

# The Dagorhir Handbook

## New Millennium Edition

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## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS DAGORHIR?

*Only one Orc remained, the last survivor of his unit. His army, which had numbered nearly a hundred only minutes before, lay scattered across the field, dead.*

*More than a score of his enemies remained alive. A mixed-bag alliance of Humans, Elves, and a single Dwarf, they charged the lone Orc, giving voice like hounds closing on the kill.*

*Instead of running away, the Orc surprised his foes. Throwing away his ruined shield, he charged through the encircling line, dealing death as he passed. One, two, three foes underestimated the Orc's desperation and speed. They fell, surprise still etched on their faces. But there were too many. The Orc dropped, hacked by six blades at once.*

THAT'S Dagorhir. A game, a sport, a martial art...a chance to live an adventure.

Dagorhir is many things to many people: a chance to escape the pressures of the modern world and play hard for a few hours; a healthy sport that's played out in the forests and fields; and a time to hang out with old friends or make new friends -- all rolled into one.

### JOINING DAGORHIR

You've just stumbled onto this Handbook (either on a Dagorhir website, or because someone handed it to you, knowing you are the kind of person who wants to live an adventure) and you're saying, "I've been looking for this my whole life," (even if you didn't realize it).

You're a Dagorhir at heart. So how do you become a Dagorhir in deed?

THE ANSWER: You find other like-minded people, make costumes, build weapons, and have a battle (and maybe follow it up with a feast). Here's how to start:

**First, go to the Dagorhir Chapters Page on [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com) and see if there is a Dagorhir chapter in your area:**

**YES! →** Email or call the contact person(s) for that group and let them know you want to join. See when and where the next battle will be. Even if you have to drive an hour to get there, it'll be worth it. Call your friends who might be interested and tell them about Dagorhir – infect them with your enthusiasm.

**NO! →** Start a Dagorhir chapter in your area! [See section on this below]

Either way, you'll need to familiarize yourself with this Handbook, so read on.

## HOW DOES DAGORHIR COMBAT WORK?

Dagorhir combat is competitive. It's not a choreographed re-creation of battles from fiction or history; instead, it's recreation -- having fun by creating your own battle. Teams ("armies") of warriors armed with safely padded "swords," "spears," and "shields" compete to achieve objectives and have a good time. Dagorhir battles are set up so that when a player "dies" she or he comes back to life soon to rejoin the fun.

Dagorhir uses colored tape to identify the various types of weapons and the damage they do: BLUE weapons are swords, axes, maces, and flails shorter than 48 inches.

RED weapons are swords, axes, and maces 48 inches or longer.

GREEN weapons are stabbing weapons such as spears and stabbing points on swords or axes.

YELLOW weapons are arrows and thrown javelins.

WHITE weapons are thrown rocks.

A basic summary of Dagorhir's combat rules is:

If you're unarmored,

- Any hit from any weapon to your torso "kills" you.
- Any hit from an airborne missile weapon (yellow or white) to your head/neck kills you (for safety, hand-held weapons can never hit to the head or neck).
- If any weapon hits your arm, you lose use of that arm -- drop whatever you're holding and put the arm behind your back.
- If any weapon hits your leg, you lose use of that leg -- drop to that knee and stay there.
- If you have two limbs (any combination of arms and legs) hacked or smashed by "blue" or "red" weapons, you die of blood loss and shock.

If you're wearing armor on your body or limbs, the armor will protect the part of the body it covers as follows:

- Armor will stop one hit from a "blue" weapon (the second hit "goes through" and counts as if the armor is no longer there).
- Armor stops all thrusts/stabs from "green" weapons that are made with only one hand on the weapon (two-handed thrusts go through the armor as if it isn't there).
- All other hits (from "red" or "yellow" weapons) "go through" as if the armor wasn't there.

Two all-out, solid hits from a "red" weapon will "break" a shield, so the shield must be dropped immediately.

The only things that can block arrows are shields and head-armor such as a helmet or coif. If you block an arrow (even unintentionally) with anything else (weapon, hand, etc.), the arrow is considered to have hit its intended target.

You may never "fake" wounds or death.

That's Dagorhir combat in a nutshell. Like any other game or sport that's been played for decades, there are some specific "micro" rules that provide more explanation of various situations, but this short list covers 95% of what happens in Dagorhir.

Some rules (such as breaking shields, or not blocking the relatively slow-moving Dagorhir arrows with swords) help keep the balance of the game, ensuring that no one weapon or fighting type is too powerful. The Dagorhir rules have been play-tested by thousands of fighters for 25 years. They work.

The full Dagorhir Combat Rules (called the Manual of Arms or MOA) appear as Appendix A at the end of this Handbook.

## **WHO CAN PLAY?**

Dagorhir events are open to the entire membership of each Chapter and of Dagorhir, and especially to new members interested in participating. Dagorhir treats all members and potential members equally and fairly, without regard to race, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, color, creed, religion, disability, or age. Any restrictions which must be instated for the reasons of safety and reduction of liability must be fair and nondiscriminatory.

## **OVERVIEW OF THIS HANDBOOK**

This Handbook is laid out with the new Dagorhir member in mind. The Handbook first explains what Dagorhir is, shows what a new member needs to do in order to participate (developing a character, creating a unit with friends, making costumes and weapons), explains how to join an existing Dagorhir Chapter or start a new Chapter, and finally, the Handbook gives the detailed rules that govern Dagorhir combat.

In all aspects of Dagorhir, common sense supersedes loopholes. Please read the rules thoroughly (several times is recommended). These rules are as plain, straightforward, and detailed as possible, but not every angle of every situation has been covered. Often a rule is clarified later in the same (or subsequent) paragraph. Safety comes first, playability second, and realism third. Loopholes will not even be considered by the Heralds (referees), check-in personnel, Dagorhir officials, or other players.

All participants must follow all rules and regulations in this handbook. Those who do not will be asked to leave Dagorhir events. If there is ever any question of what is meant by a rule, a decision will be made by the Dagorhir officials running the event where the question is raised, based upon what they interpret was implied or intended when that rule was written.

## **BATTLES AND EVENTS**

There are many types of Dagorhir battles, each with its own flavor and each permitting different types of players to excel. A Bridge Battle is primarily a contest between shield and spear fighters. An open-field free-for-all gives advantages to the fast, unarmored fighter with only one

weapon. In a Woods Fort Battle, one lightly-armed scout can make all the difference. Where will you excel?

Some battle scenarios are one-on-one or small-team fighting. Remember those scenes from “Robin Hood” or any of the Arthurian movies where peasants, lords, and ladies are all seated at a candle-lit banquet table while dancers, gamblers, and other entertainment perform around them? Feasts are like that. Campouts often combine battles and feasts into one event lasting two days to a week or more.

But beyond (or before) the events, Dagorhir encourages learning and craftsmanship. Members read literature and history to develop ideas about characters, costumes, and units. Dagorhir members learn first-hand about physics and construction from building safely padded shields and weapons. Building armor and sewing costumes teaches self-reliance and craft skills that will stay with you forever.

More than anything, Dagorhir is about fun and camaraderie. The people you “fight” in Dagorhir become your friends. The most contentious rivals on the field often become best friends in the feast-hall, as years of “I’ll get you next time!” battle stories are told over a mug of ale.

There are descriptions of various Dagorhir battle scenarios near the end of this book. Read on.

## **HISTORY OF DAGORHIR**

In 1975, as a college freshman, an actor and artist named Brian (Aratar) Wiese read J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings." Tolkien's trilogy inspired Wiese to combine his new-found interest in fantasy with his love of the outdoors, improvisational acting, and high-energy events. Wiese wanted to recapture and somehow live that high energy he felt when reading the intense battle scenes in the books.

His idea was to catapult people from the 20th century into the midst of an intense battle during some Mythic Age; a time when the values and problems of the modern world didn't exist. Players in this new game would dress in the costumes and play characters from a fantasy or medieval age. But unlike actors in a play, there would be no script: the combat and adventure would be improvisational and unfold based on the actions and the ideas of each member.

Wiese discussed the idea at length with his girlfriend (now his wife) Mary (Edaina) Dugan; his New York City roommate Gus (Rolling Thunder) Hathaway, and close friend Jim (Galarast) Murch. With their input and reflection, the game began to take shape.

On October 29, 1977, a prototype battle was held at Riggs Farm in Montgomery County, Maryland. Everyone enjoyed it immensely, but most importantly it gave Wiese a chance to see some of what would and wouldn't work. In June of 1978 he placed an advertisement on a progressive college radio station in Washington, DC, calling for people who would like to be involved in this type of event. Calls began coming in, and the newly formed Dagorhir was on its way. As the number of participants in the battles increased the organization of the events



became too difficult for one person to handle. Wiese chose six other die-hard Dagorhir members and formed a Council to refine the rules, determine Dagorhir's policies, and help run events.

Originally, Dagorhir consisted of only this one Chapter. Wiese had no idea then how long Dagorhir would last, or how far it would spread.

As Dagorhir members moved away from the Washington DC area, they took their Dagorhir Handbooks and safely padded weapons with them, and started chapters in their new hometowns. Some chapters were short-lived; others took on a life of their own, grew, and thrived.

Dagorhir came to the notice of newspapers, magazines, and TV feature programs. Articles and TV features appeared, first in Washington, DC, then nation-wide. New Dagorhir chapters sprang up in other parts of the country, as Adventurous Souls learned of Dagorhir and said, "THIS is what I've been looking for!"

To differentiate itself from the newer chapters, the founding Dagorhir group changed its name to "Dagorhir Aratari" in recognition of founder Brian "Aratar the Stormbringer" Wiese. Later, to ensure the integrity of the copyrighted rules and the trademarked name, Dagorhir Aratari incorporated as the Dagorhir Battle Game Association, Inc. (DBGA), a federally recognized non-profit recreational organization headquartered in Maryland.

DBGA administers Dagorhir's "intellectual property" -- the rules and use of the name Dagorhir, through a licensing agreement called the Dagorhir Chapter Contract. This contract is an agreement between the signing chapter and DBGA wherein the chapter's officers agree to run their organization in the manner of other Dagorhir chapters (as a non-profit organization with elections, etc.). In return, DBGA permits the chapter to use the Dagorhir rules, name, and resources (such as the [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com) website) -- for free. The Dagorhir Chapter Contract is available for downloading through [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com).

This arrangement gives every chapter full control over their own affairs, and prevents anyone from "taking over" and charging members or chapters additional dues or forcing changes to the established rules -- leaving everyone free to concentrate on holding fun battles, feasts, and campouts.

Today, with the widespread use of the Internet and the rising popularity of fantasy and medieval movies and literature, Dagorhir is seeing an unprecedented period of growth. Every week, [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com) gets requests from new individuals and groups wanting to become part of the Dagorhir adventure.

Many chapters host "national" events attended by members from around the US, and sometimes even from other countries. The oldest of these, Ragnarok, began in 1986. "Rag" lasts more than a week and is hosted every summer in Ohio. Each year, Ragnarok brings hundreds of Dagorhir from all over together for a week of fighting, feasting, camping, and (best of all) friendship.

Welcome to the game.

## CHARACTERS AND UNITS

### CHARACTERIZATION: THE ART OF LIVING AND DYING

*Gorgar's army surrounded the fort, firing arrows and thrusting spears over the walls. The enemy defenders were tough, savvy veterans. If a defender died, another stepped into the gap made by the falling body.*

*This was Gorgar's first Dagorhir battle. Protected from arrows by his round Viking shield, he watched, awed by the skill of the defenders. Then Gorgar saw his opportunity – for an instant, no enemy watched the wall nearest him. He leapt over the fort wall, swinging his axe.*

*He felled three foes from behind before they knew he was there, and took another fighter's arm as he turned. Then a sword struck Gorgar and he, too, fell screaming.*

*But Gorgar's sacrifice hadn't been in vain. Not only had Gorgar killed or maimed four warriors, but half the enemy force turned away from the wall to deal with the killer that had appeared suddenly in their midst. Gorgar's teammates swarmed over the momentarily unguarded walls. In a few seconds, the enemy force was wiped out, all due to the bravery of one new fighter.*

*The Dead rose, tying on their white headbands. The "spirit" of the enemy commander turned to the spirit of the axe-wielding Viking who had slain him. "Tell me your name, so I'll know who sent me to Valhalla," he said, extending his hand warmly.*

*"Gorgar the Jackal-Hearted of Jolmsburg," replied the new fighter, shaking his foes' hand.*

To set the mood and re-create the atmosphere of battle it's very important that each participant become some character he or she has made up. Just as in improvisational acting, you should always act out your part; accents are recommended if they sound believable.

For the most part you have free reign over what you wish to be, but you must choose characters that would use medieval weapons. Common choices include Elf, Viking, Pict, Dwarf, Nubian, Goblin, Saxon, Hobbit, or Samurai characters. However, Orc, Ogre, Cimmerian, Zulu, Troll, or Roman characters are also fine. Characters that would not be allowed are laser-packing Imperial Storm Troopers, World War II commandoes, or fire-breathing dragons.



Everyone should make up a name and a character for themselves. Many veteran warriors develop entire life histories and family trees for their characters over a period of years. Always call people by their "battle names" (don't be afraid to ask what they are). Nothing is worse than hearing someone yell: "Hey, Larry, where's Bill and Joanne?" instead of, "Hrothgar! Where are Vaida and Laurelin?"

Think carefully about your battle name before deciding on one. Remember that other people will be trying to remember your name and call you by it. Try saying it (and even shouting it) aloud. If your character name is four or five syllables long, chances are no one outside your unit will be able to remember it. At best, it will get shortened: "Tashus Flavius" might be known as "Tash."

Although there's no rule forbidding it, you might not want to take the name of a character from literature or history, particularly a major character. Many people already have a vision of how Conan, Genghis Khan, or Strider looked and acted. If you don't fit that image, you may have a hard time convincing people to think of you by that name. Instead of calling yourself Strider or Aragorn, you may want to consider developing a character who's a Ranger of your own creation. You are allowed to change your character or your character's name. Some players have changed names or changed their character more than once in their Dagorhir "career."

“Being in character” means obeying your commander, grieving over or avenging a comrade's death, and screaming or moaning when you're “wounded.” Some Dagorhir Units will fight to the death over a fallen comrade's body. If your character is nobility of some sort, don't expect people outside of your unit to address you as such. In Dagorhir all people are equal and you must earn respect from your peers through fair play, characterization, and good sportsmanship.

Because new teams are chosen for each Dagorhir event, players may find themselves allied for the day with characters who would be the mortal enemy of their character: orcs may fight alongside elves. Don't refuse to fight should this happen to you. Never let characterization get in the way of the game, or of other people's enjoyment of the battle. Instead, turn it into an opportunity for more characterization: come up with a reason WHY your dwarf character might be fighting alongside a troll!

## **DAGORHIR HONOR**

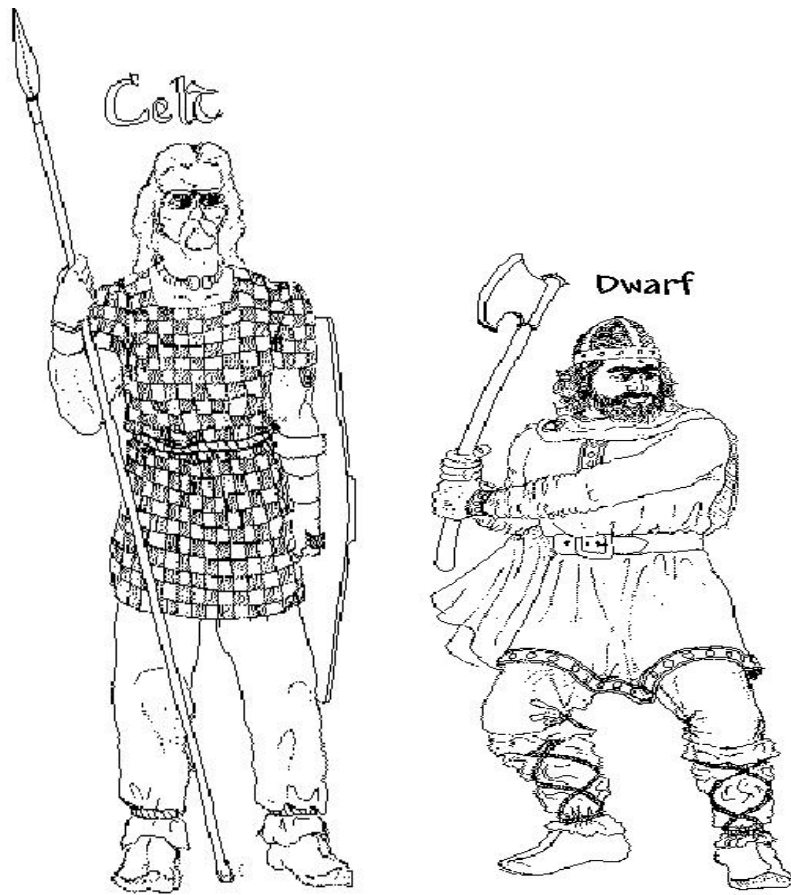
“Honor” in Dagorhir means following the rules and exhibiting a positive attitude toward everyone else who plays the game. There's a difference between having an honorable character (you play your character in such a way as to exhibit virtuous behavior) and being an honorable player (following the “honor system” rules without cheating or arguing).

AN HONORABLE CHARACTER allows opponents to retrieve a dropped weapon, or gives single combat to the last survivor of the other Army.

AN HONORABLE PLAYER “dies” from a light spear-hit by a new member, or loses an arm when a Herald (referee) tells her to do so (even if the player doesn't think the “hit” on the arm was valid). AND the honorable player does these things even though her character is a goblin who would never think of letting an opponent retrieve their fallen weapon! That's Dagorhir Honor.

If winning is everything to you, Dagorhir isn't your game.

