

The Wandering Swordsmen
www.wanderingswordsman.com

The Wandering Swordsmen LLC is an organization devoted to the facilitation and development of the new sport of boffer weapon gaming, or boffing. Boffer weapons are padded implements designed to resemble and represent all kinds of medieval weaponry, including swords, shields, bows, arrows, spears, and anything else that a foamsmith can think to create.

There are a number of different national organizations that regulate boffer games across the world, and provide detailed rulebooks that dictate how the gear must be constructed and how to play the game in a safe and professional fashion. TWS adheres to the Belegarth Medieval Combat Society rulebook (www.belegarth.com), which has very strict safety standards and a highly professional level of game play. All the gear is checked monthly (or more) to ensure that it is up to safety standards and every player is taught a clear set of rules and guidelines before stepping onto the field.

Our weekly practices on Sundays from 1-6pm at Carrier Park are competitions in and of themselves, but they are also practices for our Asheville team to prepare for various national competitions that take place across the country all year. Not to be confused with LARPing (Live Action Role Playing), where players also use boffer gear to create interactive theatrical fantasy, regular boffer games are a physical sport that is becoming an increasingly popular form of martial arts competition.

TWS has been hosting weekly boffer games available to the public in Asheville since the spring of 2011, began hosting public games at Carrier Park for kids younger than 16 in the Spring of 2013, began running workshops for kids and adults at festivals and events in the fall of 2013, and started teaching professionally at schools in February 2014.

Currently TWS teaches at Evergreen Community Charter School, Rainbow Community School, Claxton Elementary School of Arts and Humanities, ArtSpace Charter School, Francine Delaney New School for Children, Naturally Grown School, The Shaman Hill Horseback Archery Ranch, and has also taught at The Asheville Christian Academy. There are many different events and festivals that we host games for, including the Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF) and LEAF downtown, The Lexington Avenue Arts and Fun Festival (LAAFF), The French Broad River Festival, Floyd Yoga Jam, The Soulshine Farm Music Festival, The 3 Days of Light Festival, Transformus, and many private parties for children's birthdays and other events.

The value of this game, aside from it being fun and great exercise, is that it is a powerful tool for teaching people many life lessons relating to respect. Most importantly, it teaches people how to engage in physical combat and conflict in a way that is compassionate toward their opponent. The game relies upon the honor system in order to function, and so competitors must work together with their opponents to create a fair and mutually enjoyable experience in every battle. TWS utilizes a wide variety of games, demonstrations, and group discussions to help teach players how to use their attitude, communication, and teamwork in order to compete compassionately. We believe that teaching people how to engage in combat and handle conflict with compassion is a great key to helping enrich their lives. We hope that by doing this we can help create a world where people can handle conflict healthily and cooperatively in every situation in order to find solutions that are mutually beneficial to all.

To get a better idea about what this really looks like and how it works, check out our Sunday battles at Carrier Park, ask us about doing a free promotional session, or check out the video coverage from WLOS News and others on our website at www.wanderingswordsman.com/media. Thanks!