

# FENCING- LONGSWORD, SWORD + BUCKLER, SABER TOURNAMENT RULESET

IGX SPRING 2026

Friday May 29th- Sunday May 31st, 2026  
Danvers Indoor Sports- Danvers, MA, USA

*IGX Spring 2026 will host 6 fencing tournaments. The fencing tournaments and their qualifications for entry are as follows:*

- **Open Longsword:** Any fencer may participate.
- **Open Sword + Buckler:** Any fencer may participate.
- **Open Saber (dueling saber):** Any fencer may participate.
- **GenEq (Gender Equity) Longsword:** Any fencer who is a woman, female, nonbinary, transgender, or other gender that is historically underrepresented and underserved in sports may participate. Please note that GenEq events are held for the purpose of providing a safe community space for fencers of all underrepresented genders to come together in friendly competition, not necessarily for fencers of the same hormonal makeup and/or sex assigned at birth.
- **Wisdom Longsword:** Any fencer aged 40 years or older may participate.
- **Coached Beginners' Longsword:** Any fencer with less than 1 year of HEMA experience (at the time of the tournament) may participate, even if they have competed in other tournaments before. New HEMA fencers with prior experience in other martial arts are encouraged to consult with their coaches to determine whether Coached Beginners' or Open Longsword is best for them. All fencers in Coached Beginners' Longsword will be assigned to an IGX-appointed coach.

*The rules contained in this ruleset apply to all fencing tournaments. There are sections within this ruleset that apply only to certain weapons, and they are marked as such.*

**Questions concerning registration, tournaments, and tournaments rules should be directed to [info@irongateexhibition.com](mailto:info@irongateexhibition.com)**

*IGX values inclusion and accessibility for all fencers. If a fencer requires accommodation for any medical reason, they should reach out to a tournament organizer as soon as possible. We will make every reasonable effort to find solutions for any needed accommodation, but requests made without sufficient notice may not be possible to fulfill. We ask that all requests for accommodations be made at least one month before the event. We will still consider requests made after that time, but cannot guarantee their fulfillment.*

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## Gear Requirements:

*Protective equipment will be inspected at the start of each pool and the start of the finals bracket. 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 for All Events:

- Full Skin Coverage
  - No skin may be exposed- including the back of the calves and the palms of the hands.
- Shoes suitable to athletic activity
- Fencing Mask
  - No dents or holes in the mesh
  - No rust or other major damage
- Back of Head Protection
  - May be integrated into mask or may be a separate piece of equipment
  - No major gaps between back of head protection and mask
- 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, such as MoF jackets, are not acceptable for Longsword or Sword + Buckler. Such jackets are acceptable for Saber. Such jackets must be 350N rated.**
  - 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 on both elbows
- Hard Forearm Protection on both arms
  - Gloves with rigid protection that extends over the majority of the forearms are sufficient.
- Hard Knee Protection on both legs
  - It is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that knee protection extends to the sides of the knees.
- Hard Shin Protection on both legs
- Groin Protection
  - Required if anatomically appropriate
- Gloves (requirements dependent on weapon) on both hands
  - **Longsword:** Purpose-Built Longsword Gloves with hard hand protection
    - Light gloves and lacrosse gloves are not sufficient. No Red Dragons.
  - **Sword + Buckler:** 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 without finger protection, etc.
    - 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.
- **Saber:** The combination of the saber hilt and glove must encase the majority of the sword hand in a layer that is protective against percussive blows. It is highly recommended that fencers wear the heaviest possible glove for their sword and that fencers wear gloves with hard wrist joint protection.
  - A light glove may be worn on the sword hand only in conjunction with a demi-gauntlet. If wearing a light glove on the sword hand, a medium/padded glove must still be worn on the off-hand. It is highly recommended that gloves have hard fingertip protection.
- **Weapon Requirements:**
  - **Longsword**
    - Must be a purpose- built longsword feder
      - Blunt longswords are not acceptable
      - Kriegsmessers and katanas are not acceptable.
      - Schiltless feders are permitted
    - Blade must flex at or below 40 lbs (hard limit)
      - Flex measurement will be taken from the crossguard
      - It is recommended that blades flex at or below 35 lbs
    - Must be within 31-44 inches in blade length (hard limits)
    - Blade must be straight
      - Blades with major warps will not be permitted
    - Must have a crossguard
      - Siderings are allowed, but guards with any greater complexity than two siderings will not be permitted.
    - Blade must be free of rust, burrs, spikes, and all other major damage
    - Blade should have an enlarged tip (EX. rolled, swelled, or spatulated tip)
      - Use of metal, plastic, or leather to enlarge the tip is acceptable. Rubber tips are NOT acceptable.
  - **Sword + Buckler**
    - **Swords:**
      - No MoF, musketeer, or triangular blades allowed
      - Blade must flex at or below 35 lbs (hard limit)