Dagorhir combat is an honor system. If you're willing to cheat to win, put down this handbook and go try something else. It won't matter how “great” or “awesome” a fighter you become, if you have no Dagorhir Honor. If you cheat or ignore hits from other players, soon no one will want to fight you. You'll drive other players from the game. Then you can go fight yourself. But if you welcome new members, and take any hit they manage to make on you, and congratulating them after the fight for hitting you, your honor will grow, and with it, you'll gain the respect (and often friendship) of other Dagorhir members.



## LIVING AND DYING

*The attackers had numbered 15 when they took the enemy's fort, wiping out the garrison, and sending a swift runner to carry the captured flag home to their army. Then they decided to stay and hold the enemy's fortress; denying their foes the chance to regroup and recover as they returned from Valhalla. The enemy sent wave after wave of fighters swarming over the fort walls, until the cleared space inside lay piled deep with bodies.*

*Of the original 15, only 2 still drew breath. And they were both wounded, each dragging a crippled knee as they piled weapons within easy reach on all sides around themselves, preparing for the final charge.*

*One said, "It's down to you and me, Old Friend." But he didn't say it in fear, or in mourning for their lost comrades. It was a boast and a challenge, and his meaning was clear from his tone: "Only you and I have lasted this long and killed so many -- I wonder which of us will kill the most when they charge again?"*

*His friend grinned, showing his teeth like a predator on the hunt. "Here they come!" he said, firing his last arrow and grabbing for a spear...*

Dagorhir is a game. When you get “killed” in Dagorhir, you come back to life very soon afterwards. “Dying” in Dagorhir doesn’t mean “losing.” It’s part of the game. Getting “killed” in the course of a Dagorhir battle affords some of the best chances for acting and characterization. Screaming and clutching a wound or dying in a realistic manner will often garner a player as much recognition as winning a fight.

Fighting bravely and dying anyway is the sort of thing that gets you noticed by other Dagorhir and gets your name repeated around the campfires when battle-tales are told. If you’re the last fighter left on your side, which will get you remembered longer: running from the enemy and staying alive a minute or two longer...or charging the enemy line despite overwhelming odds? Stories get told about the lone fighter who jumped into the middle of ten enemies. Nobody remembers which of the ten killed the brave warrior -- only that it took TEN fighters to kill ONE.

## UNITS

*The Heralds cry, “Lay on!” and the Units close on one another, circling, vying for position. The Elven archers find the range and begin to drop shafts on the Germanic mercenaries whose mighty zweihander swords offer no protection from the rain of arrows. The Goblin Horde, seeing their chance, charge the distracted archers and are among the Elves, dealing death, before the archers have a chance to react...*

The War Band has always been part of the literature and history of warfare. Whether it was the Fellowship of the Ring, the Celtic clans who rallied to Boudicca’s call, or the Free Companions of Robert Howard’s *Conan*, the small Unit of warriors multiplies the power of the individual fighter.

So it is in Dagorhir, where Warriors form Units to ensure that close friends fight together and can support each other on the battlefield -- even to making a last stand over the body of a fallen companion.

## FORMING UNITS

Units can have any name you wish and use any symbol that’s appropriate to the fantasy/medieval genre of Dagorhir. Your Unit’s Reason for Existence can be anything you and your friends wish, such as re-creating the Army of the Roman Empire, being a band of Dispossessed Elvin Royalty, or “Just ‘Cause We Like to Fight Together.” There was once a Unit that boasted more than 20 Fighters where each claimed to be a bastard son of King Charlemagne!

Units instill a sense of fellowship and responsibility among members, increase organization at battles, and give every member a way to have his/her views felt. Dagorhir Units should be tight-knit bands of warriors who fight together for a reason, are fiercely proud, and are loyal to the rest of their Unit.

All Units must have a Standard; a flag, totem, or banner that tells something about them. Unit Standards should be brought to every battle. What's on your standard is up to your Unit: Elves might fly a flag showing a Silver Tree; a Mongol standard might be a Totem Staff topped with a painted horse skull; Pirates could fight beneath a stylized Jolly Roger; Warriors from the time of King Arthur might fight under the Welsh Chimera; and an Uruk Hai Orc banner would show the White Hand.

Many units have Battle Cries to strike fear into their enemies (and to identify one another in the swirling melee that is Dagorhir combat). Some even use other languages for their Battle-Cry. In Dagorhir, Warriors don't yell, "Bill and Joanne, I'm over here!" Instead you'll hear, "Blood and Souls!" or "Zabiti!" as Units commit to deal death upon one another.

All Units must have a "commander." This person doesn't actually have to be the sole leader of the Unit (although in many cases they will be), but they must be a responsible person that Dagorhir can contact to give information to the entire Unit. The Unit Commander will be the Unit's way of giving feedback to Dagorhir concerning rules, battle locations, battle types, and event scheduling.

The Unit Commander or her/his designated Second-in-Command should ensure that the Unit provides an up-to-date e-mail address to the Battle Check-In Staff for timely dissemination of information. Units should keep a roster of members and make it available to Check-in Staff if requested.

Your Unit may be organized any way you wish it to be. Your Unit may be run as a democracy, where all members are equal and get a vote on group decisions, such as what your Standard will look like or whether you want to volunteer to run the next Feast. Or your members might decide it would be fun to declare your Unit to be a "country" with a Queen or King supported by Thanes or Baronesses. Other Units style themselves after military organizations, with Generals, Captains, and Soldiers.

Many Units wear matching costumes or uniforms. Others often wear similar clothing (such as Celtic War-Bands, who dress mostly in plaid wool) that shows them to be a United People. Some Units have no standard garb, encouraging each member to show their individuality and character (like the Fellowship of the Ring).

Recruiting is important to keep your Unit alive and vital. Over time, members drift in and out of Dagorhir depending on school and work schedules, moving, health, family, and other interests. Unless your unit continues to bring in new members from outside of Dagorhir, it may eventually stagnate and cease to be.

Computer-savvy Units are encouraged to build web sites. Having a website can be an important component of attracting new members to your unit in the Information Age. A Unit Website gives you a way of recruiting new members 24/7; provides you a place to publish the history of your Unit and pictures of members and your banner, give directions to battle-practices, and provide contact information (email, phone, address, geographical area(s) where members are located, etc.) so interested people can apply for membership. You can even get your web page

started for free, using any of the no-cost web hosting services. Most Dagorhir Chapters maintain websites and will link unit websites onto their main site.

Finally, all Units should turn in a written outline describing the Unit, why its members fight together, what their standard means, whether they are accepting new members, etc. This does not need to be typed (although it is requested) but it must be legible. If you wish to submit a duplicate copy in your Unit's native language, that is all right. These outlines should be posted on your website, so that everyone can learn about the other Units. Unit outlines can be submitted at check-in or sent via e-mail.

## **COSTUMES & EQUIPMENT**

*The Feast was in full swing when the stranger arrived. He paused, silhouetted in the doorway, then swept into the feast hall, his cloak swirling behind him. A young bravo who'd been fighting in Dagorhir less than a year approached the newcomer, eyeing the layered clothing, the tattered leather boots, the well-worn belt and pouch.*

*"Haven't seen you before," said the bravo. "What's your name, stranger?"*

*"I've been traveling; haven't made it to a battle in a while," replied the newcomer, removing his cloak with a flourish and tossing it across an unoccupied chair. "The name's Dragluub, but most folk call me Steeleye."*

*Everyone within earshot turned, open-mouthed. "Y-y-you're STEELEYE?!" sputtered the bravo. Realization hit him in a flash: The Dagorhir clothes Steeleye wore showed years and years and YEARS of wear. Steeleye's boots were probably older than the young fighter staring at them. This must be THE Steeleye of whom so many Dagorhir tales were told. The young fighter said, "I've heard of you. I just thought you'd be...bigger."*

*Steeleye winked, then roared to the hall at large, "What does an old War-Hound have to do to get served around here?"*

The battle costume is the single most important factor in re-creating an atmosphere of fantasy in Dagorhir. A truly good costume often takes months or even years to assemble, about the same amount of time it takes to really learn how to use your chosen weapon. You may find that those with the best costumes are also the best (and most experienced) warriors.

Most Dagorhir chapters have loaner equipment available for new players to rent or borrow at their first battle.



This is an acceptable costume for a new member. Sweatshirts and sweatpants are *discouraged*, but allowed. However sweats should be earth tones or base colors (same as tunic and pants). Sweats and other "mundane" clothing should only be worn in the event of very cold weather.



### The First-Timer

The tunic is nothing more than the basic poncho-style tunic but at least it is wide enough to extend half way down the arms and long enough to extend down to the leggings.

This newcomer is wearing a hooded sweatshirt and sweat pants under the tunic, both of a good base color. The mundane clothing blends in well with the rest of the costume.

The leggings are made out of fur and cover the entire lower leg from tunic to ankle. They are also cross gaitered correctly with strips of leather or cloth.

Leather footwear.

The minimum Dagorhir costume requirements are:

A tunic of crotch length or longer.

Medieval-style pants.

Medieval-style footwear (moccasins, sandals, boots, etc.) or earth-tone shoes.

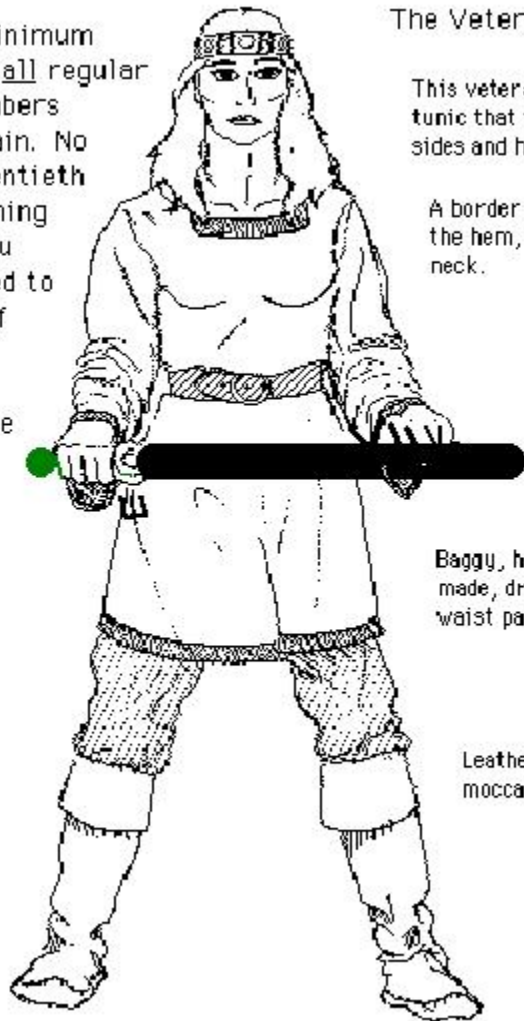
Tunics are blouselike garments extending to the mid-thigh, usually belted. Medieval style pants are similar to sweat pants; loose-fitting pants gathered by a drawstring, without buttons or zippers. Medieval style footwear consists of soft leather moccasins or knee-high boots, not to be confused with modern hiking boots. Leggings are simply cloth or fur wrapped about the shins and held on by rope, cloth, or leather straps. If you are wearing knee-high boots or other properly medieval footwear, leggings aren't required.

If you don't have medieval-style breeches (pants), then you could wear shorts that are covered by your tunic along with leggings, moccasins, or knee-high boots. You may also wear "normal"

pants, such as sweat pants or khakis (not jeans or camouflage) provided that the fly and pockets are covered by your tunic.

Footwear: Wear brown or black shoes or boots -- no white or neon shoes are never allowed! Leggings (cloth, fur, or fake fur tied around the lower legs) are recommended if you're wearing "modern" shoes. While leggings don't completely cover the shoes, they draw attention away from them. If you must wear mundane shoes, plain leather shoes are preferable.

This is the minimum costume that all regular Dagorhir members should maintain. No mundane (twentieth century) clothing is visible. You would not need to invest a lot of money in a costume like this, just time and effort.



The Veteran

This veteran is wearing a tunic that is sewn up the sides and has full sleeves.

A border has been added to the hem, sleeve cuffs, and neck.

Baggy, home made, drawstring waist pants.

Leather, knee-high moccasin boots.

The costume you choose should reflect your character: a Viking would dress differently from an Elf. Nobility might have crushed velvet, but a yeoman wouldn't. Female warriors would probably wear pants and tunic while "ladies" would wear fine dresses. Check the library for ideas. See the illustrations in this section for examples. The tunic can be bound about the waist with rope, though most civilized folk wore belts. Many warriors had elaborate embroidery and designs at their hems of their garments.

This is the kind of costume you should strive for if you want to make Dagorhir the best it can be – for you and for others. There is no machine stitching visible on the costume (on the hem, trim, or facing). However, a sewing machine can be used on the hidden seams (the ones that don't show, like the inseams on pants and the side seams on tunics).

## The Realist



The entire costume is made of leather, fur, and wool. All exposed stitching is done by hand.

Fur shoulder piece is sewn to suede vest.

The realist is wearing layers: an under tunic and an over tunic.

He wears jewelry as a sign of wealth and status, proof of many raids.

Valuables are kept in a leather pouch.

Wool pants made like the Veteran's.

Leather hand-made moccasins.

Leather and fur can make a costume very realistic. The use of faux leather on costumes is discouraged because it is difficult to make these materials look natural. Cotton is the best fabric to use for a three-season costume, while wool is best for winter.

Avoid synthetic fabrics like polyester, rayon, stretch fabrics, etc. Synthetics of any type are not realistic. Also avoid prints, most patterns, and modern fluorescent colors. Colors that should be used are white, black, browns, gray, burgundy, scarlet, rust orange, dark greens, and deep or "royal" blues.

All hats must be medieval in style: skull-caps, hoods, or a broad-brimmed hat such as Gandalf might have worn. No cowboy hats, hunting or baseball caps, etc., are allowed. If you wear glasses, we suggest wearing shop goggles over them, securing them with string or a safety band, or best of all wearing sport goggles. In the heat of battle, it's easy for glasses to be knocked off and lenses popped out, and the battle won't stop for you.

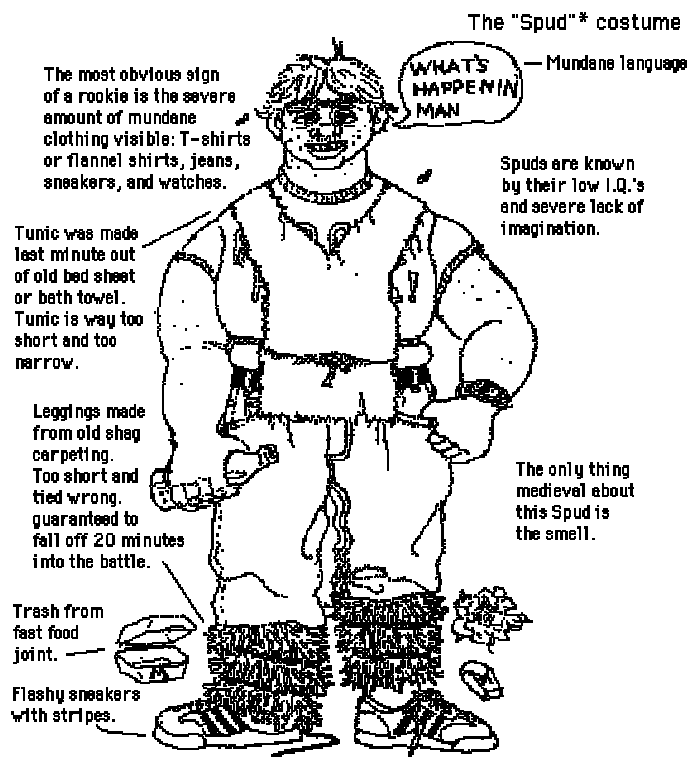
Accessories can make your Dagorhir clothing look less like a costume and more like you just stepped out of the pages of a book. Belts, pouches, sashes, vests, and embroidery all serve to make your Dagorhir garb look more impressive. Even patches where you repaired a battle-tear add character to a tunic or breeches.

A word of caution: it's recommended that you don't wear jewelry on the battlefield. You can be injured by many types of jewelry in any athletic endeavor, and Dagorhir is no exception. Rings, bracelets, earrings, and necklaces or pendants all increase the risk of personal injury. Confine your character's wearing of jewelry to the Feast hall rather than the battlefield.

Don't be concerned if your first attempts at making costumes fall short of what you'd imagined – it happens to almost everyone. You'll get better with practice and advice (either in person or online via the Dagorhir electronic Bulletin Board) from other Dagorhir members.

## PROTECTIVE GEAR

As in any other sport, you want to protect your body from athletic injuries in Dagorhir. Knee pads and gloves are strongly recommended for all participants. Men are encouraged to wear a jockstrap and cup, and women are encouraged to wear an athletic bra. Many Dagorhir fighters wear a weightlifting belt to support their lower back.



This is what not to do.  
People who show up wearing this sort of "costume" show a lack of concern for the most important aspect of the game – living a fantasy and suspending belief in the "real" or mundane world. They can ruin the game for others and give Dagorhir a bad reputation with our brother medieval groups. People who dress like this will not be allowed to participate in Dagorhir.

