

## NOTE:

**The first indent (in boldface) is the text of the concord proper, its principles, if you will.**

**The second indent is the commentaries and explanations. The gloss, if you will.**

**The third indent (plus underline) is for hard specifics not embodied in higher level categories. I recommended these be a codacil rather than the formal DC to allow easier updates, since it includes things like allowed commercial weapons.**

**Changes and new text are in red.  
All CAP notes are questions that need answering.**

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## THE DEKOVEN CONCORD

A Governing Covenant for Conducting Chivalric Deeds of Arms

### GOAL

In keeping with the chivalric nature of the medieval deeds of arms that inspire us, we resolve to display the reconstructed arts that we study to the best of our ability in an **historically** evocative environment echoing that used by the original practitioners, while using appropriate equipment within a sportive context under the governance of the host and giving conscious attention to the chivalric virtues.

#### **Regarding Displaying** the Reconstructed Arts

We expect that

combatants will have experience in executing the art which they study.

Combatants should have training in one or more medievally-based fighting arts, preferably with a focus on historical armored combat as depicted in existing fechtbücher and treatises.

combatants will have experience in wearing and fighting in armor.

Combatants should not be fighting in harness for the first time at a deed, except if they are entered into a “squire’s list.”

**combatants will strive to stay within the parameters of the art which they study.**

Those who do not should not expect to be singled out as worthy.

**combatants will give and receive [delete “fair and” to reserve “fair” for “fair blows” as in those that get counted] proper strikes.**

To be deemed “proper,” a strike should be seen to be properly supported by body structure and using the blow mechanics needed for that weapon to work against the protection on the target. See Weapons Efficacy.

Insufficiently delivered (weak and/or poorly structured) blows will not be counted as “fair blows.”

**combatants will understand that a deed of arms is an opportunity to display skill and honor, not a venue to display brute power or ruthlessness.**

Excessive power in blows is brutality.

Powerful strikes to “immune” targets will be considered unnecessary force, and thus, brutality.

Striking an unresisting opponent after they have fallen to the ground or have backed away to acknowledge a blow is improper and likely to be deemed ruthless.

Those who display brutality or ruthlessness should expect to be warned and possibly ejected from the deed.

**all combatants recognize and acknowledge, regardless of their armoring choices and prior training, that armored combat is a rough game that can result in injury. The choice to participate means that risk of injury has been voluntarily assumed.**

## **Regarding Evoking an Historical Environment**

**We expect that**

**the deed will take place in a formal manner within a discrete field.**

A boundary enclosure of rope supported by uprights is a minimum. A medievally styled barrier fence is preferred.

### **DO WE WANT TO SPECIFY A SIZE?**

An outer boundary creating a “safe zone” between any audience and the list boundary proper is preferred.

### **DO WE WANT TO SPECIFY A SAFETY ZONE MEASUREMENT?**

We expect the default format to be one in which the combatants are divided into two teams: the “tenans” who hold the field and the “venans” who

come to challenge the tenants. Typically this division will be driven by the host/presider with a picked team to stand as tenants.

Combatants are encouraged to have a certain minimum of personal kit to convey their supposed station:

A non-modern, preferably historical reproduction style seat for themselves to occupy between bouts and from which they may view the bouts while staying of the way of those working to keep the deed moving efficiently.

An identifying flag or banner to display. It is preferred that each combatant also have the necessary means for that flag or banner to stand upright. So-called "portable holes," while not medieval, are unobtrusive and easily to emplace and thus are acceptable for supporting flags and banners.

A non-modern, preferably historical reproduction style drinking vessel for receiving water.

**the deed will take place with suitable display of heraldry/affiliation.**

The host is encouraged to have one or more identifying flags or banners to display.

A table for display of helms is recommended.

An arms rack, while not medieval, is extremely useful for the efficient and tidy running of a deed and is recommended.

**the deed will take place surrounded with a modicum of pageantry.**

The fighting portion of the deed should have a formal opening and closure.

The combatants in each bout should be introduced before they fight.

Their weapons in use and any restrictions or modifications to the default rules should be announced.

At the end of the bout, the victor should be announced.

