

PART II

FOIL

Objectives

Syllabus

Technique and Coaching

Evaluation

FOIL OBJECTIVES

1. During the Level 3 foil course the coach will complete the learning and practice of:
 - The Individual Lesson
 - Foil Terminology
2. Having read, assimilated and practiced the contents of this foil section, the coach will have:
 - revised simple and compound attacks covered in Level 2 and covered the subject more fully.
 - revised parries and ripostes covered in Level 2 and learnt the remaining pronated parries and their respective ripostes.
 - revised counter attacks and counter time covered in Level 2 and covered the subject more fully.
3. The coach will learn new techniques to complete the technical syllabus for foil. These are grouped as follows:
 - Preparations of attack
 - The Line and Derobement
 - Renewed Attacks

FOIL SYLLABUS

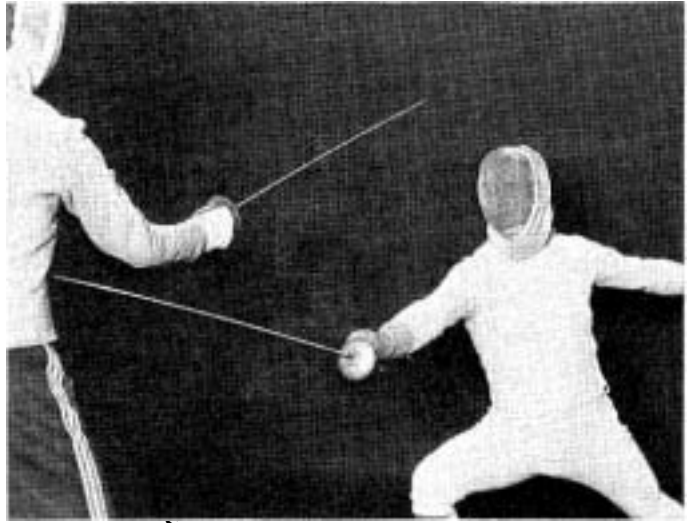
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SIMPLE ATTACKS

The Straight Thrust

The straight thrust may be executed in any of the lines:

In the low lines the hand may be in supination, (fingernails upwards) half-supination or in pronation (fingernails downwards). Pronation is not recommended in the high lines as the hit will then lack precision. The closure of a line, the strength of that closure and the degree of coverage are determined by the position of the hand. In the high lines, the hand should be kept rather high in order to achieve domination over the opponent's blade.



Simple Attack: Low

The straight thrust may be executed:

- into an open line,
- during a movement of the opponent's blade (i.e.: when the line is opening),
- into a line which is incompletely closed, or
- into a closed line (in the high lines lifting the hand can open a way to the target even if the opponent has the line correctly closed).

In combat it is very difficult to score a hit by straight thrust even though the straight thrust is technically the simplest action. Timing, speed and a good sense of distance must all be well developed in order to score such a hit. The straight thrust should almost always be preceded by appropriate preparations.

By reason of its simplicity, and in spite of the tactical difficulty of its effective use, the straight thrust is a very good action to practice with a student during an individual lesson. Additional reasons for practicing the straight thrust are:

- to check the correct distance - (advanced fencer,)
- to develop the qualities required for its effective execution - (speed and timing,)
- to develop a sense of distance,
- to use it as a means to relax the student, and
- the simplicity of this action allows the student to concentrate on other factors such as distance or coordination.

Coaching

Signals from the Instructor: In order that the student may know when to initiate the action the instructor must give an appropriate signal, of a complexity that may vary according to the student's level. It could be a simple signal with the voice or a movement of the non-armed hand. It could be a blade movement or hand movement (i.e.: dropping the point or the hand), or a backwards movement of the whole arm. It could come from the legs (for example: a step forward with bent arm or a step backward), or could be more complex (instructor's beat not followed by an extension of his arm).

The instructor must, however, be careful not to give a signal which would be in conflict with the conventions of foil. It would be inappropriate to ask the student to make, for example, a straight thrust on the instructor's step forward with the arm extending.

With a more advanced student, the instructor might ask him to make some preparations prior to the straight thrust, or might include it in an exercise with several choices.

Distances

- Riposte distance: only the student's arm moves; a slight lean forward with the body is tolerated,
- Step distance: coordinated extension of the arm and movement of the front foot,
- Lunge distance: the point should touch the target before or together with the front foot touching the ground,
- Fleche distance: the hit should be scored before the rear foot touches the ground,
- Step-lunge or balestra-lunge distance: the arm must be extending before the end of the step (or balestra).

Note: At this distance, the exercise concerning a feint of direct attack followed by a direct attack is difficult to transfer to the bout situation. This distance is more suitable for the execution of a compound attack. It should be strongly stressed, however, that a step forward with a bent arm prior to the lunge does not give any kind of priority to the attacker. On the contrary, he is exposed to a stop-hit or an attack on the preparation.

- Step-fleche distance: the same as the step-lunge distance,
- Direct lunge on the instructor's step forward: the lunge should be started at the moment the instructor's front foot leaves the ground initiating his step forward. The instructor should also keep his arm bent, otherwise he would have priority.
- Attack from a lunge distance: a) student steps forward, the instructor retreats one step, the student then makes a lunge,
b) the student steps forward, the instructor retreats two steps, the student makes a fleche, c) the student steps back and attacks with the lunge during the instructor's step forward.

All of these distances can be used to practice not only the straight thrust but also simple and compound attacks.

The possible distances are not necessarily limited to the list presented above, but whatever distance is chosen by the instructor it should correspond with a real fencing situation. If not - the student should be informed that the action does not have a practical application in combat fencing and that the exercise only serves the purpose of mastering that action.

Note: The instructor should be attentive in maintaining a correct distance from the student, when dealing with a beginner. The more the student becomes able to "feel" the distance, the more the student may be left to maintain distance. Good control over distance is very important when teaching new actions, particularly those in which correct distance is of primary importance. In such cases, the instructor should initially place himself at the correct distance in order to facilitate the exercise, until the student no longer requires this assistance.

Corrections

- The arm should be completely extended at the end of the hit,
- For hits into the high line the hand should finish high, slightly above the shoulder.

Note: The instructor may use his weapon to correct the position of the hand (see Level I Manual, page 59) but should be careful not to strike the blade too hard nor to remove the point from the target. The instructor may also use his weapon in order to return the student to a correct en garde position (sixte or quarte).

- The hand should not drop during the return to the en garde position,
- The shoulder should remain relaxed. To ensure that it is, the instructor might ask the student to pause on the hit and might then lower and relax the pupil's shoulder using his foil,
- The blade should bend upwards after the hit (hand in supination); if not the hand position should be corrected,
- The student should slightly relax the fingers after the hit, but should not loosen his grip on the weapon,
- The student should retain his balance and be ready to return to en garde,
- The student should not "lean" on the target, otherwise he will be unable to return to a parry if his attack is parried and his opponent makes a riposte,
- The instructor might verify this by avoiding the attack by retreat. The student should stay balanced, without leaning forward with the body. Another method is to parry the attack and riposte, thus requiring the student to continue the phrase through to the counter riposte.
- At the end of the lunge the rear leg should be straight and the rear foot flat on the floor. The upper body should be slightly leaning forward but not resting on the front leg.

The Disengagement

The change of lines may be done in the following manners:

a) From a high line to the other high line: The point movement is done exclusively with the fingers. The hand stays in its initial position (complete or half supination). It is possible to create an opposition to block the opponent's blade by a slight rotation of the wrist. The final position of the hand should be higher than the point. This will assure the attacker of domination over the opponent's blade. The point should change lines as late as possible in order to keep the opponent uncertain about the line in which the attack is to be finished. The point should progress continuously towards the target throughout the whole action.

b) From a low line to the other low line: This disengagement is used less frequently than the one just described. It is executed with the hand in complete supination or half-supination. The point is passed over the opponent's blade or hand; this movement is done exclusively with the fingers.

Disengagement from septime to octave can be done with complete rotation of the wrist towards the left in order to finish in complete pronation (French quinte).

c) From high to low line: At the beginning of the thrust the hand starts in supination (or half-supination). It changes from supination to pronation (wrist movement to the left) if the disengagement is finished in the line of octave. The final position of the hand is lower than the shoulder and the point is higher than the wrist. This is the best position to achieve optimum angulation with the target, reducing the risk of passing the target and at the same time avoiding the opponent's parry. This disengagement can also be done with the hand kept supinated all the time. In this case, the final position of the hand is in the octave line and the point movement is effected by finger work alone.

Disengagements which finish in the line of septime are not used in practice. The target is more distant and it is always easier to search for the hit in the octave line. No distinction is made between these two lines in attack (but becomes important during close combat). In any case, if there is an attempt to parry by the opponent, the hand movement to the right can be exaggerated in order to create a stronger opposition. The

thrust will then end in the octave opposition (it can also be executed by turning the wrist in order to finish in seconde).

d) From low to high line: The hand stays supinated and the point is moved by the fingers only.

e) Opposite handers: From high to low line (and vice versa) the hand should stay supinated. The disengagement to the low line, passing under the opponent's quarte, can also be finished with the finger nails down, but is rarely used in practice.

Coaching

All the general remarks concerning the straight thrust apply to disengagements (and also to the cut-over and the counter-disengagement).

The disengagement can be done in the following situations:

a) after an engagement,

b) during the opponent's engagement attempt,

c) during the opponent's change of engagement, (in this case it is called counter-disengagement) d) on the opponent's attack on the blade.

The instructor might use any of the above situations to train the disengagement with the student. The signal for the first (disengagement after an engagement) can be a pressure on the student's blade. The other three listed situations already contain a clear signal in their structure.

It is obvious that all of those situations can be combined with different foot-work.

Progression

Actions should be started with the beginner in immobility. The engagement allows better estimation of the opponent's position and distance. At the same time, the fencer acquires the notion of open and closed lines. To reinforce this notion and to justify the disengagement the instructor might, at the beginning, ask the student to execute a straight thrust into the closed line.

When the student is proficient in the first exercise (a) the instructor might introduce him to the next two situations (b) and (c) without necessarily telling the student at this point that these actions have different names. In these cases the instructor should make large blade movements, slightly exaggerating the movements of the hand. This will allow the student to adapt easily to the opponent's speed and to see early enough into which line he should disengage.

Little by little, the instructor can increase the speed of the engagements and vary the preparations without warning the student.

Disengagement on an attempt of a beat attack (see "derobement") is technically done the same way as on the attempt of engagement. The only difference is in the instructor's faster and smaller hand movement. This exercise can be done with more advanced students.

With higher level students, the instructor might provide the opportunity for the disengagement by any of the appropriate preparations.

Corrections

It is important that (except in special cases) the point movement is executed by the fingers, not by the wrist or forearm. To achieve proficiency in finger work the student should practice point movements alone without foot-work or movement of the arm.

During the disengagement the hand should not make any lateral movements, as this would reduce speed and affect precision. On the other hand, slight opposition in the final thrust can be permitted.

The disengagement should not be executed in two fencing times - that means, there should be no pause between the moment when the point moves into the other line and the moment when the arm starts to extend. If the action were executed in this way it would be a straight thrust into an open line.

The arm should never withdraw during the disengagement. If this fault occurs it may be because of poor fingerwork and/or a lack of sufficient distance to allow the point to move easily around the opponent's blade. The instructor can solve the latter problem by keeping a longer distance.

The point may pass around the defending blade too late. This is not a very common mistake and is immediately corrected by the student himself when he misses the target. In an exercise involving footwork the instructor should not tolerate a disengagement executed after the front foot has landed on the floor.

Cut-over (coupe)

Every move using a disengagement can also be done with the cut-over. Therefore, all the comments concerning the lines and hand positions also will apply to the cut-over.

The cut-over can be executed in two different ways:

1. By gliding along the opponent's blade with a change of direction towards the target as soon as the blade moves around his point. The blade movement should be controlled primarily by the fingers (thumb and fore-finger) but some bending of the wrist is also necessary. The movement of the fore-arm should be restricted to a minimum. This form is more popular and allows more speed than the alternative described below. Besides, it permits use of the cut-over as a feint. Small movements of the arm make such a link possible.
2. The alternative way, which has fallen into disuse, is with absence of blade. In that case, blade contact is lost very early. The arm of the attacker bends and at the same time the hand makes a diagonal movement towards the shoulder in order to pass around the opponent's point and to move into the opposite line. A firm extension of the arm into the chosen line finishes the action. It is important that there be no break in between the withdrawal and extension of the arm so as not to allow the opponent time for a successful stop-hit. It is also important to control the extent of withdrawal of the hand; it is not necessary to withdraw it so far as to have the weapon over the shoulder.

Note: This second method is still used to execute the coupe in the low line (cut-over underneath) because it allows a large enough hand movement.

Coaching

The instructor should establish the right distance from the student. Too short a distance makes the execution of the cut-over very difficult. The instructor should also avoid having his point too high, in order to facilitate the student's action.

The instructor should demand a complete extension of the arm before the lunge. This will counteract any tendency to move the feet too early, which might lead to a hit which arrives flat or passes the opponent.

Progression

The first method of executing the cut-over is the more appropriate for, and should be the first to be taught to beginners. At first the instructor should limit his teaching to the cut-overs finishing in the high lines (sixte and quarte).

Corrections

- It is important to ensure that the student maintains the correct, high position of the hand during the cut-over executed into the high lines. It is particularly important with beginners that the final few inches of the movement of the point towards the target should be horizontal and should not be "chopping" down onto the target. The hand should normally be lifted until it reaches its final level and should stay at that level without any further tendency to rise or to fall.
- The movement of the point onto the target should be continuous; the fencer should avoid any "snatching" or "throwing" movement. For this, the student should avoid withdrawing the arm too fast after the attack is completed. The instructor might ask the student "to hold the hit", if needed, and use this occasion to relax his shoulder.
- The movement of the point should not stop at any time during the cut-over attack (except in a special case such as the cut - over "a temps perdu" or "time feint"). In order to make the student "feel" this mistake, the instructor might step back occasionally so the student will tend to fall short of the target, thus drawing him into extending his arm faster and more continuously. Another way is to request a feint of cut-over followed by straight thrust or disengagement.
- The arm should not bend too much during the action. Insufficient distance is often the main reason for an excessive withdrawal of the arm.
- Movement of the point should be executed primarily by the wrist and fingers. If the student has a tendency to raise his hand in order to pass the point over, the instructor should ask him to do several cut-overs without extending or moving the arm. In this case the instructor should keep his point low enough to enable the student to perform this exercise effectively.

Practical Use of the Cut-Over

Unfortunately, some fencing instructors neglect teaching the cut-over. It is true that technically the cut-over is more difficult than the disengagement; but on the other hand it presents many advantages, as follows:

- A cut-over is more difficult to parry than a disengagement because the point approaches the target obliquely and it forces the defender to calculate very precisely the final moment of the attack in order to parry it effectively.
- If preceded by a feint, the cut-over can deceive either a lateral or a circular parry, which is not the case with a disengagement.
- The opponent's sword-arm presents no obstacle for the cut-over (contrary to the disengagement).
- The cut-over cannot be intercepted during its execution, whereas a disengagement which is crossing several lines can (for example: during a disengagement from sixte to quarte the opponent might parry octave).
- Some fencers find particular difficulty in parrying the cut-over because the point disappears from their field of vision.
- Finally, it is more effective than the disengagement in a redouble because it is faster.

COMPOUND ATTACKS

A compound attack is an offensive action preceded by one or more feints. The opponent must be convinced that the feint is an actual attack, i.e.: as perceived by the opponent, the feint should have all the characteristics of a real attack. The easier an opponent is to impress, the easier it is to make him react. A fencer who has a good defence and good control of the hand will not react to a feint which is not sufficiently penetrating. In some cases the feint must be reinforced by an attack on the blade in order to obtain a reaction.

Three factors are important in causing the opponent to react to a feint:

1) Distance: Not only the relative distance between the two fencers, but more important, the distance the point must travel to reach the target. If this distance is too long either the reaction will not be obtained, or the fencer will have time to form another parry. If the distance is too short the attacker might have difficulty in deceiving the opponent's parry, especially if the deception is executed with a straight arm.

