



TOURNAMENT RULES FOR MODERN GLADIATORAL COMBAT

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v1.2



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Contents

1	Fighting rules	1
1.1	Sportsmanship	1
1.2	The arena	1
1.3	Referees	1
1.4	Conducting a fight	2
1.5	Beginning of a fight	2
1.6	Pausing of a fight	2
1.7	Ending of a fight	3
1.8	Submission	3
1.9	Forbidden Actions	3
1.10	Equipment failure	4
	1.10.1 Minor equipment failure	4
	1.10.2 Major equipment failure	5
1.11	Medical breaks	5
1.12	Scoring	5
1.13	The retiarius' net	6
1.14	Equipment	6
	1.14.1 Helmet	6
	1.14.2 Arm protection	7
	1.14.3 Shoulder protection	7
	1.14.4 Leg protection	7
	1.14.5 Belts	8
	1.14.6 Groin protection	8
	1.14.7 Torso protection	8
	1.14.8 Shields	9
	1.14.9 Weapons	9
	1.14.10 Additional protection	9

1

Fighting rules

1.1 Sportsmanship

While the combat is conducted in full-contact manner, the conduct of sportsmanship is to be followed at all times. Maliciously injuring or attempting to maliciously injure one's opponent is forbidden and can result in a warning, or in particularly severe cases an immediate ban. An example for this would be attacking an opponent before the fight has been started, while it is paused or after it has been ended by the referees, attacking after an obvious and grave equipment failure (e.g. losing a visor or helmet) or use of unnecessary harshness by stabbing at unprotected joints with the intent of breaking a bone.

1.2 The arena

The arena should have a minimum size of 10x10m or if round, a minimum diameter of 10m. The border of the arena should be marked (either lines on the floor or poles with ropes, etc). Extending outwards from this fighting area should be an area with a minimum width of 2m which stays empty and acts as a safety zone in case the fighters involuntarily leave the fighting area. Any audience must stay outside of this safety zone at all times. The floor of the arena should be made of sand (roughly 10cm deep), grass or be an indoor gym floor. The arena floor must not be any material which imposes a risk of injury, like gravel, asphalt or slippery surfaces.

1.3 Referees

Every fight has to have at least **two referees**, the *summa rudis* and the *secunda rudis* and two scorekeepers. The *summa rudis* is the main referee and he has the final word on all rulings. The *secunda rudis* supports them in all tasks.

The fighters must follow the commands of the referees at all times. The referees ensure that

the fighters follow all rules described in this ruleset. They start, pause, resume and end the fights. They also check that the equipment of the fighters fits the requirements stated in this document. The referees also declare punishments for rule infringements. Finally, they declare the winner of the fight.

Two additional scorekeepers are required, whose sole purpose is to watch out for hits and advise the *summa rudis* on that matter. In order for a hit to count, it must be seen by at least two judges. In case of an unclear hit the *summa rudis* will have the final word whether a hit has occurred.

All referees and scorekeepers must wear a white tunic with two vertical coloured stripes, so that they can be easily identified. Footwear is optional.



Figure 1.1: Summa rudis tunic



Figure 1.2: Summa rudis tunic reconstruction

The *summa rudis* and the *secunda rudis* both also carry a wooden stick (*rudis*) of roughly 1m length. They use it to enhance their vocal commands and to separate the fighters if necessary. Hitting the fighters with the *rudis* is not allowed.

1.4 Conducting a fight

1.5 Beginning of a fight

Before the fight begins, both fighters approach the *summa rudis*. They inspect the fighter's equipment and makes sure it is safe for combat. When both gladiators have clearly stated that they are ready, the fight begins with the *summa rudis* lifting his *rudis* and yelling the command **Pugnate!**.

1.6 Pausing of a fight

Whenever a referee yells **Stare!** the combattants must stop fighting immediately. Additionally the *rudis* is held between the fighters. The referees pause the fight when:

- a legal hit is scored
- at least one fighter leaves the fighting area into the safety zone
- a referee detects an equipment failure (see 1.10) on one of the fighters
- if a fighter loses his helmet the fight is paused until they have put it back on

- when a fighter requires medical attention (see 1.11)
- any external disturbance prevents a safe continuation of the fight (e.g. a visitor walking into the arena, etc.)
- when both fighters have been engaged in a wrestling action without scoring any hits or attempting a successful submission technique for at least 15s the referees can pause the fight at any time
- if during a wrestling action double hits occur or if due to loss of control of the fighters, hits can no longer be properly recognized, the *summa rudis* must break up the fight

The fight continues with both gladiators standing when the *summa rudis* lifts his *rudis* and yells the command **Pugnate!**.

