

Riverbend Medieval Society (RMS)

Combat Safety Rules

Chapter 1

Classes of participants

Combatants

Combatants are people, who engage in combat with Melee weapons, they:

- a. Can be targeted by all types of weapons approved for use by RMS committee.
- b. Can use all types of weapons subject to appropriate authorisation.
- c. Have appropriate armour in good condition for the class of combat in which they are involved.
- d. Must be at least 18 years of age or at least 16 years of age with parental consent.

Junior members under the age of 16 may:

- a. Participate in weapon training with wasters only.
- b. May only participate in training under the direct supervision of an authorised weapon trainer.
- c. May not participate in any armoured training.

Marshals

Whilst classed as non-combatants, Marshals play an intricate role in the list field and for the conduct of combat. Marshals must:

- a. Have undergone marshal training and authorisation before under taking the marshal role.
- b. Have a solid understanding of weapons and armour standards as indicated in the RMS Combat Safety Rules.
- c. Have a solid understanding and an ability to apply the scoring points system of the RMS combat as contained within the RMS Combat Safety Rules.
- d. Have a solid understanding of the rules of engagement and the commands used during tournament combat within the RMS Combat Safety Rules.

Non-combatants

Non-combatants are people, such as marshals, Valets, Water bearers, Heralds and surgeons (first aiders) who provide a supporting role to combat or who are present on the field during combat without being part of the combat itself. They:

- a. Should be mindful of their surroundings while carrying out their duties to avoid inadvertent incidents (e.g: becoming entangled with combatants).
- b. Must obey the instructions of the marshals.
- c. Must not enter the list field unless combat has ended and helms off has been called by the marshal of the field.

- d. May not enter or remain on the field while combat is taking place.
- e. Must be at least 18 years of age or 16 years of age with parental consent.
- f. Must be at least 18 years of age to act as marshals.

Spectators

1. Anyone present in the general area where combat activities are taking place but not on the field at the time combat is taking place is deemed to be a spectator. They:
 - a. Must obey the instructions of the marshals.
 - b. Must not enter the list field. Unless combat has ended and they have been invited onto the list field.
 - c. May not enter or remain on the field while combat is taking place.

Classes of Combat

Tournament Single Combat

Single combat is a combat that begins with two combatants fighting as Individuals within the bounds of the list field⁽¹⁾.

- a. Explicit engagement between combatants is not required in tournament single combat bouts.
- b. Single combat is commenced by the marshals' call of "LAY ON"
- c. Only weapons authorised by the RMS may be used in single combat tournament.
- d. All single combat will be overseen by an authorised marshal.

Tournament Melee Combat

Melee combat is a combat that begins with two or more teams of combatants or three or more combatants fighting as Individuals.

- a. Combatants including the final pair must be engaged before they may strike at each other. A combatant shall engage their opponent by moving into the line of sight of the opponent they wish to engage and stating loudly "my Lord/Lady I am engaging you" or words to that effect and receive acknowledgement of such engagement.
- b. Only weapons authorised by the RMS committee may be used in Melee combat.
- c. Combatants should also be mindful of the level of armour their opponents are wearing, as their initial opponent may have a suitable level of armour, but their 2nd bout opponent may be in a different class that makes their weapon pairing inappropriate (e.g: 1st opponent is wearing encased plate armour against a poleaxe/footlance, and then the 2nd opponent is wearing light armour – kettlehelm and maille against the same weapon).
- d. Unless specifically forbidden by the terms of the tournament ad hoc teams may be formed and dissolved during the bout.
- e. Unless specifically forbidden by the terms of the tourney, engagement between groups of unequal numbers is allowed.
- f. During melee combat, no combatant may be engage from behind.
- g. All melee combat will be overseen by at least two authorised marshals.

- (1) The *lists*, or *list field*, was the arena where a jousting events were held. More precisely, it was the roped-off enclosure where tournament fighting took place.

