

# IMCF Rules and Regulations V.05

## Group Categories

Safety, honor, sportsmanship, and fair competition are the hallmarks of the International Medieval Combat Federation (IMCF). All competitors are expected to behave with regard for the wellbeing of other combatants. This sport has inherent risks; it is the duty of the officiating staff to enforce the following to maintain a safe, level playing field in this fierce but honorable contest.

### 1. Equipment

Each fighter's armor must meet the requirements set forth in the **IMCF Equipment Specifications** document.

Belt numbers are mandatory - it is not allowed to share, swap, or change them during the tournament. The use of tabards or sashes is mandatory for all categories.

### 2. Weapons

All weapons and shields used in group categories must meet and conform to the standards set forth in the **IMCF Weapons Specifications** document.

**Weapons may be fitted with a historic lanyard for group fights only but may not be allowed to hang freely. A hanging weapon is considered a disarm and fighters cannot continue fighting until they take back their weapon. If the weapon breaks, the fighter will be downed if he grabs a new weapon before taking off the lanyard with the remaining pieces.**

### 3. Disciplinary Actions and Appeals

All disciplinary actions and appeals procedure are set forth in the **IMCF Disciplinary Actions and Appeals** document.

### 4. Regulations for Group Categories

- 4.1. Group categories are held in a list field of the following size:
  - a) Length: 15 to 40m (50ft. to 130ft.).
  - b) Width: 7 to 20m (23ft. to 6 ft.).
  - c) The height of the sides of the lists is from **1.2 to 1.3** meters.
  - d) **Tabletop width: 60 cm minimum.**
  - e) **Bottom rails are not allowed.**
- 4.2. The Head Marshal invites two teams to the list, and then asks two other teams to prepare for combat.
  - 4.2.1. **3 vs. 3** are conducted with teams of 3 to 5 fighters (3 active and 2 reserve fighters).
  - 4.2.2. **5 vs. 5** are conducted with teams of 5 to 8 fighters (5 active and 3

reserve fighters).

- 4.2.3. **10 vs.10** are conducted with teams of 10 to 15 fighters (10 active and 5 reserve fighters).
- 4.2.4. **16 vs. 16** are conducted with teams of 16 to 21 combatants (16 active and 5 reserve fighters).
- 4.2.5. The reserve fighters must remain outside the list barrier and available to provide backup weapons or armor. They may substitute the active fighters day-to-day with any frequency and in any number between the rounds or matches. Reserve fighters cannot participate in the group categories as members of any other teams in the same category.
- 4.2.6. The team Captain may make substitutions to this roster from available national fighters prior to the commencement of the day's event.
- 4.3. The two teams invited for the next melee shall come to a designated place near the list, where they go through a pre-combat historical, aesthetic, and technical inspection of equipment. The Marshals perform the functions of the authenticity and technical committee of the event.
- 4.4. The invited teams must appear at the list within **1 minute**.
- 4.5. The fighters may not leave the list **once they have been checked and** before the start of the melee to prevent the possibility of substitution. Unless they fail inspection.
- 4.6. If the fighters appear in the list later than **3 minutes** after they've been invited or come unprepared, the opposing team is awarded a "technical victory".
  - 4.6.1. When a team withdraws during the tournament (and not before the tournament begins) and gives up the fight or round, or if the team did not show up at the list within the established time, the score per round will be determined by category, 3-0, 5-0, 10-0 and 16-0.
- 4.7. **Between rounds there's a maximum amount of time of 1 minute. Fighters will be downed if they are not ready once the time is up.**
- 4.8. The Head Marshal **will provide a 30-seconds warning to both teams before the minute ends.** Once the minute is up, the Head Marshal confirms the readiness of the Field Marshals and the fighters. **Field Marshals and Line Marshals in charge of the armor check at the list gates must make sure that the number of fighters who entered the list is correct according to the category (3, 5, 10, 16).**
- 4.9. The points for the round are scored at the rate of 1 point for each fighter legally standing.
- 4.10. The Head Marshal signals the start of the melee, giving the command

“Fight!”.

