



**ADRIAN EMPIRE**  
**IMPERIAL ESTATES WRIT #29**  
**BOFFER WEAPONS MANUAL**

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## PREFACE

This is the manual containing the rules and regulations for Boffer weapon combat within the Adrian Empire.

## I. GENERAL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

### A. HEALTH

Combat within the Adrian Empire is a martial art. Anyone wishing to participate should be in sound physical condition. It is strongly recommended that each person have a medical check prior to engaging in the combatant arts. This is solely at the option of each person - under no circumstances will the Empire or any of its members be responsible for the consequences to any person's health that chooses to participate in the combatant arts. It is the legal Guardians responsibility to ensure that any children they sign-in for Boffer Combat are physically able to participate.

### B. INHERENT DANGERS

All combatants and their legal guardian shall acknowledge that there are dangers inherent in combat as practiced in the Empire. Combatants, and their guardians, shall assume unto themselves all risk and liability for injuries sustained by participation in such combat. All combatants, and their guardians, must sign a waiver of liability at the beginning of an event prior to participating in combat.

### C. MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AGES

Any child under the age of 7 must demonstrate comprehension of verbal communication prior to being allowed to participate in Boffer Combat. This will be determined by the Legal Guardian, Crown, Minister of War and Joust, and Jr. Deputy to the Minister of War and Joust (if one is appointed). The question of comprehension may be revisited if the child does not demonstrate appropriate behavior while on the field.

Any child under the age of 6 must have a legal guardian present at the field while they are participating in Boffer Combat. All other children participating must have a legal guardian present at the Event.

Children will be placed into groups appropriate to their age and size (as follows):

1. 8 and under
2. 9-12
3. 13-16

*(Chancery Note: Use your judgment when placing children in groups. Do not place a very large child in a group with several small children. Place them in a group appropriate for their size. DO NOT exclude any child from participation if they have met all other requirements.)*

## D. GENERAL RULES OF COMBAT

### 1. SAFETY

All combatants shall conduct themselves in a safe and courteous manner at all times. Acting in a manner unsafe to themselves or others, loss of temper and use of vulgarity are causes for dismissal from the field by the Crown Marshal, marshal, or Minister of Joust & War.

### 2. MARSHALS MUST BE PRESENT

Combat shall not take place at an official event without at least one (1) qualified adult marshal and one (1) qualified child Marshal present. Combat and warm-up must take place in a designated area, which is supervised by a marshal. Those warming up should always be mindful of bystanders.

### 3. ENTERING THE LIST FIELD

A combatant may not enter the field of combat without:

- a. Having signed a liability waiver at the event in which participation will take place
- b. Meeting minimum armor requirements
- c. Taking the sword oath

### 4. LAY-ON

The command of "Lay-on" is the signal to commence combat.

### 5. HOLD

The command of "Hold" stops all combat instantly.

A scoring blow that was started before the Hold is considered valid.

During a Hold, combatants may not discuss strategy. Live Combatants may not move about on the field. Dead Combatants may leave the field.

The combatants, field marshals or Crown may call a Hold for any reason. Spectators may call Hold only for:

- a. An unsafe situation pertaining to bystanders
- b. Armor or weapon failure

### 6. NO COMBATANT MAY EVER.

- a. Thrust with weapons not meeting the required standards for thrusting
- b. Purposefully strike the hand at the break of the wrist or below unless the opponent is using the hand defensively (e.g. using it to block a blow) or offensively (e.g. attempting to grab the opponent or his equipment)
- c. Purposefully strike the leg at the knee or below
- d. Kick an opponent or his equipment
- e. Strike at an opponent that he cannot clearly see. Swinging blindly, or flailing while falling is unsafe behaviors that will cause the combatant to be warned, or dismissed as the marshal determines.

## 7. COMBATANTS ON THE GROUND

A combatant may not strike an opponent who has fallen (torso on the ground).

In a war, a combatant has the option of demanding his opponents' surrender, calling their opponent dead at weapon-point, or allowing his opponent to regain his knees or feet.

