



Historical Medieval Battle  
International Association



**BATTLE OF THE NATIONS<sup>®</sup>**



# **HMB Rules**

## for BUHURT CATEGORIES

version 1.0.1



# GENERAL REGULATIONS

- 1.1. Historical Medieval Battle (HMB)** is full contact sporting combat in which historical protective and offensive arms of the Middle Ages – made especially and adjusted to suit this kind of competition – are used. HMBs are held in the lists of standardized dimensions, with different types of authentic weapons, depending on the kind of a battle.

The concept of HMB includes all kinds of full contact combat with the use of items of Historical Reenactment of the Middle Ages (HRMA), namely historical fencing, buhurts, melee, duels, small group battles, mass field battles, professional fights, etc.

HMBs are always held in full contact, but are represented by different categories with various authorized and prohibited techniques. In addition, victory conditions, battle regulations, tournament schemes and other parameters are different.

**The following rules apply to buhurt categories of Historical Medieval Battle.**

- 1.2.** All HMBs are held under control and observation of a marshal's (referee's) group, including one knight marshal (main referee), field referees, linesmen and referees monitoring the video coverage. The number of members of the marshal's group is established separately for each event, depending on its format and content. The presence of the knight marshal and field referees is required in every type of combat.
- 1.2.1.** The knight marshal is selected by the event organizers. In case of any disagreement the knight marshal's decision is final.
- 1.2.2.** The records of the combat process and combat results are made by the secretariat.
- 1.3.** HMB buhurt categories vary. In particular, the number of fighters can be different: each category has approved combat regulations.
- 1.4.** The conditions of victory can also vary depending on the battle regulations of a certain category.
- 1.5.** The main criterion of victory in buhurt HMB categories is a "removal" of an opponent or all members of the rival team from the battle.

## In the buhurt categories a fighter is “removed from the battle”, when:

- 1.5.1. He is “grounded”, i.e. he touches the surface of the lists with the third point of support (body, buttocks, arm, knee, shield, etc.). The rule applies if a fighter falls down together with an opponent.
 

**Important!** *Two basic supporting points for a battle are feet.*
- 1.5.2. His legs leave the designated combat area or he falls or is forced outside the lists.
- 1.5.3. An element of protective equipment (used to protect joints, head, hands, groin, or neck, and also serves to protect a large area), is broken or lost.
- 1.5.4. He touches the grounded fighter with his body or buttocks.
 

**Important!** *When the fighter falls on his opponent and touches with the third supporting point (except for body and buttocks) only his opponent, who lies under him, the fighter is not considered as fallen.*
- 1.5.5. Continues attacking actions without a weapon in his hand (shield is not a weapon).

**Important!** *Should the fighter lose his weapon, he has the right:*

- *to use a spare weapon he may have;*
- *to cease fighting and place himself in a kneeling position;*
- *to take a spare set of weapons from the reserve fighter of his team standing in a marked place outside the boundaries of the lists. The fighter has the right to protect himself from opponents’ attacks without making attacking or blocking actions;*
- *take a spare set of weapons from a team member who is engaged in battle (provided the team member is not out of the battle).*

**Important!** *It is strictly prohibited to pick up weapons from the ground within the lists, from fighters who are out of the battle or take the weapon from a non-reserve fighter who is standing at a point designated for the handing over of spare weapons.*

**Important!** *Fighters with two-handed pole weapons must hold it firmly at least with one hand (rather than being supported by elbows or underarm). If the weapon is not held at least with one hand during a fight with a rival the fighter is considered to be unarmed and has to cease attacking actions until he has a weapon in his hand.*

## 1.6. To obtain admission to HMB, a fighter must:

- 1.6.1. Be of age according to the law of his country, as well as the country hosting the event.

- 1.6.2.** Sign a statement of voluntary participation in full contact combat (in the statement a fighter confirms his acceptance of any risks associated with participation in the battles, declines any declares that he fully understands the rules and agrees to abide by them in full).
- 1.6.3.** Have a medical health certificate issued by an official medical institution (state or private), confirming that he has no restrictions to limit his participation in the competitions.
- 1.6.4.** Be accredited by the organizers of the event.
- 1.6.5.** Have an admission for arms and armor, provided by the Authenticity Committee.



## AUTHENTIC EQUIPMENT

- 2.1. Arms and armor, which have chronological validity of a specific historical period as confirmed by extensive research carried out and confirmed, are allowed in HMB.
- 2.2. A fighter has to rebate his weapons before the participation in an event. They must conform in full to the specifications stated in this regulatory document with no exceptions.