- 4.11. The officials dealing with the video observation, observe the melee in their sectors of the lists, while staying behind the barrier. They record the violations they see, but do not interfere in the course of the melee except for immediate safety issues.
- 4.12. The Field Marshals observe the melee in the list, moving along it, and monitor compliance with the rules. The Field Marshals can bring those who were withdrawn from the melee for violation of the rules, back to action, as well as separate inactive clinches that last more than 5 seconds. The Marshals observe the general course of the fight and assess the interaction of the teams and fighters in the list.
  - 4.12.1. **A raised hand with an open palm is a sign of voluntarily leaving the battle.** A fighter raising a hand with the open palm and kneeling on one knee (if there is such opportunity) is automatically considered out of the fight and cannot re-join the fight.
  - 4.12.2. For inactive clinches, the Field Marshals may pull the fighters apart, giving the command **“Break!”** After this the fighters must stop fighting immediately and step apart from each other. An additional command **“Fight”** is given. This command serves as an additional signal that the battle is still in going, both in general, and for the fighters who were in the clinch. The local commands **“Break”** and **“Fight”** are only for the fighters in clinch. After the command **“Fight”**, a fighter can continue the battle against their opponent or attack another opponent.
- 4.13. The round is finished after the command of the Head Marshal **“Stop fight!”**.
  - 4.13.1. The group fight is stopped when all the fighters on the opposing team have been taken down or the numerical difference is **60% or more**, the victory is awarded with the score 3-0, 4-0, 5-0 etc.
    - a) Numerical difference for 3 vs. 3: 3 vs. 1
    - b) Numerical difference for 5 vs. 5: 3 or more vs. 1
    - c) Numerical difference for 10 vs. 10: 60% fighters against 40% fighters (10 vs. 4, 9 vs. 3, 7 vs. 2, etc.)
    - d) Numerical difference for 16 vs. 16: 60% fighters against 40% fighters (16 vs. 6, 14 vs. 5, 12 vs. 4, 9 vs. 3, 7 vs.2, etc.)
- 4.14. At the end of the round, the fighters remain standing or on the ground depending on their status at the Head Marshal’s command **“Stop Fight”** so that the round may be scored.
- 4.15. At the Head Marshal’s command **“All Rise”** fighters return to their original positions on the lists.
  - 4.15.1. The matches are won by best 2 of 3 rounds. In case of a draw, the match continues until 2 victories. **The maximum number of rounds**

is 5. The team that defeats all rival fighters first earns a victory in a round.

4.15.2. Each round lasts not more than **5 minutes**, and the total amount designated for each fight is **15 minutes**. At the end of each round, the team with the most fighters standing on their feet at the Head Marshal's command of "Stop fight!" wins the round. If the time per round runs out and the number of fighters is equal, a draw will be declared, and both teams will have to prepare for a next round.

**4.15.3. If the total amount of time designated for the complete fight runs out before a winner is declared, the victory will be defined by points.**

4.16. The Field Marshals come to the Head Marshal and report any observed violations. Relying on the reports of the Field Marshals as well as the Head Marshal's own observations, the Head Marshal decides on the result of the round. After that, the Head Marshal considers the protests (if any), announces the result of the round and gives the verbal warnings or the yellow or red cards to the fighters if required.

4.17. The Secretary must record the following results of the round:

- a) Victor of the round.
- b) Round score (the number of fighters of both teams remaining in Melee at the end of the round).
- c) Any disciplinary actions performed during the round.
- d) **Secretary duties include being the timekeepers of the fight.**

4.18. The Head Marshal announces the next round. The second, third, fourth or fifth round (in case of a draw), are held according to the above system.

4.19. After achieving two victorious rounds, the winner of the match is to be announced.

4.19.1. A win of the match is the determining factor for advancement in the tournament. The number of round victories and the scores of them are additional data for the rankings and overall point determination.

## 5. Rules for Group Categories

There are no weight categories in group categories.

The panel of marshals includes the Head Marshal, four Field Marshals and List Secretary.

In case of any disagreements a deciding vote belongs to the Head Marshal.

### 5.1. Allowed Techniques in all Group Categories

5.1.1. Any punches, strikes with a weapon's striking edge, pommel strikes, or shield strikes at the opponents allowed legal strike zones.

