ACC General Rules

Common safety, equipment and officiating rules

These rules set the common requirements for all Armored Combat Clash disciplines: Round Robin, Pro Fight, polearms, longsword, and sword and shield. Every fighter must follow these rules and the rules for their discipline. Discipline rules specify permitted techniques, bout procedures, points, victory conditions, and round or bout duration.

In this document, the terms “List Marshal” and “List Referee” refer to the same official. The French title for this role is “maréchal de lice.”

1. Scope and precedence

These common rules apply to all fighters, coaches, seconds, and attendants in the competition area. Discipline rules supplement this document and may clarify or further restrict the common rules. A departure from a common rule is valid only if it is written into the discipline rules or officially announced by ACC before the bout.

If a rule is unclear or a conflict arises during a bout, fighters must stop and immediately follow the maréchal de lice’s instructions. The official may apply the safest rule, stop the action, and ask ACC officials to clarify the matter.

2. Fighter eligibility and conduct

- Fighters must be at least 18 years old.
- Fighters must have no medical contraindication to taking part in combat. The organizer may request medical documentation under the event’s requirements.
- Every participant must register with Armored Combat Clash by contacting ACC through its website or Facebook.
- Fighting under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, or any substance or medication incompatible with sport is prohibited. A fighter who cannot participate safely will be withdrawn from the competition.
- Fighters must attend equipment inspection with their complete equipment and follow ACC instructions before, during, and after each bout.
- Fighters, coaches, and attendants must behave respectfully toward opponents, officials, scorekeepers, and event staff.
- A fighter must report any injury, equipment failure, or difficulty continuing. A fighter may stop at any time by making this clear to the officials.

3. Weapons, armour and equipment

3.1 Common requirements

Weapons and armour must be historically and geographically consistent with the period represented by ACC, from the 7th to the 15th century, and with the fighter’s kit. A discipline may restrict weapon types or set additional requirements.

All equipment must be in good condition and free of sharp edges, dangerous points, protrusions, or defects that could cause injury. ACC staff and the maréchal de lice inspect weapons, armour, and protective equipment. Equipment may not be used before it is approved. ACC may refuse or remove any item judged dangerous, even if it meets the measurements listed below.

3.2 Weapon requirements

- Thrusting weapons, flails, throwing weapons, hammers, and becs de corbin are prohibited unless a discipline’s written rules explicitly authorize them.
- Blades must be at least 1.5 mm thick. Edges must be blunt and rounded, with a radius at least equal to the profile of a one-euro coin.
- Sharp or pointed pommels are prohibited. Every edge, angle, and protrusion on a pommel must be rounded according to the same standard as a blade, with no point or cutting protrusion. A one-euro coin is the practical reference for an acceptable rounding.
- Quillons or guards may extend no more than 4 cm beyond the wearer’s gauntleted hand.
- Polearms with a thrusting point or bec de corbin are prohibited unless a discipline’s written rules state otherwise.

- Flanged maces must have blunt, rounded edges. It is prohibited to grip an axe immediately below its head to strike like a brass knuckle, or to strike with the hammer side.
- ACC staff or the maréchal de lice may impose additional restrictions when needed to protect fighters, staff, or the public.

The common limits for the main equipment categories are summarized below. Discipline rules may reduce these limits or further specify a weapon category.

Equipment	Common limits
One-handed sword	Maximum 1.5 kg; minimum length 50 cm.
Longsword	Maximum 1.8 kg.
One-handed axe or mace	Maximum 1 kg; minimum length 50 cm.
Two-handed axe	Maximum 2.4 kg; minimum length 120 cm; cutting edge at least 7 cm.
Polearm	Maximum 2.4 kg; blade at least 14 cm; total length at least 150 cm.
Shield	Between 50 and 90 cm; leather edging at least 2 mm thick or at least three layers of cloth.
Buckler	Diameter between 27 and 35 cm; made entirely of steel or titanium is permitted.

