

KINGDOM OF NORTHSHIELD



RAPIER HANDBOOK

Introduction from the Kingdom Earl Marshal

<KEM introduction goes here.>

Preface to the Kingdom of Northshield Rapier Rules, First Edition:

These rules are the culmination of over two years of hard work by many, many people. In the process of debating and writing these rules, members of the Northshield rapier marshallate read not only the "Corporate Rules for Rapier Combat in the Society for Creative Anachronism, Incorporated" (usually numerous times), but also the rapier rules for every kingdom in the Known World (also numerous times). The desire was to not only build off the Midrealm rapier tradition, which we were all familiar with, but to also examine the traditions and practices of other kingdoms to see what they had to offer us as well. Since we are building a new kingdom, it only seemed right to embrace both the old and new in the process.

Northshield's rapier rules were written largely from scratch. Very little has been copied verbatim from other rules, save where necessitated by the Society rules. As a result, there will be things both familiar and new in these pages. Read the rules with care. Do not assume things will automatically work the same as they did under our parent kingdom. We are Northshield now, and striking out on our own means following a new path.

As with any new thing, adjustments will likely need to be made down the line. No matter how carefully planned, written, and reviewed, there will be unforeseen problems with these rules. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification, or to point out inconsistencies or questions you have about the rules. It is only through feedback from the fighters and marshals that we can continue to try to improve this game for all of us.

My thanks to everyone who took part in the development of these rules. Without all of your input and support, this would have been a truly Herculean task. Your many hands, and generous hearts, made this light work indeed.

May your touch be light and your blows land true.

Regards,

THL Simon Morcar
Northshield Kingdom Rapier Marshal
November, 2004

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1. RULES OF THE LIST AND OF COMBAT

These rules set the fundamental standards for rapier combat in the Kingdom of Northshield. All rapier fighters and marshals are responsible for knowing these rules, as well as the rapier rules for the Society for Creative Anachronism and the SCA Rules of the List.

These rules are designed to promote safe rapier combat in the Kingdom of Northshield. Should a situation arise which is not explicitly covered by Corporate or Kingdom rapier combat rules, it should NOT be assumed that the situation is forbidden or inappropriate. However, no matter how clear or accurate, rules cannot replace common sense, good judgment, and concern for the participants. If a question arises when applying these standards, choose the solution that promotes the greatest degree of safety for all participants.

SCA Rapier combat is intended to re-create the rapier fighting styles of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (sometimes called the 'Arte of Defence'). As such, participants are encouraged to study fencing manuals of the period and develop combat styles based on those studies whenever possible. However, such studies are optional and can never be required for participation in rapier activities in Northshield.

Rapier combat is a martial activity. All reasonable efforts should be made to keep it both safe and fun at all times. However, as this is a contact sport, abrasions, bruises, muscle strains and other sports-related injuries will occur from time to time. ALL COMBATANTS should be aware of the risks involved before taking part in any form of rapier activity in the SCA and the Kingdom of Northshield.

1.1. Rules of the List

- 1) Rapier combat shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules of the List of the SCA, Inc., the Society Rapier Rules, and these rules. All fighters and marshals must know these rules.
- 2) Combatants will conduct themselves in an honorable and chivalrous manner at all times.
- 3) Combatants cannot take part in any official SCA rapier activities (save practices) without first becoming authorized in rapier combat. A properly filled out and signed/initialed authorization card, or a completed authorization form, must be presented to the duly appointed List Person, or the Marshal-in-Charge, prior to taking part in any SCA rapier tournament, melee or demo.
- 4) All combatants, prior to every combat or practice, shall ensure their equipment is safe, in good working order and has been inspected by a member of the Kingdom Marshallate authorized to inspect rapier gear.
- 5) Even though a warranted member of the Kingdom Marshallate has inspected the armor and weapons used by a fighter, each fighter shall accept full responsibility for the condition of his or her own equipment. Each fighter has the obligation to see that his or her equipment meets all Society and Kingdom requirements.
- 6) The Crown's representative upon the field and in all matters dealing with Rapier Combat is the Earl Marshal, then the Kingdom Rapier Marshal, then, by delegation, the members of the Kingdom Rapier Marshallate.

- 7) All combat will immediately stop upon the call of "Hold." Combatants will check for immediate hazards, assume a non-threatening stance, and not move until so instructed by a marshal. Hold may be called by marshals, combatants or spectators.
- 8) Marshals will use the term "Ware Edge," or a similar concise phrase, to warn combatants if they are approaching the edge of the field. Combatants should then make an effort to avoid running off the edge of the field. Such warnings do not halt combat.
- 9) At the end of each bout, the Presiding Marshal(s) will ask the fighters if they are satisfied with the conduct of the bout. Each marshal overseeing the bout will also be asked if they have any questions about the combat. Any participants who leave the field without voicing a concern automatically declare themselves satisfied with the bout. Fighters who are not satisfied can ask that the matter be discussed at a later time, rather than on the field (assuming it does not change the outcome of the bout); however, the concern must be brought to the marshal(s) attention before the formal close of the bout.
- 10) Any combatant may, without dishonor or penalty, reject any challenge without specifying a reason. A fight in a tournament lists is not to be considered a challenge, and therefore may not be declined or rejected without forfeiting the bout. Fighters may not recruit other fencers to fight in their stead to avoid fighting a tournament bout.
- 11) At inter-kingdom events, for any given Kingdom's tourney or melee, guest combatants shall meet SCA standards for protective gear, but shall comply with whatever weapons standards are being used by the host Kingdom for that tourney.
- 12) Visiting fighters shall be accorded fighting privileges upon presentation of a valid SCA Fighter Authorization Card issued by their kingdom of residence.
- 13) Fighters relocating to Northshield may apply to the Kingdom Rapier Marshal, or his designated deputy, to have their authorizations transferred to Northshield. It is up to the KRM, or the appointed deputy, to determine to what degree, if any, the authorizations will transfer. Such applications must be made within six months of taking up residence in the kingdom; after that, the fighter must fight a standard field authorization to receive a Northshield rapier authorization.

