

# Spear Authorization Guidelines for Standard Rapier

Prerequisite	Status
Basic Rapier Authorization	Completed / Uncompleted
Advanced Rapier Authorization	Completed / Uncompleted

## Major Foci

- Spear construction
- Understanding of acceptable use
- Demonstration of safe use

## Go/No Go Criteria & Instructions for Authorizing Marshal(s)

- Authorizing fencer understands and can identify the parts of a rapier legal spear and is familiar with their assembly.
  - Slight deviations in wording should not be a focus in evaluating this criteria. Instead, the authorizing marshal should focus on the ability of the authorizing fencer to differentiate between the head and the haft of the spear, and the materials which join them. See Sample Questions below for specifics.
- Authorizing fencer understands and can identify acceptable and unacceptable materials to be used in the construction of a rapier legal spear.
  - Some failure to recite acceptable criteria for specific components (e.g., head length, haft diameter) is acceptable, and should be discussed with the fighter prior to completing the authorization. Ideally this should include directing the authorizing fighter to the appropriate portion of the published Fencing Marshal's Handbook. The authorizing marshal should prioritize concerns around a basic understanding of the materials that are acceptable in constructing the spear (e.g., legal haft materials, affixing the spear head to the haft).
- Authorizing fencer successfully demonstrates control and safe conduct when using a rapier spear in a simulated encounter.
  - Authorizing fencers must calibrate blows with the spear, both as a receiving target and against the ushering fencer. Authorizing marshals are encouraged to have both fencers deliver blows which are too light, too heavy, and "good."
  - The authorizing fencer should be made to respond to engagements at a variety of measures and intensities. At minimum, the authorizing fencer should demonstrate safe conduct against (1) another fencer using a rapier spear and (2) another fencer using a rapier-legal sword. Ideally, the authorizing fencer should demonstrate safe conduct against (3) two opponents using a rapier-legal sword

simultaneously. As with other rapier authorizations, the authorizing fencer does not have to win these engagements, although some touches should be allowed by the ushering fencer(s) to evaluate control in delivery.

## Sample Questions and Observation Criteria

### Spear Construction

- What are the required parts of a rapier legal spear?
  - [At minimum] the head, the haft, and a contrasting material (tape or ribbon) affixed to the head.
- What are the acceptable materials that can be used in the haft of a rapier spear?
  - Rapier legal spear hafts may only be constructed of rattan.
- What are the acceptable materials that can be used in the head of a rapier spear?
  - Rapier legal spear heads may only be constructed of rubber.
- Can you make your own spear tip?
  - No. Rapier legal spear tips must be commercially purchased.
- What is the acceptable range of lengths for the **head** of a rapier legal spear?
  - Rapier legal spear heads must be between 4 and 20 inches in length.
- What is the acceptable range of **overall lengths** for a rapier legal spear?
  - Rapier legal spears must be between 6 and 9 feet in overall length.
- Describe the criteria for evaluating the acceptable flexibility of a rapier spear head.
  - Rapier legal spear heads must flex to 90 degrees under hand pressure, and substantially return to their original shape within 3 seconds.
- What is the acceptable range of diameters for a rapier spear haft?
  - Rapier legal spear hafts must be between 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  inch and 1 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches in diameter along their entire length, with the exception of the portion shaved to accommodate the spear head's socket.
- How can a spear head be affixed to the haft?
  - Spear heads must be friction fit to the hafts and taped to the haft with reinforced tape. Acceptable forms of tape include strapping tape, fiber tape, gaffing tape, or duct tape. A bright band of colored tape or well-affixed ribbon that contrasts with the spear head and the haft is to be wrapped around the base of the spear head.

### Acceptable Use

- What are the possible valid ways of delivering a blow with a rapier legal spear?
  - The only valid blow of the rapier legal spear is a thrust.
- Can you use a rapier legal spear in a single combat rapier tournament?
  - Rapier legal spears are considered non-standard equipment in single combat, and may be refused without penalty by your opponent. Should both fencers agree to the use of the non-standard equipment, they may be used at the discretion of the supervising marshal.
- What level of equipment is needed for fencers using rapier legal spears?

- The equipment standard for fencers using rapier legal spears is identical to that of standard rapier fencing.
- What is the target area of the opponent when using a rapier legal spear?
  - The target area of the opposing fencer is identical to that of standard rapier fencing.

## Demonstration of Safe Use (Authorization Fights)

- The authorizing fencer can both identify and deliver blows of the spear with appropriate calibration in a static situation.
  - Calibration of thrusts with the rapier spear should be identical to that of the sword.
  - Generally, when standing in a “squared” position with feet at shoulder width, a thrust which causes the receiving fencer to step backwards with one of their feet exceeds this calibration standard.
  - Calibration thrusts should be performed to both the torso and mask. Generally, the authorizing fencer should receive these calibration shots before delivering them.
- In fencing bouts against an ushering fencer using a rapier spear the authorizing fencer can deliver and receive blows of the spear with appropriate calibration and methodology.
  - The authorizing fencer should only deliver blows of the spear with the point. Non-incident strikes with the haft are grounds for failing the authorization.
  - When performing beats or parries with the spear, the authorizing fencer should demonstrate care not to strike the hands or arms of the ushering fencer.
  - When pressed into close measure by the ushering fencer, the authorizing fencer should demonstrate care not to strike the ushering fencer with the haft of the spear. Maneuvers to parry with the haft of the spear are acceptable, so long as care is demonstrated not to strike the opponent.
  - The authorizing fencer maintains positive control of the weapon at all times during the bout(s). Dropping to one hand, “pool-cueing,” and lunging thrusts delivered with the back hand are acceptable, so long as appropriate calibration is preserved.
- In fencing bouts against an ushering fencer using a rapier legal sword the authorizing fencer can deliver and receive blows of the spear with appropriate calibration and methodology.
  - The authorizing fencer should only deliver blows of the spear with the point. Non-incident strikes with the haft are grounds for failing the authorization.
  - When performing beats or parries with the spear, the authorizing fencer should demonstrate care not to strike the hands or arms of the ushering fencer.
  - When pressed into close measure by the ushering fencer, the authorizing fencer should demonstrate care not to strike the ushering fencer with the haft of the spear. Maneuvers to parry with the haft of the spear are acceptable, so long as care is demonstrated not to strike the opponent.
    - This is especially important when fencing against an ushering fencer using a sword. Authorizing marshals may, at their discretion, call attention

to the option of “cheeking” the spear or rapidly pulling it backwards to grasp near the head.

- The authorizing fencer maintains positive control of the weapon at all times during the bout(s). Dropping to one hand, “pool-cueing,” and lunging thrusts delivered with the back hand are acceptable, so long as appropriate calibration is preserved.