). Pushing the opponent's hand aside is permitted under this rule, so long as the hand is not grasped. All fencing is to be done in the round.

B. *Criteria for Authorization*

- The fencer will be familiar with the rules, customs and armor requirements of Markland fencing.
- The fencer poses no threat of injury either to his opponent or to himself.
- The fencer can define and demonstrate some defensive capability (a minimum of two or three parries).
- The fencer can define and demonstrate some offensive capability.
- All fencers must authorize in single rapier as their first weapons form.

C. *Scoring*

- Before each bout in a tournament, calibration between unfamiliar opponents will be mandatory. Calibration is the exchange of blows between two fully armed and armored opponents, using the lightest touch that a fencer can reasonably be expected to feel.
- A Kill is considered to be one thrust to the torso, head, or neck, one draw cut to the neck, groin, or the area below the ribcage and above the hip bone, or two draw cuts to other regions of the torso and the head. In order to more realistically simulate the effects of a wound, a killing cut may take up to 30 seconds to cause death due to blood loss. Attacks begun during the exchange may continue during that time and will be counted.
- An arm, hand, leg or foot is rendered unusable after a single thrust or two draw cuts to it. If an arm is lost, it cannot be used. If a hand is lost, it may not be used and must remain limp. If a leg or foot is lost, a fencer may continue standing on the unwounded leg or may kneel. If a fencer is thrust to the hip joint or in the buttocks, or is draw cut twice to the same region, the fencer must sit on the floor or ground and may not rise up on the leg muscles. A hip or buttock is part of the leg on the same side (i.e., a thrust to the right hip disables the right leg, and a thrust to another limb disables the fencer). If a leg or foot has been disabled, the

fencer may not use that leg or foot in any way that would require placing weight upon it, including moving on that leg or foot.

- A fencer is disabled if he or she loses the use of two limbs. A hand or foot is not considered a limb. Note, however, that if you cannot hold a blade in either of your hands, you are disabled.
- Any blow may be counted by the recipient as heavier than technically required if, in his or her opinion, it would have caused a disabling wound. However, no blow may be counted as less effective than the above rules require.

D. *Marshaling:*

- Marshals will be specifically trained and warranted for period fencing.
- Marshals will thoroughly inspect and test fencers' weapons and equipment for compliance with Markland standards prior to allowing their use.
- The Marshallate will institute such standards and procedures for authorizing participation in fencing at Markland events and for the warranting of fencing marshals as will be deemed necessary.
- All bouts will have at least one warranted fencing marshal present. An additional marshal or marshal-in-training is strongly encouraged.
- The marshal of a bout has absolute say on a fencer's conduct on the field, and may summarily eject any fencer who is guilty of misconduct or unsafe behavior. Marshals will remove any fencer acting in an intentionally unsafe manner from the field of combat. Such conduct may be grounds for revocation of authorization. The fencer in question may appeal the actions of a Marshal, but will NOT argue with the Marshal at the time of the incident.
- Marshals will be thoroughly versed in the Markland Unified Fencing Rules, and will practice such rules during any Markland fencing activity.

V. **Melee Rules:**

Except as specifically stated herein, fencing melees are conducted according to the same conventions and rules of combat as rattan melees. A fencer must obtain engagement before attacking an opponent in the melee. "Engagement" is defined as follows:

- If fencers are fighting in a line, the rules of line engagement from the rattan melee rules apply.
- No killing from behind, but experimentation is allowed upon agreement of all participants.
- Weapons may be bound from behind by other weapons.
- Running from place to place in a melee is permitted. Running attacks are prohibited. Charging a line or an individual is prohibited.
- All disabled fencers should remove themselves from the melee field or die defensively, depending on the conditions of the field.
- Rules in addition to those set forth here may be imposed on melees for the purposes of that event, that day or that melee only, so long as they are announced ahead of time.

Definition of Schlager Blades

Schlager - The form will consist of a heavier, oval cross-sectioned rapier. The use of schlager blades is governed by specific rules, contained below.

