

Rules for Combat Sport Qiangshu (Spear) Competition

The goal of promoting combat sport Qiangshu (Chinese Spear) is to provide a realistic, safe, and skill-cultivating competitive environment for martial artists. Unlike long staff (*Gunshu*) combat, spear fighting is governed by the principles of **thrust dominance, line control, and immediate lethality**. These rules emphasize realistic spear mechanics—prioritizing precise long and short thrusts and close-quarters butt/shaft strikes—while penalizing uncharacteristic staff techniques like large slashing, circular swinging, and decorative weapon spinning.

1. Setup and Personnel

1.1 Facility

The match will be conducted in a 25' x 25' square ring. The on-guard position of each contestant is located such that the front foot of each contestant is 6 feet from the center of the court (12 feet apart) with contestants directly facing each other.

1.2 Referee

The referee is located inside the ring to conduct the match, enforce engagement safety, call stoppages, and assign penalty point deductions.

1.3 Side Judges

Two side judges are assigned per match. To ensure complete focus on rapid thrust exchanges and eliminate missed counts:

- **Each side judge tracks only ONE contestant per round using a single mechanical tally counter.**
- Side judges position themselves along opposing sidelines and move actively to maintain a clear line of sight on the point of engagement.

1.4 Time/Scorekeeper

One time/scorekeeper controls official time, tracks round stoppages, and tabulates final scores from side judges and referee penalty sheets.

1.5 Ancillary Devices

- Four handheld mechanical tally counters (two for side judges, two reserved for referee deductions).

- Red and blue wristbands for judge identification.
- Stopwatch, whistle, and score tabulation sheets.

2. Valid Techniques and Target Areas

2.1 Valid Spear Techniques

2.1.1 Scoring Thrusts (Primary Scoring Method)

- **Long Thrust (*Chang Zhi*):** Full-extension linear thrust delivered with the spearhead using full body commitment.
- **Short Thrust (*Duan Zhi*):** Rapid, short-range piston thrusts delivered at close quarters with high accuracy.

2.1.2 Short Strikes (Secondary Mechanics)

- **Short Spearhead Hit (*Duan Dian*):** Snapping short-range whip or flick of the spearhead (within a maximum 12-inch movement arc) delivered to the head or hands.
- **Rear Butt Strike (*Ba Dian*):** Short-range strike delivered with the rear end (butt) of the spear shaft, strictly limited to target areas at close distance (under 3 feet).

Core Requirement: All valid techniques must demonstrate clear offensive intent, linear precision, clean contact, and structural penetration force.

2.2 Prohibited Techniques (Banned Actions)

The following actions are **invalid for scoring** and will draw immediate warnings or penalty deductions:

- **No Large Slashes (*Pi*):** Wide, sweeping vertical or diagonal downward slashing motions exceeding 30° from the centerline.
- **No Circular Strikes (*Lian Huan*):** Horizontal or circular swinging strikes characteristic of staff combat (*Gunshu*).
- **No Fancy Spinning or Flourishes:** Decorative spinning, behind-the-back transfers, or multi-rotation flourishes during combat.
- **No Hooking/Tripping:** Using the spear shaft or head to trip or hook the opponent's legs.

2.3 Target Areas

2.3.1 Valid Target Areas (Full Point Value)

- **Chest & Abdomen (Torso):** Primary high-value thrust target.
- **Throat & Neck (Front and Sides):** High-precision thrust target.

- **Head Mask (Front and Sides):** Precision thrust and short-point hit target.
- **Lead Arm & Hand:** Valid for short thrusts and short spearhead hits.
- **Lead Thigh:** Valid for low thrusts only.

2.3.2 Off-Target Areas (Non-Scoring)

Strikes landing on rear limbs, lower calves, or feet do not score points.

