



Irish Historical Fencing League

Host guidelines and criteria

As the Irish Historical Fencing League grows and progresses, it is natural that hosting clubs will shift from time to time as individual clubs or club organisers shift emphasis in their events for a time or require a time-out from hosting. To ensure smooth transition from host to host, the following regulations and guidelines apply to hosts of IHFL events.

Criteria

The following must apply:

- **Condition:** The host club is an up to date member of HEMA Ireland.
- **Reason:** The League is a HEMA Ireland initiative, runs under HEMA Ireland insurance, and makes use of HEMA Ireland resources.

- **Condition:** External first aiders must be present (Order of Malta, St. John's ambulance, or similar). These should be provided with a run-down of the event well in advance, and a copy of the events risk assessment, so that they are fully aware of the range of injuries that may be encountered.
- **Reason:** The safety of the participants and staff is of the utmost importance. Relying on First Aid at Work training rarely applied and only refreshed every few years is not suitable.

- **Condition:** Whilst the League does not insist that each event runs the same ruleset, in fact the rulesets have been kept intentionally different to promote more well-rounded fencing across the League, any ruleset used must be clear to understand and easy to judge.
- **Reason:** Tournaments within Ireland are still quite young, and the pool of capable referees and judges is still growing. Cumbersome or convoluted rulesets slow down the tournament and needlessly complicate the judging process.

- *Condition:* Equipment used/worn by the fencers must be of an acceptably high standard. Home-made items of the main pieces of equipment – head protection, hand protection, torso protection - are unacceptable.
 - *Reason:* The safety of the participants is of utmost importance, and the event staff do not have time to quality check from scratch every major item of equipment.
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- *Condition:* The tournament venue must be large enough and spacious enough to safely contain the tournament ring (minimum 6m diameter) with an appropriate safe zone around it and between it and any spectators/waiting fencers.
 - *Reason:* Again, the safety of all competitors and spectators is paramount. In the event of ring-outs suitable buffer space is necessary to prevent the fencers running into bystanders.
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- *Condition:* Should the tournament be expected to attract more than 24 competitors, the hosts should make provision for the use of two tournament rings, with appropriate clear space around each, and appropriate staffing. Please note this will impact venue requirements and will become more necessary as the League grows.
 - *Reason:* Once past 24 competitors (4 pools of 6), time constraints for running the entire tournament in a single day, in a single ring, start becoming problematic. It also results in increasing waits between bouts for fencers, and an increased amount of paperwork for the table staff.
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- *Condition:* The hosts must make it clear at the event that excessive force, lack of control, or any other form of dangerous fencing will not be tolerated, and offenders will be warned and if necessary subsequently removed from competing at the event.
 - *Reason:* The safety of all participants is paramount, and the League exists to promote skilled fencing within HEMA Ireland; excessive force and lack of control and not compatible with these aims.
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- *Condition:* The event must possess all necessary equipment for running the tournament – armbands, flags, scoring sheets, preferably a spreadsheet/digital based tracker to minimise turnaround time for pool results, and have a realistic timetable and format that accommodates the ruleset and number of attendees.
 - *Reason:* Delays, confusion, and errors caused by inadequate preparation are not acceptable; the League is one of the most publicly visible faces of HEMA Ireland within the HEMA world, and ineptly run events have a detrimental effect on the reputation of the League and HEMA Ireland overall.

- *Condition:* The event should be run in a format that allows a full ranking of fencers from first to last place after the event. It should also keep track of individual bouts in terms of who fenced whom, and each result.
 - *Reason:* This allows the League table to be updated accordingly for every fencer, and also allows submission of bout results to HEMA Ratings.
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- *Condition:* The host should have been involved in the IHFL for at least the previous year, not only in terms of competing, but also helping to staff events.
 - *Reason:* This ensures a certain level of quality control – the hosts will already be familiar with the League and general format and issues, and will have had some experience at staffing a League event.
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- *Condition:* As the training of breakfalls and safe throwing techniques varies widely across the HEMA clubs within Ireland, let alone outside, no throws or takedowns are currently permitted within IHFL events.
 - *Reason:* As ever, the safety of the fencers is paramount, and the league events run across a variety of venues on a variety of indoor surfaces. Without knowing that a fencer can control an opponent safely through a throw or takedown with suitable levels of force, or that the opponent can break their fall properly, the risks have been deemed too high.
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- *Condition:* The event hosted should consist of a single day tournament and be hosted in one of the main cities or county towns.
 - *Reason:* HEMA Ireland has a full and varied calendar with multiple events, and a relatively small pool of fencers with a limited budget and limited time off work. Ensuring League tournaments are a single day long and in accessible locations maximises everyone's ability to attend. This may be revisited should the League grow to the point where single day tournaments are unfeasible.

Guidelines

The following should preferably apply, but IHFL is willing to discuss these with potential hosts:

- *Guidance:* The host club should provide the head ref and at least 50% of the judging and scoring staff. These should be experienced with the ruleset and format to be used.
- *Reason:* The pool of judges and referees available to help out at events across the island are at a minimum. The more the host club can supply, the less risk the League and other events run of burning out willing helpers. This also allows the host club to ensure it has judges and referees as familiar with the specific tournament ruleset as possible.

- *Guidance:* The host club should finalise the date and venue of the tournament at least a month ahead of time, preferably three, but in either event should give the League organiser a definite date range (e.g. mid-August) at least three to six months in advance.
 - *Reason:* The long-term viability and growth of the League depends on publicity, which itself is heavily tied in with sponsorship, all of which must be arranged beforehand. It is also simple good manners to allow us to let sponsors know as much detail as possible about the events they will be sponsoring.
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- *Guidance:* The host club should have fencers competing in the tournament.
 - *Reason:* Whilst staffing is a critical aspect of any event, the League has no wish to completely exclude a club from competing because they have stepped up to host an event. Entrants from the host club will be competing on home ground with a minimum of travel – this is the perfect opportunity to encourage newer fencers to get involved.