Rebating is a process of rounding of the peak and the percussion edges of any bladed or pole weapon used in HMB competitions. The radius of rebating is about 10 mm (note: it has to match the radius of a coin 20 mm in diameter).

- 2.2.1. The edges of all the striking parts of any weapon are to be rounded (blunted) as a bevel and must be no less than 2 mm thick (including any possible chips and notches).

- 2.2.2. The edges of shields are to be trimmed with thick (no less than 2-4 mm) leather or three or more layers of fabric attached with glue or adhesive agents.

**Important!** *All wooden, wicker or leather shields must be made only on the basis of reliable and approved historical analogues and correspond to the form of the analogue in all three planes. A shield can only be used with a set of armor of the same epoch and region.*

- 2.2.3. Edges of the iron shields have to be carefully forge-rolled and be no less than 4 mm thick.

**Important!** *The shape of permitted metal shields must be round, made on the basis of reliable and approved historical analogues corresponding to the form of the analogue in all three planes. A shield can only be used with a set of armor of the same epoch and region. The weight of any metal shield must not exceed 5 kg.*

- 2.3. Fighters must exclusively assume all responsibility for the quality, safety and reliability of the elements of protective arms.

**2.4.** Below is the list of permitted weapons, as well as technical requirements for them.

**Important!** *The maximum weight of all weapons fully assembled and ready for battle is given. The permissible upward error is +100 for single-handed and +300 grams for two-handed models of arms.*

**2.4.1. Bladed weapons:**

- single-handed swords, sabers, broadswords – up to 1,600g;
- falchions – up to 1,800g;
- long (total length is up to 1,400mm) swords, sabers, broadswords – up to 2,500g;
- ~~two-handed bladed weapons of the XIV-XVIIth centuries – up to 3,500 g~~



**two-handed bladed weapons of the XIV-XVIIth centuries – up to 2,000 g**

**2.4.2. Polearms:** – single-handed axes – up to 1,300g, maces and six-flanged maces – up to 1,000g

**Important!** *The length of a cutting part of an axe blade must be no less than 7cm.*

**Important!** *All the maces and six-flanged maces must only have wooden handles and no sharp edges.*

- *long axes and other similar weapons (with a total length of no less than 1m) - up to 2,300g.*

- *two-handed: halberds, glaives, poleaxes and similar weapons (with a total length of more than 1,400mm) - up to 3,000g.*

**Important!** *Heavier weapons or thrust weapons are not admitted for use in historical medieval battles under any circumstances.*

**2.5.** The approved protective arms for HMB competitions must be a reconstruction of medieval armor (must have the exact dimensions and general historically accurate appearance) and correspond to such characteristics:

- compliance with historically proven origins of the XIII- XVII centuries.
- authenticity of materials used (metal, leather, fabric, tow, batting, felt);
- availability of configuration that completely covers the vital organs and joints of the fighter;
- good condition;
- thickness of protective material has to meet HMB requirements (stated below);
- size and proportions of all the protective elements have to meet the requirements;
- aesthetic appearance.

- 2.6. All items of armor have to meet the technical and aesthetic requirements, and represent a complete set of one time period within a span of no greater than 50 years.

**Important!** *Only in rare cases, due to the lack of information concerning the material culture of certain periods and regions, stylized armor elements are allowed. In this situation, a fighter can replace these items with the authentic elements relating to the neighboring regions and periods, but only if everything looks aesthetically and proportionally accurate. Concepts that require further interpretation and explanation:*

- *Authentic means material or object that corresponds to a certain historical original, found during the research. The use of authentic materials and items, coming from the original, is approved by the community of historical reenactors of the Middle Ages.*
- *A “stylized item” refers to an object that has no specific historical analogues, but is*

*made in compliance with the general style of armor and its proportional, aesthetic and operational characteristics.*

- *Historically proven originals are confirmed through text and visual material (pictures, sculptures, and other documented archaeological sources or the combination of more than one of these), on the basis of which a belonging of a particular object to the group of authentic ones is determined. A historically proven original is needed in case a reenactor intends to use anything considerably different or about which little is known in the community of HRMA. Only a historically authentic original can help to determine whether an object is valid for a decision to be made about the possibility of its use in the HRMA circles.*

- 2.6.1. The fighter’s head must be protected with a metal helmet, the safety features and specifications of which comply with the same parameters of a helmet made of steel ST3, 2mm thick.
- 2.6.2. The fighter’s helmet has to be equipped either with a well-quilted padded cap, or leather suspension, a “parachute” with a quilted padded cap. The thickness of these elements should be not less than 3 mm for quilted and 5 for padded in a condensed form.
- 2.6.3. The fighter’s helmet must have a chin strap, which ensures its stability, eliminating any possibility that it may fall off or come loose during combat.
- 2.6.4. The fighter’s body, legs and arms are to be covered with at least plate armor. Chainmails can be only used as extra protection in addition to plate armor or as the linking elements of plate armor.
- 2.6.5. In addition to body armor, the fighter’s body is to be protected with underarmor padding, which covers the whole torso. The minimum allowed protection is woolen (cloth) and linen material sewn together.