2.3.3 Illegal Target Areas (Fouls)

- Back of the head or neck
- Spine/back of torso
- Groin area
- Unprotected joints (knees/elbows from the side or rear)

3. Equipment Specifications

3.1 Combat Spear

- **Material:** Flexible, high-impact composite shaft with an approved flexible rubber/foam-padded safety spearhead.
- **Spearhead Assembly:** Soft-impact tip capable of compressing at least 1.5 inches upon impact to prevent force transfer. Red tassel attached below the head for visual clarity.
- **Dimensions:**
 - Total Length: Minimum 6'-6"
 - Shaft Diameter: Standard 1-1/4"

(Standard combat spear will be provided for contestants if necessary).

3.2 Protective Gear (Mandatory)

- **Fencing Mask:** High-impact steel mesh mask with reinforced throat guard (gorget).
- **Neck Guard:** Hockey-style or stiff padded gorget (Mandatory).
- **Chest Protector:** Dual-color (Red/Blue) chest protector covering collarbones, chest, and ribs.
- **Gloves:** Heavy-duty padded gauntlets protecting wrist, thumb, and fingers.
- **Groin Guard:** Hard-shell cup protection.
- **Elbow & Knee Pads:** Soft-padding sleeves for joints.

4. Match Regulations and Scoring Rules

4.1 Duration and Format

- Each match consists of **three 1.5-minute rounds** with a 1-minute break between rounds.
- Action within each round is continuous, stopped only by the referee calling *"Halt!"*
- The contestant who wins two out of three rounds wins the match.

4.2 Single-Counter Judge Rotation Protocol

To prevent judging fatigue, maintain single-competitor focus during fast thrust exchanges, and eliminate bias in Round 3:

Round	Side Judge 1 (SJ1)	Side Judge 2 (SJ2)	Neutral Balancing Protocol
Round 1	Tracks RED (Red Wristband)	Tracks BLUE (Blue Wristband)	Dedicated single-competitor focus.
Round 2	Tracks BLUE (Blue Wristband)	Tracks RED (Red Wristband)	Judges swap assigned competitors.
Round 3	Tracks RED (Red Wristband)	Tracks BLUE (Blue Wristband)	Referee Score Audit: Timekeeper verifies Round 3 score sheets against the Center Referee's penalty log. <i>(Optionally, a 3rd standby judge replaces SJ1).</i>

4.3 Point Rules

1. **Clean Thrust (1 Point):** Awarded for any valid long or short thrust landing cleanly on a valid target area before the opponent responds.
2. **First-Land Rule:** In rapid exchanges, only the competitor whose thrust arrives first gets the point.
3. **Simultaneous Thrusts (Double Hits):** If both fighters thrust and hit valid target areas at the same time, **no points are awarded** to either fighter.
4. **Invalid Force / Glancing Hits:** Thrusts that slide off the armor without solid tip engagement do not score.
5. **Short Hit Limit:** Snapping spearhead hits or butt strikes must land with audible/visual impact to earn a point; soft contact is disregarded.

4.4 Penalties, Warnings, and Fouls

The Referee monitors and logs penalty deductions using dedicated tracking sheets:

4.4.1 Warnings (Non-Deduction First Offense)

- Executing a circular swing or slash (first occurrence).
- Decorative spinning or non-tactical weapon rotation.
- Stepping out of bounds with one foot.
- Excessive passivity or refusing to engage.

4.4.2 Official Fouls (-1 Point Deduction per incident)

- **Repeated Staff Techniques:** Executing a large slash or circular strike after receiving a warning.
- **Dropped Weapon:** Dropping or losing control of the spear shaft (-1 point).
- **Illegal Target Contact:** Striking the back of the head, back, or groin.
- **Out-of-Bounds:** Stepping completely outside the 25' x 25' ring boundaries.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Wild, uncontrolled lunging without technique.

4.4.3 Disqualification (Match Loss)

- Accumulating **three official fouls** in a single match.
- Intentionally thrusting at an opponent after the referee calls "*Halt!*"
- Causing injury through illegal or banned techniques (e.g., full-force downward slash).

4.5 Round Score Tabulation

At the end of each round:

1. Side Judge 1 and Side Judge 2 hand their tally totals to the Scorekeeper.
2. The Scorekeeper subtracts any Referee Penalty Deductions from each fighter's tally.
3. The fighter with the higher net score wins the round.