

Rules for Sportive Combat in Tournaments of the Bolognese Tradition

First Version: 2017
Last Modification: 2023 09



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction.....	3
The Goals of Our Rule set.....	3
Rules	4
The Fight	4
Points.....	4
Hit Locations.....	5
Riposte and Double Hit.....	6
Gioco stretto.....	6
The Tournament Mode	7
Prohibited Actions, Violations and Penalties	8
Prohibited Actions	8
Weapon Simulators	9

Introduction

This document includes an overview of the rules set developed by the HEMA club Fior della Spada. Before each tournament, the complete rules and additional information are made available to all participants.

The rules are intended as a guide. If parts are misleadingly formulated or ambiguous, the decision lies with the attentive referee ("rules as intended vs. rules as written"). Our club is constantly working on improvements and is happy to receive feedback and input before and after events.

The Goals of Our Rule set

This rulebook has the following goals:

- ❖ to be a set of tournament rules adapted to the Bolognese school and its weapons
- ❖ to establish self-protection as priority and to enforce partnership with the opponent
- ❖ to be as close as possible to the historical "sporting" duel ("gioco" = game), in which blunt swords (*spade da gioco*) were used

Rules

The Fight

A fight is fought to 7 points. The fighter who reaches 7 points first wins. If both fencers exceed the point limit at the same time, the higher score wins.
No fight may be won by double hits alone.

Before the beginning and after the end of each fight the fighters salute each other.

Points

Points are awarded to a fencer when....

- ❖ he/she makes a valid hit with a bladed weapon (with the edge or thrust*) (1-3 points).
- ❖ his/her opponent crosses the outer line of the fighting area** (1 point)
- ❖ the opponent loses his weapon (1 point)
- ❖ the opponent is penalized by the referee (1-3 penalty points)

** Exceptions possible depending on the weapon and the tournament mode: See e.g. Partesana (thrusts only).*

***Clarification for the referee: The opponent is to be pushed over the outer line in a controlled way (throws etc. are not allowed - see also "Gioco Stretto" and "Forbidden actions"). This also means that both fencers get a point if both cross the outer line during an action.*

After a hit and a possible riposte the fight will be interrupted by the referee and points will be awarded.

The fencers are obliged to indicate received hits to the best of their knowledge and to support the referee if necessary. The decision whether a touch of the opponent with the sword is a valid hit or not is up to the referee.

The referee's decisions are not to be discussed during the fight. Attempted discussions will be penalized. The fencers are free to complain to the tournament management after the fight or the tournament.

Hit Locations

The following hit locations are defined (see also Figure):

- ❖ 1 point: arm (from wrist to shoulder)
- ❖ 1 point: leg (from ankle to hip)
- ❖ 2 points: torso (incl. shoulders)
- ❖ 3 points: Head, neck*

