

Ruleset for full-contact gladiatorial combat

I. General rules

A. Combat-Rules

The fight is conducted in full-contact manner.

Attacks are generally allowed to be executed with force, this applies to strikes with the shield as well.

The combattants have to protect themselves at all times.

The commands of the "summa rudis" and "secunda rudis" (the referees) are to be followed at all times.

i. Summa Rudis

Every fight has to have at least a "summa rudis" and a "secunda rudis". They also act as point-judges.

The "summa rudis" is the referee.

He enforces the rules.

The "secunda rudis" supports him in all tasks.

Two additional point-judges are required, whose sole purpose is to watch out for hits and advice the "summa rudis" on that matter.

In order for a hit to count, it must be seen by the majority of judges. If only two judges saw the hit, the Summa-Rudis will decide whether a hit has occurred.

ii. Beginning and Ending a fight

Before the fight begins, both fighters approach the "summa rudis".

He inspects their weapons and helmets and makes sure they are safe for combat.

The fight begins with the "summa rudis" lifting his rudes and yelling "pugnate".

Whenever the "summa rudis" or one of the other judges holds his rudes (wooden stick) between the combattants or yells "state", the combattants must stop fighting immediately.

The fight will be paused by the judges about two seconds after a hit has occurred (*more about that in v Double-Hits*).

Hits scored after the fight has been stopped will not be counted.

iii. Mindset

The conduct of sportsmanship is to be followed.

While the combat is conducted in full-contact manner, maliciously injuring or attempting to maliciously injure one's opponent is forbidden and can result in a warning, or in an immediate ban (in particularly severe cases).

An example for this would be attacking an opponent before the fight has been started, while it is paused or after it has been ended by the summa rudis. Another example would be attacking after an obvious and grave equipment failure (e.g. Losing a visor or helmet).

Hard strikes against the front of a helmet or shield of an opponent that is still protecting himself /herself are not considered malicious.

iv. Scoring

The fight is **up to three hits**.

There are **no time limits**. (If a fighter does not engage his opponent over a longer period (about **60 seconds**) of time, a warning can be issued if "summa rudis" and "secunda rudis" are in agreement.)

Only actions that would severely impair the fighters ability to continue the fight (if live weapons would be used) are counted as hits.

Striking, stabbing or cutting any gladiatorial gear (manica, helmet, ocrea, fascia, balteus) does not count as a hit. A padded cap does not count as gladiatorial gear in this case.

Striking, stabbing or cutting any bodypart not protected by gladiatorial gear will be counted as a hit. As long as it would result in impairing the fighters ability to continue the fight if done with live weapons.

- **Thrusts**

Any thrust that would result in deeper penetration of the body or any bodypart scores a hit.

- **Strikes**

Strikes are scored as hits, when the majority of the blade connects to the body, or in the majority of the limb connects to the blade. (e.g. A blow in the biceps is a hit, if it would cut the majority of it, it would not be a hit if it only connected to half a centimeter of it)

- **Slicing/Cutting**

Cuts are only hits if they are drawn with the majority of the blade. A resting blade is not a cut.

- **Hits on the back**

Most disputet are hits on the back, as they often occur as stabbing over shield and brim of the opponent.

Individual cutting actions from above over the back of the shoulderblade are not hits.

The "summa rudis" should observe such actions carefully, if the fighter manages to draw his weapon over his opponents carotid artery (side of the throat) while pulling his weapon back, it will be counted as a hit.

Thrusts are only hits, if they occur in a proper angle that would allow for deeper penetration.

(This results from the fact, that only limited power can be exerted in a thrust/cut from that angle in combination with the lack of unprotected vital organs or essential, easy to cut tendons or muscle groups. A continued sawing action (a series of cuts) is required to cause severe damage)

If a fighter is able to perform a series of cuts against his opponents back, it will be counted as a hit.

If the opponent does the same, it will be counted as a double hit and the fighters will be separated again.

- **Takedowns/Knockdowns**

A knockdown or takedown is only counted as a hit, if the fighter is not on his feet again within five seconds.

This rule exists because a downed fighter would be in serious danger from attacks with the shield or long weapons of his opponent. These attacks must be forbidden for tournament as they pose a high risk of injury of the downed fighter. To offset this limitation, the standing fighter is rewarded if his opponent does not get up.

While down, the fighter may be attacked with short weapons (Gladius, Sica, Pugio) during that time.

