

***2019 LIGHTSPEED-SABER  
FENCING COMPREHENSIVE  
RULES AND REGULATIONS***

*v1.190605*



# *TABLE OF CONTENTS*

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INTRODUCTION	3
TERMS	4
TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE	7
WEAPON STANDARDS	11
SAFETY GEAR STANDARDS	15
ATTACK STANDARDS	17
PROCEDURES AND ETIQUETTE	20
HONOR & CONDUCT	22
REFEREE PROCEDURES	24
SCORING OVERVIEW	26
TARGET AREAS	27
HIGH QUALITY ATTACKS	28
EN ROUTE ATTACKS	29
REDUCED POINT VALUES	30
SPECIAL RULES	32
SPECIAL MATCH CONDITIONS	34
VIOLATIONS	35
DISQUALIFICATION	37

# INTRODUCTION

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## Goals

The goal of the 2019 ruleset is to build on the 2018 rules and correct many of their shortcomings. While the 2018 rules succeeded in producing more “clean” saber play, the new rules additionally promote *high quality attacks* with stratified point values that encourage taking more risks, which is funner for fencers and spectators alike:

- Assault bonuses encourage deeper, more dramatic and skilled attacks.
- Defense bonuses encourage more bladework.
- The Indirect Hit mechanic lowers the costs of failed defensive maneuvers and punishes inaccurate swinging.
- Reduced Point Concessions lower the costs of being an honorable fighter.
- Priority Overrides allow actions on the ground while disincentivizing their abuse through enhanced realism.

## What is Lightspeed-saber fencing<sup>1</sup>?

Lightspeed-saber fencing is a sport that attempts to mimic the real martial use of a plasma sword. The techniques and strategies are consciously different from traditional fencing and swordplay in order to generate a wholly unique and innovative experience.

While the term “plasma sword” is used to avoid any legal impropriety regarding Star Wars<sup>2</sup> and the term “lightsaber”<sup>3</sup>, it should be made clear that the distinction also serves to divorce our art from any additions or changes to Star Wars canon that might otherwise irreparably damage the techniques, strategies, and design aesthetics that we have pioneered-- if not for the first time in history then after a very long forgotten history. We are talking about, after all, events that took place a long, long time ago (in a galaxy far, far away).

## Objective

The objective in a Lightspeed-saber fencing match is to touch your opponent with the lit part of your saber, (almost) anywhere on their body (including the weapon itself) and thus score points. All body parts carry the same point value. However, more points can be earned by performing skilled actions, including scoring on deep target (i.e. the head), using blade-based defense, solid agility and timing to avoid being hit, and precise attack accuracy.

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<sup>1</sup> Lightspeed-saber fencing is a registered trademark of Lightspeed Saber League LLC.

<sup>2</sup> Star Wars is a registered trademark of Lucasfilm.

<sup>3</sup> Lightsaber is a registered trademark of Lucasfilm.

# TERMS

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## Competition terms

- Box-- The play area bounding the fencers during a match. Also sometimes called a ring.
- Match or bout-- A contest between two competitors fencing to a certain number of points. A match usually ends when one fencer reaches matchpoint or time runs out.
- Encounter-- Any period during a match in which the fencers are free to engage with each other and attempt to score points. Essentially the entirety of the time between the head referee saying "Fence!" and "Break!" An encounter almost always ends with points being scored. A single match is usually made up of many encounters.
- Engagement-- A brief period of time within an encounter in which there are multiple back-to-back actions between fencers, usually attempts to score and avoid being scored upon. Engagements do not necessarily end with points being scored. A single encounter could be made up of one or several engagements.
- Contact-- Formal term for any touch made against a fencer using the blade of the saber. Also called a hit, strike, or touch.
- Exchange-- An engagement that concludes the encounter, usually by way of contact.
- Contact Signal-- Any of six hand gestures used by the referees to testify as to what they saw happen during the exchange.
- Testimony-- Any given referee's opinion on what happened during the last exchange, expressed through the Contact Signals he displays. Can also be referred to as a Call.
- Judgement-- The final determination made by the head referee-- after weighing his own testimony with the testimony of his secondary and side ref(s)-- about the last exchange.
- Primary fencer-- In an exchange in which both fencers hit each other, refers to the fencer *who scored the first hit*.
- Secondary fencer-- In an exchange in which both fencers hit each other, refers to the fencer *who was hit first*.
- Secondary contact-- Refers to the contact made by the secondary fencer in an exchange.

## Fencing terms

- Attack-- Any movement of the saber in an effort to contact the opponent.
- Defense-- Any blade action used to stop an opponent's attack. Includes deflectors, shields, and parries.
- Shield-- A defensive blade position, held temporarily, that prevents an opponent's attack from arriving on target. Can also be called a block.
- Deflector-- A blade movement that redirects an opponent's attack away from the fencer. Can also be called an attack on the blade or a beat.
- Parry-- A blade movement used with certain sabers that collects the opponent's attack at the crossguard.
- Assault-- An attack to the opponent's head.

- Return-- An attack immediately following any defensive action.
- Guard (position)-- A static position of the blade, arms, body, and legs for either defensive or counteroffensive purposes.
- Point-in-line-- Extending the arm fully and pointing the saber at the opponent. Illegal in Lightspeed-saber fencing.
- Beat-- An attack on the opponent's blade. If used defensively, more commonly called a Deflector.
- Beat-attack-- An attack immediately following a beat.
- Whip or flick-- An attack that takes advantage of the flexible nature of the Lightspeed blade in an effort to bend the tip of the saber blade around the opponent's defense. Not valid for points in Lightspeed-saber fencing.

### **Saber terms**

- Weapon-- Refers to any saber.
- Hilt-- Every part of a saber that is not the blade is considered the hilt.
- Blade-- The portion of the weapon that can legally score points and defend against attacks.
- Emitter-- The portion of a hilt that houses the main LED and fixates the blade.
- Guard (component)-- The portion on some hilts that can defend against attacks. Usually composed of side-emitters (see **Quillons**). Includes crossguards and forkguards.
- Rey-saber-- A saber that does not have any kind of guard on it.
- Ren-saber-- A saber that has a legal guard on it.
- Ignition-- The on/off switch on a hilt.
- Pommel-- The bottom of a hilt. Can also refer specifically to the hilt cap.
- Quillons-- The side blades on a crossguarded or forked saber.
- Tsuba-- A disc-shaped guard, usually lacking a direct LED illumination source. Not legal in Lightspeed-saber fencing.
- Adapter-- A piece of plastic used to convert a 3/4" blade to 1" diameter so that it can fit into a 1" (standard) inner diameter hilt.



A Ren-saber hilt, with main blade and quillons

# TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

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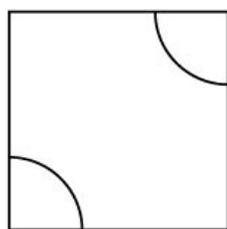
Lightspeed Saber League tournaments commonly operate through multiple phases: usually 1-2 qualifier stages, then a single-elimination bracket stage. These phases may occur within a single day within a single location, or over multiple days in multiple locations. Matches occur within squares ranging anywhere from 450 sq ft to 900 sq ft.

