

The Nobel Rules of Tournament Jousting

(or not so noble if you want to cheat.)

These are some rules I developed for my Birthright campaign to make Jousts at tournaments a bit more interesting and tactical. They actually worked rather well. I've now updated them to D&D 3.5 but they haven't been playtested as yet. So, saddle up and try to win a ladies favour.

1. No magical weapons or armour. No magic can be used during the bout. However nobles are not routinely checked, as it would question their honour. If both contestants agree, this condition can be waived.
2. Only standard blunted tournament lances can be used, these are provided by the tournaments organiser. Any tampering with the lance or use of none regulation lances will forfeit the bout.
3. Contestants are expected to provide their own warhorse, and field plate. Although contestants are allowed to participate without these requirements at the discretion of the judge and if the opponent agrees.
4. Each bout will consist of three passes.
5. Unseating an opponent automatically wins the bout unless you are also unseated in that pass, in which case you both count as one lance break.
6. The person the breaks the most lances in each bout wins if there is no clear winner via unseating.
7. If it is a draw after three passes, it goes into sudden death, first person to get ahead wins.

Riders can use any of the techniques listed below, in any pass, with the exception of "*Removing the Plume*", this can only be successfully achieved once. In each pass you go up through the phases if both riders use techniques that occur in the same phase then the attacks, damage and ride check are resolved simultaneously.

Technique used	Phase	To Hit Modifier	Ride DC Modifier	Special
Aim for Shield	1st	+2	-	Basic attack, +10% to lance breaking.
Aim for Helm	2nd	-4	+4	No increase in damage.
Remove plume	2nd	-6	-2	Insulting, counts as two lance breaks.
Chest swipe	3rd	+4	+2	Cheap shot, -30% to your lance breaking.

If hit you must make a riding role to remain on your horse, the DC 5 + damage dealt modified by the methods your opponent uses, your Ride check is modified depending on your ability and circumstances (all modifiers are cumulative).

Modifiers to Ride check DC	Modifiers to your Ride skill
+/- modifier from the Technique used	-4 if on a riding horse
+2 if on opponent on a heavy war horse	+1 if you have the <i>Mounted Combat</i> Feat
+1 if opponent has <i>Mounted Combat</i> Feat	+2 if you have <i>Ride by Attack</i> Feat
+1 if opponent has <i>Weapon Focus (Lance)</i> Feat	-4 if saddle not fitted correctly**
+2 if opponent was using strengthened lance*	+2 if you have 5 ranks in Balance
-½ damage dealt if opponent was using weakened lance*	+1-4 if you carry a favour
	+2-8 if you carry a high favour

* Using a lance other than a standard jousting lance is considered cheating.

** Tampering with a rival's saddle is considered cheating, it also negates and benefit of using a military saddle.

Breaking Lances

On each successful hit, there is a base 40% + damage rolled, that your lance will break modified by the technique used (all modifiers are cumulative).

- Using a weakened lance, this gives +20%
- Using a strengthened lance -20%
- Using a battle lance -50%
- Using the *Chest Swipe* technique -30%
- Using the *Aim for Shield* technique +10%

Damage

As lance heads are blunted and people armoured, only 1/4 of damage is real, the rest is non-lethal. The full damage both lethal and non-lethal is used to determine the DC of the Ride check to remain on your horse. As both participants are charging the damage is doubled, or tripled if the rider has the *Spirited Charge* Feat.

If a rider is using a strengthened lance then half of the damage he deals is considered real rather than a quarter. If a rider uses a battle lance rather than tournament lance, all damage he deals is considered lethal.

If a rider is not wearing field plate (Full plate) or at least half plate armour then all damage dealt to him is considered lethal.

Healing

At the end of a bout (not pass), both contestants are treated by squires and physicians in attendance and any non-lethal damage fades before the next bout. Magical healing between bouts is permitted to remove any lethal damage. Magical healing between passes is not normally permitted, but if the opponent agrees, such healing can be permitted.

Cheating

There are several ways to cheat during a tournament, the most common of which are described below. Official protests can only be made if there is evidence to support cheating, false or unproven allegations however reflect badly on those bringing them. Due to the pride involved in jousting, many riders will not challenge even the most blatant cheating and see it as part of the gamesmanship of the event, just another challenge to overcome. In addition, it is very rare for someone of lower station to challenge someone of higher station since even if proved correct it will likely lower his standing in the court.

Deciding if an official protest is up held often comes down to roleplaying, supported by the use of such skills as Diplomacy and Bluff, and is not covered in detail here.

Tampering with the lance

A common practice is to either tamper with the tournament lances provided or replace them completely with lances that appear identical but have different properties.

- Weakened lance this gives +20% to the chance of the lance breaking does only half damage, so is much less likely to unseat an opponent.
- Strengthened lance this gives +2 to the DC of your opponent's ride check to remain seated chance but -20% chance of your lance breaking, also 1/2 damage dealt is real not a quarter.
- Lengthened lance this means you resolve your attack, damage and riding check before the opponent, rather than simultaneously.

- **Battle Lance** this lance has a sharpened steel point, usually concealed by a thin tin or paper mache blunted head. This form of cheating is obvious once used against an opponent, but is a handy way to finish off a rival. All damage done by a battle lance is considered lethal.

As there are advantages and disadvantages to weakening or strengthening the lance it is often hard to prove who is behind the tampering, the rider or his opponent, thus without direct evidence of who swapped the lance this form of cheating is rarely challenged. Using a lengthened lance only provides an advantage, but if it is broken, during the pass then it is very difficult to prove its original length and so this form of cheating often goes unchallenged, unless the lance remains intact.

Using a battle lance is obvious once to the rider struck by it, if he brings the tip to the judge then he can have his cheating opponent can be immediately dismissed from the jousting tournament (and any other tournaments entered at that gathering). His opponent may also face charges of assault or attempted murder, depending on the laws of the land.

Tampering with the Saddle

The opponent's saddle can be tampered with in a number of ways, weakening or untying and number of buckles and straps all make it more likely that the rider will be unseated when struck by the lance. It is often hard to detect and prove since it might be down to the squire or rider's own negligence. Before mounting a rider who states he is checking his saddle can make a Spot or Ride roll to detect tampering opposed by the cheat's Ride check.

Carrying Favour

It is common for riders to compete for the favour of a lady (or gentleman if your campaign suits). A rider can make any number of attempts to gain a favour before the tournament and then between each bout.

To win a simple favour is a Charisma check DC 20, which uses the modifiers below (all modifiers are cumulative). To win high favour such as that granted by one of the king's own family is DC30. A character can only win one favour per tournament.

Circumstance	Modifier
Won the last jousting tournament held in the realm	+4
Has won this lady's favour before	+6
Each previous failed attempt to win favour.	-1 (per attempt)
Won the previous jousting tournament	+1 (per tournament)
Won a previous tournament at this gathering*	+1 (per tournament)
Won previous bout at this tournament	+2 (per bout)
Unseated an opponent at this tournament	+1 (per opponent)
5 or more ranks in Diplomacy	+2
5 or more ranks in Bluff	+2
Masterworked Field Plate and Heavy Warhorse	+2

- such as the foot or archery tournaments

A favour carried gives a +1 bonus to ride checks to remain seated, per bout it has been carried in (including the first), up to a maximum of +4 after four bouts. A high favour carried gives +2 bonus to ride checks to remain seated, per bout it has been carried in (including the first), up to a maximum of +4 after four bouts. Favour can also lead to wealth, influence and access away from the tournament field, but that is not covered here.