

FINAL



IFHEMA CUP PRESENTATION



Framework and Ruleset

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I. GENERAL FRAMEWORK AND CORE IDEAS

A. Presentation and Framework

1. Preamble

This **Ruleset** document is **valid** for the IFHEMA Cup **edition 2025**. The IFHEMA Cup is a **biannual country-based** competition. Under the general **Framework** adopted at the General Assembly n°9 in 2022, only tournaments with longswords and rapiers are envisaged. For the first event under this new Framework, in the year 2025, only the longsword category will be held. The IFHEMA Cup requires the participation of **national teams**. These teams are assembled by the federation (or equivalent body) which represents the country as a member or observer of IFHEMA.

The principles we want to apply are presented in the Framework document:

- 1) sportive excellence through **technical quality**
- 2) **gender inclusivity** in a XXIst century setting
- 3) **flexibility** with respect to Rulesets and Formats

IFHEMA has absolutely nothing against the standard "Open tournament" competition format nor against any of the other competition formats used within the HEMA community. However, IFHEMA does believe that, as a countrybased international organisation, it can add value to the HEMA community by creating a **country-based HEMA competition** in a format worthy of the twenty-first century. The core ideas can be found back in the final version of the Framework as approved by GA09 (see the IFHEMA website).

For the upcoming edition of the Cup 2025, the EC decided that three specific provisions of the common IFHEMA Cup Framework, adopted at GA09, will be temporarily postponed; namely 1) the possibility of individual choice to fighting only one's own gender. The "people fight people" principle will be applied over all; 2) the implementation of technical judging in the normal scoring system, and 3) the possibility of competing with penalty in case of non-compliance to team composition criteria. These three provisions remain valid for the coming IFHEMA Cup editions (from 2027 onwards). The sudden departure of the French Federation forced IFHEMA and its new organising partner HFHEMA (the Greek Federation) into a simplified implementation of the principles laid down in the Framework, which otherwise remains in full force.

IFHEMA members shall assemble their national teams as they see fit. But in a fair and transparent, clearly communicated manner, and taking into account the provisions of the **Format** and the **Ruleset**. The result will be a single, diversely composed, national team led by a **Team Captain** who acts as the sole contact person for the IFHEMA Administration and/or Competition Curator (the organising Federation). Member countries that **fail to complete** their teams as required by the quota will **not be allowed** to compete in the 2025 edition.

As mentioned before, the **Framework**, which was approved by IFHEMA's GA09 in 2022, will remain valid for all future editions of the IFHEMA Cup to come or until the GA decides otherwise. Given the flexibility principle mentioned above, **the Format and Ruleset presented in this document are specific for and applicable only to the coming Cup edition 2025**. Both the Ruleset and Format are determined basically by the Curating Federation (for the 2025 edition

this means the Greek Federation (HFHEMA)), in close collaboration with IFHEMA, and according to the Framework with the exceptions mentioned above.

2. Registration of the National Teams

Participating with a team in the IFHEMA Cup will be possible only for **members or observers** of IFHEMA. Individual participation in the IFHEMA Cup is only possible as a delegate (an individual athlete) for the national team assembled for this purpose. Therefore, members and observers are required to sign up as a team to participate.

Registration for participation in the IFHEMA Cup should be done with respect for the deadlines via the national **team captain**, who is appointed by his/her national federation or equivalent body. The team captain arranges the necessary subscriptions and pays the participation fee. For the 2025 edition there will only be a **longsword competition**. Participation is not considered booked until full payments have been made. By way of the subscription, the team captain informs the tournament curator and competition organiser of the names of the delegates who will be competing for his/her team, as well as the name of the **non-competing judge**.

Each team consists of a minimal number of starting slots for both women and men, as specified by the Framework and implemented by the competition organiser in the the **competition Format document**. The number of either gender shall in no case be lower than 30%.

Starting slots cannot be swapped, i.e., no men can be entered for women's slots, and vice versa (for details see below). Teams that cannot fill up the slots accordingly cannot participate. For details and examples, see the Format document (chapter I).

