

**SWORD + BUCKLER  
TOURNAMENT RULESET  
IGX SPRING 2025**

Fencers are permitted to compete in a maximum of four tournaments during the entirety of IGX Spring 2025.

The Open Sword + Buckler tournament at IGX Spring 2025 is open to all fencers. Any one-handed swords which meet the weapons requirements (see below) are permitted.

The rules contained in this ruleset apply to the sword and buckler tournament only. Sections highlighted in red apply to all fencing tournaments.

**Tournament Structure:**

**Check-In starts 30 minutes prior to each tournament. All fencers must be checked in and geared up by the posted tournament start time. Any fencer who has not done so will automatically be removed from the registration list. As a courtesy to event staff, please notify us ahead of time if you need to drop from a tournament.**

Fencers are permitted to compete in a maximum of four tournaments during the entirety of IGX Spring 2025.

Initial tournament caps at registration are based on committed staff, and will be raised as we confirm more staff for each tournament. If you want to see higher registration caps, we recommend volunteering to staff or getting some of your clubmates to staff!

- **Pools:** Tournaments will take place over the course of two rounds of pools, followed by finals. Tournament organizers reserve the right to alter tournament structure if necessary.
  - We will aim to place 5 fencers per pool , but exact pool size may vary based on participant numbers.
  - Finals will consist of the top 5 fencers following pools.
    - Points will accrue across both rounds of pools, and the top 5 fencers following pools will proceed to finals. Points will then reset for finals and accrue across the finals pool.

Weapons will be checked at the beginning of the tournament, and will be marked with tape to indicate whether they pass the weapon requirements. All other gear will be reviewed at the beginning of each pool, including the finals pool.

Each match will consist of multiple passes. Passes will continue until either fencer has accumulated a total of 3 points for the match. There will be no time limit per pass, and passes will continue until a scoring action is made (including doubles).

- Rings will be 15'x26' rectangles. Fencers will start each pass in a 3' endzone (included in the overall 26' length of the ring).

Ties will be broken through, in order, the following methods:

- Percentage of matches won
- Most scoring actions made (points for)
- Lowest number of cards

**Medals and XP awards will be given out immediately following each tournament.**

## **Staff**

- **Tournament Lead**
  - Runs tournament check-in
  - Explains rules and answers rules questions at the start of the tournament
  - Oversees all other staff and resolves any questions that arise during the tournament
  - Hands out medals and announces finalists
  - Resolves decisions concerning penalty and removal from the tournament that cannot be handled by judges
  - Encourages and enforces proper judging style
  - Conducts weapon inspection and marking at the start of the tournament
- **Scorekeeper**
  - Oversees table staff
  - Compiles and records score, XP, and penalty data from all pools
  - Calculates overall standings and finalists
- **Director/ Lead Judge**
  - Officiates matches
  - Looks for scoring actions and halts passes
  - Determines score and penalties
  - Assigns igXP
  - Conducts gear check at the beginning of each pool
- **Assistant Judge**
  - Looks for scoring actions and halts passes
  - Helps Director determine score and penalties and assign igXP
- **Table**
  - Keeps track of score and penalties for individual pools, reports to scorekeeper
  - Announces fencer currently fencing and fencers that are "on deck"
- **First Aid**
  - Will be on hand at all times to tend to any injuries or illnesses during the event
  - If severe injury (such as concussion) is suspected by first aid or other staff, judges may elect to remove a fencer from the tournament, regardless of the injured fencer's wishes.

## Judging Style and Language Guidelines

There will be two judges per ring, one Director and one Assistant Judge. Each judge will be equipped with a wooden marshaling pole to make visual indications of instructions.

Judges should wait to declare scoring or begin a match until both fencers are in their end zones.

### - Proper Use of Marshaling Poles:

- Marshaling poles must be used properly by ALL judges at ALL times. We require marshaling poles in order to accommodate all fencers, such as those who are hard of hearing. Use of marshaling poles is not optional, and judges who do not properly employ them may be removed from their judge position.
  - On “ready,” marshaling poles should be lowered into the ring.
  - On “fence,” marshaling poles should be raised up and out of the ring.
  - On “hold,” marshaling poles should be lowered into the ring between the fencers.

