



An important element of historical re-enactment festivals and events is presenting historical fighting traditions. One of the segments of this so-called re-enactment activity is of particular interest to both onlookers and participants, namely infantry armed combat.

If we seek ways to advance this field, there is already two decades worth of experience in Hungary alone. Lucky for us, the whole picture is becoming clearer while showcasing different viewpoints and approaches. In the genre of historical/archaeological education the three are simultaneously valid: the intention of the accuracy of the presentation, the attitude of experimental archaeology and a wish for an ability to measure combat prowess.

This rulebook is an experiment for the latter movement to describe itself.

The ability to measure combat prowess and to compare said prowess of different people is defined inherently by its nature as a sport. The whole scene would benefit from mixing the usage of historical clothing and tools with making armed combat into a sport harmoniously and in a learned, well-thought way. This would open up the way for making one of the popular segments of historical education more understandable and easier to handle. (Good examples for this are HEMA and Buhurt/BOTN.)

A common ground is by all means necessary. A widely accepted competition structure and rule system help to make the combat competitions in a IX.-XI. century environment calculable, dependable and gives them a unified value – formerly these have been rather malleable and had only haphazard contours defining them.

This overview is meant to provide an easy to use framework in the hopes of it being widely accepted and thus advancing the infantry combat re-enactment of said era.

The Definition of the Activity

TAP is a full contact martial arts sport which utilises the weapons, tools, equipment and clothing elements of different historical periods. The aim is to hit one of the contact surfaces of the opponent with a weapon. Once a hit is made on a valid target contact surface, the fighting stops and referees make their judgement regarding the point. Upon the signal of the lead referee the fighting continues.

The Name of the Sport

TAP Fight (Történelmi Alapú Párviadalok, Historically Based Duels)

Requirements for Participation

- 18 years of age or more
- adequate weaponry, clothing and accessories
- a signed responsibility statement
- a knowledge of the rules and adherence to them
- a sober state (Zero tolerance! No alcohol or other drugs allowed.)

Fight Rules

One on One (Duel)

The arena has to be well planned out on a suitable terrain, with a pen, cordon or bars in order to safely set it apart from onlookers. It is always the role of the event organiser to plot out a suitable arena and ensure the safety of the onlookers.

Competitors can pick their weapons for the fights (from the array of recognised weapons in the sport). Which means shields, swords, sabres, scramax knives, spears, one-handed or two-handed axes, halberds and longswords are allowed in the following combinations: one sword, one sabre, two swords, two sabres, one sword+one sabre, one sword+one shield, one sabre+one shield, one sword+one one-handed axe, one sabre+one one-handed axe, one scramax, two scramax knives, one scramax+one sword, one scramax+one sabre, one scramax+one shield, one

scramax+one one-handed axe, one one-handed axe, one one-handed axe+one shield, two one-handed axes, one spear, one two-handed axe, one halberd, one longsword.

The fights starts with a signal from the lead referee.

Combatants immediately stop if a valid hit is landed (or whenever the lead referee tells them to). It is highly necessary for all participants to observe fair play, and signal hits they receive quickly and honestly!

Fighting can resume on the signal of the lead referee.

The first to have five points becomes the winner. If the opponents both hit each other with less than a second difference, it is called a dual hit and both warriors get a point.

Fights are led by two scorer referees and one lead referee.

The scorers are observing hits.

Warriors are given either a red or a blue ribbon, which they place on themselves visibly. If a scorer observes a hit, he raises a flag in the colour of the warrior who made the successful hit, and also yells "hit". The lead referee stops the fight.

The lead referee can decide to award the warrior the point or deny the point from him. To make the decision, the lead referee might ask for help from the warriors or the scorers.

Upon the signal of the lead referee, the fight can continue.

The decisions of the lead referee are above dispute during the fight. No disputes between the opponents are allowed. Warriors can only signal hits received by them and not hits delivered by them.

Until the lead referee stops the fight, it goes on. Solving problems is the task of the referees and not of the contestants.

