

Ruleset of the tournament

“Krkavčí jarní fechtík”

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Note: In case of any differences between the Czech and English version of this ruleset, the Czech version is the binding one.

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1 Goal

The purpose of the tournament is to compare the fencing abilities of the participants in a sport form. The rules set the 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 piste).
Bout	A series of assaults between two fencers 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.
Tempo	Elementary unit of time that is needed to perform one simple fencing action – step, direct attack, parry, counterattack (if it consists of a single uninterrupted movement).

3 Piste

- a) A piste must provide equal conditions for both fencers. This applies mainly to lighting conditions and ground surface.
- b) A piste has the shape of a rectangle 9 m long and 6 m wide.
- c) The border of a piste must be clearly marked by a solid line, and the closest obstacle can be no closer than 1.5 m, if the construction of the room allows it (all obstacles that can be moved out of this zone must be moved out of this zone).
- d) Fencers start each assault on marks that are each placed 2 m from the centre of the piste in the opposite directions along the longitudinal axis of the piste.

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. The entry equipment check is performed at the start of the group phase, additional check can be performed at any time.

4.1 Head

- a) Fencing mask certified at CEN level 2 according to the EN 13567 norm (colloquially called „1600 N“), however the new fastening mechanism introduced in 2018 is not required.
- b) Back of head and cervical spine protector.
- c) Neck protector with a hard layer protecting the larynx, worn directly on the neck under the mask and jacket.

4.2 Hands, arms, and torso

- a) Each fencer is required to use gloves specially designed for HEMA, or gloves suitable for a sport-historical fencing, i.e. notably hard protection of fingers, back of hand, and wrist.
- b) The gloves must not have gaps in reinforcement that would allow a dangerous hit, and the surface must not be made of metal except for joining elements like rivets, grommets etc.

- c) Gloves are not required to be padded 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 with piercing resistance of at least 350 N. The jacket must not have gaps in armpits.
- f) Firm elbow and forearm protectors are mandatory. They can be their own part of the equipment, or be integrated in the fencing jacket or the gloves.
- g) There must be no unprotected area between the gloves and the rest of the protectors.
- h) Firm breast/chest protector is mandatory for ladies, recommended for gentlemen.

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 the 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 resistant to piercing.

5 Weapons

- a) Each fencer is responsible for their own weapons. Unsuitable weapon forbids the fencer from starting or continuing their participation in the tournament.
- b) The weapons are checked and approved by persons appointed by the organizer. The entry weapons check is performed before the start of the tournament, additional check can be performed at any time at a command of a judge.
- c) A weapon that does not pass a check (entry, or additional regardless of the outcome of the entry check) is forbidden to be used (further).
- d) The fencer must allow the tournament organizer to wrap the tip of the blade of the weapon with a brightly coloured tape, and to place a proofing sticker on the weapon.

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 chip-outs, cracks, and bends. Edges must be dull, including the schilt.
- c) The crossguard must be straight with rounded ends, without acute protrusions. Side rings or any other modified crossguards are not allowed.
- d) The pommel must be smooth and without protrusions.
- e) The tip of the blade must be rolled into a cylinder, widened, or its safety must be ensured by other means. In no case can it have sharp edges.
- f) Total length of a sword must be in the range 120–140 cm.
- g) Weight of a sword must be in the range 1450–1800 g.
- h) The center of gravity of a sword must be placed 9 cm or closer from the crossguard towards the tip of the blade.
- i) The stiffness in of the blade must be in the range 9–18 kg. For the description of the stiffness measurement procedure see Appendix A.

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) Both fencers take stance on their marks placed 2 m from the centre of the piste (see Section 3).
- c) Then the judge asks „Ready?“ (or „Připraveni?“), and in the case of positive answers or if there is no negative answer, 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) 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 piste according to Section 8.5,
 - (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) an offense penalizable by a card took place,
 - (viii) a fencer has requested the bout to be interrupted according to Section 8.4.
- h) A fencer is obliged to enter the piste and be ready to fight in 1 minute after their bout has been announced. Each following started minute, when the fencer fails to do so, is considered to be delaying. If the fencer is not ready in 5 minutes since the announcement of the bout, the judge is allowed to scratch the bout to the advantage of the opponent with a score of 0:5 (0:7 in the elimination phase).
- i) All valid hits are rewarded with 1 point.
- j) In case of a double-hit, both fencers are rewarded with 1 point, except for the case when the score is 4:4 in the group phase, or 6:6 in the elimination phase (in such a case no point is awarded).