### - Director’s Script:

- Before a pass:
  - “Table ready? Judge ready?”
    - This phrase should only be asked before the first pass of a match, or after an extended interruption in passes.
    - This is a question, you should wait for visual or verbal confirmation from both staff members that they are ready before continuing.
  - “Fencers, ready!”
    - This phrase addresses both fencers. It is a command, not a question. Do not wait for confirmation from fencers before continuing. Only wait if a fencer indicates that they are NOT ready to proceed.
  - “Fence!”
    - This phrase begins a pass. Say it only once, loudly and clearly. Only use this phrase when you and the other staff are ready to begin the pass.
    - Do not use any phrases other than “fence” to begin a pass, such as “begin,” “fight,” or “go.”
  - “Hold!”
    - This phrase ends a pass. Say it only once, loudly and clearly (unless fencers do not respond to the initial call). The call should last approximately one second. Both the Director and Assistant Judge may call a hold.
    - Do not use any phrases other than “hold” to end a pass, such as “halt,” “point,” or “stop.”
    - **Fencers must immediately cease all action and return to their endzone upon hearing a hold called. Actions taken after a hold is called may be penalized. Fencers should continue**

**fencing until they hear a hold called, even if they believe they have landed a blow.**

- “Nothing done”
  - This phrase should be used if a hold is called by mistake or if no scoring action can be identified. The pass will then be reset and refenced.
  
- When a judge opts not to award a point for an action, they must provide the reason why that decision was made. (Ex. “The blade was flat,” “The touch was late,” “The thrust was passe,” “The action incurred a penalty,” etc.)
- When a judge gives a penalty, they must provide one of the reasons detailed in the “Penalties” section below.
- When a judge assigns points, they must recount the action that scored, and then announce which fencer receives the point.
  - **The phrase “one point AGAINST x fencer” should be used, to avoid awarding points in reverse.**
- Judges should spend a minimal amount of time on deliberation, and should opt to re-fence a pass that they cannot agree on a score for. EFFICIENCY is key!
  
- **Reset of Pass:**
  - If a judge resets a pass, no score is awarded, and the fencers will re-fence that pass. A judge may reset a pass for the following reasons
    - Hold was called for a non-scoring action
      - EX. premature hold, safety hold, non-quality contact, hold for penalty, etc.
    - No progress is being made in the bout
      - EX. fencers are not engaging, grappling is not progressing towards control, etc.
    - Fencers have circled a complete 180 degrees
  - If 3 consecutive resets are made for any reason caused by the fencers (such as circling or non-progressing grappling), both fencers will incur 1 point against themselves (A hold called for a non-scoring action/ premature holds/ safety holds will not count towards these resets).
  - When a pass is reset, fencers must return to their end zone and begin the new pass from their end zone.

Fencers must return to their endzone upon a hold being called. Judges should wait for both fencers to return to their endzones before announcing score/penalty.

Judges should allow a reasonable time for fencers to speak to their coaches between passes.

## **Scoring**

Points will accrue AGAINST fencers (more points= bad!). Fencers will be ranked by fewest average points per match.(EX. A fencer with an average of 0 points per match is ranked ABOVE a fencer with an average of 3 points per match.

Each time a scoring action is made against a fencer, they will be assessed one point. Placement is dictated by the least number of points This means that priority should be placed on defence over offence. Doubling impacts final standings, not just the individual match.

All methods of scoring, regardless of target area or action type, are worth **one point** against the fencer who received the action.

- **Target Areas:**

- Target area includes the entire body from the head to 2" above the ankles, excluding:
  - Back of the head
  - Spine
  - Groin
  - Feet
- Any blows made to off-target areas may be subject to penalty.
- **Note:** Blows made to the crossguard (including siderings) or hilt will be considered parried, and will not be considered scoring actions.
- **Note:** All worn gear will be counted as the target area, including any protrusions or modifications made to fencing gear (such as capes, headbands, puffy pants, etc.)

Half-swording is permitted. Any actions made while half-swording must still meet all other criteria for scoring actions.

- **Cuts:**

- Cuts should make obvious, intentional contact with the opponent. Incidental contact will not be considered a scoring cut.
- Cuts must land with the edge of the blade. Contact made with the flat of the blade will not be considered quality.
- Cuts should be initiated with a chambering action in order to make them discernable and clear to judges. A cut made without a chambering action may not be considered quality.
- Cuts must be made with the weak or middle of the blade. A cut made with the strong of the blade is subject to penalty.

