

The Dekoven Concord

I. PURPOSE

To provide a governing covenant for conducting chivalric deeds of arms using historically based armored combat.

II. INTRODUCTION

These are a set of conventions to be used as a common baseline for groups and individuals wishing to run practical demonstrations, competitions, or exhibitions of free play based upon medieval armored passages of arms using the reconstructed fighting arts that we study.

Participants are expected to adhere to the forms of the art they study, use appropriate historical equipment (modified as necessary for safety), and we expect that all participants will hold themselves to the ideals of a chivalric person, behaving with courtesy, respect, and generosity to all participants and spectators alike. In plain English, don't be a jerk. Play nice and be polite, especially to spectators who are part of the general public and anyone officially associated with the host. These expectations especially apply to combatants.

In keeping with the historical and chivalric nature of the medieval deeds of arms that inspire us, a modern passage at arms should take place in a historically evocative environment and adhere to historically patterned outcomes.

Individuals and groups running modern passages of arms are welcome to become signatories of this concord. Signatories agree to abide by the conventions and specifications herein.

THIS DOCUMENT CONSISTS OF:

- Descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the organizers, officials, and combatants. Details pertinent to the roles and expectations of combatants is broken out into their own section for convenience in disseminating to participants.
- Conventions, which are the basic "rules." This includes the structural form of the deed as well as the practical conventions are intended to offer the opportunity to use our reconstructed arts, which are admittedly deadly, with reasonable safeguards and protections. The rules for a specific passage of arms held under the Concord's Conventions should note which, if any, variations will used as well as any additional rules and requirements not specifically covered in the concord.
- Specifications, which are minimum armor requirements and weapon specifics. The basic premise is that safety trumps authenticity in armor, sparring weapons, or technique. The rules for a specific passage of arms held under the concord's conventions may be more stringent, but not less. Armor and Weapon Specifications are listed separately from the Conventions regarding armor both for easier dissemination to participants and to facilitate future updates to this Concord.

III. ROLES

MANDATORY ROLES ON THE DAY INCLUDE:

- Host/Presider
- Marshals and Constables
- Combatants

OPTIONAL, BUT RECOMMENDED, ROLES INCLUDE:

- Heralds
- Squires (non-combatant)
- Someone to record the results of each bout

- Someone to coordinate the flow of the bouts so combatants can prepare in a timely fashion

The Host

The host is the organization, group, or person in charge of providing the venue and organizing the event in general.

If the host is a group or organization, we recommend designating a “presider,” an individual whose attention can be focussed on the deed without distraction by other needs of the event, especially if the deed is only a portion of a larger event.

THE USUAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOST INCLUDE:

- Providing a discrete field, called the “list” as well as sufficient surrounding space for the participants to conduct the deed. The boundary of the list should, as a minimum, be enclosed by a rope, supported by uprights. A medieval style barrier fence with two entrances on opposite sides is preferred. An outer boundary to create a “safe zone” between any audience and the list boundary proper is also preferred.
- Consulting on the list of candidate combatants with any groups associated with the deed (such as a group designated to stand as the tenants) to determine who is suitable.
- Issuing the Invitation for the deed well in advance of the date of the deed. A fortnight (14 days) is traditional but a bit short for modern traveling and event organizing schedules. The Invitation may take the form of private messages to pre-selected combatants, a public call for combatants, or some combination of the two. Invitations can be “open” and include any event attendees who wish to participate and meet the equipment standards and expectations of combatants, or invitations may be “closed,” limiting combatants to those chosen by the host and presider. Closed invitational events should have their participants determined well before the event date.
- Overseeing the efficient running of the event on the day it is held. This includes the deed if no presider is appointed.
- Scheduling other event activities in such a way as to allow all combatants sufficient time to arm in order that all may be present, in harness, for the opening of the deed.
- Appointing a chief marshal to oversee all bouts within the list. We recommend the chief marshal have the responsibility of appointing assistant marshals and constables and of designating the bout marshal for each bout. See also The Marshals.
- Appointing/recruiting other persons to fulfill roles in the deed and arranging for such assistants as necessary in order to ensure the safety of combatants and spectators.
- Ejecting any person found to be acting in contravention of the particular rules of their deed or event.
- Determining which, if any, elements of the conventions will be modified for a particular deed so as to reflect any requirements based on legal restraints and/or restrictions due to the venue and communicating any such changes to participants in a timely fashion.

MODIFICATIONS THAT MAY BE MADE BY A HOST INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Those which serve to suit a particular ambiance, such as by restricting the time frame, and thus of allowed armor elements, in order to represent a period-specific event. A deed commemorating a particular historical event should restrict the time frame for allowable armor to the time frame of the historical event.
- Modifying the allowed techniques or bout conclusions to deliberately mimic a particular historical event.
- Modifying elements of the conventions to serve a particular educational end.

- Restricting weapon choice. For example, a restriction to spear, sword and dagger is well documented.
- Declaring the deed to be a “fight over the barriers,” which will require a barrier across which the combatants must fight and will eliminate most wrestling options.

Marshals and Constables

The chief marshal is the person responsible for the running of the deed on the day(s) of the event. That person may be assisted by other marshals and constables.

A marshal in charge of a bout is the bout marshal.

A constable assists the bout marshal in monitoring a bout.