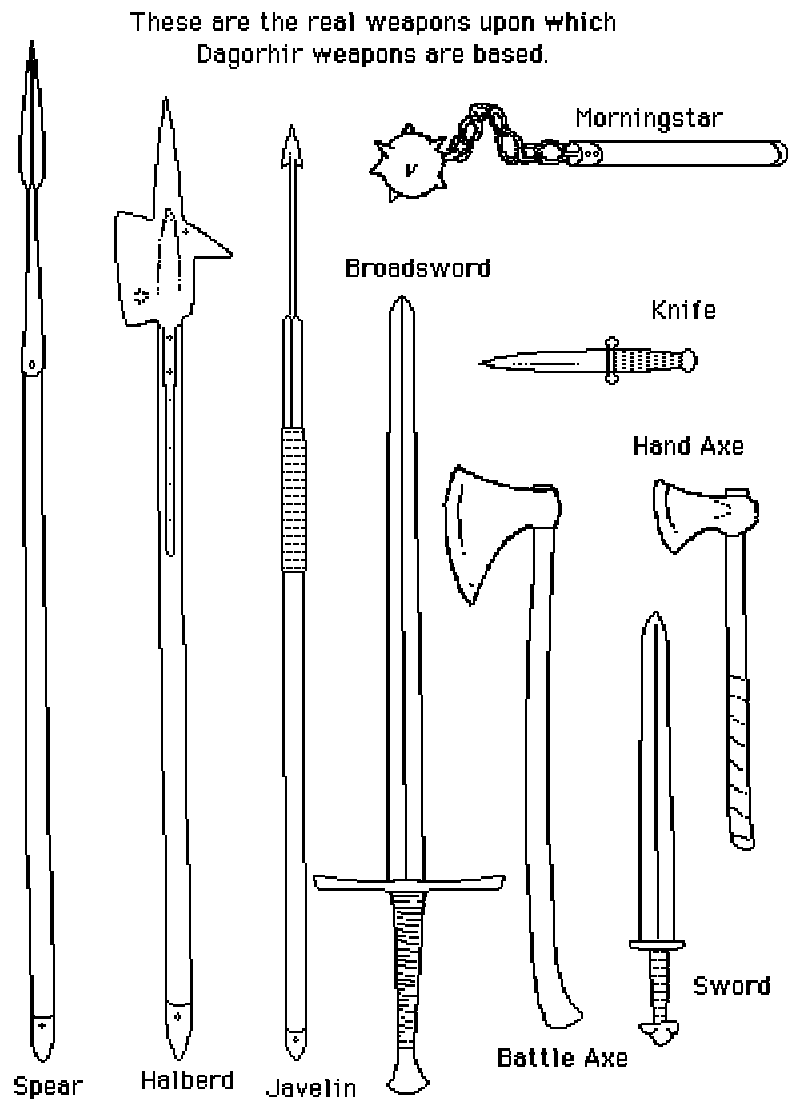
\*a derogatory term for the type of person described here

## DAGORHIR WEAPONS

*Kublan finished sewing the cover on his new axe, then wrapped the handle with leather. He held the finished project up to be silhouetted by the light. He nodded, satisfied by the result.*

*When Kublan stepped onto the field at the next battle, other fighters stopped and stared at his weapon. "It looks like a REAL axe," called one.*

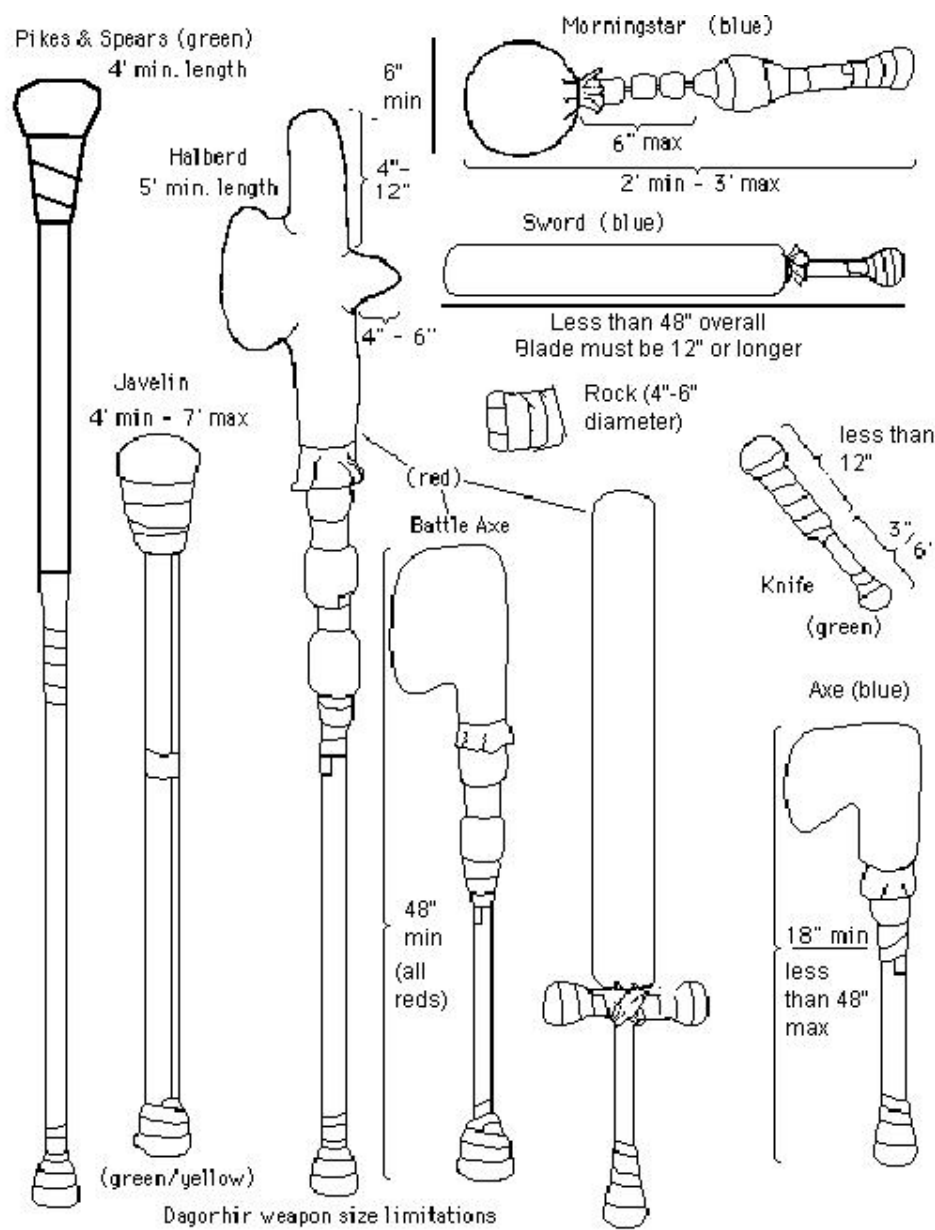
*"I know," grinned Kublan, spinning the axe around his head and shouting his war-cry.*



In Dagorhir, you may use almost any weapon that existed before the widespread use of gunpowder in warfare: swords, spears, shields, axes, flails, javelins, bow & arrows, knives, polearms, even rocks. Some historical and fantastical weapons are impossible to simulate safely in Dagorhir (see "Forbidden Weapons" below).

A safe weapon is one that will not leave bruises, break bones or noses, or knock out teeth when an unarmored person is struck with a full-strength baseball bat-style swing. If a weapon hurts at all when someone is struck with it, it is not safe.

All weapons are subject to rejection for ANY safety or construction discrepancies at the discretion of the weapons check team at check-in. Further, all weapons are subject to removal from the field of battle if they should prove unsafe for any reason during the battle. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE FOR WEAPONS WHICH ARE NOT FULLY SAFE AT ALL TIMES. Bear this in mind and bring spare weapons or weapon construction materials with you to check-in in case your weapon needs emergency repairs in order to pass safety check. All weapons and shields are checked every battle.



The entire surface of the weapon must be padded with foam rubber (except where it is held) including the butt end of the weapon, or pommel. If a cross guard or quillions are added, they must also be padded to meet Dagorhir safety requirements.

Only duct tape, electricians tape, strapping tape or glue (i.e., rubber or contact cement) may be used in weapon construction. No masking or cellophane tape is allowed.

All weapons must have cloth coverings on all striking surfaces.

Hafts on axes, morning stars, maces and the like must be padded as safely as a sword blade except for a reasonable area for a handhold. This is to prevent injury if someone is accidentally struck with the haft, rather than the head of the weapon. (Note that hits with the haft of axes and the like do not count as “wounds” or “kills” in Dagorhir.) The maximum unpadded length of the haft of a swung weapon is 18 inches. If you build a long axe or pole-arm, it’s a good idea to tape a thin “courtesy strip” of foam along the “unpadded” portion of the haft, in line with the striking edges of the blade(s). This lessens the chance that you might smash the knuckles of another player whose hand accidentally collides with your weapon.

Weapons made with a 'blade' shape (i.e., swords or axes made to resemble actual weapons more closely) must have the 'flat' of the blade padded safely as well as the edges. This includes 'single-edged' weapons such as sabers and cutlasses. The back (non-striking) edge of such weapons must be clearly marked with silver tape. NOTE: It can take a good deal of practice to make safe single-edged weapons, and the people who make the best have generally been at it a long time.

A weapon which is made too light is often not felt in combat, and therefore causes problems. All blue weapons must weigh at least 12 ounces; all red weapons must weigh at least 24 ounces. Javelins may weigh no more than one and one-half pounds (24 oz.).

If you wish to use a weapon type which is not covered in this handbook, you must present written documentation of the weapon's existence including a photograph from a history book, how it was used, and what time period it came from to the weapons check committee at check-in. All new weapons must still pass weapons inspection every battle.

## **FORBIDDEN WEAPONS**

Some historical or fantastic weapons are impossible to build or use safely or reasonably within the Dagorhir rules system. Examples include but are not limited to:

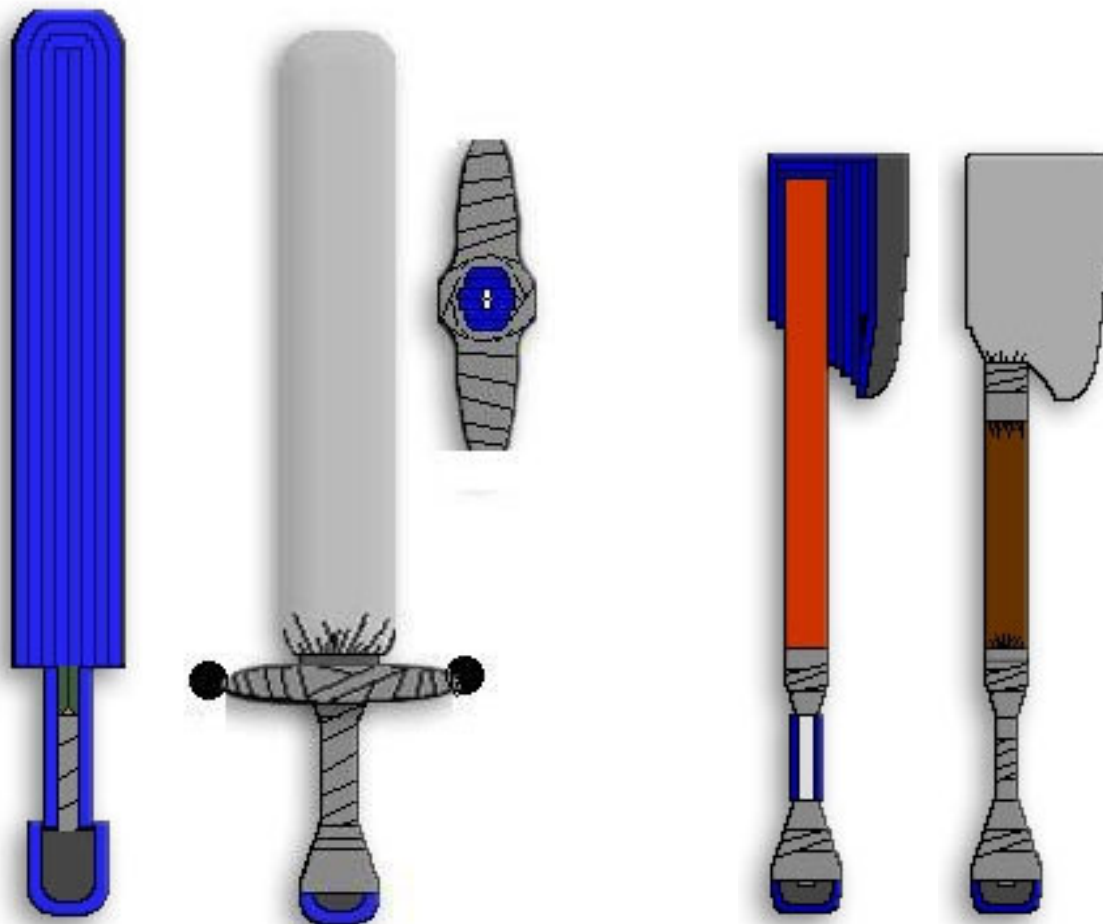
- poison.
- throwing stars or shuriken (which historically were too small to incapacitate or kill on their own, so were usually poisoned),
- nunchaku
- throwing axes (it’s too difficult to determine if a thrown axe hit “blade-first”), and
- pungee sticks (simply too dangerous to have players falling onto padded “spikes” sticking out of the ground -- besides, the point of Dagorhir is to FIGHT, not to win because the other side fell on a stick!).

Twenty-five years of play-testing Dagorhir has show that surprisingly few “non-standard” weapons (things that didn’t see frequent use in history) really work well. If a style of weapon really works well, some enterprising armorer would have built a bunch a thousand years ago.

## HOW TO BUILD DAGORHIR WEAPONS

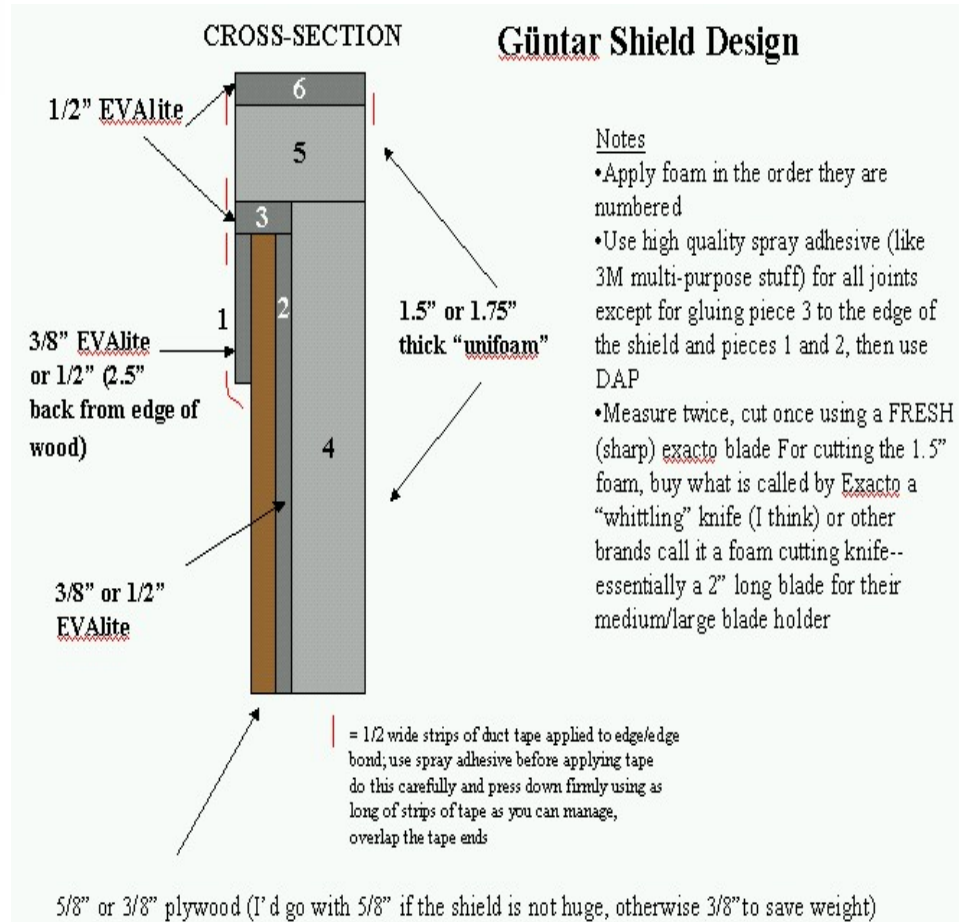
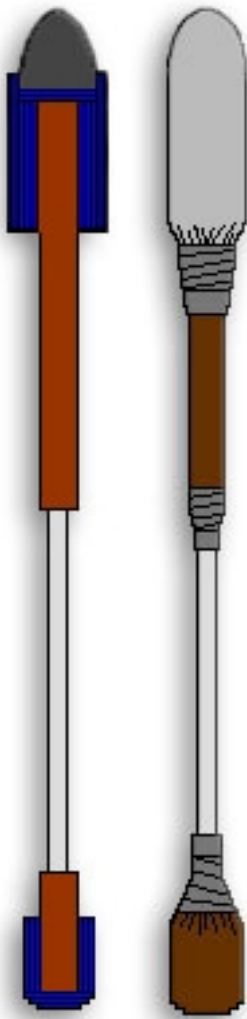
There are many, many techniques for making safe, effective Dagorhir swords, shields, axes, spears, etc. Most involve a combination of using contact cement or other types of permanent, flexible adhesives to glue dense foam rubber onto fiberglass or plastic rods, then covering the weapon with sturdy cloth. *Thanks to Scion of Angaron and Günter of the Aratari for their contributions and illustrations in this section.*

Below are schematics to how cutaway views of basic Dagorhir weapons designs. Note that the dimensions of all weapons (including cross-guard) must conform to the minimums outlined in Section 4 of the Dagorhir Manual of Arms (Appendix A). For more detailed, step-by-step instructions, see the “How-To” pages on [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com).



Basic Sword and Axe: cutaway view and finished product. The length of the finished weapon determines whether it's Blue or Red.





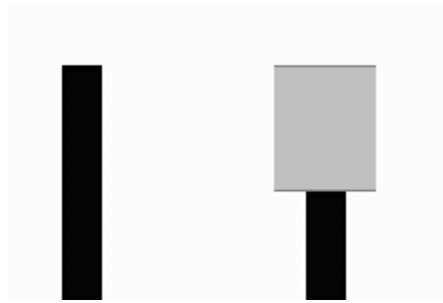
Spear: Cutaway and Finished views. Shield: Cutaway view. EVALite is a specific brand-name; you can substitute other forms of closed-cell foam "camping pads" provided they aren't hard (like Styrofoam) but have a fair amount of "give" or cushioning.