1.7 Ending of a fight

The referees end the fight by yelling **State!** and holding their *rudis* between the gladiators. The fight ends when one of the following conditions is met:

- one fighter scores three legal points and is declared the winner
- one fighter signals submission (*missio*); their opponent is declared the winner
- one fighter gets disqualified; their opponent is declared the winner
- one fighter is injured and cannot continue the fight; their opponent is declared the winner
- one fighter has a major equipment failure (see 1.10.2); their opponent is declared the winner
- a fighter lost their helmet three times; their opponent is declared the winner
- the external conditions change in such a way that the safety of the gladiators cannot be ensured any longer (e.g. bad weather); in this case no winner is declared and the fight is continued at a later point of time

1.8 Submission

Submission is signalled by dropping one's weapon and raising a hand with an outstretched index finger. While grappling or being held in a submission technique tapping on the ground, your own or your opponent's body with your hand (tapping out) is also a valid sign for submission. A fighter must stop attacking or release any chokes or holds immediately once his opponent signals submission.

1.9 Forbidden Actions

In order to ensure the physical safety of all people involved several actions are forbidden. If any of the fighters enacts one of the actions, no matter if by chance or with intent, **the referees immediately pause the fight**. Hits scored through a forbidden action or as a direct result of a forbidden action will not be counted. Any forbidden action results in a warning by the referee. After three warnings, the fighter will be disqualified. In severe cases, an immediate disqualification is possible, if *summa rudis* and *secunda rudis* are in agreement.

Forbidden are the following actions:

- Disobeying commands from the referees
- Fighting while being intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or narcotics, unless the drug or narcotic has been prescribed by a physician (proof is required)

- Any technique that results in the death or crippling of the opponent (e.g.: squashing larynx, gouging eyes, etc.)
- Hits to the neck of the opponent, no matter if intentional or unintentional
- Shield stomp/strike onto you opponents feet & toes
- Shield stomp/strike on a downed opponent or an opponent in the process of getting up
- Shield strikes to the kneecaps
- Shield strikes to the neck (Attacks on the helmet are allowed)
- Attacks directed at the neck (Attacks to the helmet are allowed)
- Throwing any weapon, including shields, except the retiarius' net
- No excessive force when attacking opponents who are unprotected, unable to protect themselves, downed or are in the process of getting up
- Not immediately releasing a choke hold after it has been scored as a hit (If a proper choke hold can be placed, it will be counted as a deadly hit if the attacker does not get hit while placing and holding it)
- Grabbing the opponent's blade with any hand (automatically results in a point for the opponent)
- No intentional attacks on fingers or wrists of the opponent's weapon-hand
- Throws and grips leveraging small joints (e.g.: fingers & toes)
- Hip tosses
- Shoulder throws
- Suplex throws
- Any throw that has an increased risk of having the opponent land on their head/neck first
- Verbal insults towards the opponent, referees or scorekeepers
- Inactivity of a fighter or intentional prevention of the fight happening
- Requesting a medical break without having any valid reason (injury or cramp)
- Bringing any item into the arena which is not part of the fighters armor, clothing or weapons (e.g. a fighter forgets to remove their cell phone tucked into their belt)

1.10 Equipment failure

1.10.1 Minor equipment failure

If some equipment should fail during the fight, but the failure does neither endanger the fighters nor spectators, the fight may be continued. If equipment fails and the failure endangers fighters or spectators, but it can be removed or repaired in the arena without any major delay (in less than 3 minutes) and the fight could be continued safely afterwards, the equipment may be removed or repaired and the fight continued afterwards. The safety of the equipment after the repair is to be judged by the referees. Only if both agree that it is safe to continue, the fight may be continued. If armor pieces are removed and body parts are now unprotected then they count as valid target area from now on (e.g. removing a faulty greave renders the leg a valid target).

1.10.2 Major equipment failure

If some equipment should fail during the fight and the failure does endanger fighters or spectators and it can not be removed, exchanged, or repaired right there without any major delay (in less than 3 minutes) or without endangering the fighters or spectators, the fighter whose equipment has failed, loses the bout.

1.11 Medical breaks

When a referee detects an injury on one of the fighters or a fighter signals that they need a medical break, the referees immediately pause the fight. Any injury or cramp is a valid reason for a medical break. **Every fighter is entitled to 1 medical break of up to 5 minutes per bout.** During that time the injury can be treated by the fighter themselves or an external assistant. If the injury cannot be treated within 5 minutes and the injury prevents the fighter from safely continuing the fight, they lose the bout and their opponent is declared the winner. If a fighter requests a medical break but the referees upon inspection cannot detect any injury or cramp, this constitutes a forbidden action and the fighter receives a warning.