5.1.2. Striking motions with the butt end of a pole arm or sword are considered pommelling (***pommelling = a strike with the pommel or***



***butt of the weapon with at least one hand on the grip).***

- 5.1.3. Strikes at opponents who have lost their balance until they fall to the ground.
- 5.1.4. Pushes or strikes with head, shoulder, elbows, knees, and body.
- 5.1.5. Attacks with free hand: strikes, holds, and pressure on the allowed zones.
- 5.1.6. The fighter can strike with a free hand, but only when a weapon is in the other hand.
- 5.1.7. Attacks on an opponent who has lost their weapon.
- 5.1.8. Kicks to legal strike zones except for the knee.
- 5.1.9. Wrestling techniques (throws, back heels, etc.)
- 5.1.10. Tripping is permitted.
- 5.1.11. Holds of the body of the opponent with weapons from the front, from behind and from the sides, which do not place pressure on the neck.
- 5.1.12. Overlapping of a shield, blocking of the opponent's hands with a shield, and putting a shield's edge under an armed hand.
- 5.1.13. Strikes with the edge or body of a shield at legal strike zones.
- 5.1.14. Opponents are eliminated when there are 3 points of contact to the ground or when they submit. The feet are always considered to be in contact with the ground equaling 2 points.
- 5.1.15. Touching the ground and supporting weight with weapon, shield or any third body part is considered a third support point. **If the fighter's weapon touches the ground with either the butt end or the striking edge but does not support the weight, it is not considered as a third point of support.**
- 5.1.16. **The fighter is not considered eliminated if he touches the ground or a downed fighter with the weapon, edge of a shield, fist, or hands during or immediately after a successful takedown.**
- 5.1.17. A fighter who breaks a weapon must immediately drop the broken weapon.
- 5.1.18. A fighter who drops or breaks a weapon must immediately stop any attacking or blocking actions and either arm himself with a secondary weapon from his belt, be handed a weapon from a standing teammate in the list or go to his team's starting zone and retrieve a spare weapon from a teammate.
  - a) Only teammates for that competition (at the **designated** zone or a standing teammate in the list) may supply him with

a secondary weapon. **The teammate supplying the weapons must be wearing gauntlets.** A rack for secondary weapons may also be used.

- b) **One-handed weapons may be placed on top of the tabletop if they are within the designated area. Two-handed weapons may lean at the edge of the tabletop.**

## 5.2. Forbidden Techniques in all Group Categories

The use of any of the following prohibited strikes or actions against an opponent are a serious breach of the rules. Sanctions for breaking the rules might include a verbal warning or a disqualification and will be imposed whether the breach was accidental or on purpose.

- 5.2.1. Thrusting is forbidden and grounds for immediate **disqualification**. When using axes or poles, moving an opponent's weapon out of the way is not considered a thrust.
- 5.2.2. Any holds with direct pressure on the neck are prohibited. **The neck is defined as the section between the lower edge of a helmet and shoulders, even if this area is covered with chainmail armor or plates.** **If a successful takedown is done by putting direct pressure on the neck with the weapon or weapon's shaft, the marshal will raise up the fallen opponent and a warning will be given to the fighter who made the illegal takedown. If the warned fighter keeps performing actions by putting direct pressure on the neck with the weapon or weapon's shaft, he will be put down immediately.**
- 5.2.3. Holding any striking edge of an opponent's weapons or punching edge of an opponent's shields with a free hand
- 5.2.4. **Holding or grabbing the blade of the sword with the free hand.**
- 5.2.5. **Striking an opponent with two hands using a one-handed weapon.**
- 5.2.6. Strikes with a weapon, shield, legs, or arms in the non-legal strike zone.
- 5.2.7. The non-legal strike zone includes: **the feet, ankles, back of the knee, groin, throat, and the neck.** The neck is defined as a section between the lower edge of a helmet and shoulders, even if this area is covered with chainmail armor or plates.
- 5.2.8. Strikes behind the knee with weapon, shield, legs, feet, or arms.
- 5.2.9. Any vertical strikes with weapons or shield along the spine.
  - a) Along the spine is defined as the area running in a straight line from the back of the neck to the tailbone.
- 5.2.10. Kicks to any part of the knee or application of significant downward pressure with foot or body to the opponent's knee.