- 2.6.6.** The neck and base of the skull are to be protected with steel plate-armor element, supplemented with damping quilted or padded protection, such as a pelerine of the padded cap, a special collar or a filling. A riveted chain-mail element, with the plate protection and a protective damping layer located under it, is allowed.
- 2.6.7.** The spine and tailbone should have metal plate protection with quilted or padded protection. The thickness of these elements should be not less than 3mm for quilted and 5mm for padded in reinforced form.
- 2.6.8.** The fighter's hands are to be protected with gloves or gauntlets made of steel plates or riveted chainmail. If hand protection is made solely of riveted chainmail, a damping layer no less than 5mm thick in a condensed (reinforced) form must be under it.
- 2.6.9.** The hands and forearms of a fighter using a shield with elbow grip can be protected with steel armor elements. Should a fighter lose his shield, he'll be able to continue the fight. They can be protected minimally (only with underarmor padding and cloth gauntlets), but from all sides, which may be under attack. The minimum level of underarmor protection includes layers of wool and linen cloth sewn together.
- 2.6.10.** The fighter's elbows and knees must have steel plate protection. If the plate protection doesn't fit the fighter's armor, it should be hidden under the authentic element of the set. The minimum level of underarmor protection includes quilted or padded protective layer no less than 10mm thick in a condensed form.
- 2.6.11.** The fighter's shins and hips are recommended to be protected with metal armor elements at each side. The minimum level of underarmor protection includes layers of woolen and linen cloth sewn together.
- 2.6.12.** The fighter's groin has be protected with armor elements or hidden protection (an athletic support for contact sports will be sufficient).
- 2.6.13.** The protective complex has to provide a complete and reliable protection to the head, neck, spine and joints in any body position.



**2.6.14.** If a fighter represents a time period, when certain parts of the body weren't covered with protective elements, these areas are to be safely covered with hidden protective elements (Eurasia region of the XIII-XVII centuries), which aren't registered visually.

**2.6.15.** If the level of safety of the authentic protective arms does not meet requirements of these regulations,

a fighter should use extra protection made of other kind of materials (worn only under authentic armor and underarmor).

**Important!** *Modern protection, having its own fastening system, can be used only as a tertiary level of protection.*

**2.6.16.** The fighter must ensure his armor meets protective characteristic standards and check the accuracy and safety of any protective parts before a battle.

**2.6.17.** The fighter is responsible for the offensive and protective arms he uses in battle, the monitoring of

their authenticity, aesthetics, and compliance with the requirements stated in this regulatory document.

**Important!** *Fighters can only use weapons that are authorized by the Authenticity Committee in battles.*



## AUTHORIZED TECHNIQUES

A battle conducted in the lists is regulated by the list of the authorized HMB techniques, which include:

- 3.1. Any strikes, pushing, press with arms, hands, legs, shield (flat part or rim), head, shoulder, body on the opponent's accepted zone.

### Important!

- The accepted zone excludes the feet, back of the knees, groin, back of the neck, skull base and open face.
- Any actions (strikes, pressure, etc.) with a leg aimed at the knee joint (on either side) are prohibited.
- The fighter can strike with a free hand, but only if he has control of a weapon in his other hand.

- 3.2. Strikes to opponents until they fall to the ground.

- 3.3. ~~Holds of non-combat parts of the weapons or shields of the opponents with free hand.~~



Holds of non-combat parts of the weapons (his or opponent's) or shields of the opponents with free hand.

- 3.4. Attack on the opponent who has lost his weapon (see 1.5.5 c).

- 3.5. Wrestling techniques, throws, back heels, etc.

**Important!** Painful grips, suffocating techniques, arch throws, fighting in the stalls are prohibited.

- 3.6. ~~Holds of the body of the opponent with weapons from the front and from the sides. The holds with direct pressure on the neck are prohibited.~~



Holds of the body of the opponent with weapons from the front and from the sides. The holds with direct pressure on the neck (when the weapon is under the helm) are prohibited. Holds of the body of the opponent with weapon from the back is allowed only with his hand in between.

