

FOTS 19 Ruleset

Match structure:

1. Each match will run for five (5) exchanges.
2. Each exchange will continue until halt is called by the referee.
3. The referee will call halt if:
 - a. A decisive blow is landed, where:
 - i. A “decisive blow” will be considered something which if delivered with a sword could reasonably be expected to be fight ending; or
 - b. A natural break in the fencing occurs after one or more significant blows is/are landed where:
 - i. A “natural break” includes spatial separation or a pause in the fencing, either due to inaction by a fencer or because a fencer is impeded from further fencing actions; and
 - ii. A “significant blow” will be considered something which if delivered with a sword could reasonably be expected to cause significant impairment to the fencer.
 - c. A natural break in the fencing occurs after an extended exchange of blows where no decisive or significant blows are landed;
 - d. The referee is satisfied that the exchange cannot progress meaningfully. This can include, but is not limited to:
 - i. One or both fencers have become disarmed;
 - ii. The exchange has proceeded to grappling; or
 - iii. The fencers are trading blows.
 - e. Neither fencer is willing to initiate meaningful attacks at the other for an extended period. Before halting the exchange for this reason, the referee must:
 - i. Warn the fencers that they are considering halting the exchange for inaction; and
 - ii. Provide the fencers with an opportunity to commence an unhurried attack following that warning.
 - f. A fencer has stepped outside the bounds of the ring. If a significant blow has landed before a fencer steps outside the ring, this is considered a “natural break”. If no blows have been landed, the referee may caution the fencer, and replay the exchange; or
 - g. The referee is concerned for the safety of one or both fencers.
4. To be explicit, the referee may continue the exchange if in their opinion a landed blow is glancing or unintentional, where:
 - a. A blow will be considered glancing if it has poor edge alignment or is a cut or slice with the point of the sword (as opposed to a thrust); where
 - b. The point of the sword will be considered (and marked) as the final two inches of the sword blade; and
 - c. A blow will be considered unintentional if it is not the result of a deliberate fencing action (eg: waving the sword around).
5. At the end of each exchange, the referee will consult with the line judges to determine which of the fencers “won” the exchange, noting:
 - a. The referee will determine which judge(s) had the best position to view any blow(s) in the exchange; and

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- b. Final determination will be made by the referee, but only after considering all relevant judge's viewpoints.
6. In determining who "won" the exchange, the referee and judges will consider:
 - a. In the case of a decisive blow, who landed that blow;
 - b. If any significant blow(s) were landed and who landed that/those blows;
 - c. In the absence of either a decisive blow or any significant blows, which fencer, if either, defended more effectively.
7. In the case of a clear advantage to one fencer over the other, one (1) point will be awarded to the fencer as the winner of that exchange and zero (0) points to their opponent.
8. In the case where there was no clear advantage to one fencer over the other, zero (0) points will be awarded to both fencers.
9. To be explicit, in the situation where both fencers land significant and/or decisive blows, both fencers will be awarded a score of zero (0) points, unless:
 - a. The referee and judges determine that one fencer has deliberately or recklessly ignored a present attack of their opponent to attempt to strike their opponent; in which case, a score of zero (0) points will be awarded to that fencer and one (1) point will be awarded to the opponent.
10. In circumstances where the referee believes that an exchange has ended prematurely, without any significant or decisive blows being landed, they may recommence the exchange without a score being awarded. Examples of this might include a ring out or grappling prior to the determination of an extended exchange.
11. If the referee determines that a fencer is intentionally attempting to prematurely end exchange(s) to deny their opponent legitimate opportunity to score, a score of zero (0) points will be awarded to that fencer and one (1) point will be awarded to the opponent for that exchange. This includes attempts to "flee" the boundaries of the ring without engaging with the opponent.
12. If the referee believes that a halt was called prematurely, they may replay the exchange in its entirety.
13. At the completion of 5 exchanges, the fencer with the higher total number of points will be awarded the match.

Weapon Specific Rules:

14. For Longsword, Sword and Buckler and Sabre/Backsword, a decisive blow will be considered:
 - a. A cut or thrust to the head/neck area; or
 - b. A thrust to the torso.
15. For Rapier and Smallsword, a decisive blow will be considered:
 - a. A thrust to the head/neck area or torso.
16. Significant blows will be all cuts, thrusts and slices that are not decisive blows, except for Smallsword where all cuts and slices will be considered glancing and/or unintentional and not scored.