**for the referee: standard mask including collar*

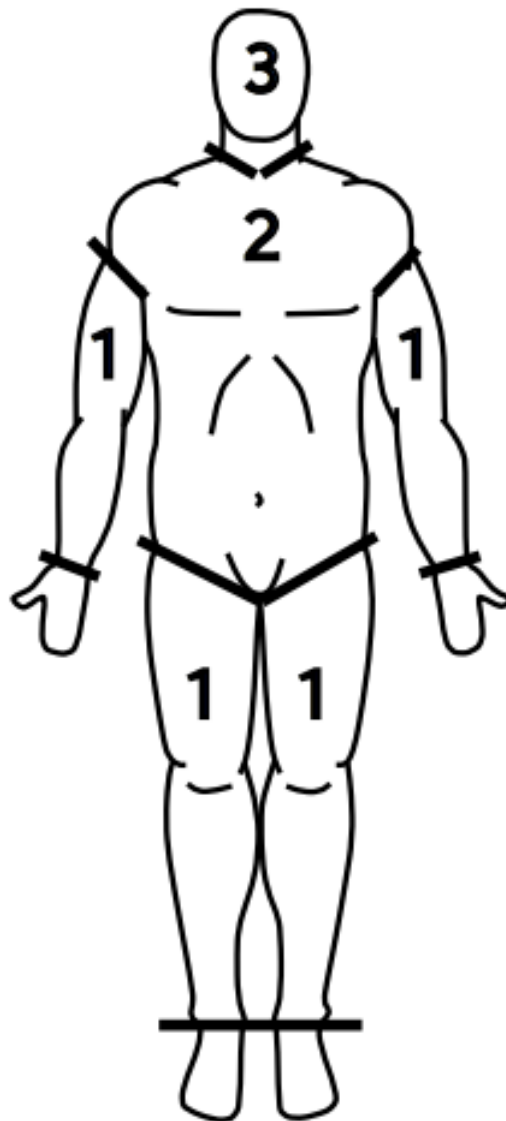


Figure 1 nanoxyde, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15450580>

Riposte and Double Hit

Double hit: Both fencers hit each other within the same fencing *tempo* (their hits land simultaneously without having to circumvent any defence). They completely disregard self-protection.

Riposte: After a hit is received, the receiving person is allowed to take one more step and finish an action (finish a single, new *tempo*).

Riposte hits and double hits are scored with full points.

With a maximum of 7 points: A maximum of 2 double hits are allowed per fight. After the 3rd double hit the bout will be considered lost for both fencers and will be scored as 0 hits dealt and 7 hits received for both fencers. If this is the case in a final fight, the fencers shall proceed to the first clean hit (no double hits allowed).

Gioco stretto

Unarmed actions in *gioco stretto** are not scored and the fight is interrupted. However, it is allowed to grab the opponent's sword hand or his (standing or barely accelerated) blade in the *forte* area (lowest third of the blade near the hilt) to score a hit. The hit is fully scored.

Repeated parrying with the hand/ arm counts as a forbidden action and is counted as a hit (catching a blow or thrust).

**For the referee: Gioco stretto = close range actions: wrestling, throwing, grappling, etc....*

For the organizer: Pommel strikes, punches/ kicks, fixing in wrestling and strikes with the shield are excluded (for safety reasons and source conformity). It is up to the organizer to take into account this type of hits to the best of his knowledge and belief, if it seems necessary in a particular tournament. However, it is recommended to take safety precautions accordingly (mats/soft ground, appropriately secured shield edges and hilts, etc...).

The Tournament Mode

Competitors will compete against each other in a preliminary round. The fencers are ranked according to the higher quotient (CUT) of received and set hits (*100).

Example:

Fencer 1: 30 points (set hits)
 10 points (received hits)
 CUT: $(30/10)*100=300$

Fencer 2: 28 points (set hits)
 4 points (received hits)
 CUT: $(28/4)*100=700$

Resulting ranking: *Fencer 2 is ranked higher than fencer 1.*

Ranking will be made according to the following criteria:

- 1.) CUT (descending)
- 2.) Number of double hits (ascending)
- 3.) Number of wins (descending)
- 4.) Alphabetical order

If there is still a tie after all four criteria have been applied, a coin will be tossed.

Summary: The fighter who has the highest CUT, the fewest double hits and the most wins will be ranked highest.

The best fighters of the ranking may advance to the final rounds (knockout system).

Prohibited Actions, Violations and Penalties

In case of forbidden actions the fight will be interrupted and the action will be penalized by the referee. The referee has the following possibilities depending upon severity of the offence:

- ❖ to issue a warning
- ❖ to give penalty points (1-3 penalty points)
- ❖ to end the fight and declare a winner
- ❖ to disqualify a fencer from the tournament in question
- ❖ to recommend to the tournament management to exclude a person from the event in question (dismissal - can also be pronounced by the tournament management alone).

Prohibited Actions

- ❖ Pommel strikes, punches, throws & kicks, wrestling fixes and strikes with the shield (see also "Hits and Hit Zones" & "Gioco Stretto"). Exceptions are possible if announced in advance, and as long as the safety of the participants is sufficiently guaranteed (adaptation of equipment, suitable hall floor, etc.)
- ❖ Actions that endanger the safety of the participants and use of excessive force.
- ❖ deliberate attack of invalid hit locations (hands, feet).
- ❖ loss of weapon control (erratic, thrown blows, repeatedly hitting the blade on the ground, etc.)
- ❖ lack of sportsmanship
- ❖ repeated catching of blows and stabs with hand/ arm
- ❖ Time stalling & inactivity
- ❖ repeated not displaying of received hits
- ❖ lateness, leaving the fighting area without permission, entering the fighting area by a helper without permission, swearing,...
- ❖ Discussing or challenging referee's decisions.
- ❖ Anything that interferes with the conduct of the fight and/ or event.

