

Lesson Plan

ACM 101 – Introductory Marshalling Policy and Practice

October 15, 2025

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson plan is to prepare the instructor to conduct a complete session of the *ACM 101 – Introductory Marshalling Policy and Practice* course. It is expected that all students who successfully complete this course will have the basic knowledge to be ready to assist as Marshals for armored combat in the Kingdom of Trimaris; as such, the instructor should make every effort to assure that all students are fully engaged in the instruction. It is assumed that all students taking this course will have a working knowledge of armored combat in the SCA – the basic workings of SCA combat will not be covered.

The structure of this lesson plan mirrors the course syllabus, to make it easier for the instructor and students to stay in sync. Instructor notes are in *blue italic text*.

Course Materials

The following materials are required to successfully teach this class:

Student

- Course Syllabus
- SCA Armored Combat Handbook, current edition
- Kingdom of Trimaris Addendum Sheet, current edition
- Marshal's Key (optional)

Instructor

- Lesson Plan
- Course Sign-In Sheet
- Passing and failing Armor Examples (if available)
- Legal and Illegal laminated weapons (optional)
- Legal and illegal low profile thrusting tips (if available)
- Weapon examples
- Marshal's Key

Course Outline

General

Instructor Note: The instructor should greet the students, announce the title of course, and begin circulating the sign-in sheet. From there, the instructor should quickly review the topics to be covered in the syllabus. Make sure that students understand that this class is no substitute for reading and understanding the marshal's handbook and that additional experience and training under supervision of an authorized marshal is required to be fully authorized. Specific standards (i.e. rigid material) will not be covered. Instead, the purpose of this class is to prepare them for marshalling 'on the field'. Remind them also that marshals must maintain a paid membership in order to perform marshal duties.

- Understand the role of the marshal in SCA armored combat
 - Safety Officer
 - Fair Witness

Instructors Note: Students should be cautioned against calling blows on the field, as this is not their function. Instead, elaborate with example using students or teaching assistants: (improvise as appropriate)

Fighter A: Was that blow good?

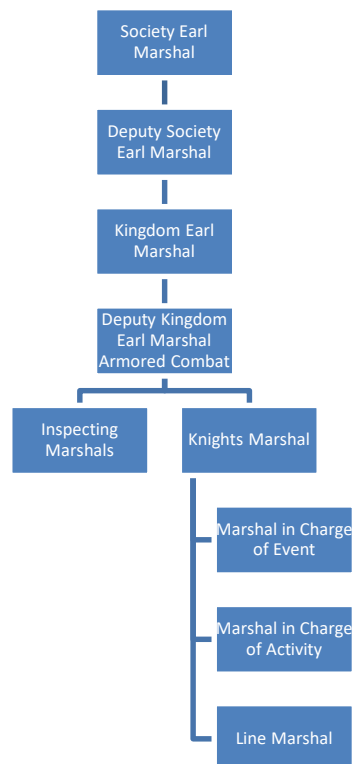
Marshal: It was a clear and unimpeded blow to your head

Fighter B: Was it hard enough?

Marshal: You were in the armor, so you'll have to decide if it was good.

 - Ringmaster

Instructors Note: Make sure the winner of each bout is announced, and that the populace is kept informed of what's happening (rounds, etc.), either by the Marshal or the Herald.
- Know what the marshal is NOT
 - Judge
 - Score Keeper
- The Marshal's tools
 - Key
 - Staff
 - Tabard
 - Handbook and Addendum
- Know the structure of the Marshallate of the Kingdom of Trimaris
 - Know the chain of responsibility and appeal. When in doubt (don't guess) or when someone wants to challenge a decision (DON'T ARGUE), pass it up the chain.



Inspections – Armor

Instructors Note: Make sure students understand that the inspection process is the first opportunity of the marshal to confront potential safety issues.

If you (as a warranted marshal) do not believe that the weapon or armor is safe, do not let it be used on the field regardless of whether it meets all other requirements. When in doubt, ask for a second opinion from another warranted marshal. Only a warranted marshal can make final decisions about weapons and armor.

- Know how to perform an inspection

Instructors Note: Demonstrate the inspection process for all required armor areas – an assistant is invaluable here. If available, have examples of non-compliant armor to show the class. Suggest starting from the top down so that nothing is overlooked. Specific inspection notes are listed below.

HEAD AND NECK

Before the fighter puts their helm on, inspect the interior for:

- Broken welds, loose rivets, and internal projections that could cause injury
- The presence and condition of padding or a suspension system. Padding and suspension systems degrade over time with use and wear and will need to be repaired or replaced.

Have the fighter put their helm on and assume their normal fighting stance.