Chapter 2

Combat Authorisation Requirements

General

1. All persons who wish to participate in combat related activities in the RMS must have an appropriate authorisation. Combat related activities include but are not limited to armoured combat.
2. To become authorised candidates must:
 - a. Demonstrate familiarity with and the ability to apply the following:
 - i. Rules of the list of the RMS
 - ii. The conventions of combat of the RMS.
 - iii. The use of weapons and shields.
 - iv. Target areas and acknowledgement of blows.
 - b. Demonstrate familiarity with an ability to reference the RMS Armour and Weapon standards.
 - c. Have a record of training which demonstrates attendance and participation in training with the desired authorisation.
 - d. Demonstrate the ability to function on the field in a manner that is safe, both to themselves and, to other participants on the field.
3. Within the field of armoured combat in RMS there are separate authorisations for the following armour classes and weapon forms:
 - a. Armour classes:
 - i. Heavy armour,
 - ii. Intermediate armour
 - iii. Medium armour, and
 - iv. Light armour.
 - b. Weapon form specific authorisations:
 - i. Longsword,
 - ii. Sword and Shield,
 - iii. Hand Axe,
 - iv. Dagger, and
 - v. Pole Weapons.

Chapter 3

Rules of the List

Introduction

The observance of Honour and chivalry and the safety of the combatants are considered overriding elements. The following is intended to bring together the appropriate rules for conducting all single tourney combat, Melee tourney combat and other RMS combat activities.

Rules of the List

1. Each combatant recognising the possibilities of physical injury to him/herself in such combat, shall assume unto him/herself all risks and liability for harm suffered by means of such combat. Other participants shall likewise recognise the risks involved in their presence on or near the field of combat and shall assume unto themselves the liabilities thereof.
2. Once the Marshal has entered the List no person shall enter without first requesting permission from the Marshal.
3. No combatant shall engage in combat unless and until he/she has inspected the field of combat and satisfied him herself that it is suitable for combat.
4. No person shall participate in combat related activities, outside of formal training sessions, unless he/she shall have been properly authorised under the RMS authorization procedures.
5. All combatants must be presented to and acceptable to the marshal or his/her representative prior to engaging in tourney combat.
6. All combatants shall adhere to the appropriate armour and weapon standards of the RMS and to any additional standards of the RMS imposed from time to time for specific events.
7. The marshal may bar any weapon or armour from use upon the field of combat. Should a rostered marshal bar any weapon or armour, an appeal may be made to the RMS Armoured Combat marshal to allow the Weapon or armour.
8. Combatants shall behave in a knightly and chivalrous manner and shall fight according to the appropriate RMS conventions of combat.
9. No one may be required to participate in combat related activities. Any combatant may without dishonour or penalty reject any challenge without specifying a reason. A fight in a tournament list is not to be considered a challenge and therefore may not be declined or rejected without forfeiting the bout.
10. No projectile weapon shall be allowed and no weapons shall be thrown within the list of a tournament.

Applications of the Rules of the List

Application of rule 1: All participants, including marshals and other support personnel whose activities bring them close to the fighting in a situation where boundaries are clearly or not clearly defined, must receive basic orientation in field safety and an acknowledgment of the overall boundaries of combat area prior to the commencement of combat.

Application of rule 4: The RMS shall establish standards and procedures for the authorization of fighters to participate in combat these procedures shall adhere to the combat authorisation

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procedures of the RMS handbook. At RMS option these procedures may involve either a general authorisation to participate in armoured combat or a set of separate authorization procedures for the use of (or for combat against) specific weapons or classes of weapons. The RMS may not simply grant an authorization unless the recipient has successfully completed the authorization process as delineated in the RMS authorization handbook.