Striking shields are permitted only when consistent with the kit and allowed by the discipline. Their edges, faces, handles, and fittings must present no hazard. Decorations must be consistent with the period or display a club or association heraldic design.

3.3 Armour and protective equipment

- Armour must protect the torso, head, and limbs. Each visible item must be supported by a historical source from the 7th to the 15th century and be consistent with the kit. The ACC committee approves the complete kit.
- Armour must be made of steel or titanium. Blackened items must have a uniformly black finish. A discreet item slightly outside the period may be tolerated, except for the helmet.
- Modern protective equipment is permitted if it remains invisible once the fighter is fully equipped. HEMA protection may be worn beneath steel or titanium armour, but it does not replace required rigid protection.
- Edges, points, fasteners, and moving parts must not cut, snag, or present a hazard. An item may be refused as dangerous even if it meets the specifications below.
- Weapons, armour, and protective equipment are inspected and approved before each tournament. Refused, unchecked, or damaged equipment may not be worn or used. Any damage during the event must be reported, and the equipment removed until it is inspected again. If the fighter or their team cannot repair or replace the defective piece of armour to the maréchal de lice’s satisfaction within the time allowed, the fighter is declared the loser.

3.3.1 Padding and neck protection

- Fighters must wear a gambeson or arming doublet covering the arms, torso, and thighs. If this layer is not supported by historical sources for the armour, it must be concealed beneath period clothing.
- Shin protection is recommended. A groin protector is mandatory for men and recommended for women.
- The neck must be protected by padding and a rigid piece. Rigid neck protection is mandatory.

3.3.2 Helmet

- The helmet must provide optimal protection for the head, neck, and throat. Titanium helmets are prohibited. The helmet must be at least 2 mm thick.
- Full face protection is mandatory. An open helmet must have bars or a faceplate behind a mail aventail consistent with the historical model.
- A chin strap or nape strap is mandatory. Rear straps are optional. The helmet must have at least 1 cm of internal padding.
- A mouthguard is recommended.

3.3.3 Gauntlets and hand protection

- Gauntlets must be appropriate to the kit’s historical sources. For periods before the 13th century, gauntlets must be covered in cloth or leather; this covering is mandatory before the 10th century.

- Gauntlets made entirely of leather or entirely of mail, articulated-finger gauntlets, and HEMA hand protection worn on its own are prohibited.
- Scale mittens are allowed for Rus or Mongol kits. Shield mittens are permitted; losing the shield stops the bout and is treated as a disarm under the discipline rules.

3.3.4 Torso, arm and leg protection

- For torso armour, mild steel must be at least 1.5 mm thick; spring steel or titanium must be at least 0.8 mm thick. Mail used as the primary protection must be supplemented with additional modern protection approved by ACC.
- Shoulders, arms, elbows, and forearms must be protected with steel or titanium. Bazubands and additional steel elbow protection are recommended.
- Hips, thighs, knees, and shins must be protected with steel or titanium. Disc knee cops are recommended. Non-historical protection must be concealed; modern joint protection may be worn beneath rigid armour.
- Short tassets do not replace thigh protection. If tassets reach the knee without protecting the thigh, steel or titanium knee protection remains mandatory. A gap greater than 3 cm between the breastplate and the top of the thigh requires additional protection.
- Sabatons are permitted if consistent with the kit's historical sources. A brigandine concealed beneath period clothing is permitted.

If an item is disputed, the fighter may provide historical documentation in support of it. The ACC committee makes the final approval decision.

4. Fighting area and safety zone

Every ACC fighting area must provide at least 36 m² of usable space. A 6 m × 6 m square is the minimum reference size, whether the area is open or inside a list, ring, or cage. Discipline rules may require a larger area.

An open area without an enclosure may use rubber mats or another approved surface. Its boundaries must be clearly and unmistakably marked or identifiable before the bout. A list, ring, or cage must likewise define the fighting space clearly and unambiguously.