- Check the face guard and eye slots do not have openings greater than 1 inch (25.4mm) that would allow a weapon to penetrate. *Instructors Note: Demonstrate use of marshal's key to check bar spacing.*
- The face guard must extend at least 1 inch (25.4 mm) below the bottom of your chin and jaw line when your head is held erect.
- Verify that the faceguard will not hit the fighter's face by putting your hand on the front of the helm, and have the fighter push against it. A gentle touch of the tip of the nose to the face guard at maximum pressure is undesirable, but not grounds to disqualify the helm.
- Check that the retention system is secured by lifting the helm gently
 - If your helm has a chin strap, it must be at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) in width and must not be placed in a way that could strangle you.
- Check gorget and/or camail for proper coverage
 - Check that the larynx, cervical and first thoracic vertebrae are covered. If it appears likely these areas will not remain covered when the fighter moves, have the fighter turn or tilt their head to typical combat positions to see that the required protection remains in place.
 - If your camail or aventail is likely to come into contact with your larynx, cervical vertebrae, or first thoracic vertebra during combat, that section must be padded with a minimum of 1/4 inch (6 mm) of closed cell foam

or equivalent padding.

Instructors Note: Make sure to cover the required areas of the neck and which types require padding and additional stiffeners.

ELBOWS AND HANDS/WRISTS

- Verify that the points of the elbows are covered and that sufficient padding is present (1/4").
- Check cops for stress fractures that risk total failure of cop. Verify that a properly constructed vambrace is in use.
 - Trimaris requires rigid protection along the medial side of the forearm and strongly recommend 1/4" padding under the rigid material.
- Gauntlets/Demis - Check the gauntlet/Demi and/or basket hilt to see if the combination covers the required area (the hand, fingers and thumb, and one inch of the forearm).
- Check for signs that the equipment is faulty. Back of the hand, base of thumb, and wrist needs 'rigid' protection with Basket Hilt. Stress that protection that is not rigid or that doesn't cup to the weapon must have proper padding (1/2").
- Behind the shield – A rigid basket on a weapon or side-strapped shield, a center-grip shield, or cup hilt with enough bars or plates to prevent a blow from striking your fingers or the back of your hand.
 - If you are using a basket or cup hilt, a side-strapped with a shield basket, or center-grip shield, your forearm armor and/or partial gauntlet must cover the remaining exposed portions of your hand, wrist, fingers, and thumb.
- Full elbow protection is required behind a strapped shield.
- Full elbow protection and vambrace are required for center grip shields

BODY

- Check for kidney and floating rib armor.
- Kidneys are located in the back, along either side of the spine at the bottom of the rib cage, generally in-line with the elbows not down on the hips.
- ASK the fighter if they are wearing the appropriate groin protection.
 - It is up to the combatant to know what they need to wear.
 - Do not attempt to check for it physically.

LEGS/FEET

- Check that the front and sides of the knee are covered. If you are concerned about coverage during combat, have the fighter flex their knees (either a deep knee bend or raise one knee at a time) and see that the knee remains covered.
- Check for signs that the equipment is faulty and that the points of knees are covered and sufficient padding is present (1/4").
- You should wear footwear that provides adequate protection and support for the terrain and activity of combat

MEDIEVAL APPERANCE RULE

You must disguise, cover, or remove modern corporate logos and sport gear unless the gear is necessary for medical reasons. We are trying to maintain the appearance and atmosphere of a medieval event

Example Guidance:

- Foot Gear – Allowed: combat boots, hiking boots, etc. that are solid natural colors (brown, black, beige); any modern footwear covered so as to look period. NO uncovered sneakers, cleats, brightly-colored/obvious plastic.
- Reasonable Example Rule - Emphasize looking for reasonable appearance: cover obvious plastic, modern logos, street signs, etc.
- Prior Damage Rule – Unrepaired damage at inspection that exposes modern logos, etc. Suggest for on-the-field repairs instead of silver duct tape or cable ties, use brown or black duct tape, cord, or leather thong. Emphasize having their own repair kit.
- Be polite in enforcement. Try to be helpful, if possible, suggest simple improvements.
- Intention is to improve appearance of field, not prevent folks from playing.

Inspections – Weapons & Shields

Instructors Note: Make sure students are aware of the rules with respect to laminated weaponry, namely that they are legal. If possible, have legal- and illegally constructed laminated weapons available to show the class. Suggest use of a tape measure or knotted string for checking lengths. If available, have examples of passing and failing weapons to show class, especially failing thrusting tips.

