

Points North 2019: Skirmish and Assault Tournament Rules

Introduction

This rules system has two different phases to the fights: “Skirmish” and “Assault.” The Skirmish phase is analogous to a rally for serve in racquet sports, and ends after a single hit. The Assault phase is analogous to having the serve in a racquet sport or being at bat in baseball, and is fought as continuous action (multiple hits are scored without stopping the fight). Points are only earned from hits in Assault phases.

Types of hits

Hits are categorized as a clean hit, a fault, or can be thrown out by the referee (no score). A **clean hit** is when one combatant hits the other without being hit within the same beat of fencing time. A double-hit or **“fault”** is when both combatants are hit within the same beat of fencing time. The measure of fencing time is based on the timing of the actions involved. If Fencer A hits Fencer B, and then Fencer B starts a new action and hits Fencer A, they are not in the same beat of fencing time. If Fencer A hits Fencer B while Fencer B is already in action and that action hits Fencer A, they are within the same beat of fencing time (and thus have scored a “fault”).

Three faults in the same Skirmish phase ends the match as a double loss.

Although this is covered in the safety rules, it bears repeating here. **There is no such thing as “too light.”** Any action that contacts a fencer with the edge or point of the sword is counted as a hit. A referee may throw out a hit if they rule that there was “no intent” on contact, but that is not based on the force of the hit or the distance the sword travels. Any combatant may also declare that they had “no intent” on a hit that they scored, but not on a hit scored against them. Strikes with the pommel should be stopped short of contact, and the combatant should say “pommel” to indicate their intent. The referee is still the arbiter of whether a pommel strike is successful. Pommel strikes only count as hits if directed to the head.

A referee may also throw out hits if the action is unclear and neither a clean hit nor a fault can be determined.

Precedence of “hits”

If a combatant touches the floor with any part of their body other than their feet, or puts one foot outside the ring, they are considered to have been hit regardless of whether it was the result of their opponent’s action or not. Likewise, a combatant who performs a grappling action that controls their opponent is considered to have hit their opponent (although special scoring rules

may apply). However, if two different types of hits occur in the same beat of fencing time, only the hit with the most precedence counts, and it is considered a clean hit. The order of precedence is:

1. A hit with the edge or point of the sword, or a pommel strike directed to the head.
2. Combatant steps or is pushed from the ring.
3. Combatant is controlled by a grapple.
4. Combatant touches the floor.

Thus, if a combatant strikes their opponent in the same beat as they fall or step from the ring, it is considered a clean hit (if a combatant is struck while applying a grapple, then the grapple is clearly not effective). If a combatant pushes their opponent from the ring, but puts their knee on the floor, it is a clean hit against the combatant who left the ring, etc.

In an Assault phase, if two different types of hit occur in the same beat, it is considered to be a clean hit (higher precedence) followed by a separate clean hit (lower precedence).

Match Format

Skirmish phase

During this phase, both combatants attempt to score a good hit on their opponent. If three faults are scored in a single skirmish phase, the match ends, and both combatants score a loss (keeping their current score). If a clean hit is scored, the action is stopped, and the combatant who scored the hit is declared the striker for the next Assault phase. The combatants reset and the Assault phase begins.

No points are scored during a regular skirmish phase.

Assault phase

During the Assault phase, the combatants fight continuously until a halt is called (the action does not stop just because the striker has scored a hit). The striker scores one point for each clean hit against their opponent, up to a maximum of five points. The action is stopped if:

- The striker is hit
- The striker scores 5 points
- Either combatant falls or is pushed out of the ring
- Either combatant is controlled by a grapple.

If the striker is hit, the Assault ends. If the defender hit the striker cleanly, the defender becomes the striker, and the next assault begins without a skirmish. If it was a fault, the striker gets no point for the final hit, and a new skirmish phase determines the next striker. In either case, the striker keeps all accumulated points. If the striker falls, is pushed (or steps) out of the ring, or is controlled by a grapple, the same result is applied as if they were hit.