Attacks by the standing fighter using his shield, hasta or trident are forbidden (*due to high risk of serious injury*).

The downed fighter is allowed to attack with any weapon and shield. If the downed fighter scores a hit, it will be counted in his favor and the standing fighter does not get a point for the knockdown.

If the fighter loses his helmet through getting knocked down, the fight will be paused immediately and the knockdown/takedown will be scored for his opponent.

- **Wrestling actions**

If the fight devolves in prolonged wrestling with no proper hits, the "summa rudis" may intervene, or may let it continue.

Once double hits occur, or if due to loss of control of the fighters, hits can no longer be properly recognized, the summa rudis must break up the fight.

The fight must be paused if both fighters go down and are unable to initiate a submission or to score a clear hit **within ten seconds**.

- **Submissions**

Hits can also be scored through applying submission techniques such as, but not limited to, chokeholds or armbars. **If a submission technique is properly applied for 5 seconds or until submission is shown by the fighter it is being applied to, it will be counted as a hit.** If the fighter is able to score a counter hit while being submitted (e.g. Stabbing his opponent with his weapon), only the counter will be counted towards scoring.

- **Double Hitting**

"Double Hits" will not be counted towards the score to avoid "tactical double hitting" (*when in the lead by having 2 hits, intentionally scoring a double hit to win the fight*).

A double hit occurs, when two fighters hit each other at the same time or in short succession. If they do not hit each other at the same moment, short succession can be determined as in how long or how many moves the injured fighter would have been able to execute before the injury would have impaired his ability to fight.

Rule of thumb: a direct counter, so when the counter attack has been initiated before the hit succeeded, is usually in short succession. A series of three attacks is not.

- **Self-Hits**

If one should hit themselves on accident, it will be scored for the opponent under the same conditions as a normal hit would.

v. Forbidden actions

Forbidden are the following actions:

- Attacks against your opponents feet & toes (shins are allowed)
- Shield stomp/strike on a downed opponent or an opponent in the process of getting up
- Shield strikes to the kneecaps
- Shield strikes to the throat or neck (Attacks on the helmet are allowed!)
- Thrusts directed at the throat or neck (Cuts are allowed! Thrusts to sternum and helmet are allowed!)
- Throws and grips leveraging small joints (e.g.: fingers & toes)
- Any technique that most likely ends in death or crippling of the opponent (e.g.: squashing larynx)
- Chokeholds for over 8 seconds
(If a proper chokehold can be placed, it will be counted as a deadly hit if the attacker does not get hit while placing and holding it)
- Grabbing the blade with either hand (automatically results in a point for the opponent)
- Disobeying orders from the "summa-rudis" (especially orders to stop the fight)
- No intentional attacks on fingers or wrists of the weapon-hand
- No intentional attacks to the genitals
- No Hiptosses
- No shoulderthrows
- No suplex-throws
- Any throw that has an increased risk of having the opponent land on their head/neck first

Hits scored through a forbidden action or as a direct result of a forbidden action will not be counted. Any forbidden action can result in a warning by the "summa rudis". After three warnings, the fighter will be disqualified.

In severe cases, an immediate disqualification is possible, if "summa rudis" and "secunda rudis" are in agreement.

Since the retiarius is wearing a fencing mask, **attacks to the head of the retiarius are allowed.**

vi. Miscellaneous

• Submission

Submission is shown during the fight by **dropping the weapon** and lifting the **weapon-hand**.

While grappling or in a chokehold or other grip, **submission can also be shown by tapping on the ground, your own, or your opponents body with you hand (tapping out).**

When a fighter submits, the fight is paused immediately and a hit is scored in favor of his opponent.

A fighter must release his opponent immediately, if his opponent submits.

• Equipment failure

In any case of equipment failure, the summa rudis must stop the fight until the equipment could be inspected.

Minor equipment failure:

If some equipment should fail during the fight, but the failure does neither endanger the fighters nor spectators, the fight may be continued.

If equipments fails and the failure endangers fighters or spectators, but it can be removed or repaired right there without any major delay (3-Minutes) and the fight could be

continued safely afterwards, the equipment may be removed or repaired and the fight continued. The safety of the repair is to be judged by the Summa-Rudis and Secunda-Rudis, only if both agree that it is safe to continue, the fight may be continued.

Major equipment failure:

If some equipment should fail during the fight and the failure does endanger fighters or spectators and it can not be removed, exchanged, or repaired right there without any major delay (3-Minutes) or without endangering the fighters or spectators, the fighter whose equipment has failed, loses.