3. Individual delegate

1. Delegates must be able to withstand the physical stress without risk to their own health. In case of inconvenient disabilities, visible injuries, obvious illness, etc., the tournament management may refuse to allow the person concerned to participate.
2. Delegates must be at least 18 years old. All genders (M, F, X as mentioned on the delegates' ID) are included and will be treated on an equal par.
3. Upon arrival, delegates must complete the participant documents in full and sign the disclaimer and privacy policy. The documents will contain individual choices of the delegate where required (e.g., wrestling). The tournament manager takes this into account when putting together the pairs of competing teams for each bout on the competition roster.
4. Delegates must not be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or doping during the tournament. If a person appears to be under the influence of any of these substances, the tournament organizer may refuse to allow that person to participate.
5. Delegates must use the equipment specified and defined by the curating federation. This will be checked and approved by the judges before the start of the competition.
6. The delegates must know, understand, and comply with the tournament protocols used, i.e., the Framework, Format & Ruleset.

B. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Protective equipment requirements

1. Upper body: Suitable HEMA jacket. No opening on the front, 350N minimum. It must cover the upper body from the hips, even with arms raised above the head, to the neck, and cover the arms down to the wrist.
2. Head protection: A fencing mask with a stab resistance of at least 1600N (without important deformation).
3. Occipital protection: A mask cover made of a hard material that protects the back of the head and neck from blows.
4. Hands: HEMA "heavy" gloves protecting the wrist as well.
5. Legs: HEMA 350N thigh protection (plate and/or strong padding). Knee protector made of a hard material that protects the knees and preferably the shins up to the ankle.
6. Throat protector: Made of a hard material that covers the larynx and protects the neck from impact.
7. Elbow pads: Made of hard material.
8. Groin protection: Obligatory for men, recommended for women.
9. Chest protection: Obligatory for women, recommended for men.
10. Sports shoes adapted for indoor practice and that do not leave traces on the hall floor.

Additional personal protective equipment (such as back protectors, mouth guards, etc.) or protective applications are allowed.

Any protective equipment that might be dangerous to the opponent is prohibited. That includes the use of protectors with sharp edges or pointed corners, as well as damaged protectors or equipment. Any protective equipment made of steel is also prohibited.

2. Weapons requirements

All tested and IFHEMA-approved sports equipment shall be marked in a suitable manner for this tournament (e.g., adhesive tape and tournament abbreviation with the date). The marking is only to be removed after the tournament. All blades will be subjected to a bending test before the tournament. The blade should show visible deflection.

Simulators tips must be covered/tapped to a strict minimum (tape; rubber seal). A blunted tip that is too large/imposing must be avoided.

For all weapons:

- Point - The point of the blade must be blunt and rounded, if necessary, apply extra tape or protectors.
- Edge - Both edges of the blade must be blunt.
- Guard elements - The ends of the crossguard, guard bow, etc. as well and other guard elements must be rounded or have soft edges.
- Pommel - The pommel must be rounded and must not have any protruding points or edges.

- Blade quality - The blade must not have any cutting or tearing burrs, dents or nicks.

For longsword:

Only **feders** with the following characteristics are accepted as competition weapons:

- Blade length - The length of the blade must not exceed 105cm.
- Overall length - The overall length of the weapon must not exceed 140cm.
- Crossguard length - The length of the crossguard must be between 20cm and 30cm.
- Guard rings - are not permitted.
- Mass - The total mass of the weapon must be between 1.3kg and 1.6kg
- Bending - The blade must visibly yield at a test weight of 15kg.
- Schilt - The schilt must be rounded, and injury to the opponent by sharp points must be excluded.

C. GENERAL PROCEDURE OF A BOUT

1. Each bout takes place in pairs.
2. The pairing for the upcoming bout is announced by an assistant or a judge.
3. The fencers line up ready to fight immediately.
4. The judges will inspect the protective equipment and the registration of the weapon.
5. The fencers greet their opponent and the judges.
6. The fencers line up at the assigned positions.
7. The judge/arbiter asks the timekeeper and other judges **"Ready?"** and awaits their confirmation.
8. After the judge/arbiter gives the command **"Fight!"**, the bout starts. The friendly touch of blades after the "Fight" has been announced is tolerated but is in no case an obligation.
9. The fencers try scoring a valid hit.
10. If a valid hit is scored or a judge has to intervene, the bout is interrupted with the command: **"Hit"** or **"Halt"**. If necessary, the time of the bout will be paused. The emergency command **"Stop!"** can imply a security concern and has to be obeyed always and immediately.
11. If a criterion for the end of the bout (point, time, etc.) is reached, the judge/arbiter interrupts the fight with the command: **"Halt"** and announces the result.
12. The fencers greet each other and the judges.
13. Wrestling (Ringen) is allowed in the 2025 Edition only as Ringen am Swert (no throws). **Wrestling is always subject to an opt-in/opt-out** on the level of the individual fencer; this option must be indicated in the participants' document and will be announced at the beginning of the bout.
14. If a fencer suffers an injury, he/she is entitled to demand a break of 10 minutes in total (can be divided).