In a tournament, a hold shall be called and the opponent must allow the fallen combatant to regain his feet or knees, as appropriate, prior to continuing combat. Likewise, a combatant who has fallen may not attack from a prone position.

## 8. DECISIONS OF THE MARSHALS

All combatants shall submit to the decisions of the Marshal of the Field, but may appeal to the presiding noble, whose decision is final.

A local sovereign may not overrule the decision of an Imperial Combat Minister (being the Imperial Minister of Combat, Imperial Minister of Joust and War, or Imperial Crown Marshal), their deputies, or the rules set forth by the Combat Manual. The Imperial Minister of Combat (in conjunction with the Imperial Minister of Joust and War) has the final decision on issues pertaining to the Combat Manual or the Marshals Manual, subject to the approval of the Imperial Throne.

Officers in the chain of command (from lowest to highest):

- a. Marshal
- b. Crown Marshal
- c. Minister of Joust and War
- d. Local Sovereign
- e. Deputy Imperial Combat Minister
- f. Imperial Crown Marshal
- g. Imperial Minister of Combat or Imperial Minister of Joust and War
- h. Imperial Sovereign

An officer shall not rule on any dispute arising from a specific combat in which that officer was a combatant. The officer shall defer to the field ruling or appeal to the next higher officer.

## 9. FORCE OF BLOWS

A combatant may not deliver a blow of greater force than that necessary to insure that it is felt by his opponent. It is presumed that every combatant is capable of delivering an armor-piercing blow. The safety of the populace shall not be risked in demonstration of this.

The marshal shall issue two (2) warnings for excessive force or unsafe behavior. On the third infraction, the marshal will dismiss the combatant. Any combatant committing a third infraction (at the same event) shall be ejected from the event. Any combatant being expelled from two (2) consecutive events for excessive force or unsafe behavior may be banned from combat within the Empire for three (3) months.

Blows intended to strike the shield or weapon shall be delivered with no greater force than those delivered to a combatant's body.

A blow that is intended for the body that is actively blocked may land with greater force than would be delivered to the body without being considered excessive. Combatants who intentionally do excessive damage to the equipment of his opponents can be subject to the guidelines for use of excessive force.

## 10. NON-TARGET AREAS

A combatant deliberately targeting non-target areas of an opponent's body will be warned two (2) times. On the third infraction, the combatant can be subject to the guidelines for use of excessive force.

## 11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF BLOWS

All combatants are on their honor to verbally or visibly acknowledge all blows fairly received.

## 12. SHIELD USE

Punch blocking: The act of extending the shield to meet an opponent's weapon is allowed.

Shield hooking: The act of catching the edge of an opponent's shield with your shield to move it out of position is also allowed.

Shield edge: Striking an opponent's body with the edge of a shield is not allowed.

## 13. FIGHTING WHEN WOUNDED

Combatants are assumed to be of heroic stature and can continue fighting when "wounded". A combatant who receives a blow to the:

- a. **Arm:** that arm becomes unusable and must be held behind the back for the remainder of the round.
- b. **Leg or hip:** the combatant must fight from his knees. Combatants who fight from their knees may rise up from a sitting position. A combatant having one "uninjured" leg may move about or pivot so long as the knee of the wounded leg remains in contact with the ground. A combatant who has received wounds to both legs may not move or pivot on the ground. He may move himself by using his hands or weapons. Another combatant may help a combatant with wounded legs off, or around, the field. The assisting combatant and the wounded combatant put a hand on each other's shoulder and both may walk to another location. Once at the new location, the wounded combatant goes back to his knees as before.

## E. SINGLE-COMBAT LIST RULES

### 1. UNSAFE WEAPONS

A combatant may decline any challenge or the use of a particular weapon by his opponent, should the combatant deem the weapon unusually dangerous or unsafe.

If the weapon is found to be unsafe by the marshal or local sovereign, or does not conform to the weapon standards set herein, then the weapon shall be removed from the field and the combat may commence with a different choice of weapons.

If the weapon is found to be safe and within Adrian specifications, then combat shall continue. If the combatant so chooses, he may forfeit the match rather than fight against that combatant or weapon.