## Play area

There is no regulation size area of play. It is entirely adapted to the conditions for the tournament. But here are some common dimensions used:

- **Full-size - 30x30' (900 sq ft)**
  - The full-size box offers plenty of room for lateral movement and for the referees to move about freely in and out of the box.
- **Condensed - 20x25' (500 sq ft)**
  - Essentially a junior-sized box for tighter spaces. A good combination of linear focus while still allowing plenty of lateral movement.
- **Tennis/NML - 18x27' (486 sq ft)**
  - Primarily a dimension of convenience, the No Man's Land area of a tennis court provides a decent-- if slightly small-- box for fencing.
- **Half-size - 15x30' (450 sq ft)**
  - Though the smallest box in total area, this shape has the advantage of being long length-wise, allowing for powerful linear actions while still allowing for lateral play. Is especially useful for recording matches on video and is easy for referees to move around, since the fencers rarely sidestep enough to switch sides.

Fencers typically start about 10 feet out from the corners.



Full size



Condensed



Tennis/NML



Half-size

## Qualifiers

The qualifiers form the initial stages of a tournament and determine which fencers are qualified to move into the final stages of the tournament. During qualifiers, fencers are randomly divided into **squadrons**. Squadrons contain between five and seven competitors. Every member of a

squadron fights every other member of that squadron. It is typical for multiple squadrons to be active at once, sometimes with multiple waves of more squadrons awaiting their turn.

Once all squadrons have run through every matchup, each fencer's qualifier score is tabulated, based on their number of wins *and* points scored and lost. All fencers from all squadrons and waves are then ordered in a large list. The fencers with the highest qualifying scores are allowed to move on to the single-elimination rounds, and/or the fencers are seeded based on those scores into the bracket.

Qualifiers are usually fought to 8-10 points, with a maximum fight time of 2:45 to 3:00 minutes (time between encounters for referee action is not counted towards fight time).

### **Single-elimination bracket**

The eliminations form the final stages of the tournament, in which each qualifying fencer is paired with another and they fight. The loser of each match is eliminated from the tournament, while the winner of each match goes on to the next round to be paired with winners of other matches. This goes on until there is only one fencer left, who is the champion of the tournament.

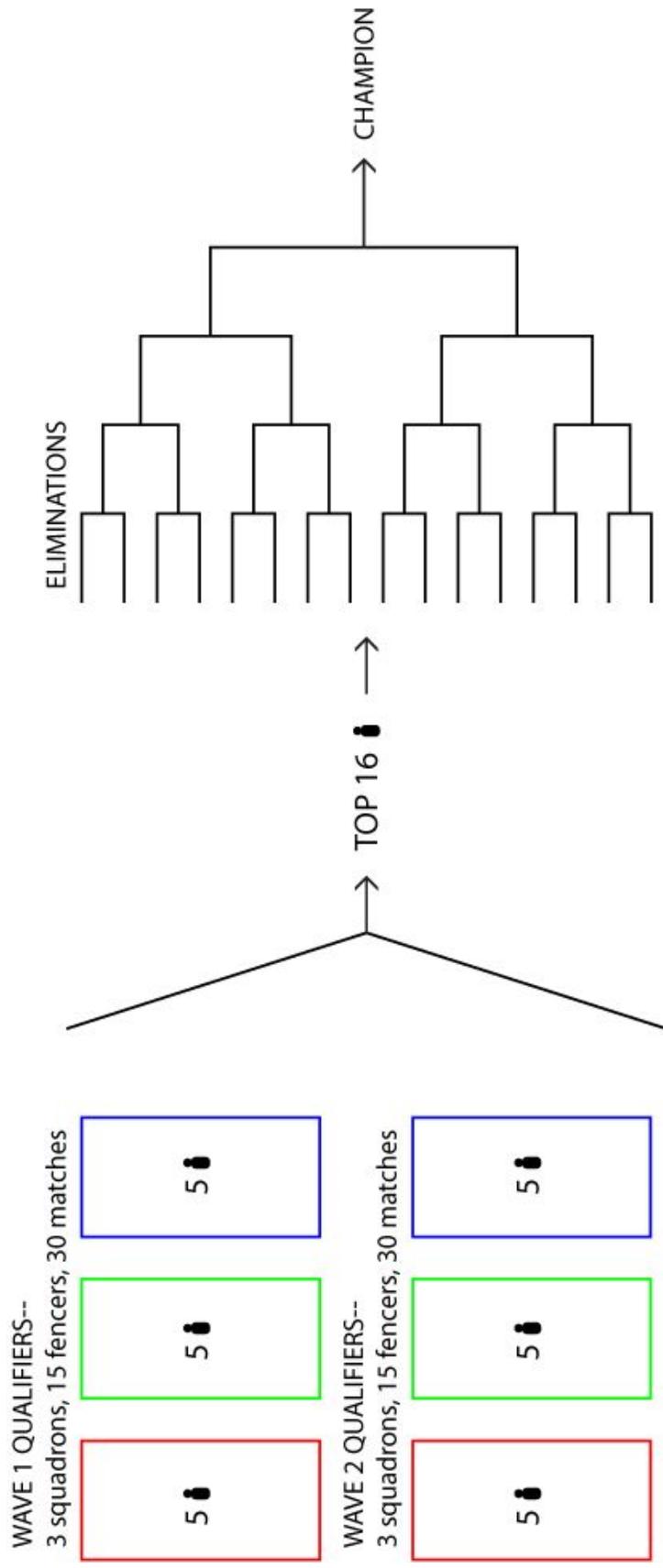
Early rounds of eliminations are usually between 10 and 12 points, with fight times of 3:00 to 3:15 minutes. Semi-finals and finals are usually between 12 and 15 points, with fight times from 3:15 to 3:45 minutes.

	1	2	3	4	5
1	Luke S	Leia O	Ben K	Ben S	Mace W
2	Luke S				
3	Leia O				
4	Ben K				
5	Ben S				
6	Mace W				
7	Luke S				
8	Leia O				
9	Ben K				
10	Ben S				
11	Mace W				

Sample squadron matrix



Sample elimination bracket



# WEAPON STANDARDS

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Weapon standards are designed to create an even playing field for mixed weapon competition. These are achieved through a mix of weight minimums, defensive capabilities, length, and number of carryable weapons.

## All classes

- No horns, claws, fins, or any other features that may damage an opponent's blade.
- No tsubas
- Saber LED and activation switch must be in good working order and protected against accidental deactivation.
- Primary LED must be able to maintain an illumination of 100,000 lux and no less for a duration of 10 seconds.
- All  $\frac{3}{4}$ " blades to be properly secured using a slotted cuff or equivalent.