Two vs. Two Fights ("Shield Brothers")

The arena is plotted out in the way specified in the chapter Duels.

Two two-manned teams fight each other.

One warrior in each team has to use a spear, a two-handed axe, a halberd or a longsword. The other can only use a shield and one of the one-handed weapons.

The warrior who is hit on a valid target surface, is out of the given round of the fight and has to kneel or lay down.

Dual hits mean both warriors are out.

The team with the last surviving warrior gets the point.

The fight is won by the team which first reaches three points.

The fight is led by two scorers and a lead referee.

Scorers also have wooden staves. If a scorer observes a valid hit which the recipient warrior does not react upon, the scorer signals this by hitting his helmet with a staff.

The lead referee leads the fight according to the way described in the chapter *Duels*.

Five vs. Five Battle (Fight of Flags or Bridge Fight)

The arena is plotted out in the way specified in the chapter *Duels*.

Two five-man teams fight each other.

Members of the teams can choose two-handed weapons at their leisure.

The warrior who is hit on a valid target surface, is out of the given round of the fight and has to kneel or lay down.

Dual hits mean both warriors are out.

The team with the last surviving warrior gets the point.

The fight is won by the team which first reaches three points.

The fight is led by two scorers and a lead referee. Scorers also have wooden staves. If a scorer observes a valid hit which the recipient warrior does not react upon, the scorer signals this by hitting his helmet with a staff. The lead referee leads the fight according to the way described in the chapter *Duels*.

Weapons and Their Target Surface Zones

Weapons used in TAP Fight are:

- one-handed sword
- longsword
- sabre
- scramax
- one-handed axe

- two-handed axe/halberd
- shield
- spear

Stabbing is absolutely forbidden with all weapons, except for the spear.

Safety and historical accuracy are both main priorities in choosing tools and clothing elements (faithfulness to archaeological finds is desirable, if possible).

Hit zones:

Sword/Sabre/Scramax

- thighs (meaning legs excluding knees and parts under the knees)
- upper arms (arms excluding elbows, forearms and hands)
- the torso
- only helmet hits are allowed on the head (temples, scruff of the neck, neck and face are NOT allowed)

One-handed and Two-handed Axes, Longswords, Halberds

- thighs (meaning legs excluding knees and parts under the knees)
- upper arms (arms excluding elbows, forearms and hands)
- the torso
- only helmet hits are allowed on the head (temples, scruff of the neck, neck and face are NOT allowed)

Spear

- thighs (meaning legs excluding knees and parts under the knees)
- upper arms (arms excluding elbows, forearms and hands)
- the torso

Shield

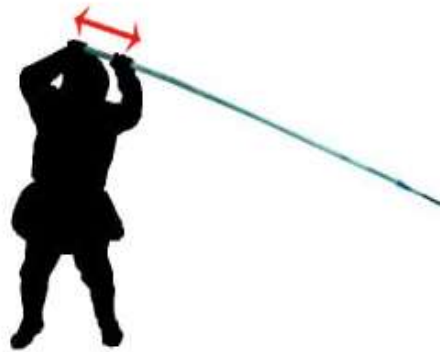
Shields may only be used to shove and push, hitting an opponent is forbidden!

Thrusting, stabbing with swords, sabres, scramax knives, axes or halberds is forbidden. Only hits of sufficient force, hitting the target surface with the edge of the weapon are valid (hits with the handle of an axe or the shaft of a spear or the shield boss are invalid).

In the case of spears, only thrusting hits are valid. It is essential to keep safety in mind while handling the spear, which is: spears can only be used with both hands. There must be at least 40 cm space between the two hands holding the spear. The back hand may not get under the level of the spearhead (thus the vector of the spear attack is directed always downwards).

Some examples for right and wrong spear usage:





Hitting with a two-handed axe or a halberd must be conducted with both hands on the handle. It is essential to keep safety in mind while handling a two-handed axe, which is: there must be at least 40 cm space between the hands holding the axe, and an attack may only be launched from an angle of maximum 90° degrees in relation to the ground. Only hits delivered with the edge of the weapon are valid.