### 2. SHIELD USE

Combatants may only use shields for defensive purposes and may not rush, smash, or intentionally strike their opponents body with it.

### 3. GRAPPLING

Grappling your opponent's body is not permitted in Boffer Combat. You may grasp your opponent's weapon by the hilt or the haft, but never by the blade.

#### 4. CALLING BLOWS

The combatant receiving the blow shall make Determination of good blows. These determinations shall be augmented by the judgment of the marshal. A marshal may stop combat at any time to explain to the combatants what mistakes they are making as pertains to the rules of the lists.

Marshals: The marshal shall disallow any blow they determine to be delivered with excessive force, land with the flat of the blade or the haft of the weapon.

- a. If the marshal determines that either combatant is blatantly ignoring blows, the marshal shall first call a Hold and discuss any incidents with the combatant. If blows continue to be ignored, the marshal may step in and call blows for the combatant.
- b. A combatant has the right to ask the field marshals for a judgment of a particular blow, given or received.
- c. The decision of the marshal is final.

#### 5. CIRCLING A LEGGED OPPONENT

A combatant on his feet may not circle around outside the weapons range of a "legged" opponent to gain an advantage. They must engage them from the front.

### F. MELEE AND WAR COMBAT RULES

All participants regardless of age or size fight Boffer Melees. Boffer Melees are for fun only and do not garner points toward any Knighthood.

#### 1. DEATH FROM BEHIND

A combatant may not strike an opponent from behind.

- a. "Behind" includes to the side of the opponent such that the opponent has no knowledge that the attacker is there.
- b. The proper method for killing from behind is for the combatant to lay the flat or haft of a single-handed weapon in front of his opponents face, within his range of vision and call out "Dead from behind". All three words must be uttered for this to be valid. This gives the combatant time to acknowledge being killed and imposes a reasonable amount of time it would take to really kill a person. Yelling "Dead!" is not sufficient.
- c. Once a combatant is killed from behind, they may not cry out with the intent of informing the rest of the army of the enemy's presence.

#### 2. COMBATANTS ON THE GROUND

A combatant may be called dead on the ground if another combatant capable of reaching the combatant attempting to kill the man on the ground is not defending them.

A combatant on the ground may not attack from a prone position.

#### 3. PEOPLE ALLOWED ON THE FIELD

- a. Only the combatants, marshals, water bearers, physickers, and unarmored squires are allowed on the field of combat during a Hold.
- b. Only the combatants and marshals are allowed on the field of combat after a Lay-on is called.

#### 4. MARSHALS

Marshals have the right to judge blows to any combatant, calling them dead or wounded as appropriate.

## G. SCORING FOR TOURNAMENTS

Boffer Tournaments will be prize Tournaments only. No Combat points will be awarded to anyone participating in a Boffer Tournament toward a Combat Knighthood.

### 1. TYPES OF SCORING BLOWS

Scoring blows are considered to be of two types:

- a. Lethal: Head, neck, or torso from the point of the shoulder inward, above the hip and downward into the groin area.
- b. Disabling: Arms from the point of the shoulder to (but not including) the wrist, legs from the hips to (but not including) the knees. If struck on a hand or wrist that is not being used to hold a weapon or shield, the whole arm is lost.

Although the legal targets are listed here, it does not exclude the limiting of targets for a particular tournament or scenario. For example, if a particular tournament calls for killing blows only, or headshots only, it would be allowed. Targets can be restricted so long as they do not conflict with the safety goals of this manual.

### 2. TYPES OF KILLS

There are three types of "kills":

- a. Lethal blow
- b. Disarmament: A combatant with both arms disabled is considered killed. In the case of one combatant being disarmed and the other combatant killed, the disarmed combatant is considered the winner.
- c. Double kill: Both combatants score lethal blows or disarmament simultaneously. Simultaneous is defined as having both blows already started by the time the first blow lands. This is considered a draw and the bout shall be fought until one or the other combatant wins. No losses will be assigned for a double kill unless specifically stated as being the case for that tournament.

### 3. BLOCKED BLOWS

A weapon is sufficiently blocked when a block has noticeably decreased its momentum. A deflected blow may still be considered good if the deflection did not noticeably reduce its momentum.