1.2. Rules of Combat

A. Behavior on the Field

- 1) All fighters shall obey the commands of the marshals overseeing the field or be removed from the field and subject to further disciplinary action.
- 2) Disagreements with the marshals overseeing the field shall be resolved through established mechanisms outlined in these rules and in the Kingdom of Northshield Rapier Marshal's Handbook.
- 3) Each fighter shall maintain control over his or her temper and behavior at all times. Fighters who fail to maintain such control will be subject to disciplinary action at the marshal's discretion.
- 4) Striking an opponent with excessive force or with deliberate intent to injure is forbidden. Intentional body-to-body contact is forbidden. However, as rapier combat is a martial

activity, it is understood that incidental or accidental body-to-body contact will occur from time to time.

- 5) Conduct obstructive to normal rapier combat, such as consistently ignoring blows, deliberate misuse of the rules (such as calling HOLD or purposefully backing into the list ropes when pressed) or the like is forbidden. Marshals may, at their discretion, impose limitations or disciplinary measures on any fencer(s) they feel are deliberately undertaking such actions.
- 6) The use of the Fleche (running at an opponent with rapier extended), or similar uncontrolled attacks, is prohibited.

B. Use of Weapons and Parrying Devices

- 1) Blows are struck by: thrusting with the point of the blade (thrust) and drawing the edge of the blade across part of the opponent's body (draw cut).
- 2) Cuts made by laying the edge of the blade against an opponent and pushing (push cuts) are optional and need not be acknowledged. A fencer may choose to accept such a cut if he or she so desires.
- 3) Chopping or hacking blows are never permitted. Fast circular movements (such as moulinets) may be used to place valid blows.
- 4) Parries may be performed with weapons, parrying devices, or the gloved hand. Though the gloved hand may be used to parry, it shall not be used to push, grasp or strike an opponent.
- 5) Parrying devices may be used to move, deflect or immobilize an opponent's weapon or parrying device, so long as such use does not endanger the safety of the combatants.
- 6) Purposefully striking an opponent with any part of a weapon or parrying device not approved for that purpose is prohibited.
- 7) If a fighter is disarmed or drops a weapon, it is up to the opponent to decide whether the fighter will be allowed to regain the lost weapon. If the opponent refuses to let the fighter retrieve the lost weapon, the disarmed fighter must be able to draw another weapon from his or her person, or yield. No hold will be called unless there is a clear and present safety issue.
- 8) Fighters may choose to grasp, rather than parry, heavy rapier blades. Grasping is defined as the momentary binding of a sword with the gloved hand for purposes of redirecting or immobilizing the blade; grasping is NOT meant to be used to purposefully bend, wrest or wrestle the rapier from the opponent's grip.
 - If the grasped blade moves or twists in the grasping hand, the blade must be released immediately. The grasping hand is deemed disabled unless a parrying gauntlet is being used on the grasping hand.
 - Wrestling for control of the blade will result in an immediate hold being called.

C. Acknowledgement of Blows

1) General

- a) The entire body is considered a legal target area.
- b) Each combatant shall call all valid blows received.
- c) In judging blows, all fighters are presumed to be wearing common civil attire of the period, not armor. Common civil attire will be defined as: a linen shirt, breeches or a skirt, stockings, and shoes.
- d) Tournaments or melees may be held that define areas of the body as armored, and to what degree, so long as all the participants are made aware of these special conditions prior to the start of combat.
- e) In rapier combat, blows will be counted as though they were struck with a real blade, extremely sharp on point and edge. Any blow that would have penetrated the skin shall be counted a good blow. Any blow that strikes a mask, helm or gorget shall be counted as though it struck flesh. Slaps, or merely brushing the cloth, are not considered good.
- f) The mandatory minimum length for a draw cut is six (6) inches. Fencers may choose to accept a shorter cut as valid if they so choose.
- g) Constant pressure must be transmitted to the opponent with the edge of the blade for the draw cut to be valid.
- h) A valid thrust is not negated or lessened due to sliding off after solid contact with the tip of the blade.

2) Valid Blows

- a) Valid blows consist of either a thrust or a draw cut.
- b) A valid blow to the:
 - head
 - neck
 - torso
 - inner groin (to the fighter's hand width down the inner limb)
 - armpit (to the fighter's hand width down the inner limb)
 - shall be judged incapacitating, rendering the fighter incapable of further combat.
- c) A good blow to the arm (down to and including the wrist) will disable the arm. A good blow to the hand will render the hand useless. The arm above a disabled hand may still be used to parry.
- d) A good blow to the leg will disable the leg. The opponent must then fight either sitting or kneeling ("kneeling" being defined as at least one knee on the ground).
- e) If an effective blow is thrown before, or at, the same moment as an event that would stop a fight (a "HOLD" being called, the fighter being "killed" himself, etc.), the blow shall count. If the blow is thrown after the hold, killing blow, or other event, it shall not count.

D. Melee Combat

- 1) In melees, fighters are engaged with all opponents upon the call of "Lay On."
- 2) Fighters may strike any opponent with any legal blow if they are within the 180 degree arc of the opponent's front. "Front" shall be defined by the facing of the front of the opponent's mask. A fighter who approaches an opponent from behind shall not deliver a blow until he is within that frontal arc.