All marshals and constables monitoring a bout shall have a staff or polearm for use in guiding and separating fighters and, if necessary, intercepting stray blows.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CHIEF MARSHAL:

- Checking to confirm that all combatants are wearing appropriate armor and using appropriate weapons with special attention to any variations in use by the deed in question.
- Being the final authority on whether a combatant's armor and weapons are in accord with specifications.
- Performing as the bout marshal (referee for a bout) or assigning that task to an assistant marshal.
- Being prepared to eject a combatant from the event if that combatant is found to be acting in contravention of the particular rules of their passage at arms or of the Concord's Conventions and Specifications.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A BOUT MARSHAL:

- Acting to insure the safety of spectators, assistants, and combatants.
- Starting and ending bouts.
- Monitoring the combatants to render judgement of fair blows, calling out such blows.
- Responsibilities of a constable:
 - Acting to insure the safety of spectators, assistants, and combatants.
 - Aiding the bout marshal in his duties as necessary, including the judgement of fair blows in cases where the chief marshal does not have a good line of sight.
 - When sufficient constables are available, accepting the task to judge blows against one of the combatants in a bout. This function is highly recommended for bouts conducted on the continuous action bout model.

Heralds and Interlocutors

A herald (announcer) is a recommended role. Heralds should have tabards, which in medieval times would likely display the arms of the deed's host.

An interlocutor is a recommended role for events where the deed of arms is played out before an audience, especially if that audience is the general public.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A HERALD INCLUDE:

- Introducing the deed of arms, stating its goals and purpose.
- Making each of the announcements associated with a bout:
 - The names of each combatant.
 - The weapons they are to use.
 - Any restrictions or modifications to the default rules, such as the model (punctuated or continuous) for the bout if the deed allows the combatants to choose.

- The victor and the score of counted blows or the victory condition under which they won.
- Announcing the conclusion of the deed of arms.
- Announcing any awards after they have been determined, including the First Among Equals (if one is chosen) unless the host reserves this function to themselves. See Appendix: First Among Equals and Other Recognitions.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN INTERLOCUTOR INCLUDE:

- Explaining to the audience details of the combatant's action, particularly in regard to the interaction of technique, weapons, and armor.
- Providing educational background to contextualize the deed.
- Filling "dead air" by engaging the audience during delays to deed, such as for equipment failures or injuries.

Squires (non-combatant)

A head squire is the person assigned to coordinate the efforts of squires and any other officials (such as a person to write the results of each bout or one to coordinate the order of the bouts) deemed necessary for the smooth operation of the deed by the host. If sufficient support personnel are available, it is helpful to assign one squire to each combatant; if not, squires may need to support more than one combatant.

SQUIRES RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Helping combatants with arming and disarming
- Handling water and refreshments
- Supplying required weapons to their combatant prior to the bout.
- Such other activities, as necessary, to keep the deed moving efficiently.

IV. COMBATANTS

Combatants compete in bouts, and continue to compete, at the pleasure of the host and/or the chief marshal. This means that the persons in charge can disallow a combatant participation in the deed. We expect they will do so when someone violates the letter or spirit of the Concord or the rules for a given deed.

An invitation to one particular deed does not constitute anything more than invitation to that particular deed.

A combatant may, without reproof, request a limitation of targets/blows struck. This is expected when there is a safety concern regarding a pre-existing physical condition, but can also come into play should the rules of the day allow incomplete armor due to insufficiently protected areas.

A pair of combatants may, by mutual agreement and for their bout only, choose to add additional limits to either the style of blows or to the targets or to both. Any such change must be communicated to the bout marshal before the bout begins and included in the announcement of the bout.

No combatant will be compelled to fight with or against any weapon that said combatant deems to pose an unacceptable risk. This applies to specific individual weapons as well as a weapon category as a whole. They may express the wish to "not fight with that weapon;" reasons need not be given. The combatants should agree a different weapon. Note: If a significant number of the combatants do not wish to fight with or against a particular weapon, the chief marshal should withdraw it from use.

No combatant will be compelled to fight against any opponent that said combatant deems to pose an unacceptable risk. They may express a wish to "not have this fight;" reasons need not be given. Other pairings should be found for both combatants. Note: If a significant number of the combatants do not wish to fight against a particular combatant, the chief marshal should consider requesting the combatant in question to withdraw for the day.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COMBATANT INCLUDE:

- Placing the safety and well being of an opponent above the need to score a point or a victory, This means being able control your power and technique in a way that demonstrates technical expertise while simultaneously minimizing the risk of injury whether caused by striking with excessive force or performing dangerous grappling techniques. Marshals and other presiding officials are likely to see failure to do so as brutality.
- Being aware of hazardous field conditions (lost armor, weapon failure, etc.) and neither taking advantage of such to score a point or a victory nor allowing such conditions to continue. This means calling such conditions to the marshal's attention once recognized.
- Recognizing and acknowledging that, regardless of their armor choices and prior training, that armored combat is a rough game that can result in injury. The choice to participate means that risk of injury has been voluntarily assumed.
- Having training in one or more medievally-based fighting arts as depicted in existing *fechtbücher* and treatises, and having experience in executing the art which they study.
- Striving to stay within the parameters of the art they study. Those who do not stay within the parameters of their art should not expect to be singled out as worthy by those judging performance at a deed.
- Having experience in wearing and fighting in armor. They should not be fighting in harness for their first time at a deed, except if they are entered into a Squire's List." See (referent) Squires List.
- Following all rules formulated for a given deed of arms.
- Accepting the authority of the marshals and other presiding persons without complaint.
- Accepting, without complaint, all blows as called upon them by the marshals. Do not argue over a call. Fight on. Polite discussion after the bout will not reverse any results but may improve subsequent judging. We do not expect combatants to talk back to the marshals save to request the recall of a judgement against their opponent.
- Acknowledging good blows struck against them which are not recognized by marshals by calling out said blow. Giving and receiving proper strikes. See Blows: Fair and Otherwise.
- Speaking out to deny any of their own blows upon their opponent which were called as fair blows but which they know were not consistent with a fair and proper strike. This is an exception to accepting whatever the marshal calls.
- Not striking an unresisting opponent after they have fallen to the ground or when they have backed away to acknowledge a blow. Judges are likely to see such behavior as ruthless.
- Understanding that a deed of arms is an opportunity to display skill and honor, not a venue to display brute power or ruthlessness. Powerful strikes to "immune" targets will be considered unnecessary force and, thus, brutality. Those who display brutality or ruthlessness should expect to be warned and possibly to be ejected from the deed.
- Watching the bouts of their companions in the deed that they may be properly informed should they be called upon to select outstanding combatants of the day.
- Understanding that there shall be no prizes of significant monetary worth, save those intended to be given to a proper charitable organization, either to one set beforehand by the host of the deed as in the case of a fund-raising endeavor or to one to be designated by the combatant chosen as First Among Equals as a privilege for having been deemed

most worthy in the deed. The restriction on prizes exists because we do not wish to encourage greed to rule the day.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMBATANTS INCLUDE:

- An identifying flag or banner to display. Each combatant should also have the necessary means for that flag or banner to stand upright. So-called “portable holes,” while not medieval, are unobtrusive and easily to emplace and thus are acceptable for supporting flags and banners.
- An assistant of their own to perform the duties of a squire for them.
- A non-modern seat for themselves to occupy between bouts and from which they may view the bouts while staying out of the way of those working to keep the deed moving efficiently. Such seats should preferably be historical reproductions.
- A non-modern drinking vessel for receiving water. Such vessels should preferably be historical reproductions.

V. CONVENTIONS

The Form of a Deed

To connect the modern deed with its historical antecedents and context the event should be surrounded with a modicum of pageantry, including a suitable display of heraldry/affiliation. The host is strongly encouraged to have one or more identifying flags or banners to display and all deed participants may be required to have a minimum of personal kit to convey their role in deed activities.

The default format of a deed is one in which the combatants are divided into two teams: the “tenans,” who hold the field, and the “venans,” who come to challenge the tenans. Typically, the division of fighters between the teams will be determined by the host, who often selects the tenan team.

The fighting portion of the deed should have a formal opening and closure. Such ceremonies need not be long, but should set the tone of the event, draw in any spectators, establish the combatants as brothers and sisters in arms, not opponents.

The deed will be controlled and monitored by a chief marshal and such assistant marshals and constables as needed/desired for the form of the deed or bout.

The deed will be performed as a series of paired matches, each fought to a conclusion. This is a “bout.” See Bouts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEED’S ENVIRONMENT:

- A table for display of helms.
- An arms rack for storing weapons while not in use. While not medieval, this is extremely useful for the efficient and tidy running of a deed.
- The presence of additional squires to aid in keeping things moving. These should be arranged by the host.
- One from among all squires present to take the role of “captain” of the squires to coordinate their efforts. This selection is usually made by the host.
- Tabards or tunics for assistants if they lack other suitable clothing of a medieval style. One or more “heralds.” Herald should have tabards, which in medieval times would likely display the arms or logo of the deed’s host.

Bouts

The weapons in use in a bout should be mutually agreed upon by the combatants, subject to the chief marshal’s approval.

The interaction of weapons and armor will follow the presumed weapon efficacy conventions herein; see Weapons versus Armor. If the host wishes to deviate from the default presumed weapon efficacy definitions, changes must be explicitly detailed and said changes shall be made known to all participants in advance of the day of the deed.

TWO FORMS OF BOUT ARE RECOGNIZED:

- “Punctuated,” where bouts pause after each fair blow.
- “Continuous,” where bouts do not necessarily pause after each fair blow.

A deed may use one or the other, alternate forms for different rounds, or leave it to the combatants’ choice for their bouts.

Bouts are completed when a conclusive result is achieved. See Conclusive Results below.

ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL BE MADE FOR EACH BOUT:

- The names of each combatant.
- The weapons they are to use.
- Any restrictions or modifications to the default rules, such as the model (punctuated or continuous) for the bout if the deed allows the combatants to choose.
- The victor and the score of counted blows or the victory condition under which they won.

PUNCTUATED (PAUSING AT EACH FAIR BLOW) BOUTS

A punctuated bout consists of a series of passes. Each pass continues until a fair blow is struck or an immediate bout conclusion is achieved. In the case of a fair blow, the marshal calls a halt and announces the nature of the blow. If the count of the blows has not been reached, the marshal then resets the combatants centered in the list and when they are ready, calls for them to begin another pass.

THIS FORM OF BOUT HAS THE FOLLOWING ADVANTAGES:

- Emphasizes direct, clean hits.
- Easier for marshals to judge.
- Easier for spectators to follow the action.
- Easier for combatants to know whether their actions have been deemed successful.

IT HAS THE DISADVANTAGES OF:

- It is more difficult for combatants to link complex actions, such as using one action to set-up another.
- Broken rhythm to the fight as a whole.
- Bouts take longer to complete, which can be a concern with a large list.

CONTINUOUS ACTION BOUTS

A continuous action bout consists of one or more passes, each of which continues until either:

- The full count of blows is reached;
- A decisive point occurs;
- A conclusive result is achieved.

The concept of a “decisive point” is unique to this combat form, and represents a blow that would have severely compromised a combatant’s ability to continue were real weapons in use. The inclusion of decisive points prevents combatants from ignoring the effects of a hit, while rushing in to try and win by scoring many hits as quickly as possible while the other combatant’s attack would have impeded their ability to do so.

When a decisive blow is landed, the marshal halts the pass, resets the combatants in the center of the list, and signals the start of another pass with the lifting of their baton.

EXAMPLES OF DECISIVE POINTS INCLUDE:

- a thrust in the armpit that arrests forward moment, or drives the struck combatant back, etc. and the striking combatant maintains their point on the target with a braced weapon. No blows struck by the “impaled” combatant will be counted as fair until either they clear the point from their body, or the attacker does.
- A fair blow that is a thrust into the palm of the hand.
- A fair blow is struck that is considered a “fight ending blow,” such as one that would penetrate an eye slot. This sort of blow, can be considered a bout conclusion. (In a more sportive context such an attack might be counted as 2 or more fair blows rather than a “fight ender.”)