## Building a Dagorhir Arrow

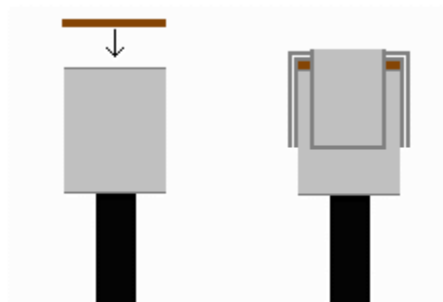
This should work for wood, aluminum and carbon shafts. The illustrations show carbon shafts.

NOTE: Wooden shaft arrows must be wrapped in duct tape.

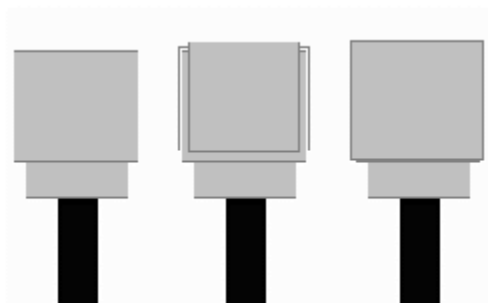
- Start with a bare arrow shaft about 31 or 32 inches long. That way, after the head is built, the bottom of the arrow will be the 28" mark. If the arrow still has a tip, REMOVE IT! They can be either screwed off or twisted off with a pair of pliers. Wrap the tip with a 1 to 1.5 inch wide strip of duct tape, flush to the tip, until it's about the diameter of a penny.



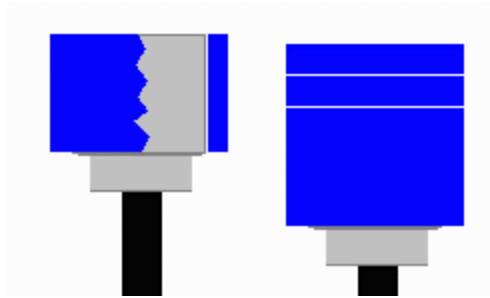
- Add a penny to the top and run strips of duct tape over it, strapping it down. Adding some epoxy to the bottom of the penny is recommended, but not necessary.



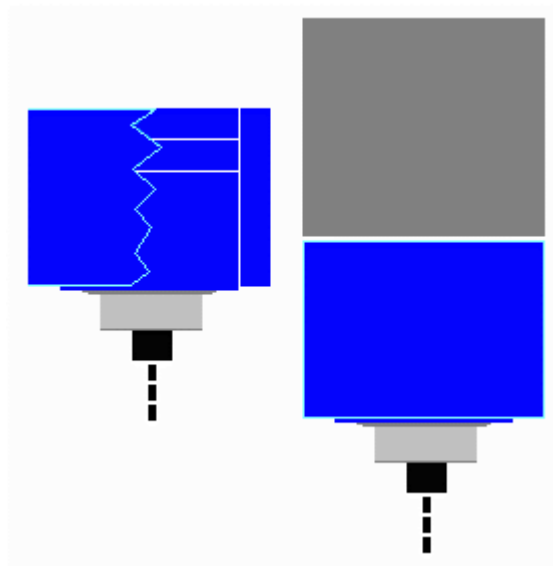
- Add more strips of tape around and over top until there is NO WAY the arrowhead can push past the penny and through the tape and following applications of foam.



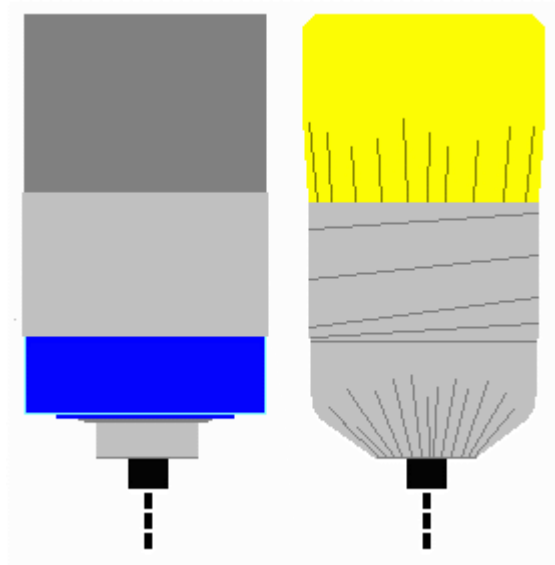
- Applying contact cement to the arrow tip sides and top and to a strip of closed cell foam, wrap a layer of foam around the arrowhead, flush to the top. Cut out two discs of closed cell foam and adhere to the top of the arrowhead with contact cement.



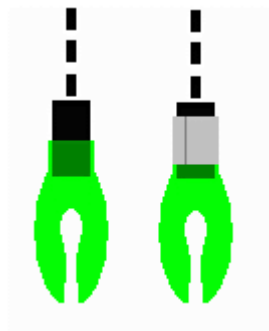
- Wrap the arrowhead once again with a strip of closed cell foam so it wraps around the first ring and the discs. Attach a 3- to 4-inch thick, 3-inch diameter cylinder of gray open-cell computer packing foam. (White ‘couch cushion’ foam may be too soft.) The open cell foam should be reasonably firm, or it will compress too fast, allowing the harder closed cell foam underneath to hit with too much force.



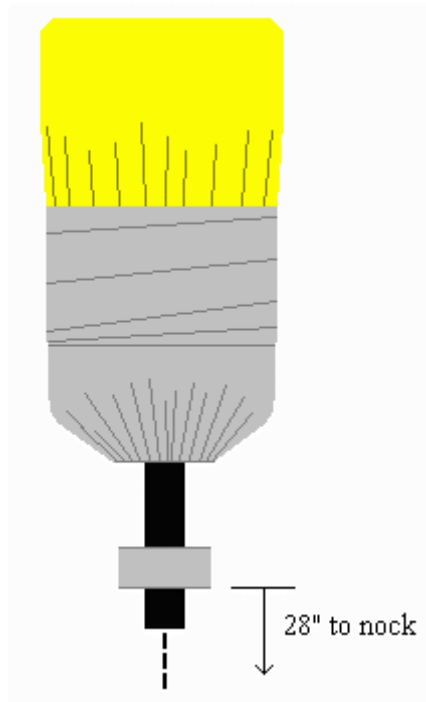
- Wrap a strip of duct tape around where the open cell joins the closed cell. Cover with cloth and tape down the cover and bottom of the arrow head with more duct tape. It is important to test the arrow head to ensure it doesn't wobble.



- While the arrow nock should be secured in place with some sort of adhesive, wrap a small piece of tape around the nock holding it to the arrow shaft.



- Last, mark the 28" point along the shaft from the nock and wrap a strip of duct tape so that you cannot draw the arrow past that point. This is the "draw stop" and will prevent an arrow to be fired at greater than 35 lbs pull.



## SOURCES FOR DAGORHIR WEAPON-MAKING MATERIALS

There are many local and national suppliers of fiberglass rods, foam rubber, glue, tape, arrows, plywood, leather, cloth, and other materials needed to build your Dagorhir weapons and costumes. For listings of recommended mail-order suppliers, go to the bulletin board on [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com) and request help finding whatever you need.

## **DAGORHIR CHAPTERS**

The term “Chapter” means a collection of people in a geographic area who participate in Dagorhir events. A “Unit” is a sub-group within a Chapter who fight together because of friendship, shared interests, common character goals/history, or other reasons. A Chapter is composed of several Units, and usually mercenaries (fighters without units) as well.

If there’s already a Chapter in your area, GREAT -- join it and start a Unit. If there isn’t a chapter and you wish to start a Dagorhir Chapter

The first things to do are to establish contact addresses and phone numbers for your new Chapter. At first, someone’s home phone number will suffice, along with the email addresses of key members, and hopefully a website for the Chapter. Provide your email address and contact information to [chapters@dagorhir.com](mailto:chapters@dagorhir.com). As Dagorhir’s national advertising campaign attracts other players in your area, we’ll direct them to you via a [chaptername@dagorhir.com](mailto:chaptername@dagorhir.com) email address provided free of charge. At least one Chapter doubled its membership in two weeks thanks to referrals from Dagorhir’s national website!

## **THE HARD PART -- CREATING A CHAPTER OUT OF THIN AIR**

You and anyone helping you start your Chapter will need to be able to inspire others to feel the way you feel right now. Founding a Chapter doesn’t take a great fighter: it takes a visionary with good organizational skills. Sometimes it takes an actress who can describe a Dagorhir battle to an audience at a local library and sweep them into her vision. Sometimes it takes a quiet guy who will stay up half the night addressing envelopes or stapling posters to telephone poles around the local high schools. Usually it takes a combination of both types of person.

For a group to be part of Dagorhir, its needs to adhere closely to the Dagorhir vision as it was developed by Founder Brian Wiese; a game that combines the fantasy worlds of books such as "Lord of the Rings" with Dark Age Europe that exists in historical fiction. A game where Elves, Saxons, Dwarves, and Britons armed with arrows, swords, axes, and spears roam the woods together in their wolfpacks, searching for combat in their quest for the opponents’ flag. Dagorhir isn’t a game of tournaments and established pecking orders. In Dagorhir, each individual is an important part of the group.

Dagorhir is a game where your reputation and honor are maintained through the way you conduct yourself in the playing of the game -- not entitled through a ranking system. A game where those who facilitate and manage the administrative aspects are elected into their positions by their selfless dedication to the game and the display of their managerial efficiency, not through Machiavellian skills or athletic prowess. A game where any honorable, considerate person can fully enjoy themselves and be made welcome regardless of their athletic abilities.

If this sounds like the type of group you want to be a part of, then welcome aboard.

Founding and running a Dagorhir Chapter takes a lot of dedication. If you're not willing to spend AT LEAST 20 hours a week on Dagorhir (hardworking people to help you), give up now.

## **IT TAKES MORE THAN ONE PERSON TO RUN A DAGORHIR CHAPTER**

One person can't run a Chapter by themselves. To ensure everything gets done, recruit a group of people to help set up and run battles, especially the Check-in portion of events. These must be responsible, organized people. Don't be afraid to "let someone go" if they aren't pulling their weight. They will probably be happier to be relieved of their responsibilities, and will enjoy simply coming to battles or other events to fight or feast without the headaches of being "staff."

You will need to recruit people to perform the following jobs at battles:

- Collect Waivers Membership Forms
- Collect Event Fees
- Check Weapons for Safety & Compliance with Size & Weight Rules
- Mark Weapons that are safe
- Check Costumes
- Supervise Selection of Heralds and Picking Fair Teams

Weapons-Check is probably the most difficult job in Dagorhir. It's physically tough, because sometimes you get bruised testing a weapon that proves to be unsafe (even if every weapon you test IS safe, testing weapons still means standing still and letting people hit you with swords, spears, and axes over, and Over, and OVER again). But more than that, Weapons-Check is emotionally draining, because you have to tell people (including your friends), "I'm sorry, your weapon isn't safe so we can't allow it on the battlefield. Yes, I realize it passed last battle. No, I don't care if you'll fix it next time, you CAN'T use it today." When someone's favorite weapon fails, they often get upset. As a Weapons-Checker, you must remain polite but hard-nosed.

In addition to the "At the Battle" jobs above, the following work must be done in between battles:

- Scheduling events including scouting out and reserving parks, updating telephone hotlines and/or websites, setting reasonable fees for events (e.g., a campout will probably cost more than a one-day event), and ensuring that events have adequate facilities such as porta-johns for campouts.
- Accounting for dues collected and expenses related to running your Chapter.
- Recruiting new members/advertising.
- Interfacing with other Dagorhir groups.

For an example of how one successful Dagorhir Chapter is set up to make this work, go to [www.dagorhir.org](http://www.dagorhir.org) (that's ".ORG" not ".com") and view the bylaws of Dagorhir Aratari.

Urge everyone in your Chapter to help with advertising by putting up posters in bookstores, libraries, or around schools; helping to administer your website; and by telling their friends about your Dagorhir group. (See more information in the section on Advertising & Recruiting below.)

Also, make sure that all of the more experienced fighters take turns as Heralds (Dagorhir Referees).

## **SCHEDULING EVENTS, PRACTICES, MEETINGS, and ELECTIONS**

As you attract the interest of more members, you need to start scheduling and running regular battles, fighting practices, weapon- and costume-making sessions, and occasional business meetings. Aim for weekly practices (with or without costumes) and monthly battles, with a feast or party thrown in from time to time. Always plan events at least two or three months in advance, and stick to the dates scheduled. Consider announcing rain-dates in case of inclement weather.

As you set up your Chapter, remember that EVERYONE burns out eventually. Plan to retire from administration in a year or two. Set up a timetable for elections for administrative positions. This empowers everyone in your Chapter, follows the American Democratic Ideal, and provides you a time to retire, so you'll be able to just show up and fight, rather than having to WORK at every battle. Remember, the point of Dagorhir is for everyone to have fun -- and that includes YOU!

As with any human endeavor, positions of authority in Dagorhir will sometimes attract people who mistakenly associate "responsibility" with "power." If you think running a Dagorhir Chapter will be "cool because you'll be the king," think again. Staring and running a Dagorhir Chapter is a lot of work, with no "power" attached. You'll be *important*, yes. But powerful? The only benefits that comes from running Dagorhir events are:

1. People occasionally thank you; and
2. You get to fight in well-run battles.

Don't kid yourself that there's more to it. ☺

That said, Dagorhir is the best thing out there. Members pay no dues outside of your Chapter's monthly event fees. In addition to your local events, Dagorhir hosts Inter-Chapter events with hundreds upon hundreds of participants.

Dagorhir allows you to live the adventures you've only read about or seen in the movies: holding off an enemy army on a bridge to buy time while your friends escape; sieging (or defending) a fort with seven-foot walls and a working gate; or smashing into a shieldwall in a berserk charge.

See you on the battlefield!

## **ADVERTISING EVENTS/RECRUITING: THE KEYS TO A DYNAMIC CHAPTER**



*“What in the world is THAT?!” thought Nick, looking at the pictures accompanying the newspaper article. The caption read, ‘Dagorhir members battle in local park,’ and showed men and women in medieval garb (some even in armor!), locked in a swirling melee.*

*Intrigued, he read the article. By the end of it, his hands were trembling. He dropped the paper, logged onto [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com), then started calling his friends...*

Only about one person in 300 will be interested in Dagorhir. Your goal is to find #301. Try to put your ads in places that YOU might go -- that way you have a better chance of finding other people who'll share your passion for the Dagorhir Adventure.

Recruiting members is the key to a successful Dagorhir Chapter. If you are “a Chapter of One,” you have no one to fight! Start by sharing the idea of Dagorhir with all of your like-minded friends – people who read the same books, play the same games, and/or like the same movies. Team with them to form your Chapter's first Unit. More recruiting suggestions follow, below.

Dagorhir members will come and go. Many who are die-hard members today will eventually lose interest in Dagorhir, move away, or quit because of medical conditions or age. Often they'll keep contact with their Dagorhir friends, even if they no longer play the game. But your Chapter will need a constant stream of new people to replace the old.

Units make organizing events and disseminating information easier. Units can be critically important to a new Chapter's growth and longevity; each unit will recruit its own new members, resulting in more and more people swelling your group's ranks...meaning MORE PEOPLE FOR YOU TO FIGHT!

Encourage new members to form their own units, with fresh ideas and fresh members. Diversity in Chapters, Units, and members is one of the key elements in Dagorhir's success. Dagorhir includes lawyers, scientists, students, and reformed gang members (as well as elves, dwarves, human, and goblins).

Dagorhir Aratari, the oldest Dagorhir Chapter, draws active members from several states, including more than 10 counties and the District of Columbia, and fields more than 100 participants at most events. Without a vibrant Unit structure (usually between 10 and 20 active units), Aratari wouldn't be able to draw people from Virginia, DC, and Maryland (and often Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and New York).

To find new members, you have to advertise. This includes word-of-mouth -- you tell two friends about Dagorhir, and they tell two friends (and so on), and soon you have dozens of people showing up for battles. When you're first launching your new Chapter, you probably won't know very many people who are interested in Dagorhir, so you need to get the word out to every proto-Dagorhir in your area. See the section on “Advertising Strategies.”

Pursue as many of these strategies as you can, and think of new strategies too:

- Encourage word-of-mouth advertising: ask your members to drag their friends to ONE battle or practice. If they're Dagorhir material, one battle is all it takes to hook 'em.
- Use the Web: put up a web page and link it to [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com)
- Put up posters in bookstores, gaming shops, comic-book stores, arcades, libraries, outside schools, coffee shops, or anywhere else in your area that might be frequented by the sort of creative, intelligent people who are attracted to Dagorhir. If you download posters from [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com), be sure to customize your posters; include your Chapter's name, your Chapter's website and/or your email address, a contact person's name and phone number (some people don't have easy Internet access), and the dates of some upcoming events. You may want to say, "Local and regional events with up to 500 participants," a true statement (regional events may have that many people) that will help boost the number of people showing up for your Chapter's wars.
- See if you can get local progressive radio stations to run ads before your battles.
- While in costume, hand out Dagorhir posters, flyers, or business cards outside movie theaters that are showing movies that would attract Dagorhir members, like *The Lord of the Rings*, *Gladiator*, or *A Knight's Tale*.
- Send emails to local talk radio programs describing Dagorhir and offering to come on the air to talk about the game.
- If your treasury can afford it, place ads in local newspapers or high school papers.
- Call or send letters and/or emails to local TV stations and/or newspapers describing Dagorhir. Do your homework first; figure out which reporter is most likely to cover a Dagorhir event and go to that person. Be sure to include links to [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com), so the station will see pictures of HUGE Dagorhir events like Ragnarok, with excellent examples of costuming. See if you can entice a feature reporter to cover your next event. If a TV show IS going to cover your event, TELL EVERYONE WHO'S EVER FOUGHT IN YOUR CHAPTER ABOUT IT. Nothing brings out members like the chance to be on TV.
- In addition to advertising for new members, remember you need to keep your current membership informed of events, too. Yahoogroups.com and similar services provide a cost-free means to maintain an email list for your members and interested people. Since Dagorhir is a non-profit organization, many local radio stations and newspapers will run Public Service Announcements describing your event for free. Be sure your announcements include the date, location, time, and description of your event, as well as your Chapter's contact information including web address, email, and contact phone number. Word-of-mouth is often the best way to get people excited about Dagorhir: nothing draws a person's interest more than hearing another player describe a battle in vivid, positive terms.