Some examples showing the right and wrong handling of two-handed axes:





Weapon Design

Weight limitations:

	min	max
sword/sabre	900 g	1450 g
scramax	-	1300 g
one-handed axe	-	800 g
two-handed axe	1600 g	2500 g
halberd	1600 g	2500 g
spear	-	-
longsword	1400 g	2300 g

The aim of setting a minimum weight limits for weapons is to make the observation of strikes and striking angles easier. It is necessary for fair scoring work.

The aim of setting maximum weight limits for weapons is to lower the risk of injury and achieve safer and more controllable weapon handling.

Form Design

Sword/Sabre

Point radius: a radius of 10 mm (app. a 1 Euro coin)

Edge thickness: at least 2 mm (rounded, undamaged edge profile)

Longsword

Point radius: a radius of 10 mm (app. a 1 Euro coin)

Edge thickness: at least 2 mm (rounded, undamaged edge profile)

Total length: 100 cm-140 cm

Blade length: 80-100 cm

Hilt length: 20-40 cm

Scramax

Maximum total length: 60 cm

Point radius: a radius of 10 mm (app. a 1 Euro coin)

Edge thickness: at least 2 mm (rounded, undamaged edge profile)

One-handed axe

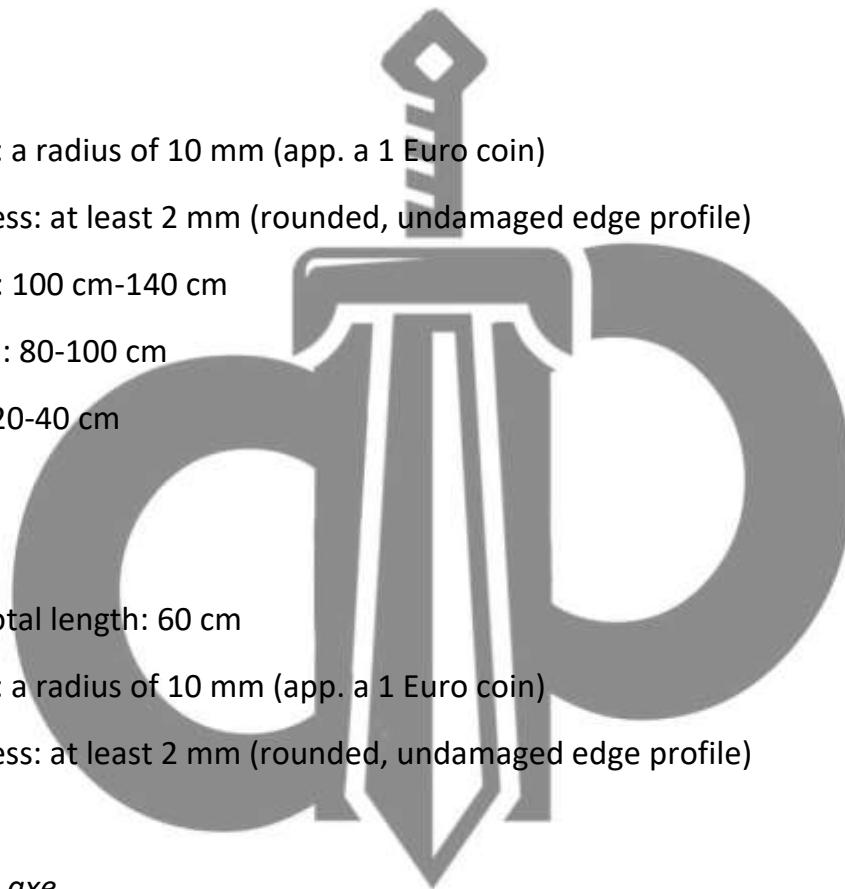
Maximum total length: 60 cm

Point radius: a radius of 10 mm (app. a 1 Euro coin)

Minimum edge length: 10 cm (This value sadly excludes many historically accurate reconstructions, but is indeed necessary in order to avoid injuries.)