A weapon that has been blocked cannot cause injury to an opponent unless it disengages and changes direction prior to coming into contact with the opponent. For example, if a combatant throws a sword blow that is sword-blocked by his opponent and the combatant then pushes through the block to hit the opponent, the blow is not considered good since the initial force of the blow was removed when the sword block was made. However, if the combatant disengages the sword block and changes the angle of attack, the resulting unobstructed blow would be considered valid.

### 4. DRAW-CUTS

Draw cutting is defined as the practice of placing a blade on an opponent (usually after missing a thrust or having a weapon blocked) and drawing the blade back to cut an opponent.

### 5. UNDETERMINED WINNER

If a situation occurs where neither the combatants nor the marshals can make a clear determination of a winner, step back and start over. "When in doubt, fight it out."

## **II. BOFFER COMBAT**

Boffer Combat is a way to introduce younger, prospective combatants to the rules of the Adrian Empire while limiting the possibility for injury. It requires no experience and serves as a fun educational way for children to become involved in Adria, while still participating in a structured environment.

### **A. STYLES OF COMBAT**

Boffer Combat will have its own styles dependent upon what type of weapon is being utilized. Each combatant should seek training in a style prior to using it in combat. Some weapon styles will require approval and safety verification.

### **B. BOFFER STYLES**

1. Single sword (a single sword used with either hand or both)
2. Sword and shield (a single sword used in conjunction with a shield)
3. Double weapon (two swords used simultaneously)
4. Axe
5. Mace

All other weapons must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### **III. ARMOR AND WEAPONS STANDARDS**

To promote and enhance the safety and authenticity on the field, all armor shall be made to appear as realistic or authentic as reasonably possible. Blatantly mundane articles, such as tennis shoes, blue jeans, plastics, aluminum, modern sports and military gear, shall be covered up or disguised in some fashion. The marshals have the authority to disallow any item of armor or weaponry they deem to be unsafe or glaringly unauthentic looking.

The following are the parameters for the minimum armor requirements for each form of armed combat. This is intended to be the basic rules for maintaining the minimum safety standards. Materials or armor exceeding the minimum requirements is completely acceptable.

#### **A. ARMOR: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

##### **1. EQUIVALENTS**

The Crown Marshal or higher officer prior to their first use on the field must approve equivalents to stated materials other than those mentioned.

When considering equivalents, the marshal may also consider multiple layers of or a combination of materials to satisfy the required standard.

- a. Rigid material can be of any inflexible material that can withstand a sharp impact without shattering such as:
  - i. 18-gauge stainless steel
  - ii. T6 aluminum
  - iii. High impact plastic
- b. Semi-rigid material can be any somewhat flexible material such as:
  - i. 6 oz. leather
  - ii. Several layers of quilted, heavy canvas

##### **2. PERSONAL PROTECTION**

Men are required to wear a rigid athletic cup (or equivalent).

##### **3. APPROVED WEAPONS**

Armor or weapons that do not meet the approval of the Minister of Joust & War or the marshals shall not be allowed on the field.

Consult with the local Crown Marshal or Minister of Joust and War before constructing or purchasing armor or weapons to be use in combat if you are unsure of their suitability. It is the responsibility of the marshal to ensure that the armor meets the minimum safety requirements set forth in this manual. It is the responsibility of the combatant to ensure that his armor is in good repair and safe for use on the field. If the Minister of Joust & War or a marshal deems a weapon or piece of armor unsafe, then the marshal has the right to not allow its use - even if it meets the minimum requirements.

##### **4. BARE SKIN**

No bare skin will be allowed on the field.

##### **5. SHOES**

Combatants are required to wear some form of enclosed toe and heel shoes of a heavy material, leather or equivalent. Some form of rigid ankle support is recommended.

**6. HEAD AND NECK**

In order to protect the head, the combatant must wear a padded covering that covers the entire head, and some type of eye protection, such as goggles or a hockey mask. This is only the minimum!

**7. BODY**

A gambeson or equivalent (1/4 inch padded material) is required.