I. Combat Conventions:

- Open hand grappling (i.e.: you may not close your fingers around any portion of your opponent) is permitted with the following exceptions:
 - There will be no contact between your hand and the opponent's face or neck.
 - All target areas of standard epee fencing apply.
 - Scoring will be counted as follows:
 - 1 cut/thrust will cause loss of the limb or death.
 - 3 tip cuts will cause loss of the limb or disablement.
 - The "Armor is Armor" rule will apply. The following are examples of this ruling:
 - Provided you physically have a mail gauntlet in place you are permitted to grasp your opponent's blade. (Note this is the only time you are permitted to grasp anything of your opponent's.)
 - Metal armor is counted as being in place. It will stop cuts and all but direct, solid thrusts.
 - Heavy leather (such as buff coats) will decrease the effectiveness of cuts, but are still defeated by good thrusts.
- Parries directed to the opponent's limbs are permitted in addition to parries of their sword.
- Shield press and open hand press are permitted. These are to be performed by laying the open hand on the opponent and pushing them away. Striking with the hand, either open or closed is not permitted.
- Light to moderate body checking is permitted.
- Tripping is not permitted.
- All weapons will be tipped in an approved manner (see Construction below). Lay on cuts are permitted and should have no more force than that of a properly given draw cut.
- Positive pressure thrust is required. A thrust should have no more than 4 to 6 lb. of pressure and less is encouraged.
- You may attack your opponent from behind in melee situations without warning. There is a separate qualification for throwing/projectile weapons and this will be obtained prior to their use. The only exception to this rule is for training purposes.
- Rapier WILL NOT be used against any other blade (this does not preclude the use of Flexi-dagger as a main gauche).
- Any changes to the combat conventions may be permitted provided they are mutually agreeable and are discussed prior to the start of the bout.

II. Armor:

- Some form of rigid breast protection is highly recommended for women.
- Metal/Heavy Leather (i.e.: 8 oz.) throat protection is required.
- Since the goal of schlager armor is to prevent cuts from burred edge, one layer of denim weight material is considered sufficient for Markland rapier (Schlager) combat.

III. Construction:

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- Before placing a tip on the blade, the blade tip should be filed (NOT GROUND) leaving all edges at the tip flat and then lightly filed to remove any sharp edges resulting from the process.
- Tips will be covered with an archery bird blunt over a metal washer or equivalent (leather in several layers is acceptable) then taped or otherwise secured in place.
- Tips will be secured with either electrical tape, woven cloth surgical adhesive tape or glue filled heat shrink tubing, as these materials can conform to the shape of the blade and tip better.
- When wrapping with tape, the tape will be started 2 - 3 inches down from the tip of the blade, and wrapped spirally upward (with at least 50% overlap of the previous pass), covering bird blunt except for the very tip. This allows visual inspection of the tip. The tape will then continue to be wrapped spirally down the blade as above, returning to the starting point.
- Open guards may be used as long as they are made in a period style and pose no hazard to an opponent. No guard will present a sharp edge in such a way as to be a hazard. All fencers must be aware that an open guard can pass an opponent's blade.
- When being used with schlager blades, bucklers of a larger area and a period weight ("targets") are permitted.

IV. **Marshals:**

- The symbols of Schlager Marshals will be as follows:
 - Marshal in Charge at any event will carry a "light weight" pole arm, 6 feet tall with a blue fabric stripe tied at the top.
 - Any other Marshal on the field will tie the fabric stripe around the neck or arm to identify themselves as a Marshal to the fencers on the field.
- To meet the requirements for qualification as a Schlager Marshal, a fencer must meet the following requirements and be authorized in all Schlager forms.
- In lieu of prerequisite marshaling experience and training, a Rapier fencer must have all four weapons forms and be certified by the local Marshal in charge to perform the office of Schlager Marshal.

V. **Qualifications:**

- Two Marshals, authorized in Rapier, are required for authorization.
- Only an authorized rapier Marshal may be used as an opponent in a qualification bout.
- Qualifications are conducted for safety reasons only, therefore, style will not be a valid reason to fail a candidate.
- Marshals will question the candidate about any physical/medical problems which may impact the qualification prior to the qualification bout.

VI. **Training:**

To be outlined in the training manual.