Two-handed axe

Maximum length: 180 cm total



Point radius: a full semicircle with a radius of 25 mm

Edge thickness: at least 2 mm (rounded, undamaged edge profile)

Minimum edge length: 13 cm

Halberd

Maximum length: 180 cm total

Point radius: a full semicircle with a radius of 25 mm

Edge thickness: at least 2 mm (rounded, undamaged edge profile)

Minimum edge length: 13 cm

Spear

Maximum length: 250 cm

The point must be a coin (with a rounded, undamaged edge profile) with a diameter of at least 4 cm.

Shield

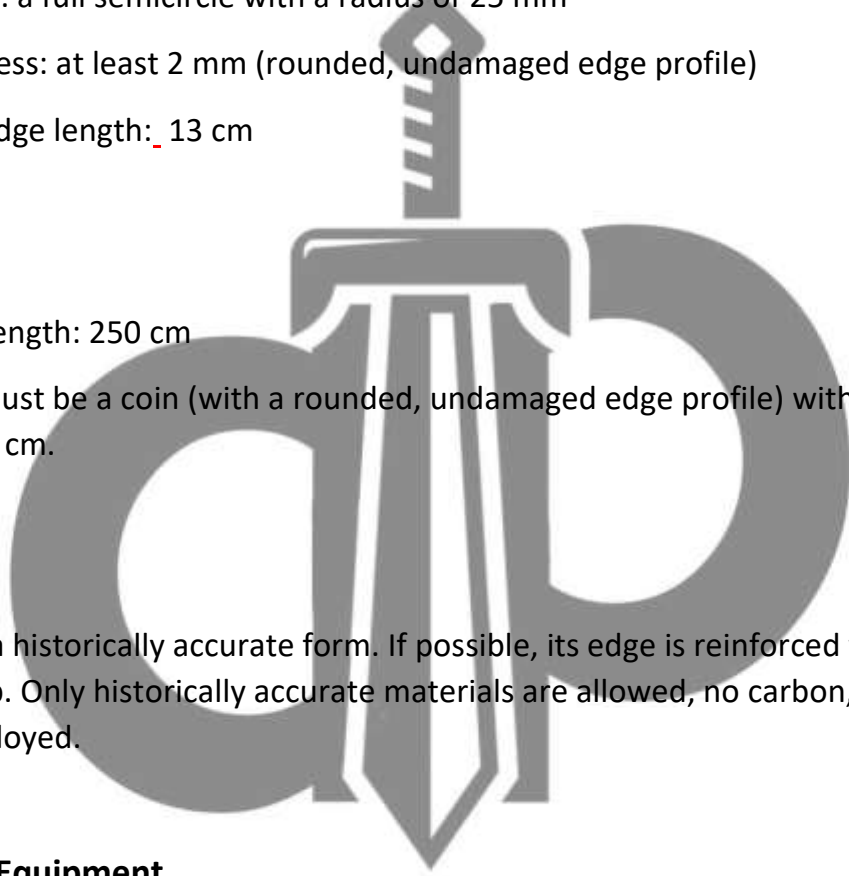
Must have a historically accurate form. If possible, its edge is reinforced with a leather strip. Only historically accurate materials are allowed, no carbon, plexi etc. can be employed.

Defensive Equipment

In TAP Fight as a sport, elements of equipment and clothing are not meant to have an educational role – our aim is to reach and keep up the quality of the overall picture we are already used to. This is compulsory for all participants. Clothing elements from different ages may not be mixed (on a single wearer). In group fights, all fighters have to belong to the same historical age!

Armour can be supplemented or even replaced by protective wear under the clothing.

Proper defence of the hand and fingers is strongly advised. It is preferable to find a solution that does not worsen the historical accuracy of the overall picture. Obviously



modern appearance is forbidden (like colourful hockey gloves, defensive gloves with inscriptions, tactical or biker gloves without concealment, etc).

A historically accurate metal helmet is **obligatory**.