For the latest information on advertising, demo tapes, and press kits, go to [www.dagorhir.com](http://www.dagorhir.com).

# Running Events/What to Expect at Dagorhir Events

## INTRODUCTION

This section teaches new Dagorhir groups how to run a Dagorhir battle. It's also very helpful to new members of established Dagorhir groups, showing what to expect at Dagorhir events.

## SCHEDULING EVENTS

Schedule your events at least a month in advance. Some Dagorhir Chapters publish their full annual schedule of events, dates, and locations more than a year ahead of time. We recommend you start check-in for your battles from 10 to 11 AM, and schedule battles to last until 4 or 5 PM. The earlier you start, the more fighting you can squeeze in!

Advertise your events well, per the guidelines in the section above.

## THE MORNING OF THE BATTLE

The organizers of the event and the check-in crew will arrive early. Check-in staff should always strive to be the first members on-site. On the way to the site, they should put up LARGE, CLEARLY WRITTEN signs with arrows that say

“DAGORHIR →”

to direct members to the event.

When the check-in crew has arrived, review everyone's tasks and duties, ensure everyone has all needed equipment, and set up the check-in area. Assign a couple of veterans to draw up a list of battle scenarios for the Heralds (referees) to use in running the day's events.

New members (fewer than 3 battles) should also arrive at the beginning of check-in so they can fill out membership forms, attend the “New Persons' Rules Review,” get to know more people, and have a few warm-up fights.

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED

### Registration Table

- Table(s) – picnic tables at a park are fine, or bring folding tables
- Signs for each table/station (“Registration,” “Weapons Check,” “Loaner Equipment”)
- Waivers/Membership forms (Appendix C of this Handbook)
- Pens and clip boards for filling out waivers
- Cash Box and financial records

### Weapons Check

- Marking Tape for weapons
- Measuring tape
- Fish scale” (for testing the strength of bows)
- Templates for checking weapons' dimensions and safety

### Heralds/Loaner Equipment

- Spare tunics and weapons to loan/rent to first-timers

- Yellow tunics for the Heralds (Dagorhir referees)

Have one check-in person direct arriving members to the Registration Table at the start of your check-in “assembly line.”

**REGISTRATION TABLE:** New members fill out waivers/membership forms, show ID to prove they are who they say they are and to confirm their age.

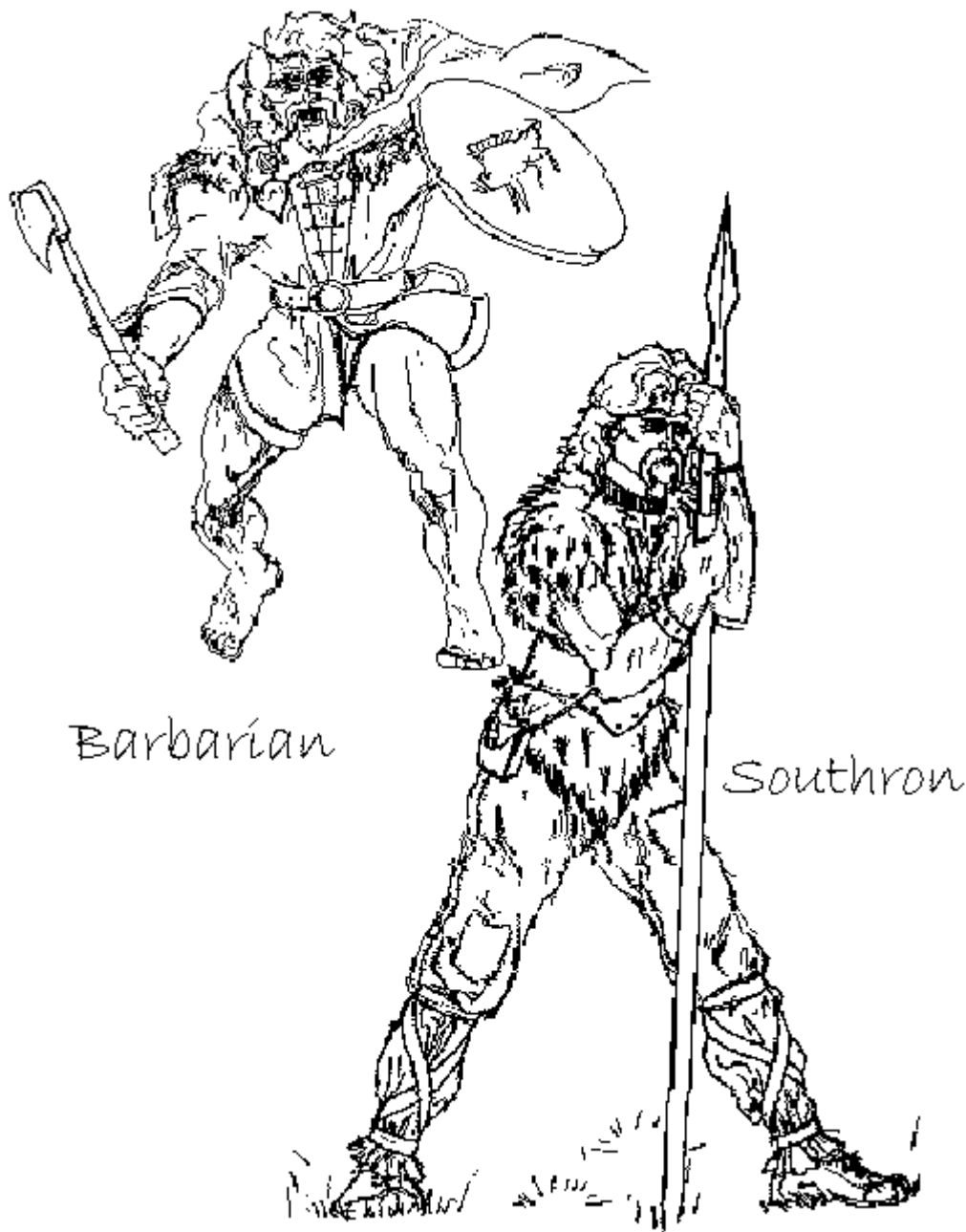
Check-in Crew:

- Collect waivers, including checking ID and ensuring that minors bring a notarized waiver signed by their parents, or have their parents sign the waiver on-site, with a member of the Dagorhir check-in staff serving as witness (including checking ID to ensure they are who they say they are and checking the minor’s date of birth to ensure they are old enough to participate in Dagorhir events).
- Check IDs, and makes sure everyone correctly filled out their waiver/membership form,
- Collect members’ battle fee (typically \$3 for a “day” event and \$5-10 for a campout or feast). ALWAYS keep careful track of the cash box, and always keep exact records and receipts. As members of a legally recognized non-profit association, each Dagorhir group’s records must always be open for review by members, as well as federal, state, and local government organizations.
- Loaner equipment person takes driver’s license as collateral of members who borrow weapons or costumes for the day.

## **COSTUME CHECK**

Next, member’s costumes are checked to ensure they meet Dagorhir minimum requirements (tunic or equivalent, earth-tone pants, no white shoes, etc.). The check-in crew should try to always set excellent examples by wearing good costumes. Remember, new members will emulate the veterans, so if new people see veterans wearing excellent costumes and staying in character, they will want to do the same.

When checking costumes, offer gentle suggestions for improvement, and let first-timers slide when you feel it’s appropriate. Ask people to remove the ‘Metallica’ T-shirts, change out of blue jeans or camouflage clothing into earth-tone sweatpants or shorts. In winter, allow a lot of flexibility as long as members make an attempt at medieval-looking clothing, such as wearing a loose poncho tunic over a down vest or layers of sweatshirts.



## **WEAPONS/ARMOR CHECK**

Next, members go to Weapons Check.

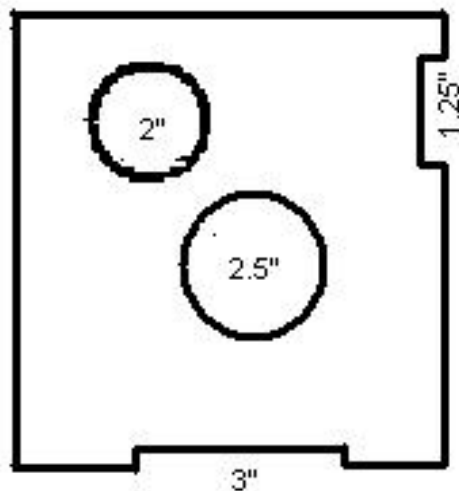
## **HOW TO CHECK DAGORHIR WEAPONS**

A Dagorhir weapon should never leave a bruise, break the skin, or break a bone. There should be no tape on any striking edge, and all weapons should have a cloth cover.

Visually inspect the weapon for gaps in padding, torn foam, ripped cover.

Check that the weapon's edge, tip, pommel, and other protrusions are of at least the minimum required dimensions and weight specified in the Dagorhir Manual of Arms. Ensure that handles on spears, axes, and polearms are safely padded except for a reasonable area for a handgrip. NOTE: Encourage fighters to add a thin "courtesy strip" of foam padding to the front edge of their handles, even in the area of the grip. This will lessen the chances of accidentally bruising other players' knuckles.

Some Dagorhir Chapters provide weapons checkers with templates (cut from ½" thick boards) with holes and notches cut in them to facilitate quick checking of minimum weapon dimensions (pommel and tip dimensions; blade width and thickness).



Weapons-Check Template

Checking Swords, Axes, Spears, and Other "Hand

Weapons"

Feel the weapon by squeezing for hard spots and gaps in the foam. If you suspect a weapon is unsafe, don't hit yourself with it; first hit a fence post or the edge of a picnic table. If you hear a "thunk," or feel the hard impact of the core, the weapon is probably unsafe. See 6C below.

Pommels do not have to be padded as safely as striking surfaces, but shouldn't "thunk" when a weapon is dropped onto a hard surface. The entire haft of axes (from the top of a reasonable area for a hand-grip to the bottom of the blade) and any sort of protruding cross-guard must be padded just as safely as the striking surfaces, because these areas often accidentally strike opponents' hands or bodies.

If the weapon meets all minimum dimensions and it feels safe when you squeeze it, test the weapon by hitting a volunteer (other than the owner) on the middle of their back with it. Hit three times: light, medium, then all-out as hard as you can. Pause between each hit so the volunteer can say, "Okay," or "OUCH! – Unsafe!" If the volunteer says the weapon hurts at any time, stop testing the weapon and reject it as unsafe. **See "WEAPON FAILS" below.** NOTE: Always have your volunteers place one hand on the back of their neck and lay the other arm across their lower back (covering the kidneys) to protect them from a test swing that goes too high or too low.

## Note on Checking Morning Stars or Flails

“Flex-weapons” including morning stars and flails tend to “hit lighter” than other blue weapons. For this reason, care must be taken to ensure that a morning star or flail not only hits safely, but also that it hits solidly enough to be felt and noticed in the heat of combat, even through armor. A flex-weapon that hits too lightly may lead to arguments and problems on the battlefield. Therefore, morning stars and flails should not only be checked by hitting an unarmored weapons-checker, but also by hitting a player in chainmail or leather armor. The armored person will confirm if the weapon can be felt through armor on a normal (“medium”) hit. If the weapon cannot be felt through armor on a “medium” hit, stop testing the weapon and reject it as unplayable. See **“WEAPON FAILS” below**.

Measure the morning star or flail “chain” to ensure it is less than 6” long (the width of the weapons-check template shown above). To easily check that the weapon’s “striking head” meets the minimum 18” circumference, place the flail head on the weapons-check table and hold the template upright next to it. If the weapon’s striking head is taller than the 6” template, the circumference will measure greater than 18” (pi times the diameter). If the weapon’s head is asymmetrical, be sure to measure its shortest side.

Ensure that the foam padding covers the rope “chain” sufficiently to prevent any chance of the rope injuring players if it wrapped around a wrist or other exposed skin. Also ensure that the tip of the core is not exposed, and that the sides of the haft/handle are as safely padded as the haft/handle of any other blue weapon (much like the haft of an axe).

## Checking Rocks, Arrows, and Javelins (Missile Weapons)

ROCKS: Squeeze the foam “rock” to ensure there is nothing solid inside the foam. Measure rock to ensure it meets minimum 4” diameter.

ARROWS: Measure the arrowhead to ensure it’s larger than 2 ½ inches in all directions, and won’t easily pass through the larger hole in the Weapons Check Template. Squeeze the arrowhead, feeling for hard spots, but also to see if the foam provides enough resistance to keep you from feeling the denser inner padding or solid core. Make certain the arrowhead is firmly attached to the shaft by grabbing it and pushing gently to each side (don’t try to force the arrowhead all the way over, but if it moves easily, it probably needs to be taped down better).

If the arrow passes these tests, have a volunteer stand 15 feet from you, and shoot the volunteer in the middle of the back with the arrow, using a 35-pound bow, and drawing the arrow back all the way (28”). Pause between each shot so the volunteer can say, “Okay,” or “OUCH! – Unsafe!” If the volunteer says an arrow hurts or is too solid at any time, stop testing the weapon and reject it as unsafe. See **“WEAPON FAILS” below**. NOTE: Always have your volunteers place one hand on the back of their neck and lay the other arm across their lower back (covering the kidneys) to protect them from a test shot that goes too high or too low.

**JAVELINS:** Measure the javelin head to ensure it's larger than 2 ½ inches in all directions, and won't easily pass through the larger hole in the Weapons Check Template. Squeeze the javelin head and pommel, feeling for hard spots, but also to see if the foam provides enough resistance to keep you from feeling the core. Unlike hand weapons such as axes or swords, Javelin pommels must be padded just as safely as the head. This means that even if a javelin is accidentally grabbed and thrown backward, it will still strike without causing injury.

If the javelin passes these tests, have a volunteer stand 10 feet from you, then throw the javelin against the volunteer's back. Throw the javelin three times: light, medium, then all-out as hard as you can. Pause between each hit so the volunteer can say, "Okay," or "OUCH! – Unsafe!" If the volunteer says the weapon hurts at any time, stop testing the weapon and reject it as unsafe. **See "WEAPON FAILS" below.** NOTE: Always have your volunteers place one hand on the back of their neck and lay the other arm across their lower back (covering the kidneys) to protect them from a test throw that goes too high or too low.

## **PASSING or FAILING WEAPONS**

**WEAPON PASSES:** If the weapon doesn't hurt, slap, or leave a bruise, it passes. Mark it with the appropriate color marking tape (red, blue, green, white, or yellow) around the base of the blade, the haft, or on the handle (whichever works best and most securely for the particular weapon).

**WEAPON CAN PASS WITH MINOR REPAIR:** If the weapon is borderline (i.e., you feel it's currently unsafe but a minor repair such as adding more padding to the pommel will make it safe to use for this battle), offer the owner advice on how to fix it and tell him/her to bring the weapon directly back to you when it's fixed (they don't have to wait in the weapons-check line again). Before the owner takes the weapon away, **REMOVE ANY MARKING TAPE FROM PAST BATTLES.** A weapon with no marking tape is a weapon that needs to be tested.

**WEAPON FAILS:** If the weapon failed for any reason, **REMOVE ANY MARKING TAPE FROM PAST BATTLES** and direct the owner to immediately put the weapon in their car (to ensure the weapon doesn't accidentally get carried onto the battlefield. Direct the owner to whoever is in charge of rental/loaner weapons, or to people you think might have spare weapons.

## **CHECKING SHIELDS**

Measure the shield to ensure it meets Dagorhir requirements. A shield may not be taller than the distance between the wielder's chin and their ankles, nor wider than 3 feet. The minimum dimension for the face of a shield is 12 inches. Feel the edges and face of the shield, squeezing to locate gaps or hard spots in the foam under the cover. If you find no problems, punch the surface of the shield, and karate-chop the edges, to ensure that it won't hurt a player's hand or face if they accidentally impact the shield in the middle of combat. Start out hitting the shield lightly (you don't want to injure yourself!); if you find no problems, hit it progressively harder.



If at any time you feel the solid core, stop testing and reject the shield as unsafe. Be sure to tell the owner where the problem spots are, so they can repair the shield before the next battle.

## **CHECKING ARMOR**

Inspect all armor to ensure it meets Dagorhir standards for thickness and types of materials, and that it does not present hazards to the fighter wearing it or to other fighters. Metal armor must be made from period materials such as iron, brass, or steel. Plate armor must be 16 gauge or thicker; chainmail must be 14 gauge or thicker. Aluminum is not a period material and is not allowed for Dagorhir armor. Plastic protective gear such as roller-skating knee protection may be worn hidden from view under costumes but it does not count as Dagorhir armor. Leather armor must be 3/16" or thicker. Metal armor must have no sharp edges. There can be no metal on the hands. No metal may protrude from the body in such a way as to make it likely to catch or gouge other fighters.

## **WARM-UP BATTLES**

As members leave weapons-check, advise them to start sparring and having "pick-up fights" among themselves. This warms up players, and keeps people from getting bored while the rest of the members finish checking in.

## **NEW PERSON RULES REVIEW**

20 minutes before Check-in closes, call for all people who have fought three or fewer battles, and all people who haven't fought in the last six months to assemble. Have two veteran fighters review the rules with these people and answer any questions they might have, such as, "What do I do if a red weapon hits my shield three times?" or "What happens if an arrow hits my sword in front of my body?"