## Rey-class

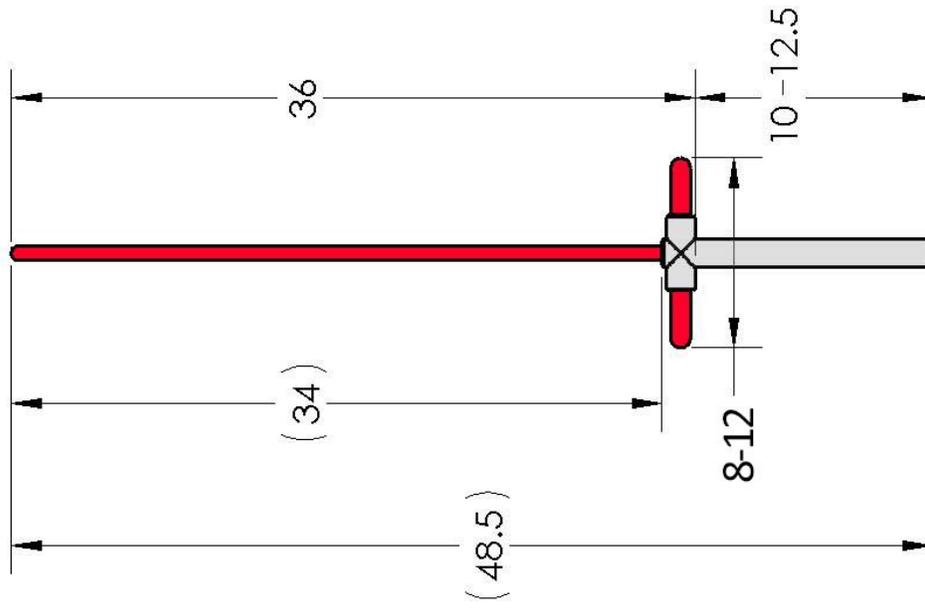
- Up to one saber allowed
- Rey-class blade:  $\frac{3}{4}$ " OD, 36" maximum exposure length, including tip
- Hilts not to exceed 12.5" in length (as measured from the pommel to the far edge of the blade adapter)
- Hilts not to fall under a mass-to-length ratio of 25 grams per inch (including batteries installed).

## Ren-class

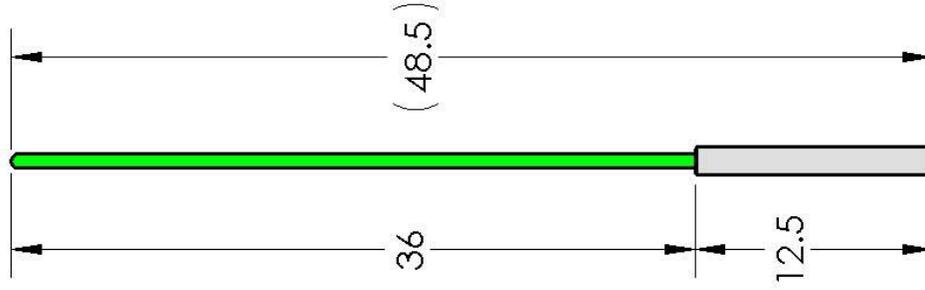
- Up to one saber allowed
- Main blade:  $\frac{3}{4}$ " OD, 36" max extension from bottom of guard
- Quillons *required*. NO blade plugs.
- Quillons: 1" OD heavygrade, to be between 8-12" total width
- Total grippable length to be between 10" and 12.5"
- Hilts not to fall under a mass-to-length ratio of 60 grams per inch of grippable hilt (including batteries and quillons installed)

## ~~Tano-class~~ (not currently legal in official competition)

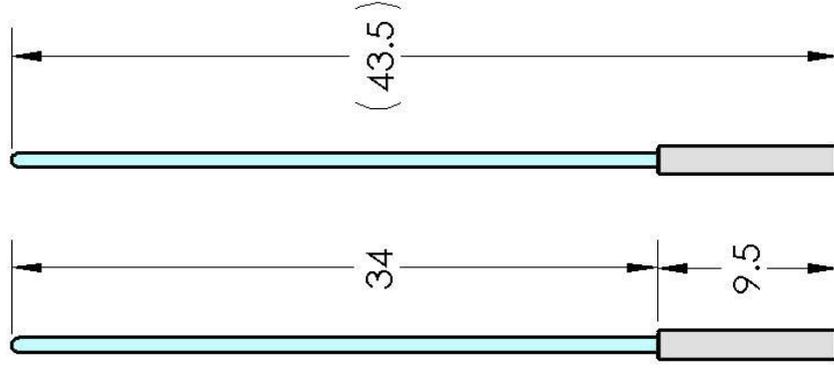
- ~~● Up to two sabers allowed~~
- ~~● Tano-class blades:  $\frac{3}{4}$ " OD, 33" max length each~~
- ~~● Hilts not to exceed 9.5" in length~~



**Ren-saber**  
60 g/in



**Rey-saber**  
25 g/in



**Tano-saber**  
25 g/in



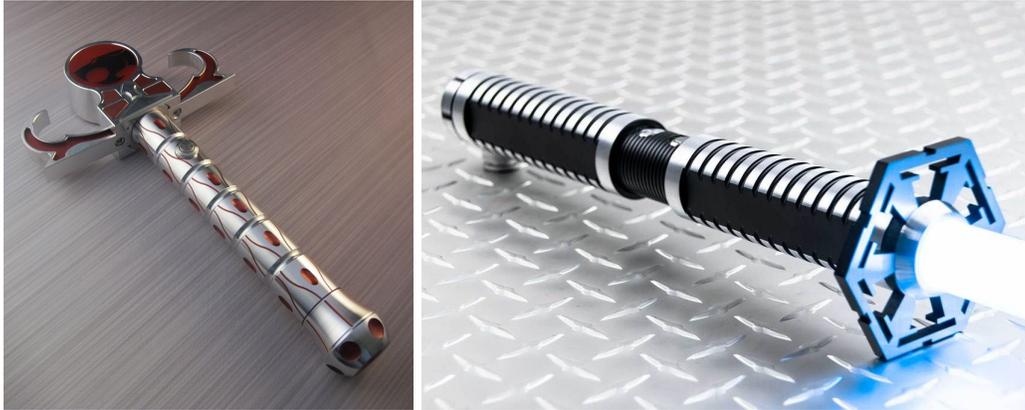
These sabers are illegal because they have fins, claws, or other geometry around the emitter that can damage an opponent's blade.



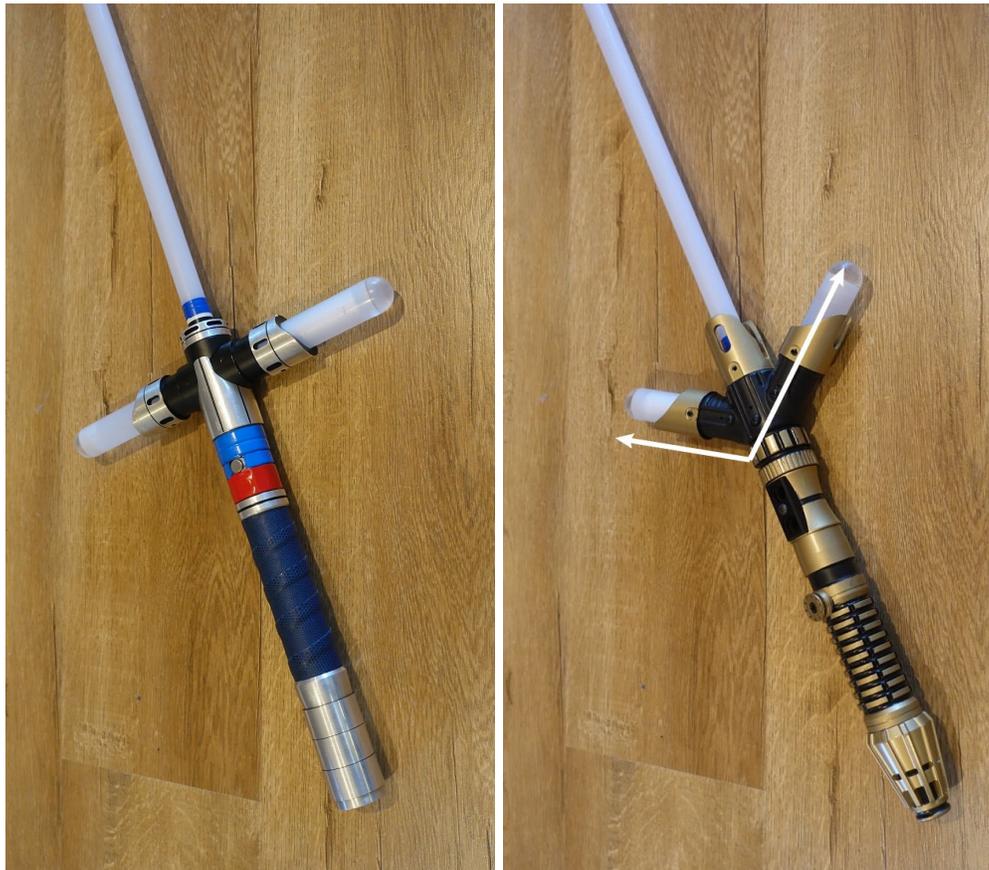
The manner in which hilt length shall be measured on various hilt shapes



