

Ruleset of the tournament

“Krkavčí podzimní fechtík”

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1 Goal

The purpose of the tournaments is to compare the fencing abilities of the participants in a sport form. The rules are meant to set terms of friendly competition in such a way that defeating an opponent requires a display of technical, tactical, and physical abilities, whilst also keeping all participants as safe as possible.

2 Basic terminology

Assault	Friendly fight of two fencers that is started and ended by an assigned judge. An assault can result in one, both, or none of the fencers being awarded a point.
Exchange	Basic unit of an assault. An exchange starts with the first offensive action and ends either by a hit, or by increasing the distance between the fencers such that it is impossible to immediately continue renewing the attack, or possibly by being ended by a judge for other reasons (e.g. due to compromised safety or because of leaving the arena).
Bout	A series of assaults between two competitors in which the points awarded in individual assaults are recorded, and the outcome of the bout is determined based on them. Only one fencer is declared a winner of a bout.
Tournament	Set of many bouts arranged in a way to determine the overall winner among the participants.
Guard	Position of fencer's body and weapon such that they are ready to defend themselves or attack.
Tempo	Elementary unit of time that is needed to perform one simple fencing action.
Measure	Mutual distance of the fencers.

3 Fencing arena

- a) A fencing arena must provide equal conditions for both fencers. This applies mainly to lighting conditions and ground surface.
- b) A fencing arena has the shape of a rectangle with the dimensions of 6 m by 9 m. The border of an arena must be clearly marked by a solid line, and the closest obstacle can be no closer than 1.5 m.
- c) Fencers start each assault on marks that are each placed 2 m from the centre of the arena in the opposite directions and in the direction of the longitudinal axis of the fencing arena.

4 Mandatory equipment

- a) Each fencer is responsible for their own equipment. Unsuitable equipment forbids the fencer from starting or continuing their participation in the tournament.
- b) The mandatory equipment is checked and approved by a judge, who has the right to expel any fencer to fix their equipment to meet the tournament standard in a 5 min time. If the fencer is unable to fix their equipment in the set amount of time, the fencer receives a black card.

4.1 Head

- a) Fencing mask.
- b) Back of head and cervical spine protector.
- c) Neck protector with a hard layer protecting the larynx.

4.2 Hands, arms, and torso

- a) Each fencer is required to use gloves specially designed for HEMA, or gloves suitable for a sporting-historical fencing.
- b) The gloves must not have gaps in reinforcement and the surface must not be made of metal.
- c) Gloves are not required in the palm area, but the palms must not be bare, lacking any protection.
- d) Torso must be protected with an unbroken fencing jacket with padding layers under most of its surface.
- e) The jacket must be made of durable material resistant to piercing. The jacket must not have gaps in armpits.
- f) Firm elbow and forearm protectors are mandatory. They can be integrated in the fencing jacket.
- g) There must be no unprotected area between the gloves and the rest of the protectors.
- h) Ladies are required to use a firm breast/chest protector.

4.3 Legs and groin

- a) Groin protector is mandatory for gentlemen, recommended for ladies.
- b) Both knees and shins must be protected by a solid protector from the sides and the front. The whole surface of legs must be covered.
- c) Hips have to be protected by padded pants or by overlaying fencing jacket.
- d) Thighs and upper legs must be protected with durable pants.

5 Weapons

5.1 Long sword

- a) Only straight-bladed, European-type swords are allowed. A long sword must consist of a double-edged blade, crossguard, hilt, and a pommel. The blade must be made of proper steel.
- b) The blade must be safe – undamaged, without chipped-out pieces, breaks, and bends. Edges must be dull, including the schilt.
- c) The crossguard must be straight with rounded ends. Side rings or any other modified crossguards are prohibited.
- d) The pommel must be smooth and without protrusion.
- e) The tip of the blade must not be sharp. It has to be rolled into a cylinder, widened, or its safety must be ensured by other means.
- f) Minimum width of the point is 1 cm.
- g) Total length of a sword must be in the range 120–140 cm.
- h) Weight of a sword must be in the range from 1500–1800 g.
- i) The center of gravity of a sword must be placed 9 cm or closer from the crossguard towards the tip of the blade.
- j) The flexibility in of the blade must be in the range 9–18 kg. For the description of the flexibility measurement procedure see appendix A.
- k) The fencer must allow the tournament organizer to wrap the tip of the blade with a bright-coloured tape.