2) Progression of the point: The defender reacts not only to the fact that the point is close, but to the fact that it is moving towards him and presenting a real risk of hitting him.

Note: The two above conditions should both be fulfilled for the feint to be efficient. During a compound attack, the point should not stop, but should be moving continuously forwards. Therefore the arm should not be withdrawn during the compound attack. A reaction is rarely obtained to a compound attack if the point stops moving forward, no matter how fast it is moving prior to the stop (i.e.: if the attack is being broken down too obviously into its component parts).

3) Security: The feeling of being more or less well protected in the line where the feint is being executed. The opponent's reaction might differ depending on the line of the threat. If the fencer has more confidence in his ability to parry in one line than another he might wait longer in the former before parrying. The line of the attack can therefore be a very important choice. Also, the more the feint is "visible" to the opponent, the better the chance of him reacting. For this reason a feint done at eye-level provokes a reaction more readily than a feint directed elsewhere.

The feint can be reinforced by an abrupt and noticeable action of the front foot (an appel).

The compound attack can be done in two ways:

1. By deceiving the parry with "open eyes", or

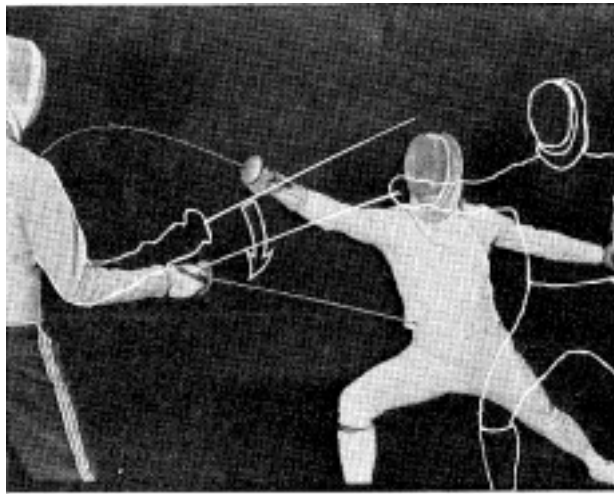
Note: See the Sabre section of this Manual for a complete treatment of "open eyes" actions.

2. By pre-planned movements, deciding beforehand what the opponent's parry or parries will be and deceiving it (them) as soon as they occur.

In practice it is only excellent fencers, who have exceptionally good reflexes and finger work, who are capable of executing foil compound attack in the first of these ways. This method should, however, be used in the individual lesson in order to develop the student's reflexes and finger work.

The second method may appear to be very risky but there are ways to reduce the risk. Firstly, by careful observation of the opponent's style, we can discover certain habits or preferences to use certain parries. Secondly, the attacker can influence the defender's choice of parry. Thus the area where the point is threatening the target can determine the defending movement in the following ways:

a) For a lateral parry, the point should be at the same level as the opponent's hand but some distance from his blade.



Compound Attack: Low - High

- b) For a circular parry, the point should be placed very close to the blade and higher than the hand if the opponent is initially in the high line (or lower than the hand, if initially in the low line).
- c) For a semi-circular parry, the point should be placed in the chosen line close to the defender's hand.

Of course, these maneuvers will net force the defender to use a parry that he does not normally use. The feints should therefore be accompanied by close observation of the opponent in order to determine which are the best areas for a successful deception.

Rhythm is a very important component of a compound attack. Normally it is recommended to accelerate the last movement during the final deception. A very fast compound attack executed with the same rhythm from beginning to end will have less chance of succeeding because:

- a) the defender receives early warning of the intention to attack.
- b) the defender always has a tendency to adapt his speed to the speed of the attacker, so it is easy for him to follow the attacking blade as it moves between the lines.
- c) in the high speed compound attack it is impossible for the attacker to adapt to any unpredicted actions of the defender if such action is executed into the preparation.

The preparatory feints should therefore be executed relatively slowly and keeping good balance in order to be ready to deal with unpredicted reactions. The final action of the attack should then be accelerated to reduce the opponent's chance of moving out of distance or of forming another parry. This acceleration is achieved by the extension of the rear leg if the action is finishing with a lunge, or the front leg if it is finishing with a fleche.

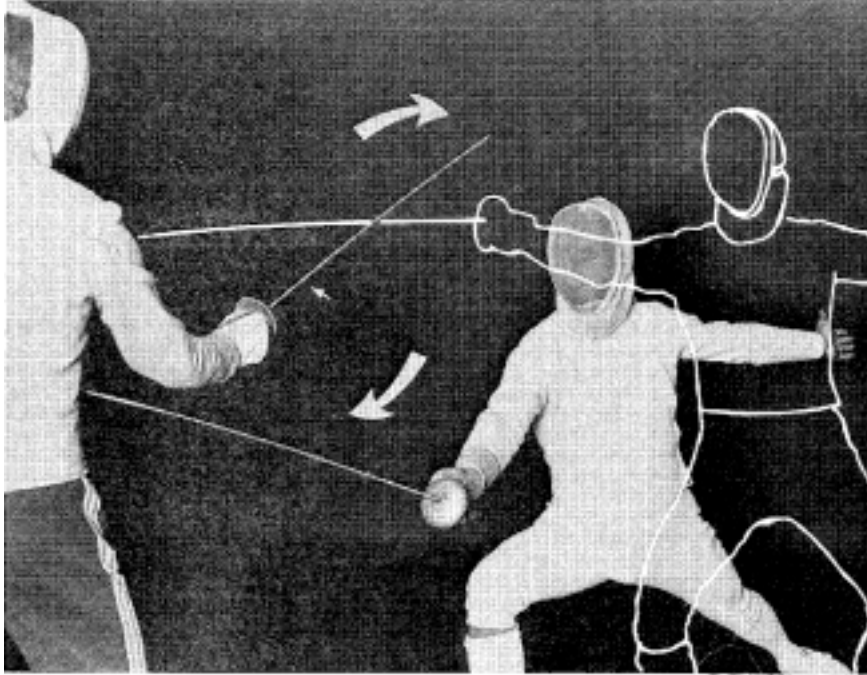
According to the F.I.E. "Regulations of Competition" (Article 236): "If a compound attack is made and the opponent finds the blade during one of the feints, he has the right to riposte", and (Article 237, 2 (d): "Only the fencer who attacks is counted as hit if, during a compound attack he allows his opponent to find the blade, and continues the attack while his opponent ripostes immediately". (Note: provided that the riposte hits the valid target).

It is therefore important to ensure that the student's blade does not meet the instructor's blade during the compound attack. If this happens, the instructor should slow down his parries until the student is able to deceive them. The difficulty often occurs if the distance is too short.

To facilitate the deception, the attacker's blade should be relatively distant from the defender's if he wishes to provoke a lateral or diagonal parry. If a circular or semi-circular parry is desired the attacking blade should be close to the defender's blade (or hand).

Large hand movements should be avoided since they will reduce the speed of execution which, in turn, will reduce the effectiveness of the deception.

During the execution of a compound attack the fencer should be prepared to form a suitable parry in case the opponent attacks or counter attacks on his preparation. The best parries to use in such cases are those that sweep through several lines, i.e.: the semi-circular or circular parries.



Compound Attack: High - Cut-over Low

Coaching

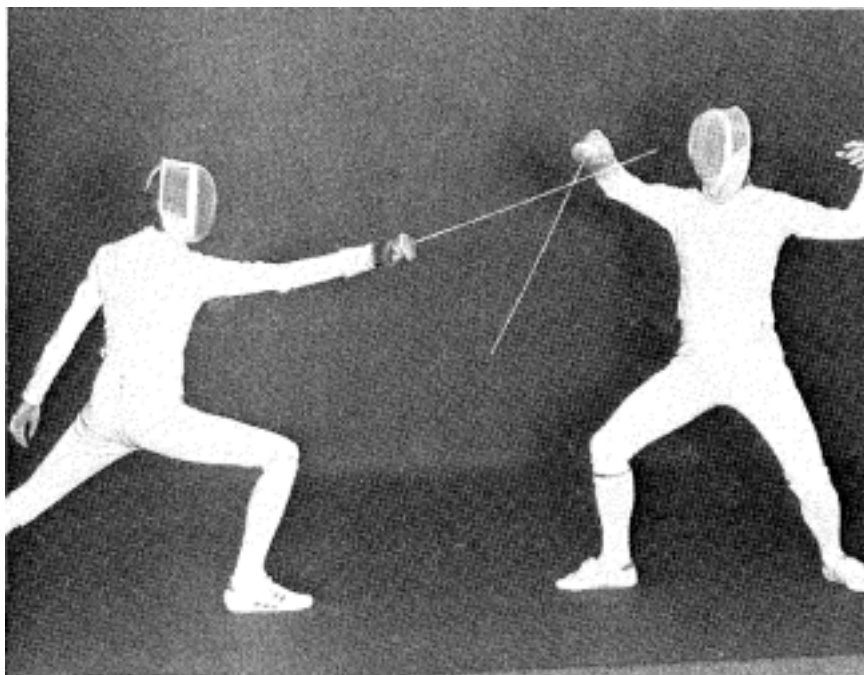
To enable the student to practise the deceptions and feints, the instructor should form his parries early and with fairly large movements, so that the student has the time to react. He might speed up the final parry to accelerate the student's final attacking movement. On the other hand, if the student's feint is not sufficiently good, the instructor should not form a parry at all. When the student reaches a sufficient level, the instructor should demand the deception during the beginning of the lunge (or fleche). This means that the deception should be executed at the moment (or just after) the foot leaves the ground in lunge (or fleche), and well before it lands again. With advanced students the instructor may vary his response to the feints, reacting with either defensive or counter offensive actions. The student must then either pursue his attack, or react with counter-time, respectively. If the instructor finds the blade during one of the feints and ripostes, the student must be well enough balanced to be able to parry and counter-riposte. The coach should vary the final line of the attack and the parries he makes. This allows a great variety of compound attacks.

In practice, compound attacks rarely contain more than one or two feints. It is therefore unrealistic to practice attacks containing more than two feints, other than as a pure training exercise (for example: to deceive several successive parries with "open eyes").

The rhythm of the components of compound attack with feints can vary, depending upon the lines and tactical intention of the attack. For example, a one-two-three attack might be executed as: 1...2-3, or 1-2...3.

PARRIES

Four parries were described in the Level 2 Manual. Four more parries, executed with pronated hand and protecting the same lines of attack as those from the Level 2, will be added below.



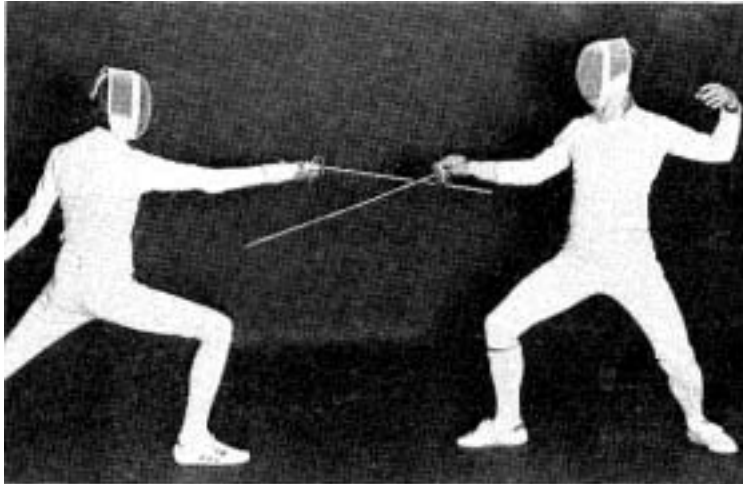
Prime Parry

The Parry of Prime

The sword arm is in a horizontal position, as if the fencer were checking the time on his wrist watch. The point is lower than the hand, the thumb turned downwards. This parry, similarly to septime, covers the lower lines. The fingernails are turned to the right. The student's arm should be kept high in order to avoid the risk of missing with the riposte. The instructor must make sure that the student's shoulder is very relaxed. Since the arm and blade movements are fairly large, the prime (similar to septime) sweeps across many lines but, when deceived, is difficult to link with another parry. Therefore this parry is recommended only when the distance is short. It is often used in "counter-time" or as a parry cutting the distance, in which case the parry is taken with a step forward.

Every parry has its counter-parry (circular movement), but counter-prime is rarely used in modern foil fencing.

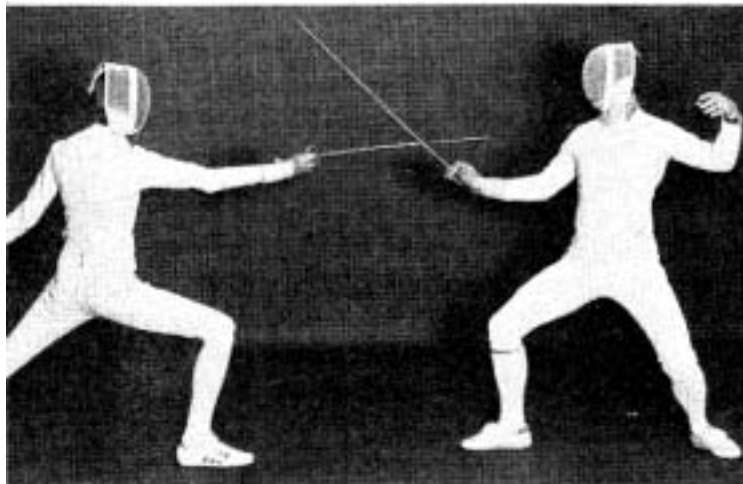
The Parry of Seconde



Seconde is both the most natural of parries and the strongest. It defends (the same as octave) against attacks on the lower flank. The hand is in the same position as in octave except that the hand is in pronation (fingernails turned down). The point is lower than the hand.

The strength of the parry of seconde increases the difficulty of controlling its position. During the individual lesson the instructor should deceive this parry from time to time to make sure that the student stops his hand in the correct position. The parry should be first taught in slow motion with a light contact of the blades. Seconde is particularly effective in opposition.

The Parry of Tierce

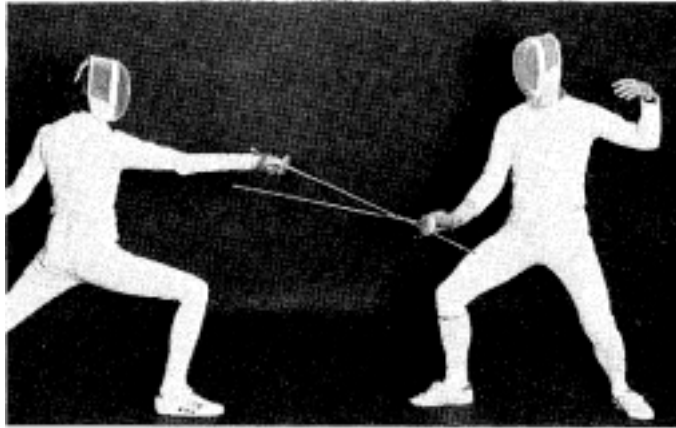


It protects (similarly to sixte) against attacks in the high, outside line. The hand is in the same position as in sixte, except that the hand is in pronation (finger nails turned down). The point is higher than the hand.

Since the point in tierce is outside of the target, the riposte must be started with rotation of the wrist.