**the deed will be controlled and monitored by a chief marshal and such assistants as needed/desired under the direction of the host and/or presider.**

The Chief Marshal's Role

The chief marshal shall serve as referee, starting and ending bouts and counting well struck blows, calling each out as a fair blow.

The chief marshal should check to confirm that all combatants are wearing appropriate armor and using appropriate weapons.

As necessary, assistant marshals shall aid the chief marshal in his duties, including the judgement of well struck blows given where the chief marshal does not have a good line of sight.

If sufficient personal are available, one assistant should be assigned to each combatant to watch for blows against that combatant.

All marshals shall act to insure the safety of spectators, assistants, and combatants.

A marshal shall have a staff or pole arm for use in guiding and separating fighters and, if necessary, intercepting stray blows.

The chief marshal, working with the presider, shall endeavor to arrange the schedule so that the combatants will have sufficient time to arm in order that all of them may be present, in harness, for the opening of the deed.

**the deed will shall include such assistants as to ensure the safety of combatants and spectators.**

It is recommended that there be tabards for heralds and tabards or tunics for assistants if they lack other suitable clothing of a medieval style.

It is recommended that each combatant have a “squire” to help with arming, disarming, handling water and refreshments, supplying required weapons and such other duties as necessary to keep the deed efficiently moving.

It is recommended that the presider choose one from among the squires to be “captain” of the squires to coordinate their efforts.

**the deed will be performed as paired matches (called a “bout”) fought to a conclusion. See the conclusion possibilities.**

**the weapons in used in a bout to be mutually agreed upon by the combatants, subject to the chief marshal’s approval.**

## **Regarding Appropriate Equipment**

**We expect that**

**weapons will be styled after historical models.**

Safety trumps authenticity.

Within the bounds of safety all weapon should resemble historical weapons in materials and appearance.

Sword and dagger blades should be steel. NEED DEFINITION OF SUITABLE FLEX?

Spear points should be steel.

Poleax heads should not be steel, but a flexible material. NEED DEFINITION OF SUITABLE FLEX?

Butt spikes on spears and poleaxes should be rubber blunts.

Dagger, sword and spear points should be either ball tipped, "nail" tipped, or covered with a blunting cap. The minimum size for a weapon tip or blunt is 3/8" by 5/8".

Spear and poleaxes should have hardwood shafts.

DO WE WISH TO RECOMMEND COMMERCIAL WEAPONS OR PRESENT ANY AS AN EXAMPLE OF SUITABLE WEAPONS?

APPROVED" WEAPON POSSIBILITIES

DAGGERS

Darkwood's most recent armored combat daggers

SWORDS

Albion Liechtenauer

Darkwood armored combat swords

AXES

Purpleheart/Revival.us poleaxes

SPEARS

Darkwood armored combat spearheads

**the weapons in use may vary from the recommended forms and materials at the discretion of the host/presider and any such deviations should be announced to prospective combatants before the deed.**

Historically some deeds restricted the weapons in use. A host/presider wishing to emulate such a deed should be able to do so.

**use of particular weapons, whether variant or not, in combination with particular armors is at the discretion of the chief marshal.**

This is intended to prevent someone from using a weapon that may be unsafe against lighter armors.

**combatants will wear a complete suite of armor suitable to a person of rank.**

As we envision these events as a deed of arms such as would be fought by gentlemen (and, modernly, gentlewomen) in a time when showing ones wealth was important, this means combatants should wear full armor covering all points of the body. We do not see these events as a “war situation,” where a fighter might make different kit decisions because war is not single combat nor are they brawls between foot soldiers where any mishmash of armor might show up.

**combatants will have armor of historical styling that belongs together chronologically.**

Armor with a historical basis in survivals or art is preferred by far. However, this does not allow armors that would overly compromise participant safety. In such cases, additions or modern reinforcements may be required.

**combatants will have armor that fits well and is well maintained.**

Armor should fit its wearer so as to function properly and safely.

Rusty steel is not well-maintained and does not fit the ideal of suitable display.

