

International Rally Saber Association

Official Rulebook®
2019 Edition



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OFFICIAL RULES COMMITTEE

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FOREWORD

The code of rules contained herein shall govern all official tournaments, matches, and training for professional and amateur level Rally Saber combat, and shall govern all members of the International Rally Saber Association.

These rules are available to all, regardless of professional status, and may be modified outside of the professional level as needed. Participants are strongly urged to follow all safety and saber equipment recommendations as outlined in the official rules.

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OVERVIEW AND PHILOSOPHY

Rally Saber is a sport designed to allow people of all physical types to participate together. There is no segregation of opponents based on sex or weight/height, and individual techniques can be developed to be successful against various levels of opponents. Rally Saber fighters must be 15+ to participate in national tournaments.

Code of Ethics

Fighters of the International Rally Saber Association (IRSA) will:

- Fight fair
- Exercise good sportsmanship
- Exhibit a positive attitude
- Refrain from deliberately harming an opponent
- Promote comradery amongst teammates
- Behave maturely and responsibly when representing IRSA

3 Foundational Rules

The three primary rules of the sport are implemented to create a heavy emphasis on defense.

1. **Turn-based.** This is the key feature to the sport that enables such controlled and clean fights. This feature is why we refer to the sport as “Rally Saber” –it refers to the continuous back and forth of attacker and defender.
2. **Bring It Back, Then Attack.** In order to make an attack, the attacker must bring their blade tip back behind them, before they make attack. This is called “breaking the plane”, and it’s another feature to allow the defender a better chance to repel an oncoming attack.
3. **Direct Swings.** When an attack is made, the attacker must make a direct, smooth, unwavering curve with their swing. No feinting, no swing speed change, and no wavering. This makes the attacking blade trajectory easier to prepare for and defend against.

Benefits of the 3 Foundational Rules

Spinning during a fight is now a strategic move with these rules. The turn-based approach affords the attacker protection while they perform a spinning strike, as the defender is not allowed to attack during the defense phase. Wide flourishes are a natural part of this sport, as the fighters’ blades must essentially stay in fluid curves as they move back and forth in offense and defense.

Rounds last substantially longer than all other sword fighting sports/martial arts, as this is a very defensive sport. This makes for a much more exciting fight for spectators. Satisfying cinematic sword fighting exchanges are beautiful and very regular in Rally Saber, whereas in other sword fighting sports/martial arts, they are less common.

No sword fighting or martial arts background is necessary to enjoy the sport.

PART 1: RULES OF PLAY

Code of Conduct

All official International Rally Saber Association (IRSA) members and employees are required to maintain respectable lifestyles and be upstanding citizens. If any member is found to be actively participating in any illegal violence, abuse, ability-enhancing drug use, corruption, or acts of prejudice, they will lose their membership. Violators will be required to go through a probationary period (to be determined by local IRSA official council) if they wish to have their membership reinstated.

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Section 1: Arena, Equipment, and Participants

1.00 Arena

Arena Dimensions, Lines, & Surface

1.01 Arena dimensions for official tournaments shall be either a 20' diameter circular ring, or a square or rectangular no less than 16'x16'.

1.02 Lines delineating boundaries shall be LED lights, painted lines, or floor tape.

1.03 Floor surface shall be polished wood, sport linoleum, sport vinyl, solid rubber, or polished concrete. Any floor surface must be solid with adequate traction.

1.04 Arena height shall be no less than 12'5".

Zones

1.05 In bounds: Combat area defined within the LED lights, paint, or tape. This area is the legal scoring area.

1.06 Out of bounds: Non-combat area outside the combat area defined by LED lights, paint, or tape. If any part of the fighter's body touches the line of the combat area boundary, or the ground outside the boundary, the fighter receives a foul.

1.07 Starting Circle: If arena is a circle, the starting circle is the inner circle in which the fighters begin their match. Fighters' feet must be touching the inner circle, but must not cross over it. This is the 4' diameter circle around which the fighters stand to signal they are ready to begin the bout.

1.08 Starting Lines: If arena is a square or rectangle, the starting lines shall be drawn 4' apart in the center of the combat area. Fighters' feet must be touching the lines, but must not cross over the lines. These are the lines at which the fighters stand to signal they are ready to begin the bout.

Temperature & Lighting

1.09 The maximum arena temperature shall not be higher than 77° F (25° C) and the minimum arena temperature shall not be lower than 61° F (16° C).

1.10 Arena lighting shall be adequate for referees and spectators to see fighters clearly. Light levels shall be at referee discretion. If arena is outdoors, natural light must be adequate for referees and spectators to see fighters clearly. Additional lighting may be used if needed, provided the lights are not shining directly in referees' or fighters' eyes.

Location of Spectators

1.11 Spectators shall be surrounding the play area in bleacher or chair style seating. Spectators may be no closer than 15 feet from outer arena boundaries.

Outdoor & Casual

1.12 Official tournaments held outdoors or in an unconventional area must maintain the same dimensions, lines and zones of an indoor tournament. The surface played on must still be flat, and if on grass, it must be recently mowed and terrain must be flat and smooth to allow ease of movement.

1.13 Casual (unranked) tournaments may alter arena specifications as desired. Full speed fights require full protective gear regardless of setting.

2.00 Equipment

Required Equipment for Official Tournaments

2.01 Required Equipment: helmet, gloves, elbow guards, knee guards, shin guards.

2.02 Helmet must cover head entirely. Helmet must have plastic shield or screen with ventilation holes no larger than 1" to prevent saber blades from penetrating through. Only certified legal helmets are allowed in official tournaments.