- Flex measurement will be taken from the crossguard (or equivalent)
- It is recommended that blades flex at or below 30 lbs
- Blade must be no more than 37 inches in length (hard limit)
  - Blade measurement will be taken from the crossguard (or equivalent)
- Weapon must be a minimum of 825g (hard limit)
- Purposefully curved blades are permitted, but 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
- Blade should have an enlarged tip (EX. rolled, swelled, or spatulated tip)
  - Use of metal, plastic, or leather to enlarge the tip is acceptable. Rubber tips are NOT acceptable.
- **Bucklers:**
  - Maximum length of 16 inches in the longest dimension (including diagonal measurements) (hard limit)
  - Buckler may be made of wood, plastic, metal, hardened leather, or other rigid and shatter-resistant materials
  - Bucklers may not have any major protrusions on their face (other than a boss and necessary hardware), such as a spike or ornaments designed to catch a blade
    - Bucklers may be curved outwards or inwards
  - Non-circular bucklers are permitted
  - The buckler must be free from any cracks, holes, significant dents or warps, rust, or other major damage
- **Saber**
  - No MoF, musketeer, or triangular blades allowed
  - Saber must have- at minimum- a bell guard. Swords with greater hand protection are permitted.
  - Saber must not be unreasonably forward-weighted, and must be reasonably described as a dueling saber.
  - Saber weight may be no greater than 750g (hard limit)
  - Blade must flex at or below 25 lbs (hard limit)
    - Flex will be taken from the guard
    - It is recommended that blades flex at or below 20 lbs
  - Purposefully curved blades are permitted, but blades with major warps will not be permitted

- Blade must be free of rust, burrs, spikes, and all other major damage
- Blade should have an enlarged tip (EX. rolled, swelled, or spatulated tip)
  - Use of metal, plastic, or leather to enlarge the tip is acceptable. Rubber tips are NOT acceptable.
- **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 10 in pools, 15 in finals). 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 (10 in pools, 15 in finals). 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.

## 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.*

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

*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!*

**Tournament organizers reserve the right to alter tournament structure for any event at any time. The standard tournament structure will be as follows:**

### **Pools:**

- All competitors will fence in two rounds of pools. Pool rosters will be announced at the beginning of the pool round.
  - We will aim to place 5-6 fencers per pool. Exact pool size may vary based on participant numbers.
  - The first round of pools will be seeded based on HEMA Ratings (snake draft). The second round of pools will be seeded based on ranking from the 1st round (snake draft).
  - Points will accrue across both rounds of pools, and the top fencers following pools will proceed to elimination pools.
    - Approximately the top  $\frac{2}{3}$  of fencers will proceed to elimination pools. If a tournament has  $\frac{2}{3}$  or less of the posted registration cap, all fencers will proceed to elimination pools.
  - In pools, fencers will be ranked based on points accrued against them. Ties in pools will be broken, in order, through the following methods:
    - Lowest average doubles per match
    - Highest percentage of matches won
    - Lowest number of cards

### **Elimination Pools:**

- Following pools, the top fencers (described above) will proceed to elimination pools.
  - There will be 4 fencers per pool in the elimination round.
  - Elimination pools will be seeded based on the combined ranking of both rounds of pools (snake draft).
  - Points will accrue over the single round of elimination pools, and the top fencers following elimination pools will proceed to finals.
    - In all tournaments, the top 8 fencers in elimination pools will proceed to finals.
  - In elimination pools, fencers will be ranked based on points accrued against them. Ties in pools will be broken, in order, through the following methods:
    - Lowest average doubles per match
    - Highest percentage of matches won
    - Lowest number of cards

### **Finals Bracket:**

- Following elimination pools, the top fencers (described above) will proceed to a single-elimination finals bracket.
  - The highest seeded fencers will be seeded with the lowest seeded fencers within the bracket.
  - In the finals bracket, fencers will be ranked based on direct elimination. The fencers who lost to the 1st and 2nd place fencers will fence each other to decide 3rd and 4th place. 5th-8th place will be tiebroken, in order, through the following methods:
    - Highest number of scoring actions made in their bracket match
    - Lowest number of doubles in their bracket match
    - Highest elimination pool placement

**Note:** The Coached Beginners' Tournament will use a different tournament structure from the other longsword tournaments. The Coached Beginners' Tournament structure will be as follows:

- Each coach will be assigned a team of 5 fencers (fencers assigned at random, and adjusted for club makeup).
  - Each coach will have 30 minutes to spend talking with and working with their team of fencers privately, during which time coaches will run their team through a warmup, learn about each fencer's background, experience, and goals, and form a plan with each fencer for their matches.