- **Thrusts:**

- Thrusts should make obvious, intentional contact with the opponent. Incidental contact or passe thrusts will not be considered scoring thrusts.
- Thrusts do NOT need to bend the blade in order to score.
- Thrusts do NOT need to plant the point in order to score. A thrust that slides off of protective equipment (such as a mask) will still count as a valid scoring action, so long as the initial thrust was valid in landing on the target.

- A thrust is considered valid if it lands on a generally perpendicular angle to the target. A thrust that lands on a generally parallel angle to the target is not considered valid.
- **Slices:**
  - Slices are only valid if made to the **wrists, arms, shoulders, neck, face, or head.**
  - Missed thrusts may not be converted into slices without demonstrating an additional clear chambering/ placement action.
  - A slice must have a clear chambering action (placing the blade on a valid target area of the opponent) followed by a clear slicing action (drawing forward or backward).
    - A slice must pass the weak and/ or middle of the blade over the target. Slices may be initiated with any part of the blade, but contact made only with the strong will not score.
- **Grappling:**
  - Limited grappling with intention to control an opponent or their weapon is permitted.
    - Takedowns, throws, and joint manipulation are prohibited.
    - **Striking with the buckler is NOT permitted, and will immediately be subject to a Black Card.**
      - Performing other grappling actions with the buckler- including blade suppression/ pushes and wraps with the buckler arms are permitted.
    - **Actions which put the opponent's weapon hand at risk of injury are NOT LEGAL.** This includes grabbing the hilt, twisting the blade during a blade grab or hand parry, and attempting to perform any kind of disarm.
  - There is no time limit on grappling. However, the pass will be ended and reset if clear progression is not being made.
  - Strikes with a body part or with any object other than the weapon are prohibited.
  - To score via grappling, a fencer must meet ONE of the following criteria:
    - **Establishing control of the opponent's weapon while keeping their own weapon free.**
      - Control may be established by blade grabs, arm wrap, or any other legal action which prevents the opponent from using their weapon.
      - Once control has been established, a fencer does NOT need to indicate a strike in order to score. Their weapon simply needs to be free.
        - The fencer needs to show the judges that their weapon is free, but does not need to indicate a potential strike.
      - Fencers may deliver one-handed thrusts while grappling, but may never deliver a one handed cut or a blow with the hilt. Doing so will be subject to penalty.

- **Taking the back of their opponent (i.e. forcing the opponent to expose their back)**
  - This may be accomplished by moving behind the opponent, or by turning the opponent.
  - A fencer does NOT need to grab their opponent from behind to score via this method- they simply need to perform an action that ends with them facing their opponent's back.
  - A fencer MAY NOT strike an opponent whose back is turned under any circumstances.
- **Disarms**
  - If a fencer drops their weapon for any reason other than those regarding safety, it will be considered a disarm, and the fencer will receive one point against them. **However, performing an intentional disarm on an opponent is prohibited, and may be subject to penalty.**
    - Ex. A fencer drops their weapon without an action being taken by their opponent. This is a disarm.
    - Ex. A fencer delivers a hard thrust to their opponent, and drops their weapon to alleviate force upon landing the thrust. This is considered an action taken for safety purposes, and is NOT a disarm.
    - Ex. A fencer grabs their opponent's weapon, and wrenches it out of their opponent's hand. This is an illegal action, and the fencer will be carded. This will not be counted as a scoring action, and no points will be assessed.
    - **Note:** if a fencer drops their buckler, this is NOT a disarm. However, there will be a safety hold, and the pass will be reset.
- **Ring Outs:**
  - If a fencer steps one full foot out of the ring, they will receive one point against them (the paint marking the boundary of the ring is considered OUT OF BOUNDS. Having a foot on the line only is still a ring out.).
    - EX. A fencer's heel touches the ground outside of the ring, but their toes are still inside of the ring. This is not a ring out.
    - EX. A fencer takes a complete step out of the ring with one foot. This is a ring out.
    - EX. A fencer steps both feet completely out of the ring. This is a ring out.
  - **Note:** Any blows made during the same tempo as a ring out will still be scored as usual.
  - If both fencers are engaged in grappling and one or both fencers step out of the ring, the pass will be reset without score.
    - If one fencer pushes their opponent out of the ring during grappling, the pass will be reset without score, and the fencer who performed the push will be subject to penalty.
- **Doubles:**