Sabers with shallow or slanted emitters are measured up to the end of the adapter piece.



These hilts from Ultra Sabers and Saber Forge are illegal because they have unlit guards on them and DO NOT fall under Ren-class



Acceptable Ren-sabers. Forked quillons are measured at an angle.

# SAFETY GEAR STANDARDS

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These are the minimum safety gear requirements for adult competition (ages 15 and up). Additional armor is welcomed and encouraged.

## Headgear

- Must protect face, ears, skull, and front of neck. Fencing masks recommended. 300N minimum.
- May not contain any spaces, holes, or slits larger than  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", with exception to the back of the head and neck.
- Plastic fencing masks NOT acceptable. Airsoft masks NOT acceptable.

## Hand protection

- Padding or armor for fingers required. Lacrosse, hockey, kendo, or HEMA gloves recommended.
- Each glove must average a minimum weight of 4 ounces or otherwise must be deemed adequately padded.
- Must have a full 360 degrees of protection around the wrist.
  - Cuffs must be closed.
  - If using a skirted glove, the wrist pads MUST close and form a full 360 degree skirt around the wrist.
- Motorcycle gloves, work gloves, fencing gloves, rapier gloves or similar are NOT acceptable

## Arm/elbow protection

- Padding or armor covering both forearms or elbows.

## Footwear

- Close-toed shoes required.
- No "toe-shoes."
- Split-toe "tabies" allowed.



The glove on the left averages only 3.5 oz and lacks full circumference protection of the wrist (ILLEGAL). The cuffed glove on the right averages 4 oz and has full protection around the wrist (LEGAL).



The skirted glove on the left averages 6 oz but is too worn out for the wrist pads to completely close (ILLEGAL). The skirted glove on the right closes properly (LEGAL).



Typical acceptable 350N fencing mask.

# ATTACK STANDARDS

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The attack standards are intended to create a safe and objectively judged sport. We do not judge based on intensity of the hit, nor its depth, as these are subjective measures and can vary depending on where any given referee was looking at the particular moment, and what angle they were viewing the action. Good attack techniques allow for maximum competitiveness in the fencers while reducing the risk of injuries and overpowered attacks.

## SCORING

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- The slightest touch is valid for scoring points, and may be detected by either sight or sound by the referees.
- It is the fencer's responsibility to make contact with enough depth and clarity for the judges to see or hear. (This is NOT an excuse to hit your opponent harder. Depth of cut is more effective than power. Follow good attack technique at all times. See below.)
- Attacks should arrive without the need for whipping or flicking of the blade. See **Special Rules**.
- Attacks should arrive without the need to exit the play area. See **Special Rules**.

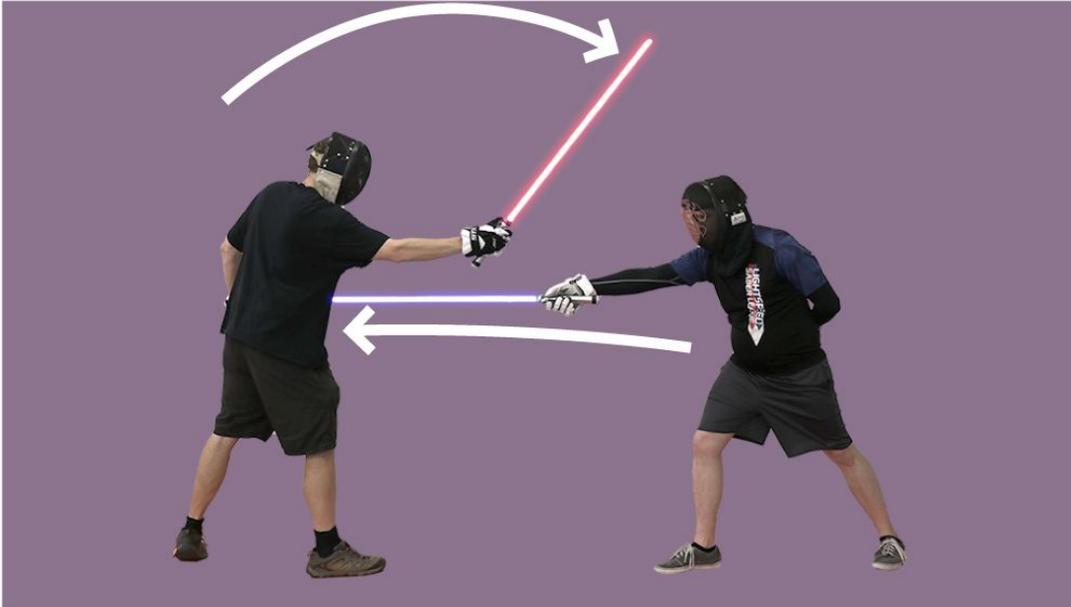
## TECHNIQUE

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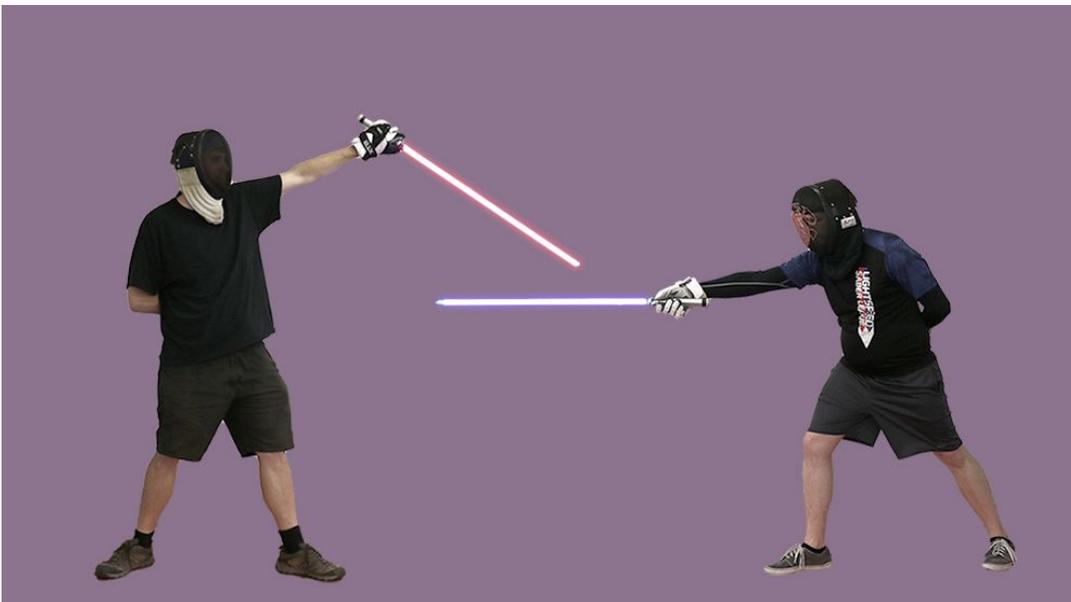
In Lightspeed-saber fencing, we try to avoid dangerous actions and excessively painful striking, even if not explicitly life-threatening or injurious. This is achieved by having good control of the blade tip, and by attacking with proper technique.