**the regulations for a particular deed’s armor will be announced in advance.**

**Following historical patterns, armor may be treated as “armor as worn” in which case fair blows shall be counted according to the Weapon Efficacy guidelines laid out herein. If the alternative of using “armor as safety equipment,” all blows with all weapons shall be deemed fair blows.**

Using “armor as worn” means different weapons will have different abilities to deal “fair blows” against various armor types. This requires more experience on the part of marshals.

Using the “safety equipment” form results essentially in an unarmored fight conducted while wearing armor. We feel this not not represent armored combat and should be chosen only for specific purposes.

## **Regarding Armor**

**We expect that**

**the preferred armor under these conventions will be that worn by persons of rank during the height of chivalric deeds in armor while armored combat was also a viable option on the battlefield, a period when plate harness predominated. In other words,**

from the latter part of the fourteenth century when near complete harnesses of plate were common to the end of the fifteenth century when armored fighting began to be less relevant to the battlefield.

a combatant's principal protection will be of steel plate and cover the greater portions of his/her head, torso, and limbs.

This is an attempt to define suitable armor for a "person of rank."

**Requirements:**

**Helmets should have minimal skull of 16 gauge skull and sides.**

**Other plate should be a minimum of 18 gauge unhardened steel.**

**steel gauntlets will be worn that protect the hand, fingers and wrist with a minimum of 18 gauge unhardened steel.**

**solid neck protection for cervical area, clavicles, and larynx protection will be worn, regardless of its historical suitability for the armor style chosen. This will preferably be of period form such as a plate gorget or beavor.**

Neck protection may be of impact resistant modern materials if such are concealed.

A mail pisane (standard) with a concealed trauma plate for the throat is acceptable.

An mail aventail alone is insufficient to protect the front of the throat.

Cloth or padded aventails without reinforcement are not suitable.

**helmets will be worn and will have full face protection.**

Any opening in the visor must not allow a 1/4" x 1/2" bar to enter unimpeded in such a way that the wearers face can be touched. Any other gaps in the helmet must not allow unimpeded access to the wearer by a 1/2" square bar. Wider eyespots and other openings must be protected by perforated steel such as fencing mask mesh as a safety measure.

Pierced steel plate used as face protection, if of a historically appropriate style and size, will count as plate. Other pierced face protection shall count as Light Armor.

The use of "open-faced" helmets is allowed with the addition perforated plates (such as fencing mask mesh) to cover any open areas of a helmet. Such perforated plate is considered as "Unprotected as far as armor goes.

**a mail shirt, mail will be made with riveted rings, that covers the armpit and any such areas of the torso not covered by plate, will be worn. Sleeves must be secured at the**

**“cuff” to prevent accidental entry of a thrust, and the shirt must be belted or otherwise secured at the waist.**

Suitable separate items such as voiders and separate skirts that work with the plate armor worn are acceptable.

Besides being part of the program of defining a “person of ranks” suitable armor, this provision is intended to provide a safety margin for the vulnerable and often targeted armpits.

A combatant’s mail may, with permission of the host/presider, be welded or, in extremis, butted.

**safety trumps authenticity. Combatants are expected to wear modern elements of protection to provide a safety margin where historical kit does not.**

**Modern Requirements include:**

**Groin protection (an athletic cup or “box”) for men.**

**Solid chest protection for women. A modern plastic fencing plastron worn under the arming coat or gambeson is acceptable.**

**a combatant’s armor will be styled to a single, historical period drawing on references no more than 10 years to either side of the chosen date.**

**there will sometimes be chronological mis-matches between combatants in a bout.**

Although, this can lead to differences in target coverage and protection, this expectation is a practical acknowledgement that not all combatants are interested in wearing armor from the same time period. If an opponent’s armor offers less in the way of targets than your own, suck it up and use your skill to get around that armor.

**a combatant’s armor should suit a year between 1370 and 1490.**

**that “armor, as worn,” whatever armor a combatant actually wears, is to be judged to fall into one of three generalized categories: Unprotected, Light Armor, and Heavy Armor. The category defines how weapons can strike fair blows. See Weapon Efficacy.**

Unprotected: This is anything (including required modern equipment that protects gaps in a combatant’s armor) that does not fall into the other armor categories, such as soft leather and lightly padded and unpadded cloth. It specifically includes perforated plate (such as fencing mask mesh). Any blow struck against Unprotected target is a fair blow.

