

PART III
SABRE

Objectives
Syllabus
Techniques and Coaching
Evaluation

SABRE OBJECTIVES

1. During the Level 3 sabre course the coach will complete the learning and practice of:
 - The Individual Lesson
 - Sabre Terminology

2. Having read, assimilated and practiced the contents of this sabre 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 second triangle in defense with its associated ripostes.
 - revised counter attacks and counter time covered in Level 2 and dealt with the
 - subject more fully.
 - revised sabre distance and classified attacks.

3. The coach will learn new techniques to complete the technical syllabus for sabre.
They are grouped as follows:
 - Open eyes attacks
 - Renewed attacks
 - Attacks on the preparation
 - The line and derobement

SABRE SYLLABUS

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Explanation of the Distance Terms used in this Section

All these terms concern the situation when the instructor is in immobility. (i.e., is not leaning nor stepping, forwards or backwards)

Short distance:

the distance between the student and the instructor such that the student may make a direct cut on the head without leaning forward with the body.

Middle-short distance:

such that the student can score a direct hit to the head with a step forward or can hit the forearm in immobility.

Middle distance:

such that the student can score a hit on the head by lunging or on the forearm by stepping forward.

Middle-long distance:

such that the student can score a direct hit on the head by fleche or on the forearm by half lunging.

Long distance:

such that the student must step and lunge in order to score a direct hit on the head, or must lunge in order to hit the forearm.

Very long distance:

such that the student needs at least a step-fleche to reach the head with a direct hit, or a step and lunge to reach the forearm.

General Observations concerning the Individual Lesson in Sabre

- The exercises and examples in this section of the manual concern two right handed fencers.
- The number of repetitions for each exercise depends on the level of the pupil (whether he is a beginner or advanced) and the goal of the lesson (whether it is to teach new movements, to rehearse known movements, to train tactics and timing, etc.). The number of repetitions chosen therefore depends entirely upon the instructor and upon what he wants to achieve. Usually, the less advanced student needs a larger number of repetitions in easy conditions. Those who are more advanced might be moved from one exercise to another faster and with a change of conditions. Nevertheless, the recommended minimum for all levels is six to seven repetitions per exercise.
- The principle of every individual lesson should be:
 1. First precision - then speed
 2. First easy - then more difficult
 3. First slowly - then fast
 4. First simple - then compound

OFFENCE

The Classification of Attacks

All offensive actions may be classified according to the way they are executed and the tactical purpose they serve, in the following ways:

- A. According to the number of blade movements as:
- simple attacks, or
 - compound attacks

Note: Both simple and compound attacks are described in the Level 2 Manual.

- B. According to the tactical concept as:
- real attacks, or
 - false attacks

Note: Real attacks are all attacks (simple or compound) initiated with the intention of scoring a hit on the opponent on their completion.

False attacks are those which are initiated in order to recognize the opponent's reactions and intention, to prepare and find the timing for a real attack, to gain terrain, to provoke the opponent to a reflexive, predictable reaction or to achieve any other tactical goal.

- C. According to the way the attack is executed as:
- first intention, or
 - second intention

Note: First intention attacks are those in which the attacker tries to hit his opponent with a pre-planned, real, simple or compound action.

Second intention attacks are those which are initiated with a false attack in order to provoke the opponent into reacting in a predicted way so as to score a hit with a prepared counter-reaction.

The second intention attacks can be finished with:

- parry and counter-ripostes, when the attacker expects a parry and direct riposte from his opponent
- remise, reprise or redoublement of the attack, when the attacker expects a parry and compound riposte from the opponent
- counter-time parry-riposte, when the attacker expects a stop-hit or direct counter attack from the opponent.

- D. According to the final movement of the attack as:
- an attack with a pre-planned final movement, or
 - an "open eyes" attack

Note: Pre-planned attacks are those which are executed from beginning to end according to the original idea of the attacker and regardless of the opponent's predicted or unpredicted reaction.

"Open eyes" attacks are those in which the attacker does not know where he is going to finish his action at the initial stage and the final movements are selected according to the opponent's reactions.

- E. According to a change of decision during the attack as:
- without a change of decision
 - with a change of decision

Note: Attacks without a change of decision are those which are executed from beginning to end according to the original plan, regardless of the reaction from the opponent.

Attacks with a change of decision are those where the attacker starts a pre-planned attack and reacts automatically (changes his plan) to accommodate to the opponent's unpredicted and undesired movement. A typical example of such an action is a pre-planned flank-head-flank real attack predicting the opponent's attempt to parry the final movement in quinte. Instead of this the opponent reacts with a stop cut on the hand during the first feint. The attacker automatically changes his original plan and reacts with a counter-time tierce parry-riposte.

COMPOUND ATTACKS

The definition of the compound attack may be found in the Level 2 Manual. Recall that any attack comprising two or more blade movements or two or more periods of time is called a compound attack. In other words a compound attack must include one or more feints. Additionally, compound attacks may be subdivided into those which include:

- two blade movements
- three blade movements
- many blade movements

Compound Attacks with Two Blade Movements:

These attacks consist of two blade movements, the first of which is a feint to provoke a defensive reaction from the opponent, the second is the deception (disengagement) of that defense. The Level 2 Manual described four such actions:

- head-flank
- head-head
- cheek-chest
- flank-head

To complete the list of those attacks we shall describe now the following possible combinations:

- head-chest
- chest-flank
- chest-head

Hand Positions

Head feint:

the arm and blade extending with cutting edge directed towards the head. Hand in semi-supination externally on the level of the shoulder or a little below. The point directed towards the head up to about 10 cm above the mask.

Flank feint:

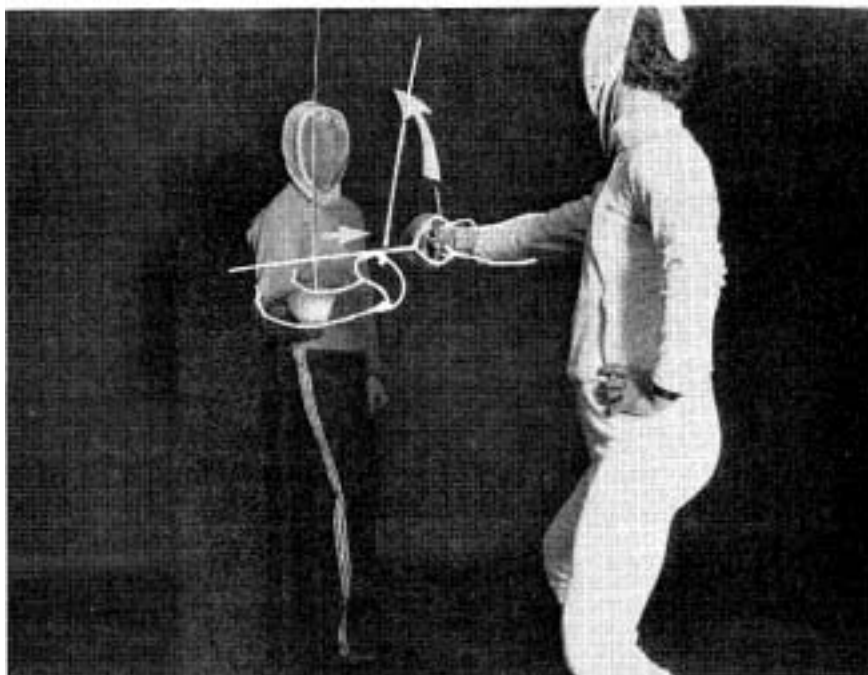
The arm and blade extending with cutting edge directed towards the flank. Blade in horizontal position, the hand in pronation (nails down), externally, below the armed shoulder. Point directed towards the flank or arm up to about 10-15 cm above the target.

Chest Feint:

the arm and blade extending with cutting edge directed towards the chest. Blade in horizontal position, the hand in supination (nails up), on the level of the shoulder or a little below. The point directed towards the chest up to 10-15 cm above the target.

Head-Chest

This action is first started by extending the sword arm with a feint at head. The opponent starts the upward action of sword arm and blade to form a parry and at the same time the attacking blade is rotated around the parry and the cut is delivered to the chest.



Compound Attack Chest Flank (See (b) below)

Chest-flank

Two examples of execution of this action are as follows:

- a) The attacker executes a feint at chest, which is uncovered due to the defender's position in tierce. The parry is drawn to quarte and at the same time the attacking blade is rotating UNDER the opponent's guard and the cut is delivered to the opponent's arm or flank.
- b) The beginning of the action is the same as above, but as the opponent makes his defending movement in quarte, the attacking blade is rotated OVER the point of the opponent's blade and the cut is delivered to the arm or flank.

Note: Compound two and three movements attacks are described on the assumption that the opponent's defensive reaction is based on tierce - quarte - quinte parries. Some of the described attacks will be executed differently if the reaction is based on the second triangle (seconde - prime - quinte) or if the defender mixes his parries. For example, in the attack "chest - flank" variant "a" can only be executed upon reaction to quarte after chest feint. If the opponent reacts to prime instead, deception under his guard will be impossible.

Chest-head

An example of this is as follows:

The feint at chest is executed the same way as in the chest-flank attack in order to draw the opponent's defence to quarte. In the final deception the attacking blade is rotated over to deliver the cut to the uncovered head.

THREE MOVEMENT ATTACKS

In the same way as two movement attacks, attacks with three movements are taught as pre-planned, first intention, real attacks. During the lesson the fencer must know beforehand where he is going to finish his attack and how the instructor is going to react. It is important not to add any additional "surprise" movements nor parries during the first period of teaching, when the student is not yet completely familiar with the structure of the attack and doesn't "feel" precisely the position of his hand while executing that action. Until he reaches this level, a method of repetition in very easy conditions and strict form should be employed.

The following progression is recommended in footwork:

step
lunge
step-lunge
fleche
step-fleche
balestra-lunge
balestra-fleche

All these stages of progression can be done from:

- 1) Immobility: when the instructor and student are not moving before the beginning of the action,
- 2) Mobility: when the student is asked to keep fencing distance from the instructor and starts the action on the instructor's signal, and
- 3) Mobility with the student's own timing, i.e., he decides on his own, without a signal from the instructor, when to begin the attack.

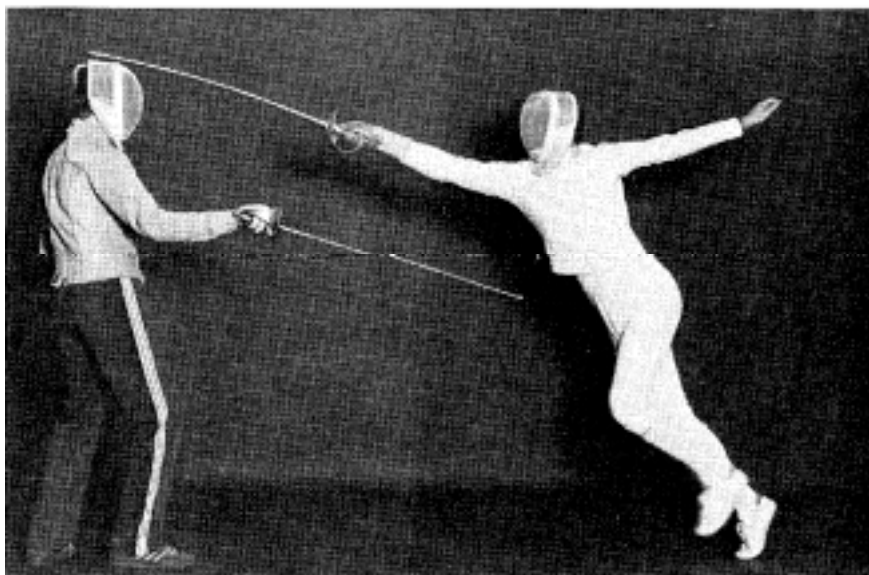
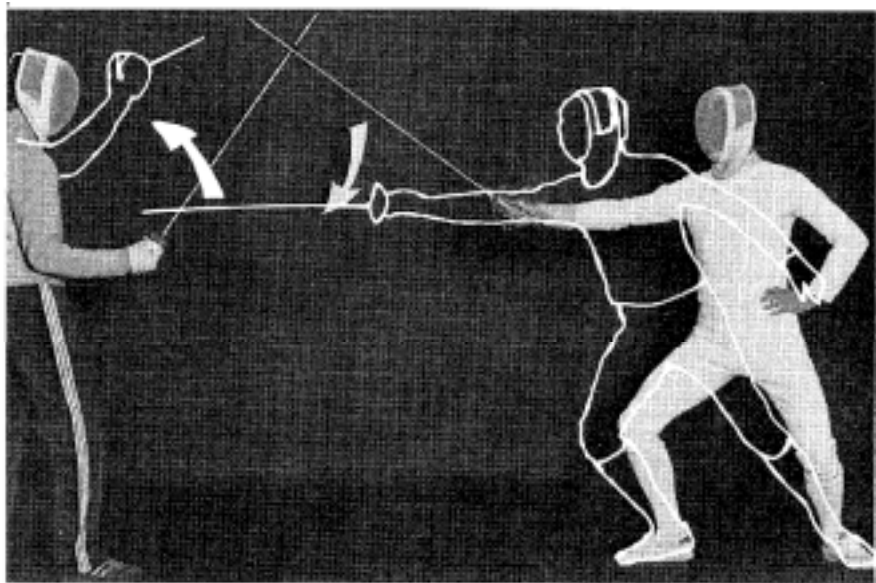
The last stage is the most difficult, most developed stage of training any offensive action. Before arriving at this stage the student must be very confident of its technical structure and comfortable with his footwork.