**8. ARMS AND LEGS**

One layer of sweatshirt- or terrycloth-weight material is required.

Elbow pads are required. One-quarter-inch (1/4") padded gambeson sleeves are sufficient. Kneepads are recommended, but not required.

**9. HANDS**

Gloves are required. They may be made out of cloth or knit material.

**B. WEAPONS**

All weapons must meet with the approval of the Imperial or Crown Marshal or Minister of Joust and War, and conform to the following guidelines:

**1. SWORDS**

- a. Boffer Weapons range from dagger to great sword in length, with minimum of 18 inches blade length.
- b. Must be at least 2 inches in diameter thickness, but no more than 4 inch thick.
- c. Commercial weapons are recommended. The Minister of War and Joust must approve all weapons that are not purchased commercially prior to being used.
- d. All boffers must have a tear-proof outer shell that encompasses the entire blade (padding) of the weapon. These may not have more than two seams to prevent accidental opening.
- e. Boffer Swords are treated as double-edged weapons.

**2. AXES AND MACES**

- a. Axes and Maces must be constructed in a way that there are no sharp edges.
- b. The core must be a porous material (Styrofoam or equivalent).
- c. They must have at least 2 inches of soft cell foam around the core and be covered with a tear proof outer material with no more than two seams.
- d. The handle may be made out of PVC or acceptable equivalent, and must be wrapped with a light material and secured in a way that the ends do not fray or come loose.

**3. CROSS-GUARDS**

- a. Shall protrude no more than 5 inches from either side of the handle
- b. Shall be rounded or padded.

**4. THRUSTING WEAPONS**

- a. There are no thrusting weapons approved for Boffer combat.

## C. SHIELDS

Shields can be any period shape so long as they do not exceed the specified outer dimensions listed below.

### 1. MAXIMUM SHIELD SIZES

Boffer Shields may not be any larger than the child can comfortably carry and operate with one hand. No Boffer Shield may be larger than 20 inches in diameter (round) or 18 by 12 inches (square, rectangular, and oval shield equivalents)

### 2. SHIELD CONSTRUCTION

#### a. Materials

Shields must be made out of closed cell foam. They may be painted or decorated within reason.

#### b. Front Openings

Shields may not have openings in the front.

#### c. Repairs

All shields and weapons must be in good repair or they will not be allowed on the field. Any Shield (or Weapon) that is torn or broken when on the field will be removed immediately.

## **IV. BANNED WEAPONS LIST**

This section lists the weapons that are banned in Adrian Combat (this list may be added to over time). A weapon may be banned for safety, authenticity or suitability reasons. All weapons on this list shall have a brief reason for their banning.

### **A. FLAILS (INCLUDING MORNING STARS)**

**Safety:** The chain or rope attaching the two (or more) parts of the weapon may loop around an opponent's limb, resulting in an unsafe situation. Additionally, flails are extremely difficult to control and it may not be possible to stop or pull back a blow once started.

### **B. BUTT-MAULS ON POLE ARMS**

**Authenticity:** The use of a mace head on the back of a pole weapon is not documented in Western Europe within our period.

### **C. QUARTERSTAFF**

**Suitability:** Firstly, the quarterstaff was a peasants weapon and not used in armored combat in tournament or war. All armored combatants in Adria are assumed to be of the Knightly class, or they would not be in armor. Secondly, we are doing live steel combat. Thus all weapons replicate steel weapons.

### **D. WRIST-IMMOBILIZING WEAPONS**

These weapons are characterized by a sword blade attached to a gauntlet or handle and extend straight out from the wearers forearm and are strapped in place and cause the wrist to be immobile.

**Safety:** These weapons prevent the wrist from bending. This causes an unsafe situation should the combatant fall or be charged by his opponent.