○ Loss of helmet:

If a fighter should lose his helmet, the fight will be paused immediately and continued after he put his helmet back on. If a fighter loses his helmet three times it will be considered a major equipment failure and his opponent wins.

• Loss of rete (net)

If the retiarius loses his net, he may pick it up again during the fight, or if the fight has been paused due to a hit scored against him.

If the fight has been paused because of a hit he scored, he may not pick up the net during this break.

B. Equipment

i. Historical equipment

- Weapons

Weapons must be dull (**min. 2mm edge, 3mm tip**) and without major damage.

The tip of any gladius, sica or pugio must be rounded (diameter of at least 15mm)

Maximum length from the bottom end of the grip to the tip of the blade (straight line along the grip) must not exceed 50cm, 30cm for pugios.

The tips of spears must be rolled (min. 2cm width, 4mm thick tip) or blunted with a thickened tip (minimum of 13mm*8mm).

The use of a rounded sauroter is allowed, a successful thrust will be counted as a hit.

The tips of the trident must have small steel balls affixed (min 15mm diameter) or be completely flat (min 15mm diameter). The trident must not exceed an overall weight of 1,5kg.

The brim of the shield must be made of leather or raw hide. No metal brims are allowed.

The net of the Retiarius may not contain any metal balls or other weights.

The retiarius must use a pugio, the provocators may choose between pugio and gladius.

- Protective gear

- Helmets

Minimum material strength for Helmets is **1,5mm in mild steel or bronze, 2mm in brass.**

All helmets that are historically accurate for the class may be used, if they have a closed visor. **Minimum Visor/Eyepiece strength is 1,8mm in mild steel or bronze, 2,5mm for brass. Maximum diameter for holes in eyepieces is 13mm.**

Secutor helmets must have an additional set of eye protection to prevent the trident from hitting the eye (rules for material strength apply), if the trident could go through the visor otherwise. The piece must be riveted or welded on in at least three spots.

All essential parts must either be riveted or welded together if there is a risk that the helmet might open during the fight.

If the visor consists of parts that can be taken apart, it must be assured, that it will not come apart during fighting.

The use of only leather strips to secure any part of the visor is prohibited.

The use of leather strips as an additional safety measure is allowed.

Even if the helmet meets the standards above, it can be deemed unsafe for combat, if Summa-Rudis and Secunda-Rudis agree. This is especially the case if it meets the required thickness, but the holes of the visor are too big for the weapons.

- Manica

The glove of the manica must cover the entire back of the hand, including the fingers and thumb. It is recommended to cover the fingertips and the tip of the thumb as well.

The manica can be made of fabric (also fabric-glue-composite), leather, chainmail, scales or plates as long as it is manufactured in an approximately historically correct design.

It may go over the upper part of the shoulder-joint, it must not cover the collarbone.

It must leave chest and back open.

An exception can be made for the "heavy retiarius" which does not use a galerus. His manica may cover the adjacent pectoralis muscle.

- Chestplate

The chestplate of the provocator may not bend to the side and cover his ribs or armpit that way. It must end at about the lower end of the sternum and should leave most of the belly exposed.

- *Belt*
The belt must not be wider than 13cm.

No piece of equipment may have sharp edges, Nails sticking out or anything similar, that might harm the fighters.

The historical equipment must be at least approximately historically correct.
An exemption exists concerning padding, welding and the method of attachment of the helmets to the head (e.g. Chinstrap) due to safety reasons.

ii. Additional protective gear

Required gear:

-For additional protective gear, a fencing mask with >1600nm is required for the retiarius. It must protect the back of the head as well.

A hit in the mask will be scored.

-Cup

-Mouthguard

Hits on the additional protective gear will be scored.

Recommended gear:

Boxing hand wraps

Knee and elbow protectors

-Throat-Protection/Gorget against impacts. No chainmail, as it does not provide sufficient protection against impacts.

For women: chestprotection (similar to kickboxing)

II. Tournament

Following classes can be fielded in competition:

provocator
retiarius
secutor
murmillo
thraex
hoplomachus

There will be three groupings:

1. Provocator
2. Murmillo, Thraex, Hoplomachus
3. Retiarius, Secutor

Fighters can participate in more than one grouping.

The style of tournament will be finalized, once the amount of participants in each grouping is known.