



## **BFHS Backsword Tournament Rules**

### **Conditions of Participation**

The BFHS Backsword tournament is open to all registered attendees of the hosting event provided they have sufficient experience to compete\*.

#### **All entrants:**

- Must have completed a PARQ (Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire).
- Are highly recommended to have Personal Injury Insurance.
- Participate at their own risk.
- Agree to abide by The Rules.

\*Entrants do not have to be BFHS members, but if you are not a member of a recognised martial arts school, you may be asked to demonstrate your level of competence before participating. If you are not an instructor, you must confirm with your instructor that they are happy for you to compete. Under-18s must provide written confirmation signed by their instructor.

### **The Rules**

#### **Etiquette during a bout**

**The Start** - Players will be called in to the ring and be directed to their places by the Chief Ring Judge. The Ring Judges will make a quick visual check that the minimum required protective wear is being worn. On the Judges words of 'salute' both players will salute each other and the two Ring Judges with their cudgels and face each other at measure in the centre of the fight area. On the command 'ready' players extend their sword arms out and tap their cudgels together twice and fall in to their chosen on guard position. On the command 'Fight' the bout will start.

**During a bout** – If a hit is scored or the bout is stopped by a call of 'Halt' players will be asked to resume their ready positions in the centre of the fight area, on the command 'ready' players will tap their cudgels together twice as at the beginning of the bout and fall in to their chosen on guard position. On the command 'Fight' the bout will resume

**The End** - When the Ring Judges have called the last 'Halt' at the call of 'Time' by the timer, players will resume their places in the centre of the ring. On the word 'Salute' the players will salute each other and the two Ring Judges and then shake hands prior to leaving the ring.

#### **Calls of Halt**



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A call of 'Halt' may be made by either Ring Judge or a player during the bout.

### Examples

1. A clean hit is made, the Judge/s who saw it will call a halt
2. A player who gets in to difficulty or has another legitimate reason to stop the bout may call a halt.

### Minimum Requirements for safety

#### Equipment

**NOTE – This IS minimum required safety equipment allowing for the minimum exclusion of BFHS members knowing that not all clubs have the same safety requirements. However the golden rule is 'The more protection the better!'**

Steel on Steel sword play - Standard fencing mask with throat protection, protection to the forearm of the sword arm, Leather or steel gauntlets (leather if using a basket hilt but steel or very padded gauntlets if using a sword with no basket or hand protection), fencing jack or padded gambeson, chest protector for ladies, no bare skin. As this tournament will be held in a sports hall no out door shoes or boots will be allowed therefore please wear fencing shoes or appropriate sports trainers.

Additional protective wear is up to the individual, this may include, a box, leg protection, back of the head protection, elbow protection, additional neck/throat protection, shoulder protection etc.

#### Sword requirements

Swords MUST be made by a recognised manufacturer and will be inspected to make sure they are in good order. Please bring any tools you may need to de-burr them after each round.

This is a Backsword Tournament however the swords permissible in the tournament are any single handed sword that is a functional cut and thrust period reproduction produced for sword training. Therefore you can use for example Spadroon, single handed broadsword, saber, Scottish basket hilt etc. This is so the tournament is as accessible to as many BFHS members who train and use single handed swords in this class.

What is not permissible are small swords or types of rapier as



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they have their own tournaments.

Swords must not exceed a blade length (not including the hilt) of 37". There is no minimum blade length but anything less than a Cutlass length may not be allowed after inspection on the day due to practicality in this tournament.

**IMPORTANT!** After some discussion and reports of several breakages and one injury **NO** Hanwie range weapons will be allowed in this tournament with absolutely **NO** exceptions. It is felt that although they may perform adequately against the same make they are too unreliable against more superior blades or excessive stress.

### Scoring System

The tournament will be scored via Round Robin followed by quarter finals, semi- finals and final elimination rounds

Scored on valid hits (not points)

There are two main ways to run a tournament.

1. Elimination rounds
2. Round Robin

Round Robins are commonly employed in fencing tournaments prior to direct elimination rounds. Depending on the number of participants and time allocation, Round Robins allow every fencer to fight every other fencer (this will be dependent on the number entering the tournament).

For most tournaments we will employ the Round Robin scoring system for the initial rounds. The 8 highest scorers after all the qualifying rounds have been played at will then move on to the quarter finals which will then become elimination rounds. Followed by the semi finals again elimination rounds.

This will leave 2 winners from the semi's who will fight in the final and the 2 runners up will fight for the bronze medal position.

In the event of a tie at any point during the tournament the Judges may instigate a fence-off at their own discretion.

### A brief explanation of Round Robin



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### **A brief explanation of the elimination rounds**

In an elimination round the fighters will score in the same manner as in the round robin however in these rounds fighters must win that round to move on to the next fight.

### **Target areas – with swords**

#### **Permitted target areas**

- Off Hand (to make the scoring fair to those competing without basket hilt swords)
- a hit to the sword hand will not count)
- Arms
- Head
- Upper and lower torso
- Upper and lower legs

#### **Prohibited target areas**

- Groin
- Back of head
- Small of the back
- Neck/Throat
- Knees
- Feet
- Intentional strikes to joints such as the elbow or knee

#### **Cuts and thrusts**

A valid hit is when the judges feel that the hit was delivered with enough accuracy and force to have caused an injury. A fleeting touch to loose protective wear such as a passing touch of a loose sleeve or hem of a gambeson is not a valid hit. The final decision rests with the ring judges.