The following are examples of three movements attacks:

1. Head-flank-head
head-flank-chest
head-chest-flank
head-chest-head
2. Flank-head-flank
flank-head-chest
flank-chest-flank
flank-chest-head
3. chest-head-chest
chest-head-flank
chest-flank-chest
chest-flank-head

It is important for a fencer to be proficient in three movement attacks, which are amongst the most often used offensive actions. It is also important for an instructor to know how to teach these attacks, step-by-step, to achieve smoothness and efficiency in his student. This manual therefore gives a very detailed description of the technique, foot-work and methodology of teaching one, chosen, three movement attack "head-flank-head". Similar steps can be applied in teaching all other three movement attacks.

The fencer on the right makes a feint head - flank ...



... and finishes the attack with a fleche at head.

Head-flank-head

Hand technique: The attack is initiated by the smooth extension of the sword arm (1st feint) towards the opponent's head. The hand is moving forward in a horizontal line, at hip level, parallel to the floor. It is recommended that the threat be directed towards the side of the opponent's mask: a right hander on the right side, left hander, on the left. (NB: some fencing schools recommend a feint towards the middle of the mask, some completely outside).

The second movement (second feint) is executed with the fingers and with a slight turn of the wrist, which moves the cutting edge of the sabre over the defending movement to quinte towards the opponent's flank. The arm should already be straight, and no vertical nor horizontal movement of the hand should be allowed during the two feints. The cutting edge of the attacker should be horizontal, ten to fifteen centimetres from the target.

The third and final movement, culminating with the cut on the head, is executed with the same small movement of the wrist and fingers as described above, which should bring the attacking blade over the opponent's second defending movement to tierce.

Foot-hand coordination

Step forward: This is very useful as an exercise during an individual lesson, with both beginners and intermediate fencers, to gain proper hand-foot coordination. The step should coincide with the third hand movement (flank-head) while the two first movements should be done in immobility.

Lunge: it is recommended to teach intermediate and advanced students to start the lunge at the beginning of the second movement (feint at flank) and to complete it with the hit on the head. The hit should be delivered BEFORE, or no later than, the front foot lands on the floor.

Fleche: the fencer should start losing his balance during the first feint and complete the action (i.e., scores a hit on the head) BEFORE, or no later than, his back foot lands on the floor.

Step-lunge and step-fleche: the first feint should be done together with the step; the rest of the action as described above.

The Individual Lesson

The following steps and methodology are recommended when teaching headflank-head (or any other one-two-three attack).

1. distance short: the instructor moves his hand slowly from tierce to quinte and back to tierce, student keeps his arm extended and hits the instructor on the flank and head, which ever target is open at the moment.
2. the same hits on head, flank and head after a step forward.
3. distance still short: student and instructor in the tierce position. The student slowly makes a feint at head, the instructor reacts to quinte and then to tierce, and the student subsequently deceives the instructor's movements and scores a hit on the head.
4. the same with a step forward (the step to start with the last deception).
5. lunge distance: the same exercise as No. 3, but with the lunge beginning with the third hand movement (deception from flank to head).
6. the same as above, but this time the lunge is initiated immediately after the first feint at head, together with the feint at flank.
7. the same as above, but with the lunge beginning during the first feint at head (for more advanced students). To facilitate this exercise and to make the lunge last longer so as to allow time for all three movements, the instructor should ask the student to put his balance slightly on the rear leg. The hit must still be scored before or together with the front foot landing on the floor.
8. fleche distance: the action with fleche is executed similarly to the one with lunge - timing can be followed as described above which will include:
 - a) fleche after the final deception
 - b) fleche starts during the final deception
 - c) fleche starts during the first deception, after the feint at head
 - d) fleche starts together with the first feint at head (for more advanced students)The hit should be scored before or together with the rear foot landing on the floor.
9. Step lunge and step fleche: distance long or very long; in both cases the first feint is initiated by the extension of the sword arm before or together with the step forward. There are the following differences among fencing masters concerning at which point of the step the feint should be initiated:
 - before the step forward starts
 - together with the first movement of the front leg
 - together with the first movement of the back leg.

For practical reasons (e.g., the attacking blade is not exposed too early to a beat attack from the opponent) it is recommended to start the feint together with the back leg movement. All three movements can, however, be exercised to give the student a flexibility in hand-leg coordination.

10. After the initial step forward with the feint at head, the rest of the attack is executed the same as described in points 8 a, b, c, d, above.

Coaching Points

- The instructor must remember that in the step-fleche actions the student is in fact doing a step and a half and, therefore, it is the half step following the initial step forward which starts the hand action after the feint to head,
- The instructor must keep correct distance from the student when teaching three movement attacks. Too close a distance will make the student bend his arm before the final cut. Too long a distance will make the student lean forwards with the body when finishing with the lunge, or start "running" after the instructor when finishing with the fleche.
- When teaching one-two-three attacks the instructor must constantly remember that the final cut, the hit, must be delivered before or at least together with the leading foot (attack by lunge) or the back foot (attack by fleche) landing on the floor.
- The instructor should react with an appropriate parry to every feint during an individual lesson, to make sure that each feint is made visibly, with a proper depth and with a proper horizontal or vertical blade position. The student should know, however, that in a sabre bout the parry is often drawn not to the first but only to the second feint on a one-two-three attack.
- There are also pre-planned real attacks by first intention with more than three movements - for example, attacks with four movements. These attacks should, however, be taught only to experienced fencers, who have no problems with perfect and small disengagements both under and over the opponent's blade. At the stage of the beginner or intermediate fencer, first two movement attacks and then three movement attacks are recommended.

OPEN EYES ATTACKS

The so called "open eyes" attack, with an unknown ending, is quite common amongst competitive sabre fencers. In these attacks, fencers try to gain terrain and come close enough to the opponent to provoke him into a defensive action or counter-offensive, and as soon as this reaction is displayed the attacker finishes his offensive action on whatever target is opening at that moment. These attacks are very often combined with counter time and second intention parries.

One of the variation of the "open eyes" attack is the so called "running attack", where the attacker is running towards his opponent with the sword arm slightly bent and usually with a number of half feints. The attacker is then "looking" either for the opponent's stop cut to finish his movement at the same time and to profit by the "priority of attack" rule or if the opponent starts some defending movements, to finish his action with an appropriate disengagement to get a clear, single hit on his opponent.

It must be clearly understood, however, that running on the piste is not an attack; the true attack starts at the moment when the "runner" begins to extend his sword arm and blade towards his opponent's target, continues as long as he is extending his arm in this way and terminates when his arm is completely extended. The "run" is only a preparation of attack and should be so treated in the learning process.

"Open eyes" attacks, in their strict form, should be widely incorporated in individual lessons, especially with intermediate and advanced fencers. The exercises are extremely useful to train fencers in compound, choice reaction and they play an important role in preparing fencers to handle unexpected, unpredicted situations in a fencing bout.

Coaching Points

Exercises with "open eyes" are usually started with a step forward and the hit is preceded by:

-another step forward

- lunge
- fleche
- step-fleche, etc. - depending on the distance and the instructor's reaction.

The exercise must be very clearly described by the instructor. The student must know WHAT are the possibilities and what kind of reactions he is supposed to expect. In other words - he must know what choices he has in order to react correctly to each.

Students must be trained "to see" what is the correct reaction rather than to anticipate and guess.

The instructor's movements must be relatively big and slow. Many inexperienced instructors react with small, fast movements "as it is in a real sabre bout", and show irritation when their students finish their attacks imprecisely or the wrong way. Such a practice can only lead to insecurity of the attack, and will cause the fencer to hesitate when it comes to real combat.

The instructor may move to the next exercise, or add one more choice, only when the student is able to react properly to the given choices every time.

Individual lesson

Stage 1.

Short distance, both student and instructor in tierce, choose between two easy possibilities; the student starts a step forward with his sword arm extending with the feint at head;

Choice one:

- if there is no reaction from the instructor he makes another step forward and finishes his hand movement with head-cut

Choice two:

- for the instructor's defending movement to quinte, the student finishes his second step with a disengagement and the hit on the flank.

Stage 2.

The same exercise should be repeated with step-lunge, step-fleche, balestra-lunge, etc.

Stage 3.

The same beginning as in Stage 1.

Choice one:

- for the instructor's counter attacking stop-hit towards the head, the student finishes his action without hesitation profiting from his priority of the attack.

Choice two:

- for the instructor's attempt to find the blade in quarte, the student finishes with a disengagement on the flank

Stage 4.

Development of foot-work as in Stage 2.

Stage 5.

When the student does not make any mistakes in the above exercises and can do them with moderate speed and continuous forward movement, one more choice may be added. Example: short distance, both instructor and student in tierce. The student makes the step forward with sword arm extending with a feint at flank;

Stage 6.

Choice one:

- for the reaction to seconde from the instructor, the student finishes with the hit on the head,

Choice two:

- for the counter attack from the instructor on the head, the student finishes direct on the flank.

Choice three:

- for the counter attack from the instructor on the arm, the student makes a tierce parry and ripostes on the head.

Stage 7:

Foot work variations as in Stage 2.

Coaching Points

- each action should begin VERY SLOWLY
- a pause between the step forward and the reaction for the choice is recommended during the initial stage of exercise, until the student does not make a mistake in reaction.
- only when the structure of the exercise is perfected in slow motion with a pause, can the whole action be put into one, smooth "open eyes" attack with acceleration on its last movement.

RENEWED ATTACKS

Renewed attacks are new offensive actions immediately following an attack which has failed to score, because it has been parried or completely avoided.

According to the FIE Regulations for sabre (and foil) once an attack has been parried or completely avoided the attacker has lost the priority of attack. A renewal of attack can therefore only be successful if the defender does not make a riposte, loses the time by delaying his riposte or makes a compound riposte.

There are three types of renewed attacks

1. the remise
2. the redoublement
3. the reprise

The remise: can be done as an offensive or counter-offensive action executed without returning to the en garde position after the opponent's parry. Technically it can be executed as a second intention action (for example, if the attacker knows that the opponent has the habit of making compound ripostes) or instinctively, when the fencer reacts instinctively on the delayed riposte with an immediate remise.

Examples:

1. Fencer A: makes an attack on the chest
Fencer B: parries quarte, but does not make riposte and moves his hand back to tierce, with a step forward;
Fencer A: makes a remise on the chest with the point or remise with a head cut,
2. Fencer A: Attacks with the flank cut:
Fencer B: parries tierce and moves forward making a compound riposte:
Fencer A: makes a remise on the hand in the same line (outside), with the hit arriving immediately as the parry is released.
3. Fencer A: Attacks on the head;
Fencer B: makes a quinte parry, but delays his riposte by lowering his sword arm first; Fencer A: makes an immediate remise on the head.



Remise as blade is released



Remise - Attack head which is parried

Coaching Points

- The blade movement during a remise should only be done with fingers and wrist movement, without bending the sword arm.
- The remise should be taught with a soft, delicate hit, especially in the beginning stages of teaching it, to achieve accuracy and control of the blade.
- Similarly to the exercises with a stop-hit (see Level II) it is recommended to practice the remise, immediately followed by parry and riposte. Even if the remise is in time it is always wise to take the safety precaution of parrying the continuation of the riposte.
- As is usual, all the exercises should be first done in slow motion, before the instructor speeds them up.

The Individual Lesson

Action: remise on the hand after tierce parry.

Tactical use: on the opponent who:

- usually executes a compound riposte;
- makes the riposte with a bent and lifted arm;
- delays his riposte by moving his body before the arm.

1. Short distance: the instructor and student in tierce position. The student makes several cuts to flank into the closed line, followed by the immediate remise outside the guard, keeping the sword arm straight. The instructor must remember to expose his sword arm visibly.
2. Short distance: the same exercise but this time the student takes a step back after the remise. The instructor should step forward without a riposte, exposing his arm.
3. Middle distance: the same exercise, but the student makes the attack with flank-cut with lunge. After the remise - come back to en garde.
4. Middle distance: the same as No. 3, but the remise is followed by quinte parry and riposte (to the flank or head). The instructor should "finish" his riposte with a step forward and cut on the head.
5. The same as No. 3, but the remise is followed by a tierce parry and riposte (to the head or flank). The instructor "finishes" his riposte on the flank and opens the area where he wants the student to hit.

The Reprise and Redoublement

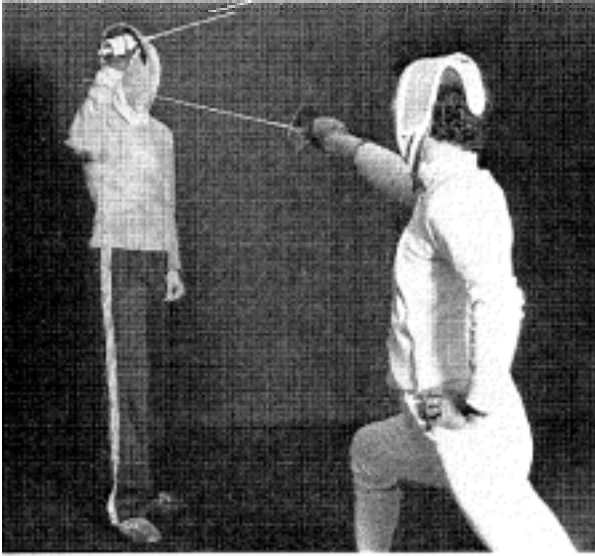
According to the FIE "Regulations of Competition", the redoublement is a new action, either simple or compound, made on an opponent who has parried without riposting or who has merely avoided the first action by retiring or by displacing the target.