- 5.2.11. Downward stomps to the calf.
- 5.2.12. Twisting against natural direction of a joint and/or painful hold.
- 5.2.13. Pressure or hooking the base of a helmet with a hand, as well as actions aimed at twisting the neck by pressing on the edge of the helmet.
- 5.2.14. Painful holds, suffocating techniques, suplex or similar throws designed to deliver an opponent onto the top of the head such as a pile driver or tombstone, and fighting from the ground are prohibited.
- 5.2.15. Deliberate attempts to remove any elements of the opponent's protective kit.
- 5.2.16. Punches with weapon hilts aimed at the face of the opponent if the gap between the hilt and fist in combat mitten or glove is more than 30mm, or if a similar protrusion exists.
- 5.2.17. Any holds, hold-downs, or suffocating techniques with hands or weapons around the neck from any direction. The neck is defined as the section between the lower edge of a helmet and shoulders even if this area is covered with chainmail armor or plates.
- 5.2.18. Any strikes at a downed or kneeling fighter.
- 5.2.19. Any strikes at the neck or the head of an opponent who is bent 50 degrees or more. Except for an upward knee to the face.
- 5.2.20. Combatants should be in control of their weapons; wild uncontrolled flailing is a hazard to fighters and marshals alike and is forbidden.
- 5.2.21. Any attacking actions towards a fighter who has raised one hand with an open palm. **A raised hand with an open palm is a sign of voluntarily leaving the battle.**
- 5.2.22. Inactive clinch that lasts more than 5 seconds.
- 5.2.23. Any attacking or blocking actions with no weapon in the hands.
- 5.2.24. The fighter who is out of the battle (due to a fall or being downed by a Marshal), but is in the list, is strongly prohibited **from doing any attacking or supporting actions such as grabbing the opponent** and standing up on both legs before the command of the Head Marshal "All rise!". If the fighter is out of the battle, he should take a comfortable sitting or lying position in the list and wait for the end of the round, without interfering in the battle. By assuming a comfortable position, the fighter shows that he is not injured.
  - a) **If the list does not have a tabletop**, grabbing the barrier with one's hand, weapon, or shield, or hooking it in any form, including the **"chicken wing"** with the arm, is prohibited. A

Marshal will audibly exclaim "**Hook!**", then issue a verbal count: "**Hook 1, Hook 2, Hook 3**" and if the fighter has not released the barrier, he will be considered down and told to sit. Repeated abuse of this rule to gain tactical advantage will result in a yellow card for unsportsmanlike behavior.

- b) If the list does have a tabletop, grabbing the end of the tabletop to gain a tactical advantage is not permitted and will result in a yellow card.

5.2.25. Any unsportsmanlike behavior towards marshals, spectators, opponents, staff, or any other person present during the competition is prohibited and will result in a yellow card. Unsportsmanlike behavior includes but is not limited to disrespect any person, boorishness, disobeying marshal's orders, foul language, yelling at marshals, spectators, opponents, or staff, etc. Throwing to the ground or pushing the opponent's team spare weapons that are placed on top of the tabletop will also be considered unsportsmanlike behavior.

## 6. Definitions

- 6.1. Everything that is not allowed is forbidden.
- 6.2. **Hook:** Grabbing the top rail or tabletop end of the list with one's hand, weapon, or shield, or with the arm ("**chicken wing**") in a way that prevents the fighter from falling, escaping, or to provide a tactical advantage when performing any technique against the opponent.
- 6.3. **Clinch:** Two fighters are engaged in a passive grapple, and are not actively fighting with punches, weapons or kicks.
- 6.4. **Disarms:** Competitor drops their weapon for any reason during competition.
- 6.5. **Fall:** Competitor loses their footing and falls to the ground for any reason during the competition.
- 6.6. **Pommelling:** Strikes with the butt of sword or hafted weapon.
- 6.7. **Strikes:** Significant impacts with the striking edge of the weapon (not the flat, and not a glance).
- 6.8. **Successful takedown:** The fighter who performs the takedown is left standing during or at the end of the technique.