

<https://society-rules.fullmesh.co.nz/index.php/Rapier:Handbook>

https://society-rules.fullmesh.co.nz/index.php/Cut_And_Thrust:Handbook

A) Summary of Changes (Overall):

- **Separate handbooks** - Rapier and C&T are now separate handbooks. Prior to this, these disciplines were combined under the Fencing Marshals Handbook (2024).
 - o The new Rapier Handbook was approved for commentary Nov 18, 2025
 - o The new Cut & Thrust Handbook was approved for commentary Jan 25, 2026
 - o Commentary for both closed March 30, 2026
 - o All comments were reviewed and adjudicated. This resulted in several changes being made. If a comment did not result in a change, the reasons were listed.
- **Original rules** count (2024 handbook): 675
 - o 252 (37%) – Wording unchanged
 - o 290 (43%) - Updated wording, reorganizing (no functional changes).
 - o 49 (7%) – Deleted/removed due to being redundant or unnecessary text, left-over from prior edits/changes, or were light rapier specific.
 - o 84 (13%) - Functional changes to the rule. These could be very major changes (no light rapier) or minor changes (standard reporting or clarified buttocks).
- **Several new sections were added** to provide context, capture current processes and existing expanded rules of engagement and guidance for new people.
 - o e.g. Introduction to SCA martial activities, Rapier Overview, Activity guidelines, designated areas, authorization example, Accessibility, Safety resources
- **Handbook is now complete** – Handbooks are self-contained. Prior references to rules and processes in the Marshals Handbook are now included here. Many of these are **global** sections.
 - o e.g. Sanctions, Chain of Command, Inspecting Equipment-General and Combat Archery, Marshalling on the Field, Interkingdom Events, Experiments

B) No major changes to game play (fighting conventions, target areas, use of weapons)

- o Current and established rules of engagement were added. Some of these were not included in prior handbooks. This should make it easier for new people to understand SCA combat rules.
- o Addition details to common conventions were added: death from behind, what to do during a hold, and ranged weapons.
- o Added a definition of a valid blow ("a cut or thrust which was delivered with effective technique for the particular type of weapon used, with proper orientation of the edge or point"). The standard for delivering and judging blows is not changed.

- o Separated head and neck from "body" to be consistent with naming in other martial disciplines. Valid blows, target areas and armor requirements to those areas remain unchanged.
- o Spears: Minor changes in use of this weapon.
 - o Clarified that spears can be used with one or two hands.
 - o Added that you are allowed to briefly grasp your opponent's spear haft with an empty hand. This is similar to grasping your opponent's blade as a defense, while not allowing wrestling over the weapon.
 - o Clarified that you are allowed to decline to face all spears in that tournament without forfeiting. This removed a loophole that enabled refusal of individual person(s) rather than the weapon.

C) Armor/Weapons/Equipment - 4 significant changes, 3 minor changes

Major Changes:

- o Removed Light Rapier from adult rapier combat. It is still a legal option for Youth Rapier Combat.
- o *C&T specific* - Reduced armor on limbs now standard. This is consistent with the reduced armor for rapier. The elbow, hand and wrist protection for C&T is still required.
- o Minors (under 18 years old) are no longer required to be marked. (No yellow diamond on glove).
- o Rapier and C&T Combat Archery equipment requirements and standards were included, rather than referencing the AC handbook.
- o UHMW ammunition from AC-rattan was specifically added as ammo that meets the existing rapier combat archery rules. Note that Baldar blunts from the AC-rattan rules do not meet the existing rules, so were not included.
- o The inclusion of UHMW ammunition from AC-rattan does not preclude other ammunition from being acceptable, if it meets the requirements and the KRM approves it.

Minor changes:

- o Tip covers must be secured (tape or other method)
 - o Expanded guidance on appropriate tape to use. This is part of an ongoing effort to reduce risks from lost tips during large melees, and to support expansion of reduced armor.
- o Grip length is better specified. (Measured from the bottom of the pommel to the base of the blade)

- o Spears – the requirement for spears to be bought from commercial manufacturers was removed. Commercial sources are not reliable for quality consistency, and the flexibility rules cover our needs.
- o Gap in the rigid material on the neck was clarified.
- o Clarified that "buttocks" are part of the upper leg.
- o Updated pictures of body and armor.
- o Added - "a defensive object must be controlled by the hand," to distinguish these items from armor as worn.
- o Gorgets - clarified that gaps are ok, and that gaps must be covered by penetration resistant material.
- o Added several items to the definition of "rigid materials". These include: 12 kg fencing mask mesh, high-impact-resistant plastics such as ABS or polyethylene (e.g. modern HEMA style synthetic back of head protection), and modern rigid athletic cup.
- o *For C&T only* - Clarified elbow protection.

D) Most of the functional changes were to administration, management, oversight functions

- o Rapier/C&T Combat Archery now requires a separate authorization
- o Rapier Marshals must be at least 16 years old (was not specified before)
- o Authorizing Rapier marshals must be the age of majority (was not specified before)
- o Clarified that inspections of weapons, equipment and protective gear are required only once a day for multi-day events. Additional inspections are at the marshals' discretion.
- o A sample authorization process is included as a default, if a kingdom does not want to create one of their own. (Creating this process was required in prior handbook.)
- o Footnotes and glossary items were removed, with the information being included in their relevant section.

Global changes to administrative, management, oversight. These apply to all martial disciplines and were approved with the 2025 Armored Combat – rattan handbook.

- o Authorizations expire with a max of 4 years (removes "infinite" authorizations)
- o New authorizations have a 2-person integrity rule
- o Established a method for authorizations of activities new to a kingdom. Allows KEMs to utilize marshals and expertise from other kingdoms (this was not allowed before).
- o Waivers are stored by the kingdom (not the marshalle)

Cliff notes on changes - Rapier and Cut & Thrust Combat Handbooks (*updated 20260622*)

- o Managing misconduct – guidelines provided to marshals regarding concerns, managing issues, and adverse events. Added details to the processes and reporting required.
- o Minors – expanded and clarified the list of people who are allowed to authorize minors.
- o Updated the Rules of the List in the Handbook (*BoD approved Nov 2024*)
- o Marshals – Codified roles and responsibilities, reporting, and updated the chain of command.
- o Added recommendations on marshal-to-fighter ratios and other best practices.
- o “Designated Areas” was added. (Note - this section is much more needed and involved for TA, TW, EQ, hence being a separate chapter.)
- o Accessibility was split off into a separate section, with examples of approaches for ideas, education and reference.
- o A section on Safety Resources was added (concussions, heat, air quality).
- o Injury procedures – created one common process for all martial activities.
- o Reporting of injuries, incidences and adverse events has been standardized for all martial disciplines.
- o Experimental programs - created 3 categories of experimental programs, to provide more flexibility in developing new weapons and activities.
- o Updates to Handbooks are now done automatically for the kingdoms, thanks to the online format and wiki-format engine. The old method had significant delays in updates (sometimes more than a decade). This policy includes timelines and processes to accommodate international affiliates.
- o Change log for handbooks are included.