

The Empire of Medieval Pursuits

Rattan Combat Rules

Empire of Medieval Pursuits Combat Customs and Traditions

The pursuit of excellence in combat arts was central to virtually every ancient culture as its future often depended on its warriors. Throughout the history of armored combat, non-lethal war games have been considered an essential element of training those warriors. The EMP is no different and endeavors to foster those traditions and skills in the relative safety of a Behordium like tradition. The EMP provides a loosely structured environment for its adherents to expand their knowledge and skills at "combat". Hereafter are the current rules and guidelines for armored combat with the Empire of Medieval Pursuits.

CONVENTIONS OF COMBAT

In the EMP we acknowledge that each combatant is primarily responsible for his own safety and secondarily in care of all other combatants. Therefore, injuries are never solely the responsibility of the aggressor but always some combination of the injured and injurious parties' skill and intent. If a combatant is found to be a danger to others through either a lack of skill or malicious intent then the appropriate authority shall sanction him.

A. General Requirements:

1. Each fighter, recognizing and embracing the possibilities of physical injury to him or herself in such combat, shall assume unto himself or herself all risk and liability for harm suffered by means of such combat. Other participants shall likewise recognize the risks involved in their presence on or near the field of combat, and shall assume unto themselves the liabilities thereof.

2. All combatants shall adhere to the appropriate armor and weapons standards of the Empire and shall not engage in combat until they have satisfied themselves, at each and every EMP sponsored event, that their armor and weapons are within those standards and are suitable for battle.

3. No fighter shall engage in combat unless and until he or she has inspected the field of combat and satisfied himself or herself that it is suitable for combat.

4. No one is required to engage in Empire combat should he or she prefer not to do so.

The Sovereign or Their representative may bar any weapon, armor, or individual from the field of combat. Should the Sovereign's representative bar any weapon or armor, an appeal may be made to the Sovereign to allow the weapon or armor.

5. Every fighter shall accept full responsibility for the condition of his or her own equipment. Each fighter has the obligation to himself or herself and all opponents, to see that his or her equipment meets all Empire and personal safety requirements.

6. Engaging in any Empire combat activity with the deliberate intent to inflict egregious harm is strictly forbidden.

7. No combatant may bear any weapon onto the field while participating in combat that does not conform to EMP combat standards. (Steel weapons are expressly prohibited)

B. Behavior on the field:

1. Striking an opponent with excessive force is forbidden.

2. All fighters shall heed the commands of the Sovereign's representative on the field, or risk being subject to disciplinary action.

3. Each fighter shall maintain control over his or her temper at all times.

4. Upon hearing the call of "HOLD" all fighting shall IMMEDIATELY stop.

A combatant may call "HOLD" for any reason (ie: dropped weapon, personal armor failure, perceived danger), but in doing so places himself at the mercy of his opponent. By stopping the combat he is in effect yielding and it is up to the discretion of his opponent to choose whether or not to resume the contest.

5. A fighter shall not enter the lists or participate in any form of EMP combat activity while impaired by alcohol or drugs (including, but not limited to: drugs prescribed by a licensed health care provider, over the counter medications, and illegal controlled substances.)

6. A fighter shall not substantively strike a helpless opponent.

C. Target Areas

1. Torso: All of the body (excluding the head and arms) above the points of the hips including the groin, shoulder blades and the area between the neck and the shoulders will be considered part of the torso.

2. Face: the area between the chin and the middle of the forehead and between the ear openings.

3. Head: The whole head and neck except the face as defined above.

4. Thigh: The leg from one inch above the top of the knee to a line even with the bottom of the hip socket.

5. Lower leg: the leg from one inch below the bottom of the knee to a line one-inch above the ankle.

6. Arms: From the shoulder to one inch above the wrist.

7. Hands: the area from one inch above the wrist to the end of the digits.

In due consideration of the ease of injury to the feet and ankles; they are not normally considered targets in EMP combat. However, if they are being used in an offensive manner (such as delivering a kick) they become legitimate targets.

D. The Use of Weapons:

1. Weapons shall be used in accordance with their design and no part of a weapon not specifically designed for striking an opponent shall be used to do so.

2. Only weapons designed and approved for thrusting may be used for that purpose.

3. The striking surface of a weapon in motion may be grasped or blocked by the hands or limbs as a means of impeding a blow, however such an action shall generally be counted within the Tell.