- Swords
 - Check minimum rattan diameter (1.25"), grip excluded.
 - If thrusting tips are used on single-handed weapons they must have at least the same diameter as the shaft of the weapon they are mounted on and have at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) of resilient material in front of the rigid tip of the weapon.
 - Check that the tip is constructed in such a manner that it cannot be forced more than 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) into a legal faceguard.
 - Check tape condition and for exposed splinters
 - Instructors Note: tape should not be neon colors or modern patterns*
 - Verify lanyard or trigger is present
 - Total weapon mass must not exceed 5 pounds (2.27 kg)
- Single-handed mass weapons
 - Check minimum rattan diameter (1.25"), grip excluded.
 - The head must be firmly and securely attached to the haft
 - The head must allow at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) of progressive give between the striking surface and the weapon haft.
 - Semi-rigid ultra-lightweight shaped foam heads, or split rattan construction techniques do not require 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) of progressive give, as long as their construction provides striking

characteristics similar to an unpadded weapon constructed of a single piece of rattan.

- If thrusting tips are used on single-handed weapons they must have at least the same diameter as the shaft of the weapon they are mounted on and have at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) of resilient material in front of the rigid tip of the weapon.
 - Check that the tip is constructed in such a manner that it cannot be forced more than 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) into a legal faceguard.
- Verify lanyard is present
- Maximum length for single-handed mass weapons is 48 inches (1220 mm).
- Total weapon mass must not exceed 5 pounds (2.27 kg)
- Great Weapons
 - The weapon must be constructed of rattan of not less than 1 1/4 inches (31.8 mm) in diameter (including tape) along its entire length.
 - Two-handed swords, great swords, and bastard swords are allowed to have a thinner handle area with a diameter less than 1 1/4 inches (31.8 mm).
 - The weapon must not be excessively flexible.
 - Verify maximum length (7.5')
 - No weapon can exceed 6 pounds (2.73 kg).
 - Thrusting Tip:
 - Must be at least the same diameter as the shaft of the weapon they are mounted
 - They must have 1 1/2 inches (38.1 mm) of resilient material in front of the rigid tip of the weapon, thereby providing progressively resistant give. (Note: Pressing with the thumb into the center of the thrusting tip is not an adequate test. The give must be across the entire face of the tip.)
 - Check that as pressure is applied directly to the thrusting surface, it will compress gradually, without bottoming-out or bending to the side enough to expose the end of the blade, haft or blunt/core of the weapon to which it is attached.
 - Check that the tip is constructed in such a manner that it cannot be forced more than 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) into a legal faceguard.
 - Mandrake brand thrusting tips are legal on weapons 7-1/2 ft or less
- Spears
 - Total spear length must not exceed 9 feet (2.74 m).
 - Rattan spears must be constructed of rattan with a diameter of no less than 1 1/4 inches (31.8mm).
 - Spears are not allowed to have a thinner handle
 - Fiberglass spears must be constructed of pultruded fiberglass shafts with an outside diameter of no less than 1 1/4 inches (31.8 mm) and no greater than 1 5/16 inches (33.38 mm).
 - The end of the fiberglass shaft which will have the thrusting tip attached must be covered with a schedule-40 PVC or equivalent non-metallic rigid material.
 - The thrusting tip will then be attached over this cap.
 - Spears must not have a cutting or smashing head on both ends

- All spears must have a thrusting tip that is a minimum of 2 inches (50.8 mm) in diameter/cross-section and have 2 inches (50.8 mm) of resilient material in front of the end, which provides progressively resistant give without allowing contact with the end
- Check that as pressure is applied directly to the thrusting surface, it will compress gradually, without bottoming-out or bending to the side enough to expose the end of the blade, haft or blunt/core of the weapon to which it is attached
- Shields
 - Shield must be edged with leather, padding, or other covering, or constructed so that it minimizes damage to rattan weapons or other fighters
 - Sharp edges (e.g. 90-degrees or more) must be rounded.
 - Bolts, wires, or other objects must not project more than 3/8 inch (9 mm) from any part of your shield without being padded.
 - Rounded shield bosses are not considered to be projections.
 - No unpainted street sign, neon colors, modern decals, etc.
- Javelins; throwing axes, hammers, and daggers
 - No part of the weapon should be able to penetrate a bar grill more than 1/2 inch (12.7 mm).
 - If your throwing weapon has a haft or shaft, it must be made of:
 - rattan that is at least 1 1/4 inch (31.8 mm) in diameter along its entire length
 - two layers of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe or equivalent.
 - You must use a thrusting tip on any tip that can be reasonably assumed to contact a fighter when the weapon is used or thrown.
 - Tips must be at least 1 1/4 inch (31.8 mm) in diameter/cross-section and have at least 1 1/4 inch (31.8 mm) of resilient material in front of the entire rigid tip of the weapon, to provide progressively resistant give.
 - If your weapon has a head:
 - The head must be firmly and securely attached to the haft or handle.
 - The head must allow at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) of progressive give between the striking surface and the weapon haft or handle.
 - The weapon must have the owner's name, kingdom, and branch clearly and legibly printed on it in English characters for identification.
 - Verify less than maximum weight (<2 lbs.)