THIS FORM OF BOUT HAS THE FOLLOWING ADVANTAGES:

- Offers opportunities to chain techniques while de-emphasizing precision “sharp-shooting” that can result in fighters not making sure they will not be struck in turn.
- Often results in a more fluid flow of action. (This is particularly true with the dagger.)
- Bouts end more quickly, allowing more bouts in the deed.

IT HAS THE DISADVANTAGES OF:

- It is more difficult to marshal.
- Without the use of decisive points, fights can become chaotic and confused.
- It is more difficult for spectators to follow the action.
- Harder for combatants to know whether individual actions are deemed successful.

Conclusive Results (vulgarly known as “victory conditions”)

Conclusive results used herein are based on forms used in historical deeds of arms. Not all historical deeds used all of these nor did they necessarily take the explicit form described herein.

The Concord allows for hosts to make choices in how a deed will be performed, specifically by restricting, modifying, or disallowing some of the conclusive results to suit the goals and nature of the deed (such as a more modern form of competition), or to conform to site requirements. This means that the conclusive results in play may be different from deed to deed. We expect that all participants will ensure that they understand any changes from the base expectations.

THE DEFAULT CONCLUSIVE RESULTS ARE:

- The agreed upon number of fair blows having been struck. That number varied historically. Five blows, in total, is a good number for well-paced bouts, but the number may be set for the deed or left to the individual combatants to agree mutually for a bout.
- One combatant yields the bout to their opponent for any reason. The marshal is expected to alert to such calls and declare an immediate cessation of the bout.
- One combatant is “shown the gate,” which is to say driven from the field through an entrance in such a way that both of the driven combatant’s feet leave the list. In lists without a solid barrier fence being driven into the ropes should be deemed a fair blow against the driven combatant. Should both combatants leave the list at the same time, without either in clear control, there is no “fair blow” or victory; the bout should be halted, and the combatants returned to a standing position in the middle of the lists before resuming the bout.
- One combatant willfully leaves the lists. That combatant is effectively calling for quarter and yields the bout to the opponent.
- One combatant is disarmed of their last weapon. Should a combatant drop their last weapon to attempt a bout conclusion through wrestling, only a short period of time (see

Wrestling) should be allowed for them to do so before the marshal halts the bout and declares the weaponless combatant as disarmed and their opponent the victor.

- One combatant is brought to the ground with the other in clear control of the situation, such as by remaining standing. Medievally, brought to the ground would mean touching the ground with a hand, a knee, or with the body. Once a combatant is on the ground, a follow-up blow by the opponent is forbidden. Slipping or tripping is not considered a bout conclusion. Should both combatants go to the ground and one combatant immediately establishes a position of dominance, that combatant is the victor; if neither does so, the bout should be halted, and the combatants returned to a standing position in the middle of the lists before resuming the bout.
- One combatant achieves a secure bind upon the other. Combatants and marshals are expected to recognize when a hold is achieved. Holds that are destructive of bones or soft tissue must not be taken to completion. As a safety consideration only a short period of time should be allowed for their opponent to escape the bind before the marshal halts the bout and declares the combatant achieved the bind as the victor.
- One combatant is rendered unable to continue. This may come from injury or catastrophic armor failure, but it may also be declared if the chief or bout marshal decides it is unsafe for a combatant to continue. In the case of failed armor, the combatant should be allowed an attempt to make repairs in a timely manner; the chief marshal will decide on how much time will be allowed.
- Combatants reach exhaustion. The marshal, upon observing this, is expected to call a halt to the bout. "Exhaustion" can be predefined before the deed by applying a time limit to a bout; this can be useful in a deed intended to have a more sportive context or one that must take place within a specified time limit.

Armor for a Deed

Most deeds during the height of chivalric armored deeds were persons of rank and high social standing. In order to be more inclusive of combatants, the Concord provides for the default Knights List, where combatants are expected to wear armor as appropriate to a person of rank, and for a Squire's List, where combatants can wear less complete equipment. Historically, squires were expected to have lighter, less protective equipment, such as mail being the primary protection for the body.

A Squires List can offer a better opportunity to portray "unarmored" combat, if that is a desired goal.

The decision to run a Knights List, a Squires List, or both belongs to the host.

We do not see these events as a "war situation," where a fighter might make different kit decisions because war is not single combat nor are these events brawls between foot soldiers where any mishmash of armor might show up. Thus, a near complete harness of plate is expected for combatants in a Knights List.

HISTORICAL STYLING

Preferred armor for deeds of arms should be from the period when plate harness predominated, which is to say from the latter part of the fourteenth century, when near complete harnesses of plate were common, to the end of the fifteenth century, when the skills of individual combat in armor became less important in European culture. Therefore, combatants will wear a historically styled suite of armor suitable to a year between 1370 and 1490.

In general, we accept that the time frame for suitable harnesses may be extended to as early as 1350, before which the dynamic of armored combat is very different, and as late as 1550, which would extend the time range into a period when arranged deeds of arms were more sportive than combative. Doing this will likely increase the challenge of mismatched target zones for paired combatants arising from harnesses with different levels of coverage

and/or protection. We expect combatants will accept the sportive challenges inherent in such mismatches.

The time frame may likewise be restricted to a narrower span for a more historical overall presentation. This approach will likely limit the number of prospective combatants but the restriction to more strictly contemporary harnesses can be important in an educational presentation.

Preferred armor styles are those with a historical basis as found in survivals or in art that depicts a clear representation. However, this provision does not intend to allow armors that would overly compromise participant safety. Any attempt to represent such an armor will require additional elements or modern reinforcements before being used.