Most of the European fencing schools follow this definition specifying the redoublement as "an action similar to the remise, except that instead of being made in the same line as the original movement it includes some simple or compound blade movements". The French school, however, described the redoublement differently as "another offensive action executed immediately after the first action and preceded by a return to the en garde position".

A similar problem of practical definition exists with "reprise d'attaque". The "Regulations of Competition" describe it as "new attack executed immediately after a return to the en garde position", which by most of the European fencing schools is understood as another offensive action made after a return to the en garde either forward or backward. The French school describes the reprise differently as an "offensive or counter offensive action executed in any other way than direct, in the same or different line than the one of the opponent's parry, WITHOUT first returning to an en garde position".

There are also other differences. For example, the Hungarian sabre school relates the reprise and redoublement to the leg movements only.

This section will follow the official definition from the FIE "Regulations of Competition", but the reader should know that the other points of view also exist.



Redouble at swordarm. _____ The attack is parried.

Redoublement

Examples:

1. Fencer A: makes an attack with a cut to the chest
Fencer B: makes a quarte parry but delays his riposte with the intention of executing a compound riposte.
Fencer A: makes the redoublement on the outside forearm
2. Fencer A: makes an attack on the flank
Fencer B: parries tierce but instead of initiating the riposte by extending the arm, moves his body first keeping his position in tierce
Fencer A: makes the redoublement with point to the chest, without returning to en garde.

Reprise

Examples:

1. Fencer A: makes an attack on the flank and immediately comes back to en garde
Fencer B: parries tierce and starts a compound riposte with a bent arm
Fencer A: makes the reprise d'attaque with an immediate, direct fleche to the head.
2. Fencer A: makes an attack on the hand with lunge on the inside line
Fencer B: defends with distance by stepping back
Fencer A: makes the reprise d'attaque by coming forward to en garde followed by a direct fleche to the head.

Coaching Points

- All renewed actions in sabre can be done either with a cut or with the point.
- Slow motion is strongly recommended for the rehearsal of the movements and as a teaching method.
- The instructor should signal very clearly to the student (e.g., by opening the appropriate target) when and where he wants him to do the redoublement or reprise d'attaque.
- When training the student in renewed attacks the instructor should not confuse the student with too fast a riposte. This will allow the redoublement or reprise d'attaque to arrive clearly in good time.

The Individual lesson

1. At short distance, the instructor in quarte, the student in the tierce position. The student makes several cuts on the flank followed immediately with a redoublement on the inside arm. Each time the instructor parries tierce but does not riposte.
2. The same from middle distance with a lunge. The student makes a redoublement on the inside forearm which this time is followed by a quarte parry and riposte. The instructor parries tierce, makes a step forward with no riposte and, after receiving the cut on the arm, finishes the riposte on the chest.
3. The same as pt. 2, but this time the redoublement is done with the point to the chest. Quarte parry follows.
4. The same as No. 2, but this time the redoublement is done with a cut to the head. Quarte parry follows.
5. At the same distance, the student makes an attack on the chest, the instructor steps back with the quarte parry but does not make a riposte. The student comes forward to en garde and makes his reprise d'attaque with another lunge and a cut on the head.
6. At long distance, the student makes a step-lunge attack to the flank, which is parried in tierce by the instructor, who then moves forward with a bent arm. The student comes back to the en garde and makes the reprise d'attaque by fleche direct on the head.

PREPARATIONS OF THE ATTACK

Preparations of the attack includes all the different manoeuvres (foot-work, movements of the sword arm and blade and combinations of the above) which permit the fencer to create the situation for a successful offensive action.

The several forms of preparation of the attack can be divided as follows:

- a. preparations made by fencer's movements on the piste/foot work/which include:
 - all kinds of steps (forwards and backwards),
 - running,
 - jumps, balestra.
- b. preparations made by movements of the sword arm and blade which include:
 - attacks on the blade,
 - prise de fer (practically not used in sabre),
 - feints direct, indirect and compound,
 - invitations.
- c. combination of foot, sword arm and blade movements, for example:
 - beat attack with balestra,
 - running attack with half feints,
 - invitation with a step forward, etc.

In sabre the fencers rarely remain within a distance short enough to permit a simple attack with lunge and fleche. Therefore, a variety of foot-hand movements is necessary to gain distance so as to execute a successful attack.

The most common preparations in sabre are those which combine both foot and sword arm/blade movements, for example:

- steps with a single feint,
- steps with half-feints,
- steps with compound feints,
- steps with invitations,
- all above combinations with balestra,
- all above combinations with a half-step or half-lunge,
- running on the piste with half-feints,
- sudden change of rhythm during a combination of steps, half-steps, balestra, etc. in one action.

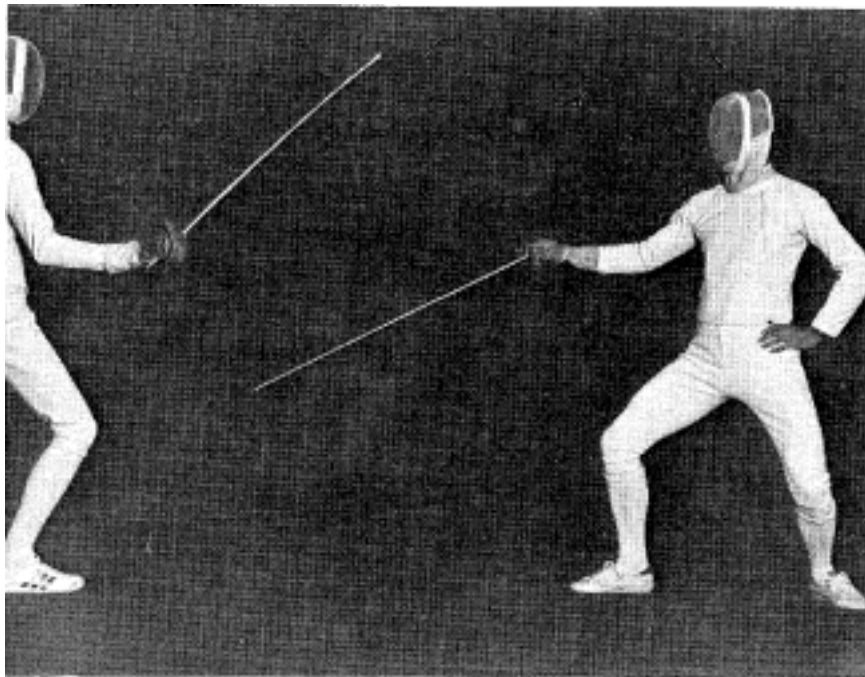
The half feint is a progressive movement of the sword arm which does not reach full extension, thus presenting a feint which is not fully perceived as a real threat by the opponent. These movements are widely used in sabre for the purpose of an offensive or counter offensive action.

The Invitation is a lateral or vertical movement of the sword arm or blade so as to open a part of the target in order to draw the opponent's attack. An invitation is usually followed by a prepared offensive or counter offensive action.

Preparations on the Blade includes:

- attacks on the blade,
- prises de fer

In modern sabre, attacks on the blade are limited to beat attacks and pressure with engagements.



An Invitation in Seconde

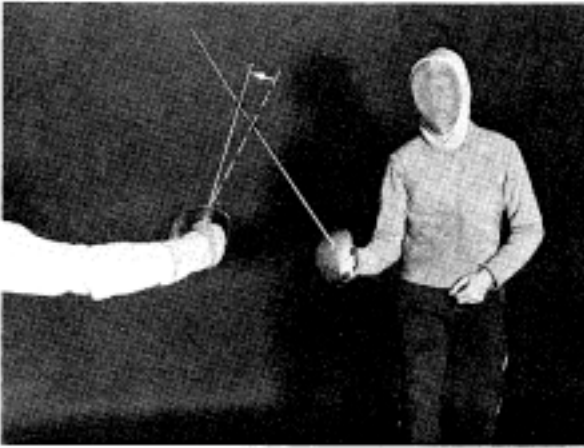
Beat attack

The beat is the most common and one of the most effective attacks on the blade used in modern sabre combat. The purpose of the beat can be:

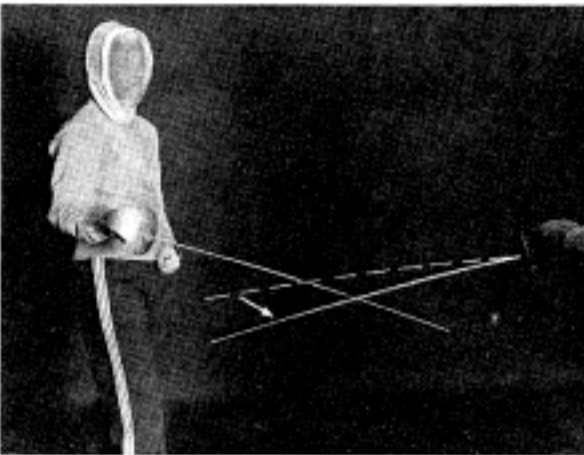
- to move the opponent's blade aside,
- to provoke him to a defensive reaction,
- to gain "the right of way" in the eyes of the President de Jury.

The beat should be made on the upper or middle half (foible) of the opponent's blade. In accordance with the FIE "Regulations of Competition", a beat executed on the forte, or close to the guard, is regarded as the opponent's parry, and should therefore be avoided. After the beat, a direct or compound attack may follow. The beat is done with a finger movement and with a flexing of the wrist, but without lateral movement of the arm.

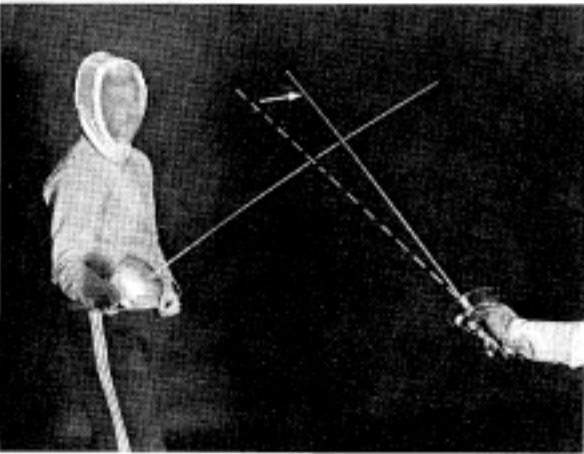
The following beat attacks are in common use:



- a. the beat in quarte is done with the front edge, inner flat, or back edge of the blade with a slight pronation of the hand



- b. the beat in seconde is done with front edge of the blade, when the opponent's blade is in a low line



- c. the beat in tierce, or counter tierce is done with the outer flat side or front edge of the blade with a slight pronation (of the hand).

- d. the beat in quinte is done with front edge of the blade when the opponent's blade is in a high line

The most common direct targets after a beat are:

after quarte beat: hand, cheek, head

after tierce beat: head, hand, flank

after seconde beat: hand, cheek, head

after quinte beat: flank, hand

Coaching Points

- Exercises with beat attacks start with a series of beats and light hits on one of the direct targets.
- The beat should be firm, crisp, and dry; and until this is achieved the exercise should be continued at short distance
- The attacking blade should bounce from the attacked blade like a ping-pong ball from the table and continue, if the attack is direct, along the shortest path to the target, without additional arm or blade movements
- When the movement is technically correct in immobility the following foot work should be added:
 - beat plus step forward,
 - beat plus lunge,
 - beat plus fleche,
 - beat with step-lunge (beat on the rear foot),
 - step forward plus beat with fleche, etc.

The instructor should then leave the student free to choose the best moment of the attack , i.e., when timing and distance are appropriate to the chosen action. He can say for example:

"Keep the distance, but from time to time, instead of going back when I step forward, make a quarte beat attack with fleche to the head..."

The Engagement with pressure is rarely used as an attack on the blade in sabre. During the engagement, the attacker's blade remains longer in contact with the attacked blade than in the case of the beat, so the opponent has more time to make a counter-reaction. The engagement can however be used as a preparation of the real attack, to see the opponent's reaction, or to make a false attack or second intention attack.

ATTACKS ON THE PREPARATION

Attacks on the preparation are offensive actions initiated into any preparational movements of the opponent. According to the FIE "Regulations of Competition" only the fencer who initiates the offensive action "by extending the arm and continuously threatening the valid target of the opponent", whether with the cutting edge or the point, gains the priority of the attack.

Modern sabre fencing requires great mobility and speed, which in turn, makes the fencers keep long distance from each other during the bout. Therefore the fencers are forced to make a number of different manoeuvres (preparations) on the piste in order to gain distance for a successful final attack. During these preparational movements the fencers are vulnerable to any kind of offensive action - if those actions come to them as a surprise.

For those reasons the attacks on preparation are amongst the most effective actions in sabre. They can be done as:

- direct attacks
- compound attacks
- attacks on the blade

The Direct attack on the preparation: This attack can be initiated into any preparational movement of the opponent, but before the start of his final offensive movement.

Example

Fencer A: starts a pre-planned compound attack head-flank-head, with step-lunge, expecting the opponent to retire and to react defensively;

Fencer B: makes a direct fleche to the head into the first preparational hand and leg movement, catching his opponent by surprise half way through his preparation.

If the direct attack on the preparation is executed in good time, the fencer is usually caught with his arm still not fully extended, due to the preparation.