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 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.

7 The judging system

- a) 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 piste in the group phase, and up to three assistant judges per piste in the elimination phase.
- b) Neither the judges, nor the assistant judges can be video-referees at the same time.

7.1 Collegium of the judges

- a) Interprets the ruleset in disputable situations, and decides situations not covered by the ruleset.
- b) Its decisions are final.
- c) Is composed of all judges judging at the tournament. Assistant judges can give the collegium an advisory opinion, which is not binding for the collegium.
- d) Decides by a simple agreement.

7.2 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 piste 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.

7.3 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 Fight evaluation

8.1 Scoring

- a) A judge can award a point for an action only if this action started between the signals “Fight!” and “Stop!”.
- b) 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.
- c) A hit is awarded one point.
- d) 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, i.e. the attack hitting after the first hit was already started at the moment of the first hit, was not interrupted, and was performed in a single movement (i.e. in a single step, without a feint, etc.).
- e) If a fencer loses their weapon by any means, their opponent receives one point. An exception is losing the weapon after a hit, e.g. a strong thrust and „breaking“ the sword out of the fencer’s hands – in such case no point is awarded for losing the weapon.
- 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 area of the hit.

8.2 Valid hits

- a) A hit is a contact of the blade or pommel of the weapon with the surface of the opponent’s 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) and the hilt of the weapon (including the pommel) except for:
 - (i) legs from the ankle down,
 - (ii) back of head and cervical spine,
 - (iii) hilt of the weapon, if it is held only by one hand.

- d) A hit can be achieved with:
 - (i) Cut – by the edge of the blade or the flat on the whole valid surface, provided the cut exhibits a visually distinctive trajectory, and would have 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 opponent's body.
 - (iii) Slice – by the blade edge on the whole valid surface. A slice has to be an intentional 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, only frontally, not from the side.
- e) Grabbing the opponent's blade, if it is static, is allowed and is not considered a hit.
- f) A valid hit must be executed with sufficient vigor, there has to be an energy transfer into the hit part. In case of weak/invalid hit, the judge does not have to stop the assault.
- g) 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.
- h) The strength of an attack must be appropriate and must not exceed an acceptable level.
- i) 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.

8.3 Close quarter combat

- a) If both fencers get into a distance that does not allow the use of weapons, the judge stops the assault.
- b) 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.
- c) Kicks, and punches with an arbitrary part of the body (fist, elbow, knee, shoulder, etc.) are forbidden.

8.4 Interrupting the course of the bout

- a) The judge can interrupt the course of the bout, if there an equipment failure occurred, or there was an injury, or any other demonstrable medical reason due to which it is not possible to continue in the bout.
- b) The interruption can be requested also by the fencer themselves, but only due to the reasons mentioned above (the fencer can also request the interruption, if they notice the opponent's equipment failure), otherwise it will be considered as delaying. In case the assault is in progress, they do so by stepping away from the opponent and raising their arm.
- c) After the interruption, the fencer has 5 minutes to fix the equipment or improve their medical condition, and return to the bout, otherwise they lose the bout with a score 0:5 (in the group phase), or 0:7 (in the elimination phase) respectively.

8.5 Leaving the piste

- a) A fencer who does not touch the piste with neither of their feet and, at the same time, touches the surface outside of the piste with any part of their body, has left the piste. In such case the judge stops the assault.
- b) It is not considered leaving the piste, if the fencer lifted their only foot inside the piste as part of a motion into the piste.
- c) A hit received in the tempo of leaving the piste is valid.
- d) A hit dealt after leaving the piste is invalid.

8.6 Forbidden actions

8.6.1 Standard

- a) Attack targetting the back of head, cervical spine, or the leg from the ankle below (tarsus, metatarsus, heel, sole), unless it is caused by a clearly unexpected movement by the hit fencer,
- b) pommel strike elsewhere than the mesh of the mask, or into the mesh from the side,
- c) kicks and strikes with any part of the body (fist, elbow, knee, shoulder etc.),
- d) attacking an unarmed opponent,
- e) going into clinch/grappling.

8.6.2 Serious

- a) Crossguard strike,
- b) tearing off the mask or any other protectors from themselves, or from the opponent,
- c) throwing the opponent to the ground,
- d) leverages or pressure on the joints,
- e) unnecessary brutality or the use of excessive force.