Application of rule 7: If a fighter regards an opponent's weapon or armour as unduly dangerous to self or opponent he or she can request that the marshal on the field re-inspect the item. Either fighter has the option of appealing the decision of the re-inspecting marshal to the RMS Armoured Combat Marshall. All appeals are to occur afterward the combat as to not interrupt the performance at hand or for a discussion to be occurring in front of public. This point applies for all Marshal rulings – to be beyond question and obeyed without question on the field, and all challenges or appeals to be made afterwards and discussed at an appropriate debrief – on field discussions can sometimes be impacted by heightened emotions and an inability to see the complete picture and are better left to after when cooler heads can prevail.

Application of rule 8: Engagement in any RMS combat activity with the deliberate intent to inflict bodily harm to an opponent is strictly forbidden. Any Combatant found to be engaging in this will forfeit the bout and will leave the field. They may be subject to further disciplinary action as determined by the RMS committee.

Application of rule 9: No one is required to engage in RMS Combat should he or she prefers not to do so.

Application of rule 10: The prohibition on thrown weapons refers to weapons thrown in combat or thrown in a hostile manner. It does not apply to "tossing" defined as a gentle short range method of transferring or removing a tournament weapon or item from the list field. The use of bows and arrows, firearms, slings, javelins, thrown axes, throwing knives, or any projectile weapon is forbidden within the RMS lists or in any other situation where spectators cannot be separated from the potential line of fire by more than the effective range of the weapon.

Chapter 4

Conventions of Combat

General Information

1. All RMS combat related activities shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of the list, the conventions of combat, the weapons and equipment standards set out in these rules, and such event rules as are established by the RMS Armoured Combat marshal.
2. All combatants, prior to taking part in combat at each and every RMS sponsored event or fighting practise within the RMS, shall ensure that their armour and weapons are inspected by a rostered member of the RMS marshalate.
3. Even though a rostered member of the RMS marshalate has inspected their armour and weapons, all combatants must accept full responsibility for the condition of their own equipment. All combatants have the obligation to themselves their opponents and the marshals to ensure that their equipment meets all RMS standards and requirements.

Behaviour on the Field

1. Extend the utmost courtesy to your opponent. You do each other honour by meeting on the field. If there is a question regarding a point of honour (such as blow strength or position) give your opponent the benefit of the doubt (winning is not always the aim).
2. All combatants shall obey the commands of the marshals on the field or shall be removed from the field subject to disciplinary action. Disagreements with the marshals shall be resolved off the field through, in the first instance, consultation with the Armoured Combat Marshal and, if required may be escalated to the RMS committee.
3. Striking at an opponent with excessive force is forbidden and may result in disciplinary action. This rule applies to all RMS authorised weapons.
4. Combatants using two handed great weapons must exercise additional vigilance that they use appropriate restraint to avoid striking with excessive force as the nature of these weapons makes the inadvertent generation of excessive power more likely.
5. All participants shall maintain control over their temper at all times. Participants losing control of their tempers will be removed from the field and may be subject to disciplinary action.
6. No person shall enter the list or participate in any form of RMS combat related activity while in a mentally impaired state including impairment by injury such as concussion or impairment by alcohol or drugs included but not limited to:
 - a. Drugs prescribed by a registered healthcare provider
 - b. Over the counter medications
 - c. Illegal or controlled substances

If you are not legally fit to drive you are not fit to fight!

7. Any combatant who has an injury involving free flowing blood or concussion must leave the field immediately and may not return until approved to do so by medical staff.