- 3.7. Blows delivered by ridge or body of a shield at kill zones.



## PROHIBITED TECHNIQUES

Any prohibited strikes or actions against the opponent are serious breaches of rules which lead to sanctions, from rebuke to disqualification. Regardless of whether breaches are made accidentally or on purpose, sanctions are to be imposed.

**Each fighter must agree not to adopt the use of the prohibited techniques, among which are:**

- 4.1. Any actions which are not listed in section 3. Only the actions stated in these rules are allowed.
- 4.2. Any thrusts with weapons.
- 4.3. Any blows delivered with arms, hands, legs, shield (flat part or rim), head, shoulder, torso in prohibited area. The prohibited area includes the feet, back of the knee, groin, back of the neck and skull base and open face.
- 4.4. Twisting against natural direction of a limb flexing and any painful holds.
- 4.5. Pressure or holding the edges of a helmet with a hand, as well neck twisting caused by these actions.
- 4.6. Deliberate attempts to remove any elements of the opponent's armor (except shield).
- 4.7. Punches with weapons' hilts or fists, aimed at the face of the opponent (if the gap between the hilt and fist in combat mitten or glove is more than 3cm).
- 4.8. Any holds, hold-downs, suffocating with hands or weapons around the neck.
- 4.9. Any strikes on a lying, or kneeling (including positioned on one knee) fighter.
- 4.10. Deliberate injury to the opponent after he loses a part of his equipment.

**4.11.** Any thoughtless or uncontrolled actions with a weapon, as judged by Marshals or Knight Marshal.

**4.12.** Any attacking actions towards the fighter who has raised one hand with an open palm.

**Important!** *A raised hand with an open palm is a sign of voluntary submission from the battle. Having raised his hand with the open palm and/or kneeling on one knee (if there is such opportunity) the fighter automatically takes the position "out of battle".*

**4.13.** Inactive clinch that lasts more than 10 seconds. In this case a field marshal can pull the fighters, who are in the clinch, apart, giving a command "Break!"

**Important!** *The local commands "Break!" and "Fight" are only for fighters in clinch. After the command "Fight" a fighter can continue the battle against his opponent or attack another opponent.*

and hanging a yellow marshal flag attached to a baton, between the opponents' helmets. The fighters have to stop fighting in a clinch immediately and step aside 2 steps from each other. An additional command "Fight", given by the marshal who has stopped the clinch, serves as an additional signal that the battle is still in progress, both in general, and for the fighters who were in clinch in particular.

**4.14.** Grasping a single-handled pole arm when the metal part of the pole arm is less than 30 cm from the index finger.

**4.15.** Any strikes to the opponent's face, if one of the opponents uses an open-face helmet. It does not matter whether the second opponent uses a closed or open-face helmet, the strokes are mutually exclusive.

**Important!** *If a fighter, preserving a normal position of the head and neck, can be punched in the face with a clenched fist without hand protection, his helmet is considered to be the "open-face helmet".*

**4.16.** Fighters who are "out of battle" (due to their falling down or referee's decision), but are in the lists, are strictly prohibited from standing up on both legs before the command of the knight marshal "Stop the battle!" If a fighter is out of the battle because of falling, losing equipment or because of marshal's decision, he is to take a comfortable sitting or lying position in the lists and wait for the end of the round, without interfering in the battle. With his comfortable position the fighter shows that he is not injured.



## MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF BATTLES

Management and control of battles is done by using the following penalties, depending on the situation in the lists, fighters' actions and referees' decisions.

- 5.1. Rebuke is a sanction applied to the fighter for less serious rule violations, which aim is to draw the fighter's attention to his actions. It is not to be put on record.
- 5.2. Warning, or the Yellow card is given to the fighter for rule violation and it is to be stated on the records. The Yellow card affects the rating of the fighter and his team. The Yellow card can be given only by the knight marshal of the tournament.
- 5.3. Disqualification or the Red card is the sanction applied to a fighter for serious or recurrent (the second yellow card) rule violation, which is to be stated in the report. After the fighter gets the Red card he is removed from further participation in the competition, and is replaced by a substitute fighter of the team. A fighter can only be disqualified by the knight marshal of the tournament.

The application of each of the above stated sanctions is regulated by the rules for every specific category.

These Rules have been developed by **HMBIA®** Marshals Committee.

This document has been reviewed and proofread by Gavin Stewart, member of **HMBIA®** Development Committee.