6 Bout

6.1 Starting, stopping, and the course of a bout

- a) The fencer that is called first takes place by the right-hand side of the judge.
- b) When the judge calls “On guard!” (or “Na střeh!”), both fencers take stance on their marks placed 2 m from the centre of the fencing arena (see Section 3).
- c) Then the judge asks “Ready?” (or “Připraveni?”), and in the case of positive answers or if there are no negative answers, the judge starts an assault by calling “Fight!” (or “Boj!”).
- d) fencers must not take any action or move from their mark until the signal “Fight!” (or “Boj!”) is called.

- e) The judge stops the assault by a gesture and signal “Stop!” (or “Stát!”), the assistant judge can stop the assault only in the case of safety threat.
- f) Fencers are obliged to stop their actions and remain at their current position when the “Stop!” (or “Stát!”) signal is called.
- g) Offensive action started after an assault has been stopped is penalized with a yellow card.
- h) Reasons for stopping an assault are:
 - (i) a valid hit by at least one fencer,
 - (ii) an invalid hit which would complicate the evaluation of any following actions,
 - (iii) leaving the fencing arena by both feet; leaving the fencing arena by fencer’s own motion is penalized with a yellow card; if a fencer is physically pushed out of the arena by their opponent, no penalization is issued,
 - (iv) end of time limit,
 - (v) safety threat due to equipment failure or any circumstances threatening the health of the fencers, judges, spectators, or anybody else,
 - (vi) situation has become so confusing that the assault could not be properly evaluated,
 - (vii) a fencer has requested the assault to be stopped by raising their hand; if the judge then finds the reasons for stopping as unwarranted, they will penalize the fencer with a yellow or red card (depending on the severity).
- i) A fencer is obliged to enter the fencing arena in 1 minute after their bout has been announced. If the fencer fails to do so, the judge can penalize them with a yellow card. In case of prolonged delay (2 or more minutes), the judge can penalize them with a red card. If the fencer does not enter the arena in 5 minutes since the announcement of the bout, the judge is allowed to scratch the bout to the advantage of the opponent (score of 0:5, formally 5 red cards).
- j) All valid hits are rewarded with 1 point.
- k) In case of a double-hit, both fencers are rewarded with 1 point.

6.2 Length of a bout

- a) The time of a bout is measured as a clean fencing time, i.e. the stopwatch starts with the signal “Fight!” and pauses with the signal “Stop!”.
- b) The stopwatch that measures the time can either be visible to both fencers, or the judge/timekeeper is obliged to inform the fencers about the remaining time following their polite request.
- c) Group phase bouts (see Appendix B.1) last for 3 minutes clean fencing time, or until one of the fencers reaches 5 points.
- d) Elimination phase bouts (see Appendix B.2) last 2x3 minutes clean fencing time with a 1 minute long pause, or until one of the fencers reaches 7 points.
- e) If both fencers have equal score after the time limit has elapsed, the judge decides an “advantage” for one of the fencers by a coin toss. The bout is then prolonged by a 1 minute of extra time (3 minutes in final and “small” final bouts) in which the first point for one fencer (i.e. disregarding double-hits) decides the bout. In case no point has been awarded in the extra time, the fencer with the “advantage” is the winner.
- f) A fencer can request a time-out due to valid health condition. If they are not able to continue the bout in 3 minutes, they receive a black card.

7 The judging system

Each bout is managed and evaluated by a single judge. The number of assistant judges is not limited, yet it is customary to have one assistant judge per arena in the group phase, and up to three assistant judges per arena in the elimination phase. Neither the the judges, nor the assistant judges can be video-referees at the same time.

7.1 Judge

- a) Manages the bouts and the course of the group phase in their group, and their assigned elimination-phase bouts.
- b) Is responsible for equipment check in their bouts.
- c) Manages their assigned assistant judges, timekeeping, score record, and video-referees.

- d) Moves around the fencing arena in such way that allows them perfect view of the situations inside.
- e) Issues penalizations (red, yellow, and black cards).
- f) Awards points for actions according to the rules.
- g) Is obliged, at a request, to explain the reasons that led them to the decision on awarding a point, issuing a card, or stopping an assault.