- If both fencers land blows within the lockout time (one tempo- details below), a double will be scored. In the instance of a double, both fencers will receive one point against them, regardless of which scoring actions were made.
  - Doubles are bad for BOTH fencers! Both will receive equal points, which negatively affects both of their scores.
- **Lockout Time:**
  - "Lockout time" is defined as the amount of time after an initial blow lands that a return blow will be considered valid. This is not a set period of time, but depends on the action.
    - To be valid, a return blow must land within **one tempo** of the other fencer's initial blow.
      - **One tempo**= the time it takes to complete a single fencing action
    - A return blow is considered **out of tempo** if the fencer needs to re-chamber/ initiate their action after the initial blow lands.
    - A return blow is considered **in tempo** if it has already been chambered/ initiated/ is already in motion before the initial blow lands.

### **Gear Requirements:**

Protective equipment will be inspected at the start of each pool. Weapons will be inspected upon check-in at the start of the tournament. IGX organizers and the Tournament Lead have the final say on the inclusion of any and all equipment in events.

- **Required Protective Equipment:**
  - Full Skin Coverage
    - No skin may be exposed- including the back of the calves and the palms of the hands.
  - Fencing Mask
    - No dents or holes in the mesh
    - Back of Head Protection
  - Puncture-Resistant Jacket
    - The entirety of the jacket must be minimum 350N rated OR be sufficiently padded so as to still be puncture- resistant.
      - Non-Newton rated jackets must be, at minimum, a similar thickness to a standard (not light) 350N longsword fencing jacket.
    - Single layer jackets are not acceptable for sword and buckler.
    - Jackets must cover all skin from throat to the waist and wrists.
    - Jackets must close completely- no open fronts or backs
  - Puncture- Resistant Thigh Protection
    - Must reasonably cover the front and sides of the upper leg



- Thigh protection must be minimum 350N rated OR be sufficiently padded or rigid so as to still be puncture- resistant.
  - **Acceptable protective gear may include:** 350N fencing trousers, 350N or padded fencing skirt, a garment made of several layers of fabric such as a historical kilt, jacket or gambeson that covers the thighs, or other rigid or padded thigh protection.
    - **Leggings, gym shorts, or sweatpants alone are not sufficient.**
- Rigid Throat Protection
- Rigid Chest Protection
  - Chest protection is required for ALL fencers, regardless of anatomy.
- Hard Elbow Protection
- Hard Forearm Protection
  - Gloves with rigid protection that extends over the forearms are sufficient.
- Hard Knee Protection
  - It is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that knee protection extends to the sides of the knees.
- Hard Shin Protection
- Gloves
  - As different sword types are allowed, gloves requirements will differ depending on sword type.
    - Heavy gloves (longsword rated) are required for the weapon hand, if the hilt will allow.
      - EX- arming swords, messers, sabers, etc.
      - Five-fingered gloves are permitted, but are expressly not recommended.
    - Medium gloves (lacrosse gloves, Red Dragons, heavily padded leather gloves) are required for the weapon hand, if the hilt will not allow heavy gloves.
      - EX. Sideswords or other swords with complex hilts.
    - Light gloves (single layer gloves, MoF gloves, etc.) are only permitted if the fencer also uses a demi gauntlet, and will only be permitted if the weapon being used completely encloses the fingers.
      - EX. Swords with basket hilts
  - **Note:** a light glove (such as a leather glove) may be worn on the buckler hand. We recommend wearing the heaviest possible glove on the buckler hand.
- Groin Protection
  - Required if anatomically appropriate
- **Weapons**
  - No MoF, musketeer, triangular, or epee blades allowed
  - Blade must flex at or below 45 lbs
    - Flex measurement will be taken from the guard