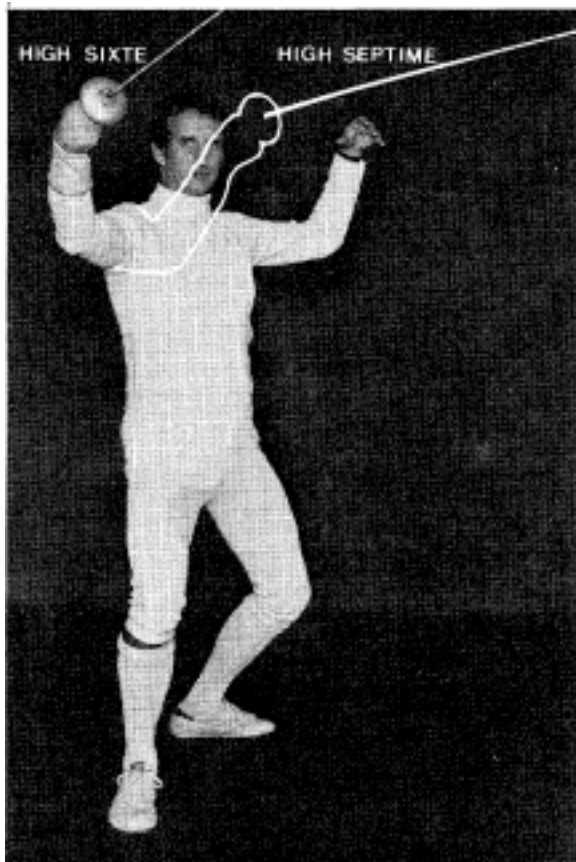
Note: Many fencing instructors prefer the en garde position in semi-pronation, which is between sixte and tierce. This position, allowing good precision and increasing the strength of the parry, is more natural than the position of sixte in complete supination. This position has been described in the fencing literature since the beginning of the century.

The Parry of Quinte (French School)



It protects (similarly to quarte) against attacks in the inside line. The hand is in pronation (finger nails down) with the point higher than the hand. The hand is to the left of the hips. (Some fencing masters prefer the position of quarte in semi-supination to the position of quinte described above).

The quinte parry is very strong, allowing firm control over the opponent's blade, but it has a tendency to deflect the attacking blade downwards onto the legs.



The Parry of High Sixte (French School)

Some fencing schools describe the parry of quinte differently. In the Eastern European School (Poland, USSR) quinte is described similarly to the "high sixte" of the French school, with the sword hand exterior (in semi-supination) at eye-level, and the blade crossing obliquely to the left. The point is at the same height or slightly higher than the hand and the blade of the attacker is deflected above the defending blade. It protects against attacks in the high, exterior or interior lines and is generally used as a semi-circular parry taken from sixte, seconde or octave.

The Parry of High Septime

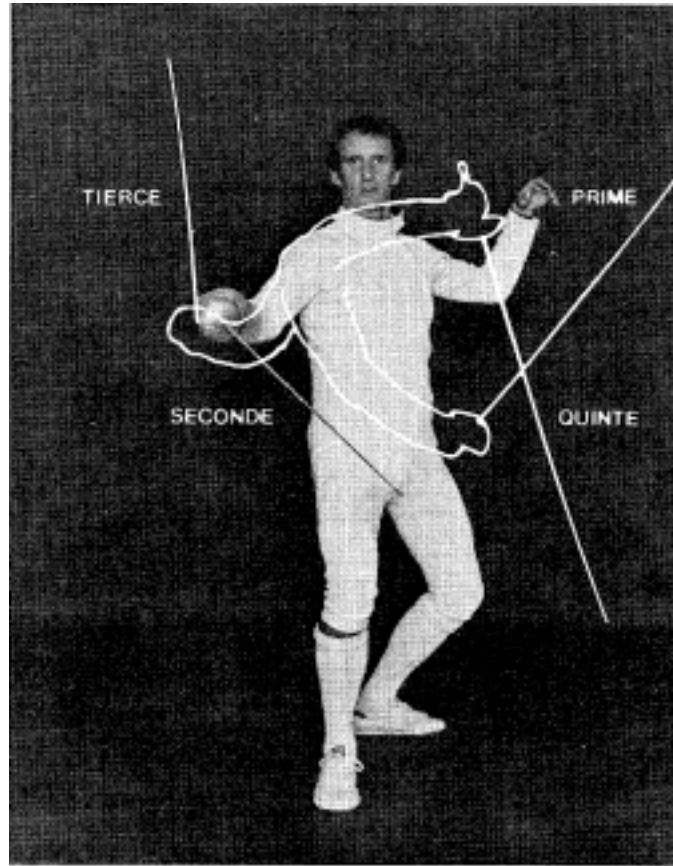
The hand is in front and to the left of the face, at about eye level and in complete supination (the fingernails upwards). The blade is almost horizontal. This is the position taken by the hand if, when passing from sixte through septime, one continues the movement until the blade finishes at a level slightly above the horizontal.

This parry is very effective against cut-over (coupe) attacks, which will arrive flat on the blade. The hand and blade positions of high septime are

difficult to execute and require much practice, and if deceived, it is difficult to link with other parries.

Since the point is situated outside of the target, the riposte (usually to the low line) must be initiated with a careful placing of the point.

Pronated Parries



General Remarks about Parries with the Hand in Pronation

These parries have the advantage of strength over the corresponding parries executed in supination. It is, however, more difficult to establish their correct positions and, in case they are deceived, it is more difficult to link them with other parries. For these reasons, they are recommended as pre-planned, prepared parries (i.e.: premeditated counter-time, parry-riposte with step forward, etc.).

Another disadvantage of pronated parries is a lesser degree of precision in subsequent ripostes (see chapter "Ripostes".) This is, however, compensated for by the strength of the parry which deflects the opponent's blade further away from the target and which almost always permits the direct riposte.

Coaching

Whatever parry is taken it should completely block the line it is intended to protect. For this reason, the defending blade should form an appropriate angle with the attacking blade (describing an angle of perhaps 20° - 30° between the two blades). The point should therefore be above the level of the hand for a parry in the high line and slightly lower, for a parry formed in the low line.

The parry must be executed with the forte of the blade in order to maintain the strength of the parry. This is assured if the hand is in the correct position. In the high line, if the hand is lifted too high, it might cause either an insufficient angle between the defending and attacking blades (the defending blade will be too close to horizontal), or too wide a movement of the hand which will make the parry easy to deceive and difficult to link with another parry. The precision of the riposte will be affected and the riposte itself will be more difficult to execute. In addition, too large a hand movement will expose more lines (too much target) underneath the parry.

For the same reason the hand should not be dropped too low in executing the low-line parries.

It should be stressed that the student must not withdraw the hand while parrying since this will allow the continued progression of the opponent's blade towards the target and, in addition, the parry taken too close to the target has to be executed with a large lateral movement of the hand in order to be effective. The defender will then find it difficult to place his riposte and, if he doesn't find the blade, to link his first parry to subsequent parries.

In order to meet the attacking blade early enough, the student should first move the blade and point and then the hand (not vice versa), otherwise the line will be closed too late and the attack will be mal-parried (i.e.: the parry will be insufficient).

While teaching the counter parries (circular), the instructor should insist that the starting position assures a complete protection of the line. The point, during the execution of counter-parries, should describe a large enough circle to collect the attacking blade. The instructor can facilitate the exercise by placing his blade close to the student's. The sword hand of the defender should move as little as possible, with the blade movement executed by finger work. Movement of the wrist will reduce the effectiveness of the counter parry.

The parries of counter-quarte and counter sixte are the most commonly used. Some fencers also use counter-septime and counter-octave. The other counter-parries rarely have practical application.

In order to teach the student to parry effectively, the instructor should execute his attacks realistically, i.e.: the arm should be extended completely and the point should be directed towards the target so that it will score a hit if a correct parry is not formed. The speed should be adapted to the level of the student and the firmness of the action to his muscular strength. To facilitate the parry the instructor should not lift his arm too high. (High lines).

The attack should be executed from a correct distance since the student would not feel obliged to react with a parry if the instructor made his attack from too far away and would form an incorrect parry if the distance were too short.

The parry should be followed by a riposte and the distance should be appropriate to the particular riposte being practiced (see "Ripostes").

In order to avoid fatigue, the instructor may use a step forward and half-lunge, instead of a lunge. This, in turn, requires the instructor to come closer to the student

before the attack starts. The more experienced the student, the more realistic the distance should become.

The student must be taught to parry attacks, not feints. In order to achieve this, the student must react to the arm extension only if it is executed together with movement of the front foot (if the attack is executed in the normal way) and must disregard an extension without foot movement, which should be read as only a feint of attack. If the student has a tendency to react too soon, the instructor might alternate real attacks and feints, or deceive (disengage or cut around) the parry.

In order to verify the student's control of the parry, the instructor might deceive the parry (insisting that the student either maintains the correct parry position or takes another parry), or he might deviate his thrust far away from the target. In this latter case the student should stop the hand at the point when the defended line is sufficiently covered, without continuing to seek the blade with an uncontrolled, wide movement.

Both beat-parries and opposition-parries should be practiced. In these, the contact between the blades may be very short (beat-parry) or prolonged (opposition-parry) when the attacking blade is followed by the defender during the riposte.

Opposition parries provide the instructor with a better opportunity to verify the correctness of the positions of the hand and blade. Thus the instructor, if needed, might ask the student to hold the parry in order to make the necessary corrections.

These parries are therefore very useful as pedagogical means to teach the basic positions to beginners. The instructor can safely move to the beat parries when the student is thoroughly familiar with all positions of the hand and with all the transitions from one parry to another without large displacements.

As opposition parries are generally used at the very final stage of the attack, it is easier for a beginner to identify the line in which the attack is going to finish. Thus, he can concentrate on one correct parry, instead of chasing the attacking blade with a succession of parries.

The beat parry allows the execution of a very early riposte, usually made before the attacker's front foot lands on the floor. For effective execution, it requires an ability to estimate correctly the speed of the attacker.

The disadvantage of the beat parry if taught too early, is the very close linkage between the parry and the immediate, direct riposte. The student might then have difficulty in separating the two actions - parry and riposte, and might develop an uncontrolled and automatic reflex of extending the sword arm immediately after forming the parry, regardless of whether or not he has met his opponent's blade.

The opposition parry, because of its prolonged contact, allows the student to develop a "feeling" of the blade, enabling him to predict his opponent's reactions.

When the student is sufficiently advanced, the instructor can start to combine the parry with foot-work. He might then ask the student to make a parry with step back or with step forward (see the chapter "Coordination"). The changing distances determine the way in which every parry and riposte will be executed. The student who has mastered the basic parry positions is able to take the parry with the arm more or less extended according to the distance.

- if the distance is longer, the parry will be taken with the arm more extended than in the basic position,
- if it is shorter, the parry will be taken with the arm more withdrawn and with a larger lateral hand movement in order to assure the best coverage.

The student may be trained in successive parries when a sufficient level is achieved. The instructor will then execute a corresponding compound attack. He will also vary those attacks in order to teach the student different variations of defence.

One of the ways of teaching successive parries could be an indirect attack on the student's preparation with engagement, followed by a parry. For example:

- the student makes sixte engagement,
- the instructor reacts with disengagement and attack,
- the student takes quarte parry and ripostes.

In the above exercise the student does not take two successive parries but moves his hand through two positions. He might then link two parries (for example: quarte and sixte on the instructor's one-two attack, or quarte and counter-quarte, etc.)

Later on, the student might link an engagement and two parries. For example:

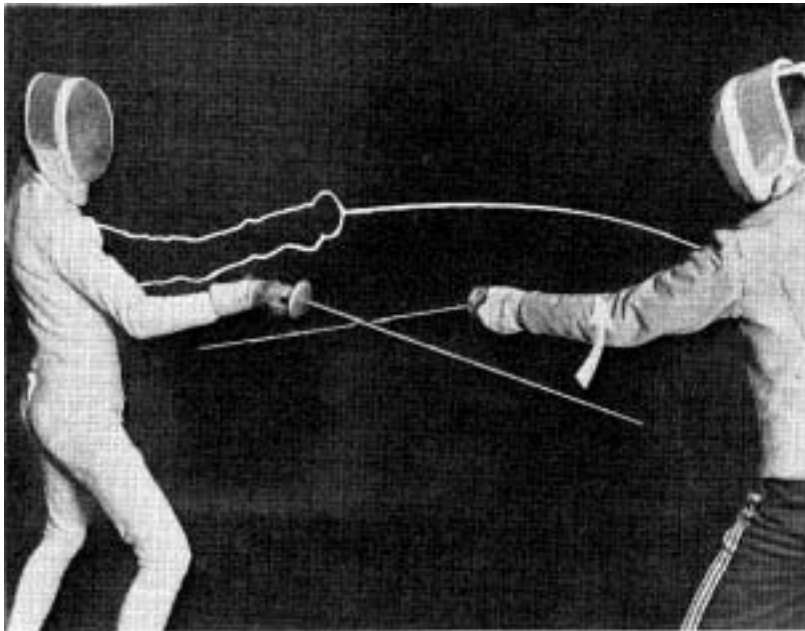
- the student starts with sixte engagement
- the instructor reacts with feints low-high
- the student parries with octave and sixte.

In combat situation fencers will rarely have to link more than two parries. The successive parries can be combined with one or more steps backwards (see "Coordination").

The student should understand that he can parry the same attack with different parries. During an individual lesson the instructor might very well link the training of an attack with the defence (or defences) against that attack.

The student, when ready, should also be trained in the difference in the position of the parries that must be used against a left-handed opponent. The sixte parry should be taken a little wider and quarte parry could be a little smaller. The same principle applies to octave and septime.

Ceding parries should be started together with training of prise de fer actions (see "Prise de Fer") but recognizing that, in modern foil, these parries are rarely used because of the rarity of prise de fer attacks.



Parry Septime - Riposte High

RIPOSTES

The riposte is the hit executed by the defending fencer after he has parried an attack. It has priority over any kind of continuation of the attack provided that it is executed immediately after the parry.

The ripostes can be:

- simple direct (riposte by straight thrust),
- simple indirect,
- compound, or
- by prise de fer

A riposte can be immediate or delayed ("a temps perdu" - i.e.: one or more fencing times elapse between the parry and the riposte). In this latter case the defender must be sure that his opponent will not execute an immediate continuation of the attack (reprise, remise, redoublement); these actions would take priority over the delayed riposte, and must be parried.

The nature of the riposte depends on the following factors:

- the distance between the two fencers,
- the kind of parry which has been used (beat, opposition, ceding),
- the reaction of the opponent.

The general principle to be used in selecting the appropriate riposte is: "Hit wherever the target is open".

Following the beat parry, usually taken very early, the direct riposte may be used, i.e.: the riposte is executed in the same line as the parry. Thus the opponent is hit while he is still "in the air", and while the line to the target has been opened by the effect of the parry.

Following the opposition parry, the riposte might take several different forms, depending on the distance and the opponent's reaction:

- at very short distance the riposte should preferably be direct, except when the opponent forms an immediate parry in which case the riposte should be indirect. If the opponent has a tendency to make a remise, the riposte should be by prise de fer.
- at middle distance (lunging distance) it should be indirect or even compound, as the longer distance gives a greater chance to the opponent to take a parry.
- at long distance the riposte should almost always be compound as a simple riposte would have practically no chance of succeeding.

Coaching

When first teaching the riposte to a beginner, it is best to work at short distance, i.e.: the distance needed to hit comfortably by extending the arm. The instructor attacks with lunge and stays there, and the student simply extends his arm after the parry. The distance should not be too short, however, in order to avoid problems of precision and most of all, to avoid the risk of teaching the student the bad habit of riposting without extending the arm.

Indirect ripostes should not be taught too early and, at the beginning, the instructor might facilitate their execution by keeping a longer distance to allow the easiest passage of the point from one line to the other.

The instructor must insist upon the execution of a good parry as the necessary condition for a good riposte. When the parry results in the point being situated outside of the target, the student must start the riposte by re-directing the point towards the target, before extending the arm. Otherwise, the riposte might either pass the target (passe) or place the point flat (plaque).

The simple riposte should be executed in one fencing time, otherwise the priority passes to the opponent if he does an immediate remise. If the student hesitates during his riposte, the instructor might ask him to hold the parry a little longer and then to extend the arm in one simple time. Another way to make the student aware of the delay is to avoid the riposte by returning to the en garde position. The student will then be drawn into extending his arm more quickly.

The instructor can help the student to speed up the riposte, either by his voice or by speeding up the backwards movement of his sword arm with the rhythm he wants to imply to the riposte. He may then reduce the size of the movement, by almost parrying the riposte, to force the student to increase the speed even more. The instructor should, however, be careful not to "wipe off" the student's blade too violently after the riposte. He can use his sword arm to correct the student's hand position, but during this correction the point should stay on the target, without being removed by a badly timed upwards beat.