Light Armor: This is mail (which, being the default exemplar, is often used as a shorthand term for the category), hardened leather, properly constructed padded garments and other armors. Unless otherwise specified, Light Armor is proof against cuts but vulnerable to thrusts.

Heavy Armor: This is steel or iron plate, whether hardened or not. Armor of small plates, properly overlapped can also count as Heavy. Unless otherwise specified, Heavy Armor is proof against all blows.

**since it is not possible to determine the actual effectiveness of real blows with real weapons against real armor with using real equipment in real circumstances, there can be great disagreement about the effects of weapons. Thus, we acknowledge that some presiders may choose to introduce “incapacitating blows” as a category of fair bows.**

Incapacitating blows only come into play if the deed is using the “One combatants is rendered incapable” bout conclusion where the default “incapacitating blow” is that any strike to an Unprotected target. However, a presider may wish to limit the effects of incapacity to certain anatomical targets where the damage done is more likely to be a fight ender. For example, a thrust to an Unprotected face is a likely fight ender.

**In order to be more inclusive of combatants, certain changes to the Concord’s provisions may be made at the discretion of the host and presider.**

Changing the armor allowed: We accept that the time frame for suitable harnesses may be extended to as early as 1350 (before which the dynamic of armored combat is very different) and as late as 1550 (extending the time range into a period when arranged deeds of arms were more sportive than combative). Likewise, the time frame may be restricted to a narrower span for a more historical overall presentation.

Changing combatant requirements: We accept that a host/provider may wish to offer a “squire’s list” for less experienced and/or less well-equipped participants wherein the armor requirements are relaxed or even mandated to be of a lesser level. Historically, squire's were expected to have lighter, less protective equipment, such as mail being the primary protection for the body. In such a case, hard protection for knees elbows is still recommended even if it is modern equipment (which should be concealed beneath period appropriate clothing.) Steel helmets and gauntlets are still be required.

Lighter Equipment: We expect that, at a minimum, combatants should wear all required armor items: helmet, gauntlets, athletic cup (males) and rigid chest protection (females). They should also wear: padded protection for the torso and arms and hardened leather for the knees and elbows. Hardened vambraces and a breastplate, coat-of-plates, brigadine or placket are strongly recommended. If such equipment is modern, it should be concealed. Even so, this is not the equipment of a person of rank and is suitable only to a “squire’s list.”

**combatants may elect to wear a less protective armor, such as shinbalds instead of closed greaves.**

combatants may choose to forego mail protection at the bend of the elbow or knee, and accept the risks, both real and within the sportive context, of such lesser protection.

combatants may elect to use modern materials may be used to stand in for period materials (i.e. a plastic breastplate). Such choices must be suitably hidden beneath period styled clothing. Persons using such equipment should understand that, by abandoning the burden of real armor, they are setting themselves at an advantage against those who accept the burden. This will likely affect any deliberations on the worthiness of the combatants's performance.

footwear with a minimal tread will be worn and will not have a blatantly obvious appearance form a spectator's viewing distance.

Non-historical footwear should be black and generally unobtrusive or hidden beneath sabatons or mail coverings.

Hiking shoes and similar items with pronounced tread are forbidden as they can "lock" a foot into the ground and cause serious injury if the leg is then subjected to force.

## Regarding Sportive Context

We expect that

combatants compete, and continue to compete, at the pleasure of the host, the presider and/or the chief marshal.

This means that the guys in charge can throw a person out of the deed. We expect they will do so when someone violates the letter or spirit of the concord or the rules.

combatants will accept the authority of the marshals & other presiding persons without complaint.

We expect that combatants will accept all calls by the marshals while on the field. We do not expect combatants to talk back to the marshals save to request the recall of a judgement against their opponent.

combatants will follow all rules formulated for a given deed of arms.

The Concord allows for hosts and presiders to make choices in how a deed will be performed. They may also restrict some choices. This environment means that the rules may be different from deed to deed. We expect participants to be informed of what is in play at the deed they are attending and act according to the rules for the day.