The veterans should demonstrate:

- What constitutes a good hit (the weapon strikes the target with reasonable force and stops or rebounds, rather than glancing and continuing onward).
- The striking zones on the body (head, neck, torso, arms, hands, legs, and feet).
- What to do when you're wounded (drop to one knee if hit in the leg, or drop what you're holding and put your arm behind your back when you're hit in the arm).
- What to do when you're killed (scream and die, then lie still on the field).
- The different color codings for weapons and the damage they do (red weapons break shields with two solid hits and go through armor in one hit; blue weapons take two hits to go through armor; green weapons thrust with both hands penetrate armor on the first hit, but armor stops one-handed green thrusts; red weapons swung with only one hand count as blue weapons; arrows and thrown javelins are stopped by shields and helmets but penetrate armor on the first hit; rocks only count if they are thrown and hit a fighter's un-armored head).
- Hands holding a weapon and feet on the ground don't count if they're hit.
- The differences between blocking arrows and javelins (only shields and helmets may block arrows; you die if you deliberately block arrows with your limbs or weapons; javelins may be blocked or deflected by any weapon or even caught in one's hand).

- If two limbs are hacked or smashed by red or blue weapons, the player is dead from blood-loss and shock but limbs lost to piercing (green and yellow) weapons do not kill from blood-loss/shock.
- When in doubt about a rule or a hit, just take the hit and ask questions about rules later. Expertise will come with experience, and veteran fighters will tell you if they felt you took a hit you didn't need to take.

## **CLOSING CHECK-IN**

As you close up Check-in and be sure the cash box, records, and all equipment are locked away securely, preferably in the trunk of a car.

## **CHOOSING TEAMS**

As the last people are going through the Check-in line, assemble the Unit Commanders. Write down the names of each unit, and the number of fighters they brought to the battle. Ask for volunteers to command armies. If you have more volunteers than you need, have the volunteers fight in a free-for-all; the last two alive become commanders.

Form up all the units. If you have fighters who are not in units ("mercenaries"), give them the option of banding together into a temporary unit or being chosen individually. Have the commanders pick teams. The commander from the smallest unit picks first and continues to pick until his team has more members than the other commander's unit. Then the commanders take turns; whoever's team has fewer members picks next. It's important that team picking be completely anonymous; you don't want to hurt the feelings of newer members by letting them know their unit got picked last. If that happens, they may never return to Dagorhir, and will miss out on the chance to become more experienced, "in-demand" fighters...and your Dagorhir Chapter will shrink in size instead of growing.

EXAMPLE:

The battle has the following units

Gray Claw 12  
 Battle Bards 10  
 White Wolves 10  
 Free Companions 7  
 Guild 5  
 Orcs 3  
 Mercenaries 3  
 Redi Knights 2

Alaric of the Guild is one commander and Verikose of the Battle Bards is the other.

Alaric chooses first, since the Guild has fewer fighters. The unit selection goes like this: Guild chooses the Orcs (3). Since the Guild still has the fewest warriors on their team (8), they choose

again, and take the Gray Claw (12). This gives the Guild 20 on their team, to the Battle Bard's 10. The Battle Bards choose the Free Companions (7) and the White Wolves (10). Guild then gets the rest of the Warriors – Mercenaries (3) and Redi Knights (2).

The teams end up like this:

Guild	5	Battle Bards	10
Orcs	3	Free Companions	7
Gray Claw	12	White Wolves	10
Mercenaries	3		
Redi Knights	2		
TOTAL	25		27

The teams are approximately even, and you're almost ready to fight!

Hand out headbands to each team (blue to one, red to the other). Headbands need to be at least an inch wide, and should be three feet long -- that's long enough to tie around any head or helmet on the field!

In the scenario above, you'd probably draft two Heralds (referees) from the Battle Bard's team, which would make the teams exactly even. Fighters may rotate Herald duty; that is, two Battle Bards could serve as Heralds for the first hour of the battle, then two Free Companions could take over for the next hour, and so on. That way, everyone gets to fight and no one feels left out.

## **HEALERS**

If you are doing "resurrection battles" where healers would be appropriate, tell your commanders to choose one healer for every 15-20 fighters. In the battle above, you'd probably have two healers per team.

## **HERALDS**

Heralds are the Dagorhir equivalent of referees. Among their most important jobs are to ensure everyone stays safe, everyone keeps their cool, and that the battle keeps moving. People should seldom be bored at a Dagorhir event!

Heralds serve as timekeepers, referees, and scorekeepers. When there's an disagreement on the field as to the validity of a hit, Heralds will mediate the dispute. But the Heralds' main job is to keep the battle flowing smoothly. Heralds wear bright yellow tunics to differentiate them from other players on the field. For this reason, players are not allowed to wear solid yellow tunics when fighting in Dagorhir.

Often warriors who are unable to fight due to a pulled muscle or other problem will offer to Herald. If you don't already have volunteers to be Heralds, draft them. A good rule of thumb is one Herald for every 20-25 fighters.

Give the Heralds the battle scenario list. With that list in hand, the Heralds always know what battle comes next, and when it's time to suggest a break.

If the teams prove to be lopsided, the Heralds will work with the Team Commanders to trade units or mercenaries effort to even up the sides. If one side loses every fight, the members on that team may decide to depart and never return to Dagorhir. Even teams where everyone has the chance to kill and die mean more fun for everyone.

Heralds:

- Tell players what scenario is next and explain the boundaries.
- Explain, interpret, and enforce the rules of play.
- Keep track of time.
- Recognize/reward exceptional actions and sportsmanship by players through such means as calling a player forward in front of the assembled armies and saying, "Marcus here has some of the most realistic 'deaths' I've ever seen," or by awarding J'tai (the Dagorhir equivalent of medals) for truly exceptional characterization and/or sportsmanship.
- Keep the action flowing.
- Keep players from getting out of hand or losing their temper. Only rarely should a Herald have to remove a player from the field for unsportsmanlike conduct.

## **CHOOSING HERALDS**

When choosing Heralds, it's always best that they have extensive current combat experience. Veterans who are unable to fight due to an injury or infirmity make great Heralds – it allows them to stay active in Dagorhir, while providing a needed service to their fellow players. Members without current Dagorhir combat experience are often less effective Heralds, as they may not be good judges of the nuances of fast-flowing Dagorhir combat.

Avoid Heralds whose personalities might leave them inclined to "power trip" on the field. Heralding DOES require a degree of self-assertion and certainty; the ideal Herald will stand up to the biggest, baddest fighter on the field and say, "Sorry, but you ARE dead," yet won't abuse his/her responsibilities by making spurious calls or imposing over-harsh penalties (such as shouting, "Dead! You're dead! And you, and you, and you, too!")

## **PLAYERS and HERALDS**

If a Herald makes a call with which you disagree, DON'T argue. Cooperate and "take the hit" – THEN tell the Herald, "Actually, that arrow glanced off the helmet of the fighter in front of me before it hit my arm," as you drop your sword and put your arm behind your back. Often, the Herald will say, "Sorry, my mistake – you can have your arm back." Even if a Herald calls you "dead" incorrectly, well, Dagorhir is just a game and you'll be "alive" again in a few minutes.

## HOW TO BE A HERALD

Because Dagorhir is “for fun” and not a professional sport where there’s money on the line, it’s better for a Herald’s decision to be quick and wrong (and to apologize for it later) than to be slow and indecisive and allow a situation (such as an argument between players) to get out of hand.

Keep your eyes constantly moving as you watch for any possible problems. Watch incoming projectile weapons and ensure that they are correctly “called” when they hit. Watch for shots that hit people from behind and ensure that the person who’s hit knows it was an attack and not their own team jostling them.

Try to avoid calling a player (especially a newer member) “dead” for minor violations of rules such as stepping over boundaries. If you feel the mistake was an honest one, simply warn the player. Generally you should only call a player dead if you deem a violation to be deliberate (such as knocking an arrow from the air with a weapon), or if it changes the flow of the game (such as stepping off the edge of a “bridge” during a bridge battle)

Whenever possible, try to state things/calls positively. Think about the effect each of the following Herald comments might have on a new Dagorhir member who accidentally overstepped the battlefield boundaries:

“You in the red tunic! You stepped over the boundary line and then stepped back! You’re dead! And if I ever see you cheating like that again, I’ll kick you off the field!”

vs.

“You in the red tunic! You stepped over the boundary line and stepped back. Watch it, or I’ll have to call you ‘dead’ next time.”

Remember, Heralds are in a position of authority. If you’re experienced enough to be a Herald, other members (especially new members) will look up to you – they’ll want to BE you in a few years. Give them a good impression of Dagorhir and of yourself.

## FREEZING COMBAT

Call a Freeze or Hold when:

1. There is an immediate safety issue, such as a (really) injured player who needs to be protected;
2. You realize that a number of players don’t understand some rule that’s basic to the scenario being played (such as where the boundaries are);
3. When there’s a brief lull in the fighting and you think it’s advisable to get “dead” players out from underfoot to keep them from getting stepped on.

Avoid calling a “freeze” or “hold” to combat for a non-safety issue (such as to get the “dead” out from underfoot) at any moment that might change tactical advantage from one team to another.

**EXAMPLE OF WHAT NOT TO DO:** The Red Team is charging over the Blue Team's fort wall, taking heavy casualties. Just as the Red Team gains a foothold inside the walls, an inexperienced Herald calls "Hold! Everybody freeze and let the dead people leave for Valhalla." This takes away the momentum of the Red Team's attack and practically ensures their defeat.

## MEDIATING ARGUMENTS

As with any competitive sport, you will see arguments on the Dagorhir Battlefield, usually over whether or not Fighter A's hit was "good" on Fighter B. In such cases:

1. If you saw the hit, render a judgment and keep the battle moving.
2. If you didn't see the hit, suggest that the players drop the argument and keep fighting.
3. If one or both players won't drop the argument, call them dead (one or both, as appropriate) so fighting can continue around them. Don't let a couple of hotheads ruin a battle for other members.

## PULLING A PLAYER OFF THE FIELD

Hopefully you will never have to "pull" a fighter off the field for unsportsmanlike conduct, BUT a Herald must be prepared to do what it takes to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the players. Generally, the only time you might need to direct a player to leave the field is when that player loses their cool: screaming obscenities at other players, smashing players (especially smaller people) with excessive force, threatening players, deliberately swinging at someone's head, throwing a punch, etc. In the face of dangerous or belligerent behavior, it's advisable to call for other figures of authority to support your actions and help calm down the troublemaker. Call for the Event Organizers, other Heralds, and other members of the troublemaker's Unit.

## COMMUNICATIONS DURING BATTLES

Walkie-talkies can be very helpful for coordinating Heralds who are out of sight of one another. War-horns are wonderful for starting battles or for sounding charges, retreats, and calling for help during battles. Although they're not "period," whistles are often useful for Heralds who need to get everyone's attention.

## STARTING THE BATTLE

*The outnumbered attackers strove to cross the stream and gain a foothold on the far shore. Their enemies, both on the shore and inside the fort (lashed together from fallen trees), fought back ferociously, with sword, axe, and bow.*

*One attacker, shot through the neck with an arrow, fell screaming at the stream's edge. Determined to make the enemy pay for his death, his comrades redoubled their efforts. Sweeping aside a sword and a spear simultaneously with his shield, one attacker drove the enemy back and finally pulled himself to the top of creek's bank.*

*Without sparing a look back, he shouted, “We take them NOW!” to the rest of his force.*

*It didn’t matter that they were outnumbered, or that water, muddy banks, and strong walls stood in their way. They charged.*

Start your battle with a mass-melee, such as “every Unit for itself” to get everyone’s blood burning. (Don’t be surprised if everyone gangs up on the biggest Units first, to remove the biggest threats!) Then divide into your two teams and begin working through the battle scenarios on the list.

Dagorhir battles generally fall into 2 categories - field battles and woods battles. Field battles are fought in open or very lightly wooded areas that are relatively small, such as a soccer field. Woods battles are held in larger (up to one square mile), more densely wooded areas that generally include streams, hills, and swamps. Dagorhir tends to hold woods battles more often. Field battles are usually held in the hot summer months, when the woods are overgrown with thorn bushes and poison ivy.

Examples of scenarios you can use:

### **WOODS BATTLE SENARIOS**

Capture the Flag (two or three teams)  
Capture One Flag  
Capture The Unit Flags Battle  
Capture the Princess/Prince  
Gold Battle  
Fort Sieges

### **FIELD BATTLE SENARIOS**

Grand Melee  
Unit Battles  
Free-for-all  
Honor Free-for-all  
Bridge/Causeway/Pass Battles  
Kill the King/Queen  
Chess Battle  
Flag Battle  
Cavalry Battle  
Race Riot  
Weapons Class Battle  
Honor Circle  
Highlander  
Zombie  
King/Queen’s Choice  
No Shields or Armor (or Missile Weapons)  
Boat/River Battles  
Dagorhir Snowball Fight

## DESCRIPTIONS OF BATTLE SCENARIOS

### Woods Battles

#### Flag Battle

A woods battle is most often a “capture-the-flag type battle. After the teams have been selected, both teams will be led to Valhalla, where the times for the battle's start and end are announced (anywhere from one to four hours). Each team heads off in opposite directions to look for a strategic place to plant its flag. Once a site is chosen, the “Fortress” around the flag is fortified by lashing fallen trees and logs together, then piling up brush on top. (Rope and twine are very useful. Your teammates will bless you for bringing them). No living plants may be harmed.

At the start of the game the entire team must be assembled around the flag inside the fort. Wise commanders will by this point know what strategies and tactics they plan to use, and will have directed the units under their command accordingly.

The goal is to find the enemy flag, capture it and return it to your camp, where you must plant it next to your own. Then your army must defend both flags from the enemy, who are sure to be in hot pursuit. If you return to your camp with the enemy's flag and find that your own flag is gone, you must quickly plant the enemy's flag where yours was and then try to recapture your own.

SCORING: Your team gets one point for every time one of the enemy is killed, and one point for every minute that BOTH flags are planted side-by-side inside your fort.

Whenever a flag is voluntarily touched by someone, that person's team assumes possession of the flag, and has only 15 minutes to get it back to their fort. The team loses five points for every minute that it exceeds the 15 minute grace period.

Note: The flags must always be on their poles. If you get to camp with only half a flag (either the pole or the banner is missing), your team will begin losing points unless the other half of the flag is found and reattached before the 15 minute grace period is up.

FLAG HERALDS: Each flag must have a Herald assigned to it. The Flag Herald's jobs are to:

1. Track time of possession and points gained or lost;
2. Referee combat in the area surrounding the flag.

#### Capture One Flag

A simpler version: Two or more teams fight over possession of a single flag. Battle starts with the Flag Herald in a central location away from all teams' forts. Points are awarded for every minute a team has the flag planted in their fort and for each enemy warrior killed.

#### Capture The Unit Flags Battle

This is a variation of the normal flag battle. The difference is that every unit is a team and has its own flag (a unit standard). In other words, instead of two teams and two flags, there could be



nine teams, each with their own flag. Each unit must supply its own flag Herald, who must stay with the flag, as in a standard flag battle. A team may capture as many flags as it wants; if a team has three flags as well as its own in its possession, it gains three points per minute.

### **Capture the Princess/Prince**

Same as Capture the Flag, except the goal is to possess a human being.

### **Gold Battle**

Gold battles can take many forms; two teams, every unit for itself, or even free-for-all (everyone for themselves). At check-in each warrior is given one gold piece (a metal washer or some other small metal disk) to place in his/her pouch or to hang around her/his neck. The goal is to end the battle with as much gold as possible.

You may collect as much gold as you want, but you must always carry it on your person, and you must hand over all your gold to any player who declares they are looting your dead body. Gold may not be hidden, buried, etc., although you may give it away to your teammates, so long as you keep one piece; warriors may not give away their last gold piece for the purpose of safeguarding it.

Gold is generally collected through “killing” players from the other team and “looting” the gold from their lifeless bodies, but extortion, robbery, or other forms of persuasion may be used as well: *“Hand over your gold, or I’ll tell my archers to shoot you down like the dog you are!”*

Killing may not be necessary to collect an enemy's gold; you can always threaten to kill them if they do not give up all their gold (you may give your last gold piece to an enemy, if you are dead or under threat of death). Nor does killing an opponent automatically give you the right to his/her gold; if someone takes it before you, you may have to kill THAT person to get it back. If dead people are inside a fort, and the Herald calls a cease fire to send the dead to Valhalla, and you haven't had a chance to get the gold off of the dead, TOO BAD! You may not search spirits going to Valhalla.

### **Fort Sieges**

Teams takes turns defending a fort and seeing who can hold the fort the longest.

### **Field Battles**

Field battles last about four hours. The fighting is nonstop, one scenario after another. The dead come back to life at the beginning of each new scenario. Here are some examples of the various kinds of battles, (some variations of which may also be used in woods battles):

### **Grand Melee**

Battle between two or more opposing teams until there is only one team left alive.

### **Unit Battles**

Each unit fights as a separate team in a grand melee.

**Free-for-all**

Every fighter for his/her self until only one is left alive.

**Honor Free-for-all**

The same as the previous one, but all combat is honor-bound; eye contact must be made before a fight is begun.

**Bridge/Causeway/Pass Battles**

Using a wide trail or an area marked off with rope or hay bales to denote a bridge crossing a steep ravine, two teams fight until one is victorious. Anyone who falls or is pushed off the bridge dies from the fall into the ravine. CAUSEWAY VARIANT: Instead of a bridge, the marked area represents a raised causeway crossing a swamp. Anyone who steps off the causeway into the swamp must drop to their knees to symbolize wading through the swamp. fighters may get back to their feet only when they step back onto the bridge. PASS VARIANT (also called a Thermoplye Battle, after the pass where 300 Spartans led a tiny coalition force from the Greek city-states, holding off overwhelming odds from the attacking Persian Empire for several days): The sides of the battle area are the walls of a mountain pass; no one can step outside the “walls,” nor can anyone fire missile weapons that cross the sides of the pass. A true “meat-grinder” battle! Choose a wide forest trail with heavy brush on the sides.

**Kill the King/Queen**

Each team has a designated king or queen (who does not have to be the commander). The object is to kill the other team's monarch before they kill yours. The monarchs are immune to missile weapons. This is usually a two-team battle, but can involve more.