PREPARATION OF ATTACK

All actions designed to facilitate the execution of an attack are called preparations of attack.

Preparations can be done with leg movements (foot-work), blade movements, arm or body movements, or combinations of all the above.

In case of an action combining several parts of the body (most frequently it is an action combining sword arm and legs), the fencer has to know in which order to move those parts. This ordered movement is called "coordination." Depending on the tactical goal one can move the arm before the legs or vice versa, or both at the same time. In case of a complex leg movement, the fencer has to know whether the arm should extend during the first part of the leg movement, the second part, or in between the two. The movements of the sword arm can also be compound... a large number of combinations can be identified. In this manual we will describe only those most frequently used.

Note: Preparations are not limited to those of the attack. A fencer can also prepare a parry-riposte, counter-time, counter-riposte, remise, reprise, redoublement, counter-attack - practically all the fencing actions can (and should) be prepared.

Fencers must be careful to distinguish between the attack and the preparation. The opponent might choose to attack on the preparation, for this is usually the moment when a fencer is most vulnerable. Some sorts of preparation give priority to the "preparer", for example a feint with the arm extended. Other sorts of preparation might give priority, but only on condition that the priority is used immediately (for example: an attack on the blade has to be followed immediately by the extension of the arm to retain priority). Other preparations do not give any kind of priority, as for example a step forward with bent arm. We must be aware, however, that even if certain preparations do not give priority, the priority does not necessarily pass automatically to the opponent. In case of the step forward with bent arm, if the opponent does nothing to take priority (for example, by extending his arm), the situation stays neutral and neither of the fencers has priority.

One can classify the preparation of attack in different categories. First, we will analyze foot-work. Then, we will classify the categories of the arm and blade movements of which the two main categories, described in two separate chapters, will be attacks on the blade and prise de fer attacks. Another separate chapter will treat coordination and we will see how coordination differs depending upon the tactical goal.

Leg movement (foot-work)

Generally, the purpose of foot-work is to find the ideal distance for an attack. According to the FIX "Regulations of Competition," in order to be recognized as the attacker, the fencer must fulfill certain conditions concerning his point and the sword arm, but in addition his leg action should be executed in one of two ways: by lunge or by fleche. Those two movements have been described in the Level I and Level II Manuals.

The distance a fencer needs to kit his opponent with a lunge is called: the fencing measure. If a fencer wishes to attack his opponent with a lunge, he has to find this measure.

In order to find the measure the fencer might:

- a. Move forward by:
 - step forward,
 - jump forward,
 - balestra,
 - cross forward,

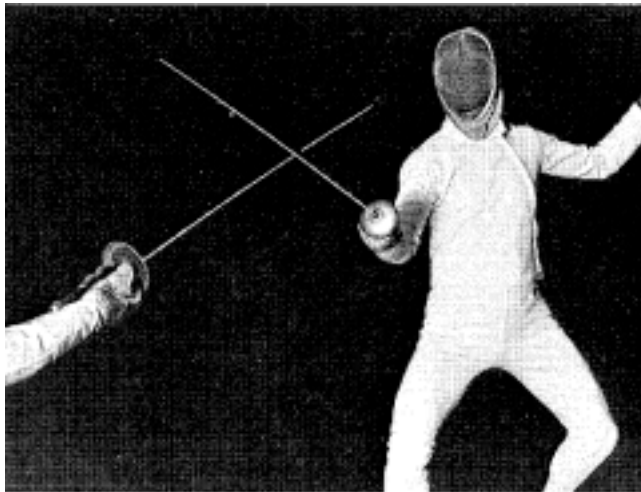
- move the rear foot closer to the front foot,
 - half-lunge,
 - lean forward with the body.
- b. Move backward so as to provoke the opponent's forward motion and attack on his step forward (sur la marche). The examples of backward movement are the following:
- step back,
 - move back with the rear leg only,
 - cross back,
 - jump back,
 - step back with deeper retreat of the front leg in order to put the body balance forward (in preparation to fleche).

After a lunge the fencer might also:

- return to en garde backwards,
- return to en garde forwards,
- return to en garde with both legs at the same time.

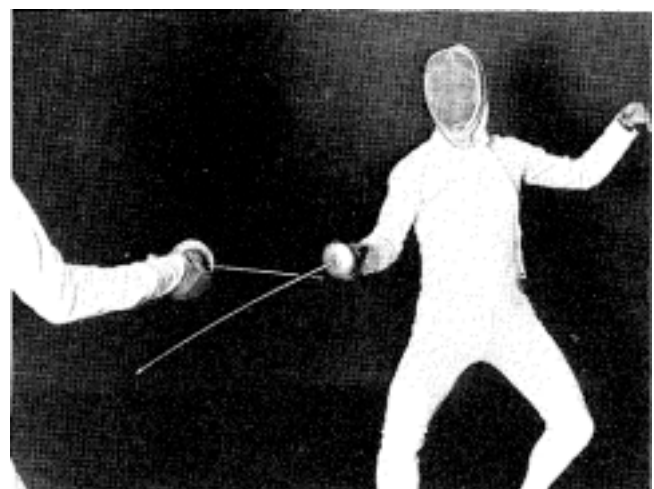
In order to provoke the opponent's reaction, the fencer might make an "appel" with the front foot. Such an appel, combined with a jump forward, often produces a defensive reaction on the part of the opponent.

The leg movements might be done either separately or combined with movements of the arm and blade.



Sixte Engagement
(neutral)

Octave Engagement
(forte)



The Engagement

The engagement is the situation when the two blades are in contact. To engage means to contact the opponent's blade with one's own.

There exist as many engagements as fencing positions. Following the relative positions of both blades we can distinguish three kinds of engagement:

- a. when the foible of the attacker's blade meets the forte of the opponent,
- b. when both blades meet in the middle,
- c. when the forte of the attacker controls the opponent's foible.

The first engagement (a) allows one to fix the opponent's hand so as to be sure about its position. In that case, the line of the opponent is closed while the attacker's line is open and exposed to an attack from the opponent.

The second engagement (b) is neutral, i.e., it gives no advantage to either fencer.

The third engagement (c) opens the opponent's line while it protects the line of the attacker. If, after such an engagement, both fencers extend their arms and hit at the same time, the priority is given to the one who controlled the blade of the opponent (forte against foible). For this reason, many writers put the engagement in the same category as an attack on the blade, since, because of the control of the opponent's blade, the engagement may be considered as being combined with a pressure.

The engagement can be done for the following reasons:

- a. To prepare an attack by fixing the opponent's hand. In this case the engagement will be light and the arm will be extending slowly. The movement will be started with the point close to the opponent's garde and seeking the earliest possible contact with his blade. If it is desired to follow up with a pressure, the engagement should be neutral, without an exaggerated lateral movement of the hand.
- b. To prepare an attack by causing the opponent to react. The engagement will always be taken well forward, started strongly with the point and followed by pressure.
- c. To provoke a counter-attack from the opponent. In this case the engagement will be done with a larger movement, but slower and well forward.
- d. To provoke the opponent to attack. The hand movement will be large with an exaggerated lateral movement.

Corrections

The student should always start the engagement with the point and then close the line with the hand, otherwise the engagement will be too easy to deceive (derobement). A sufficient angle should be formed between the blades, otherwise the engagement will be messy and difficult to execute.

Coaching

The Engagements (as well as change of engagement and double engagement) are excellent means to teach students the fencing positions. They also serve as a defence base by fixing the basic hand positions for the parries. They must be trained with special attention to the coverage of the lines in which they are taken. In order to verify whether a line is closed, the student can be asked to keep the engagement and to step forward with bent arm: he has to hit without being hit. In that case not only must the line be closed but the point must be in the correct position. If the instructor does not demand that the point is threatening the target, he might verify the coverage by attacking in the line of engagement; if the line is well closed the student will not be hit (unless the instructor exaggerates the lifting of the arm).

The Change of Engagement

The change of engagement is an engagement taken in the opposite line to the original position. The opponent's blade does not move. The change is always done by disengagement. A cut-over would be too slow, too large a movement, and too easy to deceive.

The Double Engagement

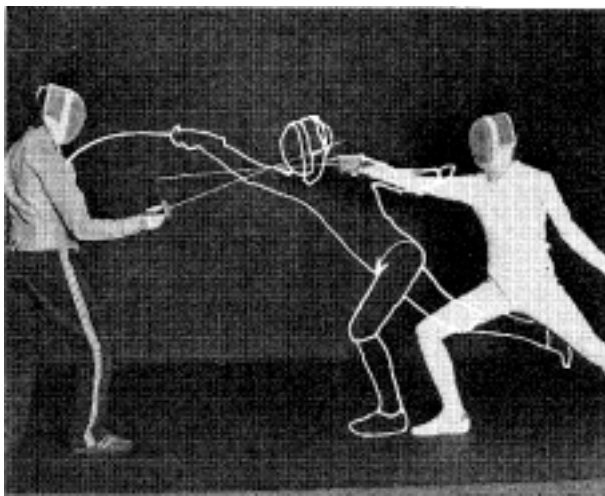
The double engagement consists of two changes of engagement, one immediately succeeding the other, or an engagement immediately followed by a change of engagement.

Technically, a change of engagement is done in the same way as the engagement. The double engagement is done without covering the line of the first engagement. The hand remains in the position of the final engagement. The movement is done by finger manipulation without displacement of the hand.

General Remarks

In modern foil, engagements are used less and less because of the longer distance and the mobility of the fencers. Therefore, fencers often use other preparations like:

- a feint of attack (see "Compound Attacks"),
- attacks on the blade,
- prise de fer attacks (see that chapter),



A false attack is executed with the same technique as a real attack, because the opponent should be convinced that it is a real attack. Depending upon the tactical intention, the false attack may be modified in detail in order to facilitate the action which follows. Thus, if a counter-riposte is planned, the attack will be done with less intensity in order to facilitate keeping balance during the lunge. If return to en garde backwards is planned, the lunge will be a little shorter. If return to en garde forward is planned, the extension of the rear leg will be limited to facilitate its faster movement forward. If the fleche is planned, the preparation will be limited to a half-lunge with the weight transferred to the front leg. If the purpose is to provoke a counter-attack, the preparation can be done with the arm bent or with an exaggerated lateral movement of the hand.

Lunge False Attack - Fleche

There is a whole range of preparations designed to prepare a defensive action. The following means can be used:

- a. An invitation. This is generally done in a form of an engagement (or a change of engagement) with an exaggerated pressure or by an attempt of an engagement or attack on the blade (or prise de fer). These actions should be executed slowly and with exaggerated, large movements, so that the opponent can deceive them easily.
- b. A feint of parry (see Compound Parries).
- c. A feint with the body. This is done by leaning the body (trunk) forward to make the opponent misjudge the distance.
- d. A false counter-attack to provoke the opponent's counter-time, but with a parry of the counter-time well prepared.
- e. A false line, to let the opponent take the blade, but with a parry well prepared for the subsequent attack.
- f. By intentionally giving the blade to the opponent in order to give him a feeling of confidence and, therefore, to make him more vulnerable for a pre-planned manoeuvre.

All manoeuvres which serve to prepare an action can be categorized as preparations. All the preparations employ a hand and/or leg movement which have to be perfectly coordinated in order to achieve the desired results.

PRISE DE FER ATTACKS - ATTACKS ON THE BLADE

Definition

Actions of the attacking blade on the opponent's blade, generally serving as a preparation on an attack, can be classified as follows:

- the prise de fer is a prolonged contact of the attacker's forte against the defender's foible with the intention of dominating the opponent's blade.
- the attack on the blade is a momentary contact of the attacking blade with the blade of the defender in order to open the line for the attack, or to obtain a reaction closing one line but opening the opposing line.



Prise de Fer - Quarte Croise

Prise de fer attacks

There are four kinds of prise de fer actions:

1. Opposition-which takes the blade and finishes the action without changing the line during its execution,
2. Croise-which takes the opponent's blade in the high line and moves it to the low line (or vice versa) on the same side,
3. Bind (Lient) which takes the opponent's blade in the high line and moves it to the low line on the opposite side (or vice versa).
4. Envelopment-which takes the opponent's blade in one line and by a circular movement moves it back to the initial line.

These actions can be executed against an opponent whose arm is extended (or extending) by controlling his foible with the attacking forte. They are seldom used as an attack in foil because of the foilist's basic en garde position with a bent arm. On the other hand, they may be used with a riposte (especially against the opponent's remise), in counter attacks or in counter-time.

The opposition and the croise are the actions most frequently used. The bind is useful in certain situations, but the envelopment is seldom used in foil.

The prise de fer attack can be simple, compound or double. In foil the simple prise de fer is the only one used. Double and compound actions are described in the epee section.

The main advantage of the prise de fer is the fact that it controls the opponent's blade during the whole action, protecting the attacker from being hit. This factor is extremely important in epee, where the hit is scored by the one who hits first, but is less important in foil. Following the rules of priority, as soon as the foilist has priority, he need concern himself with nothing but scoring a hit. If he is hit at the same time or within an interval of time less than a fencing time before his hit arrives - he scores the hit. For that reason foil fencers are more likely to use an attack on the blade rather than a prise de fer.

On the other hand, teaching the prise de fer actions is an excellent means of teaching the basic positions to a beginner. The instructor might put the student in the sixte position, then let him take the blade and ask him to make several sixte envelopments followed by bind to septime, envelopment in septime and bind to sixte. He can also ask the student to move the blade by bind from quarte to octave, make envelopment in octave, move it back by bind to quarte and finish by envelopment in quarte.

In this way, the student will learn to use his forte to control the opponent's blade, which will help him during the parries. He will develop a greater awareness of the lines - when they are open and when they are closed - and will learn to feel the relative positions of the two blades during these movements.

With more advanced students, in the above exercise - septime might be replaced by a prime and octave by seconde (and eventually sixte by tierce).

The Individual Lesson

The instructor should keep his arm well extended so that his blade will not slip away from the student's control. He should keep his arm extended until the prise de fer is finished, otherwise the student will lose the blade contact needed to execute this action correctly.

The instructor should not create an opposition with his garde, but should let the student control his blade and deliver the hit without using too much power. Then, if the attack finishes in the high line, the instructor should drop his hand and lift the point. If it finishes in the low line, he should lift his hand and lower the point.

Corrections

The student must use his forte to control his opponent's foible. To achieve this, the arm should be extended very early, preferably before the leg action.

Too large a lateral movement of the hand should be avoided at the beginning of the action. Such a mistake usually appears together with too strong a lateral pressure on the blade. The instructor might make several derobements to make the student aware of this mistake. The student must keep balance and eventually parry the instructor's attack.

On the other hand, it is recommended to move the hand slightly outside towards the line where the final action is going to be completed in order to assure the best coverage of this line.

Defence

To defend against the prise de fer, fencers can use two means:

1. Parry the prise de fer, or
2. Avoid the blade contact during the opponent's attempt to find the blade.

The second method, the derobement, can also be used against attacks on the blade.

There are three different ways to parry a prise de fer:

1. by opposition parry, keeping blade contact but closing the line where the attack is going to finish in order to gain control over the attacking blade with the defending forte. This can be done by withdrawing the sword arm.
2. by ceding parry, keeping contact between the blades all the time and giving the opponent the impression that he is in total control of the blade, but taking over control at the last moment in the line where the prise de fer was to be finished (for example: ceding prime parry against sixte opposition).
3. by counter parry, escaping from the opponent's control by changing the line with a circular movement (for example: parry counter quarte against sixte opposition).

The prise de fer attacks which are most frequently used are the following:

- sixte opposition (a straight thrust with opposition),
- quarte croise, against an opponent who keeps his hand high, -
quarte-bind, when the distance is longer,
- octave opposition (especially as a stop-hit).

In case of opposite-handers:

- sixte croise
(especially as a riposte),
- quarte with opposition,
- septime with opposition
(as a stop hit).