- 3) A fighter may never purposefully strike an opponent from behind. Doing so will result in immediate suspension from the current combat scenario, at minimum.
- 4) Fencers who deliberately ignore opponents behind them when not otherwise engaged, repeatedly maneuver to keep their backs to opponents, or purposefully twist away to keep an opponent out of their frontal arc are misusing the rules and guilty of obstructive behavior.
- 5) Fighters and marshals should make every effort to be aware of grounded or legged fighters on the field, so as to avoid collisions or falling over someone not in their immediate line of vision.
- 6) A fighter engaged with a line is considered engaged with the entire line and may be struck by any fighter in that line. If the line legally maneuvers itself behind a fighter, they are required to use Death From Behind rather than striking the fighter in the back.
- 7) Death From Behind (DFB) is the default standard for melee combat. It can be disallowed if announced by the MIC beforehand. A fighter performs DFB by laying the rapier blade over the opponent's shoulder, to at least a third of the blade length, while calling out "Dead, my lord," (or some other short, courteous phrase) in a loud, clear voice. Reaching around the neck is forbidden. The opponent will be deemed "killed" from the instant the blade touches his or her shoulder, and shall not attempt to spin, duck or dodge away.
- 8) When "Hold" is called in a melee, all fencers must check for immediate hazards, drop to their knees, point their weapons toward the ground, and remain so until told by the marshals to rise. Melee combatants may not regroup or make plans during a hold.
- 9) The Marshal in Charge may impose additional restrictions on melee combat, based on the needs of the scenario or conditions of the field. Such restrictions must be announced to the combatants prior to the start of the melee.

2. EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

2.1. General Standards

- 1) Sharp points, edges or corners are not allowed anywhere on any equipment.
- 2) All equipment must be able to safely withstand combat stresses.
- 3) Equipment that is likely to break a blade or damage other equipment is prohibited.

2.2. Weapons and Parrying Devices

A. Weapons

The default rapier blades in Northshield are those classified as “Heavy Type” rapiers. Northshield also allows “Fencing Type” blades under limited circumstances (see section 2.2.B below). A list of Heavy Type rapier blades, dagger blades and Fencing Type blades approved for use in Northshield are listed in Appendix 1 of this handbook.

B. Fencing Type Blades:

Fencing type rapier blades may NOT be used in tournaments or melees in Northshield, (with the exception of Youth Rapier tournaments and melees; see Section 8: Youth Rapier Combat). They are included here so fighters may practice and authorize with them for use at Out Of Kingdom (OOK) events. A rapier combatant must first be authorized in Single Rapier before they can practice with a fencing-type rapier or attempt an authorization in this style.

Any equipment that has small rigid openings large enough to admit a 3/8 “standard” plastic epee tip (e.g., small holes in bell guards, small openings in cage or swept hilts, any design which has acute angles where a blade could be easily wedged and bent) will not be used against fencing type blades. Knuckle bows ARE DEEMED SAFE for use with fencing type blades.

C. Prohibited Blades:

Foils, fiberglass blades and rattan blades are expressly prohibited for use in rapier combat in Northshield. Rigid steel “parrying-only” daggers, such as those made from cut down blades, will not be allowed. Flexidaggers will be prohibited in Northshield after January 1, 2006.

D. All blades are subject to the following:

- 1) Any blade in a given rapier class may be used against any other blade in that same class, but NOT against blades of the other class. Dagger blades may be used against either class of rapier blade.
- 2) Blades must first be approved for use by the Deputy Society Rapier Marshal. Blades must subsequently be approved by the Kingdom Rapier Marshal for use in rapier combat in the Kingdom of Northshield.
- 3) Rapier blades must be a minimum of 30.5 inches in length (measured from the ricasso/tang juncture, or the “shoulder” of the weapon, to the tip). This is the bottom end of documented adult rapier lengths in period.

Equipment Specifications

- 4) Blades must be free of pits, rust, and jagged edges likely to weaken the blade or snag on an opponent's armor or equipment.
 - a) Any blade with kinks, sharp bends, or cracks shall not be used. Blades that develop these defects cannot be repaired and must be retired.
 - b) Heavy rapiers with "S" curves must have the "S" removed/re-curved before being used in combat. This process can be repeated as necessary, and does not mean the blade should be failed.
 - c) Fencing type rapier blades or flexidaggers with permanent "S" curves must be retired.
 - d) If a fighter disagrees with the inspecting marshal's decision, two other marshals must inspect the blade in question in the presence of the first inspecting marshal. The majority opinion of the marshals shall prevail. The fighter may appeal this decision up the Marshallate chain of command, but may not use the failed blade while the appeal is in process.
- 5) Blades will not be altered by grinding, cutting, heating, hammering, or other actions that could significantly alter their temper, flexibility or durability. Normal combat stresses and blade care do not violate this rule. Exceptions are:
 - a) The tang of the weapon may be altered.
 - b) Heavier-type blades may be shortened so long as the blade continues to meet the flexibility standard outlined in Appendix 2 of these rules
- 6) All steel blades must be reasonably flexible (as defined in Appendix 2 of these rules).
- 7) Blade ends must be capped with commercial rubber or plastic tips (such as archery-style bird blunts and standard "practice" epee/foil tips).
 - a) Heavy rapiers and daggers with broad, 'schlager-type' blades must use tips at least ½ inch (12 mm) in diameter. A metal washer or a strip of four ounce leather (or the equivalent) must be placed between the tip of the blade and the inside of the rubber/plastic tip
 - b) Fencing type rapiers and flexidaggers may use tips measuring at least 3/8 inch (9mm) in diameter. They are not required to have additional materials between the tip of the blade and the rubber/plastic tip.
 - c) Tips must be firmly taped in place. The tip and the last inch of the blade shall be taped in a bright color that contrasts with both the blade and the tip, so that the tips absence is readily apparent.
 - d) The striking portion of the tip shall not be covered by tape, so that it may be examined for excessive wear. Note: leather "tip covers" and "tip bags" are allowed to present a more period look, but must be removable to allow for inspection of the rubber/plastic tip beneath.
- 8) Weapons may use a hand guard such as a cup hilt, swept hilt or quillons and knuckle bow. Quillons must be blunt.
- 9) Orthopedic (or "Pistol") grips will not be used unless the fighter has approval for medical reasons, supported by documentation from their health care provider.

E. Parrying Devices

- 1) Rigid parrying devices will be made of sturdy, lightweight materials resistant to breakage and splintering.