We acknowledge that not all combatants are interested in wearing armor from the same time period. Such individual choice in historical inspiration for armor styling will lead to differences in target coverage and protection. Doing this will likely increase the challenge of a bout arising from harnesses with different levels of coverage and/or protection. We expect combatants to acknowledge that this can result in differential targeting opportunities and accept that challenge.

A combatant's armor should be composed of elements that belong together chronologically, which is to say an armor should be styled to a single, historical period, drawing on references no more than 10 years to either side of the chosen date.

Combatants may elect to wear a less protective armor, such as shinbalds instead of closed greaves. While this is not "full armor" in the historical sense, the practice is well documented. While shinbalds are more affordable today, they do not provide the same protection as closed greaves, especially in a fall.

Combatants will have armor that fits well and is well maintained. Armor should fit its wearer so as to function properly and safely. Rusty steel is not well-maintained and does not fit the ideal of suitable display.

Any restrictions or variances from the Concord standards for a particular deed's armor will be announced in advance by the host.

SAFETY & EQUIPMENT

Because we agree that safety trumps authenticity, combatants are expected to wear modern elements of protection to provide a safety margin where historical armor does not. Such elements should be concealed or as inconspicuous as possible. See Armor Specifications for technical details.

All combatants are expected to ensure that they appear at the deed with the requisite equipment in good repair and fitting them properly. Equipment in ill repair and ill-fitting equipment are easily avoidable safety hazards.

All marshals, constables, and combatants are expected to be alert to unsafe equipment issues. If such are noticed during a bout, the marshals should halt the bout, resuming only if the situation can be remedied in a timely fashion through repaired or replacement and to the satisfaction of the chief marshal.

Weapons for a Deed

Weapons will be styled after historical models.

THE WEAPONS IN USE FOR DEEDS OF ARMS ARE TRADITIONALLY:

- spear
- poleax
- sword
- dagger

Within the bounds of safety, all weapons should resemble historical weapons in materials and appearance. See Weapon Specifications for technical details.

Use of any weapon is at the discretion of the chief marshal.

Use of particular weapons in combination with particular armors is at the discretion of the chief marshal. This is intended to prevent someone from using a weapon that may be unsafe against lighter armors.

Historically, some deeds restricted the weapons in use. A host wishing to emulate such a deed may do so. Any such restrictions should be announced to prospective combatants before the deed.

We strongly recommend that poleax be excluded from all Squires Lists unless both combatants are armored to Knights List standards.

Weapons versus Armor

Since it is not possible to determine the actual effectiveness of real blows with real weapons against real armor without using real equipment in real circumstances, there can be great disagreement about the effects of weapons. Thus, we acknowledge that some presiders may choose to introduce “incapacitating blows” as a category of fair bows.

Whatever armor a combatant actually wears will be judged by the chief marshal to fall into one of three simplified categories: Unprotected, Light Armor and Heavy Armor. Layered armor upon any given point of the body is not considered to provide cumulative protection and shall count as the most protective category covering that point.

These categories define which weapons can strike fair blows.

ARMOR CATEGORIES ARE:

- Unprotected: This is anything (including required modern equipment that protects gaps in a combatant’s armor) that does not fall into the other armor categories, and includes soft leather and lightly padded and unpadded cloth. It also specifically includes perforated steel plate (such as used in a “Tindall hat” fencing mask). Any blow struck against an Unprotected target is a fair blow.
- Light Armor: This is mail (which, being the default exemplar, is often used as a shorthand term for the category), properly hardened leather, properly constructed padded garments and other armors. Unless otherwise specified, Light Armor is proof against cuts but vulnerable to thrusts.
- Heavy Armor: This is steel or iron plate, whether hardened or not. Armor of small plates, properly overlapped, can also count as Heavy. Unless otherwise specified, Heavy Armor is proof against all blows.

AN ALTERNATIVE USE OF ARMOR

An alternative form of deed that is preferred in some quarters treats armor simply as “safety equipment” and conducts what amounts to unarmored combat with the combatants wearing armor. In such a form, all blows with all weapons are be deemed fair blows. Overall, we feel this does not represent armored combat as depicted in existing *fechtbücher* and treatises but we recognize that certain specific forms of tournament combat did something similar, such as an encounter where the goal is to strike off the crest from the opponent’s helmet.

Notification to combatants must be made prior to the deed if this this form of combat will be used for any or all of the event.

INCAPACITATING BLOWS

Incapacitating blows only come into play if the deed is using the “One combatant is rendered incapable” bout conclusion where the default “incapacitating blow” is that any strike to an Unprotected target. However, a presider may wish to limit the effects of incapacity to certain anatomical targets where the damage done, were real weapons involved and safety

equipment not present, would be a more likely fight-ender. For example, a thrust to an Unprotected face is a likely fight-ender.

Whatever armor that a combatant actually is wearing will be categorized into Unprotected, Light, or Heavy (See Armor Categories.)

Presumed Weapon Efficacy

Fair blows shall be counted according to these weapon efficacy guidelines.

SPEARS

- Strike fair blows with the edge against Unprotected.
- Strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armor.
- Are ineffective against Heavy Armor.
- Hafts strike fair blows against Unprotected. However, see Dangerous Actions: Haft Strikes.
- Haft strikes against Light or Heavy armor may be used to set up follow on strikes or techniques.

POLEAXES

- Strike fair blows with the hammer/blade and with the back spike against Unprotected, Light and Heavy Armor.
- Strike fair blows with their head and foot points against Unprotected and Light Armor.
- Are ineffective with head and foot points against Heavy Armor.
- Hafts strike fair blows against Unprotected. However, see Dangerous Actions: Haft Strikes.
- Haft strikes against Light or Heavy armor may be used to set up follow on strikes or techniques.

SWORDS

- Strike fair blows with the edge against Unprotected
- Strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armor.
- Are ineffective against Heavy Armor.
- Pommels strike fair blows against Unprotected. However, see Dangerous Actions: Pommel strikes.

