

# The Sport of Combat Lightsaber Dueling – Official RSA Rules



*The following are the essential procedures and rules for an official combat lightsaber duel or sparring match, based upon historic codes of standard dueling etiquette, standardized and distributed by the Rogue Saber Academy, and first agreed upon by its founding council on 3/4/2017. (Current Edition: 2.7\*, Approved: 11/7/2017) \*The Latest Edition is Prioritized.*

- 1. The Agreement.** Both opponents must have agreed before the commencement of a match on the following rules and on the amount of “points” (or successful strikes) to be earned first by the winner (typically five). In a tournament, the tournament organizer may set the winning amount of points for each round. It is also determined whether or not helmets or body armor will be worn. The appointment of a judge is optional. A judge may be any person familiar with these rules whose authority is accepted by both duelists before the match.
- 2. The Weapons.** Both opponents must possess standard combat-ready sabers in good repair. These are sabers with reinforced blades to prevent shattering or denting on impact. Their hilts must contain electronics to at least successfully illuminate the blades. Their blades must be between 24” (about 60 cm) to 36” (about 90 cm) in length (not including the hilt). If detachable, blades must be properly fastened to the hilt, and connective mechanisms must be tightened before and during a spar or duel as needed. The blades must be illuminated, “ignited,” (or “armed”) during a successful strike, for a point to be made. Either Duelist may be armed with one saber, two sabers, sabers with hand guards, saber-staffs containing two blades, or sabers with abnormally long hilts.
- 3. Safety Measures.** Both opponents understand that minor injury will most likely take place. Nevertheless, proper safety precautions are taken to avoid serious injury. The match must be located in a publicly accessible area with plenty of space for movement and moderate pedestrian traffic. Should pedestrians disrupt the match, it is immediately paused and later resumed. A duelist is not permitted to physically, or through lack of proper warning, back an opponent into any obstacle. All sabers are to be held firmly to avoid a hilt slipping out of one’s hands. If a duelist is male, he will wear a cup or jock strap for protection. Both duelists must wear protective gloves and shoes or boots for protection and mobility. The use of mouth guards and eye protection is strongly recommended. If it is agreed that strikes to the head will be allowed, helmets must be worn by both duelists. If it is agreed that stabbing techniques will be allowed, suitable body armor must be worn by both duelists. Additionally, the “RSA’s Official Safety Standards” (attached) in their entirety, are to be strictly followed.
- 4. The Bow and Salute.** Opponents face each other and ignite their sabers. They stand only close enough to allow a few inches of space between the tips of their sabers as they are pointed toward each other with extended arms. Both combatants bow and salute each other. The bow is quick and respectful, at about 30 degrees. The salute can be a simple spin, flourish, or signature flourish of the saber while respectful eye-contact is maintained. Thus the match begins. This sequence is also to be followed if a match is resumed after any break.
- 5. Earning Points.** One point is earned by a duelist if he/she lands a strike on their opponent. A “strike” is a successful attack in which the blade has made contact with the opponent’s hands, body, or armor, or if the opponent’s own blade makes contact with their own hands, body, or armor. Strikes to the eyes, face, throat, groin, or knees must be avoided at all costs, and do not yield points. If helmets are not worn, head strikes are also prohibited. A stabbing strike in the absence of body armor likewise yields no point. Grabbing one’s own blade or the saber of an opponent is not allowed. Likewise, punches, holds, grabbing, kicks, and hitting an opponent with a saber’s hilt are all illegal actions.
- 6. The Boundaries.** The match takes place in the “starting area” roughly in the center of the dueling area, which has clearly established and agreed upon boundaries. (These boundaries must follow visible markers such as painted lines, trees, walls, fences, etc.) Either duelist may not retreat both feet beyond the pre-determined boundaries of the dueling area. If this occurs, one point is awarded to the duelist remaining inside the boundaries, both must suspend the match, return to the starting area, and salute again before resuming. All points earned thus far remain.
- 7. Self-Declaration.** In the moment a point is earned, the duelist who was hit calls out the number of points so far earned by their opponent. For example, if this was your opponent’s second point made against you, you would call out, “two!” There is no formal break in the action, as the match continues unabated. If a disagreement arises, it is settled with the ruling of an appointed judge or with a coin-toss.
- 8. Halting for Injury.** All care and precautions should be taken in order to avoid injury. If a duelist is seriously injured, or otherwise in need of an emergency respite, they will raise their hand, with palm toward their opponent in a universal “stop” motion. This will signal to both duelists (and perhaps judges and audience members as well) that the active spar or duel is now temporarily suspended. Both players will then agree on the proper course of action. If the match is to continue, the duelists will return to the starting area, bow and salute.
- 9. Claiming Victory and Conclusion.** The spar or duel is over when one duelist first reaches the previously agreed upon number of points. If both players reach that number of points at the same time, the match is a draw and would be recorded as a “tied match.” After the match, both duelists honorably agree upon and accept the results of the duel, deactivate their sabers, shake hands, and go their separate ways. These results are then reported within 72 hours after the event by each duelist if it is to count toward their progress within an academy or club.