**combatants will strike blows with appropriate control of force.**

More force, or better structure, is needed against armored targets and less against unprotected targets.

Because different weapons have different performance characteristics, we expect that combatants will moderate their force to suit the application.

Because not all combatants are created equal, we expect that their application of force against opponents and in different circumstances may vary in appearance and effect.

Striking against targets, especially faces, protected by equipment classed as “non-armored” need not be made with the force used against an armored target. So, for example, a sliding thrust can score against an unprotected target while it would lack the structure to penetrate an armored target.

Striking against truly unprotected targets must be done with controlled application of force or be considered ruthless or brutal.

**judgement will be used on the part of the marshals in recognizing what is sufficient for a “fair blow.”**

One such standard is to see displacement of the target area. Another is to observe a visible bend in the weapon, either because the attacker is solidly structured or the target has advanced into or braced against the strike.

**no combatant will be compelled to fight with or against any weapon (or opponent) that he/she deems to pose an unacceptable risk.**

If the issue is a weapon, the combatant may simply expressing the wish to “not fight with that.” Reasons need not be given. The combatants should choose a different weapon.

If the opponent is the issue, the declining combatant may do so by simply expressing a wish to “not have this fight.” Reasons need not be given. Other pairings should be found for the combatants.

If a significant number of the combatants do not wish to fight with or against a particular weapon, the chief marshal should withdraw it from use.

If a significant number of the combatants do not wish to fight against a particular combatant, the chief marshal should consider requesting the combatant in question to withdraw for the day.

**any combatant may, without reproof, request a limitation of targets/blows struck due to lack of or inadequate armor or due to concern for a pre-existing physical condition.****the interaction of weapons and armor should follow the Weapon Efficacy conventions herein. If the host wishes to deviate from the Weapon Efficacy definitions, changes**

**must be explicitly detailed and said** changes shall be made known to all participants in advance of the day of the deed.

#### Weapon Efficacy

The conventions for fair blows against armor are:

**Daggers** strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armor, ineffective against Heavy Armor.

**Spears** strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armor, ineffective against Heavy Armor.

**Swords** strike fair blows with the point against Unprotected and Light Armor, ineffective against Heavy Armor.

**Swords** strike fair blows with the edge against Unprotected, ineffective against Light and Heavy Armor.

**Poleaxes** strike fair blows with the head and foot points against Unprotected and Light Armor, ineffective against Heavy Armor.

**Poleaxes** strike fair blows with the hammer/blade & back spike against Unprotected, Light and Heavy Armor.

**Portions of weapons that are blunt** in real weapons do not strike fair blows against armor but may be used to set up follow on strikes/techniques

**bouts shall be completed when an appropriate conclusion is achieved. Herein is a list of historically based conclusions to deed of arms bouts.**

#### Historically Based Bout Conclusions

The agreed upon number of fair blows have been struck. A “fair blow” is one which would score against the armor, or lack thereof, against which it is targeted. The number of blows to be counted varied historically. Five blows, in total, is a good number for well-paced bouts.

One combatant is driven from the field.

**If both combatants fall from the list at the same time, the bout is halted momentarily and the combatants returned to a standing position in the middle of the lists before combat resumes.**

**If a combatant willfully leaves the lists, he/she is effectively calling for quarter and yields the bout to the opponent.**

One combatant is disarmed of his last weapon.

One combatant is thrown to the ground with the other in clear control of the situation, such as by remaining standing ( a follow up blow to the downed opponent is not necessary or desired).

If both are carried to the ground and one combatant does not immediately establish a position of dominance, the bout is halted momentarily and the combatants returned to a standing position in the middle of the lists before combat resumes.

Slipping or tripping is not considered a bout conclusion.

One combatant achieves a secure bind upon the other.

One Combatant is rendered unable to continue.

This may come from injury, but it may also be declared if the chief marshal or the marshall in charge of the bout decides it is unsafe for a combatant to continue.

Combatants reach exhaustion.

“Exhaustion” can be predefined, especially in a deed intended to have a more sportive context, by applying a time limit to a bout.)

