

Approved Rules for the Study and Education of Historical Combat Techniques within the SCA

From the Office of the Society MoAS

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The purpose for the subsequent rule set is *to create a place in the SCA where the study, teaching, and (controlled) demonstration of historical combat techniques and practices have a home society-wide*. There has been some question whether historical combat classes and demonstrations belong under the purview of the Marshallate or of the Ministry of Arts and Sciences, and this document strives to define where the responsibility of the Office of Arts and Sciences shall begin and end.

The study of the historical combat arts under the Office of Arts and Sciences is meant to allow for the teaching and demonstration of historical martial arts that may otherwise be prohibited by or beyond the scope of the set of rules as set forth by the Office of the Marshallate. This is in no way to be construed as an impediment or replacement to the use (current or future) of historical combat techniques in the combat forms allowed by the Marshallate, so long as said techniques do not violate standing rules at the time in which they are implemented. All ‘competitive’ sport combat is under the direct control of the Office of the Marshallate.

1. The ‘Non-Competitive’ study and demonstration of historical martial arts, systems, and principles shall be regulated as and if necessary by the Ministry of Arts and Sciences.
 - a. The Society Minister of Arts and Sciences intends to appoint a knowledgeable deputy to coordinate and oversee this activity.
 - b. The Kingdoms of the SCA may choose to appoint a knowledgeable deputy to coordinate and oversee the activity on the kingdom level. This deputy will serve under the Kingdom Minister of Arts and Sciences, and will report to this Minister as if they were a senior officer (Baronial) and should be warranted where appointed.
2. Theatrical performances:

All theatrical performances involving stage combat will choreograph, rehearse and perform such stage combats in a manner consistent with the safety guidelines set forth by such professional organizations as the American, Canadian and British societies of fight directors, as is appropriate for the locale in question. These include, but are not limited to, plays and performances - the primary purpose of which is for the entertainment of an audience. No free combat play will take place within any theatrical performance conducted as a part of the activities of the SCA, inc.
3. Historical Combat Studies (non-theatrical) that fall under the purview of the Ministry of Arts and Sciences:

Must be supported by (at a minimum) research and documentation appropriate to the activity in question, consistent with that expected for any other A&S entry as appropriate to the kingdom in which the activity will occur. Any combat study or demonstration that falls outside this guideline does not fall under the purview of the Ministry of Arts and Sciences and will default to the Marshallate in the Kingdom in

which the activity occurs.

- a. In presenting, demonstrating, and teaching the historical combat arts neither the teachers, students, or any other participants shall engage in free-assault, sparring, or any form of competitive use of the arts or practice weapons.
 - i. In the demonstration of movements and techniques, whether as an A&S demonstration/presentation or as part of a historical combat class, teachers and their assistants may employ only such drills, plays, and exercise patterns as are indicative of the art being demonstrated or taught, at only such speed that is prudent, safe and necessary for the drill, play or exercise to be properly and safely employed as determined by the instructor, primary presenter, and/or the Ministry for Arts and Sciences.
 - ii. In historical combat classes, teachers may allow students to work with one another in drills, plays, and exercises, conducted in accordance with safety practices followed by the art being taught, at only such speed as is prudent, safe and necessary for the drill, play or exercise to be properly and safely employed, as determined by the instructor and/or the Ministry for Arts and Sciences. The class participants will at all times act and respond in a manner deemed safe and controlled by the class instructor and/or the Minister for Arts and Sciences or their appointed deputy or immediately forfeit their right to participate in said class.
- b. All presentations and demonstrations must consist only of plays, drills, or techniques predefined and agreed upon by all participants before the action in question occurs. Participants will at all times act and respond in a manner deemed safe and controlled by each other and the Ministry for Arts and Sciences.
- c. When the participants of a class, presentation, or demonstration enact a drill, play, or technique with practice weapons or simulators at a distance close enough to strike one another, eye protection is suggested and encouraged. Such protection might consist of polycarbonate sports goggles, a 12kg 3-weapons mask, or their equivalent in protective quality. Exceptions to this might include classes where the mask or protective equipment would hinder the instructor's ability to demonstrate a particular technique or theory. Participants in a class, presentation, or demonstration should wear such other safety equipment as they deem appropriate. Use of any protective clothing and/or equipment may be required at any time at the discretion of the class instructor, the primary presenter/demonstrator or by Kingdom Law or Policy.
- d. For performances and demonstrations, a delineated area will be required. The office of Arts and Sciences suggests a minimum 10-foot distance between the performers and the judges and audience. Instructors/demonstrators and participants should consider the nature of the demonstration or performance and maintain an appropriate distance between the combat activity and any observers.
- e. At this time, no more that two participants may interact at a time in any play, simulation, or drill used for historical combat training while studying or demonstrating the historical combat arts. This does not preclude group warm-ups, physical exercise training, or multiple pairs of participants working through a play, simulation, or drill at the same time.

