

MARSHAL FIELD DUTIES

(Extracted from the obsolete MidRealm Rapier Rules, Rev 2.5, Section 3)

RUNNING MELEES

Melees are the potentially the most hazardous environment for both combatants and marshals and, not coincidentally, the most difficult to marshal. Marshals must not only keep in mind all of the considerations noted above in the Tournament section, but also contend with more spectators and rules of engagement - all while trying to not unduly affect the tactical scenario.

General

Maintain a high level of safety and awareness as indicated above in the Tournament section.

Additional considerations specific to the melee scenario include:

- Remind the marshals to keep good clearance from the lines during rushes, charges and other mass movements that could cause the marshal to be accidentally struck or overrun.
- Make sure the field of combat is clear of noncombatant staff and spectators before resuming after a "HOLD".
- Check the field surface before and between melees for problems.
- Check combatants and encourage them to check each other during holds for state of their equipment. They may have had something damaged in the previous engagement.
- Marshals should always have a marshal's staff, baldric and whistle for safety and effectiveness. Protective equipment is also recommended where reasonable, especially hand and groin protection. Goggles or safety glasses are recommended, but they are required for melees involving Rubber Band Guns (RBGs).
- MICs are strongly encouraged to arrange adequate Chirurgeon and water bearing support.

Melee Marshalling Requirements

- Have as many marshals as possible. The melee is a dynamic environment covering a wide area. A ratio of one marshal to every ten combatants is a good margin.
- Sometimes it's not possible to achieve that ratio, but every effort should be made to have enough marshals to protect spectators and ensure the safety of the combatants.
- Marshals should maintain the best clear view of the action, moving with the combatants as necessary, but remaining effectively out of weapons range. The MIC is responsible for judging whether or not there are enough marshals and requesting additional participation.
- One marshal should be designated as the "Presiding Marshal", who is responsible for signaling the commencement of the melee, arbitration and its continuance after any "HOLD". The role of Presiding Marshal can be rotated among the marshals as necessary.
- Marshals are expected to maintain their own tempers, remain objective and encourage calm discourse on the field.

Crowd Control

- Larger melees tend to draw larger crowds of spectators than single combat. Not only does available space become a safety consideration, but also the combatants themselves are

less likely to remain attentive to the boundaries as they follow the flow of the tactical scenario.

- The location and layout of the melee area must take these factors into consideration and the buffer zone between spectator and the action has to be firmly enforced. In some situations (such as woods battles) it is not uncommon for the MIC to forbid spectators entirely from the vicinity of the fighting area.
- When marshalling a melee that involves rubber band guns (RBGs), additional safety precautions must be taken to protect the spectators. The simplest way is to keep spectators at a distance greater than the range of the strongest RBG. But that would push spectators too far away. A better way is to arrange the melee field so all shooting will be aimed away from the spectators or that the most powerful RBG (probably a cannon) can only be shot when aimed away from the spectators.
- Keeping the spectators confined to one area will help.

“HOLDS”

There are few areas where marshals and commanders come into more frequent conflict than when to call “HOLD” s, because of the effect of interrupting the developing scenario. The first consideration must always be safety. The marshals should call for a “HOLD” if:

- The fighting is about to overflow the boundaries.
- There is an injury that might require medical assistance.
- A potentially dangerous situation is about to develop.
- A critical piece of protective gear (like a helmet/mask) has come off a combatant that cannot be otherwise safely removed from the fighting

It is impossible to create a rule for every conceivable situation. The marshals should, however, try to allow the fighting to continue when possible, erring only on the side of safety. During a “HOLD,” marshals should attempt to resolve the situation as soon as possible so that the fighting can continue.

Rules Of Engagement

All marshals should make themselves thoroughly familiar with the melee conventions of combat. The issues of legal engagement in the confusion of melee combat can not only lead to dangerous physical situations but can cause rapidly escalating tempers as well. Marshals must be particularly attentive to potential problems in situations where:

- The lines have broken and units are intermixed.
- One unit has flanked or is in the rear of another.
- Elements of one unit are breaking through the lines of another.
- Individuals are rejoining the fight from another part of the battlefield.

Marshals will frequently be called on to render judgments about engagement issues and should be constantly aware of the heightened emotions that can build during a melee. Marshals must remember to remain absolutely impartial (and diplomatic) and serve the interests of safety first, the rules of the game second, and the tactical concerns of the participants last, if at all.