- a) Scabbards/Batons:
 - Scabbards/batons must be made of lightweight, break-resistant materials. Possible materials include wood, PVC pipe, or the equivalent. If PVC pipe is used, it must be covered with cloth, leather or tape to minimize the danger of jagged breaks.
 - The scabbard may be no more than one inch longer than the blade used in the primary hand, and must have at least a ¾ inch outside diameter. The end facing the opponent must be capped, closed or plugged. Scabbards must be wrapped in leather, tape, or the equivalent (i.e. – no bare PVC or metal tubing, etc.).
 - Batons may be of any length.
 - b) Bucklers:
 - Bucklers may not exceed 30 inches in overall diameter.
 - The edges of the buckler must be finished, so that there are no splinters, burrs or rough edges that could cut or snag an opponent's armor or equipment.
- 2) Non-Rigid Parrying Devices:
- Soft, non-rigid devices may be made of cloth, foam, leather or similar materials.
 - Non-rigid parry devices may be weighted with soft materials, such as rope or rolled cloth; they shall not be weighted down with any rigid materials (such as chains or fishing weights), or any materials heavy enough (such as sand or metal filings) to turn the device into a flail or impact weapon.
 - Devices that predictably cause entangling of an opponent or their equipment, either by design or repeated mishap, are not allowed.

F. Projectile Weapons

- 1) Throwing weapons and mock-gunnery gear, such as rubber band guns (RBGs) may only be used in rapier melee combat, as long as safety standards for those arts are met and the MIC approves the use of the weapons. RBG bullets penetrate bucklers and soft non-rigid parry devices in a straight line (e.g. they are not bullet-proof). Damage from projectile weapons will be resolved the same as for a thrust.
- 2) The use of projectile weapons is forbidden within formal rapier Tournament lists (single combat), or in any situation where spectators cannot be separated from the potential line of fire by more than the effective range of the projectile weapons to be used.
- 3) Marshals overseeing melees where projectile weapons are being used must wear protective eyewear. At a minimum, this eyewear must have shatter-resistant lenses and be worn whenever combat is underway.

2.3. Protective Equipment

A. General Coverage

No skin shall be bared. There shall be sufficient overlap between separate pieces of protective clothing so that, regardless of the fighter's stance or movements, the minimum protection for that body area will be preserved.

B. Definitions

- 1) Abrasion-Resistant Material: Material that will withstand normal combat stresses (such as being snagged by an unbroken blade) without tearing. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- broadcloth
- a single layer of heavy poplin cloth (35% cotton, 65% polyester; "trigger" cloth)
- sweat pants
- opaque cotton, poly-cotton, or Lycra/Spandex mix tights.

Nylon pantyhose and cotton gauze shirts are examples of unacceptable materials.

- 2) Puncture-Resistant Material: Any fabric or combination of fabrics that will predictably withstand puncture. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Four-ounce (2 mm) leather
- Four layers of heavy poplin cloth
- Ballistic nylon rated to at least 550 Newtons
- Commercial fencing clothing rated to at least 550 Newtons

Kevlar is not an acceptable material, as it degrades rapidly.

Material commercially rated to 550 Newtons or higher need only be tested at the marshal's discretion; all other materials must be tested the first time new gear is used. A swatch of fabric is NOT the same as testing the armor itself, even if constructed out of the same materials, and cannot be substituted for testing purposes.

- 3) Rigid Material: Puncture-resistant material that will not significantly flex, spread apart, or deform under pressure of 12 Kg applied by a standard mask tester, repeatedly to any single point. Examples of rigid material are:

- 22 gauge stainless steel (0.8mm)
- 20 gauge mild steel (1.0 mm)
- 16 gauge aluminum, copper or brass (1.6 mm)
- one layer of hard (stiff or boiled) leather (8 oz / 4 mm)

C. Head and Neck

- 1) The front and top of the head must be covered by rigid material to below the jaw line and behind the ears. Standard 12-kg fencing masks are known to meet this standard. If built to this standard, fencing helms are also acceptable.
- 2) The face must be covered by either 12 kilogram mesh (e.g. - a standard fencing mask) or perforated metal. Such metal must not have holes larger than 1/8" (3 mm) in diameter, with a minimum offset of 3/16" (5 mm) and shall also meet the definition of rigid material.
- 3) Masks and helms must be secured to the fighter so that they cannot be easily removed or dislodged during combat. The combination of snug fit and the spring-tongue in a conventional fencing mask is NOT sufficient, by itself, to secure the mask to the fighter. Some other device (such as, but not limited to, a factory installed Velcro or elastic strap, a lanyard around the neck and bib, an extra strap running across the back of the neck, or an external hood) must be used to secure the mask. However, if, in the judgment of the inspecting marshal, this is not sufficient to secure the mask (the Velcro or elastic is failing, the mask is loose and liable to be dislodged, etc.), an additional means of securing the mask will be required.

- 4) If a fighter's mask or helm becomes dislodged during combat, a HOLD must be called immediately. The fighter can re-secure the mask/helm, pending the approval and subsequent re-inspection by a marshal. If the helm/mask becomes dislodged again, the fighter must yield the bout and remove himself from all further combat until the mask/helm has been repaired to the satisfaction of the Marshal-In-Charge.
- 5) Both modern fencing masks and rapier helms, when inspected, shall comply with the rigid material standard, provisions on facial coverage, and shall show no evidence of impending failure (e.g. - rust which weakens the metal involved, dents or other defects which spread open mesh, broken weld points, etc). If there is concern about the face mesh of a modern fencing mask, it should be tested using a standard commercial 12 kg mask punch. Marshals doing the testing shall be trained in the use of the punch. The Kingdom Rapier Marshal will designate which marshals can administer such testing and train others in the use of a mask punch.
- 6) The rest of the head and neck must be covered by at least puncture resistant material. This material must provide sufficient overlap so as to prevent excessive displacement of the material during combat. Coverage may be achieved by having the puncture resistant material either under the mask (as in a hood worn on the head), or over the mask (as with a "drape" attached to the mask).
- 7) Throat protection is required. It shall consist of rigid material, as noted above, covering the entire front of the throat (including the larynx and the carotid arteries) down to the jugular notch at the top of the sternum, and shall be backed by either puncture resistant material (such as a hood), ¼ inch (6 mm) of open-cell foam, or their equivalents. The cervical vertebrae (from the top of the spine to the base of the neck) shall also be protected by rigid material, provided by some combination of gorget, helm, and/or hood insert. These areas must stay covered during normal combat situations (turning the head, lifting the chin, etc.), and must provide coverage against attacks from obtuse angles (attacks from the side, etc.).