Compound attacks on Preparation: The most common example of a compound attack on the preparation is the offensive feint into the preparation. This type of attack is mostly used against those fencers who tend to use second intention in order to provoke their opponent to a direct attack on their preparation, to which they have a prepared defence.

Example

Fencer A: starts the second intention attack by a step with an invitation in seconde (blade movement from tierce to seconde);

Fencer B: "reads" this intention and instead of doing a direct attack on the preparation to the head (as intended by A). makes a feint of attack on the preparation by fleche;

Fencer A: reacts to quite expecting the direct action;

Fencer B: finishes his fleche with a disengagement to the flank (and scores the hit).

The Attack on the Blade on the Preparation: This is also a very common sabre action in which the fencer takes away the right of the attack from his opponent by doing a beat on his blade, followed by a direct, indirect or compound offensive action, during any of the opponent's preparational or attacking movements.

Example

Fencer A: starts his attack with a step forward and feint to the head, expecting a backward defending reaction from the opponent;

Fencer B: makes a quarte beat attack with fleche on the exposed blade with a direct hit to the head.

The most common beat attacks on the preparations are the quarte, and counter-tierce.

The Individual Lesson

The following sequence is recommended in teaching the attacks on a preparation in an individual lesson:

1. Direct attacks on the preparation with fleche or lunge
 2. Compound attacks on the preparation with a fleche or lunge
 3. Attacks on the blade with a fleche or lunge.
1. Long distance, the instructor and the student in tierce. The instructor makes a step forward without extension of the sword arm. As the instructor's front foot moves forward to initiate the step - the student makes a direct fleche to the head.
 2. The same distance and hand position. The instructor and the student in mobility. Each time the instructor makes a step forward preceded by an extension of the sword arm, the student moves back keeping distance. If the instructor moves forwards keeping the arm bent, the student makes a direct fleche on the head.
 3. Long distance, the student in tierce position, the instructor in line. The instructor makes a step forward withdrawing the hand in the line to the tierce position. At the moment the instructor is removing his arm, the student makes a direct fleche to the head.
 4. Compound attack on the preparation: long distance, the instructor and the student in tierce. The instructor makes a step forward with a seconde invitation. In the same moment the student starts a fleche with feint at head immediately followed by a disengagement to the flank. The instructor reacts to quinte.
 5. The same exercise as No. 4, but with mobility. The instructor might do several steps forward and backward, changing the blade position from tierce to seconde and back. The student keep the distance and chooses the right moment (when the instructor starts a step forward with the simultaneous invitation in seconde) and makes the head-flank fleche. The instructor reacts to quinte again and lets the cut arrive to the flank.
 6. Beat attack on preparation: long distance, both in tierce. The instructor makes a step forward with a feint at head and complete extension of the sword arm. The student makes a quarte beat and fleche to the head. The fleche should be started at the end of the instructor's step forward.
 7. Repeat exercise No. 6 with mobility. The student keeps distance from the instructor, and chooses the moment to make the beat with a fleche to the head. The instructor in this case should 'begin' his attack several times to create the condition for the beat attack.

Coaching points

- All the attacks on the preparation **MUST** start with a full extension of the sword arm before the body moves forward. The instructor should not tolerate any hesitations or half-extensions.
- Speed and surprise are essential in attacks on the preparation, therefore, it is recommended to exercise those actions with moderate speed, increasing to high speed (the exact structure of the movement should be, of course, well known to the student for this speed exercise).

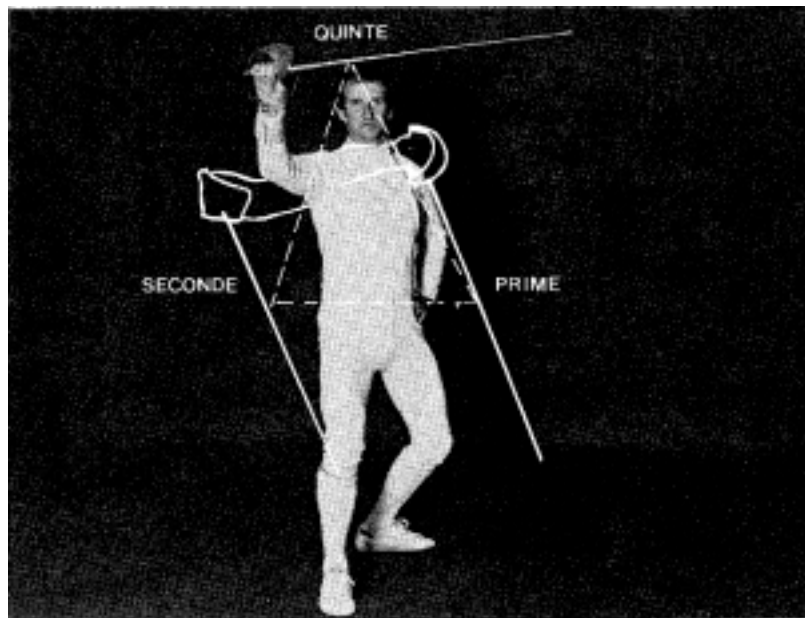
DEFENCE

The three basic sabre parries tierce, quarte and quinte which are the basis of the first defensive triangle have already been described in the Level II manual.

In this manual is described the second defensive triangle, which comprises the parries of prime (1) seconde (2) and quinte (5).

The Quinte parry, which defends against a head cut, is the one which is common to both triangles.

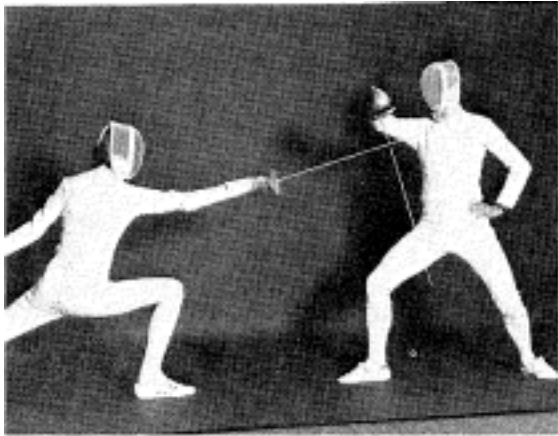
Until recently, in some modern fencing schools of sabre (Hungary, Poland, USSR) the prime parry was considered as "nice to know" but not necessarily "need to know". Thus, many fencing masters in those countries concentrated mainly on the first defensive triangle, which is the basis of the classic Hungarian sabre school. The reason for this was the fact that the seconde parry, defending against low lateral and vertical cuts on the flank, was replaced, if necessary, by a lower tierce parry. Prime, defending against vertical and semi-vertical cuts on the chest and inside shoulder, was replaced by the less risky and technically easier quarte parry. One indisputable advantage of the prime - seconde system over quarte and tierce is that the first two parries can only be deceived in one way - at their upper end, with a deceiving movement over the guard. Parries quarte and tierce can be deceived in two ways - either with a coupe (around the point) or disengagement (around the guard). Therefore, there is now a tendency to teach fencers both defending triangles, keeping quarte, tierce and quinte as the main defence system and prime, seconde as an alternative. Nowadays more and more top fencers in sabre use the seconde parry in alternation with tierce as a defence against low line attacks on the sword arm and flank, and against counter offensive actions with a point.



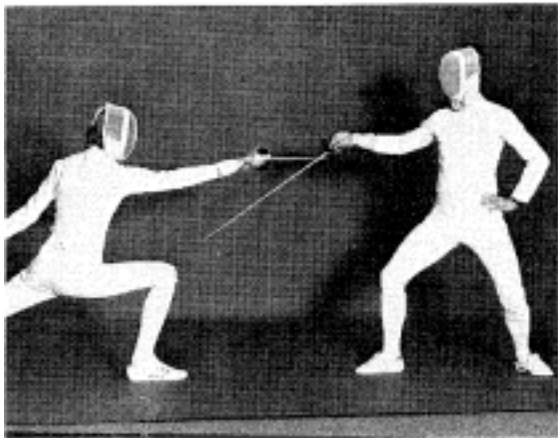
Seconde is the parry which protects the fencer under the sword arm against low line lateral cuts on the flank, and vertical and semi-vertical cuts made upwards at the flank and the sword arm. This parry is often used as a semi-circular parry from the tierce position against attacks with the point, and in conjunction with quinte - against head-flank attacks.

Prime is the parry which protects the inside line from hip to shoulder against lower line lateral, vertical and semi-vertical cuts made on the chest and shoulder.

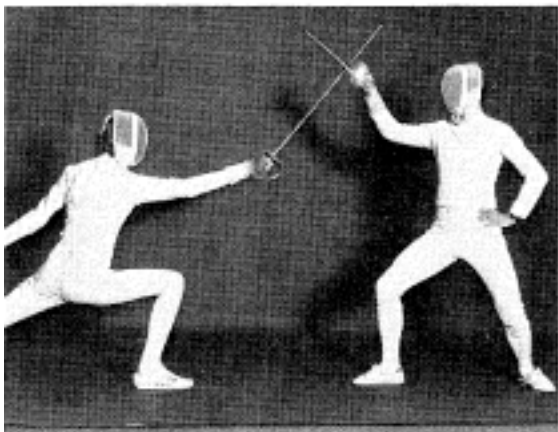
Quinte already described in the Level II manual



Parry of Prime



Parry of Seconde



Parry of Quinte

Points to remember are:

- the sword arm in prime and seconde is extended forward more than it is in tierce and quarte;
- the guard in prime is at the level of the inside shoulder;
- the guard in seconde is at a level slightly below the sword-arm shoulder;
- the point in both positions is directed forward, blade angulated about 45° to the line of fencing.

The Individual Lesson - Seconde and Prime Parries

The teaching of seconde and prime is recommended only when the first triangle is already well trained and mastered by the student: i.e. he knows how to parry tierce, quarte and quinte singly and successively, followed by ripostes, both direct and indirect.

1. Put the student's hand in the position of seconde and ask him to memorize the position.
2. Have him make several semi-circular movements from tierce to seconde and back to tierce. Check if the position is correct each time. Remember that in transition from tierce to seconde the movement is done only by turning the blade with fingers and wrist. The sword arm remains at the same height although it might move slightly forward.
3. Make a slow, low line flank cut and have the student block the cut in seconde. Repeat the exercise several times.
4. Put the student on guard in the quinte position and repeat the same exercise as No. 3.
5. Once the student has a good feeling of the position, the parry can be combined with the riposte. The first riposte is recommended to the cheek, then to the head.
6. Once precision of the movement is achieved, the speed of riposte can be increased and then the execution of the whole action of "parry and riposte" may be accelerated.

The Individual lesson (prime)

1. Similar steps can be followed when teaching the prime parry. After establishing the correct position of the hand, the first transition can be made from seconde, then from quinte and then from tierce.
2. The first riposte from prime should be to the head, then to the chest.
3. Once technical proficiency is achieved in seconde and prime, the instructor can start exercising the whole triangle with parry and riposte. For example:
flank cut - seconde, riposte to cheek
chest cut - prime, riposte to the head
head cut - quinte, riposte to the flank
4. At the beginning the student should be informed as to the exact cut and parry that will be executed. Then the instructor should move to "no warning" cuts, where the student should react with an appropriate parry (seconde, prime or quinte) to random attacks to any of the mentioned areas.
5. Initially, slow motion and large movements from the instructor are essential for correct performance in this exercise. The speed can be accelerated when the student makes no mistake in "reading" correctly the line of the attack and executes each parry correctly. Transitions from one parry to another can be done in sabre in the same way as in foil by:
lateral movement - e.g., from quarte to tierce,
circular movement - e.g., from tierce to counter tierce,
semi-circular movement - e.g., from tierce to seconde,
combinations of the above - e.g., from tierce to prime can be done by a combination of the circular and lateral movement.

Some of the transitions can be done in two ways. For example, the transition from tierce to quinte can be done by:

- a. lateral transition, where the point travels directly from its tierce to its quinte position,
- b. combination of a semi circular and simple movement, when the point on its way to quinte makes first a downward, semi-circular movement and then a straight movement upwards "collecting" all vertical and semi-vertical cuts to the head, cheeks and shoulders.

The first transition (a) is faster and is used in the situation when the defender makes his quinte parry at the last moment (for example in second intention) or as a parry after a direct riposte on the head. In that case the speed of the transition is the most important factor.

The second transition (b) is usually done when the fencer has more time to make the parry, for example against a compound attack when the end movement is anticipated to be vertically or semi-vertical downwards. The defender increases his chance of finding the opponent's blade by causing the blade and point to travel a longer distance, covering a large area.

Riposte

Riposte in sabre can be:

- a. simple direct,
- b. simple indirect,
- c. compound.

Simple direct riposte is any riposte or counter riposte which is executed in the same line as the parry to any part of the target that is accessible by direct cut or thrust without colliding with the final position of the opponent's sabre.

Simple indirect is any riposte or counter riposte which is executed into a riposte line other than that of the parry by a simple deception of the opponent's parry either by disengagement or by coupe.

