

Foil Weeks 1 & 2

The Weapons

Foil: this is what you will be using for the first 8 classes. Traditionally used as a training weapon (mostly by young children and ladies), it is the lightest of the 3 weapons. With a smaller guard and reduced target area, the foil has a thrust and parry mode of use.

Épée: the most popular of the 3 weapons, RFC specialises in épée fencing, which is based upon the duelling sword of old – traditionally used by gentlemen to settle matters of honour. With a larger guard than the foil, it is slightly heavier and, when scoring, the whole of the opponent's body is valid target – you can hit them from head to toe!

Sabre: originally used by cavalry officers, this is the only cutting weapon (where hits may be scored with the edge as well as the point of the blade). As such, the valid target area is reduced to above the opponent's waist – this was the most vulnerable area of a seated rider, and it was also viewed as bad form to hit their horse! Modern sabre fencing is a bit like paper-scissors-stone.

Safety

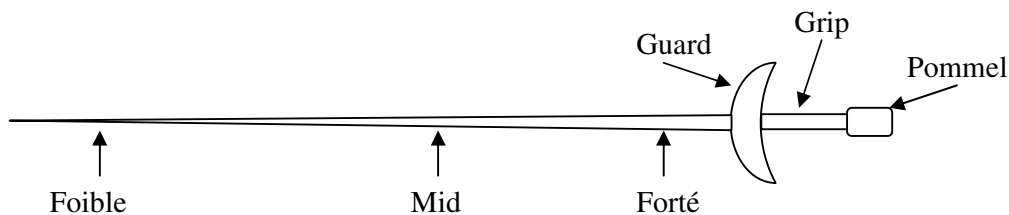
- ✂ Always wear correct clothing – mask, plastron, jacket, glove, long trousers and trainers – and make sure that your equipment is in good condition (e.g. no holes in clothing, stitching intact, mask not rusty or too dented, with a working back-strap).
- ✂ Make sure your opponent is ready to fence, and wearing the correct equipment.
- ✂ Never lose your temper.
- ✂ Obey the rules and the referee.
- ✂ Do not turn your back on your opponent, or run into them whilst fencing.
- ✂ Keep your non-sword arm out of the way.
- ✂ Do not use excessive force; hits on your opponent should be firm but light, with a slight bend in your blade.

The Grip

There are countless varieties of sword handles in fencing. The main two categories of grip are French and Pistol – both involve slightly different styles of play, but world champions have used both. Most people use pistol grips, but you'll be using French grips as they're easier to get the hang of to begin with.

When holding your foil, make sure that your palm is slightly upwards – imagine that your thumb is the hour hand on a clock: it should be positioned somewhere between 1 and 2 o'clock. Place your thumb near the guard on the top part of the handle, don't grip it too hard (use mainly your thumb, index and middle fingers to apply the most pressure), and keep the pommel (metal bit at the end of the handle, nearest to you), close to the palm of your hand.

Parts of the Foil



Salute!

Before each match, fencers must salute each other, and their referee, before fencing can begin. At the end of the fight, fencers must salute each other, and the referee, before taking off their masks and then shaking hands.

En Garde

Your feet should be at a right angle, hip- or shoulder-width apart. Hold your weapon with a bent arm, not too close or far away from your body, pointing towards your opponent. Bend your knees!

Basic Footwork

You should finish each step as it started: with your feet at right angles, hip-width apart, with your knees bent.

- ✂ **Stepping forwards:** Lift your front toes and extend your leg, placing your heel on the ground before your toes. Place your front foot down, and then lift (not drag) your back foot to close the distance. Ideally, the toe of the front foot should land at the same time as the back foot returns to the En Garde position as it helps to make smaller, neater footwork

- ✦ **Stepping backwards:** Lift your back foot and extend it behind you. Follow with your front foot, making sure that you step onto your heel first followed by toes second.