D. Torso and other killing zones

- 1) The entire torso (the chest, back, abdomen, groin, and sides up to and including the armpits) must be covered with puncture-resistant material.
- 2) Acceptable minimum armpit coverage is provided by a triangle extending from the armpit seam, down the inner/under arm, one-third the distance to the fighter's elbow. This coverage must be maintained no matter what the fighter's stance or arm position.
- 3) Male fighters shall wear rigid groin protection. Any ventilation holes large enough to admit a broken blade must be covered from the outside with at least puncture-resistant material.

E. Arms and Legs

- 1) Hands shall be protected by gloves made of abrasion resistant material that overlap any sleeve openings. Feet shall be protected by boots, shoes or sandals, comprised of at least abrasion resistant material.
- 2) Abrasion-resistant material is required on arms (save as noted above for armpits), legs, and any area not otherwise mentioned in these rules.

F. Periodic Testing of Protective Gear

- 1) All protective gear required by the rules to be constructed out of puncture-resistant material must be tested by a warranted rapier marshal prior to its first use in a tournament, melee, demo or practice. A swatch of identical fabric is not an acceptable substitute when testing armor. Should a piece of armor be significantly altered (such as, but not limited to, adding or removing layers, patching tears/holes, etc.), it is the responsibility of the fencer to have the armor re-tested by a warranted rapier marshal.
- 2) All protective gear mandated to be puncture-resistant must be formally tested once every two years. All face protection must be formally tested once every two years. The testing marshal(s) will initial and date the fighter's authorization card to indicate when testing was performed on each item. In the case of fighters who have multiple sets of protective gear, it is incumbent on the fighter's honor to make sure each additional set has been tested in the last two years.
- 3) Fighters who cannot show proof that their protective gear has been tested in the last two years will not be allowed to take part in rapier combat in Northshield until proof is provided, or the protective gear has been tested.
- 4) ANY protective gear may be tested at the discretion of the inspecting marshal if there is concern that the gear may have lost its protective ability due to age, wear, or other factors.
- 5) See Appendix 3 for procedures for testing protective equipment.

3. AUTHORIZATIONS

Participation in SCA rapier combat is a privilege, not a right. All candidates for authorization will be held to the appropriate standards outlined in these rules.

3.1. General Requirements

- 1) Competence in other SCA combat styles does not automatically mean competence in rapier. Separate warrants and authorizations in rapier combat are required.
- 2) All combatants must authorize first in Single Rapier. Heavy Rapier-type blades are the default rapier blade of the Kingdom of Northshield, and must be used for a Single Rapier authorization.
- 3) Candidates for authorization must show proof of membership in the SCA, Inc. Non-members of the SCA cannot authorize for rapier combat in the Kingdom of Northshield.
- 4) Rapier authorizations are valid for a period of four years.
- 5) Participants must be 18 years of age or older to authorize for rapier combat in Northshield. The minimum age for training in rapier combat is 14. All rules regarding minor participation in combat must be observed for combatants under the age of 18 (see Section 6 of these rules).

3.2. Combat Authorization

- 1) All combatants must demonstrate appropriate safety and familiarity with the weapon or weapons forms they are attempting for authorization.
- 2) Authorizations will be performed by two warranted Rapier Marshals, one of whom must be from a different home group than the authorizee and preferably not familiar with the candidate's fighting. All examiners (including the authorization partner) must agree on the safety and acceptability of a candidate for the authorization to be issued.
- 3) Authorizations may be held at any official SCA event, demo or practice.
- 4) There are four rapier styles a fighter may authorize in:
 - Single Rapier (SR)
 - Defensive Secondary (DS): rigid parry, non-rigid parry
 - Offensive Secondary (OS): rapier and dagger, two rapiers (case of rapier)
 - Epee (EP)

B. Authorization Requirements

1) Single Rapier (SR)

Single Rapier is the default primary rapier authorization form in Northshield. As such, it is the "doorway" to the rapier field and rapier combat in general, and the most important authorization a rapier combatant will undertake. Authorization candidates will be held to high standards of safety to ensure they are neither a hazard to themselves nor others on

Authorizations

the field of combat, and that they are familiar with the basic tenets fundamental to safe rapier play. Authorization candidates will be expected to display:

- a) Understanding of the rules for rapier combat in Northshield, for both tournaments and melees.
- b) The ability to check their own weapons and armor for defects.
- c) Proper movement and an understanding of range and distance.
- d) The ability to safely execute various attacks and defenses, as well as acceptable blow calibration and the ability call blows.
- e) Ability to maintain control when pressed.
- f) Fight from the ground, and engage opponents on the ground.
- g) Properly use, and react to, blade grasping.
- h) Ability to parry with the off hand.
- i) Demonstrate basic melee concepts (such as Death From Behind, etc.)
- j) Understanding of when, and how, to seek out assistance when resolving a dispute on the field.

The above list is NOT all-inclusive. Rapier combatants are encouraged to read the authorization section of the Rapier Marshal's Handbook and/or seek out a rapier marshal or senior rapier fighter to help them prepare for their authorization.

Any fighter who fails their authorization may undertake additional training and apply for authorization at a later date. Candidates who pass are duly authorized rapier combatants and may compete in official rapier lists, melees and demos in the Kingdom of Northshield. Once a fencer has successfully completed their Single Rapier authorization, they may attempt the advanced authorizations in any order.

Successful authorization candidates must send a copy of their authorization paperwork (and, in the case of initial authorizations, their completed Combat Waiver and a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope) to the Northshield Clerk of the Roster. Authorization cards will not be issued to new fighters unless a signed Combat Waiver and SASE is included with the authorization paperwork.