The winners of the qualifying rounds will be the fighters with the



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higher hit score.

The winner of the tournament will be decided via elimination rounds.

Players will have hits awarded for placing a hit on an opponent but also hits deducted when hit by their opponent. The only way to win a bout is to have the greater hit score. Therefore this scoring system promotes offensive attacks but also focuses on perfect defence.

Example - Tom scores 5 hits against Bob. Bob scores 4 hits against Tom. Bobs 4 hits are deducted from Tom's score leaving Tom with 1 hit. Tom's hits are deducted from Bob's score leaving Bob -1 hits. Both combatants should have paid more attention to their defence!

### **Multiple Attacks**

If a player engages their opponent using a multiple attack (offensive action) and lands more than one hit when a call of halt is made the action will count as a single hit as the call of halt would have been made on the first clean hit. Hits landing after the initial hit will not be counted as additional hits but will not be a warning offence as long as there is no clear rest in tempo of the attack.

Example – Bill makes a feint drawing Karen's guard away from his intended place of attack then lands two consecutive hits at a high tempo to Karen. The Judges call a 'Halt' as they see the first hit land but due to Bill being committed to his offensive action in a high tempo a second hit lands before Bill disengages, then one hit will be awarded and no warning given for hitting after a call of halt has been made.

However if Bill hits Karen and a call of halt is made on the first hit and there is a measured pause in tempo before a second hit lands then this would not be part of a multiple attack and would be considered an offensive action of its own and would be subject to a warning

Note. The word 'hit' refers to any hit scoring action, cut, thrust, close etc.

### **Mutual hits**

If both players hit each other at the same time or almost at the same time (before or as the ring judges call 'Halt') then a hit will be deducted from each player.



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### **Wrestling/Coming to the close**

A combatant will be awarded a hit if they are judged to be in command within 10 seconds of a close. If neither combatant is in clear command the judge will call for them to break.

The Judges decision is final.

### **Take downs**

As part of a close and grip/wrestle, take downs are permitted if controlled \*NO THROWS

### **Strikes with the off hand**

Do not score a hit on their own but are permissible with control (control = to strike without excessive/uncontrolled force)

### **Kicks**

Do not score a hit but are permissible with control (see above) as an action on their own or as part of an offensive or defensive action

### **Throws**

Throws will not be permissible in tournament unless there is correct padded flooring.

### **Round time**

3 minutes

### **Judges decisions**

Players must respect all Judges decisions. Disputes can and will be dealt with outside of the designated fight area so as to not hold up the tournament.

### **Awards**

At the end of the tournament the President of the BFHS will award medals to the top three finalists. The winner will receive the title Backsword Champion.

### **Rules for Ring Judges - Scorers - Timers**



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### **Ring Judges**

There will be 2 Ring Judges in the designated fight area at all times. Each judge should maintain position on one side of the players at all times and move with them. One judge will be named the Chief Judge and it is the Chief Judge who will call players to ready, initiate each bout, award points, give warnings/disqualification, call scores, time-outs and all relevant commands in the ring.

### **Directing a round/bout**

See 'Etiquette during a bout' above.

### **Scoring** (see above)

When scoring, Judges need to use their expertise to validate hits (Cuts, thrusts, grapples and take downs).

If a hit is unclear, judges should confer and come to a swift decision on whether a hit is to be awarded or not. A judge's decision is final. Judges must not be swayed by objections made by players in the ring, their seconds or members of the audience.

The Chief Judge should clearly indicate to the scorer who a hit has been awarded to before recommencing a bout.

### **Halts**

Both judges can call a Halt at any given time during a bout as can a player

### **Warnings and disqualification**

Up to 3 warnings can be given. Warnings will be given for heavy hitting/excessive force, being abusive, repeatedly stepping out designated fight area, failing to heed a call of halt, striking a prohibited area, generally accepted bad behaviour/poor conduct. On the third warning given at any point during the tournament the combatant is disqualified from the tournament.

### **Time outs**

A time out may be called at any time during a bout by the Judges for any reason they deem necessary. Example – suspected injury

### **Excessive and insufficient force**



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It is hard to judge what constitutes as excessive or insufficient force when scoring a hit as everyone's opinion on this can differ. Therefore please refer to the scale below to measure what acceptable in these areas. This chart is to be used as a guide.

### Force Scale – Judges decision is Final!

Scale	Force	Example
1	Very Light	Sword only just touches loose clothing or fencing mask. No hit scored
2	Light	Sword hits clothing but no body contact is made. Light touch to fencing mask. Judges decision could go either way
3	Medium	A clean hit is scored
4	Heavy	A hit is scored but injury could occur. Judges decision on giving a warning
5	Excessive	A hit is scored but major injury could be the result. Immediate warning or disqualification

### Scorers

Every bout will have a scorer. The scorer will note down hits to and against when indicated by the Chief Ring Judge.

Score charts will be made available at the start of the tournament

### Timer

Next to the Scorer will be a Timer. The Timer will start a stopwatch at the beginning of a bout and pause it on each call of halt. They will start it at the recommencement of a bout on the Judges call of 'Fight'. The Timer will clearly call 'Time' at the end of a bout/round.

The Timer will stop the clock on any given 'Time out' and will resume when the round recommences.

### Additional information

First Aiders will be on hand at all times supplied by the event organiser

A full risk assessment can be obtain from the event organiser