4. A shield may be used to displace, deflect, or immobilize an opponent, so long as such use does not substantially endanger the safety of the combatants.

5. Deliberately striking an opponent's head, limbs, or body with the edge of a shield is discouraged, unless that shield edge is designed for use as a weapon.

E. Acknowledgement of Blows:

1. Blow Calling and the "Tell" – the method used for determining the victor of a standard martial contest in the EMP is very simple. A combatant honorably yields the fight when he has received a predetermined number of impacts/hits from his combatants. These strikes (or blows) are to be divided into three categories, Substantive (i.e.: debilitating/fight ending), telling (i.e.: wounding/counting), and minor (i.e.: ineffectual/weak)

2. In a standard EMP tournament or skirmish, victory is determined by any of several stated conditions. This is hereafter called the "Tell". Generally, the Tell consists of either one substantive blow delivered to the head, neck, torso, or groin of an opponent, or a total of three telling blows to any part of the combatant excepting those restricted by the safety regulations. The exceptions to this rule are when combatants agree to vary the standard tell to suit their own training needs or in judicial duels.

3. When judging the effect of blows, all fighters are presumed to be wearing "armor as worn".

a. Under this standard, a blow to the face of a fighter with an open face bar grill would be tolled as if one level more debilitating than to other portions of the head or body (i.e. a minor blow would be counted as telling, and a telling blow as substantive).

4. Substantive blows are those that a combatant judges would have either stunned, incapacitated, or outright killed them in the course of a battle using actual weapons. Generally, blows that inflict some measure of pain, stop forward motion, cause a loss of breath, or impress the combatant upon whom they are struck are "substantive" blows. If a blow is anywhere close to the threshold of which a combatant desires to receive blows it should be counted as a "substantive" blow.

5. Any blow thrown at an opponent who is unaware of the impending shot should be limited to the force of a telling blow but will always be counted as a substantive blow regardless of actual impact.

6. Any blow thrown at an opponent who is prone or has more than two primary points of contact with the ground should be limited to the force of a telling blow but will always be counted as a substantive blow regardless of actual impact.

7. Any substantive blow to an appendage (arms/legs/hands) may be counted as only telling at the discretion of the combatant receiving the blow.

8. Telling blows are those that the combatant can detect but do not measure up to the standard described as a substantive blow. By definition, these blows do not have to be "substantive" but should not be overly glancing or weak.

9. Any blow directed at a combatant who is not aware of the initiating opponent or prone should be thrown with moderate telling force.

10. Minor/Ineffectual Blows are those that create no reasonable kinetic impact upon those who are struck. (i.e. the combatant struck felt no impact whatsoever)

If a blow is judged to be minor/ineffectual it need not be counted toward the "Tell".

When a blow is judged to be ineffectual it is in effect requesting the opponent to strike harder.

11. Body to Body contact consists of all forms of grappling, sweeps, throws, and strikes designed to unbalance or disorient an opponent or otherwise interfere with his ability to do battle.

Grapples may be initiated and maintained against any weapon or any legal target with the exception of the torsions involving all joints, or the head.

12. Submission locks and holds are prohibited.

13. Strikes with armored extremities may be used to effect the tell, and to unbalance or disorient an opponent but inflexible objects (i.e. pommel weights for weapons) may not.

14. Body to body contact is not considered lethal and any strikes made to armored areas need not be counted toward the "tell" at the discretion of the combatant struck.

Strikes to the unarmored face of an opponent are exempt from this rule.

F. Conventions of War

1. Due to the extra hazards afforded by group combat certain modifications to the standard EMP combat conventions shall be observed.

2. Not more than three individuals can be involved in any form of standing grapple or throw.

Strikes to opponents unaware of the attacker's presence should be accompanied by a verbal signal, such as "Dead from behind!" aiding in the opponent's comprehension of the blow's origin.

Rattan Combat Armor Rules

Definitions:

-Rigid material – metal of at least 18 Ga., stainless steel of at least 20 Ga. Or titanium of at least 22 Ga. Heavy Leather hardened by wax, or some equivalent.

-Heavy Leather – either non-oiled leather of 8–10 oz. thickness, or oiled leather between 10–12 oz. Thickness. Or some equivalent.

-Heavy Padding- an equivalent of 3/8 inch closed cell foam, quilted material of enough bulk to provide protection from the impact of an EMP weapon during typical combat situations.

