



The Sword Conservatory

Pirate/Maritime Historical Combat



In *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Capt. Jack Sparrow and Davy Jones fight each other with cutlasses while swinging from the ropes of a ship. In *Master and Commander*, Capt. Jack Aubrey and his crew board a French ship and fight with cutlasses, pikes, and axes. Is this how pirates and sailors in the age of sail actually fought? At *The Sword Conservatory (TSC)*, we have developed a program in Pirate/Maritime Historical Combat that specializes in edged weapons. We have researched the sword fighting styles from the golden age of piracy through the age of fighting sail and teach these techniques to our students. For a pirate/maritime festival, we can offer several activities:

- Sword fighting demonstrations with cutlass, sabre, and small sword
- Demonstrations of naval historic combat ship boarding techniques
- Introductory lessons in cutlass fighting
- Fight-a-pirate

Sword fighting demonstrations with cutlass and sabre

Our sword fighting demonstrations are in the styles of Pirates or of the Royal Navy (18th-19th centuries). Our fighters use cutlasses and sabres in *non-choreographed* duels, either one-on-one or multiple fighters. The fights show the difficulties of fighting in the cramped spaces aboard ship.



Two fighters demonstrate cutlass fighting.

Demonstrations of naval historic combat ship boarding techniques

In these demonstrations, we show how naval edged weapons were used when one crew boarded another ship to take it as a prize and how a crew fought in defense. Using multiple fighters, we show how boarding

parties fought using cutlasses, daggers, boarding pikes, axes, and belaying pins.



Defenders fight off a boarding party.

Introductory lessons in cutlass fighting

In this activity, we invite audience members into our ship and give them an introductory lesson with wooden or padded cutlasses. The participants learn some basic attacks and defenses with these weapons.



Young students learn cutlass skills during lessons.

Fight-a-pirate

In this activity, we invite audience members into the ship to participate in a 3-point bout using foam, padded cutlasses against one of our pirates.



This activity is especially popular with children.



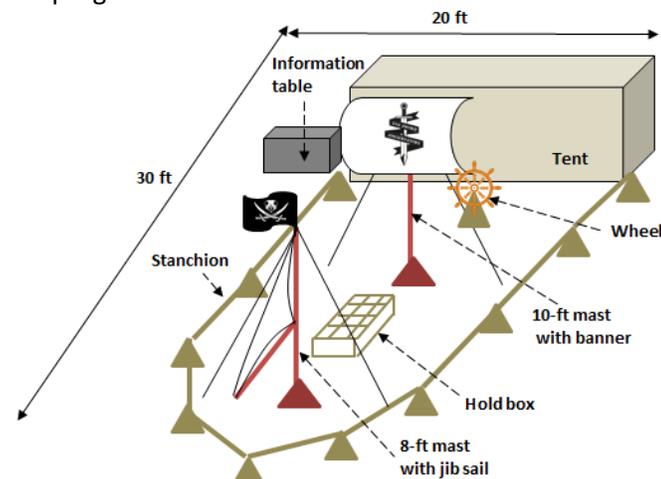
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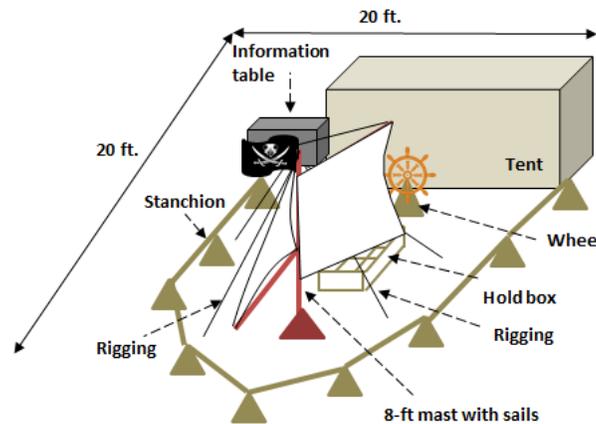


Our Ship

Our ring is in the shape of a ship. We have two layouts: a square rig (20 ft. x 30 ft. area) or a fore-and-aft rig (20 ft. x 20 ft. area); we can use either one depending upon available space. Within the ring, there are masts, a hold, a ship's wheel, sails, ratlines, and rigging lines. The area shows the obstacles that pirates and sailors had to fight around. At the information table, we show patrons the weapons of the period and provide information about the programs we teach.



The layout of our ship (square-rigged)



The layout of our ship (fore-and-aft-rigged)

About Us

The Sword Conservatory is a non-profit organization (501 (c)(3)) dedicated to research and teaching sword fighting from medieval, Renaissance, 18th & 19th century styles through modern sport fencing. We teach in Holly Springs, NC. We have programs in medieval weapons (single-handed broadsword, two-handed broadsword, sword & shield, dagger, staff, pike, dagger & buckler), rapier, small sword, historic sabre (19th century), cutlass, and modern fencing (foil, sabre, epee). Our students range in age from 8 to 60 years old.

We have participated in the North Carolina Renaissance Faire (Raleigh, NC), Festival of Legends (Apex, NC), Triad Highland Games (Greensboro, NC), Greater Greenville Scottish Games (Greenville, SC), Pagan Pride Raleigh Festival (Raleigh, NC), Greenville Pirate Fest (Greenville, NC), the Swansboro Pirate Fest (Swansboro, NC), and the Beaufort Pirate Invasion (Beaufort, NC). We are fully insured and will provide a certificate of insurance upon request.



Contact Us

If you have more questions or are interested in what we can offer your pirate or maritime festival, please contact our fencing instructor, Craig Freudenrich [(919) 544-4783, cfreudenrich@earthlink.net]. We would be happy to provide any further information. You can also find information on our website (<https://swordconservatory.org/>)