If a fencer voluntarily does not appear for the fencing for understandable personal reasons, the bout will be evaluated as a victory for the opponent without any counter hits.

II. SPECIFIC EDITION RULESETS

A. Rounds & bouts : competition procedures

1. Protocol

It is recommendable to carry out a pool brief between the refereeing body, the table, and the fighters at the beginning of each round.

The two fighters wait in their corner with their coaches (if applicable) for the starting signal.

Every **round** will be completed in **9 bouts of 5 points or 3 minutes**. The clock is stopped at each “Halt” that is announced by the referees. The game will therefore finish when one team reaches 45 points or when it exceeds the time limit.

Fencers will change when a team reaches first 5 points, then 10, then 15, then 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, then 45. Every point is added to the previous result until they reach the sum of 45 points or run out of time.

Each bout will have a time limit of **3 minutes**. If the fencers do not reach the targeted amount of points within these **3 minutes** then the bout ends, the fencers change and the score remains as far as it has been and the whole procedure continues until **ALL 9 bouts** have been completed and the round ends with any score that has been reached up to there.

Ex aequo's are decided on the basis of the number of clean hits and the number of doubles. A score of the number of clean hits and the number of doubles per team per round is kept, and decides in case of an ex aequo in the final ranking about the place of the team: more clean hits: one place up; more doubles: one place down. This to prevent cheap point collection or parasitic fencing styles.

For details on the procedures followed for **the conduct of the rounds** during the competition, see the **Format document 2025** (chapter III).

2. Team composition

For the 2025 IFHEMA Cup edition, we have teams of 3 fighters and 1 substitute, complying with the 30% gender balance rule, and adding 1 non-fighting jury member.

For more details on **team composition**, see the competition **Format document 2025** (chapter I).

B. Scoring

1. Validity and Judgement of Hits

Valid target zones : The whole body is considered a valid target, with the exception of : Feet, back of the head, back in general, and genital areas.

A **clean hit** on a valid zone always scores **1 point**. This includes the **head**, torso and the **bodies' extremities** such as the **hands/lower arms** and **legs**. The hits from the flat are counted, but the referees will ensure the quality of the hits (see section on Hit Quality).

One-handed strikes ("geiselen") are allowed but limited to **1 per bout**.

Regardless of the validity of a hit, any weapon that falls to the ground immediately ends the exchange.

A hit made by a fighter who falls to the ground or loses completely his/her balance at the same time as he/she hits is not considered valid (see Hit Quality).

Falling to the ground while receiving a hit does not cancel the point of the one who delivered the hit (but keep in mind the section on Forbidden Actions and Penalties). Hitting a fighter that is already on the ground is not allowed and will be penalised.

The "Halt!" given to the fighters at the end of the exchange ends the fight, meaning there is no after-blow opportunity permitted anymore (see section on Doubles & Afterblows).

2. Hit quality and technical fencing

We value the quality of the hits and technical quality of the fencing overall during each bout.

Here are some objective points that allow to judge an insufficient quality of a scored hit:

- If the structure of the striker is broken: Back excessively bent backward, arm inappropriately extended, and wobbly support.
- If the hit is made by collapsing with the hit/falling to the ground/knees on the ground or by losing balance with the hit.
- If the strike is a wrist jerk involving no arm and/or chest/shoulder movement.
- If the hit is induced by the rebound of a "dead" blade, i.e., one which has been parried and rested on the opponent without any proper gesture of striking or cutting (cf. previous point).

We remind you that the referees and jury are the only ones entitled to judge the quality of a strike. The fighters and the team captain cannot make any judgment on the quality. **Fencers/coaches** have the right **to object ONCE** during each bout (see section on Referees).

3. Doubles and After-blows

For this edition of the IFHEMA Cup, we chose for an amended version of the so-called “Polish Afterblow”. This allows us to stay close to a historically attested aspect and to standard HEMA practice, in an easy to judge way. To put it in contemporary terms, we chose for “combat style”, not “right of way style” judging: time (tempo), not initiative counts in validation.