Prise de Fer - Sixte Croise

ATTACKS ON THE BLADE

Classification: According to the nature of the contact between the blades, we can distinguish four kinds of attacks on the blade:

1. Beat attack-is a short, dry, more-or-less violent contact done with the middle part of the blade against the opponent's foible,
2. Pressure (Pression) - is a lateral "push" on the opponent's blade done after an engagement,
3. Grazing (Froissement)-is an action where the blade is sliding or grazing along opponent's blade from the foible to the forte with a more forceful push at the end to open the line of attack,
4. Glide (Coule)-as the graze except that blade contact is continued right through to the hit.

The Beat Attack:

Beat attacks can have different intensity, depending on their tactical concept. A beat executed in order to open a line for an attack will generally be quite strong. If its purpose is to obtain the opponent's reaction and profit from it, the beat should be of medium intensity. If we wish only to fix the position of the opponent's hand, without any other reaction, the beat should be very light.

Techniques

The instructor should insist that the beat is done by action of the fingers only. Too large a movement of the arm will diminish the effectiveness of the beat and will facilitate an eventual derobement by the opponent.

The student should control the intensity of the beat - i.e., if the opponent makes a derobement, the blade should not travel too far laterally. The point should be lifted a little during the beat in order to meet the opponent's blade at a sufficient angle and to achieve a "clean" beat. It is difficult to do this if the blade stays too horizontal and, even if a beat is accomplished, it will probably be "gliding" along the blade, diminishing its effectiveness.

The beat attack can be done in any line, but the main concentration should be on the beats to the quarte, sixte, septime and octave lines. The beat can then be followed by a simple or compound attack, by another preparation, or even by a defensive action.

Coaching

The beat attack can be done in the following situations:

- from an engagement,
- from absence of blade, when the opponent's blade is in immobility,
- upon the opponent's blade movement from one position to another,
- from a change of engagement.

Coordination

If an attack is being prepared, the beat should be done before any leg movement and should be followed immediately by the extension of the sword arm in order to retain priority.

If we wish to provoke the opponent's attack in order to use it to our advantage (either by following the beat by an invitation, or by exaggerating the movement of the beat, so that it will be deceived), the arm and the leg movement should be done together. It is important, however, to keep balance in order to retain control over the distance and to be able to react with counter-time or a second intention parry - riposte.

Pressure

Pressure is used less and less in modern foil fencing because of the rarity of engagement. Similar to the beat, pressure is used either to open the line for an attack, in which case it should be light so as not to provoke an early reaction of the opponent, or to provoke a reaction, in which case it will be stronger.

If an offensive or counter offensive reaction is desired, the pressure should be followed by an absence of blade, or by an exaggerated lateral hand movement. During an individual lesson, exercises with pressure are very useful, to make the student feel aware and be aware of the reactions of his opponent. This will develop a special "feeling of the blade," very useful during the execution of opposition parries.

Mistakes to avoid

- leaning too hard on the defending blade, and putting too much weight on the front leg during this action,
- lifting the elbow during the action. Contrary to the beat, this action is done by fingers and wrist acting together (but over rotation of the wrist should be avoided).

The Graze (Froissement)

This action has fallen into disuse, but can be useful against an opponent who "gives" the blade and has a "soft" hand. It is done by grazing or sliding one's own blade along the opponent's, at the same time rotating the wrist in order to move his blade suddenly aside, opening the line for a straight thrust.

The Glide (Coule)

This is a preparation of an attack designed to come very close to the opponent by gliding along his blade either in a closed or not completely closed line. Depending on the opponent's reaction, the glide can be followed by direct or indirect attack. A compound attack is used very rarely.

The glide rarely provokes an offensive or counter-offensive reaction because of the deep point penetration.

Execution

There should not be any lateral push during the action. It is essential that the arm extend first. The rhythm depends on the kind of reaction desired. A sudden extension of the arm will generally provoke a defensive reaction. A progressive, soft extension, accelerated in the final, is recommended to surprise the opponent with a direct attack.

COUNTER ATTACKS

- There are two types of counter attacks (mentioned already in the Level II Manual). 1. The stop-hit
2. The stop-hit with opposition or interception

The Stop Hit

According to the FIX "Regulations of Competition" (Art. 236): "...to be valid, the stop-hit must precede the final of the attack by an interval of fencing time (temps d'escrime); that is to say that the stop-hit must arrive before the attacker has begun the final movement of the attack."

In case of a badly executed attack (for example, with bent arm), the stop hit must arrive before the attacker starts extending his arm. In case of one-two attack, the hit must arrive before the beginning of "two." That means, if the stop-hitting action is initiated on "one" it is already too late (except in the situation when the attacker hesitates).

As we can see, the stop-hit is not an easy action to do. It requires premeditation, good observation of the opponent, a well developed sense of timing, and "cold blood."

It is better to wait until the student has a good understanding of the conventions of foil and is able to evaluate whether or not the opponent respects these conventions. He should also be able to determine the exact moment of counter-attack and to know how to take the fencing time away from the opponent.

The notion of fencing time is not innate. It varies depending on the weapon. Therefore, it is one of those things the instructor transmits to his student. Because it is fundamental to the judgement of foil action, it must be given much attention in the learning process.

It is very easy for a beginner to extend his arm against his opponent's attack, especially if he is fencing against another beginner. At that stage, even the smallest unpredicted reaction of the opponent might affect the attacker. Therefore, it often happens that even a stop-hit which is executed too late will disturb the attacker, so that he will miss the attack. Using the path of least resistance, a beginner may develop a tendency to rely upon this kind of "defence." It is, therefore, recommended to wait until the beginner has a well developed parry-riposte reflex, before introducing him to counter-attacks.

To execute the counter-attack well, the fencer must be able to identify the different ways he may be attacked by his opponent: simple, compound, with bent arm, arm withdrawn and then extended again, etc. This is not possible for a beginner. Such a fencer does not usually become fully conscious what the opponent is doing against him without much training (especially with youngsters).

In order to teach a student the notion of fencing time, the instructor might ask him to make counter-attacks at different moments of the extension of the arm. In this way he may be taught the dividing line between the counter-attack in time and not in time.

Teaching the counter-attacks we must always remember the tactical context of the action.

The stop-hit can be done in immobility, with step back or, rarely, with step forward. It should be clearly distinguished from the attack into the attack and from the attack on the preparation (see chapter "Preparations"). These are essentially different actions.

If an attack is badly coordinated, it is possible to make a stop-hit the moment the opponent withdraws his arm, and then to retreat quickly out of his reach. In this case the hand extends at the same time as the rear leg starts its first movement

backwards. Such a counter-attack should be done with the sword arm well relaxed in order to be able to return to a parry in case of the opponent's counter-time.

The stop-hit can be done in different lines:

- if the opponent keeps his hand high, generally it will be executed into the low line, with the hand in pronation,
- if the opponent keeps his hand low it will be done into the high line with the hand in supination (or semi-supination).

The stop-hit can be done with a side-step or while ducking, which increase the chance for the attack to miss. A well timed stop-hit generally stops the attack before it even has time to develop. The attacker who realizes that he is about to run into the opponent's point, usually stops his arm movement and tries to parry. Excessive speed and bad coordination will prevent his counter-time from succeeding.

Compound Counter-Attacks

If the attacker can recognize early enough that his opponent is going to make a counter-attack he may parry and riposte; the technical term for the parry of a counterattack and the subsequent riposte is "counter-time" (contre-temps). The compound counter-attack is the method of deceiving a counter-time. Such a compound counterattack might comprise one (or more) feint(s) of counter-attack, followed by the deception of the opponent's parry. It is practically impossible for the attacker to make more than one parry, since he is responding to the counter-attack during a lunge (or fleche). Therefore, the compound counter-attack very rarely has more than one feint.

There are as many compound counter-attacks as there are compound attacks and they are described in the same way (for example: counter-attack by one-two, feints low-high, etc.).

The attacker will not be drawn into parrying a counter-attack unless he perceives the threat very early in his attack. Thus, it is important to extend the arm very early when executing the feint of counter-attack. To deceive the parry in such conditions (arm extended, distance reduced) requires very well developed finger work, but the attacker, too, will be experiencing the same difficult conditions of time and distance, thus making his parry larger and less controlled, and therefore easier to deceive (unless, of course, he is executing a premeditated counter-time!).

An effective way of provoking the attacker's reaction is to reinforce the feint of counter-attack by an "appel" with the front foot. If the opponent can be easily provoked, it is not always necessary to extend the arm completely.

Coaching

The instructor will first parry by a large movement of the arm, stopping his forward motion in order to facilitate the exercise. At that point the student will do a compound attack on the preparation. Then the instructor will progressively develop his foot-work more and more, but without completing it, so that the student can make the compound counter-attack in immobility. Finally, the instructor will make a complete foot action finishing in the position of lunge (or half-lunge), but with his arm bent in the position of a parry.

The compound counter-attack may be executed with a step backwards, but such execution is difficult. Moreover, the increased distance almost always leaves enough room for the attacker to extend his arm and resume the attack after he has failed in his attempt to parry. There is then the risk that this combination of compound counter-attack while retreating, together with the resumed attack, may be misinterpreted unless executed very precisely. This risk may be reduced if the counter-attacker has time to make a clean "appel" with his front foot in order to signal his intention of executing a compound counter-attack to the President de Jury.

It is not recommended to use the cut-over to deceive the parry because of the difficulty of its execution at such close range. If the cut-over is used as a feint, it should be done very early with the arm as far forward as possible. Too deep a withdrawal of the arm will almost always leave priority with the attack and would, in any case, not present a sufficient threat to provoke a parry.

If the attack is initiated at very long range, the counter-attack may be done with a half-step forward, a half-lunge, a step or even a full lunge. It will then almost always become an attack on the preparation, as the attacker will not in practice have the time to complete his forward movement.

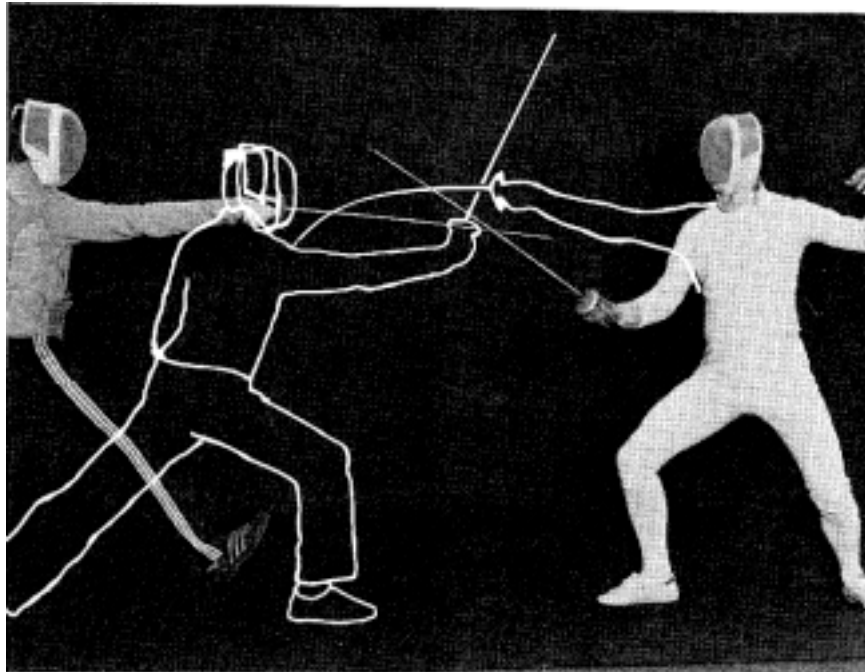
The Stop-Hit with Opposition and Interception:

The stop-hit with opposition and the stop-hit with interception have two objectives: 1. to hit the opponent,

2. to deflect his attack so that it does not arrive.

In effect, this section comprises a parry and riposte executed simultaneously with the arm extending.

This type of stop-hit may be divided into those with opposition and those with interception. They might look the same and the result may be the same but technically they are different.



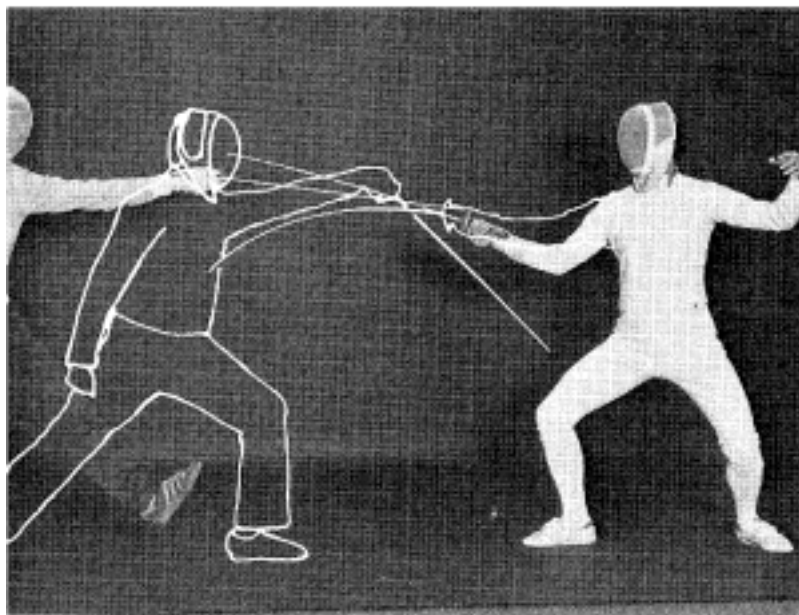
Stop Hit With Opposition

The Stop-Hit with Opposition closes the line where the attack is finishing. It may be executed against any attack and is initiated by the point, which is first placed in the chosen line, and followed by the extension of the arm. To reinforce the surprise effect and leave the opponent less time to react, the extension of the arm can be done together with a half-lunge or with a step forward. When the action is executed against a compound attack, the first parry (parries) might correspond to the feint(s) and the final movement should close the line by extension of the arm.

Stop-hits with opposition are difficult to do against attacks with cut-over, especially those executed with the arm relatively bent. In such situations they are not recommended.

They are easier to execute in the external lines (sixte, octave, seconde). In the internal lines the hand should be much further out and the movement accompanied with a sidestep (rotation of the body). In case of opposite-handed fencers it is easier to score by stop-hit with opposition by using the internal lines.

The Stop-Hit with Interception (as the name indicates) is intended to intercept the attack before it arrives in the line of destination. The attack should, of course, be indirect or compound. In order to arrive in the destination line, every such attack must cross one or more lines.



Stop Hit With Interception

The stop-hit with interception closes one of these intermediate lines by meeting the attacker's blade as he is trying to pass through it. For example: after a sixte engagement the disengagement enters the quarte line passing through the octave line. As soon as the attacker's blade leaves the engagement the defender should move the point to the position of octave together with a complete arm extension. The disengagement will not have time to be completed. In order to be effective, the movement of counter attack should start at the same time as the movement of attack in order to meet the attacking blade in the right place and at the right time. If the counter attack starts after the beginning of the attack, it will be too late to achieve the desired domination (forte against the attacker's foible). In that case, a stop-hit with opposition would have to be done in quarte, which would be more difficult.

Against a compound attack, the defender would have to pursue the feint with appropriate parries, and, as the attacker was deceiving the first parry, the defender would extend his arm, meeting and deflecting the attacking blade. For example: after a quarte engagement the attacker makes a feint of disengagement into the sixte line to finish the attack in the line of quarte. The defender reacts initially to sixte and then takes octave as soon as the attacker starts his second disengagement. In order to execute this action in good time the defender should only initiate the movement to sixte (i.e., sufficiently to make the opponent believe that he is really forming the parry) and immediately change to octave. If the opponent's actions are really "programmed" one could even move directly from quarte to octave, without the feint of sixte parry.

Coaching

The difficulty of this action is knowing the precise moment for the extension of the arm. If the extension is made too early it may be deceived. If the arm is extended too late, the parry may be executed with the foible (i.e., insufficiently). Thus, the exercises should be started in slow motion until the student has developed a good feeling for the exact moment of extension. Since the extension of the counter-attacker's arm depends also on the moment chosen by the opponent to extend his arm, the instructor might facilitate the exercise by attacking initially with a completely extended arm. Later on he might ask the student only to extend his arm when the attacking arm is beginning to extend.