1.12 Scoring

The first fighter to score 3 hits wins. Hits are only scored on unprotected body parts, except the feet or the neck. They are not scored on armor. Additional protective gear like groin protection, the fencing mask of the retiarius, chest protection for women or knee and elbow protectors; count as unprotected areas and hits are scored on these. Hits are only counted if they were conducted with enough force to cause an open wound if live weapons would have been used.

- Thrusts are counted if the tip of the weapon connects with unprotected tissue and the attack would result in a penetration of the body.
- Strikes are scored if the cutting edge of the weapon connects with the opponent's unprotected tissue. Hits made with the flat side of a sword or spear do not count.
- Cuts are only counted if they are done with the cutting edge of a weapon and they are drawn or pushed with the majority of the blade. A resting blade does not constitute a cut.
- Take downs and knockdowns do not count as a hit, but the downed fighter may be attacked with swords while on the ground in order to score a hit.
- Submission techniques like choke holds or arm bars are scored as a hit if one fighter is able to properly apply control with them for 5 seconds or the opponent signals a missio. If the gladiator doing the submission technique is counter hit while doing so (e.g. being stabbed with a sword while doing an arm bar) then only the counter hit will be counted for scoring, not the submission technique.
- Self-hits, meaning a fighter hitting themselves with one of their own weapons in such a way that it would be a legal hit if it would be done by the opponent, is scored as a hit for the opponent.
- Double hits are not counted as legal hits. A double hit occurs if both fighters score a legal hit at the same time or in short succession (roughly < 2 seconds) before a *summa rudis* pauses the fight through the State! command.
- Grabbing the blade of the opponent does count as a hit for the opponent. Grappling non-sharp areas like the shaft of a spear or the edge of a shield is permitted and not counted as hit.

1.13 The retiarius' net

When a retiarius has lost (or thrown) his net it remains in the arena. They may pick it up again at any point during the fight. They may also pick it up again when the fight has been paused due to a hit scored against the retiarius. During breaks due to a hit scored by the retiarius they may not pick up the net again.

1.14 Equipment

All protective gear must be declared viable for fighting by the referees before the bout. No piece of equipment may have any sharp edges, sharp points (e.g. nails sticking out) or similar properties which pose a risk of injury. All gear worn visibly should visually follow examples from original historical sources like mosaics, reliefs or archaeological finds. Every fighter should be able to produce at least one visual proof for the design of their equipment pieces. Non-visible additional protection as well as the fencing mask of the retiarius are exceptions and can be of modern design and materials. All fighters should not wear any jewelry, wristbands or watches at exposed places in order to avoid injury (ear rings under a helmet are fine). Exposed piercings which cannot be removed should be taped off. Gladiators can choose before every individual bout whether they want to fight left or right-handed and must wear the equipment according to the following specifications.

1.14.1 Helmet

- minimum thickness of 1,3mm for steel or bronze helmets and 1,5mm for brass helmets
- only helmets with closed visors are allowed (e.g. no republican helmets)
- the eye visors must have a minimum strength of 1,3mm and the individual holes in the visor a maximum diameter of 15mm
- all essential parts must be riveted or welded together
- if the visor consists of parts that can be taken apart (e.g. face plates), it must have the ability to be locked, so it is assured that it will not come apart during fighting
- the helm must be padded or suspended properly to prevent impact damage being transferred to the user's head
 - Padding can be made with quilted cloth, foam or any other material that can reduce impacts but must be at least 1cm thick.
- additional chin straps are allowed
- Secutor
 - secutor helmets must have their eye holes covered with an additional visor as above if the trident could go through them otherwise
 - the eye visors must be riveted or welded on in at least three spots

Figure 1.3: Secutor helmets with valid eye protection

- Retiarius
 - the retiarius must wear a fencing mask with a strength of at least $>1600\text{nm}$
 - the mask must also protect the sides and the back of the head

- the mask must be free of severe dents
- hits against the fencing mask will be scored



Figure 1.4: A suitable fencing mask with neck protection

1.14.2 Arm protection

- the arm protection manica can be made of fabric, with an optional outer layer of leather, chain mail or metal scales must be manufactured in an approximately historically correct design (e.g. non-riveted chain mail is allowed)
- the manica is only protective in nature; in order to avoid injury therefore no additional reinforcements with plastic, steel or other hard materials may be added to the hand which are aimed at making it a striking weapon (e.g. adding brass knuckles, etc)
- the retiarius wears the manica only on the left arm, all other classes wear a single manica on their right arm (vice versa for left handers in both cases)
- it must cover the entire back of the hand, including the fingers and the thumb
- it covers the entire arm up to the shoulder, excluding the shoulder
- the torso must not be protected by the manica with the following exception:
 - retiarius and secutor manicae with an outer layer of chain mail or scale mail may also cover half of the front and back of the torso as well as the shoulder