A. Helms

1. Helms shall be constructed of steel of no less than 16 gauge, or of equivalent material. Alternative materials such as stainless steel, brass, bronze, or like materials are permissible as long as the materials are functionally equivalent to 16-gauge steel.

2. All joints or seams shall be constructed in one or a combination of the following ways:

-Welded on the inside and outside.

- Welded with a single bead that extends through both surfaces.

- Lap joints welded or brazed at the edges of both pieces.

- Helms will be riveted with iron or steel rivets no more than 2-1/2 inches (63.5 mm) apart, or with equivalent riveting techniques. Screws and or pop type rivets, along with other lightweight rivets, are not to be used.

-Welds must be sound and rivets secure.

3. Face guards shall prevent a 1-inch (25.4-mm) diameter dowel from entering into any of the face guard openings.

4. The face guard shall extend at least 1 inch (25 mm) below the bottom of the chin and jawline when the head is held erect.

5. Bars used in the face guard shall be steel of not less than 3/16 inch (4.8 mm) in diameter, or equivalent. If the span between crossbars is less than 2 inches, 1/8-inch diameter bars may be used.

6. All visors shall be attached and secured in such a way that the chance that it will become detached or come open in normal combat use is minimized.

7. There shall be NO major internal projections; minor projections of necessary structural components shall be padded. All metal shall be free of sharp edges. Face guard bars or mesh should not attach to the interior of the helm, unless of structurally superior design and workmanship.

8. All parts of the helm that might come into contact with the wearer's head shall be padded with a minimum of 1/2 inch (13 mm) of resilient or closed-cell foam, or shall be suspended in such a way as to prevent injurious contact with the wearer.

9. If eyewear is worn it must not be allowed to contact the helmet itself during normal combat conditions. The lens of all eyewear shall be shatterproof industrial safety glass or plastic. The wearing of contact lenses or "sports glasses" is strongly recommended.

10. All helms shall be designed to prevent the helm from being dislodged during combat.

B. Gorget:

1. The circumference of the neck must be covered by rigid material lined with foam or other equivalent designed to minimize the possibility of severe impact trauma during typical combat situations. Chainmail, heavy leather camails or aventails can be considered equivalent.

C. Cuirass, Hauberk and Cottepiece:

1. A minimum of heavy padding shall be worn over the entirety of the torso including the points of the shoulders as well as the hips.

2. The kidney area and the lower spine shall be covered with a minimum of rigid material.

3. The groin must be covered by a minimum of rigid material (e.g., a gender appropriate hockey, soccer, karate, boxing, or baseball cup, is recommended), worn in a manner designed to hold the armor in place during normal combat situations.

D. Gauntlets:

1. The outer surfaces of the hand and wrist of both arms must be covered by one or a combination of the following:

2. A metal basket hilt with enough bars or plates to prevent a blow from striking the fingers or the back of the hand. If a basket hilt is used, a vambrace or partial gauntlet shall cover the remaining portions of the hand and wrist.

3. A gauntlet made of rigid plates; either lined with padding or closed cell foam, or designed to transfer potentially injurious impact to the surfaces being grasped.

4. A gauntlet of heavy leather lined with closed cell foam or heavy padding.

5. A shield with a shield basket or equivalent.

E. Arm Armor:

1. The elbow point and bones at either side of the elbow joint must be covered by a rigid material underlain by at least ¼ inch (6 mm) of resilient padding or closed-cell foam or by an approved equivalent. This armor shall be attached in such a way that the elbow remains covered during combat.

F. Cuise:

1. The kneecap and both sides of the knee joints must be covered by rigid material lined by at least ¼ inch (6 mm) of resilient padding or closed-cell foam or an approved equivalent. This armor shall be attached in such a way that the knee remains covered during combat.

2. The shins and both points of the ankle shall be protected by a minimum of heavy leather.

3. All individuals will wear sturdy footwear while engaged in combat activities.

G. Shields:

1. Shields shall be edged with material that shall minimize their capacity to damage rattan weapons or other fighters.

2. No bolts, wires, or other objects may project more than 3/8 inch (9 mm) from any part of a shield without being padded. (Rounded shield bosses are not considered to be projections.)

Rules of Rattan Combat Weapon Construction

A. General

1. NO MATERIAL THAT MAY SHATTER OR DEFORM INTO A POTENTIAL CUTTING SURFACE MAY BE USED IN THE STRIKING SURFACE OF ANY WEAPON.