During the exercises with compound attack, it is best to ask the student to let himself be hit several times before trying the interception. Thus, in the above example, the instructor might hit the student several times with a one-two attack, requiring the student to take sixte (and, as needed, to start into quarte). Then, when the student is well aware about the lines and the relative movements of both blades, he can execute the stop-hit with interception into octave (or seconde).

The Attack into the Attack

The fact that this action occurs so often is due to faulty offensive and defensive technique. For example, if the attacker extends his sword arm too late, the defender, perhaps having insufficient confidence in his defence, hesitates momentarily and then chooses to attack into the attack instead of executing a parry-riposte. In this case both fencers committed a mistake, and they should be replaced en garde without awarding the hit. If the attacker made no flagrant mistake in technique, he would, naturally, retain priority. The opponent's only chance of success in executing an attack into an attack would then be the surprise factor (offensive reaction instead of defence), combined with a sudden change of distance, which might cause the attack to miss. In case the attacker made a flagrant mistake in technique, while his opponent reacted correctly and immediately, the action should be judged in favor of the opponent as an attack on preparation.

THE LINE. THE DEROBEMENT

The Line

According to the "Regulation of Competition" Art. 233, (a)6 "If the attack is initiated when the opponent has his 'point in line' (i.e., with the arm straight and the point threatening the valid target), the attacker must first deflect his opponent's blade."

Art. 31: "At foil and sabre it is not permitted to come en garde in the in-line position."

Art. 237, 2a: "Only the fencer who attacks is counted as hit if he initiates his attack when his opponent has his point in line (arm straight and the point threatening the valid target) without first deflecting the opponent's blade." (Note: If both fencers are hit in the same fencing time).

Art. 237, 1e: "Only the fencer who is attacked is counted as hit if, having his point in line and being subjected to a beat or a prise de fer which deflects his blade, he attacks or replaces his point in line instead of parrying a direct thrust made by his opponent." (Note: If both fencers are hit in the same fencing time).

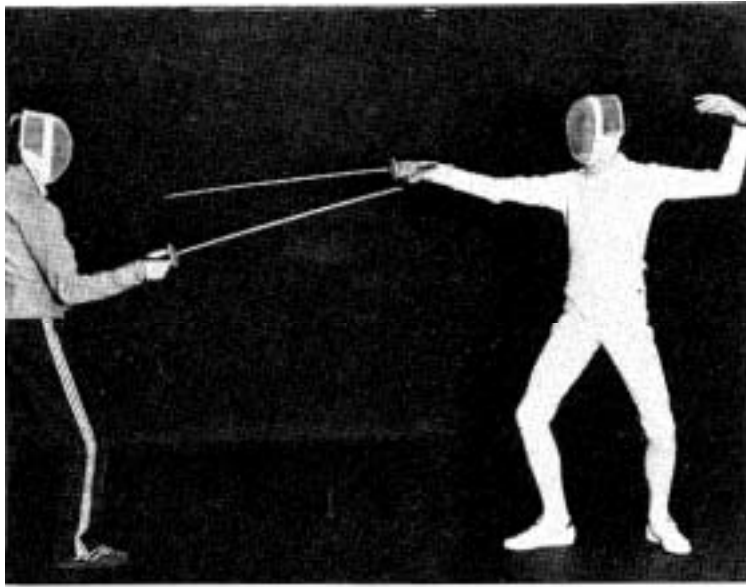
It follows from the above that the arm must be extended before the beginning of the attack in order to be recognized as having the point in line. The arm must be held straight during the whole action, otherwise, the moment it bends, the right of way passes to the attacker and the fencer is no longer in line.

The fencer in line may move his arm or his shoulder, but as long as his arm remains extended throughout, with the point threatening the valid target, the condition of the line remains unchanged.

If the opponent attempts to find the blade (beat, prise de fer), the fencer may avoid his attempt to deflect the blade; i.e., he may make a "derobement." This can be done by cut-over or by disengagement (see Derobement). Thus, if the opponent is seeking the blade, the arm and blade may depart from the position of "the line" sufficiently to avoid the opponent's blade. On the other hand, the fencer may no longer be regarded as being "in line" if he moves his point away from the valid target and then puts it back, unless he is avoiding his opponent's attempt to find his blade.

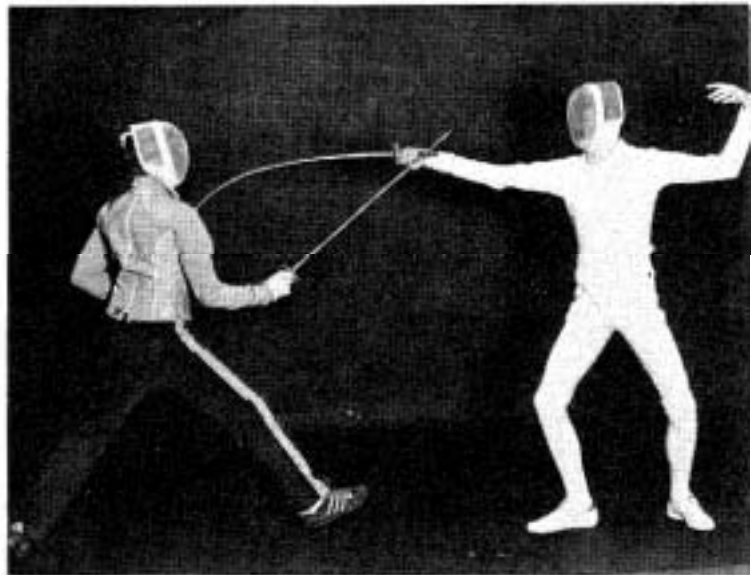
The reasoning presented above indicates that if the attack starts when the fencer is not in line, and the line is established during the attack, the line is considered as too late.

A step has no influence upon the condition of the line; no article in the rules mentions foot-work, so the relative position of the arm and the point are the only relevant factors. Nevertheless, three elements (movement of the arm, movement of the shoulder, movement of the feet) may result in errors of judgment. It is, therefore, recommended to reduce them as much as possible. The arm must be extended but relaxed, especially the shoulder. Point movements should be controlled exclusively by the fingers and arm movements reduced to the necessary minimum.



The line giving "Right of Way" to the fencer, on the right.

The fencer on the left lunges on to the straight arm, point in line.



Coaching

The line can be initially taught against the straight thrust.

- The student must be taught to distinguish between a valid line and a stop-hit.
- The instructor might then execute a beat attack with a large lateral movement, slow enough to facilitate the derobement.
- The line should be first practiced in immobility until it is smoothly executed, with step back against the step lunge attack. From this distance the derobement is generally needed against two beats, or an engagement followed by a beat.
- The student must practice derobement against beats in all the lines. At the beginning, the instructor might occasionally tell the student which lines he is going to engage. Later on the instructor might vary those lines without warning, but always with a large, slow movement to facilitate the derobement.
- finally, the instructor might start practicing two successive derobements, at the beginning telling the student the lines of engagements and then asking him to do it with "open eyes."

Corrections

The student should:

- keep the arm and the shoulder relaxed to assure the best control of the point.
- make the derobement with the fingers without hand movement. This is only possible if the hand remains in the original position of supination (or half-supination). Rotation of the hand may influence precision, make the blade easier to find or cause mistakes in judgment.
- not lift the hand too high. If the wrist is too much angulated, it becomes more difficult to avoid the beat. For the same reason the hand should not be too low.
- not make any thrusting movement, but let the opponent run into the point. Contraction of the shoulder and leaning forward with the body may decrease precision and cause the point to pass.
- not try to make an opposition. Such a movement might appear to the president to be an attempt to parry.

From time to time the instructor might beat the line and continue the attack to make sure that the student returns to parry. This is not possible if the arm and shoulder are too tight. The instructor should also teach the student to return to other parries than quarte (which is the most natural).

Defence

The easiest defence against the line is not to attack. If a fencer wishes to attack against a line, he must be sure to deflect the opponent's blade before proceeding with the attack. An effective beat must be done quickly, with finger movement only, and with the blade initially situated close to the opponent's blade. An alternative way is to start with a large beat so as to provoke a derobement, in order to execute a second, accelerated beat. Beats which are preceded by a change of line are the most difficult to disengage.

The beat in high septime is advised if there is difficulty in finding the opponent's blade. The derobement is more difficult in this case because of the angulation between the blades.

In no case should the legs move too early, i.e., the fencer should deflect the opponent's blade before moving forward. Moving the legs before the beat can only be done on the assumption that the blade can be deflected during the lunge; there must be a very good, pre-planned, tactical reason to take such a risk (based either on former successful experience or on the superior speed of the arm).

The Derobement

According to the "Regulations of Competition":

Art. 233, 7: "If, when attempting to find the opponent's blade to deflect it, the blade is not found (derobement), *the right of attack passes to the opponent.*"

Art. 237, 2,(b): "Only the fencer who attacks is counted as hit if he attempts to find the blade, does not succeed (derobement) and continues the attack." (Note: If both fencers are hit in the same fencing time).

The derobement may be executed by a fencer either from his in-line position, or from any other position - the essential feature is that his opponent must be attempting to find his blade and must fail to find it.

The derobement requires good timing and good finger work. When it is executed from the in-line position it requires excellent calmness and self-control ("cold blood"). The derobement can be done with "open eyes" if the fencer has very good reflexes. Generally, however, the "open eyes" derobement is difficult to do unless the opponent is relatively slow and attacks with large movements.

One can also "feel" the opponent's preparation and be able to use one's observation to predict the way he is going to take the blade.

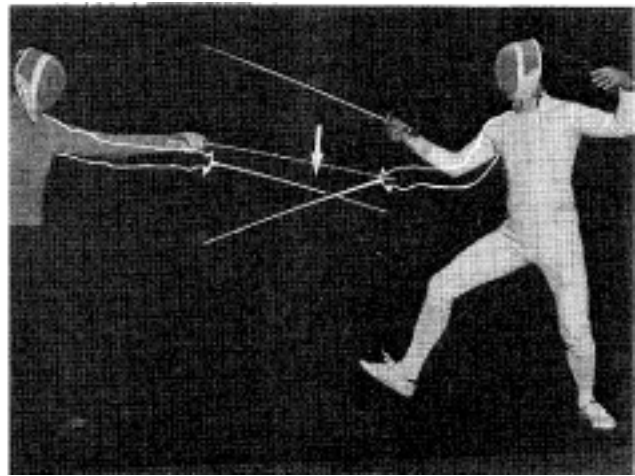
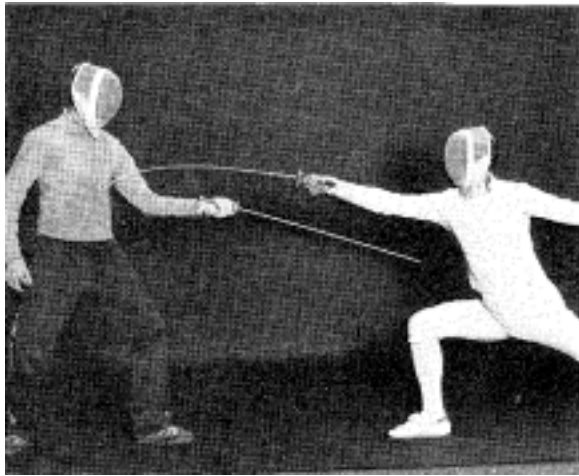
Contrary to epee, the slightest blade contact will, in practice, give priority to the attacker.

When one is not initially in the in-line position, it is recommended to attempt the derobement only on lateral preparations, for the following reasons:

- it is easier to execute a derobement against such actions, and
- if the opponent looks for the blade while extending his arm and if his point is not visibly directed away from the valid target while he is looking for the blade, the President de Jury might interpret the derobement as a counter attack (stop-hit) into a simple attack and give priority to the attacker. This is, of course, an erroneous analysis, contrary to the specifications of Art. 237.2(b) but, particularly amongst inexperienced presidents, is a fairly common mistake.

Such a problem does not exist with lateral beats (especially with medium and strong beats) since the derobement is executed by an extension of the arm against a clearly lateral movement. Nevertheless, the arm must be extended as soon as the point changes the line. The more strongly the attacker tries to beat, the greater the chance that, lacking the reaction from the beat, he will miss the attack or at least lose his balance sideways. In such case the President de Jury will easily read the derobement, quite apart from the fact that there is often a clear difference in fencing time between the two hits.

It is recommended to link the derobement with a movement forward (step, lunge, half-lunge). There are good chances that such action will be read as the attack on preparation. If this action is made from the in-line position, the fact that the arm is extended clearly before the attack is attempted makes the judgment even easier.



Riposte with Lunge - Countertime - Preparation and Parry

COUNTER-TIME

Counter-time (Contre-temps) is an action designed to exploit the opponent's counter-attack in order to react either with a parry and riposte or with an attack. This definition implies that counter-time is often executed as a pre-planned action (second intention). However, fencers with a good, quick hand and good reflexes can execute reflexive counter-time, which is technically identical and differs only in the original conception. It can also be executed as an action with several intentions: the fencer is initiating an attack, but has a pre-prepared parry available in case the opponent counter-attacks. In this case the action becomes, for all practical purposes, a pre-planned counter-time.

Depending on distance, a fencer might react with a parry riposte, an attack on the blade or a prise de fer, followed by a lunge, step forward or fleche.

Depending on the moment of the opponent's counter-attack, the counter-time might be done in balance (for example, at the end of the step forward) or out of balance (for example, during the lunge).

There are many actions which can be used to provoke the opponent's counter-attack (or attack on the preparation). All of these actions are called the preparations (see the chapter). Generally, they include a deliberate mistake in execution which the opponent is led to believe that he can exploit. Such a "mistake" can be displayed more or less visibly, depending on the opponent's level of skill. It could be, for example, a step forward with bent arm, too large an engagement (invitation), a beat which is easy to deceive, a feint badly executed, a false attack, a beat not followed by arm extension, etc.

If the opponent's reaction is offensive rather than counter-offensive, the counter-time will take a form of a parry riposte against the attack on the preparation. Some authors describe this as defensive counter-time, others as second intention parry-riposte. Such an action, even if it is slightly different from counter-time because of this different foot-work, is still regarded as counter-time in its execution and conception.

If the opponent reacts with a counter-attack followed by a quick retreat, such an action becomes an "offensive counter-time."

In foil, counter-time by prise de fer is successfully replaced by counter-time with attack on the blade. The reasons are the same as those (explained already in the previous chapters) concerning the attacks.

Coaching

The student does a preparation of attack, the instructor reacts with counter attack. The easiest preparation, which allows the student to understand well the mechanics of counter-time, is an invitation with step forward: for example, sixte engagement with a large movement. The instructor then makes the derobement and the student reacts with quarte parry and riposte direct at the moment his rear foot touches the ground. The instructor's counter-attack should be in immobility. Then he can progress to the same action but with step back and the student should riposte by lunge. The quarte parry then becomes more a quarte beat. The emphasis should be on rhythm and coordination. If the counter-time is executed with lunge, the invitation should be given during the step forward and the beat at the moment the rear foot lands on the ground or even when the front foot leaves the ground. Next, the instructor might react with a parry and step back and the student should make an indirect attack.

As soon as the student masters these two distances, the instructor might start mixing them. He can also add the third possibility, that is, an attack on the preparation. The student makes sixte engagement moving only the front foot forward, the instructor deceives with half-lunge (or full lunge). The student has to parry and riposte during the step forward or the moment the rear foot lands on the ground.

To make it easier, the instructor might ask the student to make the same hand action in three different distances. The student will then be able to concentrate only on distance and coordination.

The instructor might retain the same distance but vary the hand actions. For example: against the same engagement he can react with counter-attack high, counter attack low, or with one -two. The student should react with the corresponding parry-riposte.

At a more expert level the instructor should vary all of these factors independently without warning the student. The student should understand the importance of coordination (see the chapter) to be able to provoke the desired reaction of the opponent.