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8. Any behaviour that takes deliberate advantage of an opponent's chivalry or safety consciousness or that takes deliberate unfair advantage is prohibited.
9. Intentional contact of a fighter's hands, feet, limbs, body, or head to an opponent's person is prohibited without prior agreement of the combatants and the marshals involved. Brief accidental contact is expected and accepted.
10. HMB style of combat should be limited, as that style of combat features sportified armour that is better equipped for that style of fighting. Grappling should be limited – though if allowed should be displaying technique and technical skills (wrestling and grappling are considered knight marital arts) rather than unformed and messy wrestling.
11. Deliberately striking an opponent with a shield or weapon haft, without prior agreement, on any part of the body is forbidden. Placing a shield or weapon haft against an opponent's weapon or person is not considered striking.
12. Intentionally tripping an opponent is strictly prohibited.
13. Grasping an opponent's person, shield, weapons blade or striking surface is prohibited without prior authorisation and training.
14. It is forbidden to trap the blade of an opponent's weapon in contact with your limbs or body as a means of preventing their use. However it is acceptable to grasp or trap the haft of an opponent's weapon.
15. The striking surface of a weapon in motion may not be grasped or blocked by hands or limbs as a means of impeding a blow. If a combatant intentionally places an illegal target area such as an empty hand or lower leg in the path of a blow the combatant forfeits that point as if it had been struck in a legal target area.
16. Inadvertently bringing the hands in contact with the striking surface of a weapon in motion as when attempting to block a blow shall not be considered to be in violation of this convention.
17. Intentionally striking an opponent outside the legal target area is forbidden. Combatants who repeatedly throw such blows shall be duly warned by the marshals. If such blows continue to be thrown the combatant can be caused to forfeit the bout and may be subject to further disciplinary action.
18. Any combatant whose helmet or chin strap fails in combat will be considered unable to continue and must immediately leave the field. Failure of a gauntlet will require the combatant to leave the field unless in the opinion of the Marshal that the hand will remain protected by a shield. Failure of other armour may require the combatant to leave the field on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Marshal. Combatants who are forced to leave the field due to armour failure must forfeit the bout.
19. No persons under the age of 18 may engage in any form of grappling, wrestling or HMB style combat.

Contravention of the Conventions of Combat

1. Any combatant who breaches the RMS conventions of combat will be brought to the attention of the Armoured Combat Marshal by the rostered Marshal on the field.
2. A decision as to the appropriate action will be made by the Armoured Combat Marshal in conjunction with the Marshalate. The RMS committee can be involved at the discretion of the Armoured Combat Marshal. Any combatant subject to disciplinary action will be notified to the RMS Committee.

3. The RMS Committee will, after discussing the matter with the Armoured Combat Marshal impose any further actions it deems appropriate.

Rules of Engagement

Individual Engagement

1. Tournament combat occurs when two combatants move onto a list field under the command of a marshal with the intent of combat.
2. Tournament combatants may use any of the authorised RMS weapons that they are individually authorised to use.
3. Tournament combatants will receive two commands from the marshal “ready” and “lay on”.
4. At the command “ready” combatants are to adopt a defensive or offensive stance of their choice and acknowledge to the marshal that they are indeed ready. At the command “Lay on” the combatants may engage at will with their opponent.
5. Missiles or thrown weapons may not be used.

Melee Combat Engagement

1. Tournament Melee combat is a combat that begins with two or more teams of combatants or three or more combatants fighting as individuals.
2. Combatants including the final pair must be engaged before they may strike at each other.
3. In Tournament Melee combat, a combatant shall engage their opponent by moving into the line of sight of the opponent they wish to engage and stating loudly “my Lord/Lady I am engaging you” or words to that effect and receive acknowledgement of such engagement.
4. It is forbidden to strike an opponent with whom you are not engaged.
5. Unless specifically forbidden by the terms of the tournament ad hoc teams may be formed and dissolved during the bout.
6. Unless specifically forbidden by the terms of the tourney, engagements between groups of unequal numbers are allowed.
7. A combatant who turns their back on an opponent with whom they are engaged while remaining within weapon range is subject to being struck by that opponent until they leave weapon range.
8. Missiles or thrown weapons may not be used during tournament Melee combat.