**Chess Battle**

The two teams stand facing each other with a shield wall in front of each team. The Herald calls for different types of combat in the following order, allowing one or two minutes for each segment:

1. Missile weapons only.
2. Retrieval of missile weapons by owners.
3. Honor challenges (eye-contact honor battles).
4. Red berserkers (red weapon wielders attack their counterparts from the enemy army and the survivors attack the enemy shieldwall, trying to cleave shields).
5. Grand Melee.

Note: The shield wall must hold the line and cannot 'travel' during the early Battle Phases; one foot must stay planted until the Grand Melee. Warriors behind the wall may not advance to the center unless they are competing in the specific battle of the moment.

**Flag Battle**

There are two type of field flag battles. In one, the flag is placed in the center of the field and two teams race to capture and hold the flag. The team with the flag at the end of the grand melee wins. In the second, each team has a flag and fights to defend its flag and capture the team's flag.

### **Cavalry Battle**

Each team has part of their team stand (on horseback) and everyone else kneels (infantry). When a horseman loses one or more legs, he/she becomes infantry. The first lost leg counts as the horse's death, so the limb is still there for battle purposes. Leg armor counts only on the cavalry, not on the "horse," so the first hit to a cavalry's armored leg would still drop him to his knees.

### **Race Riot**

A grand melee in which teams are selected on the basis of character races or nationalities.

### **Weapons Class Battle**

Divide up by weapons types (spears vs. red weapons vs. round shields vs. two weapons vs. rectangular shields vs. archers etc.) and fight as a Unit Battle.

### **Honor Circle**

All warriors form a circle and challenges are called for honor battles in the center.

### **Highlander**

As in the "Highlander" movies and TV series, it is "The Gathering" and all fighters are Immortals. Everyone is allowed only one blue or green weapon. This is an Honor-Free-for-All as above; you must make eye-contact with another player before you may fight them. You fight, take wounds, and die just as in a regular battle, but when you kill an opponent, they fall to the ground and count to 10. If, during that 10-count, you step in, touch your weapon to your dead opponent's throat and say, "There can be only one," you take your opponent's "quickenings" (their life-force) and you are healed of all wounds. If another fighter gets there first and takes your dead opponent's quickening, that fighter is healed of any wounds. If no one reaches the dead fighter before she/he completes the 10-count, the dead fighter is returned to life fully healed and may continue fighting. Everyone keeps fighting until There Is Only One.

### **Zombie**

This free-for-all battle starts with one or more Zombies fighting against all the "Living" (humans, elves, orcs, etc.). Zombies may not run, but must limit their speed to a fast walk. When a Zombie kills a Living fighter, the Living fighter falls over dead, counts to 10, and resume fighting as a Zombie. When a Zombie is killed, they fall over dead, count to 10, and resume fighting as a Zombie. The Living always lose. Imagine you're in one of those bad B-Horror movies; eventually, the field is full of Zombies shambling after the last few Living fighters, crying, "Brains! Must eat brains!"

### **King/Queen's Choice**

Commanders of the Armies each choose groups of 3 fighters to duel (one group of 3 at a time). When the last member of one Army's group of 3 dies, that Army sends in 3 fresh fighters to combat the survivors of the enemy's previous group of 3. Continue until one Army is wiped out.

### **No Shields or Armor (or Missile Weapons)**

Grand melees with the better-equipped fighters giving up the advantages of their superior weapons for a short-lived, intense Clash of Heroes.

### **Boat/River Battles**

Very silly and a lot of fun, allowing for all sorts of strategies. “Shorelines” are designated by rope, chalk lines (like on a football field), or the edges of a field. “Boats” are boat-shaped frames of plastic PVC piping glued together with T, L, and V joints. Boats may be anywhere from 8 to 20 feet in length, depending on how they’re constructed.

Fighters step inside the boat and lift the frame, then walk or run to propel the boat. Fighters may attack other boats, “swimming” enemies, or enemies on land. Any attacks that go below the framework of a boat are considered to have “hit the hull” and don’t count; thus, a common defense against an incoming arrow barrage is to shout “All hands below decks!” and raise the PVC frame up over the heads of all “onboard!”

If you fall in the “water” wearing ANY kind of armor or shield, you drown immediately.

If you’re not wearing any armor or shield, you can swim (and even fight) in the water, provided:

1. You stay on your knees at all times; and
2. You keep one hand free for “swimming.”

Hence, fighters in the water cannot use red or green weapons two-handed, or fire a bow.

When two boats intersect (the PVC frames touch or overlap at any point), the boats are considered to have rammed. Both boats must immediately be dropped to the ground and the fight becomes basically a bridge battle across the area of the boat frames until one side is wiped out. Then the survivors of the winning side may “un-ram” the boats and attack other objectives.

### **Dagorhir Snowball Fight**

A blast! Rocks and thrown javelins only: no shields, no bows, not even a knife. Two teams fight, throw, and dodge until one side’s all dead.

### **Combinations**

The scenarios above are time-tested favorites. As mentioned above, before testing a new scenario, it’s a good idea to discuss it with other veterans to see if a fresh look will reveal hidden flaws. The more rules the players have to remember, the slower and less exciting a battle is likely to be.

However, once your players are familiar with each scenario, try combining aspects to make interesting, memorable battles, such as a Capture the Flag Battle with forts separated by a River that includes a Bridge and Boats!

### **AFTER THE BATTLE**

- Ensure the Heralds’ tunics and any headbands that haven’t been lost in the woods are turned in to the Check-in Crew.
- Collect any rental/loaner weapons or costumes.
- POLICE THE BATTLE SITE, making sure Dagorhir leaves the site cleaner than it was when you arrived.
- Take down the “Dagorhir” signs on your way home.

Good fighting!

**Ye Weasel Words:** Dagorhir is a full-contact sport not unlike football, rugby or wrestling. Being a full contact sport the possibility of injury exists. A release form must be signed before anyone may participate in Dagorhir events. For those under 18, a legal guardian must sign the release form with the Check-in crew as witness, or the participant may bring a signed, notarized copy. This release explains that you participate at your own risk and you have agreed, in the event of an accident, to never bring charges or suit against any other participant, any Dagorhir organization, or land owners where games are held.

You must be at least 16 years of age to participate in Dagorhir events.

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This Handbook is based on several source documents, including the Dagorhir Rules, Scroll II, Scroll III, the Dagorhir Handbook (Library of Congress Catalog Card Number TXu 50-026), Scroll V The Dagorhir Aratari Manual of Arms, and Scroll VI The Dagorhir Manual of Arms.

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This Handbook is dedicated to Dagorhir's original Scribe, Brother Quam the Unlearned, and to new Dagorhir fighters everywhere.

## **Appendix A -- Dagorhir Combat Rules (Manual of Arms)**

Dagorhir can be a VERY physical sport. While serious injuries are very rare, sprains, skinned knuckles, and bruises happen often at practice or in battles, not from being hit by Dagorhir weapons, but from tripping, accidentally smashing one's hand into that of another participant, or running into a tree.

This Manual of Arms is a summary of the Dagorhir rules. It is based on the 1988 "Dagorhir Aratari Manual of Arms" which was, in turn, a derivative of the 1980 Dagorhir Handbook (Library of Congress Catalog Card Number TXu 50-026). Numbering has been added for reference purposes.

### **"Rule Zero"**

In all aspects of Dagorhir, common sense supersedes loopholes. Please read the rules thoroughly (several times is recommended). These rules are as plain, straightforward, and detailed as possible, but not every angle of every situation has been covered. Often a rule is clarified later in the same (or subsequent) paragraph. Safety comes first, playability second, and realism third. Loopholes will not even be considered by the Heralds (referees), check-in personnel, officials, or other players.

#### **1. Participation**

- 1.1. The minimum age for participation in Dagorhir battle games is 16; however, some Dagorhir Chapters may choose to raise or lower this limit for their Chapter.
- 1.2. All participants must sign a release form before they will be allowed to participate in any Dagorhir event. For those who are under 18, a legal guardian must sign the release form with either a notary or a member of the Dagorhir check-in staff as witness.
- 1.3. All participants must wear a costume that meets or preferably exceeds minimum Dagorhir requirements:
  - 1.3.1. A tunic or "period" style shirt, dress, or vest of crotch length or longer. This requirement may be waived only if the rest of the costume (pants, boots, etc.) is of exceptional quality and appearance.
  - 1.3.2. Medieval-style (baggy) pants, kilt, skirt, etc.
  - 1.3.3. Medieval-style footwear (moccasins, boots that are not blatantly non-medieval in style, earth-tone shoes, leggings, etc.).
- 1.4. Forbidden Garments: Include blue jeans, white shoes, camouflage patterns such as military fatigues, exposed T-shirts (particularly with logos), modern hats, real swords or knives (even in sheaths or cases, worn or carried) during combat or fighting.

#### **2. General Rules**

- 2.1. Event organizers reserve the right to eject or exclude any person from Dagorhir events for the following reasons:
  - 2.1.1. Violating local, county, state, or federal laws that impact Dagorhir or Dagorhir events, including but not limited to violations that endanger the safety of Dagorhir

members, spectators, or bystanders; violations that endanger Dagorhir's use of facilities; violations of intellectual property rights; etc.

- 2.1.2. Endangering the safety of persons or property, including actions demonstrating intent to cause actual injuries or harm on the Dagorhir battlefield.
- 2.1.3. Endangering Dagorhir's ability to use land or equipment.
- 2.1.4. Abusive language or other behavior unbecoming of a Dagorhir member using a "reasonable person" standard.
- 2.1.5. Disobeying the Dagorhir-related requests and instructions of those in charge of events.

2.2. The Herald (Dagorhir Referee) is the primary authority on the battlefield.

- 2.2.1. A Herald has the right to remove anyone from the field for behaviors described above.

### 3. Types of Combat and Damage

3.1. In combat, common sense supercedes perceived loopholes. These rules are as plain, straightforward, and detailed as possible, but not every angle of every situation has been covered. In all manners concerning these rules, Heralds and event organizers shall have final say. When resolving rules questions, Heralds shall consider the matter according to the following criteria: safety first, playability second, and realism third. If there is a question of what is meant by a rule, a decision will be made based upon the Herald's interpretation of what was implied or intended when that rule was written.

3.2. Weapon Combat: To kill someone in Dagorhir, you must use a weapon.

- 3.2.1. All weapons must be checked for safety and marked by weapons checkers appointed by the event organizer before they may be used in combat.
- 3.2.2. There are five classifications of weapon types which are designated by colored tape: Blue, Red, Green, Yellow and White.
  - 3.2.2.1. Blue weapons: one-handed hacking and smashing weapons. Blue weapons cannot be considered red weapons even when used with two hands.
  - 3.2.2.2. Red Weapons: two-handed hacking and smashing weapons. A red weapon must be used with both hands to count as a red weapon; if used with a single hand, it counts as a blue weapon.
  - 3.2.2.3. Green weapons: stabbing weapons, such as spears, sword points, daggers, and stabbing points on pole arms.
  - 3.2.2.4. Yellow Weapons: projectile weapons, including arrows and javelins. Arrows may never be used as hand weapons.
  - 3.2.2.5. White weapons: Rocks and other head-only projectile weapons.

3.3. Hit Locations: Hit locations include Torso, Leg, Arm, Head, Neck, Feet, and Hands.

- 3.3.1. Torso: shoulders, chest, stomach, crotch, sides, back, and buttocks.
- 3.3.2. Leg: From the top of the foot to the torso (below the buttocks).
- 3.3.3. Arm: From point where the hand joins the wrist to torso or shoulder socket.
- 3.3.4. Head: Off-limits to all but yellow projectile weapons.
- 3.3.5. Neck: Off-limits to all but yellow and white projectile weapons.
- 3.3.6. Hands and Feet: These locations are unaffected by weapon hits if



- 3.3.6.1. Feet are on the ground; if the foot is in the air when it is hit, it is considered a hit to the leg.
- 3.3.6.2. Hands are holding a weapon. When not holding anything, hands are considered part of the arm.
- 3.3.6.3. Intentionally blocking any blow with a hand or foot results in the loss of the limb.
- 3.3.6.4. Gripping the blade or point of your opponent's weapon with your hand results in the loss of that arm.  
[The rules in this section evolved to streamline playability and prevent arguments arising over whether the whole hand/foot was hit, or only a finger or toe. These rules also prevent fighters from blocking hits to other areas with their hand or foot, then crying "It doesn't count!"]

#### 3.4. Judging Hits:

- 3.4.1. Hits from hand-held weapons count when the weapon strikes solidly with noticeable force.
- 3.4.2. Hits from projectile weapons count when the head of the weapon merely strikes the target: stopping or being even slightly deflected.

#### 3.5. Weapon damage varies according to weapon type and whether the target area is armored.

### 4. Weapons

#### 4.1. General

- 4.1.1. All weapons are subject to rejection for any safety or construction discrepancies at the discretion of the weapons checkers appointed by the event organizers. Weapons-Checkers and Heralds have the final say in determining how to classify a weapon, e.g., whether a weapon with a circular cross-section is a "sword" or a "club."
- 4.1.2. A safe Dagorhir weapon is one that will not leave bruises, break bones or noses, or knock out teeth if an unarmored person is struck with a full-strength baseball bat-style swing. [Note that hits to the head from hand-held weapons are illegal but could happen by accident.]
- 4.1.3. All weapons must have cloth covering all striking surfaces.
- 4.1.4. Two- and a half-inch rule: Weapon tips designed for thrusting (green sword points, arrow tips, spear tips, javelin tips, etc.) shall not easily pass more than 0.5 inch through a 2.5 inch-diameter hole. This measurement shall be conducted by lowering the testing template onto the tip of the weapon perpendicular to the edge or shaft of the weapon. The intent is to test the thrusting tip of the weapon, not to search for sword and axe head corners that can pass through the template.
- 4.1.5. Two-inch rule: Weapon tips NOT designed for thrusting (non-stabbing sword points, flail haft tip, etc.) shall not easily pass more than 0.5 inch through a 2 inch-diameter hole. This measurement shall be conducted by lowering the testing template onto the tip of the weapon perpendicular to the edge or shaft of the

weapon. The intent is to test the tip of the weapon, not to search for sword and axe head corners that can pass through the template.

- 4.1.6. The flat (non-striking surface) of bladed weapons must be safely padded.
- 4.1.7. Hafts on axes, morning stars, maces, polearms, and the like must be safely padded except for a reasonable area for a handhold.
- 4.1.8. Single-edged weapons such as sabers and cutlasses must have their non-striking edge clearly marked with silver tape.
- 4.1.9. Restrictions:
  - 4.1.9.1. The pommel of a weapon must be padded to prevent injury in the event of an accidental “hit” and must not easily go through a 2 inch-diameter hole.
  - 4.1.9.2. All bladed weapons must conform to the following:
    - 4.1.9.2.1. Minimum dimensions of 1.25 inch by 3 inches.
    - 4.1.9.2.2. Weigh greater than twelve ounces.
    - 4.1.9.2.3. Balance above the top of the handle (i.e., blade heavier than handle).
  - 4.1.9.3. The shaft or blade of a red or blue weapon may not flex greater than 45 degrees when the weapon is swung.
  - 4.1.9.4. Weapons cores may not constructed of baseball bats or axe handles.
  - 4.1.9.5. No weapons other than aluminum arrows may have metal cores.
  - 4.1.9.6. No weapon may have a spike or blade at the butt (pommel) end.
  - 4.1.9.7. No swung weapon may have more than 1/3 of its overall length unpadded, nor have more than 30” unpadded.
  - 4.1.9.8. Double-ended weapons such as quarter staves are considered to be blue weapons.
  - 4.1.9.9. All hafts of wood weapons must be covered with tape.
  - 4.1.9.10. Disallowed weapons include but are not limited to: Nets, lassos, pungee sticks, nunchucks, tonfas, double-ended daggers.

## 4.2. Blue Weapons

- 4.2.1. Blue weapons are one-handed edged (hacking) or mass (smashing) weapons.
- 4.2.2. Blue swords have a minimum blade length of 12 inches and a maximum overall length of 48 inches.
- 4.2.3. Blue weapons other than morning stars, flails, and quarterstaves (double-ended weapons) may have green stabbing tips or spikes.
- 4.2.4. Morning stars and flails:
  - 4.2.4.1. The ball of a morning star must have a minimum diameter of six (6) inches (measured at its narrowest point) and must be made from a Nerf soccer ball or ball of equivalent size, weight, and density.
  - 4.2.4.2. The end of flail haft must follow the 2-inch rule: Weapon tips NOT designed for thrusting (non-stabbing sword points, flail haft tip, etc.) shall not easily pass more than 0.5 inch through a 2 inch-diameter hole. This measurement shall be conducted by lowering the testing template onto the tip of the weapon perpendicular to the edge or shaft of the weapon. The intent is to test the tip of the weapon, not to search for sword and axe head corners that can pass through the template.
  - 4.2.4.3. The maximum “chain” length is 6 inches.