Counter-time is an action which profits from the opponent's mistake at the exact moment which makes it very difficult for the opponent to recover. Therefore, it is appropriate to use simple actions (direct or indirect) in one fencing line and linked to blade contact. The only case when indirect actions are recommended is at long range. In most other cases the direct action will be sufficient or, at most, a disengagement high (or underneath) might be used. Holding the parry will in any case give the opponent time to recover both with the hand and with distance. In such case it is more appropriate either to wait for a better moment, or - if the fencer keeps perfect balance - to react with a compound reaction.

With a more advanced fencer the counter-time exercise might include other situations. The student might make a feint with half-extension and react with counter-time on the instructor's counter-attack. If the instructor reacts too late the student should continue with simple attack. Then the instructor might add another possibility by taking, for example, a parry as the reaction to feint, so the student must finish with compound attack.

All of these actions are usually executed during the student's step forward. The step forward can also be used so as to provoke and recognize the opponent's reaction and to react accordingly. The step forward can be replaced by a jump forward or by balestra. The time for a reaction will, in that case, be reduced because a step forward lasts longer than a jump or balestra.

With more advanced students, the step can be replaced by a half-lunge (or full lunge) followed by either a fleche or a return forward to en garde and another lunge. This is a false attack.

The instructor's reactions should clearly differentiate one action from another, especially with exercises containing several intentions. If the instructor decides to use varied foot-work, he should execute the foot-work early enough so that the student has time to react.

The instructor's arm should be fully extended during the counter-attack in order to make it realistic. If the counter-attack is to be followed by a retreat, the rear foot should move together with the extension of the arm. In case the instructor decides to return to parry he should not withdraw his arm too fast because there is a risk that the student will miss the blade.

The instructor should require perfect balance from the student during the parry. To achieve this he can make from time to time a compound counter-attack, which will force the student to make two successive parries. This is very difficult to execute if one is out of balance. In order to control the balance after a counter-time executed with lunge, the instructor might parry the student's final thrust in order to have him continue the phrase through to the counter-riposte.

If the instructor chooses not to react with counter-attack, the student should either keep his balance and return to (or remain) en garde, or should continue with an attack (simple or compound).

Examples of counter-time

After a sixte engagement and:

1. counter-attack in the inside quarte line:

- quarte parry and direct riposte,
- quarte parry-riposte with disengagement (or cut-over) if the distance is long. The instructor returns to quarte,
- quarte parry and riposte with cut-over underneath,
- high septime parry and direct riposte,
- prime parry and direct riposte (at short distance).

2. counter-attack into the inside sixte line, in addition to the above:

- counter sixte stop-hit with opposition (the opponent's hand not too high)
- counter sixte (or counter tierce) parry with riposte underneath or by disengagement, quarte parry croise,
- octave stop-hit with opposition (or quarte bind).

After quarte engagement and:

1. counter-attack into the sixte outside line:

- stop-hit with sixte opposition,
- sixte parry and riposte underneath or by disengagement, counter-quarte parry and direct riposte,
- counter-quarte parry and riposte by disengagement (or cut-over),
- counter-quarte parry and riposte by cut-over underneath,
- stop-hit with septime opposition or septime parry and direct riposte.

2. counter-attack underneath:

- octave parry and riposte high (indirect) or septime parry and direct riposte,
- stop-hit with octave opposition (if the opponent's hand is high enough).

Opposite handers

After sixte engagement and:

1. Counter-attack into the quarte line:

- quarte parry and riposte on the flank,
- quarte parry and direct riposte with opposition,
- quarte parry and riposte with cut-over underneath,
- high counter-sixte parry (Polish counter-quinte) and riposte underneath.

2. Counter-attack into the sixte inside line in addition to the above:

- counter-sixte parry and riposte croise,
- prime parry and direct riposte (short distance).

After quarte engagement and counter-attack into sixte outside line:

The actions are the same as listed above in pts 1 and 2, except the counter-sixte parry becomes sixte, and the counter-quarte parry becomes quarte, plus the following action:

- stop-hit with septime opposition or septime parry and direct riposte.

CO-ORDINATION

Very rarely in fencing is an action executed exclusively by arm movements or exclusively by leg movements. When several parts of the body move during an action, one has to know in what order they should move. This is called "coordination." Coordination is the fundamental factor in fencing, since bad coordination during an action almost always results in failure.

The order in which different movements should be executed is not only in respect to the effectiveness of the action, but also in respect to foil rules of priority. This order can vary depending on the tactical goal: even the same action, differently coordinated, can provoke different reactions from the opponent.

One of the most important skills which has to be developed at first is independence between arm and leg movements. This can be developed by appropriate exercise started from the very earliest stage. Generally, these will comprise foot-work exercises (fencing or non-fencing) combined with various activities of arms (pre-determined movements of varied rhythm, throwing and catching a ball, taking various fencing positions).

The instructor might ask the student to make the same movement with the arm at different times in order to make him aware of the timing of those movements in relation to his legs. For example, during a step and lunge he can ask the student to extend the arm:

- before the step forward,
- on the first part of the step, together with the front leg,
- on the second part of the step, together with rear leg,
- at the beginning of the lunge,
- after the lunge.

By varying these exercises, the student will gradually develop an awareness of coordination. An artificial way of teaching coordination is to break the action down into its component parts, where only one part of the body moves at a time. This creates the theoretical problem of knowing in what order those movements should be executed. It is often difficult to decide what movement should be done first from amongst those which are normally executed at the same time. The order can, however, be chosen arbitrarily for pedagogical reasons. If needed, the student might be asked to exercise in one way at first, then in changed order. In any case, the instructor should move very early from broken actions to the real actions, even if executed in slow motion. The danger of breaking actions into parts is their complete detachment from the real bout situation.

PRINCIPLES

In forward movements the general principles to follow (which are adaptable) are: first move the point and the blade, then the hand, then the arm and finally the legs. It is obvious that in real life all of these movements are linked with one another, and too great a separation will have a negative influence on a general understanding of the whole action, but the linking together of the components must depend on the student's physical capabilities. Thus, during a disengagement the student should move the point under the opponent's blade (using his fingers) during the extension of the arm. If his finger work is not well developed, the instructor will ask him to move the point first and then extend the arm. If, on the other hand, the student has a tendency to execute this action in two times, the instructor will rather delay the fingers action, asking the student to extend the arm first (transforming the action almost into a feint direct - disengagement).

Apart from some special cases (such as the ones described above, where the instructor separates the movements in order to correct mistakes), the logical coordination is the one mentioned at the beginning: point, hand, arm, legs. Thus, during the riposte by disengagement at short range, the student will move the point first and next the arm. If the relative position of the fencers requires that the fencer who makes the riposte shall move his hand (e.g., to find the best angle for the hit), the order will be the following: first point, then hand, then arm.

The influence of tactical concepts on coordination will be treated in Levels IV and V.



RENEWED ATTACKS

Renewed attacks belong to the category of actions which are possible only if one of the fencers deviates from the normal fencing phrase, by withholding or delaying the riposte after a parry or by composing it too much. In such cases the opponent gets a chance to resume the offensive in several ways. Those actions might:

- include foot-work or not,
- comprise foot-work backwards, forwards, or first backwards and then forwards,
- comprise actions in the same line or with one or more changes of line (possibly returning eventually to the original line).

Different fencing schools classify renewed attacks in different ways, without universal agreement on the meanings of the various classifications that are used. Bad translation or interpretation of the original French terms lead even to the same name being given to completely different actions.

All schools agree that the action called the "REMISE" is the action which scores a hit without changing line, without withdrawing the arm and without returning to the en garde position.

Note: In fencing manuals, the various actions by straight thrust (re. without changing line) with no leg movement, but after a withdrawal of the arm, are not given specific names. Radical differences exist between the two principal fencing schools, however, in the definitions and the two other varieties of renewed attack - the redoublement and the reprise.

Because this manual is intended for instructors, the authors have decided to adopt the definitions most commonly used in those works to which the reader may refer. Therefore, one can find in the French language version of this manual the definitions of the "French School," adopted by the majority of Francophone masters, while in the English-language version the definitions are the ones which are adopted by the majority of non-Francophone nations, and consequently the ones most frequently used in Englishlanguage texts.

Note: The FIX "Reglement pour les Epreuves" gives, in Art. 13, an explanation of some relevant technical terminology; the current English-language definitions conform strictly to this explanation. This Article is not totally in agreement with the "Classic French School"; the author believes some of these explanations to be incomplete and erroneous, and believes this to be the cause of the present inconsistency.

While awaiting the derivation of a common terminology and set of definitions, mutually agreed by the FIX and the Masters of the French School, we have adopted the attitude described below, which seems to be the best suited to the every day practice of fencing. For those instructors teaching in both languages, we can only offer our apologies in advance!

Remise

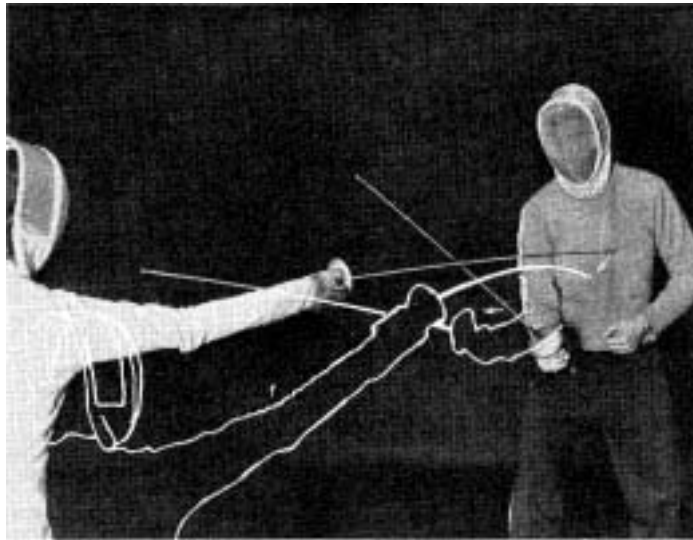
This is an offensive or counter-offensive direct action executed after the attack has been parried, but without returning to the en garde position.

In foil, if the riposte is executed immediately after the parry, the riposte has priority and the remise has not. Therefore, before executing a remise the fencer must be sure that one of the following conditions will be fulfilled:

- it will arrive at fencing time before the riposte,
- the riposte will miss, or
- the opponent will not make a riposte.

The following are types of mistakes which might be committed by the defender and which would justify the various forms of remise:

- if the defender releases the blade after the parry and does not riposte, the remise can be executed as a direct continuation of the attack,
- if the defender releases the blade and makes a late riposte, the remise might either be executed as a direct continuation of the attack, or as a stop-hit before the riposte,
- if the defender makes an indirect riposte, the remise may be executed as a stop-hit with opposition,
- if the defender makes a compound riposte, the remise may take a form of a stop-hit in good time,
- if the defender holds the blade without riposting, the remise may be a continuation of the attack, executed generally with angulation.



The Remise

Technical Execution

The remise should be executed with the arm kept straight. The point, that has been deflected by the parry, should be re-directed towards the target.

If the remise is executed within a distance such that the point has not yet passed the target; if the opponent moves forward then it is sufficient merely to re-direct the point into line; or if the opponent stays in the same place then, together with re-directing the point, the fencer must make a movement forward. This movement can be executed by:

- leaning forward with the body,
- a half-step,
- a prolongation of the half-lunge, or
- a fleche (but without passing through the en garde position).

If the point has already passed the target, the fencer should move back in order to replace the point in front of that target. This may be executed by:

- a step back, or
- leaning to the rear with the upper body.

The remise executed with a backward movement is rarely used in foil.

Coaching

The remise is an action often used by beginners, instead of parrying if their attack is parried. For that reason the instructor should not increase this tendency by teaching the remise too early to students who have not yet acquired the reflex of parrying the riposte. In every case the remise should be a premeditated action not a manifestation of a simple lack of balance after an attack.

It is recommended to train this action in a realistic context. Thus, the instructor might commit the same mistake several times before asking the student to react with the appropriate remise. (For example: the instructor holds the parry without riposting; the student comes back to en garde. After a couple of such repetitions the student might make the angulated remise instead of coming back to en garde).

It is not recommended to include the remise in exercises with several possibilities. The risk of being hit by the riposte is too great. The least risky remises are the following:

- against an opponent who holds the blade too long, (when an angulated remise will usually provoke a second defensive reflex, which gives priority to the remise);
- against an opponent who makes a direct riposte into a line which, because of the attacker's favourable hand position, the attacker finds easy to block. For example: the defender makes a sixte parry and direct riposte and the attacker reacts with a remise with opposition, blocking out the riposte; and
- against an opponent who does not make a riposte or who always makes a compound riposte (the remise has a good chance of being in time).

The remise is not recommended against an opponent who makes a direct riposte into a line difficult to block (for example quarte) or who ripostes indirectly (except the case of the riposte with disengagement after a quarte parry).

When the opponent makes a parry placing his point outside of the valid target and has a tendency to riposte too quickly and imprecisely, the remise can be accompanied by a side step or ducking. For example: if the defender parries quarte and ripostes direct, he might miss the target if the attacker makes a remise while ducking.

Defence

There are several methods of defence against opponents who use the remise:

- By using exclusively the simple riposte (direct or indirect), watching its speed to avoid the risk of missing the target,
- By profiting from the fact that the opponent keeps his arm straight, by taking control of his blade to riposte by prise de fer (see the chapter).
- By doubling the parry, thus parrying the remise before the riposte.

Redoublement

"The redoublement is a new action, either simple or compound, made on an opponent who has parried without riposting or who has merely avoided the first action by retreating or displacing the target" (FIX "Regulations of Competition" Art. 13, b).

The action is done without returning to the en garde position.

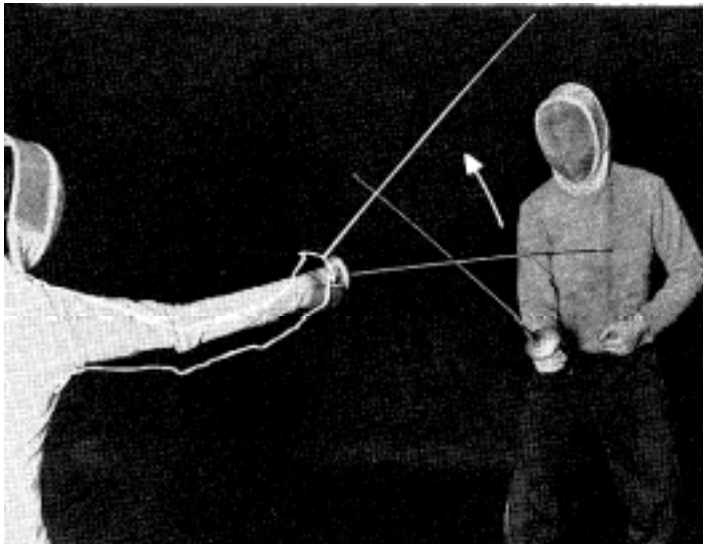
We can see that the conditions of distance are the same as for the remise. Depending on the opponent's reaction and the plans of the attacker, the latter might either execute the redoublement with extended arm, or withdraw the arm first and then extend it again.

There are the following ways of executing the redoublement against an opponent who does not make a riposte:

- indirectly (by disengagement or cut-over),
- by derobement, against the change of engagement (by counter-disengagement or coupe),
- by a compound action,
- by an attack on the blade, direct or indirect (rarely compound).

