

IGX Fall 2025 - Vale of Variables

The goal of this event is to put registered teams of fencers into a simulated fight against each other with a random selection of weapons and random scenarios (each within a predetermined range). Weapons, as well as ancillary props will be provided by organizers. Varied HEMA knowledge, as well as tactical adaptability, will all be valuable tools for this event.

This will be a hybrid pool and bracketed tournament based on the size and time to administer. Competitors will register in advance, but four-person teams will be drafted on the day of the event.

FIELD: The field is a 50' x 40' rectangle, with the following markings.

- A 4' diameter circle at centerpoint
- A 2' wide strip running the centerline of the strip longitudinally
- Designated short-end sides for each team.

STAFF: Staff will consist of:

- One director, responsible for explaining scenario conditions, monitoring match safety, and calling end of match via time or winning condition.
- Two line judges, responsible for monitoring match safety and ensuring eliminated fencers leave the field of play.
- Two table staff, responsible for keeping track of bracket, weapons, and available scenarios

TOURNAMENT SETUP: Prior to the event, all fencers will check in and provide a gear check to the table. This will only be for protective gear, as weapons will be provided. As they check in, fencers will randomly be given a color and number for their team assignment (Example, "Green 4").

MATCH SETUP: After any prerequisites provided by the director are completed, the director will explain the match rules to the fencers and give them 2 minutes to obtain their weapons and devise tactics.

IN MATCH:

Judging Style and Language Guidelines

There will be a director and two line judges per ring. Each line judge will be equipped with a wooden marshaling pole to make visual indications of instructions.

Judges should wait to declare score decisions 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.

- **Director's Script:**
 - Before a pass:
 - "Table ready? Judges 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 all 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 match. Say it only once, loudly and clearly. Only use this phrase when you and the other staff are ready to begin the match.
 - Do not use any phrases other than "fence" to begin a match, such as "begin," "fight," or "go."

 - "Hold!"
 - This phrase ends or pauses a match. 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/pause a match, 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.**

 - "[X Fencer] Out!"
 - Judges should use the color-number assigned to each team and its fencers when a clear hit against them has been made.
 - **Fencers are encouraged to operate on the honor system and eliminate themselves when receiving a hit, but judges may eliminate fencers who do not notice hits they have received.**

- “[X Penalty] to [X Fencer]!”
 - May be given after calling HOLD to end or pause a match.
 - When a judge gives a penalty, they must provide one of the reasons detailed in the “Penalties” section below.
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- **Pause of Match:**
 - If a judge calls HOLD to pause a match prior to its completion, no score is awarded, and the currently remaining fencers will re-fence that match with whatever time remains. A judge may reset a pass for reasons including but not limited to the following
 - Safety hold for equipment failure or injury
 - Hold to remove eliminated fencers from the field
 - Hold for penalty
 - When a pass is paused, fencers must return to their end zone and begin from the position they were at prior to HOLD. They may not exchange weapons with a teammate or pick up weapons from eliminated fencers during a pause.

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

Scoring

Each time a scoring action is made against a fencer, they will be eliminated from the current match. Once eliminated, fencers should raise their weapon above their head and back out of the ring carefully.

- **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 must be made with both hands on the weapon. **A one-handed cut with a two-handed weapon which makes contact will be penalized, as will obvious attempts at one-handed cuts.**
 - 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 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.
 - One-handed thrusts ARE permitted, so long as they meet all other criteria for valid thrusts.
- **Slices:**
 - Due to the amount of other actions on the field and the difficulty in determining quality, slices will not be considered a scoring action.
- **Grappling:**
 - **Due to the close nature of this event and the potential for injuring others not involved in the exchange, grappling is not allowed.**
 - **Due to the potential for complex hilt-related hand injuries, as well as force imbalances inherent to asymmetrical combat, blade wraps, grabs, and open handed parrying are also not allowed.**
- **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 be eliminated from the match.
 - EX. A fencer drops their weapon without any 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 impact. This is considered an action taken for safety purposes, and is NOT a disarm.
- **Ring Outs:**
 - If a fencer steps one full foot out of the ring under their own power, 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.

- EX. A fencer is pushed out of the ring by another fencer. This is not a ring out, and the opposing fencer may receive a penalty
- **Note:** Any blows made during the same tempo as a ring out will still be scored as usual.
- **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 be eliminated from the match
- **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.
 - Due to the multi-person nature of this event, judges may not be able to determine if a double is in or out of tempo. If timing is uncertain, it is at the judge's discretion to call out fencers.

END OF MATCH: Matches proceed until win conditions have been met or the 3 minute time limit has been reached, in which case the team with the most standing fencers would win. The winning team will continue through the tournament as dictated. The director or judges may call "HOLD" to pause combat or end the match for safety purposes (a fencer has fallen over, letting eliminated fencers leave the field safely, etc). If the match has been paused, it will be resumed via countdown.

GEAR REQUIREMENTS: Protective equipment will be inspected at the start of the event. Weapons will be provided by IGX organizers. The Tournament Lead will 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 (non-padded) jackets are not acceptable for longsword.
 - 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
- Purpose-Built Longsword Gloves
 - Light gloves and lacrosse gloves are not sufficient. No Red Dragons. Thokks allowed if Longsword Peripheral is attached.
 - Five-fingered gloves are permitted, but are expressly not recommended.
- Groin Protection
 - Required if anatomically appropriate
- **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, their team will fence without them in the next match. 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.

Weapons: For the safety of fencers, all weapons must be held with heavy gloves suitable for steel longsword fencing unless otherwise noted. Two of each weapon will be provided and competitors will draw lots prior to their match. Fencers within each team may swap weapons with each other.

- Steel Longsword
- Steel Arming Sword + Buckler (fencer may use a soft glove of their own for the buckler hand)
- Staff - PARRY ONLY
- Spear - THRUST AND PARRY ONLY
- Steel Sabre
- Cloak + Parrying Dagger

SCENARIOS: These will be randomly drawn prior to each match. The exact nature of these scenarios will vary, but all contain the possibility of asymmetrical combat based on available weapons or winning conditions. Available scenarios reset after either side of a bracket is completed.

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 penalty

- Yellow Card: Temporary penalty to team, and potential advantage for opposing team.
- Red Card: Ejection of fencer from tournament
- Black Card: Ejection of team 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.
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- **Note on doubles:** If a fencer receives a penalty during a pass that resulted in a double, their scoring action will be negated. They will be eliminated but their opponent will remain in play.
- **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, and we assume that you have!
 - 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 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 forfeit their participation from a match at any time. Forfeiting a match will remove the forfeiting fencer from play for the remainder of the match, with no ability to substitute.
 - 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.