2) **Defensive Secondary (DS)**

Defensive Secondary includes both rigid and non-rigid parrying devices. Candidates must show competence with both weapon forms to receive this authorization.

- a) Display competent and safe use of each: buckler, baton/scabbard, and non-rigid parry.
- b) Candidate will demonstrate knowledge of the rules pertaining to these devices.

3) **Offensive Secondary (OS)**

Offensive Secondary includes rapier and dagger and case of rapier. Candidates must show competence with both weapon forms to receive this authorization.

- a) Active and coordinated use of the weapons must be displayed for both offensive and defensive uses.
- b) Proper calibration must be demonstrated and maintained throughout the authorization.
- c) Candidate will demonstrate knowledge of the rules pertaining to these devices.

4) **Epee (EP)**

Epee authorizations are primarily for those fighters who are either a) planning to travel and fight Out of Kingdom (OOK), to ensure they are familiar and safe with the weapon form; or b) to spar with youth rapier fighters as a Youth Rapier Marshal. Rapier fighters cannot practice with or attempt an epee authorization until they have successfully passed

the Single Rapier authorization. Epee authorizations are run very similar to the Single Rapier authorization. Once a person is authorized in epee, they can use any authorized secondary in conjunction with the weapon, so long as the secondary meets the specific requirements listed under the Fencing Type Blades section of these rules. (**Youth rapier fighters** are exempt from having to authorize in heavy rapier before attempting an epee authorization. See Section 8 of these rules for more information.)

4. MARSHALLING RAPIER

The following is a brief overview of the concerns and duties of the Rapier Marshallate in Northshield, as well as a summary of rapier fighter's rights and options when dealing with the Marshallate. More detailed information can be found in the Kingdom of Northshield Marshal's Administration Handbook.

4.1. General Rules

During any organized rapier combat, there must be at least one marshal on the field at all times, termed the Presiding Marshal. This marshal cannot be engaged in combat while acting as **Presiding Marshal**. The only exception to this rule is in the case of practices, where there need not be a Presiding Marshal (though there must be a warranted marshal present in some form). For melees, there must be a reasonable number of marshals present to allow for proper observation of the field at all times.

4.2. Marshallate Organization

Below is a list of the Kingdom Rapier Marshallate, organized from the "top" down. More detailed information on the Marshallate's organization can be found in the "Kingdom of Northshield Marshal's Administration Handbook."

- a) Crown of Northshield
- b) Kingdom Earl Marshal (KEM)
- c) Kingdom Rapier Marshal (KRM)
- d) Regional Rapier Marshal (RRM) / Kingdom Youth Rapier Marshal (KYRM)
- e) Group Rapier Marshal (GRM) / Rapier Marshal in Charge of an event (MIC)
- f) Rapier Marshal of the Field (MOF) / Youth Rapier Marshal (YRM)
- g) Group Rapier Marshal in Training (GRMiT)
- h) Rapier Marshals in Training (MiT) / Minor Rapier Marshal (MRM)
- i) Constable of the Field

Combatants are urged to familiarize themselves with the duties, authority and responsibilities of the various marshals.

4.3. Disciplinary Procedures

More detailed information on disciplinary procedures and the appeals process can be found in the Kingdom of Northshield Marshal's Administration Handbook.

A. **Combatants**

- 1) Marshals of the Field must caution any fighter whose conduct is deemed unsafe. Unsafe conduct includes, but is not limited to: striking with excessive force; slashing with the blade; consistently ignoring touches; deliberately misusing the rules to gain an advantage (such as intentionally falling or calling "Hold" when pressed); purposefully trapping offensive or defensive equipment against the body; or attacking in an uncontrolled or unsafe manner.

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- a) A formal warning may be issued by a marshal for either repeated violations of the rules or blatantly unsafe conduct. All formal warnings must be reported to the Marshal in Charge at the time of issuance.
- 2) The Rapier Marshal in Charge will, at the least, remove any combatant from the list if they receive a second formal warning. The Marshal in Charge may also, at their discretion, suspend the authorization of any rapier combatant for the duration of the event.
- 3) The Rapier Marshal in Charge will report any suspension, in writing, to the Kingdom Rapier Marshal, the Kingdom Earl Marshal, and the Crown, within one week of the suspension.
- 4) The Rapier Marshal in Charge may bar a fighter from the field if they believe the fighter poses a real and reasonable risk to themselves or others.
- 5) The Rapier Marshal in Charge may, but is not required to, remove a combatant from the rapier field for the remainder of the event for any of the following reasons (this list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive):
 - a) The rapier fighter has committed an infraction the MIC feels is of sufficient gravity to warrant immediate removal from the list.
 - b) The rapier fighter refuses to obey the legal commands of the marshals overseeing the combat.
 - c) The rapier fighter delivered a blow of such force that their opponent was forced to stop combat or physically retreat from the field.
- 6) Any combatant may file a written complaint about the conduct of another combatant, or rapier marshal, with the Kingdom Rapier Marshal. All written complaints received by the KRM will be investigated, and appropriate action will taken, *as deemed necessary by the KRM*, based on the severity of the issue(s). If multiple complaints against a person are filed, either from different sources or about separate issues/instances, the KRM will notify the KEM of the situation and all actions taken to rectify it to date.
- 7) Written complaints will remain on file for one year. After that time, the complaint becomes void. The KRM may indefinitely extend the “life” of a complaint if it is felt the issue is either unresolved, chronically recurring, or of a severity that merits further observation.
- 8) Any marshal who knowingly allows a rapier fighter to engage in combat with any equipment that does not pass safety standards will have their warrant suspended for a minimum of one year. Application to re-warrant after the suspension has ended must be presented to the Crown and KEM through the KRM.
- 9) Any marshal who has their authorization suspended will have their marshal’s warrant suspended as well.
- 10) Any marshal who knowingly ignores or condones illegal and unsafe practices on the rapier field will have their warrant suspended. Marshals who have had their warrant revoked cannot reapply for marshal status for two years. Application to re-warrant after the suspension has ended must be presented to the Crown and KEM through the KRM.