- f. Under the circumstances laid out above, acceptable simulators/practice weapons include, but are not limited to, rebated steel, aluminum, wood, and rattan. (**For appropriate weapon terminology, see Appendix A**)

4. **Final Note: *Where Study becomes Combat:***

Where the study of Historical Combat in a Kingdom leads to the use of a competitive weapons form, there may be crossover between the office of the A&S and the Marshallate, in terms of jurisdiction. It is not the intention of the Society A&S office to ever include any *competitive* combat art in its purview. Therefore, while study, practice and demonstration of historical techniques may fall under this office, any sparring and/or competition in the form may only be allowed where the Marshallate of the Kingdom agrees and provides rules for such. **E.G:** The rules and regulations covering Caid's historical combat studies with padded weapons are outlined in the document RULES FOR UNARMORED COMBAT (Kingdom of Caid Unarmored Combat Rules) and might easily encompass both offices, but any actual combat, including sparring, authorization, etc, shall remain under and default to the office of the Marshallate. The simple rule is, if it's free-assault, sparring, or any form of competitive use of the arts or practice weapons, or the Kingdom requires you to authorize in it, then it does not fall under the Ministry of Arts and Sciences.

Appendix A

Definition of official terms (Approved by Board of Directors, 1/15/06)

To assist in alleviating confusion and promote effective communication within a group as large as the SCA, it is necessary to define terms that might otherwise be misunderstood or which might hold different meanings for different people and regions. Therefore, and to that end, the following terms are defined as they will be officially used and understood by the office of the Society Minister of Arts and Science. Please use these terms accordingly in all official communications. As you can see by these definitions, referring to use of 'live steel' at an event instead of 'blunted blade' or 'bated blade' might well set off alarm bells in an official report.

Bated blade (aka *rebated blade*) – A blade designed and expressly meant for training or tournament use. These are designed to simulate as closely as possible the weight, balance, and action of a "sharp" while still maintaining a blunted edge. Because of this, rebated blades often look don't resemble the swords they are made to simulate. These blades are designed specifically for practice and to minimize the possibility of injury.

Blunt or blunted blade – A blunt blade or sword is merely one that doesn't have a sharpened edge. It can, however, be sharpened and become "live steel". The edge on these blades, while blunt, is usually, but not always, thinner than that on a rebated blade. These can be meant for practice, or they can be blades that simply haven't been sharpened.

Live blade (aka *live steel* or '*sharps*') – A blade that is sharpened and expressly prepared for the purpose of cutting and/or thrusting and which would have deadly effect if used against a person.

Practice blade – A blade meant for practice and free assaulting. Both blunt blades and bated blades can fall into this category.

Simulator – A weapon simulator (in the SCA Combat context) is any item created to represent a weapon for use in tournament, practice, demonstration, education or battle scenarios. This includes, but is not limited to, blunted weapons, rebated weapons, wooden weapons ("wasters"), plastic weapons, and rattan weapons.

Waster – A wooden practice sword. According to the Oxford English Dictionary: waster (*wayster*, *wafter*, *wasiler*) = A wooden sword or a foil used in sword-exercise and fencing.