# The RSA's Official Safety Standards



*The following collection of safety measures is a subsection of the Official RSA Rules for The Sport of Lightsaber Dueling. It was first agreed upon by the Rogue Saber Academy's founding council on 3/4/2017. (Current Edition: 2.7\*, Approved: 11/7/2017) \*The Latest Edition is Prioritized.*

## Personal Responsibility

In all physical sport, there is a chance for injury. As a public service, these safety standards were written to give further protocols designed to minimize the chance of injury and promote safety and wellbeing for all involved when engaging in the sport of Combat Lightsaber Dueling. All users of the RSA's online media, resources, and published works (referred to as "students" or "duelists") acknowledge that even when the following standards are applied, minor injury can still be expected due to the nature of the sport itself. In accepting the RSA's Terms and Conditions, all students agree to take full practical and legal responsibility of their own safety when training, meeting with others, and so forth.

## Personal Health Precautions

It is recommended that all students engage in thirty minutes of rigorous cardio exercise (or proper weight-lifting) for at least thirty minutes a day, five days a week, prior to and during their combat saber training. This exercise, in combination with plenty of water intake and healthy nutritional habits can prevent a number of injuries. Students should actively seek to increase their physical endurance, strength and flexibility. If serious illness or other health concerns arise, students are expected to cancel any scheduled event, in which they are to participate, in order to adequately recover and prevent the spread of disease to other students. To avoid injury before a match, duelists should stretch all major muscle groups and "warm up" with a quick jog or exercise routine.

## Assembling a first aid kit

It is expected that all students arrive at their matches with a small first-aid kit contained within a water-proof container. This kit should be well stocked with materials such as: common adhesive bandages, general disinfectant (hand-sanitizer), insect-bite ointment, cleaning wipes, finger splints, a roll of first-aid tape, sterile pads and gauze rolls, vinyl gloves, scissors, and a note with the phone numbers of nearby hospitals and the local police.

## What to Bring

It is recommended that all students bring with them to each match one or more personal water bottles, their first-aid kit, and a working cell phone. If the skies are clear, wearing lotion-style sunblock with both UVA and UVB protection with an SPF above 15 is highly recommended. In addition to the protective materials given in the official sport rules, all duelists should wear clothing appropriate for the weather. Watches and jewelry should be removed prior to any spar or duel.

## The Importance of a Second

Students should never go to a scheduled match or tournament alone. A "second" is traditionally a fellow duelist who is expected to engage in the match on behalf of a fallen comrade. However, the RSA uses this term to mean a well-known and trusted friend of the duelist who is to accompany them to a match, ensure that all rules and safety standards are followed, and contact help in the event of an emergency. The mere presence of an alert second can dissuade possible intended criminal activity. A second can serve as a judge, and also help to ensure both duelists are not behaving too aggressively or carelessly. They should never be engaged in a duel (or other distracting activity) at the same time as the duelist with whom they had arrived to the match. Following the match, both duelists, with their seconds, should go their separate ways.

## Interactions with Other Students

Online, or in person, a student should not give their full real name, home address, or contact information, to another student. Before any event, a duelist should contact family members or friends to let them know where they are expected to be and when they expect to return. If a match has been scheduled between two duelists who are unfamiliar with each other, both participants and their seconds should be alert at all times for unusual behavior, ready to cancel the event and go their separate ways at the earliest suspicion. For example, once duelists meet at the agreed upon meeting location, they should never go to a second, unplanned, location. The suggestion to carry out the match in a way contrary to the public plans for that match should be cause to cancel the event.

## Proper dueling techniques

All students should study and practice a great deal before engaging in a match. (The RSA's training lessons, in particular, have been designed to grant students with technical advantages and also to help them develop safe habits. Therefore, adherence to the steps of each technique taught is important.) To avoid injury, control of a duelist's weapon must take priority over speed or style. Consequently, all duelists are strongly encouraged to only duel or spar at 50% of their maximum possible speed and intensity. A focus on maintaining control, preventing harm, and performing at one's best, takes far more skill than reckless dueling. Someone who trains with this kind of focus will not only be a safer duelist, but will also benefit from the greater self-discipline along the way.

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