Holds

1. A call of “**hold!**” is a call for an immediate cessation of all activity on the field.
2. Holds may be called by anyone including spectators for any of the following reasons:
 - a. broken weapons
 - b. broken armour
 - c. broken people (IE injuries)
 - d. broken tempers
 - e. broken ground (IE hazardous terrain)

- f. broken boundaries (IE someone/thing coming onto the field that should not be there or combatants leaving the bounds of combat)
3. Upon hearing the call of **“hold”** all participants must immediately:
 - a. Stop all activity,
 - b. repeat the call of **“hold”**,
 - c. check whether they are in danger, or causing the danger,
 - d. continue to call hold until all action ceases after which remains silent so the directions of the marshals can be heard,
 - e. all combatants must drop to one knee if it is safe to do so holding their weapons unthreateningly overhead,
 - f. remain in place unless a marshal gives explicit directions to the contrary; and
 - g. await further direction.
 4. Until Helms off is called all non-marshals on the field must remain silent and listen for the commands of the marshal.
 5. Helms must remain on and all visors must remain closed unless the marshals have instructed that it is safe to remove them with a Call of Helms off.
 6. A hold once called can only be lifted by a martial the marshal will warn the combatants to prepare to continue by commanding **“all rise”** at which time all who are able to do so will stand back up and take up the positions they held prior to the hold being called.
 7. If a **“helms off”** has been called after the **“hold”**, **“helms on”** must be called and at the call of **“ready”** all combatants must raise their weapon above their head to signify their readiness to continue. This must be visually checked by the marshals and combatants before **“Lay On”** can be called.
 8. Combat may only resume with the cry of **“Lay on”** by the Marshall
 9. The end of battle will be signalled by the call of **“hold”** followed by a verbal signal from the marshal in charge that the battle has ended and a call of **“Helms off”**.

Chapter 5

The Use of Weapons and Shields

Weapons

1. RMS weapons consist of:
 - a. Long Sword,
 - b. Short or arming sword,
 - c. Hand axe,
 - d. Dagger, and
 - e. Pole weapons.
2. Weapons may only be used in accordance with their design i.e none of the RMS weapons may be thrown.
3. A weapon may be used to displace, deflect, or immobilise an opponent's shield or weapon, so long as such use does not endanger the safety of the combatants. A shield or haft may be safely placed against the opponent's body to restrict their ability to strike or defend.
4. In a tournament combat bout, combatants may only use weapons they have brought onto the field at the beginning of the round but may freely change between those weapons. An exception shall be made to this rule for combatants whose weapons physically break in the course of a bout. In such circumstances the combatant may rearm with the same type of weapon to complete the bout or forfeit the bout.

Shields

1. RMS shields consist of:
 - a. Viking round shield,
 - b. Kite Shield,
 - c. Bucklers, and
 - d. Heater shields.
2. Shields must be controlled by the hand. Shields not controlled by the hand are to be considered armour, and good blows falling on them must be taken.
3. A shield may be used to displace, deflect, or immobilise an opponent's shield or weapon, so long as such use does not endanger the safety of the combatants. A shield or haft may be safely placed against the opponent's body to restrict their ability to strike or defend.
4. A broken shield may be replaced if available or the bout must be forfeited.

Chapter 6

Target Areas and Acknowledgement of Blows

Judging Blows

1. Judging the effects of blows is left to the honour of the combatant being struck by the weapon, unless. They relinquish this responsibility, with the exception of clear violations of the rules of the list or the conventions of combat.
2. Effectiveness of a blow may not be judged by the opposing combatant, the marshal, or other observers. Information unavailable to the combatant being struck may be supplied by the opposing combatant or the marshal, including blade orientation upon impact, apparent force transmitted, or apparent location and angle of the blows impact based upon the observer's angle of orientation.
3. No blows are to be aimed at or below the knees, at the groin, spine, joints, hands or forearms.
4. No weapon may be used in a thrusting manner to the red and yellow shaded areas on Figure 1. Additionally thrusting should be limited and always have a downwards tilt (to avoid glancing blows the 'ride' up the armour under maille or into faces)
5. All blows connecting with opponent must be fully under control and slowed in such a way that upon striking your opponent you will not injure them.
6. Grappling, punching and kicking is permitted but only after consultation between both combatants and only if blows are fully controlled and will not injury the opponent. Any use of grappling, punching, kicking or any joint manipulation (hyperextension, pressure holds or twisting against natural rotations) is strictly banned without prior agreement and will warrant the immediate expulsion of the offender from the list field and disciplinary action post the event.
(**Note – RMS combat is about chivalry, weapon prowess and spectacle and rolling in the dirt is not conducive to any of these ideals**)
7. A blow delivered to the crown of the head shall be deemed the only legal head blow. No stab or thrust may be delivered to this area.