1. All valid attacks are made using an arcing motion of the weapon to touch the opponent with the broadside of the blade. No contacts may legally be made by driving the tip of the blade into the opponent, nor by leaving the tip of the blade in an extended position such that the opponent may advance onto it (stabbing themselves). Such actions are referred to as *point-attacks* and *Extended Point Positions*, respectively, and are illegal. See **Violations**.
2. In general, all attacks should be made such that the opponent's body is clear of the saber's "line-of-threat" at the conclusion of the attack (see images). In the case of multiple attacks chained together, each attack should clear remove the line-of-threat from the opponent's body before attacking again. Failure to clear is referred to as "holding" and is illegal. See **Violations**.

3. All attacks arriving on target should conclude with a relaxed wrist and unlocked elbow. Attacks should not “get caught” on the body nor be allowed to “rest” on the body. This can be achieved either by retracting the weapon at the conclusion of the attack, or by relaxing the wrist and elbow such that the attack concludes by drawing the blade across the target area. Failure to do so is referred to as “pressing” and is illegal. See **Violations**.



The Red Fencer (left) is delivering a valid cutting attack, which travels through an arc and will contact Blue with the broadside of the blade. The Blue fencer (right) is either delivering an illegal thrust by driving the tip straight forward, or holding an Extended Point Position in the hopes that Red will stab himself on it.



Both fencers display Extended Point Positions. These positions, held statically, are illegal. Any extended point should be a transient element in an *attack arc*.



On the left, the Red fencer displays incorrect and unsafe technique by waving his saber back and forth without clearing the saber's line-of-threat off the opponent's target areas. On the right, the Red fencer is doing the same but making sure to take the cut "off-line", which is accepted technique and helps prevent dangerous accidents.



On the left, the Blue fencer demonstrates an illegal "press" in which he makes contact with Red but fails to relax his wrist and arm, leaving his elbow locked out. The blade is "stuck" on Red's body. This delivers an unnecessary amount of power and is considered bad form. On the right, Blue demonstrates a more acceptable attack, which concludes with the relaxing of the wrist and elbow, allowing the blade to "glide" over Red's body. This should not be taken to mean that the attack will be painless, but the power delivered will be reduced.

# PROCEDURES AND ETIQUETTE

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While not all aspects are strictly enforced, good etiquette helps create positive traditions and puts a good face on the community and the organization, for both fencers and spectators alike. These procedures will also help your first tournament and matches go smoothly.

1. Squadron assignment
  - a. At the start of the tournament, you will be assigned to a wave and a squadron, usually denoted with a number and color, ie Wave One, Red Squadron. Each squadron is assigned a fight box.
  - b. When it is your wave, bring all your things to the fight box and obey any instructions from your head referee (squadron/box leader).
2. Entering the box
  - a. Matches proceed in a predetermined order.
  - b. When your box leader says you are “on deck” it means you are fighting next. Wait outside but near the box and make sure your equipment is on hand and ready to go. As the current match is concluding, start equipping your gear.
  - c. When your box leader says you are “up” or “in the box” it means you are fighting *now*. You may now enter the box.
3. Pre-match procedures
  - a. If this tournament has fight cards, give your fight card to your head referee.
  - b. If you have not met your opponent, introduce yourself, preferably without your mask on.
  - c. The referees will check your safety equipment and weapon.
  - d. Before the match starts, the referees will usually command the fencers to salute.
4. Match procedures
  - a. Start every encounter behind the starting line.
  - b. Do not cross the line until the referee says, “go”, “fight”, “fence”, “begin” or equivalent.
  - c. When the referee yells “break!” or equivalent, stop whatever you are doing immediately. Return to your starting line.
  - d. Obey the referee at all times.
5. Mid-match procedures
  - a. If your tournament includes side-switching halfway through the match, switch sides with your opponent and fist-bump or high-five your opponent as you pass (or equivalent).
6. End-match procedures
  - a. After the referee announces the winner, take off your mask, then shake hands, fist-bump, or high-five or equivalent.
  - b. You may salute if you wish.
  - c. Thank your referees.

- d. If your tournament is using fight cards, retrieve your fight card from the head referee.



Understanding the referee's signals can grant vital information about your match in progress

# HONOR & CONDUCT

*This is designed to be a modern sport. As such, judging must be based on referees and not on honor calls. However, it is still a tradition we wish to promote. Good honor and good conduct enhance the reputation of yourself and the organization, and make judging easier.*

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In general, do not argue with your referee. If your referee is making an obvious mistake identifiable in the rules, then you may politely mention it. We encourage honorable admissions. However, conceding is ultimately your choice.

## Denials & claims

- You **MAY NOT** deny that you were hit. This is an infraction and your referee can punish you for it.
- You **MAY NOT** claim that you scored a hit. This is also an infraction and your referee can punish you for it.

## Concessions & refusals

- You may *refuse* points if you feel your referee has awarded you points erroneously.
- You may *concede* to being hit if your referee missed it.
- See also **Reduced Point Concessions**.

## Protests and complaints

- If your referee is making an obvious mistake identifiable in the rules, you may politely mention it.
- If the issue is not resolvable you may request a review from a tournament director.
- If you feel that a referee is unable to fulfill their duties properly, the issue should be taken directly to the tournament director(s) *after the match*.
- Absolutely no bad-mouthing of referees while the tournament is running.

## Intimidation and distractions

- Excessive yelling should be avoided.
- In general, opponents should not be conversing with each other, let alone name-calling, trash-talking, etc.
- Intentionally pointing your saber at your opponent's eyes is extremely poor conduct and will be punished.
- Attempts to intimidate or influence the referees will be punished.

## Celebration

- Fencers may "celebrate" when they score a point on a limited basis
- Celebration may not occur until AFTER the referee has formally awarded points.
- Excessive and/or early celebration can be penalized as intimidation or an attempt to influence the judges.

## FAVORABLE CONDUCT

- Thank and congratulate your opponents.
- Thank your referees.
- Salute your opponent, your referees, and your audience.
- Fight with honor.
- Win with speed, skill, and strategy, not strength.
- If you suspect you may have hit your opponent harder than necessary, apologize, or at least ask.
- If you commit a safety violation-- regardless of whether it was avoidable or not-- apologize to your opponent and ask if they are okay.
- If you feel a dangerous action is about to happen, do everything you can to minimize injury.



Congratulate or thank your opponent and touch gloves after the match (and don't forget to remove your mask)

# REFEREE PROCEDURES

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This section is for your benefit as a competitor, so that you understand referee practices, terms, and signals.