These actions are rarely executed with a backwards movement. The following ways are in common use:

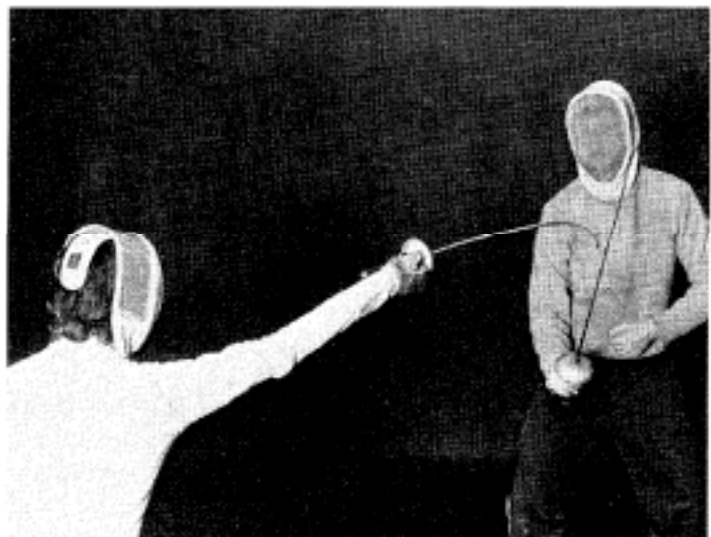
- in immobility,
- leaning forward with upper body (trunk),
- by half-step,
- by prolonging the half-lunge,
- with step forward,
- with fleche,
- during return forward to en garde.



The Redoublement

The attack from the left is parried and the arm bends to make a Cutover

Finally, the arm is extended to hit in the opposite line



If the opponent makes riposte or counter-riposte, the redoublement might take a form of a stop-hit with opposition. For example, the defender makes quarte parry and direct riposte, the attacker makes the redoublement with disengagement finished in sixte opposition. It can also be done by interception during the riposte. For example, the defender makes sixte parry and initiates his riposte by disengagement; the attacker makes the redoublement underneath finishing with octave interception. In this case, as above, the redoublement is generally executed with arm extended.

Note: The redoublement is fundamentally in contradiction to the motion and priority implicit in the foil convention; therefore, the instructor, while teaching this action, must take the same precautions as those described for the remise. However, the redoublement is more offensive in its character than the remise, and, because of this, the fencer who redoubles resumes the priority from the defender as a result of his positive action during the opponent's hesitation. The structure of this action resembles an "active" remise, which means pre-planned and controlled, as opposed to the more "passive" remise which is non-planned, non-controlled and reflexive.

Reprise

The description of the reprise (as the redoublement) is based in the FIE "Regulations of Competition":

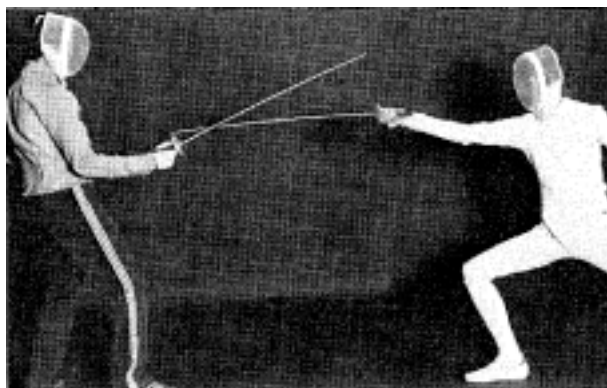
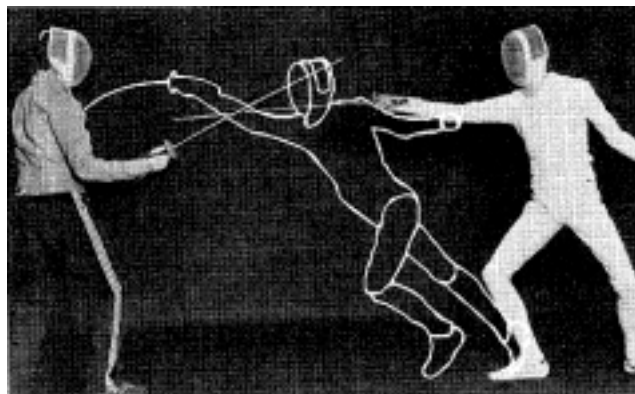
"The reprise d'attaque is a new attack executed immediately after a return to the en garde position" (Art. 13, c).

Note: The return to the en garde position can either be backwards or forwards (some fencers return to en garde with both legs together).

This renewed offensive action has exactly the same characteristics as an attack. Thus, as with all attacks, it must comply with the foil convention, and the fencer must make sure that the situation is appropriate for the reprise to be used.

In practice, the reprise is almost always used with a return to en garde forward during the opponent's retreat.

The Attack is Parried



The Reprise Attack is delivered en Fleche

INDIVIDUAL LESSON IN FOIL

In this chapter, as a conclusion to the foil part of this manual, two examples of individual lessons are provided.

The first one is a general lesson without any particular theme. It is composed of ten exercises. The rhythm, together with the difficulty, increases progressively, to reach a maximum in exercises 7, 8 and 9. Exercise number 10 is used as a warm down.

In order to have a warm up lesson, one can take exercises 1 to 6, 7 a) and b), then 10 of the first example. The coach should be careful to insure that the student works at a slowly increasing rhythm and remains always very supple.

The instructor obviously need not follow exactly all the exercises. He should rather use the example as a canvas upon which to compose his lesson. According to the reactions, the physical shape and the fatigue of the student, the instructor may ask for more or less repetitions or for a faster or slower rhythm.

As far as the special lesson is concerned (the lesson on a theme), the main part of it concentrates on a particular category of actions (or even on one or two actions only). The instructor should however place some warming up exercises before the main part of the lesson, and warm down at the end.

In the example below of a special lesson, only the main part is given. The warming up and warming down exercises may of course include actions related to the theme of the main part.

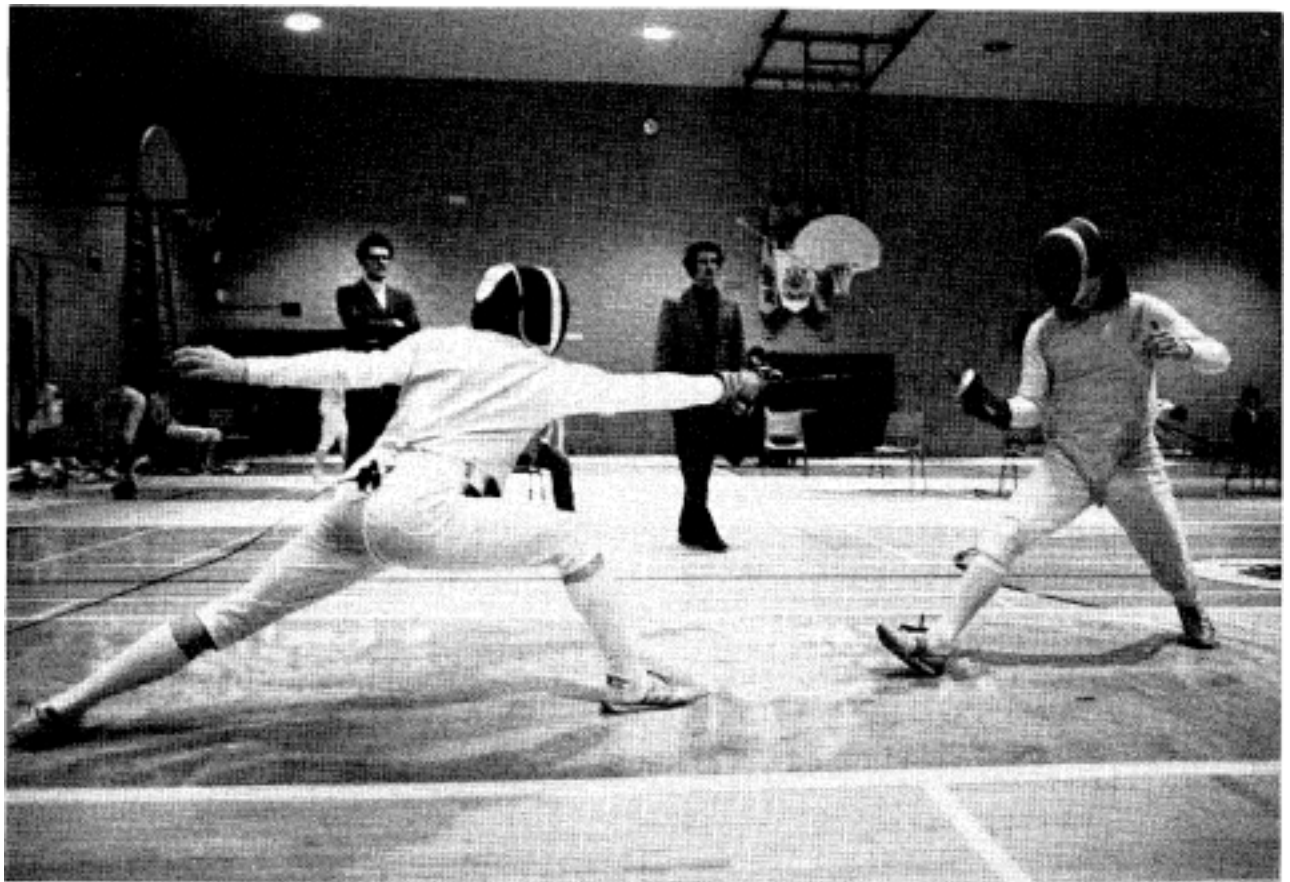
EXAMPLE OF FOIL INDIVIDUAL LESSON - GENERAL

1. Riposte distance. Stretch the arm slowly several times. Same thing from the sixte engagement (on the absence of blade). Same thing with disengage, then with cut-over.
2. Answer the quarte beat, then stretch the arm. Answer the quarte beat, then disengage. Then these two exercises with a step forward.
3. Lunge distance. Engage sixte, direct attack. Engage quarte, direct attack. Engage sixte, disengage (on the coach's reaction) Engage quarte, disengage (on the coach's reaction) Then same exercises with a step and lunge.
4. Parry the instructor's disengage or cut-over in quarte. Riposte direct. Parry the same attack with circular sixte. Riposte underneath.
5. When the instructor drops his point, feint direct. Avoid the quarte or circular sixte parry with cut-over. Lunge distance first, then step and lunge distance.
6. The instructor feints direct and cuts over with step and lunge. The student parries quarte and counter quarte with a step backwards. He ripostes with a disengage
 - a) from immobility
 - b) with a lunge on the instructor's return to en garde
7. The student engages sixte with a step forward.
 - a) he catches the blade, then attacks by one-two with lunge.
 - b) the instructor does not give him the blade, he remains en garde. Progressively the instructor adds other possibilities.
 - c) he counter-attacks with a disengage, the student executes a counter-time by beat quarte and direct attack.
 - d) he attacks with cut-over, the student parries quarte and ripostes direct.
 - e) he attacks with one-two (or cut-over, disengage), the student parries quarte and sixte, then ripostes direct.
 - f) he counter attacks then steps backwards, the student executes a counter-time with beat disengage in fleche.

8. On the instructor's attempts to disengage, the student does a stop-hit by interception in octave.
9. The student attacks with a cut-over with lunge. The instructor parries quarte and ripostes direct. The student counter ripostes by quarte disengage, remaining on the lunge. Then the instructor ripostes by disengage with a lunge. The student parries circular quarte while coming back en garde. He counter-ripostes direct.
10. The student warms down with several opposition after engagements in sixte at a very easy rhythm, remaining a little while on the target. Instructor and student salute each other and shake hands.

SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL FOIL LESSON - THE CUT-OVERS

1. Riposte distance. Engage sixte cut-over. Engage quarte cut-over.
2. Lunge distance. On the instructor's attempt to engage sixte, cut-over. Same thing on his attempt to engage quarte.
3. The instructor attacks, the student parries quarte and riposte by cut-over. First from immobility, the instructor remaining in lunge and parrying back to quarte. Then with a lunge while the instructor comes back en garde.
4. Step and lunge distance. Feint cut-over with the step, then cut-over. The instructor parries either quarte or circular sixte. Same thing with a balestra-lunge.
5. On the instructor's feint direct, cut-over, the student parries quarte and circular quarte with a step backwards, then ripostes by cut-over in the low line with a half-step (or little step).
6. The student engages sixte with a step.
 - a) he gets the blade, he then attacks by change engagement, beat and cut-over in the low line with a lunge.
 - b) the instructor attacks by cut-over on his preparation. The student parries high septime and ripostes direct.
7. The student attacks by disengage, the instructor parries quarte but does not riposte. The student redoubles by cut-over, staying in the lunge.
8. The student is in line. On the instructor's attempt to beat-attack, he executes a derobement by cut-over.
9. The student attacks with beat. The instructor parries quarte and ripostes direct. The student will counter-riposte by prime cut-over to the flank while coming back to en garde forward.
10. The student feints cut-over, disengage underneath with lunge. The instructor parries quarte. Both start from the sixte engagement.
11. The student feints direct, cut-over underneath with balestra lunge. The instructor parries prime.



C.F.A. COACHING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

LEVEL III

EVALUATION - FOIL

NAME _____ CLUB _____
PROVINCE _____ PASSPORT _____
COURSE VENUE _____
COURSE CONDUCTOR _____ DATE _____

- NOTE: 1. Please complete the following written paper, tear out and hand to the Course Conductor at the beginning of the Level III coaches certification course.
2. The marks total 100 and 60% is required for a pass.

EVALUATION FOIL

Answer

1 and 2. In each of the following situations, who has the priority? (Two possible answers: Fencer A, fencer B)

8

- a) Fencer A steps forward with bent arm, then lunges together with arm extension while B stretches his arm.
- b) A extends his arm, then B. Then Fencer A executes a direct attack.
- c) A steps forward with bent arm, while B extends his arm. A executes a direct attack.
- d) Fencer A is in line. Fencer B does an attempt to beat, then lunges. Fencer A avoids the beat with a cut-over. Both hit at the same time.
- e) B is en garde, A makes an attempted beat attack. While A is lunging, B avoids the beat with a disengage and stretches the arm. Both hit at the same time.
- f) Fencer A executes a progressive one-two attack. During the one, fencer B extends the arm. Both fencers hit at the same time.
- g) Fencer A executes a one-two attack, arm extended. During the one, fencer B's blade accidentally meets fencer A's blade without disturbing fencer A's movement. B stretches his arm. Both hit at the same time.
- h) Fencer B is in line and A makes a beat attack on fencer B's forte. B's point does not move off target. During the attack fencer B steps backwards. Both hit at the same time.

Circle the correct answers.

- 3 Both fencers starting from the sixte engagement. a simple disengage can be parried with a: 6
- a) prime
 - b) seconde
 - c) circular sixte
 - d) High sixte
 - e) octave
 - f) septime
4. The following actions are (1) attacks on the blade, (2) prises de fer (place the number (1) or (2) against each): 6
- a) froissement
 - b) croise
 - c) opposition
 - d) pressure
 - e) envelopment
 - f) coule
5. Which of the following actions are (or can be) preparations of attack? 7
- a) parry
 - b) step forward
 - c) feint
 - d) stop-hit
 - e) engagement
 - f) beat
 - g) ducking
6. Describe an exercise with several intentions. What must the instructor do? 14

7. Give two examples of attacks and two examples of ripostes used against an opposite hander. 4

8. Assuming that the fencer A did an attack which fencer B parried in quarte, are the following actions remises (1) or redoublements (2)? Place the number (1) or (2) against each. 5

- a) B does a direct riposte and A hits with a quarte opposition.
- b) B ripostes by disengage and A hits with a sixte opposition.
- c) B does not riposte and A hits with an angulation in B's quarte.
- d) B does not riposte and A hits underneath with a rotation of the hand e) B does not riposte and A hits with a cut-over.

9. Give one example of stop hit with interception, and one example of stop hit with opposition. 6

10. Describe two different ways of defending oneself against counter-time. Give examples. 8

11. The instructor attacks and the student parries quarte. What must the instructor do in order to make the student riposte direct? Indirect? Compound? 9

12. Describe three different ways (concerning distance) to make a student parry and riposte. What must the instructor do? 9

13. The opponent has his arm stretched in the high line. Describe three different prises de fer to hit him. 6

14. You execute a feint direct and the opponent attempts to parry quarte. Give three different ways to finish your compound attack. 6

15. What intensity would you give to a beat in order to:
a) fix the opponent's hand 6

b) get a defensive reaction

c) execute a straight attack.

TOTAL MARKS	100
PASS	60