B. Appeals

- 1) All marshallate decisions regarding removal from the field, suspensions and the revoking of authorizations can be appealed.
 - a) Appeals regarding a fighter being barred or removed from the field shall be directed first to the Rapier Marshal in Charge, then to the Regional Rapier Marshal, then to the Kingdom Rapier Marshal.
 - b) Appeals dealing with the suspension or revoking of an authorization shall be filed directly with the KRM.
 - c) Appeals beyond the KRM will follow the established mechanisms described in the Kingdom of Northshield Marshal's Administration Handbook and by the SCA, Inc.
- 2) Appeals against rulings shall be taken to the next higher authority whenever possible.
- 3) Appeals must be lodged within one week of the decision that is being appealed. Appeals to a higher authority must be lodged in writing (letter, e-mail or fax).

5. EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT

All proposed experimentation with new weapons and/or techniques in the Kingdom of Northshield must first be approved by the Kingdom Rapier Marshal. Experimenters must submit a plan, including: details about the weapon/technique, construction guidelines (if applicable), proposed methods for the use of the weapon/technique, documentation on the weapon/technique as used in period (if applicable), and a sample of the device or weapon (if applicable). If the Kingdom Rapier Marshal supports the experiment, it will be submitted to the Kingdom Earl Marshal for approval. The experiment will be monitored and supervised by the KRM, or any representative he/she so delegates for the task. All experimentation is subject to the procedures as specified in the SCA Corporate Rapier Rules.

- 1) Experimental equipment can be used at official SCA practices, tournaments and melees. However, experimental equipment cannot be used at SCA demos.
- 2) Any combatant may refuse to face an experimental weapon/technique without forfeiting the bout.
- 3) In a melee, all combatants must consent to the use of the weapon/technique prior to the beginning of combat.
- 4) The Rapier Marshal in Charge must approve the experimental weapon/technique for use at every event. This approval can be withdrawn at any time.

At the conclusion of the experiment, the Kingdom Rapier Marshal will make a final recommendation to the Kingdom Earl Marshal regarding the status of the weapon/technique.

New blade types may be approved by the KRM at his or her discretion, after they have first been passed the Deputy Society Rapier Marshal, and approved for use in Northshield by the KEM and the Crown.

6. YOUTH RAPIER COMBAT

Except for the important differences listed below, youth rapier combat follows the exact same rules and standards set forth in the Kingdom of Northshield Rules for Rapier Combat. All youth rapier combat competitions will be minor versus minor.

6.1. Minor Participation & Parental Consent

Minors can authorize and participate in youth rapier combat in Northshield at 14 years of age. Minors may also begin the Minor Rapier Marshal program at age 14. At age 18, all youth authorizations and warrants will automatically transfer to adult status.

No minor may participate in any martial activity, including demos and practices, without parental approval. The combatant must have a signed and dated waiver from their parent or legal guardian. If the parent or legal guardian is not at the tournament/melee field, then the combatant must have a "permission to treat" slip that authorizes someone on site to offer treatment.

A. Parental/Guardian's Responsibilities

- 1) Parents/Guardians are to understand:
 - a) This is a contact sport, and that injuries or death may occur.
 - b) That the Parents/Guardian should behave in a courteous and responsible manner at all times.
 - c) The Parents/Guardians are responsible for their minor's safety, with the Youth Rapier Marshal guiding the armoring/safety process.
 - d) They are required to read and understand the rules and standards for rapier combat in Northshield, and make sure their minor has read and follows them.

6.2. Weapon Specifications

Youth rapier is broken up into two age brackets for the purpose of weapon usage. These brackets do not effect combat or tournament pairings, and are used solely to make distinctions for training purposes.

The **Leon Paul "stamped" epee** is the default rapier blade for tournament and melee combat in youth rapier in Northshield. As such, youth rapier is the sole exception to the rule that disallows fencing-type blades to be used in tournaments, melee and demos in Northshield, provided the proper blade is used. No other type of epee blade, other than the Leon Paul "stamped" epee, can be used for purposes of youth training or youth combat in Northshield.

A. Youth Epee Bracket

- 1) Youth rapier fighters 14 and 15 years of age fall into this bracket, and can only use the Leon Paul "stamped" epee for their rapiers. Youth epees must 1) have quillons, and 2) be balanced between 0 and 1 ½ inches in front of the guard. This is to better simulate the movement and balance of a heavy rapier, which the youth epee fighters are ideally working towards. Purely modern guards (such Olympic-style epee, foil, or saber guards) do not meet these criteria, and are thus not allowed on youth epees.

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- 2) In certain instances, fighters in the youth epee bracket may attempt a heavy rapier authorization. Such fighters must have written parental consent, the support of their local Youth Rapier Marshal, and pass a rigorous special authorization. This authorization will focus on the use of proper technique and control with a heavy rapier by the combatant, as well as safety with the weapon.
- 3) Youth rapier fighters may use any legal dagger, rigid parry, and non-rigid parry device allowed by the rules.

B. Transitional Bracket

- 1) Youth rapier fighters who are 16 and 17 years old are in the transitional bracket, and may begin to practice with heavy rapier blades. Since heavy rapiers are balanced and perform differently than fencing-type blades, transitional fighters are urged to get used to them gradually over time. This will not only ensure they are familiar and safe with the heavier blades, but also that they do not potentially strain or injure themselves due to the changes in blade types, weapon balance, and so on.
- 2) Fighters in the Transitional Bracket can use heavy rapiers in youth rapier tournaments as long as both combatants are authorized in the weapon style and it is acceptable to the marshals.
- 3) Heavy rapier blades cannot be used in youth rapier melees.

