

Kingdom Moot of TRM's Malik and Genevieve

Feast Of the Bear, Canton of Eoforwic, Barony of Septentria
November 6, 2004

The moot opened with a Reading of the Article XV-200 - 'Courts of Chivalry'.

Item of business Duke Sir Finvarr de Taahe and Mistress Ragni Dzintera of Amberhall presented the Lawspeaker with a sack of raw wool on which to sit, as a symbol of her office. The historical reference is that in the courts of King Edward, wool had a large part of the English economy and the head of government should sit on a sack of wool as a symbol of it's importance. This sack will not be part of the Kingdom regalia, but will be kept by Mistress Ragni for future moots, as the wool is a gift of her own sheep. There was a hearty applause.

There was a question expressed via the Lawspeaker about Kingdom Arts and Sciences events and their distance from extreme ends of the Kingdom. It was being suggested that Kindom A&S events should be held in more "accessible" areas. Clarification was requested and offered that the issue was travel distance.

Responses

- Kingdom A&S is part of the rotation process, and all groups have the right to bid on it as they see fit, and there really wasn't much more that could be done to ensure fairness and ease of access for all groups.
- if it is important for someone to enter Kingdom A&S, they should be willing to sacrifice some time for their art.
- groups that are outside the rotation process are still free to bid on the event.
- distance is relative, for those who often travel outside the kingdom, events within the kingdom are actually fairly convenient
- entrants don't always need to accompany their entries, many A&S entries are able to be sent with others, and it was also suggested that there be a process established to allow performance entries to be video taped
- the only entry for which remote entries are not really feasible is a cooking entry

There was no further comment from the floor.

Question: Currently primary fighter authorizations MUST be single weapon and shield; all other authorizations are considered advanced authorizations. Should there be a change in law and custom to allow for spear to be a primary authorization?

- clarification was requested as to reasoning: This would allow more participation from those who might be physically unable to fight weapon and shield but wish to participate on the field.

- clarification requested as to process: This would apply to those who wish spear authorizations ONLY. Those wishing to fight in other weapons forms after a spear authorization *MUST* go through the existing process of weapon and shield authorization to advance.

Responses:

- agreement: on the condition that the spear bearers be treated as part of the army, not simply as an addition to be slotted in haphazardly.
- rebuttal: there is a facility in place to allow this at the moment as special dispensations can be requested from the Kingdom Earl Marshal by individuals.
- the question was raised: what is the possible benefit of this move?
- this would allow a greater spectrum of individuals to join the army
- this does a disservice to the fighters in leaving out the learning of fundamentals. It is difficult to learn how to act in a press without being *in* the press.
- concerns were expressed about how this would give the fighter the right experience for melee combat, they wouldn't get that experience just knowing one form of weapon style.
- it was pointed out that it is next to impossible to really prepare someone new for the experience of Pennsic, whatever the weapons form, so does it really make that big a difference? If it gets more fighters on the field, this is a good thing.
- there isn't the availability to teach melee combat in this kingdom that other kingdoms have available, therefore there isn't a suitable training ground for spear fighters
- it was pointed out that the basics of sword and shield fighting teach a lot about stances and strike zones and control, which is difficult to teach with a spear
- it was pointed out that if someone can't handle a melee situation, regardless of weapon, they shouldn't be on the field, and if that is the reason they wish to use spear it's not an appropriate one.
- there is nothing stopping someone from doing their primary authorization in weapon and shield and then picking up a spear next. They would be just as overwhelmed as if they hadn't had the weapon and shield authorization.
- novices can be just as dangerous with spears as with some of the heavier single weapon styles: axe and mace were highlighted.
- it was felt that the spear was perhaps the most dangerous weapon on the battlefield, especially with face thrusts, as it allows for more force with a single shot. Weapon and shield teach control and defense postures which spear does not teach.
- there was some feeling that if a fighter is unwilling to commit to the full process of learning that there shouldn't be exceptions
- fighters learn also to accept blows while fighting with weapon and shield, which teaches a fighter how to protect themselves from those blows.
- as the process currently exists to allow for exceptions, why do we need to change current practice?
- the "hoop" is there for a reason: to protect everyone on the field

- concerns about precedent: if we do it for spear, should we also not do it for combat archery?
- would it be possible to set up a training program to allow for more prepared spear fighters?
- suggestion: if the spear is the primary (and only authorization): only body shots should be allowed.
- it was pointed out that if spear is such a dangerous weapon on the field, shouldn't the authorization be more difficult to obtain than it is currently?
- rebuttal: most marshals already know this, and are more strict with their spear authorizations as it is
- since injuries already happen under the current system, obviously the current system isn't really any better
- authorizations should be harder then
- it was pointed out that experience on the field is important for self-protection, and there isn't as much ability for spear fighters to train, so they won't get that experience
- there was a question about how successful this has been in the kingdoms that allow it?
- response: there is no way to evaluate the success, but it is ensured that all fighters are competent on the field.
- if a fighter doesn't want to do the primary authorizations, and just wishes to fight spear, obviously they don't want to be in the middle of a press. They should do combat archery if they want to participate (it was pointed out that CA is also an advanced authorization)
- it was suggested that the authorization be split into two levels, 6' and 9' spear, which might allow for more safety
- other kingdoms have this as their standard operations, we should look at how it is handled there.
- it was pointed out that there have been many objections to different changes to the fighting "culture" over the years (objections to combat archery, women on the field etc) and those have been overcome. Not looking at other ways of doing things leads to stagnation.
- it was suggested as this was a discussion that affects the whole fighting community, that a fighters moot should be held.
- there was general agreement to this.

The discussion was tabled.

Question: What is the general feeling of the populace regarding the Pay to Play concept?

Clarification: requiring a paid membership to participate in the SCA outside of attendance at meetings.

- the "pay to fight" system has been discussed for a long time. It was suggested that those who wish to fight in tournaments must have a paid membership to do so.

- the SCA is one of the few groups/associations that DOESN'T require a paid membership to participate.
- SCA membership is not an onerous cost for most people
- marshals, judges for A&S, autocrats and officers MUST be members, why should those who benefit from those individual's participation not have to be as well
- Should there be a grace period? One year was suggested
- it was pointed out that we are a defacto pay to play group - non members now pay the NMS (non-member surcharge) at events
- it was pointed out that before the NMS the kingdom membership was hovering just over the allowed number for kingdom status. Our numbers have increased since the NMS was imposed.
- when we were part of the Midrealm, a membership was a requirement before you could become a fighter
- how do you enforce Pay to Play outside of the fighting arena? If you can't, is it fair to force a "tax" on the fighting population? The NMS administration is difficult enough.
- re: the issue of cost: If you are fighting in tournaments and putting money into armour, or even A&S projects, money is obviously not an issue for the participant.
- it was pointed out that the NMS was intended only to ever be a temporary measure
- Pay to Play might expand the potential officer base
- it was pointed out that if we want to keep our Kingdom, paid memberships are the only way to guarantee that.
- for some people, the membership fee is unreachable, even if they want one. It was suggested that groups start collections for membership for needy members, or "secret santa" type gifts.
- in other kingdoms you have to have a membership AND submit you name to the college of heralds in order to get your AOA. (Heavy and enthusiastic nodding from Trillium at this)
- it was pointed out that individuals who are "service" oriented already have to pay for their memberships to play, as a membership is needed for most SCA official offices and functions.

There was no further commentary from the floor, and the discussion was tabled.