**Authenticity:** These weapons were only found in India thus are not within the geographic boundary of our period.

## GLOSSARY

- Armor check** - The process of verifying that the armor worn by a combatant is not wearing sub-standard armor.
- Battlefield** - The designated area for war combat. Battlefield must have clearly defined borders.
- Buckler** - A small, round shield
- Bye** - A stand-by round (in single-elimination lists, where the last combatant has no one to fight)
- Charging** - Rushing full-speed toward an opponent.
- Death from behind** - There will be no death from behind.
- Dead on the ground** - A phrase used to describe a combatant who has who has fallen and been called dead by an opponent.
- Double elimination** - A tournament list is where each combatant is eliminated from the tournament after losing two rounds.
- Double kill** - Both combatants score lethal blows or disarmament simultaneously (where both blows have already started by the time the first blow lands).
- Draw cut** - The practice of placing a blade on an opponent (usually after missing a thrust or having a weapon blocked) and drawing the blade back to cut an opponent.
- Excessive force** - Using too much power to deliver the blow.
- Gambeson** - A coat made of several layers of heavy batting, covered by a heavy broadcloth or trigger material. Moving blankets are a good example. If the gambeson is of sufficient padding and coverage, then elbow pads may not be required for Shinai. The gambeson should cover the torso and at least the buttocks. It may or may not require sleeves. Please consult with your local Crown Marshal. One (1) layer of moving blanket or two (2) layers of terrycloth counts as one-quarter-inch (1/4") of padding.
- Gauntlet** - A glove that protects the entire hand.
- Gorget** - Neck protection that covers the front, sides, and back of the neck. They have a bib to cover the clavicle, throat down to below the top of the breastbone, and cervical vertebrae of the wearer.
- Haft** - Shaft of a pole weapon or one-handed weapon that is not part of the handle or striking/killing surface of the weapon.
- Hold** - This phrase signals an immediate halt to combat. It is the same as Freeze.
- Lay-on** - This phrase signals the start of combat.
- Liability waiver** - A combatant acknowledges that Adria is not liable for any injury or damage that might result from their participation in Adria. This standard waiver is included on the membership form, but is also included on the sign-in list and is required for participation in Adrian activities, including combat.
- List field** - The designated area in which combat may be conducted. Must List Fields have clearly defined borders and clear area.
- Marshal** - Marshals conduct armor and weapons checks, qualify combatants and have ultimate authority on the field. Marshals are the safety officers of the empire. Crown Marshals oversee other marshals on a local level.
- Marshal of the Field** - A marshal who is actively engaged in marshaling on the field.
- Marshal's oath** - Before a marshal may enter the list or battlefield, they must participate in the marshal's oath.

- Minister of Combat** - Imperial minister responsible for producing and modifying the combat-related manuals, as well as the application and interpretation of the content stated therein.
- Minister of Joust and War** - The combat logistics officers of Adria, and are responsible for organizing combat for tournaments and wars.
- Pas de Arms** - A form of tournament from 15th century Europe, in which challenges play an important role in determining who shall fight each round. A gallery of spectators, rather than counting the number of good blows often chooses winners.
- Personal protection** - Part of armor specifically intended to protect the groin area (on both men and women) and breasts (on women)
- Punch blocking** - Extending the shield to meet an opponent's weapon.
- PVC** - Fairly rigid plastic material (polyvinyl chloride) commonly used to make hafts which are used in Shinai pole- arms.
- Qualification** - A combatant must be qualified by an authorized marshal in the type of weapon-style in order to participate in that weapon-style.
- Scenario** - A round of combat in a war, and the premise and specific rules that goes along with that battle.
- Semi-rigid material** - Any somewhat flexible material such as 6 oz. leather or several layers of quilted, heavy canvas.
- Shield bashing** - Rushing or intentionally striking their opponent only with the flat of the shield. Allowed only on the Knight's List when both combatants agree to it, and notify the marshals, before combat begins.
- Shield hooking** - Catching the edge of an opponent's shield with your shield to move it out of position.
- Sign-in list** - Before a combatant may participate in combat, he must sign in with the list-keeper at the beginning of the event. These sign-in sheets are used to create any list trees, and to award participation points for those who participate.
- Simultaneous blows** - See **Double kill**
- Single elimination** - A tournament list where each combatant is eliminated from the tournament after losing a single round.
- Thrust** - A type of blow delivered straight on (think of throwing darts, or a one-handed pool queue)