Cross-over Steps

- **Forwards**

Starting with your rear foot: move it forwards, across the front of your body, and place it on the ground in front of your other foot (in the same position prior to movement). Lift your front foot, move it forwards, and place it on the ground (on to the heel first) so that you are back to the en garde position.

- **Backwards**

Starting with your front foot: move it backwards, across the back of your body, and place it on the ground behind your other foot (in the same position prior to movement). Lift your back foot, move it backwards, and place it on the ground so that you return to your original en garde position.

The Lunge

Extend your front arm, towards your opponent, with your foil pointing towards your opponent. As with a step, raise your front toes and extend your front leg into a longer stride by pushing off your back leg (make sure that you land on your front heel first, not toes). Your back arm should extend backwards to act as a counter-balance.

Throughout the movement, your body should remain upright with your front hand slightly above your shoulders. On completion of the move, your front knee should be above the instep, with a straight rear leg. Both feet should still be at right angles, flat on the floor, with your head and body upright. On completion of the lunge, you'll need to recover:

- ✦ **Recovery backwards:** Keep your back foot where it is. Push off your front leg and bend your back leg, using your rear arm as a counter-balance, to return to your original en garde position.

- ✦ **Recovery forwards:** Keep your front still. Bring your back foot up to return to your original en garde position.

Note: When lunging, move your arm first! When recovering from a lunge, your sword arm is the last to return to the en garde position.

Target Area & How to Hit

The target area in foil is the trunk of the body, excluding the opponent's head, arms and legs. Points to the 'V' section of the jacket into the groin are valid, as well as points to the back. The bib of the mask is not included.

There are nine different hand positions in fencing, numbered one to nine: prime (1), seconde (2), tierce (3), quarte (4), quinte (5), sixte (6), septime (7), octave (8), and neuvième (9). In this lesson, you will be covering sixte (sword-arm side, high line), quarte (non sword-arm side, high line), and octave (sword-arm side, low line). These positions are shown in the diagram opposite.

N.B. The diagram is of a right-handed fencer! Positions in red are the ones most commonly used in foil and epee fencing.

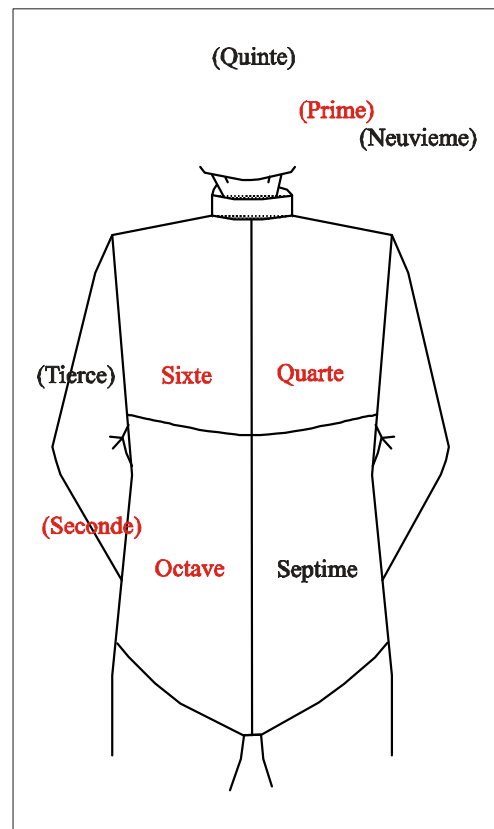
The Parry (4, 6, 8) and Riposte

A *parry* is just a posh word for 'block'. There're several positions that you can parry into, and several ways in which you can get there; here are the basic and most commonly used ones.

- ✦ **Quarte (lateral parry):** keeping your point where it is (inline with your opponent), move your guard horizontally across from sixte to quarte. Keep your hand at the same height, with the pommel pushed away from the wrist, and make sure not to push your weapon too far from your body. The foible of the attacking blade should be trapped between the guard and forte of your weapon.