- Each fencer will fence in team pools against fencers not on their team. There will be no finals round, and the top 8 medalists will be calculated based on pool scores.
- In the Coached Beginner's Tournament, there will be additional awards for the team who performed the best and their coach.

Each match will consist of multiple passes- passes will continue until either fencer has accumulated a certain number of points for the match.

- In pools and elimination pools, a fencer accumulating a total of 10 points will end the match.
- In finals bracket matches, a fencer accumulating a total of 15 points will end the match.

Points will cap at the quantities of points listed above. There will be no time limit per pass, and passes will continue until a scoring action is made (including doubles). Rings will be 25' circles. Fencers will begin each pass at designated starting lines at opposing ends of the ring.

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

## Seated Fencing Accommodations:

*In all fencing tournaments, any fencer may opt to fence their matches seated. If a fencer opts to fence seated, they must conduct all following matches from a seated position. A fencer who starts a tournament seated may not switch to standing. A fencer who starts the tournament standing may switch to seated, but may not switch back after making that decision. A fencer who wishes to fence seated should inform the tournament organizer.*

### **A fencer who is scheduled to fence a seated fencer will be given the option to fence in one of two formats:**

1. Both fencers may fence seated. The Seated Fencing Set-Up and Match Protocol defined below will be followed.
2. The fencer may fence standing against the seated fencer. The standing fencer will be contained to a 3ftx3ft square, defined by a wooden boundary. They may move however they wish within that square, so long as they stay within it. The usual protocol for finding distance in seated matches will be followed, except that the standing fencer will stand in the marked center of their square. The usual targeting for seated fencing matches will apply to both fencers. Chairs are mounted on a 12" high platform, and so are at a height that is comparable to an average person's standing height.

### **Seated Fencing Set-Up and Match Protocol:**

*A seated match will begin with both fencers seated in parafencing chairs provided by IGX. The chairs will be angled so that each fencer's dominant arm is forward.*

#### **- Rules and Scoring:**

- In seated matches, the torso below the ribs and the legs will be off target. Striking the legs will be subject to penalty.
  - To define the target area, a piece of duct tape will be placed on the front of each fencer's jacket. All areas from the ribs and up will be on target (in accordance with the legal targets defined below).
- In seated matches, all carding and penalty rules will apply as usual.
  - All scoring rules will apply as usual, and all scoring actions (other than ringouts) that are defined within the ruleset are valid as usual.
  - If a standing fencer steps out of their square, the pass will be reset without score. Repeated resets caused by stepping out of the square or intentional resets caused by stepping out of the square

are subject to penalty. Fencers may not step on top of or over the wooden boundary. Fencers may touch the inside edge of the wooden boundary.

- Judges will start and stop passes as usual.
  - All gear requirements will apply as usual.
  - Fencers will wear seatbelts to strap them into the chairs.
    - Fencers may not attempt to stand up from their chair during a pass. Doing so is subject to penalty.
    - If a fencer falls out of their chair or their seatbelt comes undone, a safety hold will be called, and the pass will be reset.
    - While fencers may not stand up from their chair, they may lean or move their upper body in any way necessary, so long as they remain seated.
      - Lifting the body completely from the chair is prohibited (some part of the legs/hips/rear must maintain contact with the chair at all times).
  - A fencer's feet must remain on the footrest of the chair, and their body must maintain contact with the seat of the chair at all times. If a fencer requires a higher footrest to maintain foot contact, one will be provided. If a fencer is unable to keep their feet planted on a footrest, they should alert a tournament organizer so that a suitable accommodation may be made.
- Distance:**
- To find the distance for the match, the fencer with greater reach will sit upright (not leaning forward or backward) and extend their dominant arm forward, with their elbow bent at a 90° angle. The fencer with lesser reach will sit upright in their chair (not leaning forward or backward), and extend their weapon in front of them. The chairs should be adjusted until proper distance is achieved. The proper distances are as follows:
    - **Longsword:** the tip of the weapon should just touch the outside of the opponent's elbow
    - **Sword + Buckler and Saber:** The tip of the weapon should just touch the inside crease of the opponent's elbow
- Start Position:**
- At the beginning of each pass, fencers will assume the relevant start position. From that position, the director will announce "Fence!" and the pass will begin and proceed as usual. Start positions are as follows:

- **Longsword:** Fencers will assume a neutral bind position with their swords pointed upwards (fencers may not apply pressure on their opponent's blade).
- **Sword + Buckler and Saber:** Fencers will assume a guard with their swords pointed up and unextended. The weapons may not touch. Swords may be held to the left, right, or center of the body. Bucklers may be held in any position.
- **In the Saber tournament, chairs will be equipped with a grab bar for the non-dominant hand. Holding onto this bar is optional. The grab bars will not be equipped for the Longsword or Sword + Buckler tournaments.**

## 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 2 points per match is ranked ABOVE a fencer with an average of 5 points per match.*

*Each time a scoring action is made against a fencer, they will be assessed a specified number of points. Placement is dictated by the least number of points.*

### The following actions are worth points:

- **3pts:**
  - Scoring via grappling
  - Disarms (longsword and saber only)
  - All blows to the head and neck, unless otherwise specified. For the sake of judging clarity, hits to the top of the shoulders inside the shoulder seam of the jacket will be scored as hits to the head.
  - Thrusts to the torso, unless otherwise specified
    - The torso is defined as any area inside the shoulder seam of the jacket (standard jacket)
- **2pts:**
  - All blows to the arms
    - The arms are defined as the area outside the shoulder seam of a jacket (standard jacket)
  - Cuts to the torso, unless otherwise specified
  - All blows to the legs
  - One-handed thrusts to any target (longsword only)
  - Ring-outs

### Target Areas + Target substitution:

*If a fencer attempts to prevent a deep-target hit by blocking with a shallow-target or off-target area, the hit will be scored as the highest value target.*

- **Legal 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 will be subject to penalty.
- **Note:** Cuts made to the guard (including siderings), strong of the blade, or hilt will be considered parried, and will not be considered scoring actions. Glancing or incidental contact with a legal target area made after contact to the strong or hilt will not score. Contact made through the strong, guard, or hilt to a legal target area will score in the case of an insufficient parry.
- **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.)

## Scoring Actions:

*All scoring actions will be judged based on **intentionality**. There are no force or speed requirements for any action, but actions that do not demonstrate clear intentionality will not score. Incidental contact will not score. Scoring actions should demonstrate controlled and clear contact with the opponent. Fencers should use no more force than is necessary to accomplish an action or land a strike. Fencers must be in control of their force, their fencing actions, their bodies, their behavior, and their equipment at all times.*

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

- **Cuts:**
  - Cuts must land with the edge of the blade. Contact made with the flat of the blade will not score.
  - While there is no specified travel requirement for cuts, cuts should demonstrate a sufficient amount of travel to be clearly intentional. 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 intentional.
  - 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. Cuts that only graze the target with the very tip of the blade will not score.
- **Longsword Only:**
  - Cuts must be made with both hands on the weapon. A one-handed cut which makes contact will be penalized, as will obvious attempts at one-handed cuts.

- **Thrusts:**

- Thrusts must land with the point of the blade.
- 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. Passe thrusts will not score.
- Thrusts may be completed during grappling actions, and will score dependent on the target area.
- One handed thrusts are valid in all weapon categories.

- **Slices:**

- Slices are only valid if made to the **hands, wrists, arms, shoulders, neck, face, or head** (the “U” shape formed from hand to hand).
- 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 submissions of any kind are prohibited. Any attempts at such will be subject to penalty.
- 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 legal parts of 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 grab, 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.
- In all weapon categories, fencers may deliver thrusts while grappling, but may not deliver a cut while grappling. 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.
- **Landing a thrust while grappling**
  - Delivering a cut while grappling will be subject to penalty.
  - Thrusts made while grappling will score based on the target area.
- **Sword + Buckler Only:**
  - Striking with the buckler is NOT permitted to any part of the body.
    - Strikes with the buckler are immediately subject to a Black Card.
    - Performing other grappling actions with the buckler, such as blade suppression and pushes/wraps using the buckler, are permitted.
  - Because the Sword + Buckler tournament allows complex hilts, actions which would 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, and attempting to perform a disarm. This rule applies no matter the weapon type of a specific fencer.
- **Disarms:**