## Overview

Every match has a minimum of two referees. One is the head referee, the other is the secondary referee. There may be additional side-referees if staffing permits. It is common for competitors to double as some form of lower level staff such as the side referee. Side referees may help keep time and/or data.

The head referee makes all final decisions and is usually the most experienced referee in the box.

## Signals

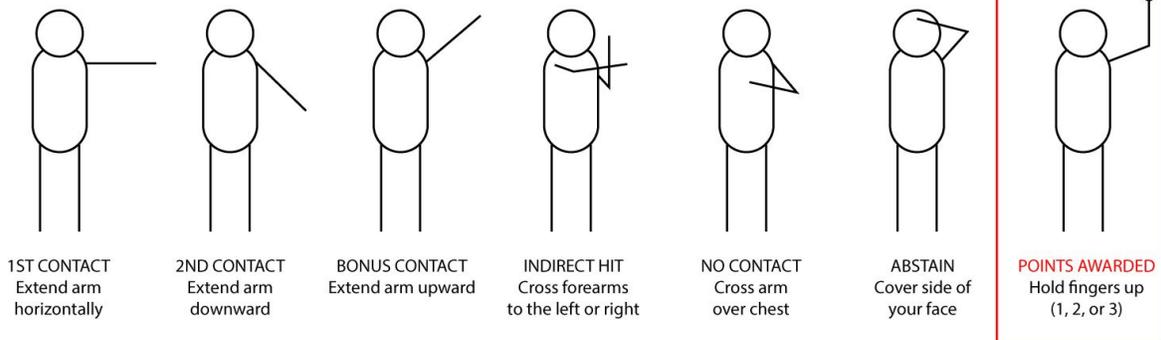
The referees use a total of six contact signals and one scoring signal. This allows fencers to understand what is happening regardless of noise or spoken language.

The contact signals are bipartite-- that is, they are always signaled as pairs, one for the fencer to the referee's left and one for the fencer to the referee's right. As such, many combinations of contact signals are possible.

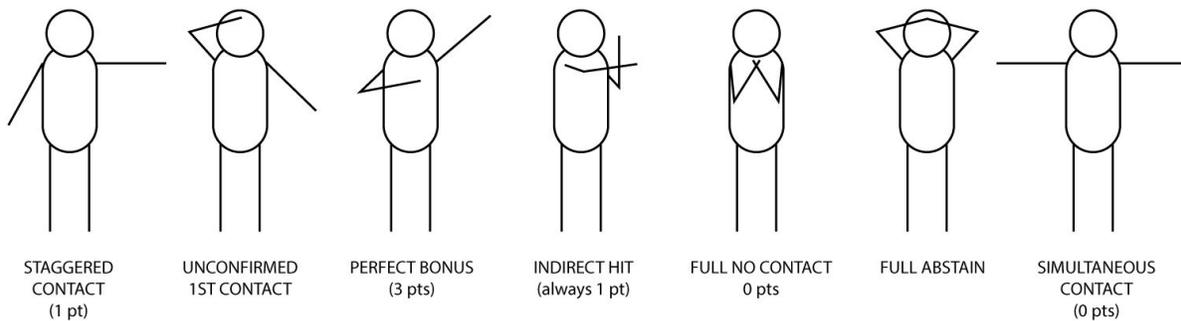
- First contact
  - A straight arm held horizontally toward the fencer who was hit.
  - Indicates the first or sole contact in an exchange.
- Second contact
  - A straight arm held diagonally downward toward the fencer who was hit second.
  - Indicates the second contact in an exchange.
- Bonus contact
  - A straight arm held diagonally upward toward the fencer who was hit.
  - Indicates the first or sole contact in an exchange that is also enhanced with a bonus point, whether offensive or defensive.
- Indirect hit
  - Both arms crossed at the wrist or forearms, toward the fencer who was hit.
  - Indicates that an indirect hit was made.
- No contact
  - The arm crossed over the chest.
  - Indicates the belief that there was no contact, and/or that any contact made was to blade or crossguard, and therefore did not count as a hit.
- Abstain
  - The hand shading the eyes or forehead on the side of the appropriate fencer.

- Indicates the belief that it's possible there was contact made on that side but the referee is unsure.
- Points
  - The hand held up with one, two, or three fingers held up.
  - Indicates the number of points scored by that fencer.

### THE 6 CONTACT SIGNALS AND 1 AWARD SIGNAL



### CALL EXAMPLES



# SCORING OVERVIEW

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While far more complex than the 2018 season, the 2019 Lightspeed-saber fencing rules can be understood and summarized through one word: quality. The higher the quality of the attack, the more points it earns. Elements that are considered when determining the quality of the attack include speed, accuracy, timing, risk, and bladework.

The following is an overview. To see every aspect in detail, continuing reading.

## **Target areas (see Target Areas)**

- Anywhere on the fencer's body, including head, legs, fingers, toes, clothing or armor, and the hilt of their weapon.
- Notable exception: groin.

## **Direct hits**

- First contact (staggered): +1 pt
- Clean or interception: +1 pt
- Assault or defense bonus: +1 pt

(The total value of any single direct hit may be 1, 2, or 3 points. See **High Quality Attacks**.)

## **Indirect hits (See Reduced Point Values)**

- Always 1 pt

## **Other scoring situations (See Special Rules)**

- Simultaneous: 0 pts
- Messy/ambiguous exchange: 0 pts
- Out of bounds: 2 pts
- Disarm: 2 pts
- Priority override: 1 pt

# TARGET AREAS

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Almost the entirety of a Lightspeed-saber fencer's body is valid target area. Although there are bonus points associated with hitting certain targets, technically all areas are worth the same amount. Therefore, this section is primarily to make sure you understand the delineations between body parts, and the safety rules associated with each location.

## Head

- Defined by the boundaries of the fencing mask and bib, and *technically* includes the back of the head and neck.
- Attacks to the head are eligible for an assault bonus.
- Attacks to the head have priority over attacks to the legs (see **Special Rules**)

## Legs

- Defined by the knees and all target area below.

## Body

- Everywhere else not already defined above is considered the body, including the hilt.
- **Exception: the groin**

## Blade & guard

- Contact to the blade or guard, if present, does not score and does not stop the action of the encounter.
- Attacks defended with the blade or guard are eligible for a defense bonus.



# HIGH QUALITY ATTACKS

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As mentioned in the previous section, any one contact could be worth 1, 2, or 3 points, depending on its *quality*. High quality-- and thus high-scoring-- attacks:

1. Arrive before the opponent's attack
2. Are paired with superior agility, timing, and/or bladework to completely avoid or stop the opponent's attack (usually referred to as the secondary attack or followup attack)
3. Either score on a deep target (the head) OR immediately precede or follow a defensive blade action (offensive or defensive bonus).

Each of the above elements-- primeness, tempo, and bonus action-- are worth one point and can be stacked together to score 1, 2, or 3 points for a single contact.

## Primeness

- In order for any attack to be worth any points at all, it must be *first* in the exchange.
- Being first scores *one* point.
- (EXCEPT in the case of a Priority Override. See **Special Rules.**)

If the referees cannot determine a first contact, the exchange is ruled a **simultaneous contact** and is worth zero.