Clothing, Shoes

Warriors of TAP Fight must strive to use shoes, clothing and accessories which are deemed historically accurate by science. It is definitely preferable for everyone to use clothing elements and weapons in a set that keeps in mind the character of the re-enacted warrior (and his nationality, his social standing, etc.).

(Clothing and accessories make up for a topic that is currently still in development in connection with the educative re-enactment of history and is constantly debated professionally. The available sources, contemporary imagery, the newer and newer archaeological finds and scientific extrapolations are all elements of a research field that seldom can posit a final, unchanging thesis. This makes up for a difficulty in defining clothing requirements, or even makes it impossible. The fact that clothing of any given era was not at all uniform, makes the question even more complex. Yet, the tendency and the aim can and must be set: the historical and scientific accuracy of presentation. In practice however a high level of expert knowledge and a healthy sense of judgement is needed to differentiate between totally unscientific, misleadingly anachronistic solutions from those that can be accepted, even if with problems. The first must be excluded, and the second tolerated.)

Warriors with clothing, accessory and weapons seriously deviating from the templates accepted as accurate can be excluded from the competition by the event organiser.

Problems and Solutions

- Making the enemy fall counts as a hit and thus a point. What counts as falling: not just self-explanatory falling, but also if at least one of the knees and one of the hands (or shield, or sword) simultaneously touch the ground.
- Hits with the shafts and handles of spears or axes are not forbidden, but do not count as hits. Such hits may only hit the opponent on the target surfaces of swords.

- Dropping your weapon counts as a hit against you. In a duel the opponent can renounce the point given to him for such a reason.
- Broken weapons do not count as hits. If the contestant can quickly replace the broken weapon, he may continue to fight.
- Falling or stepping out of the arena: counts as a hit. In a duel the opponent can renounce the point given to him for such a reason.
- Injuries: If an injury is caused by a hit striking a valid target zone, the point is given. If after a quick first aid the contestant is able to continue, then the lead referee may signal the fight to continue. (To avoid such situations, wearing protective gear underneath the clothing is practical.) If an injury is made by landing a hit on the body outside of valid target surfaces, then the warrior injuring the other is warned. This warning is valid during the whole event. The second warning excludes the warrior from participating in fights during the whole event. If the warrior who sustained an injury outside of valid target surfaces cannot continue fighting, then the one causing the injury is also excluded from fights on that event.
- Hits with differences in tempo: The second hit is only denied if it was started after the first hit landed, in all other situations it is valid too. The second hit is invalid even in team fights. Fighters who fail to notice this may be returned into combat by referees without the fight being stopped.
- A fallen fighter disrupts the fight: Fallen warriors kneel or lay down, thus becoming obstacles for the remaining contestants. This is absolutely all right, but if they hold down the weapons of active players, or try to make them fall deliberately, or deliberately defend their team mates from a strike, then the fight is stopped by the lead referee. In such a case the round is automatically won by the opposing team, and the team of the warrior at fault gets a warning. The second warning means the given team has lost.
- A warrior is hit by the handle or shaft of an axe or a spear but the warrior does not realise this: Such a hit is not valid, referees may return the fighter into the fray without stopping the fight.
- A warrior commits a charge and makes one or more opponents fall: If he is not hit during the action, then it is valid, and those who fell on the ground are considered hit (in a duel this grants him a point). But if he is hit before the end of the action, he only finished the movement in vain: the lead referee stops the fight, and the fighter (or his team) who hits the charger is awarded a point. The team at fault is warned. The second warning means the given team has lost.
- A warrior strikes a hit after being hit himself: His hit is invalid. In team fights referees will return the other warrior into the fray.

- The lead referee has a right to stop fights whenever he sees fit. He can also reset and restart the round if solving the problem proves impossible.

Origins of the Rule System

- This rule book came into being by considering and putting together the rules that the majority of the currently active Hungarian teams employ.

The Future of TAP Fight as a Sport

- TAP Fight in its current form is not a final and unchanging system, active teams can participate in its further development too.
- The teams who wish to participate in developing the sport, can and should seek us out at: tapfighthungary@gmail.com.