- Must be no more than 37 inches in blade length
  - Blade measurement will be taken from the crossguard (or equivalent)
- Must be reasonably straight (intentionally curved blades are permitted)
  - Blades with major warps will not be permitted
- Guards may be simple or complex
- Blade must be free of rust, burrs, spikes, and all other major damage
- Blades should have an enlarged tip (EX. rolled, swelled, or spatulated tip)
  - Use of metal or leather to enlarge the tip is acceptable. Rubber tips are NOT acceptable.
- **Bucklers**
  - Maximum length of 16in the longest dimension
    - Longest dimension includes diagonal measurements
  - Bucklers may be made of wood, metal, hardened leather, plastic, or other rigid materials
  - Bucklers may not have any protrusions on their face, such as spikes or anything designed to catch a blade
  - Non-circular bucklers are permitted
  - The buckler must be gripped in the hand- strapping or tying the buckler to the body in any way is prohibited
  - Bucklers must be free from any major rust, cracks, dents, or other damage
- **Gear Failure:**
  - IN the event that a fencer's gear needs to be repaired or replaced during a match, they will be given a reasonable amount of time to repair or replace their gear. If a fencer is not able to do so within the time allotted to them by the director, they will incur all remaining points in the match (maximum 3). The fencer will then be given until their next match to repair or replace their gear, and if they are unable to do so, they will incur all possible points in the match (3). This process will continue until the fencer has repaired or replaced their gear, the tournament has ended, or the fencer has decided to discontinue their participation in the tournament.

### **Penalties:**

The goal of penalties within this ruleset are to minimize, correct, and- if necessary- penalize **reckless or unsafe behavior** within the ring. As such, cardable actions are those which jeopardize the physical, emotional, or mental safety of participants, staff, and/or spectators. Judges are given complete discretion in deciding if and when to card participants. While situations that will likely warrant a card are outlined below, judges should use common sense and their best judgement when assigning cards. There are no automatically cardable offenses, as judges should consider each situation individually.

Cards do not automatically escalate. While escalation is optional, judges are encouraged and empowered to escalate cards whenever they feel is appropriate.

- EX. A judge may assign a yellow card for a first offense, or they may immediately escalate to a red card.
- EX. A judge may opt to give a second yellow card to the same participant, or they may opt to escalate to a red card.
  - Judges are encouraged to escalate cards for repeat offenses.
- **Levels of Penalty:**
  - Verbal Warning: no point penalty
  - Yellow Card: 1 point penalty (counts towards match total)
  - Red Card: 3 point penalty (counts towards match total)
  - Black Card: ejection from tournament
    - If a black card is issued, the receiving participant may also be subject to ejection from other tournaments, as well as prohibition from future IGX events. Such decisions will be made by event organizers on a per-case basis.
  - **Note: There is no max score when cards are being given. If a fencer has 2 points against them and then are given a red card, they will end the match with 5 points.**

A participant may not be awarded a scoring action in the same pass that they receive a card. A participant may be awarded a scoring action in the same pass that they receive a verbal warning.

- **Note on doubles:** If a fencer receives during a pass that resulted in a double, their scoring action will be negated. The scoring action made by the fencer who did not receive a card is still valid.
- **Cardable Actions:**
  - Exposing the back of the head during a pass (exception- being forced to expose your back by your opponent during a grapple)
  - Striking any off target area
  - Striking with any part of the hilt
  - Failing to cease all action with a hold is called
    - Performing a revenge strike is immediately subject to a black card.
  - Performing any action that a judge deems to be reckless, dangerous, or excessive, including- but not limited to:
    - Striking an opponent with too much force
    - Making leaping or jumping attacks
    - Pushing or shoving an opponent
    - Attempting to throw an opponent
    - Removing protective gear during a pass
    - Performing any other illegal action, as defined within this ruleset
  - Arguing with or disobeying a staff member
    - Influencing judges (defined below) may be considered disobeying the judges if done repeatedly