Three different situations must be distinguished:

1. **Simultaneous double:** each fencer hits the other one at the same moment, no preceding gestures take place (“not anyone’s fault”) (no points scored).
2. **Same tempo double:** one fencer hits, the other one had initiated his movement already and hits the other one directly after, in the same tempo (no points scored).
3. **Afterblow:** one fencer attacks and gets a clean hit (1pt) and sets up a defence. The other fencer follows in the next tempo (and not later) and with a clean counter hit. This means that the defence of the first fencer failed. He/she loses one point due to this failure, so no score is added for his/her initial clean hit. Note, however, **there is no Afterblow** after a clean **hit to the head**.

The **Afterblow** only takes place **in the tempo after the initial attack**. It forces the attacker to set up a proper defence after a successful action (clean hit); (s)he is moderately punished if (s)he fails to do so.

Individual scores are kept for the benefit of the fencer only. His or her results will go into the overall team result for that round. Doubles are not punished nor rewarded by points. However, **a score of the number of clean hits and of doubles per team per round is kept**, and decides in case of an ex aequo in the final ranking about the place of the team: more clean hits: one place up; more doubles: one place down. This to prevent cheap point collection or parasitic fencing styles. Afterblows shall not be recorded as doubles.

Note that **one-handed strikes** at any target are **not** considered **valid Afterblow** Opportunities.

Also **wrestling** is **not** considered a **valid Afterblow** opportunity.

4. Wrestling and Pommel strikes

In this ruleset **projections/throws from wrestling positions are NOT allowed** due to the hard floor. Only wrestling standing up (Ringen am Swert) is allowed (disarms, blocks & counter strikes, halfsword).

A pommel strike is valid when it is made at the level of the opponent's mask, with a clear arm gesture coming to rest lightly on the mask. **NO ACTUAL STRIKE. The pommel strike is only indicated.** All use of force (i.e., one that physically and visibly affects the recipient) will be sanctioned by a red card (see Penalty section).

A wrestling situation has **5 seconds to be resolved** by the fighters. After 5s, “Halt”/“Stop” is pronounced by the arbiter. During these 5s, the fighters have to disarm, execute a clear sword action (strike, cut or stab), or establish clear dominance. Otherwise no clear exchange has taken place, and no points will be awarded.

C. FORBIDDEN ACTIONS AND PENALTIES

1. Safety, Fairness and Gentle(wo)manship

For safety reasons and to maintain fairness, as well as to encourage technically refined fighting in the competition, the following actions are prohibited. Furthermore, all actions that constitute unsports(wo)manlike conduct or intentionally endanger the opponent are prohibited and will be penalised.

1. Kicks with the foot, lower leg, and knee against joints and soft parts, or leg sweeps.
2. Blows with the fist, hand, edge of the hand, forearm, or elbow.
3. Pommel strikes: indication is permitted. (cfr. wrestling and pommel strikes section)
4. Blows with the crossguard (mordschlag)
5. Pushing, shoving, knocking down, or similar (cfr. wrestling section)
6. Blows to the back of the head and neck.
7. Needlessly hard or excessively violent blows.
8. Blocking with hands to prevent a hit. Hands are not a shield. Referees/Judges are allowed to give a yellow card for this behaviour.
9. Leverage techniques against joints (locks, cfr. wrestling section)
10. Throws (cfr. wrestling section)
11. Throwing of weapon or equipment, even after the bout is finished
12. Running into each other without having any sword exchange beforehand.

2. Colour cards for penalty

Yellow cards:

1st yellow card acts as a warning, 2nd yellow card concedes a point to the opponent, 3rd yellow card concedes a point to the opponent and the bout ends.

Two yellow cards for the same reasons will result in a red card.

Yellow cards are personal and valid only for the current bout.

- Kick
- Punch
- Full wrestling
- Charging and wrestling/push to provoke an exit.
- Armed strike that is executed after the halt (if armed before the halt, it does not incur an error)
- Full hand grip of a moving blade
- Presenting the back without protection
- Voluntary exit from the fighting area (not caused by a push/wrestle) in an attempt to sabotage the exchange
- Intentional timewasting/inactivity
- Removal of protective gear before the command "Halt" / "Stop"

Red cards:

1st red card concedes a point to the opponent, 2nd red card concedes a point to the opponent and the bout ends.

2 red cards for the same reason will result into a black card and a loss of 5 points for the team. Red cards are personal and valid only for the current bout.