- ✦ **Sixte (circular parry):** move your point in a (clockwise) circular movement to catch the foible of your opponent's weapon between the guard and forte of your own. You should finish in the same position as when you started, but with your opponent's blade on the opposite (sixte) side of yours. The circle made by your point should be small, no larger than a dinner plate, using only movement from your wrist and fingers (not the whole of your arm!).

- ✦ **Octave (semi-circular parry):** move your point in an anti-clockwise direction (opposite to circular parry), making contact with you opponent's blade and then pushing it to the right, so it's no longer near your target area. To make it more effective,



you might want to move your hand over to the right as well – this will give you more protection whilst also allowing an easier angle to riposte from.

A *riposte* is an offensive action that follows after a parry has been made; the defender becomes the attacker. There are a couple of variations on how you can hit your opponent with a riposte, depending on the situation. These are:

✂ **Direct/Indirect**

- *Direct* riposte: where a hit is scored without passing under or over the opponent's blade, i.e. in the straightest line possible to the target area.
- *Indirect* riposte: after making a successful parry, your point finds its way to the target but not in a straight line, i.e. you move your point under or over their blade.

✂ **Attached/Detached**

- An *attached* riposte is where your blade keeps in contact with your opponents; after making a parry, slide your blade along your opponents to score a hit (always keeping contact between the two blades).
- A *detached* riposte is where, after making a parry, your blade loses contact with that of your opponents, e.g. with an indirect riposte.

Counter-Riposte

This is a riposte, made after an opponent's initial riposte has itself been parried ... for example: Person A attacks, Person B parries and makes a first riposte; Person A parries this riposte and then makes their own riposte – this last riposte is the first counter riposte. This pattern may continue to give second, third, or even fourth counter ripostes.

The Bind

Once your opponent's blade has been engaged by your own, a bind is where their blade travels diagonally across (from high-to low-line, or vice versa).

For example: engage your opponent's blade in quarte. Cut your point over their blade in a (anti-clockwise) circular motion, and then move your blade downwards and across to the position of octave.

Binds are a quick and effective form of engagement, although for a small time your opponent's blade will travel across your own target area.

Prepare to Attack!

You may wish to use tricks and tactics to outsmart your opponent... in fencing, a number of movements can be used to prepare your attack, instead of just going straight in for the kill!

Feint, Disengage

• **The Feint**

A simple move, the feint is used as a preparation before making an attack. Its objective is to make your opponent react, often forcing them to make a parry, whilst you attack elsewhere. Feints are more effective when you aim your point to the opponent's eyes, not chest, but be careful not to over-extend your arm in doing so (it will make the rest of your attack less effective).

• **The Disengage**

When making a simple attack or a riposte, a disengagement can be used to deceive your opponent's parry. This not only makes your life easier, but also the avoidance of your opponent's blade will mean that you keep right of way (see later notes, in Weeks 5 & 6, under Principles of Foil).

To make a disengagement, simply use your wrist and finger movement to move your point underneath your opponent's blade, without touching it, and then back up again. Make the movement as small as possible: smaller movements are quicker and therefore harder to defend against.

Beat It!

One of the simplest preparations, the beat is a short, crisp striking movement against the opponent's blade. The aim is to knock their blade aside (and provoke a reaction). Make sure to use only your wrist and fingers to move your blade, not your whole arm. The objective is one of subtlety and guile, not to bash your opponent's weapon across the room – as such, it is a small movement, and your blade should stop where it makes contact with your opponent's.

Most often, the beat will be used in tandem with either a feint, a disengagement, or a cutover.

Think About...

Keeping distance.

Foil Weeks 3 & 4

Balestra

The balestra is a forward, jumping, movement that serves two purposes. Firstly, it is a quick way of gaining ground on your opponent and, secondly, acts as a preparation by intimidating/surprising your opponent, making them react.