VII. **Weapons Inspections:**

- Inspect for piercing of the tip.

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- Inspect blade and guard for nicks, cracks, etc. (NOTE: The blade of the rapier is not intended to take a set as do modern blades. If your blade begins to take a set, you may be using unnecessary force with it.)
- Inspect guard for damage and strength of attachment.
- Inspect for tip retention and quality of tape wrapping.

Bated Rapier

I. Definition of Bated Rapier Blades

The Bated Rapier shall consist of a full size rapier blade on a period style of hilt. Blade edges shall be 1 US penny in thickness and the tip shall be bated in a period manner.

II. Combat Conventions:

- Bated Rapier will not be used for any type of tournament combat. It is intended to provide better understanding and research into the training techniques of the "Age of Rapier".
- All target areas of standard epee fencing apply with the following exceptions:
 - There will be NO targeting of the head.
 - There will be NO thrusts to the throat.
 - Scoring will be counted as in Schlager fencing above.
 - The "Armor is Armor" rule will apply. See Schlager conventions above.
 - All weapons will be tipped in an approved manner (see Construction below).
 - Lay on cuts are permitted and will have no more force than that of a properly given draw cut.
 - Positive pressure thrust is required anything less will be considered a tip cut. A thrust should have no more than 4 to 6 lb. of pressure and less is encouraged.
 - Bated blade WILL NOT be used against any other blade with the exception of bated dagger blades.
 - Bated Rapier will be not be used in melee situations.

III. Armor:

- Some form of rigid breast protection is strongly recommended for women.
- Metal/Stiff, Heavy Leather (i.e.: 8 oz. with padding of _" resilient foam) throat protection is required.
- Bated blade armor is intended to prevent cuts from burred edge, one layer of denim weight material is considered sufficient.
- Bated blade head armor shall consist of head/eye protection sufficient to protect from accidental contact.
- For training purposes a modern fencing mask is required. Qualified Bated blade fencers are encouraged to use a form of protection less visibly modern when using this style.
- Padding for knees and elbows is strongly encouraged.

IV. Construction:

Bated blades tips shall be constructed as follows:

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- The end of the blade will be flattened and a washer of not less than $\frac{1}{8}$ " will be welded to the tip to provide a "button". The resulting button will not have a protrusion of more than $\frac{1}{8}$ " beyond the washer (to allow for the weld bead).
- This will be covered with a resilient foam ball (glued to the tip) of not less than 1.5" diameter to completely enclose the end of the blade.
- A leather bag will be placed over the assembly and the open end of the bag
- will be whipped down on the blade to secure the bag.
- Bated dagger blades will be constructed to the above standard.
- Guards will be constructed as per Schlager blades above.

V. Marshals:

- Only marshals specifically trained in bated blades will be permitted to authorize bated blade fencers.
- To meet the requirements for Bated blade Marshal, a fencer must be authorized in all Schlager and Bated forms and be actively involved in use of the Bated blade weapons.

VI. Qualifications:

- This weapon style is an advanced form and requires the utmost care in its conduct. As a result, deviations from the rules will result in immediate withdrawal of qualification status.
- Bated blade fencers must show proficiency and qualification with the equivalent Schlager form prior to attempting to authorize with a Bated form.
- Two Marshals, authorized in Bated Rapier, are required for authorization.
- Only an authorized Bated Rapier Marshal will be used as an opponent in a qualification bout.
- Qualifications are conducted for safety reasons only, therefore, style will not be a valid reason to fail a candidate.
- Marshals will question the candidate about any physical/medical problems which may impact the qualification prior to the qualification bout.

VII. Training:

To be outlined in the training manual.

VIII. Weapons Inspections:

- It is the responsibility of the fencer maintain their equipment in top condition. Weapons will be inspected for:
 - Inspect for loose or damaged bags on the tip and condition of padding.
 - Inspect blade and guard for nicks, cracks, etc.
 - Inspect guard for damage and strength of attachment.
 - Inspect for tip retention.
- Weapons not meeting the standard will be down-checked until corrected.
- Any fencer repeatedly failing to maintain the standard will have their qualification pulled and will be required to reauthorize in the use of this weapon.