7.2 Assistant judge

- a) Assists the judge in identification and evaluation of the hits. Their responsibility is to watch the bout from different angles and remember hits they see.
- b) If an assistant judge sees a hit, they raise a hand. Based on this, the judge may or may not stop the assault. After every “Stop!” signal they signal to the judge the evaluation of the hit(s) from their point of view.
- c) Assistant judge is not responsible for awarding the points.
- d) Assistant judge helps the judge with equipment check and instructing fencers during their assigned bouts.

8 Scoring hits

- a) A hit is awarded one point.
- b) Simultaneous hit, or double-hit, is awarded one point for each of the fencers. A double-hit is a situation when the fencers hit each other in a tempo that can be considered simultaneous.
- c) The previous point does not apply in the situation where the score of (at least) one of the fencers is equal to 4(6 in elimination) points. In such situation, no fencer gains a point from the double-hit (it is therefore impossible to win a bout by a double-hit).
- d) A judge can award a point for an action only if this action started between the signals “Fight!” and “Stop!”.
- e) After stopping the assault, the judge evaluates and analyzes the actions of the last exchange. Then they evaluate whether a point is awarded to none, one, or both of the fencers. The judge must be able to verbally describe the last action for which they award the point(s). They must be able to explain to the fencers which actions and hits they saw.
- f) A judge must not award a point if they don’t know what they saw, they are not sure about the time sequence, or the place of the hit. In elimination bouts, they have the right to consult a video recording.

8.1 Valid hits

- a) A hit is a contact of the weapon with the surface of the opponen’ts body or sword hilt (including the pommel).
- b) A hit can be valid or invalid.
- c) For a hit to be valid, it must land on a valid surface, i.e. the surface of the whole body (including protective equipment) except for:
 - (i) legs from the ankle down,
 - (ii) back of head and cervical spine.
- d) Intentional covering of valid surfaces with an invalid one is penalized by a red card.
- e) A hit can be achieved with:
 - (i) Cut – by the blade edge or flat on the whole valid surface. A cut must exhibit a visually distinctive trajectory, and must correspond to a movement that would carry the potential to injure the hit part of the body (i.e. the hit on the head with the flat is counted as a valid hit).
 - (ii) Thrust – by the tip of the blade on the whole valid surface. A valid thrust must be executed in such a way that it is noticeable, i.e. it exhibits a bend of the blade, or the movement of the blade should carry the potential of penetrating the opponen’ts body.
 - (iii) Slice – by the blade edge on the whole valid surface. A slice is either a pulling or pushing motion with a pressure on the valid surface and of a noticeable length.
 - (iv) Pommel strike – only into the mesh of the mask.

- f) Grabbing the opponent's blade, if it is static, is allowed and is not considered a hit.
- g) A valid hit must be executed with sufficient vigor, in case of weak/invalid hit the judge does not have to stop the assault.
- h) A hit by a cut that lands on the target by bending the blade over a parry or crossguard is not considered a valid hit.
- i) The strength of an attack must be appropriate and must not exceed an acceptable level. Unnecessary brutality can be penalized by a yellow, red, and the black card.
- j) A fencer has the right to acknowledge a hit they have received by stepping away from the opponent and raising their unarmed hand with a verbal acknowledgement of the hit at the same time. However, the judge is not obliged to award a point for such hit, but they must be able to explain their decision.

8.2 Special actions

A fencer can be awarded a point also for actions that have not resulted in a hit, if a situation generally recognized as dominance occurs.

- a) Dominance by disarming – a fencer disarms their opponent, i.e. they make them not hold the weapon. In such case the judge immediately stops the assault. Losing a weapon by fencer's own mistake is not considered a dominance, and the judge will not award a point in such case.

8.3 Close quarter combat

- a) Any form of wrestling where the opponent's centre of gravity is manipulated, or a pressure on their joints is exerted, or the fencers enter a clinch is forbidden.
- b) If both fencers get into a distance that does not allow the use of weapons, the judge stops the bout.
- c) Kicks, and punches with an arbitrary part of the body (fist, elbow, knee, shoulder, etc.) are forbidden.

9 Video-recording

- a) Video-recording is necessary in the elimination phase of the tournament.
- b) Every fencer has the right to request evaluation of the video-recording of the last exchange in each assault. They lose this right until the end of the bout, if the decision is not changed based on the video-recording request by the respective fencer.
- c) Request for evaluation of the video-recording can be called after the judge announced the decision on awarding the point.
- d) After reviewing the recording, the judge has the right to change their decision, or uphold the original one.
- e) If the judge upholds the original decision, the fencer loses the right for video-recording review in that bout.
- f) The judge can request a video review unlimited number of times before making the decision on awarding the points for the last assault. After the video has been reviewed and new assault started, it is no longer possible to request a review of an older recording.