- If a fencer drops their weapon for any reason other than those regarding safety, it will be considered a disarm.
  - EX. A fencer's weapon is taken from them by their opponent during a grapple. This is a disarm.
  - 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.
- **Sword + Buckler:**
  - Disarms are not scoring actions, and attempting to perform a disarm on an opponent is not legal. Dropping the sword or buckler will result in a safety reset. A fencer who intentionally drops their sword and/or buckler to force resets will be subject to penalty.
- **Ring Outs:**
  - A ring out occurs when a fencer steps one full foot out of the ring.
    - The paint marking the ring is considered in bounds.
  - **Note:** Any blows made during the same tempo as a ring out will not score.
  - If both fencers are engaged in grappling and one or both fencers step out of the ring, the pass will be reset without score.
    - Physically pushing another fencer out of the ring is illegal and will be subject to penalty. Intentionally or repeatedly ringing out to avoid a grappling action will be subject to penalty.
- **Doubles:**
  - If both fencers land blows within the lockout time, a double will be scored. In the instance of a double, both actions score fully and both fencers will receive the relevant points against them.
    - EX. Fencer A lands a cut to the head and Fencer B lands a thrust to the hands. Fencer A takes 2 points against them, and Fencer B takes 3 points against them.
- **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 in the same **tempo** as 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 initiate their action after the initial blow lands.
- A return blow is considered **in tempo** if it is already in motion before the initial blow lands.

## Penalties:

*The goal of penalties within this ruleset are to minimize, correct, and 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 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. Judges should consider each situation individually. Judges should contact the Tournament Lead if they are unsure about a penalty decision.*

## Levels of Penalty:

**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 12 points.**

- Verbal Warning: no point penalty
- Yellow Card: 3 point penalty in pools + elims, 5 point penalty in finals (counts towards match total)
- Red Card: point penalty equivalent to the number of points required to end a match (10 in pools + elims, 15 in finals) (counts towards match total).
  - Yes- this means you could potentially end a match with up to 20 points in pools. Yes- this is very bad for your score. Don't get a Red Card.
- 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.
  - Judges must consult the Tournament Lead before issuing a Black Card.

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.

- Cards will be tracked throughout the entire tournament, and judges are encouraged to escalate cards if a fencer has been carded in a prior pool.

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 a card 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 an opponent during a grapple)
- Striking any off target area
- Striking with any part of the hilt
- Striking with the strong of the blade
- 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 uncontrolled attacks
  - 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), self-calling, and delaying a match will be considered disobeying the judges.
- 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
  - Gloating or excessive boasting
  - Poor sportmanship
  - 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!
- While actions taken outside of the ring are not always 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.
- 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.

### **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 significant 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. Points assessed against 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 10 in pools + elims, maximum 15 in finals) 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 displays of celebration or anger will be 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

## igXhibition Points (XP)

*Fencers who demonstrate particularly skillful or artful fencing may be awarded igXhibition Points (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 elims or 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!
- Beautiful or entertaining fencing
- **Fencing with style and art-** bouts that would make it into an IGX highlights reel!

## Judge Rating Program

At IGX Spring 2026, competitors will be asked to rate their judges following each tournament round. This policy details the process by which those ratings will be collected, their use and storage, and the rights of staff members regarding data privacy, data sharing, and participation in this program.

### Purpose:

- IGX has implemented its judges rating program for the following purposes:
  1. Recognition + award for high performance. The top rated judges will be publicly congratulated and receive prize items as recognition for their performance as judges.
  2. Identification of skilled judges for future event staffing recruitment. IGX organizers may invite judges to staff at future events based on high ratings. However, judges who are rated poorly will NOT be punished in any way, and no individual will be barred from volunteering as a staff member at future events on the basis of previous event ratings. If a serious complaint regarding behavior or conduct of a judge is filed through a ratings submission, that will be considered an issue separate from a judge's ratings, and punitive or expulsive action may be taken by IGX organizers.
  3. Provision of a productive avenue for competitors to lodge complaints or express frustration with judges. This system allows fencers to freely and anonymously express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with judges, while encouraging them away from direct confrontation with or criticism expressed to the judge in question.
- Based on its pilot testing in 2025, it is the belief of the IGX organization team that the above purposes are achieved by the rating program and that those purposes are sufficient cause to continue pursuing the rating program.