The following ripostes are most common in sabre:

direct indirect

After the tierce parry:

forearm chest

head flank

cheek

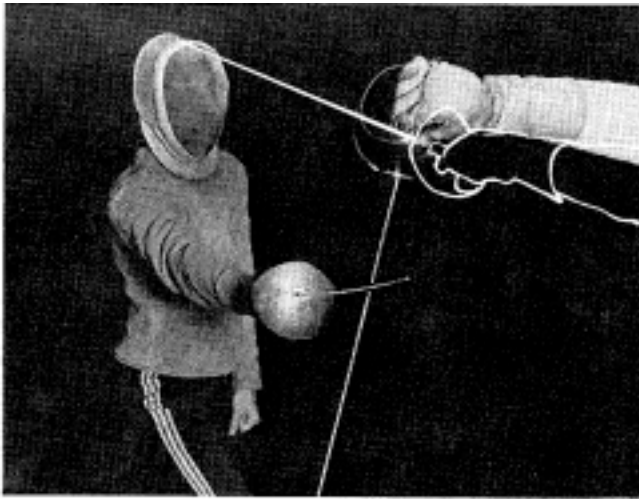
After the quarte parry:

forearm flank

head

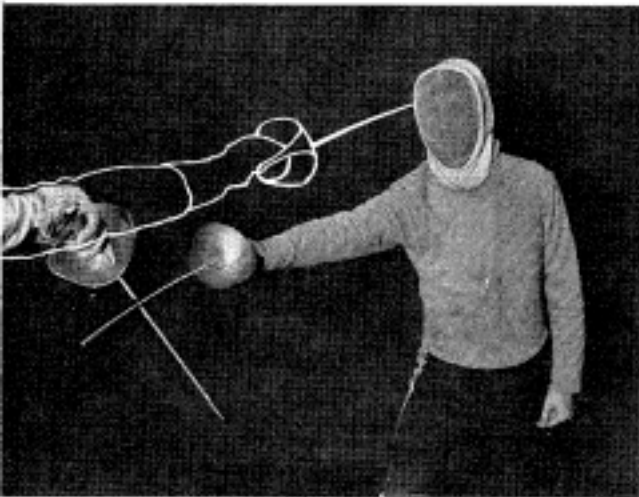
cheek

chest



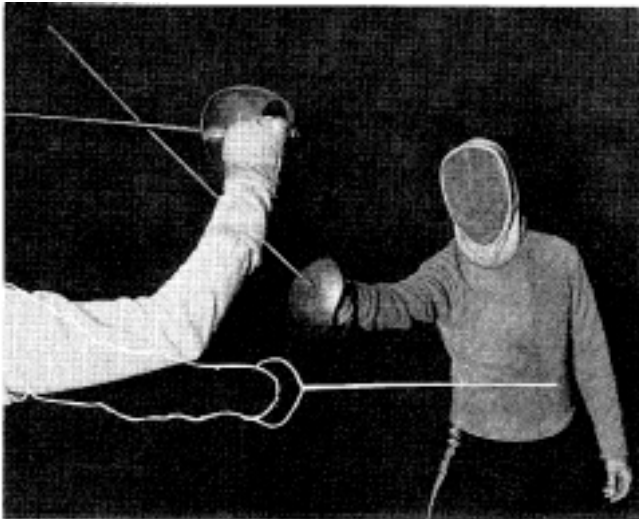
Parry Prime — Riposte Head

After the prime parry:
 arm/low cheek
 flank head
 chest with chest
 the point



Parry Seconde - Riposte Cheek

After the second parry:
 arm chest
 flank
 head
 cheek
 chest with
 the point



Parry Quinte - Riposte Chest

After the quinte parry:
 forearm chest
 flank head
 chest with
 the point

A Compound riposte is any riposte or counter riposte where the hit is preceded by one or more feints. For example: parry quarte, riposte with feint at chest and cut on the flank.

Coaching Points

- It is recommended to stop the motion momentarily with the arm extended in the end position of the riposte, after the riposte is completed. There are the following reasons for this recommendation:
 - a. to avoid a jerky movement backwards of the sword arm in an attempt to form the next parry,
 - b. the student can better recognize the direction from which the instructor's next cut is coming, or - if parried - where the riposte is coming. That enables him to react with the appropriate defence or counter defence, without a reflex parry, (applies to the situation when the sequence of parries and ripostes is unknown).
- when the sequence is over (after one or more ripostes) the student (unless otherwise advised) should bring his hand back to tierce.
- at the end position of the riposte the sword arm and the blade should be in the close to straight line.
- it is not recommended to teach riposte with a step back. Step back can be done with a parry, but immobility or any kind of forwards motion (step, lunge, fleche, etc.) should be employed for the riposte.
- compound ripostes can be started when simple ripostes, direct and indirect, are well trained and technically correct.
- the slow motion is recommended on all levels of teaching as the rehearsal of the movements.
- the students should be able to make the riposte in a high speed as well as in a low speed in order to control better their movements and reflexes.
- a backwards movement of the arm is sometimes necessary when doing riposte indirect in order to avoid the opponent's blade. This movement should be, however, limited to the necessary minimum, otherwise it becomes slow and imprecise.
- the instructor must put special attention on precision, small blade movements and good hand protection with the guard when teaching compound riposte, in order to minimize the danger of exposing the target for a remise or counter attack from the opponent.

The Individual Lesson

The individual lesson should contain a wide variety of actions - attacks, counter attacks, defensive and counter defensive movements, all with a variety of foot-work. Once in a while, however, it is recommended to conduct a lesson where the instructor concentrates on only one type of action and develops that action from its most simple to the most complex form, considering all possible reactions from the opponent and all situations. Such an individual lesson can be conducted with a student who is sufficiently advanced as to have no technical problem concerning execution of the action. The example of the individual lesson below is an example how the exercises can be built and developed.

Subject: quarte parry and riposte

1. Short distance, instructor and student in tierce, immobility: the instructor makes a chest cut, the student defends with quarte parry and riposte on the head.
2. The instructor repeats the same attack, the student ripostes on the cheek.
3. The same attack, the student ripostes on the inside arm.

4. The same attack, the student ripostes on the chest.
 5. The same attack, the student makes a simple indirect riposte to the flank. The instructor must react to quarte in order to open the target for the flank cut.
 6. Repeat points 1 to 5, with the student stepping back DURING the parry. Immobility during the riposte.
 7. Repeat point 6 adding to each riposte:
 - step forward, then
 - lunge, then
 - fleche
 8. Repeat points 4 and 5, adding a parry and counter riposte to each action. For pt 4 (the student ripostes to chest) the instructor makes a quarte parry and counter riposte on the chest. For pt 5 (the student ripostes indirect to the flank) the instructor stays in tierce and makes a counter riposte to the chest.
 9. Compound riposte: start from immobility; after the instructor's initial attack on the chest, the student makes a quarte parry, feint at chest and cut on the flank with coupe.
 10. The same beginning, but after quarte parry the student makes a feint at flank and hit on the head.
 11. Repeat exercises no. 9 and 10 adding a step back during the parry.
 12. Repeat the exercises in point 11 adding the following footwork after each parry:
 - step forward
 - lunge
 - step-lunge
 - fleche
 - step-fleche
 13. Riposte direct and indirect with "open eyes". The student has two choices after parry quarte: depending on the instructor's reaction.
 - if the instructor comes back to tierce: riposte direct on the head
 - if the instructor tries to parry back with quarte: riposte indirect to the flank
- Note:** During this exercise the instructor should initially ask the student to stop the quarte parry for a split second in order to see the reaction and to have time to make the correct decision.
14. Counter time quarte parry and riposte. The student makes a step forward with the sword arm half extended, in tierce.
 - the instructor makes a stop-cut on the inside forearm which is open due to the tierce position,
 - the student makes a quarte parry on the stop-cut and ripostes on the head with:
 - a) another step forward,
 - b) lunge,
 - c) fleche.
 15. Second intention quarte parry and riposte:
 - the student makes a step forward with an invitation to seconde
 - the instructor makes a point attack on the chest with lunge,
 - the student makes a quarte parry and riposte on the head (no additional movement after the first step forward).

The similar lesson can of course be conducted using each of the remaining parries (tierce, quinte, seconde and prime), or mixing them up during different exercises.

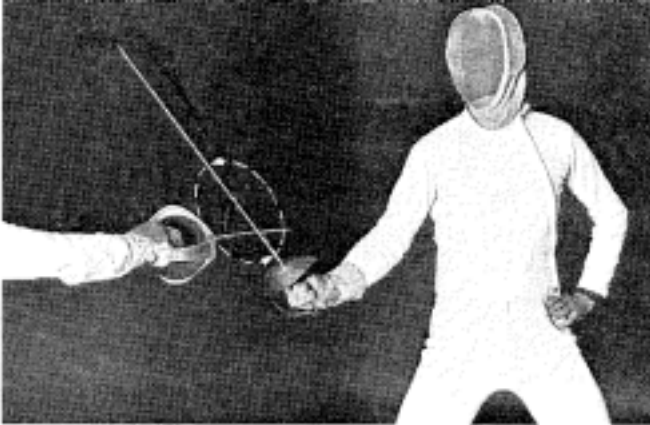
Circular Parries (counter parries) in sabre

Theoretically, the circular parries are possible from all parry positions. Practically, only counter-tierce, counter-quarte and counter-seconde are in use.

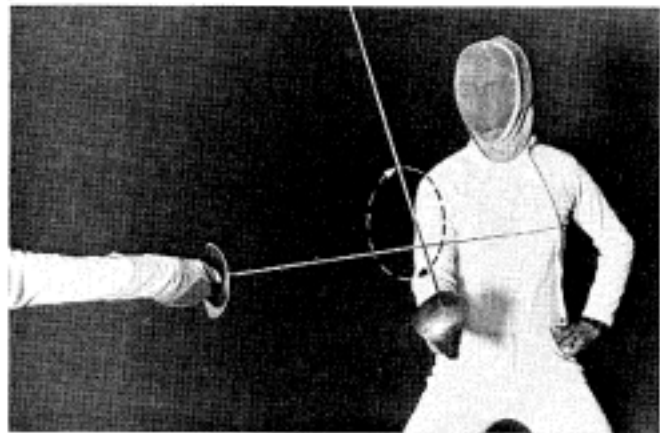
Circular parries are done by a circular movement of the wrist and fingers. The circle described by the point of the defender's blade should be sufficiently large to collect the attacker's blade and carry it off the target.

The circular parries are used mostly as:

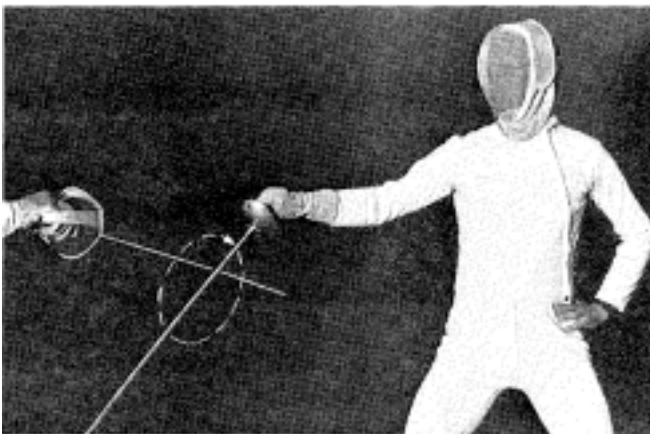
- defence against point attacks,
- defence against attacks on the sword arm,
- defence against beat attacks.



Circular Parry of Tierce



Circular Parry of Quarte



Circular Parry of Seconde

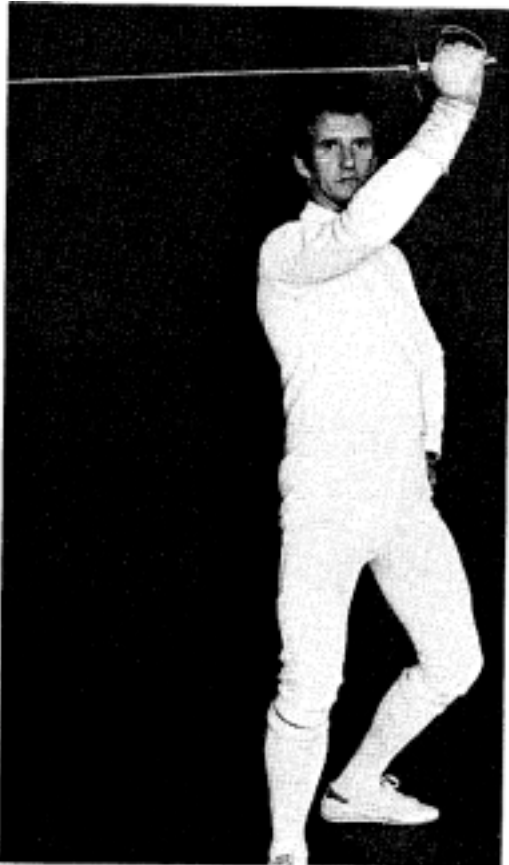
Coaching Point

- The student should not use the forearm during the circular movement. This will cause a wide and slow parry and an imprecise riposte.

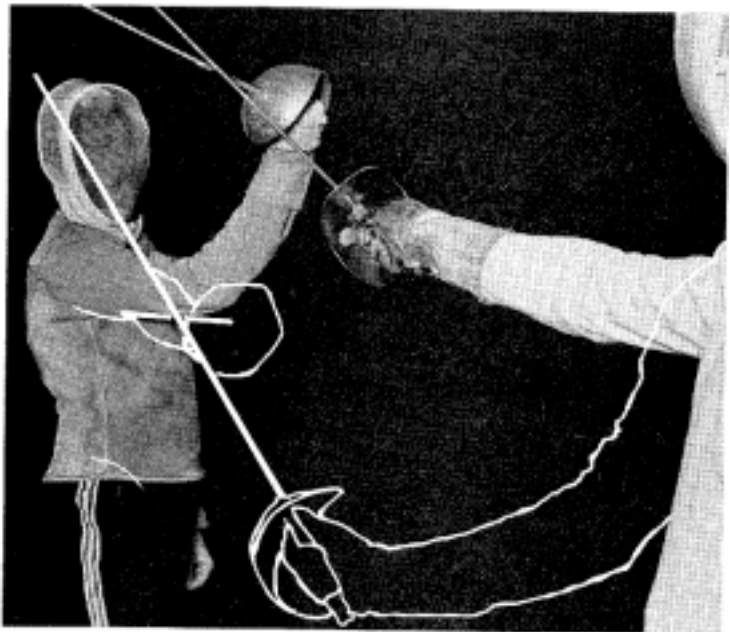
Unusual sabre parry of sixte

This parry has long been abandoned as not useful for defence in competition. A fencing instructor should know about it, however, as it can be useful during a fencing lesson.