Start of as you would a forward step, by raising your front toes. Extend your front leg, as with a step or lunge, and push off your back foot to gain extra distance. Both your feet should land at the same time, and you should finish as you started, on balance in the en garde position.

Full Speed Ahead! Or Not...

- **Different Types of the Lunge.** You should be aware that there are two types of lunge – Explosive, and Accelerating – which can be used according to different situations. The technique involved with both types of lunge remain exactly the same, it is only their speed that changes.

- **Explosive.** This is the type of lunge that you've been using up until now; use an explosive lunge for more direct attacks, where speed is paramount. Extend your arm first, and then use the power in your back leg for a burst of energy to propel you forwards. There is just one speed for explosive lunges: fast!

- **Accelerating.** One of the more difficult footwork techniques to master; use an accelerating lunge for more complex attacks that involve preparations. After extending your arm, proceed with the lunge at half speed – this time is reserved for preparing an attack – and then, as you finish your preparation, fully extend your arm and accelerate your lunge to full speed to reach the target.

* For both types of lunge, always remember one thing: **ARM FIRST !!!**

The Flèche

This is one of the hardest footwork techniques to master... when executed well, it is an excellent way to rapidly finish off your attack and score a magnificent hit on your bedazzled opponent...

As with any attack, the first thing you must do is to extend your **ARM FIRST**. Your knees should be bent, and as you tilt your weight forwards slightly, push off your back leg to propel you forwards, and then drive it through in the direction of your target. You should (in theory) hit your opponent *before* your back leg lands on the floor.

The energy of the movement should be aimed forwards, not upwards, and your body should remain upright, with your head up and eyes facing forwards.

After (hopefully) hitting your opponent, you should move around them: move to your sword-arm side – if you need to, this will allow a better opportunity to hit your opponent again – and then continue past.

N.B. If you miss, your opponent is allowed one parry and one riposte to hit you, even once you've passed them! The flèche should not be over-used, but is a useful move and should be done to its full effect every time.



It's Not Over... Remise and Redouble

Sometimes after making a lunging attack, your point will fall short. A remise can be done quickly in order to make up the extra distance to the target.

To remise, once you have completed a lunge, lift up your back foot and place it 10-15cms forwards from its original position. Now, use the newfound bend in your back leg to push off and make either:

- a) Another (smaller) lunge, or,
- b) A flèche.

- **The Remise**

A different kind of remise this time ('remise' comes from old French – *remettre* – which means to 'replace' or 'renew'). Put simply, once an attack has failed – after falling short, or having been parried – a remise means having another go at the target, in the same line of attack.

Once your attack has failed, use a remise to hit the any of your opponent's target area that remains exposed. You may have to angulate your foil in order to get a better shot at the target.

- **The Redouble**

Similar to a remise, a redouble is a renewal of the attack, hitting in a different position. For example, if your attack to the quarte position of your opponent's target area, you could redouble to sixte.

N.B. The remise and redouble are used mainly in épée fencing. In foil, once an attack has ended – by falling short or being parried – priority is handed to the other fencer... as such, the use of a remise/redouble is done without priority and, if both fencers

hit at the same time, it will be the ex-defender that scores the point. Unless your renewal is done at lightning speed, the safest option in foil would be to get out of distance, and/or use a counter-riposte.

Pressure

With the blades engaged, simply pressure in a lateral motion upon the mid-section of your opponent's blade. Use your fingers and wrist movement, keeping your hand and arm in the same position. The aim is to provoke a response from your opponent.

A short, sharp pressure will provoke a more immediate reaction (similar to the beat), whereas a slower one will allow for more control of their blade. Most often, an effective pressure will provoke your opponent to counter-pressure, allowing you to attack with either a disengage or a cutover.

Froissement

Froissement can be translated into English as "rustling" (in terms of noise). The move involves making contact with your opponent's blade at its foible, and then sliding your blade down toward their guard whilst exerting pressure at the same time. So, like a pressure but with movement on the blade.