DAGGERS:

- Strike fair blows with the edge against Unprotected.
- Strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armor.
- Are ineffective against Heavy Armor.

Proper Strikes

At all times we expect combatants to strike blows with appropriate control of force. Different weapons have different performance characteristics, we expect combatants to moderate their force to suit the application.

Because not all combatants are created equal, we expect that their application of force against different opponents and in different circumstances may vary in appearance and effect.

Striking against targets, especially faces, protected by equipment classed as Unprotected need not be made with the force used against an armored target. So, for example, a sliding

spear thrust can score against an Unprotected target while it would lack the structure to penetrate an armored target.

Striking against truly unprotected targets must be done with controlled application of force or be considered ruthless or brutal.

Marshals should use judgement in recognizing what is sufficient for a fair blow.

A PROPER STRIKE SHOULD:

- **Be On Target:** A blow must be delivered with a technique that puts a useful part of the weapon against a target it can affect through armor. See Weapons Efficacy.
- **Have Structure:** A blow must be delivered with good technique, which means backed with body structure.
- **Produce Pressure:** A touch is not sufficient. The structure used for a blow needs to be applied in a way that, given real weapons and real armor, the strike would have had a good chance of having a notable effect on the target. Examples of judgement standards include, but are not limited to:
 - Displacement of the target area.
 - Seeing the target combatant's forward motion arrested.
 - A visible bend in the weapon, either because the attacker is solidly structured or because the target has advanced into or braced against the strike.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Targeted blows without good structure should not be counted as fair blows.
- Structured blows that are delivered short or weakly should not be counted as fair blows.
- Unprotected targets need less force to penetrate and conventions for pressure and structure should be relaxed. Indeed, we expect all combatants to use control when striking against unprotected targets and moderate their force to suit the target.

Wrestling

A widely held interpretation of the conventions is to call a stop to re-set a bout if the combatants resort to wrestling for an extended period of time. The exact time period allowed is debated, but a "five count" is commonly used.

Dangerous Actions

The actions advised by the historical treatises are inherently dangerous. This is especially true for those advised for use against an armored opponent because they are designed to seek the weaknesses in that armor. In addition, techniques done with the expectation of protective armor often result in inappropriate levels of force when mis-targeted, whether through intent or accident, against a less well armored part of an opponent's body.

This document acknowledges that some techniques are inherently less safe than others, occasionally offering unacceptable (when not literally fighting for one's life) levels of risk. To that end, some techniques and categories of actions are highlighted in this section as falling into that general category. Some are not allowed under these conventions, others are restricted and allowed only under specific circumstances, and still others are allowed in general use but should be used with heightened restraint and caution.

Disallowed Techniques

These techniques may not be used.

1. HEAD WRENCHING

Techniques involving wrenching the head simultaneously around and to the side, such as Fiore's last scholar of the poleax and the German tradition's Sunpointer. These may not be used due to the extreme ease, in part due to the lack of tactile feedback regarding applied pressure, with which a neck can be snapped.

2. HEAD/NECK IMPACT THROWS

Throws designed to send the opponent to the ground to impact directly on their head or neck.

Restricted Techniques

These techniques should not be in general use. They may only be used with the consent of the host and the chief marshal. If they are not to be allowed at all, that information should be made known to all marshals and combatants prior to the start of the deed. Other restrictions may apply as noted below.

1. MORTSCHLAGE

When using sparring swords with steel pommels and crossguards, this technique is effectively using a real weapon as envisioned by the treatises.

Thus, this technique is restricted to combatants who have trained specifically to use it with care and restraint and who have experience in using it and receiving its attacks. No combatant should be allowed to attempt this technique for the first time in a deed.

Both (trained) combatants in a bout must specifically agree to the use of this technique in their bout; the combatants will make sure that the bout marshal and any constables are aware that they intend to have it as an option for their bout.

Specially modified equipment, such as padded or impact-absorbing pommels and cross guards to reduce impact force or sparring swords with impact-reducing pommels and crossguards, can reduce the danger of this technique. The host and chief marshal, at their discretion, may allow the use of such weapons. As always, any combatant can decline to face such equipment with the result that the technique will not be allowed for their bouts. If such weapons are in use, this technique should be treated as a technique allowed with heightened restraint.

Heightened Restraint Techniques

Combatants should use increased control when executing such techniques to avoid excessive force and dangerous targeting. Marshals should be especially watchful when techniques of this type are applied.

1. POLEAX STRIKES

A poleax is a powerful weapon, even as a simulated weapon, and combatants choosing to use this weapon acknowledge the increased risk. Strikes hard enough to cause a concussion are not safe; they are brutality, intended or not.

Mass and rigidity are important factors in this danger, therefore steel poleax heads are not allowed for general use. See the weapon specifications of this document for alternatives.

Combatants must use restraint in making strong blows with a poleax, especially those which travel a long, unimpeded distance before contact.

Armor with design features well suited to dealing with such force, such as cuirass-anchored helmets, mitigate some of the danger and may offer consenting combatants the opportunity to reduce their restraint a little, but only when both combatants have such armor.

2. HAFT STRIKES

Striking with the haft of a spear or poleax is still effectively using a real weapon (the hard wood shaft) as envisioned by the treatises and results in a real effect. Strikes hard enough to

cause a concussion are not safe; they are brutality, intended or not. Combatants should be aware that a rising strike to the temple is especially dangerous in this regard.

Such strikes can effectively set up further actions, which is a desirable expression of the historical arts. Therefore they are permitted, if performed with restraint.

3. SWORD POMMEL STRIKES

Strikes with a steel pommel (other than *mortschlage*) is still effectively using a real weapon (the pommel) and results in a real effect. While not as dangerous as a *mortschlage*, they can still have significant effects. Strikes hard enough to cause a concussion are not safe; they are brutality, intended or not.