6.3. Training and Sparring

- 1) Youth Rapier Marshals and the parent/guardian of the minor can train youth rapier fighters in full speed or near full speed sparring at any time. Additionally, the Youth Rapier Marshal in Charge at an event (or a practice) can designate any authorized rapier fighter they deem sufficiently safe as able to fence with youth rapier combatants. Such designations do not extend beyond the individual event or practice, and can be withdrawn by the YRMIC at any time.
- 2) There must be at least one Youth Rapier Marshal present at all youth rapier practices and tournaments.
- 3) All combatants must use the same class blade (youth epee vs. youth epee and heavy rapier vs. heavy rapier) when sparring or training in youth rapier.

6.4. Authorizations

- 1) Youth rapier authorizations are run exactly like adult authorizations, save that a youth rapier fighter's first authorization must be in epee (EP), using the Leon Paul "stamped" epee only. After that, the fighters can authorize in either Defensive or Offensive Secondary (DS or OS) when they feel ready. Fighters in the Youth Epee bracket may also opt to attempt a heavy rapier authorization, as detailed under 6.2.A.2 above.

- 2) Fighters in the Transitional Bracket can get a separate authorization in heavy rapier (SR) after they are comfortable with the weapon style. Youth rapier fighters with SR authorizations can use heavy rapiers in tournament competition

6.5. Marshalling Youth Rapier

More detailed information on youth rapier marshalling can be found in the Kingdom of Northshield Marshal's Administration Handbook.

7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix 1: Allowed Rapier and Dagger Blades

The following classes of blade are allowed for use in Northshield:

- 1) "Heavy Type" Rapiers:
 - Oval bladed schlagers
 - Diamond bladed schlagers
 - Del Tin Practice Rapiers
 - Del Tin Bated Rapiers
 - T03 Triplette Rapier blades
 - Darkwood Armory Practice Rapiers
 - Darkwood Armory Bated Rapier
 - Zamorano Rapiers
 - Hanwei Practical Rapiers (those with buttons on the end)
 - Angus Trim rapier blades (AT 1691)
- 2) Dagger Blades:
 - Flexidaggers (to January 1, 2006)
 - Scottie daggers
 - SafeFlex Mark II daggers
 - Triplette T05 dagger
 - Darkwood "Diamond-flex" daggers
 - Darkwood "Wide-flex" daggers
- 3) "Fencing Type" Blades:
 - Epees
 - Doublewide epees
- 4) Youth Epee blades:
 - Leon Paul "stamped" epee

7.2. Appendix 2: Blade Flexibility Testing

Marshals having any doubt concerning the flexibility of a given blade are strongly urged to test the blade. An acceptable field test for flexibility is:

Hold weapon parallel to the ground, supporting handle against table or bench if necessary. Hang a 3-ounce weight (85 grams) just behind the tip. If the blade of a dagger (out to 18" blade length) flexes visibly (more than 1/4 inch <6 mm>), the blade is sufficiently flexible. For a rapier blade (greater than 18"), the flex must be 1/2 inch (12 mm).

A weapon that does not pass the above test cannot be used for rapier combat in the Kingdom of Northshield. As with any failed weapon, the owner may appeal the results as described in section 4.2.1 of these rules.

7.3. Appendix 3: Fabric Testing for Protective Gear

A. Drop Test

The “drop tester” is the standard default testing device for Puncture Resistant material in the Kingdom of Northshield. Acceptable drop test devices deliver a force, on dropping, of 1.5 joules to the fabric sample via a dull, flat 5/32” (4 mm) metal rod. As a general example, this rod can be mounted on a 1.0 kg (2.2 lbs) solid weight and dropped down a guide tube from 15.3 cm (6 inches) onto the fabric sample. The sample must be held firmly over a 3” diameter externally threaded frame by clamps when the drop test is applied. All armor to be tested must have the outside of the armor facing “up”, so that the 5/32” rod encounters the outside of the armor first. More specifically, the drop tester **MUST** be constructed and used as described in the instructions found in the Rapier Marshal’s Supplement to the Kingdom of Northshield Marshal’s Administration Handbook.

If the gear to be tested is made of a single layer, it fails if penetrated by the dull flat 5/32” metal rod. If the protective gear is made of multiple layers of material, no more than the top layer may be penetrated when tested; if more than one layer is penetrated, the gear fails. If the marshal performing the test has reason to believe that the sample has been constructed in such a way to thwart the drop test without providing adequate protection (such as with a combination of stretching and non-stretching fabrics) the marshal should repeat the drop test but turn the sample so the back side is facing up on the threaded flange.

The Newton standard used by commercial suppliers of modern fencing gear does not correlate precisely to this standard. However, commercial fencing gear/fabric, in testing, has been found to consistently resist penetration by the same test, as used on 4 layers heavy poplin cloth, at a rating of 550 Newtons. Consequently, commercial gear/fabric which has been rated by a testing laboratory to 550 N is considered acceptable. Documentation must be available at the time of inspection. In addition, since fabric can degrade over time, any fabric rater at 550 N or greater **MUST** be tested after its first two years of use, as per normal puncture resistant gear.

B. Four Thrust Test

While the Drop Tester is the default testing method for Puncture Resistant material in the Kingdom of Northshield, there may be times when a piece of armor needs to be tested and a drop tester is not available. In such instances, marshals can use the Four Thrust Test to field test the armor. However, the fighter must get the armor re-tested with a drop tester at the next available opportunity (unless it failed the Four Thrust Test, in which case, it stays failed).

To perform the Four Thrust test, the marshal will need a foil blade of at least 24 inches in length, with a flat break at the end (“flat break” means there are no jagged points). To perform the test, lay the material to be tested on a penetrable surface, such as the ground or a thick block of Ethyl foam (not hard packed dirt, concrete, or foam with a thin cross-section, such as a folded camping mat). If any area of the material shows more wear or weakness than the rest, that is the section that should be tested. Holding the broken blade in both hands near the handle/tang (do not grasp or guide the blade itself – this prevents the blade from flexing and can cause a false failure), punch the material four times in approximately the same location, increasing the force each time. Examine the material after each punch. If it has been completely penetrated, or seriously damaged, it fails. If there is no damage, or if only the top layer has been damaged, the protective gear passes.