- Exhibiting any other conduct within the ring which creates a hostile or unsafe environment for spectators, staff, or other fencers
  - Throwing gear
  - Insulting or yelling at other persons
  - Responding with excessive anger to ranking, rules, or judge decisions
  - Violating the IGX Code of Conduct
    - The Code of Conduct is signed by all participants at registration and is available on our website- you should have read this!
  - Striking or punching with the buckler!
  - Judges may also assign a card for any action they deem unsafe which does not explicitly meet criteria given here, but otherwise poses a safety risk.
- **Other Prohibited Actions:**
  - Violating the IGX Code of Conduct, in or out of the ring
    - While actions taken outside of the ring are not cardable, they will be taken just as seriously as actions taken within the ring. Harassment or other violations of the IGX Code of Conduct will be immediately addressed by event staff, and they may result in expulsion, suspension, or other punitive action.
  - Improper interaction with staff (defined below)
    - Repeated prohibited interaction with judges may become a cardable action.
- **Fencer's Rights and Interaction with Judges**
  - Fencers may have up to one coach accompanying them at the ring.
  - Fencers and their coaches may ask questions, request clarification on a scoring/penalty decision, or raise safety concerns with the judges. Fencers may not argue with the judges, nor may they make friendly/ casual conversation with the judges during a match.
    - Fencers and their coaches are empowered to approach judges, Tournament Lead, or other staff if they feel there has been an oversight related to safety or penalty. **If a fencer is injured, suspects injury, or has been caused pain by an opponent, they should immediately approach event staff.**
  - Coaches may not speak with fencers or judges during an ongoing pass, except in the case of a safety concern.
    - Coaches may not yell out advice, encouragement, etc. to fencers during passes.
    - Fencers will not be penalized for their coaches actions, but coaches who are disruptive or cause safety concerns may be removed from the event at any time by judges or the Tournament Lead.
  - Fencers have the right to deny a scoring action. This includes in the case of a double, which would turn the score into a single point against the fencer. Points assessed oneself cannot be denied. Fencers must wait until the director has announced the score for the match before denying a scoring action.

- Fencers have the right to forfeit a match at any time. Forfeiting a match will incur all remaining points (maximum 3) against the forfeiting fencer.
  - If a fencer is considering forfeiting due to behavior by their opponent such as bullying, harassment, intimidation, physical or mental harm, or causing pain, they should instead approach event organizers, who will handle the situation accordingly.
  - As a reminder, discrimination is against the IGX Code of Conduct. Forfeiting a match due to refusal to fence a certain class of persons (ex. women, LGBTQ+ people, people of color, etc.) will be considered discrimination and will be handled accordingly by event organizers.
- Fencers should remain calm and collected following each pass. Excessive celebration or anger may be considered to be influencing the judges, and therefore subject to penalty.
  - Fencers may not self-call in any way, including- but limited to:
    - Tapping their body where they believe they were hit
    - Correcting a judge
    - Early point denial
    - Arguing with a judge
    - Announcing a hit made by themselves or their opponent
    - Attempting to end an exchange before a hold is called, except for safety reasons
    - Announcing “pommel!” after or while establishing control in grappling

### **Exhibition Points (XP)**

Fencers who demonstrate particularly skillful or artful fencing may be awarded an Exhibition Point (XP). These points will be counted for each event, and a prize will be awarded for the highest number of XP per event. Fencers who earn XP will also be entered into a raffle at the end of the weekend (1 entry per XP earned).

Judges will assign XP following each pool. Each pool will have a maximum number of XP equal to the number of fencers in that pool (pool of 5- 5 XP, pool of 6- 6 XP, etc.) that its judges may opt to assign following all matches in a pool. Fencers may receive no XP, one XP, or multiple XP. Judges do not have to assign all (or any) of their allotted XP if they do not feel they have been earned.

- As XP are awarded at the end of the pool and not during matches, judges will have the ability to “highlight” matches that they wish to keep in mind during their XP assignment. If a judge highlights a match, the table will mark the match on their scoresheet to be revisited at the end of the pool.

**XP only accrues during pool matches- not in finals. This is to ensure all participants have the same opportunity to earn XP, regardless of tournament ranking.**

Examples of behavior that may be awarded XP (This list is not exhaustive!):

- Proper use of controlling blade actions (meisterhaus, exchange of thrusts, etc.)
- Proper entry and exit from threat range, or otherwise strong defense
- Clean and controlled grappling actions
- Landing clean, light blows with minimal force
  - Accruing cards and fencing unsafely, regardless of style, will make fencers less likely to receive XP!
- Scoring hits in their opponent's end zone
- Beautiful or entertaining fencing
- **Fencing with style and art-** bouts that would make it into an IGX highlights reel!