## Tempo

- Contacts made without the opponent landing a corresponding (secondary) attack are referred to as "clean".
- Attacks arriving BEFORE the opponent's attack is *en route* are referred to as "interceptions" and scored just like they were clean. See **En Route Attacks.**
- Attacks arriving WHILE the opponent's attack is *en route* are referred to as "staggered contacts".
- Arriving with a clean contact or an interception scores *one* additional point.
- Staggered contacts do not earn any additional points beyond the one for arriving first.

## Bonus

- Assault bonus
  - If a first contact arrives on the head, it receives one bonus point.
- Defensive bonus
  - If a first contact arrives (on any target area) immediately following or preceding a defensive blade action, it receives one bonus point.
- Only ONE of the above bonuses can be applied for a single contact

# EN ROUTE ATTACKS

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When an exchange is concluded, and there was one contact made for each fencer, the referees must determine who landed first, and they must also evaluate the action of the secondary fencer to determine if the exchange was a staggered contact or an interception. The referees use several criteria to determine if the attack was *en route* to the target.

To declare a secondary attack to be *en route* and therefore *in play* for the contact exchange, the attack, at the moment the secondary fencer was hit, must:

1. Be moving toward the opponent
2. Have enough momentum to contact the primary fencer, assuming that the secondary fencer loses all bodily function at the moment they were hit
3. Arrive before the referee(s) begin to say "Break!"



While tempo cannot really be ascertained in stills, in this image, Red is poised to score, while Blue is most likely not *en route*. Any secondary contact made by Blue would probably be considered *out of play*.

# REDUCED POINT VALUES

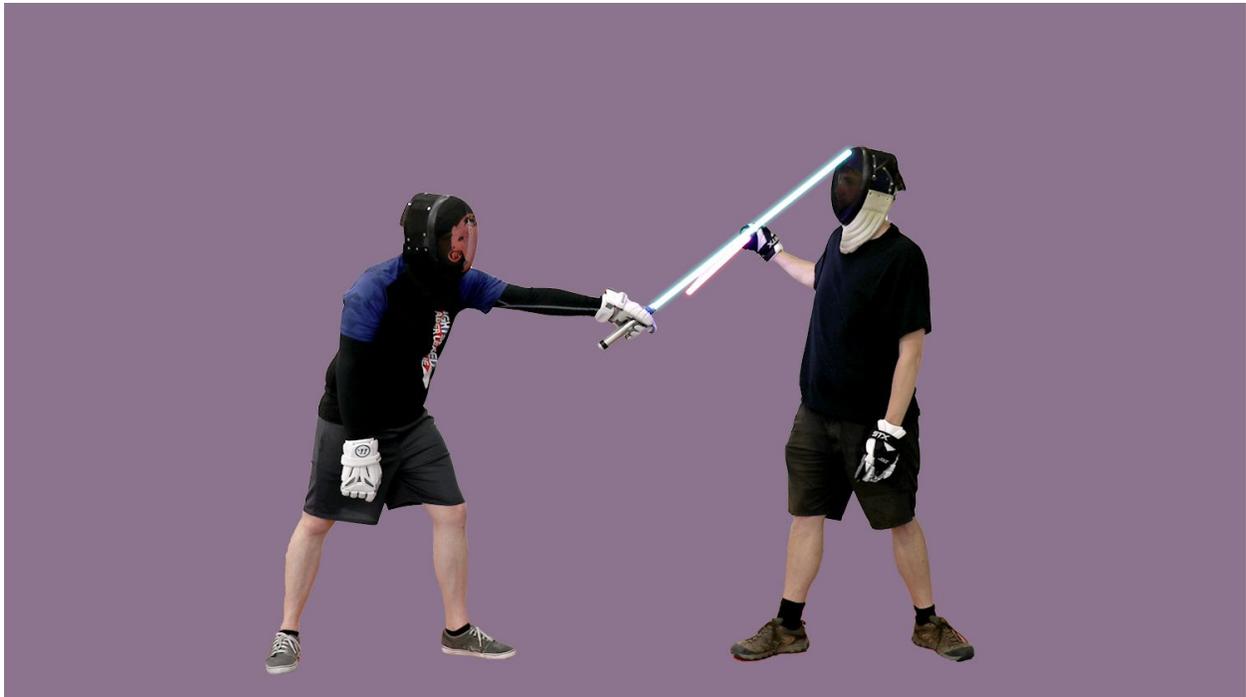
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Under certain conditions, an attack may have its point value reduced to 1 no matter how much it would be worth ordinarily. These are known as scores via (1) indirect hit, (2) concession, or (3) priority override.

## Score via Indirect Hit

As part of the *high quality attacks* paradigm, one of the elements of a high quality attack is accuracy. If the attack lands directly onto valid target area within a single blade-arc without any interference from the opponent or otherwise touches the opponents blade in any way, then it is considered a Direct Hit and is eligible to receive full points. If, however, an attack glances, bounces, slides off, or *pushes past* the blade or guard and onto valid target area, it is considered an Indirect Hit and is reduced to one point.

- RPV does not apply if the blade contact is made *after* contact to the target area.
- Beat-attacks and Defense & Returns consist of TWO blade-arcs and therefore RPV does *not* apply.
- The opponent does not need to be actively doing anything for the indirect hit rule to apply.



The fencer on the left scores an assault, but not without some interference from his opponent's blade. The attack is reduced to a single point.

### **Score via Concession**

Because a single contact can be worth as much as 3 points, one concession can be devastating to a fencer's chances to win. Therefore, when a contact is recognized due solely to the honorable admission of any competitor, that contact's value is reduced to one. For RPV to apply to a concession, it must:

- Be given after the contact was already made and no referee was able to detect it.
- OR Be given after the referees are unable to make a decision and are about to throw the exchange out.
- OR Be given after the referees have made an erroneous decision and are awarding points to the wrong fencer.

Concessions made BEFORE the referees have a chance to make a call or deliberate are not eligible for value reduction.

### **Score via Priority**

When Priority is applicable to an exchange (ie a Delayed Assault-- see Special Rules), the attack with Priority is granted one point. Also see **Special Match Conditions**.

# SPECIAL RULES

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While the basic concepts of competitive Lightspeed-saber fencing are simple, they are joined by a set of special rules, designed to enhance realism, safety, and overall fairness. In general, application of these rules is infrequent.

## **Delayed Assault**

By default, only the first contact in an exchange scores, except in the case of two key targets: the head and the legs. If a fencer is hit in the legs but scores on her opponent's head with an en route attack shortly after, the head hit overrides the leg hit. This is worth 1 point *to the fencer scoring on the head (Assault)*. This is also known as Priority. See also **Reduced Point Values**, **Target Areas**, and **Special Match Conditions**.

## **Self-contact**

Incidental and brief contact with one's own blade does not award points to the opponent. However, points can be awarded to the opponent for prolonged and/or direct self-contact.

*Examples:*

1. *Resting the blade on the shoulder, or against any other part of the body.*
2. *Half-swording.*
3. *Catching a loose saber by the blade.*

In the event that a fencer's blade is *ricocheted* into themselves via their opponent's actions, this is not considered self-contact, as a correction for the natural flexibility of the Lightspeed blade.

## **Ren-saber**

The quillons of a Ren-saber MAY NOT be used to score points on the opponent. They are, however, considered self-deadly, and therefore may not be left in prolonged self-contact with the wielder, such as in a guard position. Brief and incidental contacts are accepted.