One combatant calls for quarter and yields the bout to his/her opponent.

**there will be more to a deed than winning the most bouts. Thus, at the conclusion of the fighting, combatants shall meet in conclave to determine who among them best displayed fidelity to the goals and ideals of the deed of arms, said person to be named First Among Equals that day.**

The size of the conclave can vary. If so, it's form should be announced before the deed begins. For example, the tenants may choose to conduct the conclave themselves, thereby ensuring that their goals and standards are the basis of any decisions, or they may open them to the whole of the participants. This is the form favored by the Companions of the Seven Swords when they stand as tenants.

Groups electing private conclave are encouraged to accept input from other fighters as to what they were impressed by on the day.

We expect that the conclave of combatants will also name individuals whose performance, in accord to the goals and ideals, was also worthy of note. For example, the Companions of the Seven Swords use awards for: Prowess (notable martial performance), Panoply (notable physical presentation), and Diligence (notable work in making the deed run well).

**all understand that invitations to one deed do not constitute anything more than invitation to that deed.**

## **Regarding the Host**

**We expect that**

**a host is the person or organization running an event or the providing the venue.**

**the host will provide a suitable enclosed space for the combat.**

**a host may elect to modify certain elements of the conventions.**

Foremost among such modifications are those which serve to suit a particular ambiance, such as restricting the time frame of allowed armor elements for a represent a period-specific event or in modifying the allowed techniques or bout conclusions to deliberately mimic a historical event or to serve a particular educational end.

A deed commemorating a particular historical effect should have the time frame for allowable armor restricted to the time frame around the historical event

A deed might restrict weapon choice, say to spear, sword and dagger.

A deed may elect to “fight over the barriers” and intrude a barrier across which the combatants must fight.

Otherwise, we expect the host’s choices in any restrictions or changes made for a deed will reflect requirements be based on legal restraints and restrictions due to the venue.

**a host will designate a presider for the deed.**

~~[deleted: a host will consult on the list of candidates for invitation with any groups associated with the deed, such as the assembled defenders or a sponsoring group. to replace with:]~~

~~the presider will consult on the list of candidates with any groups associated with the deed, such as a group designated to stand as the tenants, as well as with the host to determine who is suitable. The presider may designate the defenders of a sponsoring group as the determiners for invitations.~~

~~the presider will issue [word] for the deed. This may take the form of private invitations to those chosen to compete or a public call for combatants, or some combination of the two.~~

~~Invitations can be “open” and include any event attendees who wish to participate, (They will, of course need appropriate equipment.) or they may be “closed invitationals” at the discretion of there host/presider. Closed~~

invitationals should have their participants determined well before the event date.

**the [word] will be issued well in advance of the date of the deed.**

## **Regarding Chivalric Virtues**

**We expect that**

**all participants will hold themselves to the ideals of a chivalric person.**

Don't be a dick. [a more polite formulation might be a better choice for print.]

**all participants will behave with courtesy and respect to all, participants and spectators alike.**

Play nice and be polite, especially to spectators who are part of the general public and anyone officially associated with the host.

**a pair of combatants may, by mutual agreement and for their exchange only, choose to add additional limits to either the style of blows or to the targets or to both. Any such change must be communicated to the bout officials BEFORE the bout begins.**

**combatants will accept, without complaint, all blows as called upon them by the marshals.**

Do not argue over a call. Fight on.

Polite discussion after the bout will not reverse any results but may improve subsequent judging.

**each combatant will acknowledge good blows unrecognized by marshals.**

**each combatant will call out a good blow if he/she feels it, whether the marshals call it or not.**

**each combatant will deny any blows called upon their opponent which were not consistent with a fair and proper strike.**

If you know that a blow you stuck was not really on target or well structured, be chivalrous and deny the marshal's call. This is an exception to accepting whatever the marshall calls.

**combatants shall watch the bouts of their companions in the deed that they may be properly informed when choosing the First Among Equals for the day.**

**that there shall be no prizes of significant monetary worth, save those to be given to a proper charitable organization as designated by the First Among Equals, or by the hosting entity in the case of a fund raising endeavor.**

*We do not wish to encourage greed to rule the day.*