The Sixte parry, often called the "master's parry", defends against vertical cuts on the head and shoulders - thus it has the same role as quinte. Fencing instructors use sixte to parry a student's riposte on the head from quarte (see below right).



← The Sixte Parry



COUNTER ATTACKS

According to the FIE "Regulations of Competition" (Art. 12.3), counter attacks are offensive, or offensive-defensive actions made during the offensive action of the opponent.

In sabre we will consider as a counter attack all kinds of action made in immobility or with a movement backward against the attacking opponent when the hit scored:

- precedes the end of the attack by at least one fencing time,
- when the attack is blocked by a closed line,
- when the right of the attack is taken away from the attacker by a successful action on his blade.

Note: the similar actions done with movements forward (lunge, fleche, etc.), were already described in the chapter "Attacks on the Preparation".

The counter attacks in sabre can be divided in the following way:

- a. the stop hit (cut),
- b. the stop hit (cut) with:
 - opposition,
 - interception.
- c. derobement, (finta in tempo)
- d. attack into the attack,
- e. counter attack with deviation.

The Stop-hit (cut) with Opposition is a counter offensive action which closes the line into which the attack is finished. The stop-hit with opposition can be executed on the hand or on the body, with a point or cut. The most commonly used stop-hits with opposition in sabre are those made on the chest with a point and on the head with a cut.

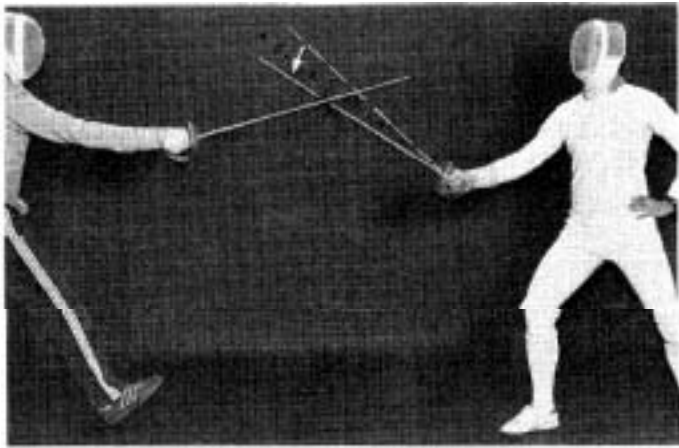
Example

Fencer A: Makes a pre-planned attack head-flank with the step and lunge;

Fencer B: makes a counter attack in immobility by a semi-circular movement from tierce to seconde with the simultaneous extension of the arm. The position of seconde blocks the opponent's final cut to the flank and the arm extension scores the hit with the point on his chest at the same time.

The Stop hit (cut) with Interception is a direct counter offensive action which closes or intercepts the line through which the attack is going to pass. The interception can be done with:

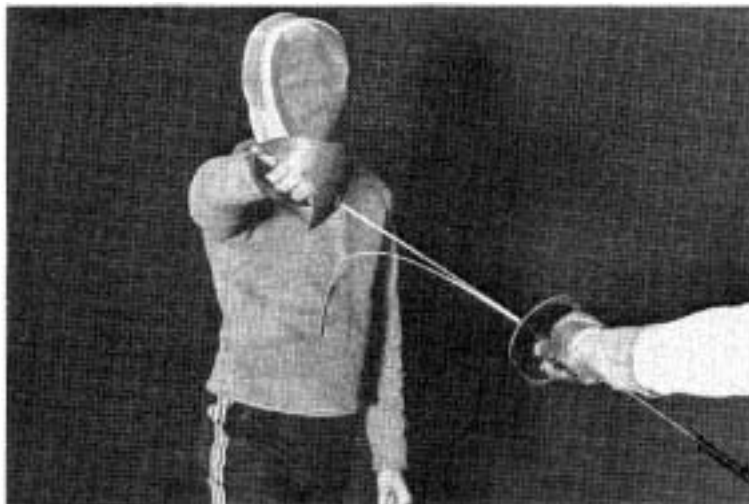
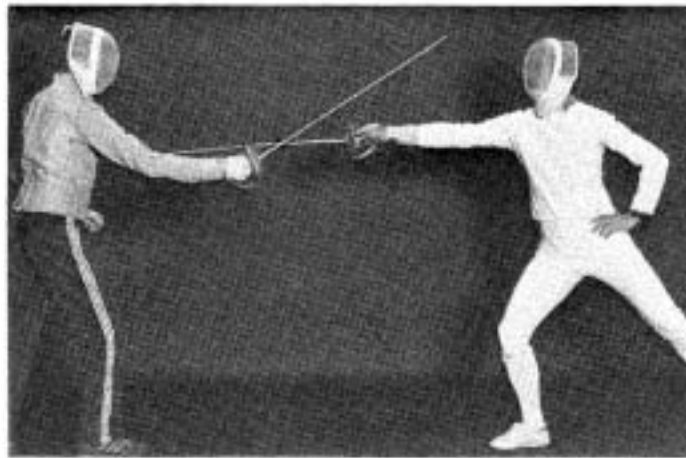
- beat, when the contact with the opponent's blade has a momentary character and the attacker's blade is free to continue its movement towards the target, but without the "right of way",
- opposition, when the line through which the attack is passing is blocked and the attacker cannot score a hit other than by a remise, reprise or redoublement.



Example 1

Fencer A: starts a head-flank-head attack with a step-lunge;

Fencer B: intercepts the blade during the opponent's step forward with a feint at head by quarte beat and scores the hit on the arm (in immobility or with a step back).



Example 2

Fencer A: starts a head-flank-head attack with a step-lunge;

Fencer B: makes a circular (counter-tierce) opposition counter attack into the first movement of the attacker's step with head-feint. The hit is scored on the head while the attacker's blade is intercepted and blocked by the garde in tierce

or

Fencer B: makes a semi-circular opposition counter attack from tierce to seconde into the flank feint of the attacker, together with an extension of the arm. The hit is scored with the point on the chest while the flank feint of the attacker is intercepted and blocked by the position of seconde.

Stop cut on the hand was already described in the Level II Manual.

The Counter Attack with Deviation (displacing the target), while common in foil, is rarely used in sabre, therefore the description will be omitted in this manual.

The Derobement is the counter offensive action made to avoid an opponent's attempt to take the blade or make an attack on the blade, without allowing blade contact. It can be done by simple indirect, or by compound movement with a disengagement or coupe. The hit can be scored by a cut or point. The derobement from the position of the line has been described in the paragraph "The Line".

Example 1 (derobement simple indirect):

Fencer A: starts a pre-planned attack by a quarte beat with a step-fleche;

Fencer B: avoids the attempt to find his blade in quarte with a disengagement under and immediately extends his arm and scores the hit on the outside forearm with a step backward

or

avoids the attempt to find his blade in quarte with a coupe and immediately extends his arm and scores the hit with a cut on the head.

Example 2 (compound derobement):

Fencer A: starts a second intention counter time attack with a step forward and an invitation in tierce, expecting the opponent to do a direct stop cut on the inside forearm which he is prepared to parry in quarte and score a hit with a riposte.

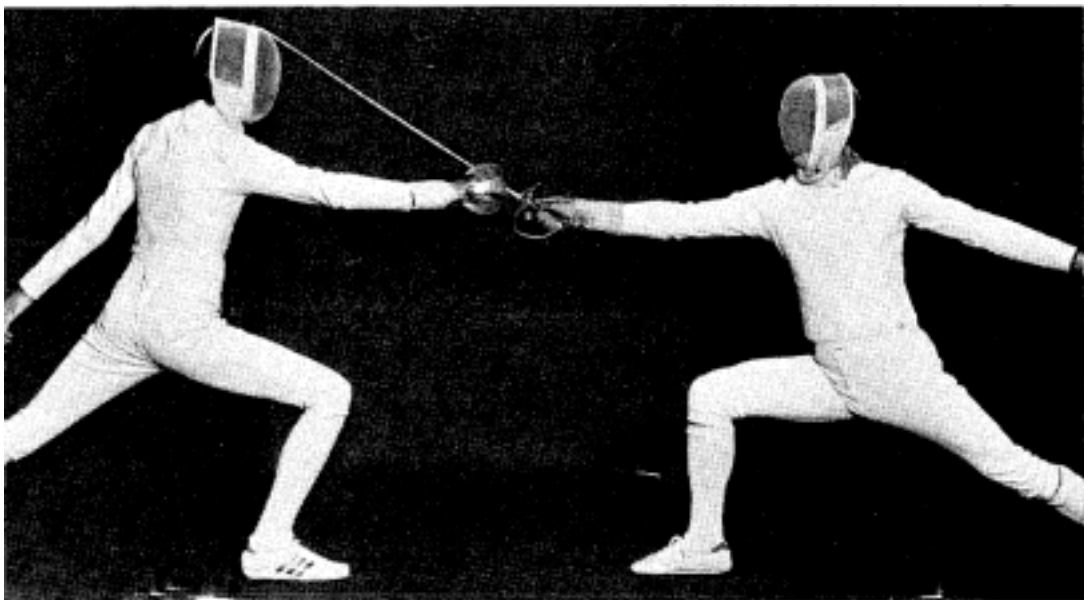
Fencer B: "reads" this intention and "cooperates" during the first part of the action by doing the feint of the stop cut on the inside forearm which is however immediately followed by derobement with a disengagement under the guard on the attempt to find his blade with quarte. The hit is scored on the outside forearm.

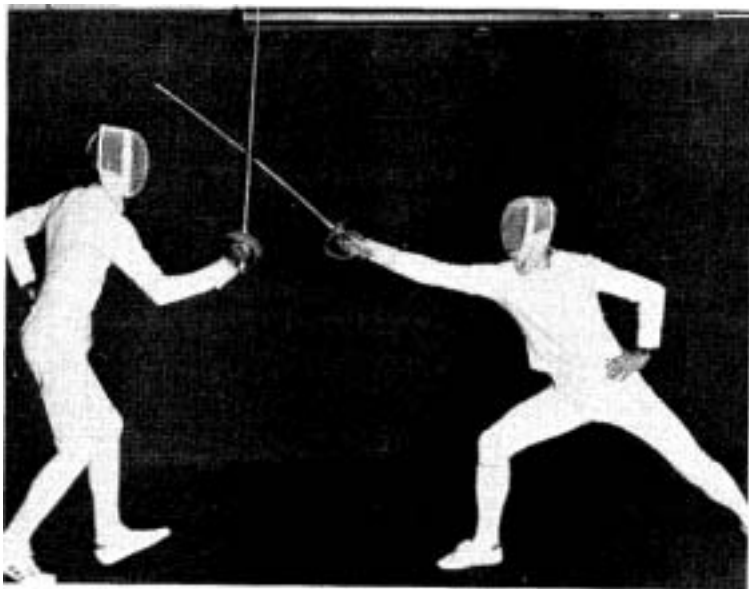
The Attack into the Attack can only be successful if the opponent completely misses the target (which is difficult in sabre due to the cutting movements) or if the line of the attack is blocked by the opposition.

Example

Fencer A: makes step-lunge attack, chest-cheek

Fencer B: makes a lunge into the attack blocking the opponent's cheek by his position in tierce and scoring the hit on his head.





The Stop Hit (cut): The same principle as described in Level 2 will apply to the stop-cut on the head or body. That means the valid stop cut should:

- be initiated before the last movement of the attack,
- arrive one period of fencing time before the end of the attack.

The stop cut can be done into either an attack or a riposte.

The Individual Lesson

An individual lesson with counter attacks might include the variety of the elements described above, or might be concentrated around one kind of counter attack (for example, a stop-cut on the hand), in all possible situations and counter-reactions.