Cut-over

To make a disengagement, simply use your wrist and finger movement to move your point slightly towards you whilst arching over the opponent's blade, so that it arrives on the opposite side. Again, make the movement as small as possible to maximise its effectiveness.

- **The Idea of Compound Attacks**

Simply put, a compound attack is an attack made up of two or more movements. Direct attacks – also called 'simple' attacks – look to hit the opponent in a straight line, with no other movements in preparation; whereas compound attacks look to combine a number of different movements – such as some of the movements we have covered in this lesson – to trick the opponent into reacting to an initial movement, and then hitting them afterwards.

- **An Example of a Compound Attack: the 1-2 Attack**

With your partner, stand at a distance where you can hit them with two steps, with your blades not touching. Slightly extend your arm into a feint and, when your opponent goes to parry quarte, disengage and place your point into the quarte position, whilst stepping forwards. After making an initial parry, and having been deceived, your opponent will make another lateral parry back into sixte; disengage again, so that your point is in the sixte position, extend your arm and step forwards a second time to make the hit.

Successive Parries

When an opponent uses compound attacks against you, you will often be forced to make a number of parries to keep them from hitting you. Make sure that you don't use the same parry too often, because a predictable fencer is easier to hit... and always remember, that distance is also the best defence!

New Parries

- **New Positions.** For your Grade 1 Assessment, you will only need to know the positions of sixte (6) and quarte (4). There are, however, nine positions in total and to help your fencing in general it will be useful to know the others...

- **Prime (1).** One of the hardest parries to get right under pressure, prime is a parry normally reserved for close quarters defence.

From your en garde position in sixte, pronate your hand slightly and, as you make contact with the opponent's blade, continue to lift your hand upwards in a diagonal movement. You should end up with your hand flexed at a right angle, positioned directly in front of your mask (roughly eye level). Try to keep your point in line with your opponent, and position your blade so that it is a small distance away from your body, in order to fully block the oncoming attack.

To make a riposte, flex your wrist slightly and go for a direct hit, stepping in if necessary in order to close distance to the target.

- **Seconde (2).** Another parry that is primarily defensive, used regularly due to the strength of its final position and control over the opponents blade.

From your en garde position in sixte, pronate your hand and move your point in a circular (anticlockwise) movement, trapping your opponents blade as you do. With control of their blade, move your guard slightly outwards (your elbow will also move out as a result). You should finish with your hand positioned slightly ahead and to the side of your body, making for a safe and solid position to make your hit.

Angulate your point to go for a direct (attached) hit to the low section of your opponents target area, or hit indirectly.

- **Septime (7).** This position is on the non-sword arm side, with the point in a low line. It is rarely used, although can be effective in both attack (in a coul e, especially against left handers) and defence (in a bind or even a beat parry).

From the sixte position, move your hand laterally across to the non-sword arm side (as with quarte) and drop lower your point so that it is still in line. You should finish with your foil pointing towards the target, with your opponents blade on the far side of yours. Make sure that it is your point that lowers, not your hand.

Make a direct riposte (making sure that you keep control of your opponents blade) or an indirect (compound) one elsewhere on your opponents target area.

- **Neuvième (9).** Probably the least used of all the hand positions in fencing it is, however, a nice one to know so that (when you're good enough) you can show off once in a while... Its position is the same as in prime, but with your hand placed slightly more in front. Make sure that you take the blade early and then, once in neuvième, make a quick and direct hit on your stunned and bewildered opponent.

- **Just so you know...** the seven positions that we have covered so far are those used most frequently in foil and épée fencing. However, there are two more that you should also be aware of. **These other positions are...**

- **Tierce (3).** This is the starting position in sabre and one of the main parries in sabre. Although it is seldom used in foil and épée fencing, tierce can be used in some (more advanced) compound attacks.

From sixte, flex your wrist and turn your palm upwards (so that it is facing towards you).