Safety Expectations:

17. All fencers are expected to demonstrate restraint and control at all times during the tournament. In particular:
 - a. Fencers are expected to fence without excessive intensity; as detailed below.
 - b. With respect to grappling:
 - i. Control of arms/sword is permitted but joint locks are not permitted;

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- ii. Grappling at the body is permitted but will result in the end of the exchange;
 - iii. Rushing/Tackling an opponent is not permitted.
 - iv. Takedowns are not permitted.
18. Fencers are expected to attend the safety briefing prior to competing; failure to do so will result in removal from the tournament.
19. Fencers are expected to be wearing all required safety equipment when competing; required safety equipment is detailed below.
20. Fencers are expected to present their safety equipment for checking prior to competing; failure to do so will result in removal from the tournament.

Behavioural Expectations:

21. Fencers will follow all directions from the referee directing their match.
22. Fencers will demonstrate respect to all other participants during the match.
23. Fencers will only communicate with the referee and one (1) coach during each match.
24. For clarity, fencers will not talk with the line judges.
25. Other participants will not talk to the line judges or the referee.
26. If any participant or spectator talks to the scorekeeper, line judges or referee on a fencer's behalf, the referee will be advised, and may award a penalty to the fencer.
27. Fencers may withdraw from a match at any point, so long as they do so with decorum and respect; however, a forfeit will be recorded for that match (ie: the match will be recorded as a loss with zero (0) points for that fencer and five (5) points for their opponent)

Penalties:

28. For clarity, in this section a "fencing action" has the meaning of any attack (cut, thrust or slice), parry or counterattack performed by a fencer, whether at their opponent or otherwise.
29. A fencer will incur a penalty if they commit an offense. Offenses include, but are not limited to:
- a. Continuing to fence after 'Halt' has been called;
 - b. Performing any prohibited action during the course of a bout, as detailed below;
 - c. Fencing with excessive intensity, as detailed below;
 - d. Failure to be present and ready in a timely manner at the beginning of a bout;
 - e. Failure to be present and ready in a timely manner when called upon to act as a judge;
 - f. Communicating with judges, scorekeepers, or any other tournament official other than the referee during a bout;
 - g. Failure to follow the instructions of the referee, or any other tournament official;
 - h. Dissenting with the decisions of the referee or any other tournament official on any matter, including but not limited to scoring, the results of an exchange or bout, and the awarding of penalties;
 - i. Failure to show due respect to an opponent, spectators, referees, judges, or any other tournament officials or attendees.
30. Any fencer who performs a prohibited action at any time during a bout will incur a penalty. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to:
- a. Striking or attempting to strike with the hands, feet, elbows, knees, head, or any other part of the body;

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- b. Striking or attempting to strike the back of the opponent's head or spine; indicated blows are permissible, as is incidental contact;
 - c. Striking or attempting to strike with the cross guard of the sword;
 - d. Striking with the pommel of the sword. Strikes with the pommel must be indicated only, and not carried out;
 - e. Any action which places both hands on the blade of one's own sword;
 - f. In the case of longsword, striking or attempting to strike with only one hand gripping the sword. An exception to this is if the other hand is occupied in controlling the weapon, arms, or hands of the opponent;
 - g. Throwing the sword or any other object;
 - h. Removing or attempting to remove any piece of either one's own or the opponent's safety equipment during an exchange. Unintentional loss of or failure otherwise of safety equipment is excepted;
 - i. Continuing to strike or attempting to strike an opponent's head multiple times after a blow to the head has landed in one exchange;
 - j. Attacking an opponent outside the ring, or physically forcing (ie: pushing etc.) an opponent outside the ring;
 - k. All takedown grapples and attempted takedown grapples;
 - l. Failure to follow referee directions with regards to staying within the boundaries of the ring;
 - m. Exposing the back of one's head or body to the opponent during the course of an exchange;
 - n. Any other action deemed unsafe or unsporting, at the discretion of the referee or other match officials.
31. Any fencer deemed to be fencing with excessive intensity at any time during a bout will incur a penalty. "Intensity" is considered to be a lack of control and consideration for the opponent; actions which are firm but controlled will not be considered breaches of intensity. Actions deemed to breach accepted levels of intensity include, but are not limited to:
- a. Striking with excessive force;
 - b. Fencing in a wild or uncontrolled manner;
 - c. Striking the ground with the sword during any fencing action;
 - d. Any fencing action in which both feet simultaneously leave the ground;
 - e. Failure to adequately consider the safety and wellbeing of other fencers, spectators, or tournament officials;
 - f. Any reckless or otherwise dangerous behaviour.
32. For a given offence, penalties will be awarded in one of four categories, as follows:
- a. Intensity, as detailed above;
 - b. Prohibited fencing action, as detailed above;
 - c. Dissent, for dissenting with the referee or other tournament officials; or
 - d. Conduct, for all other offences.
33. Sanctions for penalties are as follows:
- a. On the first occasion of a penalty within any category: the offending fencer or fencers will be warned by the referee and will forfeit the exchange (ie: a score of zero (0) will be awarded to that fencer or fencers for that exchange and a score of one (1) to the non-offending fencer);
 - b. On the second occasion of a penalty within any category:

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the offending fencer or fencers will forfeit the match (ie: the match will be recorded as a loss with zero (0) points for that fencer or fencers and five (5) for the non-offending fencer); and

- c. On the third occasion of a penalty within any category:
the offending fencer or fencers will be excluded from the tournament.

