

# SwordStrong KC 2024 Ruleset



Welcome to the second SwordStrong KC event! Our goal in this event is to provide a very competitive environment with a chance for everyone to fight a lot of bouts, as well as to experience something that they may not get a chance to anywhere else. We are going with 9 tournaments this year, including an open and a novice for each of the 4 main weapon types. We'll also have a team tournament that should be a lot of fun. We hope you enjoy watching or participating in all of them!

The purpose of this ruleset is to promote defensive fighting. Only exchanges where you are able to score a hit, but not get hit will count towards your total points. Additionally, rather than having a time or point limit, we limit the final number of exchanges. Any points that you can score in the pool exchanges count towards your Elim placement. In the finals, it's single elimination, so stay alive to emerge victorious! At all times, Doubles will count heavily against you.

## Tournaments

Open tournaments will be open to any competitors. The Novice tournaments are intended for inexperienced fighters as a way to jump into tournament fighting. The requirements to enter a Novice Tournament are:

- Never received a medal in any HEMA tournament (top 3 positions)
- Three or fewer tournaments previously competed in

### 1. Friday

- a. Open Messer
- b. Novice Messer
- c. David Miller Seminar
- d. Rob Childs Seminar

### 2. Saturday

- a. Open Longsword
- b. Novice Longsword
- c. Jeremy Pace Seminar
- d. Open Rapier (no offhand)
- e. Novice Rapier (no offhand)

### 3. Sunday

- a. Open Saber
- b. Novice Saber
- c. Donny McKay Seminar
- d. Team Mixed Steel and offhand event

Full schedule: <https://swordstrongkc.com/event-schedule>

# Rules

1. A bout consists of five rounds in the both the pools and the finals
2. Rounds do not have a time or point limit
  - a. Exception, in the Elimination rounds only, a fight ends when there are no longer enough exchanges left to change the win outcome. I.E. score of 3 - 0 with only 2 exchanges remaining.
3. All valid target locations are worth 1 point
  - a. Valid targets include everywhere except the back of the head and neck
  - b. Striking the back of the head and neck will result in a penalty
  - c. Purposefully exposing the back of the head and neck will also result in a penalty
4. Points may be scored with a Cut, Thrust, Draw Cut, Pommel Strike or Shield Bash
  - a. Cuts must be made with the edge and with sufficient rotation (>45 degrees)
  - b. Thrusts must be deep enough to move the gambeson
  - c. Draw cuts must be over half of the blade, (made with both hands for two-handed weapons), and have significant pressure against the opponent
  - d. Pommel strikes and shield bashes must be made with control, and only to the mesh of the mask
    - i. This can be either gently touching the mask or presenting that you “could have” bashed
    - ii. Glancing, incidental, and blocked blows are not counted as valid
    - iii. Shield bashes can only be made with the boss of the shield. Intentional edge of shield strikes anywhere will incur a penalty
  - e. Stepping both feet out of the ring scores no points, but does stop the action and cause a reset in the center, a fighter that Intentionally leaves the ring will result in penalties being awarded
5. Grappling with the hand is only allowed against the hand, arm, handle, or guard of the weapon.
  - a. Throwing, hitting, kicking or head butting will be penalized
  - b. Grabbing a blade is allowed in Longsword, Messer, and Mixed Steel only.
    - i. Blade must be stationary and the grab must be on the strong third of the blade.
    - ii. With other weapons, or if the blade is moving or you grab the weak, grabbing will count as a hit against you.
  - c. You can wrap an arm around any weapon. Pulling the blade out, though, could constitute a draw cut.
6. In Elimination bouts, the bout cannot end on a double. If the bout would normally end for any reason and the fighters score a double, then the fight continues from the center in the same exchange.
7. Fighters can “self-call” a hit against themselves during the round, The Director can overrule them if they feel it wasn't a valid hit.

# Bouts

1. A round/exchange is completed when a scoring action has occurred
  - a. If a point is called and it was determined there was no scoring action, or if a fighter leaves the ring, no points will be scored and the round will continue with fighters in the “Danger Zone” (close enough to cross swords and strike hands in the center of the ring) and that exchange will continue
2. Fighters will indicate with their swords that they either landed a hit (pointing up) or that they were hit by their opponent (pointing at the opponent)
  - a. If fighter was both hit and scored a hit, then point both up and at the opponent
3. After each round, the Director will
  - a. Note the fighter's opinions
  - b. Look for the Line Judge's hand signs
  - c. Award a point to a fighter that landed a clean strike, or declare a double

At the end of the bout, points will be awarded to each fighter. If a tie occurs in the elimination rounds, sudden death begins and the first clean hit wins the bout.