- 4.2.4.4. The rope or cloth of the flail chain must be completely covered with segmented foam (rings) to reduce the risk of injury if the chain strikes a player.
- 4.2.4.5. Morning stars and flails are always blue weapons regardless of length.
- 4.2.5. Double-ended Weapons (Quarterstaves)
  - 4.2.5.1. Double-ended weapons must not be more than 7 feet long.
  - 4.2.5.2. Double-ended weapons must have a minimum of 18 inches of padded striking surface on each end.
  - 4.2.5.3. Double-ended weapons cannot have green stabbing tips.
- 4.3. Red Weapons
  - 4.3.1. Red weapons are two-handed edged (hacking) or mass (smashing) weapons.
  - 4.3.2. A sword or swung weapon other than a sword (axe, mace, glaive, halberd), 48 inches or longer is considered a red weapon when swung with two hands.
  - 4.3.3. A red weapon used with one hand counts as a blue weapon for damage.
  - 4.3.4. Red weapons may have green stabbing tips and/or spikes on the back of blades.
  - 4.3.5. Red weapons go through armor on the first hit when used two-handed.
  - 4.3.6. All Red weapons when used two-handed can destroy a shield with two solid blows. Light or glancing hits to a shield do not count; the hit should be “all out” -- the sort that might hit a home run in baseball. The player wielding the shield determines whether the blows were solid; however, the physical size of the player delivering the blows must always be considered; i.e., a “solid” hit from a smaller, lighter person will generally feel “lighter” than one from a more massive player.
- 4.4. Green Weapons
  - 4.4.1. Green weapons are stabbing weapons, such as spears, sword points, daggers, and stabbing points on pole arms.
  - 4.4.2. One-hand green thrusts do not penetrate armor.
  - 4.4.3. To penetrate armor, a green weapon must be thrust with both hands from the beginning of the thrust until it has connected solidly with the target.
  - 4.4.4. Spears must have at least 1/3 of the haft padded, but since spears are thrusting weapons (as opposed to hacking weapons), the padding does not have to be as thick as on a hacking weapon.
- 4.5. Yellow weapons
  - 4.5.1. General
    - 4.5.1.1. Yellow weapons must be used at half-drawn (arrows) or thrown with half force (javelins) at ranges closer than 20 feet.
    - 4.5.1.2. A yellow weapon must travel its own length through the air to count as a legal hit.
  - 4.5.2. Javelins
    - 4.5.2.1. The maximum weight of a javelin is 1.5 pounds.
    - 4.5.2.2. Javelins must be between 4 and 7 feet in length.
    - 4.5.2.3. Because they may be used as both thrown- and hand-weapons, all javelins must pass standards for both yellow and green classifications; “yellow only” javelins are not allowed.

- 4.5.2.4. All javelins must have a yellow cover on the head (not on the pommel).  
No non-missile weapons may have a yellow cover. This is to clearly show in the heat of battle which end of a javelin is safe to throw at the enemy.
- 4.5.2.5. Javelins are exempt from weapon flex rule 4.1.8.4. and instead must not flex more than 90 degrees.
- 4.5.2.6. Any block that stops the head of the javelin from striking its target is a legal block, including catching the javelin or blocking it with a weapon.
- 4.5.3. Archery
  - 4.5.3.1. All bows must have a draw weight of 35 pounds or less at 28 inches draw.
  - 4.5.3.2. Compound (pulley) bows are not allowed.
  - 4.5.3.3. Crossbows must have a maximum draw weight of 15 pounds or less.
  - 4.5.3.4. Arrows must always be shot; they can never be used as hand weapons.
  - 4.5.3.5. If an arrow is deflected, even minutely, it is considered to have hit.
    - 4.5.3.5.1. An arrow must strike with its head to count as a hit.
  - 4.5.3.6. Once an arrow has hit an object (changed its path) it is harmless. An arrow cannot strike multiple targets.
  - 4.5.3.7. To better simulate the speed and power of real arrows in flight, the only things that can stop arrows are shields and/or head armor such as a helmet or coif. Arrows cannot be caught, blocked, deflected, or knocked out of the air by anything else, including hands, feet, and weapons. If an arrow is blocked intentionally with anything other than a shield or head armor, the warrior doing the blocking is dead automatically.
  - 4.5.3.8. If an arrow strikes a limb that has already been hacked or smashed by a blue or red weapon, the arrow is considered to have continued as if the limb were not there, hitting whatever is in its path.
  - 4.5.3.9. If a weapon accidentally blocks an arrow from hitting a target, the arrow is considered to have hit the target anyway.
  - 4.5.3.10. Players may not ever carry another warrior's arrows around without the owner's express permission. You may return fire with arrows that have been shot at you, but if you leave the immediate area where the arrows were fired, you may not take any arrows other than your own with you. Players must always return the owner's arrows to the owner upon request.
  - 4.5.3.11. Bows may be used to turn aside thrusts without suffering any damage. However, if a bow is hacked or smashed by a red or blue weapon, or used to stop a thrust, the bow is considered broken. A healer may heal a broken bow.
  - 4.5.3.12. Archers are allowed to call shots for clarity, i.e., they may call out to let their target know whether a hit was "good," or not, as in the case of a glancing or ricocheting arrow.
  - 4.5.3.13. Arrows
    - 4.5.3.13.1. A draw stop (generally a ring of tape around the shaft) is required to prevent an arrow from being drawn more than 28 inches.
    - 4.5.3.13.2. No part of the arrow face may be less than 2.5-inch in any direction.
    - 4.5.3.13.3. All arrows must contain a penny secured perpendicularly (flat) at the end of the shaft.
    - 4.5.3.13.4. All arrow striking surfaces must be constructed of open-cell foam.

- 4.5.3.13.5. All arrows must have at least two full fletchings (feathers).
- 4.5.3.13.6. All wood and fiberglass arrows must have their shafts wrapped in tape.
- 4.5.3.13.7. There can be no tape on the striking surface of an arrow
- 4.5.3.13.8. The head of the arrow must not be able to be moved easily from side to side.

#### 4.6. White Weapons

- 4.6.1. Rocks must be between 4" to 6" in diameter and constructed of foam with as little tape as possible.

#### 4.7. Shields:

- 4.7.1. Shields must be safely padded on the front and all sides.
- 4.7.2. A shield maybe used or worn in any manner, and it will still remain a shield; e.g., a shield may be carried on the arm, held in one or two hands, worn on the back, or propped against a player's side.
- 4.7.3. A player may wear or carry only one shield at a time in combat.
- 4.7.4. A shield may not be taller than the distance between the wielder's chin and their ankles, nor wider than 3 feet.
- 4.7.5. The minimum dimension for the face of a shield is 12 inches.
- 4.7.6. Shields may be virtually any shape, but must have handles and/or arm-straps. If a shield is made to strap onto the body and has no means to carry it on the fighter's arm, it is not allowed. As with all weapons rules, Weapons-Checkers and Herald's have the final size in determining what is a shield versus what is armor.
- 4.7.7. All Red weapons when used two-handed can destroy a shield with two solid blows. Light or glancing hits to a shield do not count; the hit should be "all out" -- the sort that might hit a home run in baseball. The player wielding the shield determines whether the blows were solid; however, the physical size of the player delivering the blows must always be considered; i.e., a "solid" hit from a smaller, lighter person will generally feel "lighter" than one from a more massive player.
- 4.7.8. When a shield is destroyed by two red-weapon hits, the wielder of the shield must immediately drop the shield. Additional hits from any type of weapon that strike before the shield is dropped count as though the shield isn't there.
- 4.7.9. Anvilling, laying a weapon on a shield to avoid taking damage to the shield, is not permitted and results in the "anvilled" weapon being broken, i.e., the weapon must be dropped. Thus, a weapon must intercept the red weapon before it strikes the shield. If the blocking weapon is driven back against the shield by the hit from the red weapon, it does not constitute anvilling.
- 4.7.10. Fighters may use a red weapon while also using a shield.
- 4.7.11. Shield "spikes" are for ornamentation only and do no damage.

#### 4.8. Shield Bashing and Checking

- 4.8.1. A shield bash means using a shield to strike an opponent starting from a distance more than two steps away.
- 4.8.2. A shield check means using a shield to strike an opponent starting from a distance two steps away or closer.

4.8.3. Players may shield bash an opponent on their front or side. Bashing an opponent from the rear is prohibited.

4.8.4. Players may shield check an opponent from any direction.

#### 4.9. Grappling

4.9.1. Grappling is defined as wrestling in a safe and reasonable manner, attempting to subdue or unbalance your opponent without strikes, throws, or joint/nerve holds. A good example is high school wrestling.

4.9.2. A person in armor or rigid plastic safety equipment may never initiate a grapple.

4.9.3. Players are not allowed to initiate a grapple starting more than two steps away from an opponent.

4.9.4. Grappling from behind should be done with great caution and will be closely judged by Heralds for safety.

4.9.5. Body checks (blocking your opponent's movement using one's body) are allowed.

4.9.6. Punching and kicking are never allowed. This prohibition includes kicking shields or weapons, which could drive the unpadded portion of the shield or weapon into the head of a player, or a kick that misses its intended target might instead hit another player.

#### 4.10. Miscellaneous

4.10.1. Whenever you strike an opponent from behind, simultaneously call out the color of your weapon so that your opponent will know how to react.

4.10.2. If a blow strikes a sheathed weapon (i.e., one that is hanging from your belt or over your back), the attack is considered to have hit you anyway. A weapon must be in your hand to intercept an attack.

### 5. Armor

#### 5.1. General:

5.1.1. All types of armor provide the same level of protection.

5.1.2. Armor protects only the area it covers.

5.1.3. Armor may not be concealed and must remain visible to other players. Players may wear a surcoat or tabard over armor so long as the armor is easily visible.

5.1.4. The front, back, and sides of any part of the body are considered a single strike zone for armor coverage. Hits anywhere on armor on the left leg are considered hits to the "left leg armor," and hits to a fighter's armored chest, sides, and back are considered hits to the "torso armor" even if the hits land on different pieces of armor such as a breastplate and backplate. Think of armor protection in Dagorhir this way: armor lessens the damage from some types of hits, but does not eliminate damage entirely. Hence, an armored fighter will "survive" the first blue weapon hit to his back, but a second blue hit to the same fighter's chest armor will have done enough damage to "kill" the fighter.

5.1.5. All armor within a strike zone counts as a single piece of armor no matter how many separate pieces of armor are actually present.

5.1.6. Armor does not offer protection against red weapons, two-hand green thrusts, or yellow (projectile) weapons except as shown below.

- 5.1.7. Head and neck armor protect from yellow and white weapon hits to the head and neck.
- 5.1.8. The first hit from a blue weapon to an armored strike zone has no effect.
- 5.1.9. The second blue hit:
  - 5.1.9.1. to an armored torso results in death;
  - 5.1.9.2. to an armored limb results in loss of the limb.
- 5.1.10. A one-handed green thrust has no effect on armor, even if the armor was previously struck by a blue weapon.
- 5.1.11. Armor protection against blue weapon strikes is not eliminated due to a previous yellow or two-handed green weapon hit.
- 5.1.12. Rigid plastic safety equipment for knee and elbow protection is permitted but must be concealed under clothing. It does not count as armor.
- 5.1.13. No one wearing armor may initiate grappling.
- 5.1.14. Rigid body armor must not protrude more than ½ inch from the body.
- 5.1.15. Rigid armor including helmets must have no points and must have blunted edges.
- 5.1.16. Armor must not be able to catch any appendages; e.g., fingers.
- 5.2. Metal armor:
  - 5.2.1. Metal armor may be made of iron, steel, bronze, brass, or copper. Aluminum and other modern alloys are not allowed.
  - 5.2.2. The minimum thickness of metal armor is 16 gauge.
  - 5.2.3. The maximum thickness of metal armor is 1/8 inch.
  - 5.2.4. The minimum thickness wire for chain mail is 16-gauge.
  - 5.2.5. Rigid metal knee or elbow armor is forbidden (ring or chainmail is permitted).
  - 5.2.6. All corners should be rounded for safety.
  - 5.2.7. Metal helmets may only be constructed from 16 gauge. Helmets may not have “non-period” grills (e.g., most ‘SCA’ helmets have non-period grills).
- 5.3. Leather armor:
  - 5.3.1. The minimum thickness for leather armor is 3/16 inch and may be achieved by layering several pieces of thin leather.
  - 5.3.2. Studded, scaled, or brigandine armor can only be counted as armor if 2/3 of the area is covered by metal, or the studs/rings/plates are no more than 1/2" apart.
- 5.4. Armor may not be constructed of plastic or other non-period materials.
- 6. Wounds and Healing
  - 6.1. When in doubt of any of these rules, ask a Herald.
  - 6.2. When killed, scream and fall to a prone position on the ground.
  - 6.3. When you lose an arm, drop anything that is in that hand and put the arm behind your back.
    - 6.3.1. If the arm was hacked or smashed with a blue or red weapon, any other strike to the same arm counts as a torso hit, because in real life the arm would not be there to intercept the hit.
  - 6.4. If you lose a leg, you must immediately kneel on that knee. To move from place to place you must either crawl, dragging the injured leg, or have comrades carry you. Hopping around on your uninjured leg is not allowed. However, you may make a lunge off the good leg toward an opponent. Any strike to a leg that has already been lost does not

count. If both legs are wounded, you may only “knee walk” or be carried in order to move.

6.5. If you have two limbs hacked or smashed by red and/or blue weapons, the result is death. Wounds from green and yellow weapons do not count towards this rule, even if they are inflicted by the green stabbing point of a red or blue weapon.

6.6. If asked, a warrior must accurately describe their current armor damage and wound status. Players may never fake death or wounds during a battle to mislead opponents.

6.6.1. Because kneeling is how we show wounds to a leg, kneeling during combat isn’t allowed. Crouching is allowed as long as neither knee is touching the ground.

6.7. At no time may the dead speak to the living, unless it is to shout a safety warning that is “outside” of Dagorhir combat; e.g., “Look out, you’re about to step off a cliff!”

#### 6.8. Healing

6.8.1. The Healer cannot heal her/himself or their own equipment.

6.8.2. To heal a person, the Healer must be in direct physical contact with the injured person.

6.8.3. A healer may not heal a person while either are under direct attack. If the Healer or injured person is attacked or distracted, or contact is broken for any reason, the entire Poem of Healing must be read or recited again.

6.8.4. A Poem of Healing must then be recited or read aloud. The minimum length of a poem of healing is 180 syllables and must be approved at event check-in.

6.8.5. When the healer completes reading the Healing Poem, all wounds and any items held by the wounded player are healed or repaired (i.e. armor, bow, shield, etc.).



## **Appendix B -- Dagorhir Waiver**

### **Waiver**

Dagorhir Battle Games Association, Inc., hereby grants permission to photocopy or otherwise reproduce and distribute this liability waiver, provided such reproduction is solely for purposes directly supporting Dagorhir events.

Waiver requires notarized signature from parent if under 18; parents also have the option to come to the new member's first event and sign the waiver with a member of the Check-in Crew as witness.



## Dagorhir Battlegames Waiver and Release of Liability

(Minors must have notarized signature of Parent/Legal Guardian)

Real Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Street,C,S,Zip) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # (home) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any serious health issues/problems and would like us to be aware of them, please list

\_\_\_\_\_

Character's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Realm \_\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIPTION OF DAGORHIR:** Dagorhir combines fast-paced full-contact combat simulation with elements of live action role-playing. Combat in group melees or between individuals is similar to the battle scenes in movies like *Braveheart* and *Gladiator*, with the biggest difference being that Dagorhir "weapons" are well-padded to prevent injuries. Dagorhir weapons are constructed to resemble Dark Age/medieval swords, shields, spears, etc. and generally consist of soft foam layers bonded to a rigid core. Combatants may also become involved in grappling/wrestling. Dagorhir rules of combat are strictly enforced by the Heralds (referees) to ensure maximum safety along with maximum playability.

As with any outdoor, intense contact sport, the possibility for injury exists. The types and likelihood of injury are similar to those in soccer, rugby and lacrosse and, as in those sports, severe injuries can occur.

**WAIVER:** In consideration of receiving permission from DAGORHIR BATTLE GAMES ASSOCIATION INC. (Dagorhir) to participate in any Dagorhir-sponsored activity, event, tournament, contest or meeting, the undersigned assumes full responsibility for any bodily injury and/or property damage arising out of or related to my attendance and/or participation. I fully release Dagorhir, its members, participants, observers, officers, officials, owners and/or administrators of land upon which the event/activity is being held, and/or anyone administering emergency medical assistance from liability to myself, my assigns, heirs and next of kin for any injury to myself or damage to my property arising out of my attending/participating a Dagorhir event/activity. I hereby agree that if at any time I feel

any Dagorhir activity/event to be unsafe or if I observe unsafe behavior on the part of other participants/observers, I will immediately notify the appropriate Dagorhir officials and/or refuse to participate in or observe any further activities/events.

The undersigned is aware of the risks and hazards inherent in participating in any activity, event, tournament, contest or meeting of Dagorhir and elects voluntarily to participate, knowing that participation involves significant physical contact by others to his person and that such participation may entail a risk of injury.

In signing this release, the undersigned acknowledges and represents:

- (a) That he or she has read the above release, understands it, and signs voluntarily;
- (b) That he or she is over 18 years of age and of sound mind;
- (c) That, if the undersigned intends to participate in Dagorhir activities, he or she has no known physical or mental defects that would increase the likelihood of serious injury from such participation;
- (d) That, if signing on behalf of a Minor participant, the undersigned has the legal capacity to do so.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Undersigned (Sign name here)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Minor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Undersigned (Print name here)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (if different from Minor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (if different from Minor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail (if different from Minor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, and Zip (if different from Minor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_

CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_

TO WIT:

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ personally appeared and made oath in due form of law that the matters and facts set forth in the foregoing Agreement are true and correct as therein stated and that said Agreement is in fact his/her act and deed and that (s)he has full understanding thereof.

WITNESS my hand and Notarial Seal:

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dagorhir Combat Quick Reference Chart

	Weapon Type					
Strike Zone	Blue	Red <sup>1</sup>	Green (One Handed)	Green (Two Handed)	Yellow	White
<b>Torso</b>	Death	Death	Death	Death	Death	No Effect
<b>Leg or Arm</b>	Lose Limb <sup>2</sup>	Lose Limb <sup>2</sup>	Lose Limb	Lose Limb	Lose Limb	No Effect
<b>Head</b>	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Death	Death
<b>Neck</b>	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Death	No Effect
<b>Foot or Hand<sup>3</sup></b>	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
<b>Armored Torso</b>	Stops 1st Hit Only	Death	No Effect	Death	Death	No Effect
<b>Armored Limb</b>	Stops 1st Hit Only <sup>2</sup>	Lose Limb <sup>2</sup>	No Effect	Lose Limb	Lose Limb	No Effect
<b>Armored Head</b>	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	No Effect <sup>4</sup>	No Effect <sup>4</sup>
<sup>1</sup> When used one-hand, red weapons count as blue weapons. <sup>2</sup> Any two limbs hacked or smashed with red or blue weapons result in death. <sup>3</sup> When on the ground or holding a weapon; otherwise treat as leg or arm. <sup>4</sup> Head armor only protects the area it covers.						