Instructors Note: Stress -don't hesitate to ask for help if you are not familiar with inspecting these weapons.
- Combat archery

Instructors Note: ONLY a combat archery marshal can inspect weapons and ammunition. Stress that if you are MIC and not a CA marshal, you must arrange for one if there is to be CA at the event.
- Experimental weapons
 - MUST be clearly marked with 6" of red and green spiral tape

Instructors Note: Stress that if you are not familiar with the proper construction/regs of the experimental weapon, get help.

- Siege weapons

Instructors Note: ONLY a siege weapons marshal can inspect weapons and ammunition. Stress that if you are MIC and not a siege marshal, you must arrange for one if there are to be siege weapons used at the event.

Basic Field Marshalling Procedures

- Understand the procedures for marshalling a single bout.

Instructors Note: Emphasize to students that most problems can be avoided by approaching the fight with a confident attitude and good field presence, as the participants will perceive that the marshal is in control of the fight.

- Where to stand.
- What to look for.

Instructors Note: Remind students that they will be occasionally called upon as a fair witness of where a blow landed, or when, and remind them to pay attention to the details of the fight, and not just to watch. NEVER say a blow was 'good', the fighter must always judge the blow himself.

- How to exert control of the fight.

Instructors Note: Remind the students to try and keep the fight centered in the list area to minimize the possibility of spectator injury. Discuss the circumstances under which a warning needs to be issued to one of the combatants (i.e. low blows).

- When to call a hold.
- When NOT to call a hold.
- When to escalate situations to the Marshal In Charge of the event
 - Don't argue

Line-marshalling Melee

Instructors Note: Discuss briefly how line-marshalling emphasizes maintaining the safety of the spectators, and to keeping an eye out for immediate safety issues.

- Changes in the role of the marshal on the open field.
- Maintaining field integrity.
- Additional equipment.

Instructors Note: Recommend to students that they acquire goggles for scenarios with combat archery, and the advisability of full gauntlets in certain melee scenarios.

Engagement Guidelines

- Understand Line engagement.
- Know when a passing shot is allowed.

Exceptional Situations

Instructors Note: Emphasize to students that they must become comfortable with making decisions on the field quickly, and with good judgment, as an issue on the field can develop rapidly into one beyond the control of the marshal, while excessive holds are just as bad.

- Safety Issues

Instructors Note: Discuss briefly some concrete examples of common safety issues that occur on the field, i.e. required protective gear that has obviously been rendered ineffective, acknowledgement levels that present safety issues, activities that are within

the bounds of policy and convention that are carried out in an unsafe manner, dropped weapons, etc. Don't let the discussion get out of hand, as there are more possible safety issues than time to discuss them.

- Argumentative combatants
- Disputes on the field
- Non-combatants on the field
- Injuries

Marshal Duties

Instructors Note: Stress that timely reporting is important. A marshal may fall into more than one category of responsibility, such as the Knights Marshal being the MIC of an event. All marshals should submit supplementary reports for incidents they witnessed. Combat waivers for unauthorized fighters must be sent to the Waiver Deputy monthly.

- Knights Marshals - WARRANTED marshal (must be paid members)
 - Promotion of all combat activities of the branch
 - Communicate information within the local group
 - Hold regular practices and train new combatants
 - Oversee local marshals of other combat activities (rapier, youth, etc.)
 - Perform Authorizations as outlined in the Trimaris Addendum
 - Distribute, collect, and send combat waivers to the Waiver Deputy
 - Quarterly/Annual Reports
 - Incident/Injury Reports
 - Experimental Weapon Feedback
- Marshal-In-Charge of event
 - Oversee all combat activities at an event, including arranging for armor inspections, authorizations, appropriate marshals to supervise other combat activities (rapier, equestrian, etc.), scheduling such activities with the autocrat, and reporting results.
 - Tourney Reports
 - Incident/Injury Reports
 - Experimental Weapon Feedback
- Marshal in Charge of Activity
 - Generally responsible for running a tournament at an event
 - Usually this is the Champion of the previous year running a tournament
- Marshals-At-Large – ROSTERED marshal
 - Assist with armor inspections, melees, and tourneys
 - Supplemental Incident/Injury Reports
 - Must be paid member to be MIC
 - NOT authorized to perform authorizations