For the referee: In case of repeated violations of the rules, the severity of the penalty should be higher each time and finally end in disqualification.

The participant is free to file a formal complaint against a referee with the tournament management.

Weapon Simulators

Steel simulators are used. All steel simulators must be equipped with a protective rubber blunt at the tip. Depending on the type of weapon, other materials are also permitted.

The tournament management may exclude simulators and equipment from the tournament for safety reasons. The tournament management may also exclude simulators if they meet the numerical specifications and safety standards, but are contrary to the intent and spirit of the tournament (e.g., if the tournament management finds in good faith, that the simulator does not fall within the targeted weapon category and/ or time period).

1.) Spada Sola - single weapon and double weapon ("sidesword").

- ❖ Blade length - the length of the blade must be between 80 cm and 96 cm; including ricasso, i.e. up to the parrying bar).
- ❖ Overall length - the overall length of the weapon must not exceed 112 cm.
- ❖ Length of the guard - the length of the guard must be between 10 cm and 30 cm.
- ❖ Weight - the total weight of the weapon must be between 900 g and 1,400 g.
- ❖ Bending behaviour - the blade must bend at a pressure weight of 12,000 g.

2.) Brocchiero – sidearm (buckler)

This hand-held shield consists of the shield and the handle, which must be firmly connected to the shield (welded, riveted, screwed, etc.). Points on the buckler must be rounded off or provided with plastic or leather protectors.

- ❖ Diameter: the maximum diameter of the buckler must not exceed 42 cm (16.5").
- ❖ Shape: The shield has a circular disc shape with a center bulge. At the rim, the shield may have a forged, or welded (in the case of plastic probably cast) beaded edge. Other protruding parts, e.g. blade catcher are prohibited for safety reasons!
- ❖ Buckler shield material - the shield must be made of metal, or plastic (e.g. polypropylene). Bucklers made of other materials can be approved by the tournament management, if there is no danger of splintering or other concerns can be excluded. The fencer must not have any advantage in the fight because of the material (e.g. binding behavior).
- ❖ Buckler handle material - the handle can be made of metal, wood, plastic, etc. and does not have to match the material of the shield.

Other weapons of the Bolognese tradition, whose simulators are not yet comprehensively described (additions will be made as necessary and over time):

3.) Targa – sidearm

Rectangular fist shield made of leather or steel with handle and corrugated surface.

4.) Rotella – sidearm

Round tethered shield with a diameter of 50-70cm. Material: steel or wood.

5.) Imbracciatura – sidearm

Drop-shaped leather shield made of wood and a spike on the lower edge. For tournaments, the spike must be secured (eg: blunt and yielding mechanism).

6.) Pugnale – single weapon and sidearm (dagger)

- ❖ Blade length - the length of the blade must not exceed 40cm.
- ❖ Overall length - the overall length of the weapon must not exceed 55cm.
- ❖ Guard/blade catcher - the width of the blade catcher must not exceed 16cm.

7.) Cappa – sidearm (cape)

Cape or Cloak made of a heavy fabric.

8.) Arme inastate – single weapon (pole arms)

Lengths and blade shapes vary depending on the type. Depending on the type, used as a cutting and/or thrusting weapon. When used as a thrusting weapon, use a compliant material for safety reasons.

9.) Partesana

Pole weapon with leaf-shaped blade at the tip. Attention: In tournament the thrust only is scored.

10.) Bolognese Spadone - single weapon (two-handed): The use of this weapon in tournaments is currently not recommended for safety reasons.

- ❖ Two-handed sword
- ❖ Total length is 1.55m or less.
- ❖ No side rings
- ❖ Ricasso and Elsette present
- ❖ weight around 2kg
- ❖ Ratio of handle incl. pommel to blade approx. 1:2