2. All weapons must make an acceptable attempt at appearing like an actual weapon while strictly adhering to the safety regulations.

3. Weapons 18 inches and over designed to be used single-handed shall have a wrist strap (or equivalent restraint), that will keep the weapon from leaving the immediate area of the user.

4. Weapons may be constructed of rattan or equivalent material and may have a rounded 5/8 inch rope or equivalent mounted to it defining the blade or relevant striking surface.

5. Any rattan blade or striking surface shall be no less than 1 ¼ inches (33 mm) at its widest point.

6. No striking surface shall be able to penetrate a standard bar grille more than ¾ of an inch.

7. Thrusting tips on weapons designed to be used one handed are to be constructed of at least 1 1/4 inch (33mm) of closed-cell foam or equivalent. The thrusting tip will be securely attached with at least ½ inch (12.5mm) of progressive give across the face of the thrusting tip without allowing contact with the rigid tip of the weapon. It shall not be possible to force the thrusting tip more than 3/4 inch (19 mm) into a legal face guard.

8. Thrusting tips on weapons designed to be used two handed are to be constructed of at least 2 inches of closed-cell foam or equivalent. The thrusting tip will be securely attached with at least 1 inch (25mm) of progressive give and shall provide progressively resistant "give" under pressure without allowing contact with the rigid tip of the weapon. It shall not be possible to force the thrusting tip more than 3/4 inch (12.5 mm) into a legal face guard.

9. The full length of the blade or head, including the tip, or any portion of the weapon routinely suffering impact shall be treated in a manner which allows no rattan splinters to protrude.

10. No weapon designed for use with one hand shall weigh in excess of 5 lbs.

11. No weapon designed for use with two hands shall weigh in excess of 7 lbs.

12. The hafts and handles of all weapons shall be of no less than 1/4 inches (33 mm) in diameter.

13. Guards and pommels shall be firmly and securely affixed to the haft and leave no means of penetrating a standard visor in the course of normal combat.

14. If grips or guards are used, they shall have no sharp edges or protruding unpadded points. 15. Rattan shall not be treated in any way that will substantially reduce its flexibility (i.e) treated with wax, resin, fiberglass, etc.

B. Swords:

1. Swords shall have a hand guard such as a basket hilt, quillons, or equivalent. It shall not be possible to force the guard more than 3/4 inch (19 mm) into a legal face guard.

2. Swords shall have a defined edge.

C. Mass Weapons:

1. The head shall not be constructed of solely rigid materials.

2. The head shall be firmly and securely attached to the haft.

3. The head shall allow at least a ½ inch (12.5mm) of progressive give between the striking surface and the weapon haft.

4. Total mass weapon length designed for single-handed use shall not exceed 42 inches.

5. Total mass weapon length designed for two-handed use shall not exceed 7 ½ feet (228.6cm).

D. Pikes:

1. Pikes shall not have a cutting or smashing head.

2. Pikes shall measure between 7.6.1 and 12 feet.

3. No pike shall weigh in excess of 5 lbs.

E. Fiberglass Pikes

1. Poltruded fiberglass piping only may be used. The piping must be 1/4 inch (33 mm) in diameter and have a sidewall of not less than 1/8-inch (3.2 mm) thickness. Hence it shall have an interior diameter of 1 inch (25.4mm).

2. The end of the shaft which will have the thrusting tip attached must be covered with an endcap and firmly glued. The thrusting tip may then be attached over this cap, and shall meet the requirements for fiberglass spear thrusting tip.

3. All fiberglass spears must be constructed so that there is a minimum of 3 inches (75 mm) of resilient material in front of the PVC endcap and shall provide progressively resistant "give" under pressure without allowing contact with the PVC endcap. It shall not be possible to force the thrusting tip more than 3/4 inch (19 mm) into a legal face guard.

4. The heads of fiberglass spears shall be firmly affixed to the shaft and shall not bend to any side significantly during typical combat situations.

F. Flails

1. Flails shall be no longer than 48 inches long.

2. Flails shall weigh no more than 5 lbs.

3. The head of a flail shall weigh no more than 1.5 lbs

4. The flexible portion of a flail shall be no longer than 15 inches from the end of the haft to the attachment point of the head and shall be a minimum of 1 inch in width.

5. The head of a flail shall be affixed in such a manner that it cannot become detached during typical combat situations.