

By: Master Geoffrey MacDhomhuill, Io  
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What are sports armours? Sports armours tend to be based upon the lightest weight materials and usually allowing for lessened protection (minimum armour) to achieve the greatest flexibility and speed during combat.

What are period based armours? Period based armours are armours that have been researched and reproduce the style and design of the armour worn during the medieval age. Overall, they may sacrifice some flexibility and carry more weight than sports armours, to gain the look and feel of an armoured medieval warrior.

Why do we have sports armours? Within the society we have all chosen to do that which interests us each, the most. Some have chosen to join in the fighting portion of the activities. The objective of this fighting is different for each of us. Some fight for the glory, some fight for fun, some fight to represent what they would have done as their persona, and some fight to win. Just because you fit into one of these categories, does not limit you from fitting into another. Some people just look at the fighting as a sport, more than a representation of medieval combat. These people are the ones who usually wear "Sport armours".

Why do we have period armours? Some people are willing to lose the edge that is gained by wearing the light plastic and aluminium sport armours. They believe that if it is not period they should not use it. They strive to reproduce the period feel of armoured combat. They look at it as an extension of their research and persona, and they are usually the ones who wear the "Period Based Armours".

Why should we not use Sports armours? Sports armours are not period. In no way do they recreate what the SCA is meant to represent. We are a historical educational group based on learning about the middle ages. Invariably when non period materials and designs are discussed someone will say "if they had it, they would have used it." But the simple truth is that they did not have it, and if we applied that rule to everything in the SCA, then why not wear bomber jackets and poodle skirts, for if they had it....

Why should we not use period based armours? They are hot and heavy and make it difficult to fight, or so I am told. I personally wear a full 1350 harness with full body armour of 16 ga steel and mail, and I recently (upon accidentally falling) did a full backwards roll and came up to my knees without stopping or calling a hold, then bounced to my feet before my opponent reengaged. My armour is heavy, but not restrictive, and it weighs in comparison to a period suit of the time. It lets me feel what it is like to really wear armour.

Is there a middle ground? For some, yes there is. Imagine a suit where the arms and legs were of leather and a bascinet of steel, a red velvet covered breastplate and fauld covers the body. This suit would be from the late 1300s to early 1400s and could weigh as little as 40 pounds, and no one could tell that the breastplate was made of plastic covered in velvet. A mix of lightweight period materials and covered lightweight non period materials for a period effect. A middle ground.

Who is right? By the way that the SCA is set up, we all are. Within the SCA there are regulations that state the minimum armour standards for combat. In many cases these regulations say "or equivalent material". This leaves much to speculation for those who wish to fight in a sports armour. Kydex, ABS plastic and aluminium are, in many cases, an equivalent material. As long as they meet the requirements they are allowed to use these lightweight materials to lessen the weight of their armour. Those who hold true to period materials are also right, for we are trying to recreate the Middle Ages, where combat was real, and armour was there to protect you. They desire to get the feel of what it was like to be a knight in shining armour. Each must decide for themselves, or maybe... choose the middle ground.