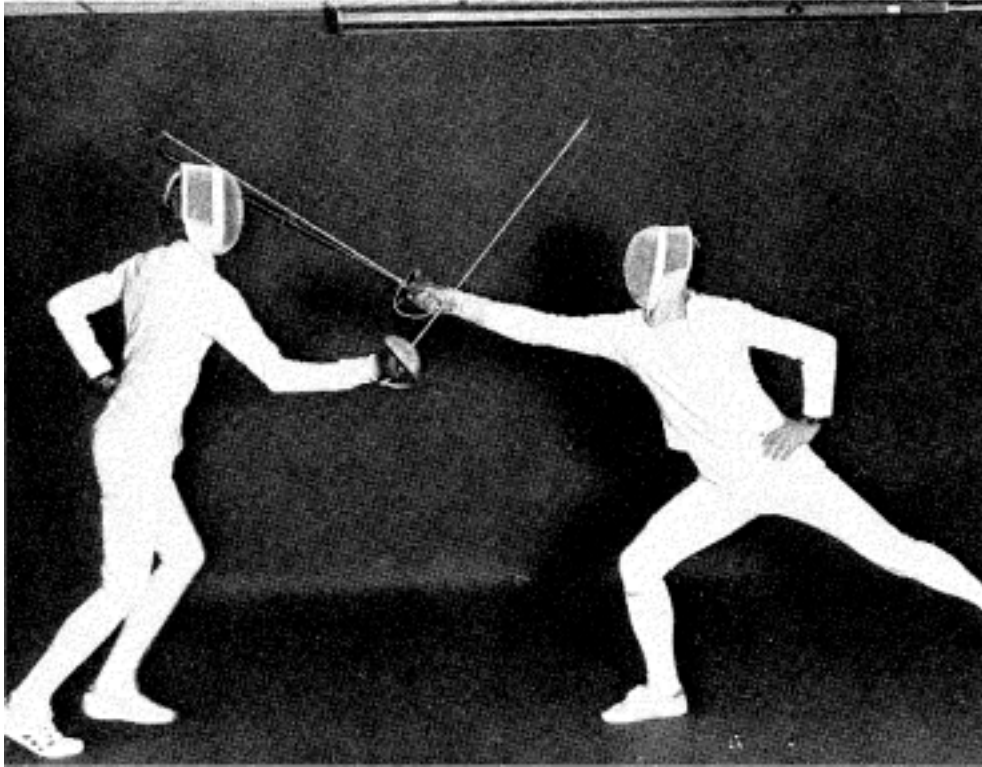
The example presented below combines a variety of different counter attacks. From the tactical point of view this lesson is trying to follow the question:

"What can the opponent do next in order to avoid the hit from my previous action?"

1. Middle distance, both in tierce. The instructor makes the step forward with a feint to the flank, the student answers with the stop-cut on the upper forearm with a step backward. The step back is followed by a parry tierce and riposte on the head. The instructor should in this case "finish" his movement directly on the flank.
2. The same distance and position. The instructor makes the step forward with feint at flank, the student answers with the feint of stop-cut on the upper forearm, immediately followed by a derobement under the guard and hit on the inside forearm. The action is finished by the student's quarte parry and riposte on the head. The instructor reacts or, the feint in tierce, and after being hit on the arm finished his attack with a chest cut.
3. The same distance and position. The instructor makes a step forward with the sword arm tierce (bent), the student answers with the stop-cut on the head and steps back, followed by quarte parry and riposte. The instructor does the second step with a chest cut.
4. The same distance and position. The instructor makes a step forward with feint of head and the sword arm extended. The student reacts with an interception by a quarte beat and a hit on the upper forearm, then steps back - after the hit.
5. The same distance and position. The instructor makes a head-flank attack with a lunge, the student reacts with a counter attack in seconde opposition and a hit with the point on the chest.
6. Long distance, both in tierce. The instructor starts an "open eyes" attack with two steps forward and sword arm half extended. The student makes a feint of quinte parry immediately followed by a stop cut on the outside forearm.
7. Very long distance. The instructor starts a running attack leading to a direct attack. The student presents the line with a step back and hits with a point.

Coaching Points

- The step back with the stop cut should be initiated together with the extension of the sword arm. This means - the rear leg should move back at the same moment as the sword arm moves forward. The sword arm goes back to the defending position right after the stop cut is completed and at the same time as the front foot moves backward to complete the step.



- The instructor should make his "invitation" with a fairly large and also fairly slow movements. It should be easy for the student to hit the target with a counter attack in good time and make a successful parry - if the action is followed by the defence.
- The instructor should give special attention to correct coordination between the leg and sword arm movements.

COUNTER OFFENSIVE

Counter offensive actions can be divided into counter time and second intention actions. Many fencing instructors confuse these two kinds. Counter time can be executed in second intention, but this applies to the way and the situation in which an action is done. On the other hand, second intention refers only to a tactical idea before an action is to begin.

Counter time

These are substantial differences in description and interpretation of counter-time amongst fencing schools. According to the FIE "Regulations of Competition", counter time "is every action made by the attacker on a stop-hit made by his opponent". Most of the European fencing schools follow this definition. The Hungarian and Italian schools describe counter time differently as the attacker's stop-hit or opposition into the defender's counter attack. In this manual we will follow the FIE version.

Counter time can be done as:

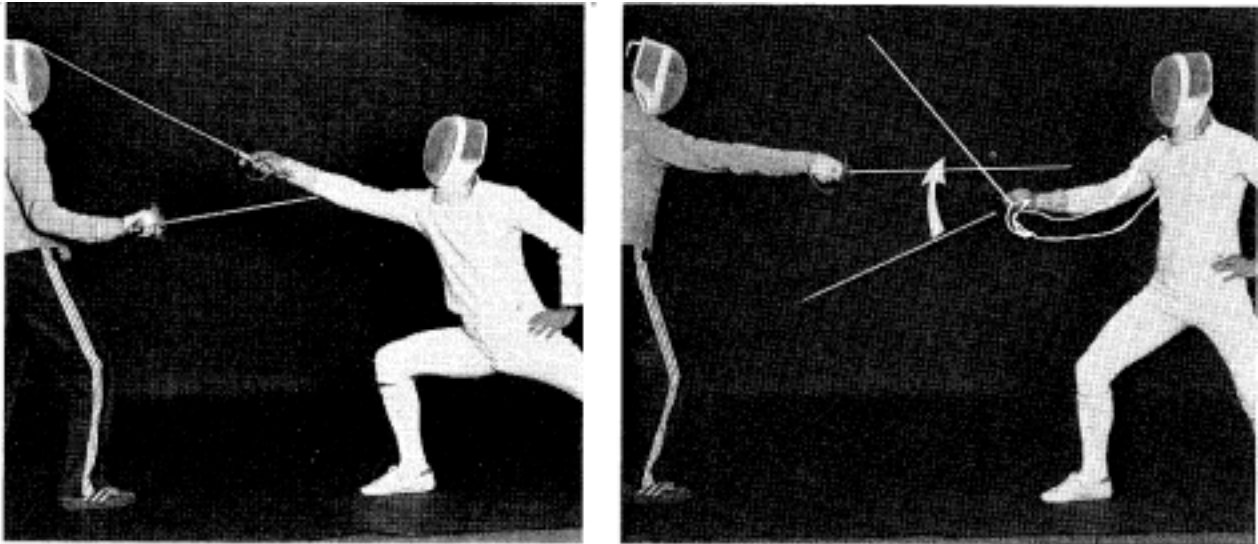
- a second intention action,
- a reflex action,

and it can be executed by:

- parry and riposte - on direct counter attack
- parry with opposition - on a compound counter attack
- by a compound attack on blade (chercher le fer) - on a counter attack with single disengagement.

Counter time can also be done as

- an offensive action, where the attacker makes a parry during his movement forward and ripostes with lunge or fleche,
- a defensive action, when the attacker stops while making a parry and ripostes without further forward movement.



Example of an offensive counter time

Fencer A: starts his attack with a step forward and moves the sabre from the position of tierce to seconde,

Fencer B: makes a stop-hit on the forearm,

Fencer A: parries the stop-hit with tierce and ripostes on the head with fleche.

Coaching Points

- There are three parts of a counter time action:
 1. Preparation: which is usually an invitation or a beginning of a compound offensive action
 2. Defensive action: parry or opposition
 3. Offensive final: riposte
- The depth of the preparation is a very important factor to which special attention should be given during an individual lesson if the counter time is done in second intention.
- Too short a preparation will cause no reaction from the opponent, while too deep a preparation creates the risk of being hit by the opponent's counter offensive action,
- The instructor should exercise the counter time with a clear change of rhythm using the following pattern:
 - preparation - faster movement,
 - defensive action - slow down,
 - offensive action - speed up again.
- The change of rhythm can be achieved by breaking the counter time initially into three separate actions with a momentary pause between the first two. For example:
 1. preparation with a step or balestra;
 2. pause;
 3. parry, counter attack on the hand;
 4. riposte with fleche on the head.
- Gradually the pause is replaced by a slowing down in the action, and the action done in a smooth, controlled way.

More examples of counter time actions in second intention

Example 1:

Fencer A: makes a step forward in the tierce position with the sword arm half extended;

Fencer B: makes the stop-hit on the inside forearm;

Fencer A: makes quarte parry and riposte with fleche on the head.

Example 2:

Fencer A: preparation with a step forward in tierce position with the sword arm half extended;

Fencer B: makes a stop-hit on the head and steps back;

Fencer A: parries quinte and ripostes with lunge on the flank.

Example 3:

Fencer A: preparation with balestra and changes from tierce to seconde;

Fencer B: places the point in line;

Fencer A: makes quarte beat and fleche on the head.

Example 4:

Fencer A: preparation with balestra and change from tierce to seconde;

Fencer B: makes fleche attack on the head;

Fencer A: parries quinte and ripostes on the flank, with no further movement forward.

Example 5:

Fencer A: preparation with step forward in tierce;

Fencer B: makes feint of counter attack to the inside forearm; and disengagement under the opponent's guard to score a hit on the outside forearm;

Fencer A: makes compound movement first to quarte then to tierce and ripostes with fleche to the head.

The Individual Lesson

1. Middle distance, instructor and student in tierce. The student makes a step forward with a half extension of the sword arm, the instructor reacts with a stop-cut on the outside arm (on the tierce). The student blocks the cut and makes a riposte to the head.
2. The same distance, but this time the student makes his step forward changing the blade position from tierce to seconde. The instructor's stop-cut is parried by returning to tierce - ripostes again on the head.
3. Repeat point 1, except the riposte which should be done with another step forward.
4. Repeat point 1, except the riposte should be done with a lunge, (pause between the step and fleche).
5. Repeat point 1, except the riposte should be done with fleche, (pause between the step and fleche).
6. Repeat point 2, adding to the riposte; first another step forward, then lunge, then fleche., (pauses between step and lunge and fleche).
7. Repeat points 3 to 6 but with the riposte to the flank. The instructor must in this case react upwards to quinte, after the student's tierce.
8. Now repeat point 4 to 7 but replacing the pause between the step and the subsequent leg action by a slow down, so the whole exercise is executed in one, smooth, continuous motion.

The Second Intention in Defence

These actions are often called "false parry" or "feint of parry". The idea is to make one or more defensive movements, "false parries" in order to draw the opponent's attack into the desired area and increase one's own chances to make a successful parry. Those tactical movements are very often used against "open eyes" attacks or running attacks, and profit from the opponent's instinctive reaction to finish the attack on the target which is open to him.

Example:

Fencer A: starts an "open eyes" attack with two steps forward;

Fencer B: does not move back, but reacts to quinte;

Fencer A: finishes his attack on the open target on the flank;

Fencer B: is prepared for this disengagement, comes back to tierce to parry the attack and scores a hit with the riposte.

In the example above the attacker might of course finish his attack either on the flank or the chest, which is also open, but in this case the defender has a 50% chance of making the right parry, against only 33% if he guessed where the attack would finish.

Another variation of the tactical use of the second intention in defence, widely utilized in modern fencing, is a feint of counter attack out of time followed by a parry riposte. The purpose of the action is to force the opponent to finish his attack without hesitating in order to parry it with a prepared defence.

Example:

Fencer A: starts an attack with feint at head (sword arm extending) and step forward;

Fencer B: makes a feint of counter attack to the head, which is theoretically inappropriate because the opponent still keeps the right of the attack and in case of a double hit the hit would be awarded against fencer B;

Fencer A: finishes the attack straight with the chest cut. (Since the flank side is still covered by the line of the feint the inside line is the only choice to finish the attack); Fencer B: makes a quarte parry and ripostes.

Coaching Points

- Maintaining correct fencing distance is essential while exercising false parries and false counter attacks. Both feints should be done when the opponent is no further than middle distance (within reach of a single lunge or fleche);
- To gain such distance the student should exercise these feints in immobility or with a step forward. A step back might give the opponent enough time to make a compound action, which is tactically undesirable, because the objective is that he should finish his attack to the closest open area.
- In case of a feint of counter attack on the head, the guard should be kept fairly low in order to "close" effectively the outside line to the flank, where the cut is not desired.

The Individual Lesson (with a feint of counter attack and a feint of parry):

1. Middle distance, the instructor and the student in tierce. The instructor makes a step forward with a feint at head, the student reacts with a feint of a counter attack at head, in immobility. The instructor finishes his attack with another step and chest cut to receive the student's quarte parry and riposte on the head.
2. Long distance, both in tierce. The exercise is repeated the same way as in point 1, but this time the student makes a feint of counter attack with step forward. Parry and riposte in immobility. It is recommended to start this exercise with a pause after each phase:

For example:

I: steps forward with the feint, - pause

S: starts his feint with the step at the end of the instructor's step, - pause I: makes a lunge with the chest cut,

S: makes quarte parry and riposte on the head.

3. Repeat the exercise No. 2, but this time the instructor finishes his attack on the head, so the student should react with a quinte parry.

Note: in this particular action the quinte parry is not always necessary to defend against the attack on the head. A well timed quarte parry can deflect both attacks - vertical on the head and lateral on the chest.