2.03 Gloves must be a minimum of Lacrosse level of protection. Fingertip guards are recommended, particularly for thumb, index, and middle fingers.

2.04 Elbow guards must be secured in place, and fit well enough so as not to shift during combat.

2.05 Knee guards must be secured in place, and fit well enough so as not to shift during combat.

2.06 Shin guards must be (at least) double-strap or sock insert. Must be secured in place and fit well enough so as not to shift during combat.

2.07 Optional Equipment: chest or thigh protectors and shoulder pauldrons are allowed in tournament setting, but must not obstruct fighter movement in any significant way. Legality of all equipment is at referee/judge discretion.

Clothing & Shoes

2.08 Tournament shirt shall be an official Rally Saber approved jersey, with team printed on the front and fighter's name and number clearly printed on the back.

2.09 Pant legs must be at least five inches below the groin, regardless of fighter sex. Loose or excessively tight pants or shorts (subject to judge discretion) are prohibited in official tournaments.

2.10 Shoes must be closed toed. Ankle must be protected either by shoe or ankle guard. Shoes must be light and pliable, with rubber or composite soles without a raised heel.

Prohibited Items

2.11 Open-faced helmets, shoes with wooden or leather soles, and helmet adornments that protrude from the helmet surface are strictly prohibited in official tournaments. Fighters may not participate in official tournaments while wearing a medical cast or splint of any kind.

2.12 Support braces are permitted. However, fighter must demonstrate that they are capable of a full range of motion before being allowed to compete.

3.00 Approved Saber Specifications

Blade

3.01 Official Rally Saber matches may only be fought with sabers of equal length.

3.02 Legal blade width is 1" in diameter.

3.03 Legal hilt length from pommel to emitter shall be no less than 10 inches and may not exceed 13 inches.

3.04 Legal overall saber length is measured from bottom of hilt to tip of blade. Overall length shall be no less than 44 inches and may not exceed 47 inches.

3.05 Saber blades shall be hollow and made of highly durable poly-composite plastic (polycarbonate). No exceptions. All blades must be from approved vendors.

Hilt

3.06 Hilt material must be made of highly durable metal, plastic, or wood.

3.07 Hilts may not have protruding spikes or sharpened edges that could pose a threat to owner or opponent.

3.08 Any method used to secure blade to hilt must hold blade firmly in place during combat. Blade must slide securely into hilt without wiggle room and once fixed in place, must resist any reasonable torquing or pulling.

Electronics

3.09 All sabers used in official tournaments may be illuminated with no less than 250 lumens and shall not exceed 500 lumens.

3.10 Sound is optional for either fighter. All sound fonts must be pre-approved by the IRSA managing committee. Sound fonts may not be explicit or offensive in any way.

3.11 Flash-on-clash effect is permitted. Clash effect must not exceed 2 seconds in length.

4.00 Participants

Age, Size, & Ability

4.01 All participants of official tournaments must compete in their appropriate age bracket.

4.02 Official tournaments are separated into three divisions: Junior, Youth, and Open.

4.03 Junior Division is open to participants ages 12 and under. Matchups in Junior Division shall be based on fighter height.

4.04 Youth Division is open to participants ages 13 through 17. Matchups in Youth Division shall be based on level.

4.05 Open Division is open to participants 18 and over. Matchups in Open Division shall

be based on level.

4.03 Only fighters 15 years of age and up may participate in National tournaments.

4.04 Opponents competing in official tournaments may not be more than one level apart.

Certification Levels

4.05 Fighter skill level is determined by passing level examinations, as approved by a certified IRSA official.

4.06 Skill levels are defined as Novice, Intermediate, and Expert. Youth and Open Divisions have separate levels. Levels do not apply to Junior Division.

4.07 Youth Division levels are defined as Youth Novice/Youth Intermediate/Youth Expert.

4.08 Open Division levels are defined as Open Novice/Open Intermediate/Open Expert.

4.07 Youth Division fighters aging into Open Division may skip the Novice level examination if they have passed Expert level in Youth Division.

4.08 Expert level is granted to fighters who have passed all previous level examinations and who pass the Expert level examination.

Membership

4.09 Memberships are required along with level certifications in order to be recognized as a professional IRSA fighter.

4.10 Membership levels are as follows: Basic, Professional, Referee, Organizer, and Gym Owner.

4.11 Memberships are billed annually, and can be reinstated at any time after a hiatus, provided the applicant meets all required standards.

Membership Benefits

	Basic	Professional	Referee	Organizer	Gym Owner
Equipment Discounts	X	X	X	X	X
Event Discounts	X	X	X	X	X
Training Discounts	X	X	X	X	X
Access to Database	X	X	X	X	X
Access to Database Forums	X	X	X	X	X
Competition Training		X			
IRSA Competition Eligibility		X			
National Ranking		X			
Exclusive Access to Special Events		X	X	X	X
Promotional Exposure		X		X	X
Access to Referee Portal			X	X	X
Authorization to Hold Local IRSA events			X	X	X
Franchise Kit					X
Official Representation on IRSA Website & Database					X
Authorization to Create Official IRSA Team					X
Authorization to Hold Official Tournaments					X

Membership opportunities and benefits will be kept up-to-date on the official IRSA website and in each subsequent edition of the Official IRSA Rulebook.

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