If the striker scores five points, the assault ends, and a new skirmish phase begins to determine the striker for the next assault.

If the defender falls or is pushed from the ring, the action is stopped, the striker gets one point added to their current score, the combatants reset and the Assault is resumed (unless it was the 5th point).

If the defender is controlled by a grapple, then the Striker is given maximum (up to 5) points for the assault, the Assault ends and a new skirmish phase determines the striker for the next Assault.

Only the striker may ever earn points during an assault.

Phases of the Fight

Each fight uses the following sequence of phases:

- Skirmish for the First Assault (Mandatory)
 - Standard Skirmish phase
- First Assault (Mandatory*)
 - Standard Assault phase
- Skirmish for the Second Assault (Optional**)
 - Standard Skirmish phase
- Second Assault (Mandatory*)
 - Standard Assault phase
- Skirmish for the Third Assault (Optional**)
 - Standard Skirmish phase
- Third Assault (Mandatory*)
 - Standard Assault phase
- Redemption Assault
 - Special Assault phase
 - Occurs only if one combatant is currently in the lead
 - Trailing combatant is striker and may score exactly enough points to tie their opponent.
- Final Battle
 - Special Skirmish phase
 - Only occurs if the score is currently tied
 - Combatant who scores a clean hit scores one point and wins the fight
 - Fault rules still in effect

*Mandatory phases are only cancelled in the event of the combatants scoring three faults in a single skirmish phase.

**Optional phases are bypassed if defender in the previous assault phase scores a clean hit

Pools and Eliminations

During pools, double losses will be scored as such. Placement for the elimination rounds will be based on most wins, followed by total points, followed by fewest total faults. During elimination rounds, double losses will grant a “by” in the next round to the top-seeded combatant in that round. **In a medal match, a double loss will result in no medals being awarded for that tier.**

Example of a Skirmish & Assault Match

The combatants, Jack and Diane, take their corners and start the match. They **Skirmish for the First Assault** and Jack and Diane strike each other in the same fencing time, a double hit or **fault**. If they earn two more faults in this Skirmish, they will score a double loss and the match will end. They reset and enter the ring again. Fortunately, Diane lands a **clean hit** on Jack and the skirmish ends.

Diane is the **striker** for the **First Assault**, and Jack is the **defender**. She lands two clean hits before both combatants strike each other at the same time, a fault. The Assault ends and Diane scores 2 points.

Diane and Jack reset and enter the ring to **Skirmish for the Second Assault**. Jack lands a clean hit on Diane and the skirmish ends.

Jack is the striker for the **Second Assault**. Jack lands three clean hits with his sword in quick succession on Diane, driving her back, but as she steps out of the ring she strikes a clean hit on Jack. Diane’s strike with the sword takes precedence over stepping out of the ring, so she earns a clean hit on Jack, ending the Assault phase with a clean hit by the defender. Jack scores three points. The score is 2 for Diane, 3 for Jack.

Because the previous assault ended on the clean hit for the defender, the next Skirmish phase is skipped, and Diane is the striker for the **Third Assault**. Diane gets a single clean hit with her sword and then enters into a grapple, throwing Jack to the floor. Diane earns maximum points for the Assault (1 for the clean hit with the sword, and 4 more for the grapple, reaching a maximum of 5 points). The score is 7 for Diane, 3 for Jack.

As the fencer with the lower score, Jack is now the striker for the **Redemption Round**, a special Assault phase. Jack can earn as many points in this phase as would bring him to a tie with Diane - in this case, up to 4 points. They enter the ring and Jack lands two clean hits before there is a double hit, a fault. The match ends, with a final score of 7 for Diane, 5 for Jack.

If Jack had managed to tie the match during the Redemption Round, a Final Battle Skirmish would be fought to end the match and determine a winner.