Target Areas

1. **Ideal target areas are:**
 - a. Above the knee to the point of the shoulder, excluding the groin, hands and forearms. Inadvertent striking of these areas during combat may still occur but should not be aimed for.
 - b. The crown of the head/helmet
2. **Prohibited target areas:**
 - a. **Below the knees, the neck, face and head** (apart from the crown of the head as stated above)
3. Target areas are highlighted in figure 1.
4. Additional target area restrictions may be placed on RMS members by the Armoured Combat Marshal due to armour worn and risk assessment.



Figure 1.

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Chapter 7

Armour Classes and Requirements

General

1. Armour shall be fastened in a way that prevents it from being dislodged during normal use.
2. Armour shall cover the areas that are required to be armoured throughout the normal range of movement.
3. All armour shall be free of sharp edges.

Responsibilities

1. Every participant is responsible for obtaining and wearing in combat, armour which complies with the minimum standards set out in these rules for the class of combat they participate in.
2. To reduce the risk of combat related activities to an acceptable level, it is the responsibility of the individual to determine their requirements for additional armour above the minimum standards and to ensure armour meets the appropriate standards as set out in these rules.
3. Prior to combat at each and every RMS event, every participant shall ensure that a rostered marshal inspects and approves any armour and weapons which that participant will use.
4. Participants have an obligation to themselves the marshals and their opponents to ensure that their equipment meets all RMS requirements.
5. Even though armour and weapons have been inspected, all participants accept full responsibility for the condition and safety of their equipment.
6. The wearing of armour and clothing that gives as period an appearance as possible is strongly encouraged. It is strongly recommended that all visible tags, logos and modern materials be covered or removed.

Summary of Armour classes

TBP as a separate document

RMS Tournament Combat Scoring System

TBP as a separate document

Chapter 8

Melee Weapon Standards

General

1. All combatants bear final responsibility for the condition and safety of their own equipment.
2. The edges and tips of all striking surfaces shall be rounded, as per melee weapon standards below. No part of a weapon shall have sharp edges or protrusions.
3. No weapon may exceed 2.73 kilogrammes in total mass.
4. All Thrusting tips and striking heads must be securely attached to the weapon haft.
5. No weapon may have a cutting and or smashing head at both ends.

Standards

1. All swords, axes and Daggers must be rebated.
 - a. Normal rebated re-enactment swords, axes and daggers.
 - i. Rebating is a process of rounding of the peak/tips and the percussion edges of any blade used in RMS combat.
 - ii. The radius of peak/tip rebating is approx 10 mm (note: it has to match the radius of a coin 20mm in diameter).
 - iii. Percussion edges must be a minimum of 2mm and rounded.
2. Single-handed Swords:
 - a. Sabers, broadswords, arming swords etc. up to 1,600g
3. Long Sword:
 - a. Two handed swords, total length is up to 1,400mm and up to 2,500g
4. Shields (as a weapon)
 - a. The edges of shields are to be trimmed with thick (not less than 2 - 4 mm) leather, raw hide or three or more layers of fabric. Edges of the iron shields have to be carefully forge-rolled and be no less than 4 mm thick. *Note: Shield striking using either flat of shield or edge, if allowed by prior arrangement, is subject to the same rules as weapons regarding calibration of blows.*
5. Spears and Pole Weapons
 - a. A spear or pointed pole weapon must have the tip fitted with an aluminium or steel sphere no smaller than 50mm in diameter. Other pole weapons such as axes are subject to the same rules as all weapons regarding point and blade minimums. The maximum length for a spear or pole weapon will be 3.5 metres.