9 Video-recording

- a) Video-recording is necessary in the elimination phase of the tournament.
- b) The video recording is reviewed only if a fencer calls a so-called „challenge“ after the judge’s decision.
- c) After reviewing the recording, the judge has the right to change their decision, or uphold the original one.
- d) Each fencer has 2 „challenges“ (3 „challenges“ in final and „small“ final) available for each bout in the elimination phase.
- e) If the judge changes their decision based on a video review due to a „challenge“, the fencer keeps the „challenge“ (i.e. the number of available „challenges“ is unchanged). If the judge keeps the original decision the fencer loses the „challenge“ (i.e. the number of available „challenges“ is decreased by 1).
- f) A fencer can call a „challenge“ only if they have at least 1 „challenge“ available.
- g) After the video has been reviewed and new assault started, it is no longer possible to request a review of an older recording.
- h) In case a fencer has called a „challenge“, but the video recording does not provide sufficient information for the review of the decision, or the video recording failed, the judge is obliged to not award any points and repeat the assault; the fencer does not lose the „challenge“.

10 Offenses and penalizations

- a) For very light offenses, or for behavior that is close to the limit given by the rules, the fencer is notified by the judge with a verbal admonition.
- b) Other offenses are penalized by the judge with a yellow, red, or black card.
- c) Yellow card is a warning. Yellow card is effective until the end of the given bout, it does not transfer to other bouts.
- d) Red card results in 1 point being awarded to the opponent. Red card is effective until the end of the given bout, it does not transfer to other bouts.
- e) Black card results in disqualifying the fencer from the tournament. In exceptionally serious cases, the fencer can be banned from future tournaments organized by the organizer, and/or organizers of other tournaments can be notified about their misconduct.
- f) If a fencer has already received a yellow or red card, all following committed offenses in the same bout, which are otherwise penalized with a yellow card, are penalized with a red card.

10.1 Offenses penalized by a yellow card

- a) Actions listed in Section 8.6.1,
- b) leaving the piste according to Section 8.5 (does not apply, if the fencer was physically pushed out),
- c) inadequately strong and uncontrolled or intentional hit to the floor,
- d) attack started after the assault has been ended (command „Stop!“),
- e) dangerous exposure of risky non-hit areas (especially back of head and cervical spine),
- f) delaying the bout, including unwarranted interruption of the bout (see Section 8.4),
- g) disputing the decision of a referee beyond a polite request for reevaluation or explanation of the decision.

10.2 Offenses penalized by a red card

- a) Actions listed in Section 8.6.1, if they are performed too dangerously,
- b) actions listed in Section 8.6.2,
- c) intentional covering of a valid hit area by an invalid one,
- d) inadequately frequent equipment failures,
- e) unsportsmanlike conduct.

10.3 Offenses penalized by a black card

- a) Actions listed in Section 8.6.1 and 8.6.2, if they clearly vindictive, intentional, or exceptionally severe or dangerous¹,
- b) using of any other health endangering techniques (in addition to those listed in Section 8.6),
- c) exceptionally severe unsportsmanlike conduct,
- d) using a weapon with missing, forged, imitated, or transferred proofing mark,
- e) refusal to enter the bout with another regularly enrolled fencer,
- f) not showing up for a bout (see Section 6.1.h) after their previous bout has been scratched to their disadvantage,
- g) inability to put their equipment into a state that passes the entry check,
- h) systematic, repeated committing of misconducts penalized by a red card, without the signs of the effort to change their behavior.

¹ For example, if the opponent is injured as a result of usage of such action, especially if they cannot continue in the bout or the tournament due to such injury.

Appendix A

Blade stiffness measurement

- a) The stiffness of the blade is measured using a weight scale following this procedure:
 - (i) The sword is put vertically on the scale with the tip of the blade down.
 - (ii) The measurer pushes down on the pommel of the sword vertically – the blade will start to bend and the scale will show increasing weight.
 - (iii) At some moment, the increase in the indicated weight will slow down significantly – the reading on the scale at this moment is the stiffness of the blade.
- b) In case an over-limit stiffness is measured, the measurement is repeated by a judge who decides whether the blade meets the stiffness criteria. This decision is final.

Appendix B

Tournament format

- a) The tournament is split into 2 phases – group and elimination.
- b) A number (determined by the organizer) of the best placed fencers from the group phase advances into the elimination phase.
- c) It holds in all phases of the tournament that should a fencer start in two consecutive bouts without any other bout taking place between those two, they have the right to rest for 5 minutes, but do not need to use the full length of it.

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 fights in 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) random draw

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.