# Team Tournament Specific Rules

1. Setting up the teams
  - a. Before the start of the tournament, fighters attending will form into teams of three, preferably from the same school with varying amounts of experience/skill levels.
  - b. The purpose of this tournament is to give fencers of lower levels a time to shine. Advanced students often get the glory of receiving medals, accolades, etc. We want this to be an opportunity for newer fighters to contribute to the overall outcome of the match.
  - c. Please be honorable in your selections and select a Beginner level fighter, middle-level fighter, and Advanced fighter where available.
  - d. Teams should create a name to represent them, School/Club name can be used as a team name, but if a club has more than one team, please choose some variation.
  - e. Fighters that do not have a team will see the tournament director to join the “Free Agents” who will be grouped into teams.
  - f. Teams will announce who their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd fighters will be before the pools are set.
    - i. Teams of two will vary slightly, the 1st fighter will also be 3rd
  - g. Once teams are set, the order can only be changed after pools finish and before eliminations begin.
2. Team Matches (both pools and eliminations)
  - a. At the start of a match, each team has 9 points, 3 for each fighter.
  - b. When a fighter has received 3 touches, they are eliminated. The next fighter on the team then steps in to continue the fight.
  - c. When a team eliminates all of the opposing team’s fighters, they win!
  - d. Fighters may only eliminate two other fighters in any given match. If they eliminate two fighters, they retire from the match and the next fighter steps in to continue the fight.
    - i. Exception: If a team is down to its last member, that member is not required to retire from the match no matter how many opponents they face.
    - ii. Exception: If a team only has 2 members, the first fighter must retire after besting two opponents, but may come out of retirement if the other member of the team is forced to swap out or retire.

## Equipment

1. Protective gear and clothing:
  - a. Mandatory items:
    - i. A padded or Hema level jacket
    - ii. Fencing Mask with back of head cover
    - iii. Gorget or some form of trachea protection
    - iv. Rigid or padded gloves for both hands (even in one handed tournaments)
    - v. Elbow and knee pads
    - vi. Shin guards
    - vii. Athletic cup (for men)
    - viii. No exposed skin allowed
  - b. Highly Recommended but not mandatory items:
    - i. Additional padding for thighs and torso
    - ii. Forearm protection
    - iii. Rigid Chest Protection
2. Weapons:
  - a. All weapons must be checked and approved. If any weapon does not pass the check, we will work to provide a safe alternative if you do not have one available.
  - b. All Blades
    - i. Blades must be able to bend easily during a thrust
      1. Blades with too stiff a bend will not be allowed
    - ii. All major swordsmith brands are acceptable
    - iii. If you have a custom-made blade, it must be tested and approved by the tournament officials prior to competing with it

- iv. All blade length and width requirements have a small amount of wiggle room that will be at the inspector's discretion.
- v. In no case will sharp edges anywhere on the weapon be allowed
- c. Messer
  - i. Blade length must not exceed 30 inches from the crossguard
  - ii. Handle length must not exceed 8 inches
  - iii. Min of 5/8" width on the widest non-schilt part of blade
  - iv. No complex hand protection beyond a Crossguard & Nagel (no baskethilts, knucklebows, etc.)
- d. Long Sword or Feder:
  - i. Blade length must not exceed 40 inches from the crossguard
- e. Rapier
  - i. Blade length must not exceed 43 inches from the **crossguard**
    - 1. Not measured from the ricasso or bell
  - ii. Min of 1/2" width on the widest non-schilt part of blade
- f. Saber
  - i. Blade length must not exceed 36 inches from the crossguard
  - ii. Min of 5/8" width on the widest non-schilt part of blade
  - iii. Finger guard of some sort or rigid finger protection must be present
- g. Mixed Steel:
  - i. Blade length must not exceed 36 inches from the guard
  - ii. Handle length must not exceed 12 inches, including pommel
  - iii. Min of 5/8" width on the widest non-schilt part of blade
  - iv. Offhand dagger must not exceed 19 inches and must have **very good flex**
  - v. Offhand buckler must not exceed 12 inches in diameter
- h. All weapons must reasonably be able to be classified as fitting in that category.
- i. All tips must be rolled, spatulated, or tipped and not present a danger of puncturing or tearing
- j. We have a good number of loaner weapons if needed.
- k. Tournament Staff reserves the right to reject any gear or weapons they deem unsafe.

## Penalties

1. The purpose of this system is to keep fighters from repeatedly putting themselves or others in potentially dangerous situations.
2. These can include hitting non-target spots, exposing non-target spots, purposely hitting too hard, delaying the fight, etc.
3. There is no all-encompassing list of penalties. Generally, be kind and respectful, and don't put yourself or other fighters in danger.
4. For minor infractions, one warning will be given to the fighter and they will be recorded in Scorecard. The second time a fighter commits the same infraction will result in the fighter's opponent being awarded a point. If the fighter does the same infraction a third time he or she will lose the bout they are in and the opponent will receive all the remaining possible points. If a fourth infraction for the same rule happens, the fighter will be asked to leave the tournament.
  - a. This list is subject to change based on the severity of the infraction. If the judges feel that a severe infraction has occurred, immediate severe action can and will be taken.
5. This system extends throughout the tournament, not just a single bout
  - a. For example; a fighter might be warned two times about excessive force, in two different bouts. On that second warning the fighter he or she is facing will get an extra point.
6. Being warned for different offenses does not compound on one another.
  - a. For example, a fighter might be warned about exposing the back of their head, and for excessive force. These are different warnings and do not count as two warnings for either.
7. Again, these penalties are not in place to try to be overly strict or authoritarian but to keep everyone safe, happy, and healthy.

## Final thoughts:

Thank you everyone for joining us in our second annual SwordStrong KC Event. This promises to be a fun and exciting event and runs HEMA competitions in a way that has been needed for some time.

We've put a lot of sweat and consideration into this ruleset and we think it'll make a fun, fair tournament. We do reserve the right to tweak it as needed, though. Do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have and we hope to see you there!