- **Quinte (5).** Only used in sabre fencing, this is a parry used to protect from lunging attacks to the head.

From the sixte position, raise your hand upwards and tilt it inwards so that it finishes above and in front of your head, with the blade not parallel but sloping slightly upwards.

If you have to do a parry of quinte in foil or épée, then something has gone terribly, terribly wrong...

Be Engaging...

An engagement of the blade simply means taking control of the opponent's foible with your own blade – principally the forte and guard – as a means of making a direct hit or in preparation. There are four main types of engagement: simple engagement, bind, envelopment, and croisé.

Whenever attempting to engage your opponent's blade, make sure that you use only your fingers and wrist movement, not the whole of your arm. The smaller the technique, the quicker it will be and therefore harder to defend against.

- **Simple Engagement**

The easiest and simplest of engagements, this consists of making contact and taking control of the opponent's blade, as in a parry, but with a half-extension of the arm. The most common simple engagements are: sixte (circular), quarte (lateral), and octave (semi-circular).

- **Change of Engagement**

A change of engagement simply reverses the initial engagement made by your opponent. For example, if your opponent engages your blade in sixte, use your wrist and finger movement to move your point in an anti-clockwise direction, underneath your opponent's blade, to come up on the other side and engage their blade in quarte.

Foil Weeks 5 & 6

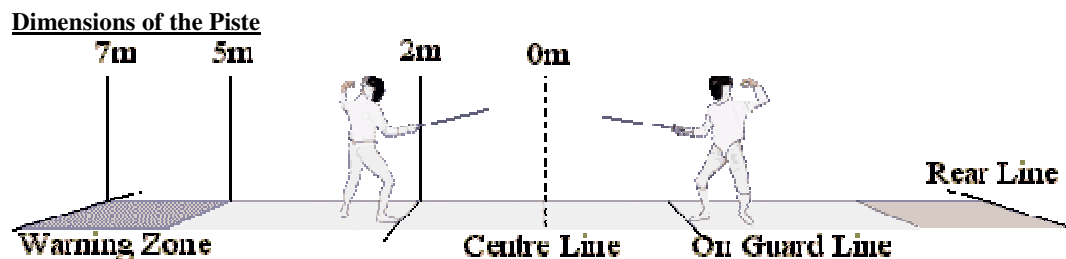
Right of Way Explained (as best we can...)

In foil (and also in sabre), points are scored using a system of priority. In order to score a valid point, you must not only hit on target, but with priority... initially, priority is given to the fencer who initiates an attack. At this stage, if two hits are made, it is the person with the attack (who has priority) who wins the point.

In order to win priority, the defender must make sure that his opponent's attack has ended – for example, the attacks falls short, misses, or is parried – before marking their own hit.

If the person with priority hits a non-valid target, then play is stopped there. No points are awarded, and play will resume from the same spot on the piste.

If both fencers attack and hit each other at the same time, priority is not awarded and no point is scored (this is called 'simultaneous attack').



- A fencing piste is 14 metres long, and 1.5 to 2.0 metres wide.
- Two metres either side of the *centre line* are two *en garde lines*, where fencing starts at the beginning of every fight and after each successful hit is scored.

Two metres from each end of the piste is a *warning line*, and the *warning zone* in the last two metres of the piste is often coloured differently.

Oh, Referee!

