

SCA Rapier Experiment Proposal

Experiment Name: Cut and Thrust Melees

Original Submission Date: March 2015

Returned by SRM Date:

Posted to the KRMs list Date: March 19, 2015

Participating Kingdom(s): TBD

Submitting Marshal: Master Robert MacFarland

What & Why

Cut and Thrust Melees

This experimental program is being proposed to test the viability of utilizing cut and thrust weapons and techniques on the melee field. Cut and thrust combat has been an authorizable form in the SCA since 2006 without any major injuries reported. At this time, several kingdoms have shown interest in utilizing these techniques and weapons on the melee field. This proposal is to run the experiment concurrently in a minimum of four kingdoms to test the safety of this type of combat on the melee field. With the exception of the rule barring melee combat with this form, all current cut and thrust rules and conventions will be enforced during the experiment.

If successful, the following rule will be removed from the Rapier Marshal's Handbook: *Marshal Concerns in Rapier Combat 6.E. Cut and thrust rapier may not be used in melees.* Since percussive cuts and the stouter weapons used in this type of combat are already limited to cut and thrust authorized fighters, no further rules are needed to cover cut and thrust only melees.

How

This office will select a minimum of four kingdoms to participate in the experiment. If less than four kingdoms apply to participate in the experiment, it will not move forward.

The Kingdom Rapier Marshal of each participating kingdom will designate a Supervising Experimental Marshal and provide the marshal's contact information. Each experimental melee must have a minimum of two cut and thrust marshals present for all engagements.

The experiment will have four phases spanning over a period of two years. The first phase will have the most tightly controlled parameters in order to establish the viability and safety of the experiment. Each subsequent phase will broaden the scope of the experiment in an effort to pace toward the type of engagements that normally happen in melees.

Below is a breakdown of the phases:

Phase 1

Duration

- Six months

Weapons

- One-handed swords only

Secondaries

- Not required
- Rigid defensives only

Participants

- A minimum of four and no more than 10 combatants per scenario
- All fighters must be authorized in cut and thrust combat for more than two years and have had no current official marshal-related issues on file

Phase 2

Duration

- Six months

Weapons

- One-handed swords only

Secondaries

- Not required
- All standard secondaries are allowed

Participants

- A minimum of four and no more than 10 combatants per scenario
- All fighters must be authorized in cut and thrust combat for more than one year and have had no current official marshal-related issues on file

Phase 3

Duration

- Six months

Weapons

- One-handed and two-handed swords only

Secondaries

- Not required
- All standard secondaries are allowed

Participants

- A minimum of four and no more than 10 combatants per scenario
- All fighters must be authorized in cut and thrust combat for more than one year and have had no current official marshal-related issues on file

Phase 4

Duration

- Six months

Weapons

- One-handed and two-handed swords only

Secondaries

- Not required
- All standard secondaries are allowed

Participants

- A minimum of 10 and no more than 30 combatants per scenario
- All fighters must be authorized in cut and thrust combat for more than one year and have had no current official marshal-related issues on file

At the end of the each phase a comprehensive report will be submitted by this office to the DSRM detailing each experimental engagement with information including, but not limited to:

- Location (kingdom and the event/practice)
- The name of the supervising marshal
- The number of participants
- Type of engagement(s) (Open field, broken field, bridge battle, etc.)
- Details on any equipment failure or damage
- Any feedback/comments/concerns from participants

In order for a phase to be successfully completed, each kingdom must have held and reported on a minimum of six engagements. If there are less than 24 engagements reported across all the kingdoms, the phase will continue until such time enough information is collected. After receiving the report, the DSRM will have two weeks to confirm that the experiment will proceed to the next phase and/or make any changes to the current phase.

After each engagement the marshal-in-charge will report to their designated in-kingdom Supervising Experimental Marshal within two weeks. Each Supervising Experimental Marshal will report to the Kingdom Rapier Marshal, who, in turn, will report to the Society Cut and Thrust deputy on a quarterly basis with a summary of the experiments that took place and their opinion of the experiments success or failure, safety concerns, and feedback on general community acceptance. To collect data, the current plan is for the Society Cut and Thrust deputy to set up an online reporting tool to capture participant satisfaction and feedback from all kingdoms. All deadlines will be published when the experiment is approved to move forward.

Experimental engagements will be allowed at interkingdom events (“wars”) held within the boundaries of a kingdom participating in the experiment and only with the written permission of the Rapier Marshal-in-Charge for the event. These engagements cannot be considered as part of the warpoint scenarios and must follow the guidelines of the current phase of the experiment. All participants must be approved combatants from kingdoms that are participating in the experiment. Reporting on these engagements will be the responsibility of the host kingdom for the event.

At the end of fourth phase, the DSRM will determine the viability of lifting the rule and allowing these techniques and weapons to be used on the melee field.

Risks

There is a higher potential for increased rate of injury compared to individual combat. This potential is due to the ways small unit engagement changes the attack vectors and potential for unexpected attacks from opponents not directly in front of the combatant.

The marshal in charge will explain at the beginning of each series of engagements that:

- Melee combat is more dangerous than individual combat and you are taking the field at your own risk with this understanding and foreknowledge
- You should not take the field if you are not comfortable with melee combat or your fellow combatants on the field
- Units are engaged with units so attacks may come from any of the opposing unit to any legal target as long as individuals are within reasonable distance to be considered a part of the unit
- Individuals who separate from their unit are not considered part of the unit and must engage, and be engaged by, opponents such that a reasonable person would realize they were being confronted before attacking
- The entire body is a **legal** target but with that being said don't be an ass
- As with standard melees, fighters may strike any opponent with any legal blow if they are within the 180 degree arc of the opponent's front. Killing from behind ("death from behind") is allowed if it has been announced beforehand and must follow the procedure as described in MARSHALLING CONCERNS IN RAPIER COMBAT, Sections 6.C.

Where and When

The experiment will take place at any SCA calendar event or published fighter practice with adequate combatants and approved marshals. At the end of the experimental program, any and all cut and thrust melee combat will cease until a final determination has been made on the viability of this change.

Who

Person in charge of the experiment, with name, email, and phone:

Don Robert MacPharland, sca.candt.marshal@gmail.com

Back-up person, with name, email, and phone:

TBD

Person who will send reports to the SRM, with name and email:

Don Robert MacPharland, sca.candt.marshal@gmail.com

Other people managing the experiment and their role:

TBD

Participants, how and when they will be used, and why they are qualified to be included (can be listed by name, or by qualification, such as "anyone authorized in case of rapier more than 1 year"):

Each kingdom must maintain a list of up to 25 Cut and Thrust participants participating for the first year. If the kingdom is approved to continue into a second year of the experiment, any authorized Cut and Thrust combatant may participate.