A safety zone must surround the fighting area and is reserved for authorized ACC staff. Fighters, coaches, attendants, spectators, and everyone else may not enter or remain in it without permission from an ACC official.

The consequences of leaving the fighting area depend on the setup and the discipline rules. The discipline rules specify what happens when a boundary is crossed; these common rules award no points and set no victory condition for leaving the area.

5. Authority in the list and immediate safety

- Fighters must obey the maréchal de lice's orders immediately and at all times.
- At the command to stop, fighters must cease all offensive and defensive action, immobilize their weapons, and wait for instructions. No strike or offensive movement may follow the stop command.
- The maréchal de lice may interrupt, suspend, or stop a bout at any time to protect a fighter, inspect equipment, clarify a rule, or restore safe conditions.
- The maréchal de lice's safety decisions take effect immediately. Any request for an explanation or appeal is made after the action, using the procedure announced by the organizer.

6. Actions prohibited in every discipline

The following actions are prohibited in every ACC discipline. A discipline's own rules may add prohibitions or explain how these rules apply, but may not authorize an action on this list without a written ACC waiver.

6.1 Prohibited strikes

- Striking the throat or neck, groin or genitals, feet, back of the knee, or back of the thighs.
- Delivering a vertical strike aimed at the spine of an opponent on the ground.
- Delivering a soccer-style kick to the head of an opponent on the ground.

- When either fighter is on the ground, using the legs to strike the opponent. A grounded fighter may not use their legs to strike a standing opponent; strikes aimed at any part below the waist of a grounded fighter are prohibited.
- Striking after a stop command, a separation command, or an official’s interruption of the action.
- Striking an opponent again after they surrender, or continuing an action after they have clearly stopped defending themselves.

6.2 Prohibited techniques and conduct

- Joint locks, twisting or hyperextension, forced manipulation of joints or fingers, strangulation, and cervical twists.
- Removing or attempting to remove any piece of armour with bare hands; pulling or pushing on the edge of a helmet to remove it.
- Deliberately hooking a weapon onto an opponent’s armour to tear or break the weapon or armour; wrapping an arm around an opponent’s weapon in a “chicken wing.”
- Maintaining a clinch after the maréchal de lice orders separation.
- Putting an arm, leg, or any other part of the body through or over the barriers of the list.
- Gripping an axe immediately below its head to strike like a hand weapon, or striking with its hammer side.
- Fighting bare-handed or using a broken or badly damaged weapon.
- Any action intended to injure an opponent, any dangerous action not covered by the discipline rules, and any refusal to obey an official’s orders.

7. Warnings and penalties

The maréchal de lice may take any action needed to protect safety and enforce these rules. The response depends on the seriousness of the action, the risk created, whether it was intentional, and whether it was repeated.

Measure	General application
Comment or reminder	For an unintentional fault, the official may briefly stop the action and remind the fighter of the rule.
Warning	For a deliberate violation. The discipline rules specify any sporting penalty attached to the warning.
Loss of bout	On the second warning, the fighter loses the current duel or bout, depending on the format.
Disqualification from the tournament	On the third warning, the fighter is excluded from the tournament.
Additional disciplinary action	Depending on the seriousness of the facts, the ACC board may impose a temporary or permanent exclusion.

The maréchal de lice is responsible for safety and enforcing the rules during the bout. Sporting penalties are applied under the discipline rules, which set any point penalties and their exact consequences. Refusing to obey, striking illegally or in a prohibited zone, starting without authorization, and unsportsmanlike or discourteous conduct toward an opponent or staff may result in a warning. Any serious violation is reported to ACC leadership.

8. Discipline-specific rules

Each ACC discipline has its own supplementary rules. At a minimum, those rules specify permitted weapons and techniques, rules for grips and grappling, inspection procedures, the duration and number of rounds or bouts, the points system, victory conditions, and how leaving the fighting area and other discipline-specific situations are handled.

The supplementary rules cover Round Robin, Pro Fight, polearms, longsword, and sword and shield. They must be read together with these general rules.