## **Disarm**

This is when a fencer becomes disarmed as result of the opponent's actions, usually via a hard beat or a solid shield. In these situations, the encounter is ended immediately and is worth an automatic 2 points to the fencer still holding their saber.

Dropping your saber is not considered a disarm, and play continues. The fencer may attempt to retrieve their saber.

## **Out-of-bounds**

Going out of bounds is worth 2 points to your opponent. Stepping *on*, *outside*, or otherwise disturbing the boundaries *in any way* is considered going out-of-bounds.

## No-score actions

In some situations, a fencer may land a hit but have their hit nullified. These are the unusual circumstances in which this can happen:

- Self-disarmament
  - This is a disarm not resulting from any action from the opponent. It usually occurs as the fencer is landing an attack and loses grip of their weapon at the moment of impact.
- Out-of-bounds
  - Going out of bounds immediately after scoring a hit (usually due to momentum) nullifies that hit.
- Whipping or flicking
  - In the rare instance that whipping or flicking of the blade can be detected, any points scored this way are nullified.



Priority: even though Red has arrived first on the leg, as long as Blue's attack is en route to the head, Blue will receive the point instead.

# SPECIAL MATCH CONDITIONS

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The referee may, at their discretion, apply special conditions to the match if deemed necessary.

## Crashing

- If the referee perceives that the match has devolved into clumsy first-contact fighting with no variation in tempo, defense, or dodging, she may increase the value of the defense bonus by one point per encounter.
- This will most likely happen if the fencers fail to score more than 1 point among them for several encounters in a row.
- Once at least a 2-pointer has been scored, the defense bonus may be reset, as judged by the head referee.

## Stalling

- If the referee perceives that one or more fencers are stalling, inactive, or excessively disengaging (running away) then he may prematurely break the encounter and increase the value of the assault bonus by one point per encounter.
- Once a point has been scored, the assault bonus may be reset, as judged by the head referee.

## Priority

- If matches continue to crash or stall despite steps taken above, the referees may instead assign priority to the fencer with the most bonus points earned.
- Priority is a condition assigned to a fencer, in which any contact made by that fencer is considered the *primary contact* for scoring purposes, even if it was temporally second, or if the contacts were simultaneous. Any attacks upgraded to primary must have been *en route* during the exchange-- otherwise they are treated normally. See **En Route Attacks**.
- If the fencers have an equal number of bonuses for the match, priority will be assigned randomly.
- Points earned via Priority are always reduced to 1 point. See **Reduced Point Values**.

# VIOLATIONS

*Lightspeed Saber League may have more safety rules and complex regulations than similar organizations. However, as long as everyone observes these rules, then we can continue our commitment to lower armor requirements, lower barriers for entry, lower costs, greater inclusivity for fencers of all genders, sizes, and economic backgrounds, and greater speed and maneuverability for all competitors.*

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Illegal actions are almost always involved with safety violations and bad conduct. When done accidentally, these actions will levy a rules infraction/violation. Done intentionally, then disqualification may apply. *You are responsible for keeping your opponent safe. **You will be held responsible if your “style” or “strategy” is prone to unsafe actions or accidents, regardless of your intention. “Style” and/or lack of intent are not excuses.***

In general, violations are wiped at the conclusion of the tournament. However, repeat offenders may have their violations carried over if necessary, to be expunged with good behavior.

When violations occur, the *entire encounter is thrown out*, regardless of who scored. A 2-point penalty is usually applied instead. However, after three violations, the fencer is disqualified.

## Point-attacks

Attacks that score by driving the tip into the opponent, or by holding the tip such that the opponent runs onto it, are illegal.

## Extended point positions

- Guards that point at the opponent or anywhere on the ground between the opponent's legs at partial extension or greater, or otherwise create a stabbing, tripped, or straddling hazard, are illegal.
- (Examples: point-in-line, hanging guard)

## Excessive power

- Attacking with enough power to either kink, crack, or visibly dent your blade or break off a piece off it is illegal.
  - (Does not include tip-loss.)
  - (Does not include blade failure near the hilt.)
- Holds are illegal. See **Attack Standards**.
- Presses are illegal. See **Attack Standards**.
- Attacking the legs with sweeping or slashing attacks is illegal (semi-cuts and strikes only). See **Attack Standards** and **Target Areas**.

## Reckless fencing

- Fencing in a manner likely to cause collision or causing collision is prohibited. Incidental and infrequent body contact which does not cause injury or would be unlikely to cause injury is permissible.
- Incidental contacts to the groin, regardless of gender or whether a groin protector is worn, is illegal.
- Rising attacks to the legs are illegal.

### **Bad conduct**

Can include:

- Pointing your saber into your opponent's eyes
- Arguing with the referee in your favor (claiming you were not hit or that you scored a hit) (It is *not illegal* to ask your referee questions or correct them if they are making a mistake identifiable in the rules document.)
- Abusing or intimidating the referee or opponent (includes "calling out" the opponent for not conceding)
- Excessive and/or premature celebration

If you appear to be coming close to committing a violation, the referee may give you a warning in order to prevent accidents. Continuing to do so may warrant a penalty, at the referee's discretion.

### **NO-FAULT VIOLATIONS**

Accidents happen, and sometimes violations occur that are not your fault. In all cases, follow the guide for good conduct, and this will be taken into account by your referees to potentially give you a No-fault Violation (see **Honor & Conduct**). In a no-fault violation, the referees determine that the violation was unintentional *and* unavoidable, and can throw the violation out and potentially award points as normal, depending on the situation.

Examples of no-fault violations:

- Both fencers lunge at each other simultaneously and collide.
- A fencer follows good attack technique but nonetheless the opponent ends up being stabbed.

Note that the violation must be considered *unavoidable*. This means that certain behaviors carry a higher risk of accidents and thus are considered *avoidable*.

Examples of risky behavior:

- Rising attacks from the floor up to waist level (high incidence of groin hits and stabbings)
- Waving the saber around at the groin level (same as above)
- Cutting from the wrist with a straight arm (high incidence of stabbings)
- Fighting from the ground (high risk of tripping and groin hits)

# DISQUALIFICATION

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In general, violations are accidental. Any violation committed with motivated intent is grounds for disqualification, banishment, or legal action.

## **Non-blade combat**

Combat involving anything other than the blade of the saber-- held securely in the hands, against a fully equipped opponent-- is strictly prohibited. No tackling, grappling, checking, tripping, kicking, punching, shoving, elbowing, kneeing, headbutting, or throwing of the saber or similar is permitted.

## **Catastrophic breaks**

Striking with enough force such that a piece of your blade breaks off and flies more than 20 ft from the point of contact is strictly prohibited. (This is a spectator hazard.)

## **Abuse of property**

The destruction or abuse of property, regardless of its owner, is strictly prohibited.

## **Brutality**

Attacking with enough force so as to cause injury\*, disablement, or medical forfeiture of one's opponent OR committing an illegal attack such as a point-attack or a leg sweep with the intention to injure is strictly prohibited.

(\*Injury is defined as a medical or physical condition, foreseen to last longer than the duration of the tournament, preventing the fencer from competing at normal capacity. Examples:

1. Attacking the legs or groin such that the opponent has difficulty walking
2. Attacking the hands or arms such that the opponent has difficulty gripping their saber
3. Attacking the throat such that the opponent has difficulty breathing or speaking.)