1.14.3 Shoulder protection

The retiarius may wear a shoulder guard galerus if he wears a manica only made from fabric and not covered in chain mail or scale mail. The shoulder guard can be made from steel, bronze or brass. The same rules for material thickness as for helmets apply. The shoulder guard is worn on the same side as the manica.

1.14.4 Leg protection

- the leg protection fascia can be made of fabric and must be manufactured in an approximately historically correct design
- on top of the fabric armour greaves made from steel, bronze or brass may be worn

- the same rules for material thickness as for helmets apply
- cloth armour covers the leg in the following ways:
 - Murmillo, Secutor: only on the leg on the side the shield is worn, from below the knee down to and including the ankles, optionally the upper side of the foot
 - Provocator: only on the leg on the side the shield is worn, including the knee down to and including the ankle, optionally the upper side of the foot
 - Thraex, Hoplomachus: both legs can be completely covered down to and including the ankles, optionally the upper side of the foot
 - if the padding on the upper foot is thinner than the rest of the fasciae, hits are will be scored in this area
- greaves cover the leg in the following ways:
 - Murmillo, Secutor: only on the leg on the side the shield is worn, from below the knee down to and including the ankles
 - Provocator: only on the leg on the side the shield is worn, including the knee down to and including the ankle
 - Thraex, Hoplomachus: on both legs, including the ankles up until roughly 10cm above the knees
- additional leather gaiters may be worn on both feet
 - they can cover the upper side of the foot and the lower shin
 - hits on this protection will be scored

1.14.5 Belts

Belts can be made from leather and/or metal. They can have a maximum width of 15cm.

1.14.6 Groin protection

Fighters must wear a groin protection. Any model fit for martial arts like kickboxing is allowed.

1.14.7 Torso protection

Provocatores must wear a pectoral armour made from steel, bronze or brass. The same thickness rules as for helmets apply. The pectoral armour may cover the upper chest up to the collarbones, but not the shoulders, sides of the torso or parts of the back. It may also not fully extend down to the belt. The pectoral can be a solid metal plate or metal scales sewn onto cloth or leather.

For women additional chest protection made from hard plastic is recommended (see image). Hits on this protection will be scored if no pectoral armor is worn on top of it.



Figure 1.5: Modern martial arts chest protection made from hard plastic

1.14.8 Shields

Shields must be made out of wood with a leather brim. Metal brims are not allowed. Umbos can be made from steel, bronze or brass. Umbos must be attached securely to the shield with nails. All nails must be sufficiently flattened and no pointy parts are allowed to stick out in order to prevent injury. It is not allowed to change the shape of the shield (e.g. cutting off corners, adding extensions). The shield of the hoplomachus or eques must be round, the shield of the essedarius must be oval, the scutum of a secutor or murmillio must be rectangular or may have a round lower edge. The shield of the provocator can be rectangular or oval. All other shields must be rectangular.

1.14.9 Weapons

All weapons aside the net may be made from steel, bronze, wood or plastic. All weapons must be free of splinters, burrs, sharp edges or sharp points and without any major damage which could risk them breaking.

All swords and spears must have blunted cutting edges with a minimum thickness of 2mm. All swords must have a minimum thickness of 3mm at their tip. The tip of any sword must be rounded with a minimum diameter of 15mm. All swords must have a maximum length of 50cm from the bottom end of the grip to the tip of the blade (straight line along the grip).

Spears must have a rolled tip (min. 2cm width, 4mm thick) or a ball point tip (min 1,5cm diameter). Sauroters are only allowed on spears if they are fashioned like described for tips above, but hits made with them will not be counted.

The tips of the trident must have small steel balls affixed or be completely flat. The diameter must be 20mm – 25mm. The net of the Retiarius may contain small metal weights without any spikes or sharp edges and a maximum weight of 100 grams.

1.14.10 Additional protection

- Knee and elbow protectors are allowed, hits on this protection will be scored

- Mouthguards are allowed
- Throat protection (like gorgets) is allowed, hits on this protection will be not scored as attacks to the throat are forbidden actions
- In non-sand footwear without spikes is allowed (no caligae with nails, but sport shoes or sandals are fine), hits on this protection will be scored