10 Cards and penalizations

- a) Yellow card is a warning. Yellow card is effective in the given bout (does not transfer to other bouts).
- b) Red card results in a point being awarded to the opponent. Red card is effective in the given bout (does not transfer to other bouts).
- c) Black card results in disqualifying the fencer from the tournament.
- d) Following a yellow card, only a red or black card can be issued, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct.
- e) Following a red card, only a red card or black card can be issued, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct.

10.1 Forbidden actions

All actions listed below are penalized by a yellow card. In case of exceptionally serious misconduct, the judge is allowed to penalize the offender with a red or black card.

- a) Attack with a cut or thrust targetting the back of head or cervical spine.
- b) Attack targetting the foot from the ankle below.
- c) Crossguard strike.
- d) Kicks and strikes with any part of the body (fist, elbow, knee, shoulder etc.).
- e) Tearing off the mask or any other protectors.
- f) Throwing the opponent, if their centre of gravity is lifted up.
- g) Leverages (pressure on the joints) or turning into a grapple.
- h) Attacking an unarmed opponent.
- i) Agressivity or use of excessive strength.
- j) Unsportsmanlike conduct, including intentional damage of the sports hall or its equipment.

10.2 Leaving the arena

- a) A fencer who does not touch the fencing arena with neither of their feet and, at the same time, touches the surface outside of the arena with any part of their body, has left the arena.
- b) Leaving the arena is penalized by a yellow card (if the fencer is physically pushed out of the arena by the opponent, no penalization is issued).
- c) A hit received in the tempo of leaving the arena is valid.
- d) A hit dealt after leaving the arena is invalid.

Appendix A

Blade flexibility measurement

The flexibility of the blade is measured using a weight scale following this procedure:

- a) The sword is put vertically on the scale with the tip of the blade down. If the scale allows it, it is now zeroed, otherwise the reading on the scale is recorded (the weight of the sword).
- b) The measurer pushes down on the pommel of the sword vertically – the blade will start to bend and the scale will show increasing weight.
- c) At some moment, the increase in the indicated weight will slow down significantly – at this moment the reading on the scale is recorded.
- d) If it was not possible to zero the scale (see point 1.), the weight of the sword is subtracted from the recorded number.
- e) The resulting number is the flexibility of the blade.

Appendix B

Tournament format

- a) The tournament is split into 2 phases – group and elimination.
- b) A number (determined by the organizer) of best fencers from the group phase advances into the elimination phase.
- c) It holds in all phases of the tournament that if a fencer should start in two consecutive bouts without any other bout taking place between those two, they have the right to rest up to 5 minutes.

B.1 Group phase

- a) The organizer splits all fencers into groups in such a way that the sizes of the groups differ at most by 1.
- b) Each fencer has a bout with all other fencers in their group exactly once.
- c) After all groups are finished, an ordering of all fencers is established.
- d) The ordering is decided sequentially according to these metrics (in case of equality, the next metric is used):
 - (i) number of victories / number of bouts in the group
 - (ii) number of hits dealt - number of hits received
 - (iii) number of hits dealt
 - (iv) number of hits received
- e) In case of equality of all metrics, the relative ordering is determined by randomly drawing a lot.

B.2 Elimination phase

- a) Fencers are arranged into pairs such that the fencer that was first in the group phase is seeded against the last one, second against the second to the last one, etc.
- b) Each pair has exactly one bout.
- c) Winner of the bout advances to the next round.
- d) The loser finishes in the competition except for the fencers who lost in the second to the last round (semi-finals – 4 remaining competitors). Those go into a bout for the 3rd place in a so-called “small” final.

B.3 Determining the final ordering

- a) In the 1st place is the winner of the final.
- b) In the 2nd place is the loser of the final.
- c) In the 3rd place is the winner of the “small” final.
- d) In the 4th place is the loser of the “small” final.
- e) The following places are occupied by the fencers in a descending order of elimination rounds where they were eliminated. Relative ordering of fencers eliminated in the same elimination round is carried over from the relative ordering of those fencers in the group phase.
- f) The following places are occupied by the fencers who have not advanced into the elimination phase, in the same ordering they ended up in the group phase.