- Crossguard hit
- Voluntary headbutt
- Pommel strike to the opponent's head, the back of the mask and/or the back of the neck.
- Throwing / projection or "Heavy" take down.
- Sword Throw
- Joint lock
- Refusal to obey the judge or to accept a decision of the judge
- Inadequate equipment or failure to appear
- Unnecessary force / uncontrolled fencing

Black cards

A black card leads to the end of the bout and a penalty of 5 points for the team.

- † **Tearing off the opponent's fencing mask, protectors, gloves, etc.**
- † **Any kind of aggressive verbal criticism of the conduct or decisions of judges, insulting or belittling a person or the audience, making threats, throwing equipment or weapons, or similar.**
- † **A fencer refuses to salute his opponent before or after the bout.**
- † **If a tournament participant behaves in an improper manner during the tournament (also outside the bouts), he will be excluded from the tournament. Such a decision will be taken after a hearing of all the parties involved.**
- † **Accumulation of faults, actions, and attitudes of a fighter.**



For more details, see the **IFHEMA Cup Framework**, pp. 12-14.

An accumulation of faults, error actions, and offensive attitudes of a fighter may lead to an exclusion from the tournament. Depending on the severity of the situation, any black cards can lead to an exclusion from the tournament. A hearing with the referees, team captain, and the table will in any case be held, during which the culprit will be given the opportunity to defend him/herself. The tournament coordinator, as well as an IFHEMA representative may be involved if the situation is delicate/serious.

It is the responsibility of the tournament organiser to expel the fencer or fencers from the competition site and/or undertake further action. A proper procedure has to be put in place for such occasion.

3. Offences and Resolution:

Any forbidden action performed prohibits scoring a point, in addition to getting a Card.

Any forbidden action which produces in addition to the offence an obvious injury to the opponent fighter, will pass to the next category. Example: an armed Strike executed after the Halt (yellow) becomes a Red card if it injures the fighter. The seriousness of the injury is to be taken into account by the referees for appropriate sanctioning.

III. REFEREEING

A. REFEREES

- The Referees will work in teams of two: 1 main arbiter and 1 side judge. In the finals a third judge might be added.

- The competition coordinator of the event will also be active during the tournament and can be called upon in case of problems or doubts about a situation.
- It is up to the referee teams to decide who will be the arbiter (the one who announces the Start, the Hits, and the Stops).
- We will limit ourselves to a simple refereeing lexicon: "Salute, Ready, Fight" as well as "Hit/Halt" and (emergency) "Stop" during bouts. Judges should be as clear as possible in their commands and if need be being able to name the rules used when they are significant in their judgment.
- Arbiters are required to make a concise but **clear statement** of their judgement to the fighters, supported by the ruleset, and, if necessary, explanatory. Ex: "A's strike on B. Valid area. Insufficient quality. B's after-blow is valid, no response from A before the Halt, point A cancelled."
- The arbiters can question a fighter and/or a coach to refine their judgment in case of doubt (this should not be systematic).
- **Fencers/coaches** have the right to **object ONCE** during each bout and request the judges to discuss their ruling.
- In the event of a strong dispute, a time break can happen, and any group of judges can seek the help of the Competition Coordinator or of any experienced arbiter available.

A Referee is a human being and has the right to make a mistake. We encourage Referees to re-set an exchange if there is too much doubt, or if they are aware of their mistake after deliberations.

No post-bout complaints can retroactively influence the results.

B. TABLE

The table consists of a scribe who takes care of the notations on the score sheet and a timekeeper (these can be 1 person).

The table gives the half-time information to the Referees and calls for the preparation of the fighters for the next two bouts, to make everything run smoothly.

If there are 5 secs or fewer left on the clock after the end of an exchange, the bout ends immediately after the arbiter has given his judgment. The table announces the end of the bout by means of the announcement "Time!" if need be.

The fighters and/or their coach have the right to ask the table for the time remaining, which is then announced audibly to the entire crowd.

We are aware that Refereeing, for both fighters and Judges, is often associated with frustration and stress in tournaments. We, therefore, expect understanding from both parties and encourage listening, self-discipline, and courteous exchanges.

HEMA tournaments are competitive, martial, and a human experience. The overall atmosphere is in the hands of all the participants in the event. It is necessary to take care together of a good atmosphere, and make sure that the actions of only one do not spoil the experience of the whole. In this respect, the organizing committee considers the participants as partners. Mutual trust and respect is required.