Combatants should be aware that a rising strike to the temple is especially dangerous in this regard.

Pommel strikes can effectively set up further actions, which is a desirable expression of the historical arts. Therefore they are permitted, if performed with restraint.

4. STRONG STRIKES TO THE BACK OF HEAD OR NECK

Strong percussive blows and structured thrusts, with any weapon, deliberately made to the back of the head or neck will be considered brutality and cause for immediate removal from the list, unless both combatants are wearing suitable protective armor such as great bascinets that lock down to the cuirass.

VI. SPECIFICATIONS

Knights' List Armor

Whereas we envision our deeds of arms to be in emulation of those historical ones that would be fought by gentlemen (and, modernly, gentlewomen) in a time when showing one's wealth was important, combatants in a Knights List will wear a complete armor suitable to a person of rank that covers all points of the body. Combatants may elect to not wear sabatons. While this is not "full armor," the practice is well documented.

KNIGHTS LIST COMBATANTS SHALL HAVE:

- Principal protection of steel plate, covering the greater portions of his/her head, torso, and limbs. See Specifications of Armor.
- Rigid groin protection: Athletic cup (males) or "Jill" (females).
- Shoulder protection, such as steel spaulders/pauldrons or a mail and padded aventail which extends over the shoulders, is recommended.
- Footwear with a minimal tread will be worn and will not have a blatantly modern appearance from a spectator's viewing distance.

Note on Knights List footwear: Non-historical footwear should be black and generally unobtrusive or hidden beneath sabatons or mail coverings. Hiking shoes and similar items with pronounced tread are strongly discouraged as they can "lock" a foot into the ground and cause serious injury if the leg is then subjected to force.

Squires List Armor

Whereas we envision a Squires List to be in emulation of those historical ones that would be fought by non-knights, combatants in a Squires List will not wear a complete armor as would be suitable for a knight. They shall, however, have sufficient protection of either historical armor or modern safety armor to meet minimal protection expectations.

IN A SQUIRES LIST, COMBATANTS SHALL:

- Conceal any modern protection beneath period appropriate clothing or armor.
- Have a steel helmet.
- Have steel gauntlets.
- Have hard protection for the knees and elbows. Hardened leather is a minimum.
- Have rigid groin protection: An athletic cup (males) and “jill” (females).
- Protection for the torso is strongly recommended, such as a breastplate, coat-of-plates, brigandine or placket. A modern plastic fencing plastron worn under mail, an arming coat, or a gambeson is acceptable.
- A padded garment is the minimum protection for the arms.
- Rigid protections for the forearms should be worn. When simulating unarmored combat, concealed plastic protection is the recommended form. For lightly armored combat, other forms may be used such as as hardened leather or splinted vambraces.
- Footwear with a minimal tread will be worn and will not have a blatantly modern appearance from a spectator’s viewing distance.

Note on Squires List footwear: Non-historical footwear should be black and generally unobtrusive or hidden beneath sabatons or mail coverings. Hiking shoes and similar items with pronounced tread are strongly discouraged as they can “lock” a foot into the ground and cause serious injury if the leg is then subjected to force.

Specifications on Armor

Helmets should be a minimum of 16 gauge (1.5 mm) steel, and full enclose the head and neck.

- Any opening in the visor must not allow a 1/4” x 1/2” bar to enter unimpeded in such a way that the wearer’s face can be touched. Any other gaps in the front, side, or top of the helmet must not allow a 1/2” square bar unimpeded access to the wearer. Wider eye slots and other openings must be protected by perforated steel plate as a safety measure. Helmets that expose the neck or back of head in some head positions, such as tailed sallets, must be supplemented with protection covering the cervical vertebrae, such as a gorget.
- Helmet visors shall be either locked, strapped or tied shut during combat, so that the face is not exposed.
- Highly perforated steel (not standard fencing mask mesh (which is unacceptable), but steel sheet where the perforations equal or exceed the amount of steel in the perforated zone) may be used to simulate an open visor. The greater greater visibility and airflow this allows comes at the cost of the visor counting as an Unprotected target; should the combatant be struck upon such a visor, they are considered immediately defeated.

Neck Protection shall provide solid protection for the cervical vertebrae, clavicles, and larynx, regardless of its historical suitability for the armor style chosen.

- The preferred form of protection is a historical piece such as a plate gorget or bevor. A mail pisane (standard) with a concealed trauma plate of steel for the throat is acceptable.
- A mail aventail is insufficient to protect the front of the throat (larynx). Additional throat protection should be worn beneath it.
- Simple cloth or lightly padded aventails without reinforcement are insufficient protection. Concealed neck protection may be of impact resistant modern materials. An impact spreading solid plate is still needed for throat defense,

Mail shall be worn to cover the armpit and any areas of the torso not covered by plate. Besides being part of the definition of a person of rank's suitable armor, this mail is intended to provide a safety margin for the vulnerable and often targeted armpits.

- Mail shirts should be belted or otherwise secured at the waist. Sleeves that are not tightly fitted should be secured, such as by a cinching cord or strap, so as to not allow point traveling beneath the mail to reach the inner surface of the upper arm or the armpit.
- and their sleeves shall be secured at the "cuff" to prevent accidental entry of a thrust.
- Separate mail items, such as voiders and separate skirts, that work with the combatant's plate armor are acceptable.
- Combatants may choose to forego mail protection at the bend of the elbow or knee and accept the risks, both real and within the sportive context, of such lesser protection.
- Mail shall be made of riveted rings or of alternating riveted and solid rings. If authenticity is not a primary concern, welded mail is allowed. Butted mail is not considered sufficiently protective and is only allowed for use in decorative applications.

Limb and Torso Protection shall be a minimum of 18 gauge unhardened steel.

Steel Gauntlets shall be worn to protect the hand, fingers, and wrist. They shall be a minimum of 18 gauge unhardened steel.