### Process:

- Following each tournament round, competitors will be asked to submit ratings of the judges that judged their matches. While it will be highly encouraged that all fencers do so, it will not be a mandatory practice.
- Ratings submissions will be made on paper, so that any submissions made for a judge who has opted out of the ratings program (more info in "Judge Rights") may be destroyed without a digital trail. Submissions will be made anonymously. A member of the IGX management team will input all handwritten ratings submissions into a digital spreadsheet.
- Competitors will rate judges on a scale of 1-5 in the following categories:
  - Judging Accuracy
  - Rules Knowledge + Application
  - Volume + Ring Presence
  - Ring Culture + Safety
  - Comments (fencers may opt to write in any comments they have)

- Averages will be calculated for each category and overall. Prizes will be awarded to top performing judges (exact number and type to be determined based on availability and event resources).

### **Data Storage + Privacy**

- Judge ratings will be stored and calculated in a private spreadsheet accessible only to IGX management. IGX staff and planning team members who are not part of the management team will not have access to this document or data without explicit written permission from the rated judge(s). No individual, group, event, database, organization, or other entity outside of IGX will be granted access to this document or data without explicit written permission from the rated judge(s). After digital data entry is complete, paper ratings submissions will be destroyed.
- If a member of the IGX management team leaves the management team, they will lose access to any judge rating data that they previously had access to.
- Data for event-wide ratings (the overall rating of all judges in a tournament) may be aggregated and tracked year-to-year.

### **Judge Rights**

- Judges have the right to opt out of inclusion in the ratings program. Any individual who wishes to opt out should inform an IGX management team member in writing. The general IGX email address is [info@irongateexhibition.com](mailto:info@irongateexhibition.com)
  - 2026 Management Team:
    - Jeff Tsay
    - Ella Rose (preferred contact for tournament staff)
    - Sarah Zordan
    - Sean Thompson
- Judges who opt out of the rating program:
  - Will not have any ratings data collected, stored, or calculated. Any paper ratings submissions made for a judge who has opted out will be destroyed and will not be entered into any digital document.
  - Are not eligible for any performance-based judge recognition or prize. They may still be included in general staff raffles.
  - Will not have their names or opt out status made public.
- Judges have the right to request a summary of their ratings. Upon request, IGX will share an individual's total average rating, category average ratings, and any comments submitted. IGX will not share this data unless requested.

## Staff Roles + Assignments

### The Tournament Leads will be the following:

- Open Longsword: Ella Rose
- GenEq Longsword: Drew MacKeil
- Wisdom Longsword: Ella Rose
- Beginners' Longsword: Ella Rose
- Open Sword + Buckler: Ella Rose
- Open Saber: Ella Rose
- Open Ringen: Shane Scallin
- GenEq Ringen: Shane Scallin

*Other staff assignments and staff training materials can be found on the Staff Resources page at [irongateexhibition.com](http://irongateexhibition.com). To volunteer to staff a tournament, please reach out to Ella Rose (IGX Lead Tournament Organizer) at [ella.rose936@gmail.com](mailto:ella.rose936@gmail.com). Staff volunteers receive a free IGX t-shirt and reduced event registration pricing.*

### Staff roles:

- **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 elims + 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 check-in
- **Scorekeeper**
  - Oversees table staff
  - Compiles and records score, XP, and penalty data from all pools
  - Calculates overall standings and finalists
  - Handles pool seeding and pool rosters creation
- **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

- Directors are directly responsible for maintaining the safety and atmosphere of their ring.
- **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
  - Highlights matches for XP, as directed by judges
  - Announces fencers currently fencing and fencers that are “on deck”
  - Announces match ends and matches winners
- **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- as well as one table staff. Each 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 at their starting lines.*

### - 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.
  - 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, and should do so when they see a potential scoring action.**

- 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.
  - “What happened during that pass?”
    - If judges are unsure about a safety/behavior/penalty issue, they may individually ask each fencer to describe what happened during the pass. They may not ask leading questions (ex. “Did they hit you in the back of the head?” “Did you try to throw them?”), and they must speak to each fencer privately. Judges will ultimately have to make final decisions, but they are encouraged to take into account fencer feedback when considering safety/behavior/penalty decisions.
    - **Judges may not ask fencers for feedback when considering scoring decisions.**
  - “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, no identifiable scoring action, etc.
  - A hold was caused for a safety-related reason
  - No progress is being made in the bout
    - EX. grappling is not progressing towards control, etc.
- When a pass is reset, fencers must return to their starting line and begin the new pass from their starting line.

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

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