4. Middle long distance, both in tierce. The instructor makes the step forward with feint at head, the student reacts with the feint of quinte parry. The instructor finishes his attack with another step (or lunge) and flank cut, which is parried by the student with tierce. Riposte on the head.
5. The same exercise as No. 4, but this time the instructor finishes his attack on the chest. The student must react with quarte, after the feint of quinte. Riposte on the head.
6. Choice reaction. The exercise is similar to No. 4 and No. 5. except the instructor finishes his action either on the flank or on the chest. The student must recognize the line of the attack and after the feint of quinte - react with appropriate parry - tierce or quarte. The instructor should make his attacks with large movements in order to enable the student to make the right choice.
7. Mixed feints. Middle-long distance. The instructor and the student in tierce. The instructor makes a step forward with the feint on the head, the student reacts with a feint of counter attack to the head immediately followed by a feint of quarte parry. The instructor finishes his action with the lunge and cut on flank, to which the student reacts with tierce parry and riposte on the head.

The above lesson contains a large number of possible combinations of single and double feints of counter attacks and parries. For practical reasons it is recommended to limit the number of combinations to two or three alternative actions in order to build the fencer's confidence. The principle to follow is:

"Better few and good, than many and bad".

THE LINE

The line is an offensive-defensive position where the fencer has his arm straight and the point threatening the valid target. Similarly to foil - in sabre the line must be deflected before the attack can have priority if it is established:

- before the opponent starts his attack; or
- during the opponent's preparation of the attack and before the final attacking movement commences.

The attacking fencer can regain the right of the attack, after the line is established, by removing the point from his valid target by:

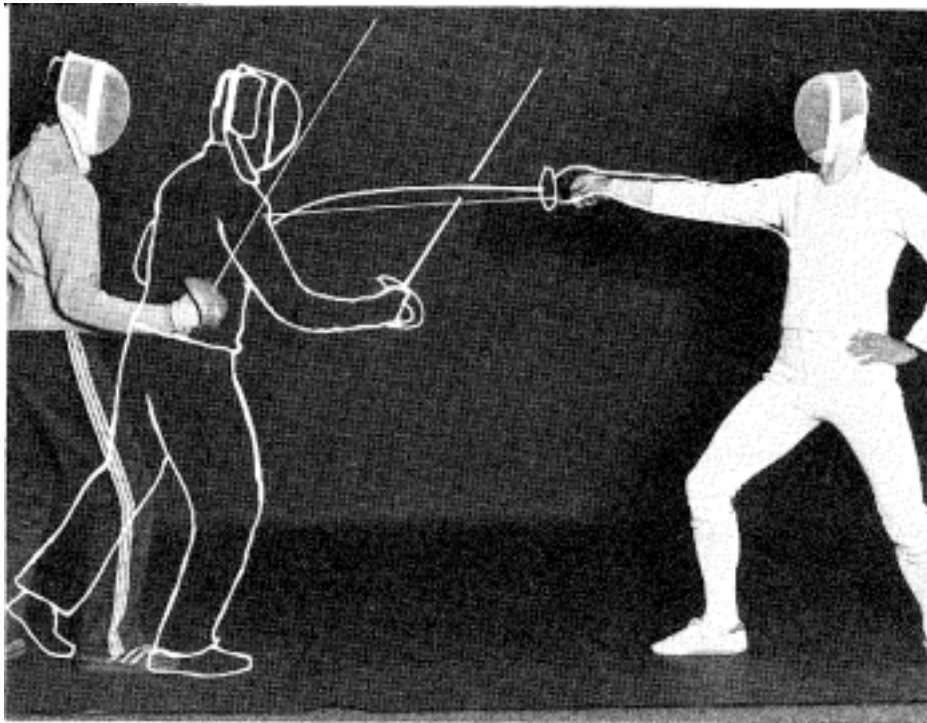
- beat;
- engagement; or
- parry.

The line is established in sabre in the following way:

- the sword arm straight and hand slightly pronated; - the guard on the level of the shoulders; and
- the sword arm in a straight line with the sabre blade threatening the opponent's target.

The Derobement

The derobement is the action taken by the fencer who has his point in line to avoid his opponent's attempt to remove his blade from the in-line position.



The derobement may be executed by one or more disengagements or counter disengagements if the opponent is trying to find the blade with a compound attack on the blade. In order to retain the line, however, the sword arm must remain straight, and the blade must deviate from the straight line by the minimum possible amount required to avoid the attempts to take the blade.

In sabre the derobement is an especially successful action against a high speed running attack during which the opponent is trying to find the blade which is initially in line.

Coaching Points

- The line can be taught from a very early stage,
- The instructor should give special attention to the exclusive use of the fingers to execute the derobement, without involving the whole arm in the movement,
- The arm must be straight all the time during the derobement. The fencer who removes his arm from the line (point not threatening the target, the blade and the arm in a large angulation) or bends the arm during the opponent's attack - loses the "right of way" and such a line is no longer considered as valid.
- The student should know beforehand what kind of engagement he should expect from the instructor. Choice and "open eyes" reaction can be added when there is no mistake with a simple or compound "known" derobement.
- The instructor should do his engagements with a large and relatively slow hand movement to facilitate "reading" and "timing" his attempts to take the blade.
- The position of the hand and sabre during the hit with the point, should be the same as their initial position "in line", i.e., the arm straight and in line with the blade, no angulation in the wrist.
- The hit with the derobement and the point should be trained with three kinds of the foot-work:
 - a. in immobility,
 - b. with a step forward,
 - c. with a step backward,but NOT with a lunge nor fleche which would convert the line into an attacking movement.

The Individual Lesson

1. Short distance, the student is in the position of point in line, the instructor in tierce - tries to engage the student's blade in different ways (quarte, seconde, tierce, countertierce, etc.). The student avoids the engagement with a derobement without contact with the instructor's blade, keeping the arm and blade still in line. No hit in this step of the progression.
2. The same as exercise No. 1, but this time the instructor makes a step forward after each attempt of the engagement on the line. The hit with the point should follow the derobement.
3. Middle distance, both in tierce. The instructor makes a step forward with a bent arm, the student at the same moment puts the point in line on which the instructor makes an attempt of engagement with another step. The derobement should be followed by a hit with the point.
4. Double deception: repeat exercises 1 to 3, but this time the instructor does a compound attempt to find the blade in line with the following engagements:
 - quarte and tierce
 - counter tierce and quarte
 - seconde and tierce
 - seconde and quinte
5. Choice reaction: middle distance, both in tierce, the instructor makes a step forward with a bent arm, the student presents the line at the same moment. The continuation is the choice between two possibilities:
 - I. I: continues with another step forward and straight hit on the head,
S: leaves the line and hits with the point
 - II. I: makes an attempt to find the blade in quarte with another step forward,
S: makes the derobement and hits with the point.

6. Choice reaction: three possibilities. The same conditions and the same beginning as in exercise No. 5, but this time the student has three choices:
- I. I: continues forward without seeking the blade,
S: leaves the point in line.
 - II. I: attempts to find the blade in quarte (the type of engagement is of course up to the instructor's choice),
S: makes the derobement and hits with the point,
 - III. I: attempts to find the blade with a compound engagement of quarte and tierce (Note: the second step forward should be done AFTER or TOGETHER with the second movement of engagement - in this case with the movement from quarte to tierce),
S: deceives both movements with feint of derobement - derobement and hits with the point.

THE WARM-UP LESSON

General Remarks

The nature and content of the warm-up lesson given to a fencer before or during a competition depends upon the fencer's competitive level, the level of competition, the round, the time available for the lesson, the fencer's level of arousal, etc. All of these factors will be described in more detail in the Level IV manual . The instructor should keep in mind the following principles:

- Advanced fencers who will be promoted easily through the first round need a shorter lesson because fencing in the first round will warm them up;
- Beginners and less advanced fencers need a very solid warm-up lesson before the first round. They should be brought to their top performance, otherwise the first round might be their last!
- Fencers who are very nervous and tense should be calmed down by a slow and relaxing lesson in easy conditions;
- Fencers who have a tendency to be apathetic before the competition or between the rounds should have a more dynamic warm-up lesson with a number of simple, easy actions repeated at high speed in order to stimulate their optimal level of arousal;
- If a fencer needs a warm-up between the rounds, the warm-up should be shorter and less intensive than a warm-up given before competition. Its intensity will depend upon the fencer's fitness level and his level of arousal;
- The instructor should not teach or repeat any new movements or actions during the warm-up session. This is not the time to teach new things. On the contrary - the lesson should be a repetition of well known actions only;
- The lesson should mostly contain the fencer's favorite offensive, counter-offensive and defensive actions. The instructor should facilitate maximally the conditions in order to build the fencer's confidence in those actions. The duration of the lesson should be from 5 to 15 minutes.

An Example of a Warm-Up Lesson

1. Short distance: the student and the instructor in tierce. The student makes several direct cuts on different targets (head, flank, chest, cheek, hand) depending on the instructor's opening (1 - 2 minutes);
2. Middle distance: the student makes several lunges (to stretch and warm-up the leg muscles) at different targets - (head (the instructor in tierce or in seconde), flank (when he moves from tierce to quarte), chest or flank (when he moves from tierce to quinte) - (2 - 3 minutes);
3. Long distance (step-lunge): compound attacks with two and three blade movements (one or two feints) on different targets (5 to 10 repetitions of each attack). Emphasis should be placed on precision and confidence. The attacks might be executed at low speed with slight acceleration at the end (for high anxiety students), or at normal and high speed (for low anxiety, apathetic students). The instructor should demand a parry-riposte after each attack in order to help the student in keeping balance after return from the lunge - (3 - 5 minutes);
4. Short distance: series of parry and ripostes, progressing into counter-ripostes. First in immobility, then the student should maintain distance from the instructor (Note: no retreat during the riposte) - (2 - 3 minutes);

5. Middle distance: stop-hit on the arm followed by parry and riposte. The instructor makes a clear opening for the stop-cut to his forearm (in outside line, inside line or underneath), and after the cut is executed - finishes his hand action by attack on tierce, quarte or quinte line (the student should know beforehand which line is to be attacked) - (2- 3 minutes);
6. Repeat the student's favourite offensive or counter-offensive action. For example: favourite counter-time, favourite beat-attack, attack on preparation, etc. - (2 - 3 minutes);
7. Repeat the student's favourite defensive action. For example: feint of counter-attack followed by parry-riposte, false attack followed by stop-cut and parry-riposte, etc.;
8. The warm up can be finished with a derobement (line). The instructor will try to find the student's blade by different, simple or compound engagements executed with slow and large hand blade movements. The student should make the derobement with "open eyes" - (1 minute).

Note: The time brackets suggested for each exercise are optional. The instructor might choose to spend five to ten minutes on one exercise (for example, favourite actions), ignoring completely the others. It is up to his judgement how much time he needs to prepare the student physiologically (i.e., to warm-up the muscles) and psychologically (to build confidence) for the forthcoming competition.

C.F.A. COACHING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

LEVEL 3

EVALUATION - SABRE

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 Certification course.

2. The marks total 100 and 60% is required for a pass.

THE EVALUATION

SABRE

SECTION I - MULTIPLE CHOICE - Circle the correct answers.

Marks

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. According to the number of movements, the attacks can be divided into: | 5 |
| a. real and false | |
| b. pre-planned and "open eyes" | |
| c. simple and compound | |
| d. first and second intention | |
| 2. Assuming the defender reacts with quarte, the compound attack "chest-flank" can be done: | 5 |
| a. with deception over the opponent's blade after the feint to the chest finished with a cut on the flank | |
| b. with deception under the opponent's garde after the feint to the chest finishing with a cut on the fore-arm. | |
| c. with deception under the opponent's blade after the feint to the chest with a point finishing with point thrust on the flank | |
| d. "a", "b" and "c" are possible | |
| 3. According to the FIE "Regulations of Competition" the running attack has: | 5 |
| a. priority against all the counter attacks as any other simple attack | |
| b. the run should be treated as a preparation of the attack | |
| c. it is an attack direct if the arm is kept straight during the run | |
| d. all the above are true | |

4. Fencer A makes an attack with a lunge. Fencer B parries quarte but does not make a riposte and moves back. Fencer A returns forward to the en garde and scores the hit with a straight fleche in the same line. According to the F.I.E., the described action is a: 5
- a. remise
 - b. reprise
 - c. redoublement
 - d. none of the above
5. The beat attack is: 5
- a. attack on the blade
 - b. prise de fer attack
 - c. "a" and "b" are correct
 - d. attack with an engagement
6. A beat can be done in order to: 5
- a. move the opponent's blade aside
 - b. provoke a defensive reaction
 - c. get the "right of way"
 - d. all the answers are correct
7. Counter time can be done as: 5
- a. a second intention or reflex action
 - b. a feint of counter attack followed by a parry and riposte
 - c. a false parry followed by a real parry
 - d. all of the above are correct
8. The derobement is: 5
- a. an action to avoid the opponent's attempt to fine one's blade
 - b. deception by the attacker of lateral parry
 - c. deception by the attacker of circular parry
 - d. all the answers are correct

SECTION II - TRUE OR FALSE (circle the correct answer)

1. Counter-time is a counter-offensive action which is done by the attacker on a stop-hit of the opponent. This statement is: 5
- A. true
 - B. false
2. The attacks on a preparation are all of the offensive and counter-offensive actions initiated into any preparational movements of the opponent. This statement is: 5
- A. true
 - B. false

SECTION III - SHORT ESSAYS

1. Describe briefly the progression in teaching the "head-flank-head" compound attack. 10

-
2. Describe briefly what kind of preparation you would ask your student to do if you were teaching him the counter-time. What should be your reaction for each preparation? 10

-
3. Describe all the possible targets for a direct riposte after the parry of seconde? 10

4. What are the steps you would use when teaching a prime parry?

10

5. Compose a short individual lesson to teach a counter attack of your choice.

10

Total Marks	<u>100</u>
Pass	60