Weapon Specifications

Weapon Composition [Do we need a positive statement on this?]

SPEARS (STEEL)

- Steel spear heads:
 - Edges should be blunted.
 - If the tip is rounded or squared off, a rubber blunt or leather cover must be firmly affixed to the tip of sufficient width to bring it to a minimum functional size of 3/8" by 5/8".
 - If the tip is either folded over or flared, it must be of sufficient width to bring it to a minimum functional size of 3/8" by 5/8". A rubber blunt or leather cover firmly affixed over the tip is recommended.
 - If the tip is expanded, either additional metal in the blade or through laminated construction, it must be of a minimum functional size of 3/8" by 5/8". Heads should be constructed as per steel swords.
- Synthetic spear head should be stiff but not inflexible.
- Shafts should be made of hardwood.
- Butt spikes should be rubber or synthetic blunts that reduce impact.

POLEAXES

Poleax heads should be of an impact reducing material rather than steel.

Head and butt spikes should be a cap of synthetic, impact reducing form.

Shafts should be made of hardwood such as ash or hickory. Rattan is an acceptable substitute.

Butt "spikes" should be rubber or synthetic blunts that reduce impact.

WORDS (STEEL)

- Edges should be blunted.

- If the tip is rounded or squared off, a rubber blunt or leather cover must be firmly affixed to the tip of sufficient width to bring it to a minimum functional size of 3/8" by 5/8".
- If the tip is either folded over or flared, it must be of sufficient width to bring it to a minimum functional size of 3/8" by 5/8". A rubber blunt or leather cover firmly affixed over the tip is recommended.
- If the tip is expanded, either additional metal in the blade or through laminated construction, it must be of a minimum functional size of 3/8" by 5/8".

DAGGERS (STEEL)

- As steel swords

Squires List Weapons

Synthetic sword blades, dagger blades, and spear heads are recommended for Squires Lists where the armor of combatants is closer has them closer to an unarmored state than an armored one. This is useful for training lists by providing a wider margin of safety.

These weapons are also recommended for "armor as worn" melees where some of the combatants' armor is closer has them closer to an unarmored state than an armored one. Any combatants carrying steel weapons must exercise restraint in striking lightly protected opponents.

Examples of Suitable Weapons

[In all cases are there others that should be listed?]

SPEARS

Darkwood Armored Combat Spearhead

POLEAXES

Black Armoury Poleaxe Mk2 synthetic head

Black Armoury Warhammer synthetic head (spike is too flexible)

Cap-à-pie polyurethane Warhammer Head

Purpleheart Polehammer rubber head

SWORDS

Albion Liechtenauer

Darkwood Armory Armored Combat Sword

Hanwei Practical German Bastard Sword

Jesse Belsky Stageswords Mordschlag Training Sword

DAGGERS

Darkwood Armory Armored Combat Dagger

Wooden rondel dagger with ball tip, such as Purpleheart Rondel Dagger

BUTT SPIKES

Cap-à-pie polyurethane Butt Spike Long

Purpleheart Blunt Thrusting Tip

Appendix: First Among Equals and Other Recognitions

There is more to a deed of arms than winning the most bouts. Thus, at the conclusion of the fighting, we encourage combatants to meet in conclave to determine who among them

best displayed fidelity to the goals and ideals of the deed of arms. While winning bouts is a consideration, comportment and faithfulness to the historical arts should be given greater weight. The chosen combatant will be named First Among Equals for that day.

We encourage that other individuals beyond the First Among Equals also be acknowledged for above average performance in accord to the goals and ideals of the Concord. For example, those whose martial prowess (i.e. success), panoply (their physical presentation), and diligence (notable work in making the deed run well) stood out.

SEVERAL FORMS HAVE BEEN USED:

- Conclave of the tenans: In this form only the tenans meet. This form is used by events sponsored by the Companions of the Seven Swords. It works best when the tenans are experienced armored combat practitioners with a commitment to selecting combatants who are exemplars of the goals and ideals embodied in the Concord. Groups using this sort of conclave are encouraged to accept input from all combatants as to what they were impressed by on the day before making their final selection; the Companions have successfully used the dual conclave form as integral prelude and an underlying structure for their conclave of tenans.
- Conclave of the whole: In this form all combatants meet together. This approach can lead to issues with reluctant to name members of one's own team as well voiced opinions being biased toward simple bout success, especially from less experienced deed attendees.
- Dual conclaves: In this form, the tenans choose a First from among the venans while the venans choose a First from among the tenans. This avoids the issues of "voting for your own team." It does create two "Firsts" and strays from the medieval form of having a single "First" chosen from among all combatants who, whether venan, tenan, novice, or veteran, equally share an interest and approach to honor, prowess, and the ideals of chivalry.

Appendix: Management of the Dekoven Concord

Management of this Concord has fallen to the Companions of the Seven Swords, who periodically appoint a committee to review and revised the document, after which any changes to the the core Conventions or Specifications are presented to the signatories for further commentary prior to adoption.

Individuals and groups may request to become a signatory by contacting the Companions of the Seven Swords and providing contact information to facilitate contact during the management process.

A signatory may request removal as a signatory at any time.

Signatories

The undersigned have agreed to the Dekoven Concord's statement of purpose and to abide by the expectations and conventions expressed in this document for their deeds of arms.

Academie Duello

Chicago Swordplay Guild

Forteza Historical Swordwork Guild

The Medieval Swordsman Guild of Kansas City

Le Maitre des Armes

Northwest Fencing Academy

Selohaar Fechtschule

Southern Academy of Swordsmanship

Swords of Chivalry

Virginia Academy of Fencing

Devon Boorman

Gregory D. Mele

Bob Charrette

Bruce Rawitch

Jason Smith

Sean Hayes

Christian Henry Tobler

Scott Wilson

Scott Farrell

Bill Grandy