

Northshield Rapier FAQ  
November 29, 2015

**Preface:**

Not every question you may have is going to be covered below. That's simply the nature of a Q&A document. However, it's important to remember that not every answer you want is necessarily in the rapier rulebook. That handbook is not, and was never meant to be, a "one stop shop" for every martial issue or question you may have regarding rapier combat. If you cannot find the answer to your question in the rapier handbook, I encourage you to check both the Northshield Marshal's Handbook and the Society Rapier rules. There is a good chance what you want to know will be in one of those documents. If not, by all means check with your Group, Regional, or Kingdom rapier marshal; but please do your homework first. Odds are that while you are looking for one answer, you may find others as well. (Besides, you're supposed to have read all of these books anyhow, so, ya know, read 'em.)

**FAQs:**

The following answers are meant to clarify and update the current published rapier rules for Northshield. **None of these rules or policies are new to this document:** all have been previously approved at the kingdom or Society level – they simply haven't been incorporated into our current printed rules set. A new edition of the Northshield Rapier Rules are in the works; in the mean-time, please consider this FAQ to be a clarification of the rapier rules currently available on the kingdom website.

**General:**

Q: Is Northshield a pay-to-play kingdom when it comes to fighting or authorizing?

A: No. You no longer have to be a member to be an authorized combatant in Northshield. However, you must still be a member to be a marshal or MiT.

Q: How do I become a marshal?

A: To be a rapier marshal, you must first go through the Marshal in Training (MiT) program. To become a MiT, you need to:

- Be authorized in at least three rapier combat styles
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be a paid sustaining member of the SCA
- Contact your Regional Rapier marshal to ask about becoming a MiT (they're the ones who typically issue the paperwork)
- Refer to the "MiT Process" PDF on the Kingdom Earl Marshal's page on the Northshield website for more information

Q: Is there a list of rapier Training Marshals for MiTs somewhere?

A: Yes. A list can be found under “Resource Links” on the Kingdom Rapier Marshal’s page on the Northshield website.

Q: How do I get a copy/replacement copy of my authorization card?

A: When you send in your completed copy of your initial authorization paperwork to the Clerk of the Roster, you will be e-mailed a PDF of your authorization card. Should you need a new card, contact the Clerk of the Roster to request a replacement PDF. (Note: you are expected to update your authorizations through your persona/personal page on the Northshield web site.)

Q: What is the policy for practice waivers?

A: Anyone fighting at a group rapier practice who is not already authorized must sign the Roster Waiver **every time they fight at a practice**. This policy also extends to anyone who will be in or around the list field and stands a reasonable chance of coming into contact with combatants (heralds, photographers, really interested spectators, etc.) and is not otherwise authorized in a SCA combat activity. Group Rapier Marshals should send these waivers in to their Regional Rapier Marshal every quarter when they file their quarterly reports.

Q: Can unauthorized fighters fight at an event or a demo if they sign a waiver?

A: No. Only authorized combatants can take part in combat activities at events and demos. The only place an unauthorized fighter can take part in SCA combat is at an official practice.

Q: Is Cut and Thrust still part of rapier?

A: No. In Northshield, Cut and Thrust combat is a separate martial activity with its own marshallate structure.

Q: So do I still need to be authorized in rapier before I can authorize in Cut and Thrust?

A: You must be authorized in either single rapier or armored sword and shield before you can authorize in Cut and Thrust. Please see the Cut and Thrust rules for further authorization and armor requirements regarding that combat form.

Q: Where can I get a mask tester?

A: Many mundane fencing suppliers sell them. Check on-line.

Q: Where are the instructions for making a drop tester for armor?

A: Instructions can be found in Appendix 3 of the Society Rapier Rules.

### **Minors in Rapier Combat:**

Q: Is there still a Youth Rapier program/authorization in Northshield?

A: No. Northshield no longer has a youth rapier program or youth rapier marshals at this time.

Q: What is the policy on minors fighting adults in rapier?

A: Combatants from 14 to 17 years of age are considered Minor Combatants. They can fight adults in rapier tournaments and melees if those minors have been authorized. They must designate their minor status with a yellow diamond on their mask and on the glove of their sword hand. If they are not authorized and in training, they should follow the policies and procedures listed on the Kingdom Earl Marshal's page under "Rules for Minors fighting with Adults."

### **Armor & Weapons:**

Q: Do we still have a list of approved blades in Northshield? If so, what blades are approved for use in Northshield?

A: At this time, rapier blades legal for use in Northshield are:

- All rapier blades currently listed in Appendix 1 of the current Northshield Rapier Handbook
- Darkwood Spada Blade
- Darkwood Practice Spanish Rapier
- Darkwood WMA Rapier Foil
- Alchem Curved Rapier
- MK Armory MKA30 - MKA45 Rapier; MKA30 - MKA45 Wide
- Castille Armory Standard Rapier
- Castille Armory Crossover Rapier
- Castille Armory Crossover Saber

Legal dagger blades:

- All dagger blades currently listed in Appendix 1 of the current Northshield Rapier Handbook
- Castille Armory Dagger blade
- Castille Armory Main Gauche blade

(Note: Just because a blade is listed above, it does not mean that every blade of that type will automatically pass a flex test. BLADES CAN DIFFER – be sure to test your blade for proper flex using the methods outlined in the Society Rapier Rules.)

If your rapier or dagger blade is not listed above, or you are curious about another blade being considered for use in our kingdom, please contact the KRM.

Q: Is the flex test described in the Northshield Rapier Rules up to date?

A: No. Follow the flex test guidelines in Appendix 1.B of the Society Rapier Rules.

Q: Are rapier spears/polearms legal in Northshield?

A: No.

Q: What are the legal sword lengths for rapiers (and daggers) in Northshield?

A: Per the most recent Society rapier rules update, swords are defined as any blade longer than 18 inches (up to 48 inches) that passes the flex test for rapiers; daggers are any blade under 18 inches that pass the appropriate flex test for daggers. Note that in Northshield, **rapiers shorter than 30.5 inches are still not allowed**, per the current copy of the Northshield rapier rules.

Q: Are two-handed rapiers legal in Northshield? If so, do they require a separate authorization?

A: Yes, they're legal. Two-handed rapiers are defined as swords with:

- a handle longer than 10 inches (but no longer than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the length of the blade), and,
- a blade between 30 and 48 inches in length

No separate authorization is required for two-handed rapiers in Northshield at this time. Anyone using a two-handed rapier is strongly urged to take extra care when it comes to their blow calibration, especially in melees. In addition, two-handed rapiers are NOT meant to be used in place of, or as a substitute for, rapier spears (no holding the final couple inches of the sword handle and using it like a pole weapon, for example). They are swords: use them like one.

Q: Is puncture-resistant armor required to extend down the inside of the leg to one hand-span?

A: No. While puncture-resistant armor is required to extend one hand-span down the inside of the arm & armpit, no such requirement is mandated for the legs. However, puncture-resistant material is required to fully cover the front of the abdomen and groin. When inspecting or constructing armor, make sure these areas are covered by puncture-resistant or rigid material, no matter what the combatant's stance. (In other words, no unprotected gaps between your puncture-resistant doublet/jacket/shirt and your cup, guys.)