- 34. In a situation where a fencer has previously breached multiple offences, the referee may proceed immediately to a higher sanction.
- 35. In circumstances of egregious conduct, referees may proceed immediately to whatever sanction is appropriate for the conduct.

Required Equipment:

- 36. For Longsword, fencers will be required to use a feder or longsword:
 - a. no longer than 100cm in the blade; and
 - b. less than 1640g.
- 37. For Backsword/Sabre, fencers will be required to use a backsword or sabre:
 - a. No longer than 95cm in the blade; and
 - b. Between 800 and 1200g.
- 38. For Rapier, fencers will be required to use a rapier:
 - a. Between 95cm and 115cm in the blade; and
 - b. Between 950 and 1500g.
- 39. For Smallsword, fencers will be required to use a smallsword or foil:
 - a. No longer than 92cm in the blade; and
 - b. No more than 800g.
- 40. For Sword and Buckler, fencers will be required to use a sword:
 - a. No longer than 95cm in the blade; and
 - b. No more than 1200g; and a buckler
 - c. No more than 35cm in diameter; and
- 41. All weapons must have:
 - a. enough flex to satisfy the referees;
 - b. an appropriately blunted (rolled, spatulated or otherwise) tip, further covered with a leather or rubber stopper;
 - c. the two inches closest to the point taped; and
 - d. no burrs or sharp edges.
- 42. Fencers will be required to wear:
 - a. A fencing mask with appropriate back of head protection;
 - b. A gorget;
 - c. A protective padded fencing jacket;
 - d. For Longsword: Heavy fencing gloves (ie: SPES heavies, Konings, Sparring Gloves or equivalent);
 - e. For Backsword/Sabre, Rapier/Smallsword, Sword and Buckler: Appropriate hand protection provided jointly by weapon guards and fencing gloves
 - f. Rigid elbow and knee protection;
 - g. Shin protection;
 - h. For males, rigid groin protection; and
 - i. For females, chest protection.

However, fencers are encouraged to wear any further protective equipment that they would choose to.

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Judging/Referee guidelines:

43. Matches will be overseen by one (1) referee and two (2) to four (4) line judges.
44. The referee will oversee the conduct and safety of the exchange.
45. The line judges will look for blows against the fencers.
46. The referee has the responsibility for determining the end of the exchange.
47. During the exchange, if a line judge observes a significant blow on a fencer, they will raise a flag; if they observe significant blows on both fencers or a decisive blow on one or both fencers, they will raise both flags.
48. At the conclusion of the exchange, the referee will consult with all judges as to how they will award the exchange, with:
 - a. The referee determining which Judge(s) were in position to assess a relevant part of the exchange; and
 - b. Final determination being reserved for the referee;
49. If determination can be reached, the referee will announce that the exchange and one point have been awarded to the relevant fencer and state the updated match score.
50. If determination cannot be reached, the exchange will be awarded as inconclusive and the referee will announce that no points will be awarded for that exchange and restate the match score.
51. At the end of the fifth exchange, the referee will announce the winner of the match.

Preliminary/Pool structure:

52. Prior to the commencement of the tournament, fencers will be divided into pools of up to six (6) fencers.
53. Each fencer will fence each other fencer in their pool in a round robin format.
54. At the end of each match, a fencer's points will be added to their total points for the pool/tournament.
55. Fencers not competing in the current pool will act as line judges for the pool currently fencing.
56. At the completion of a pool, the fencers will be ranked according to:
 - a. Number of won matches; and in the case of equal wins
 - b. Total points; and in the case of equal points
 - c. The fencer with the higher number of points for the match(es) between the tied fencers; and if that is equal
 - d. A coin toss.

Finals Structure:

57. Finals will be in an elimination format with the winning fencer progressing and the loser being eliminated.
58. During finals rounds, fencers will fight additional exchanges after five (5) until a clear winner and loser for the match are revealed.
59. If at any point in a finals match there are five (5) exchanges which are non-scoring due to both fencers being hit, both fencers will be awarded a loss and neither will progress.
60. If because of the above, both fencers are awarded a loss in a medal match, both will be awarded the lesser of the two positions available for that match (ie: both second or both fourth).