- At the start of every new point, both fencers must stand behind their respective en garde lines. The referee stands on the outside of the piste, level with the centre line. These positions are taken at the beginning of every fight, and after a successful hit has been awarded.
- The referee's **commands** are..
 - "En garde" – to ask both fencers to come to their positions.
 - "Are you ready?" – say "no" if you're not.
 - If there are no objections from either fencer at this point, the ref will say one of the following... *allez, fence, fight, play!*
 - Whenever the bout needs to be stopped, the ref will say "halt"!
- During freeplay, the ref must move in order to remain by the side of the fencers, whilst keeping a clear view to the scoring apparatus.
- In the event of a non-valid hit being made, the ref will call 'halt' to stop play, and fencing will resume in the same place on the piste.
- Stepping completely off your end of this piste will stop play, and a point will be awarded to your opponent.
- Stepping off the side of the piste results in a stop in play, and when play resumes the offending fencer loses one metre in ground – if this results in the fencer crossing the back line, one point is awarded to the opponent. If this is done on purpose – to avoid being hit – the ref may award a yellow card.
- The ref may give a fencer a 'warning' for small offences. A yellow card must be awarded if this offence is repeated, and two yellow cards will result in a red – giving one point to the opponent. Please avoid... weapon failure (when fencing with electrics), the use of unreasonable force, failing to salute the opponent or referee.

Keeping Score & Time

Points win prizes! To win a fight you must get to the allocated maximum score before your opponent or, if time runs out, be the one with the most points. In épée, if for example you and your opponent are tied at 14-14 and there is a double hit, then you must replay the point until a single hit is scored (the same applies at 4-4 in a fight to 5). In competitions, fights are often scored to 5 points in the first rounds (called 'poules'), and then to 15 points in DE (or 'Direct Elimination') fights later on.

Poule fights: score 5 hits/3 minutes. The person who scores 5 hits first will win; if the 3 minute time limit is reached before either fencer has gotten to 5, the person who is leading will win.

DE fights: 15 hits/9 minutes. Three times the fun of a poule fight... these are comprised of three 3-minute periods, with 1-minute rest periods in between (e.g. fence for 3 minutes, rest for 1 minute, fence a second period of 3 minutes, rest for 1 minute,

and then a third, final, and nerve-racking final 3 minutes). Again, the first person to reach 15 points will win the fight and, in the event of time running out, the person leading on score will be victorious.

Sudden death: in the event of time running out and *both* fencers being tied on score, then the bout is decided with one final point. One person is given 'priority', normally by tossing a coin or spinning a pen or pencil, and then fencing resumes for a further minute – the person who scores the first hit will win or, if time runs out before a hit is scored, then the person with priority will win.

NB: time keeping in fencing is *not* continuous. The clock starts as soon as the referee tells the fencers to begin, and ends each time "halt" is called.

'Electric' Fencing (Week 5)

Electric fencing is the norm nowadays. It involves a **scoring box** (usually referred to simply as "*box*"), situated by the centre line of the piste, which is connected to two **spooles** at either end by what are called **ground wires/leads**. Each spool will have a socket, into which the fencer will plug their **bodywire** and then attach it to a clip on their jacket – the other end of the bodywire, which is worn underneath the fencing jacket, will plug into the socket of an electric weapon.

As the valid target in each weapon is different, fencers must use different equipment accordingly:

- ✂ Foil: is complicated. Each fencer must wear an **electric jacket** (also referred to as a **lamé** [pronounced "lar-may"] – don't ask us why, we don't know!), which covers only the target area valid for foil (i.e. not the arms or legs). The bodywire will have 2 ends with 3 different bits at each one – a 3-pin socket (plugs into spool), a crocodile clip (clips onto jacket), and a bayonet or 2-pin socket (plugs into weapon). Before the fight commences, each fencer will hit the electric jacket of the other, making sure that a coloured (red/green) scoring light registers, instead of an off-target (white) light.
- ✂ Sabre: is more complicated. More or less the same as foil in that each fencer must wear an electric jacket, however the jacket will be sabre-specific (i.e. with sleeves and no metallic fabric below the waste). The same bodywire is used in sabre as in foil, but with an additional "mask clip" – a wire with two crocodile clips, one at each end – connecting the electric jacket to the mask. Before a match, fencers will test by tapping each other's mask to make sure that a coloured light appears.
- ✂ Épée: is much easier. No funny jackets – apart from the normal fencing one! – need to be worn. The bodywire is simple, with two 3-pin plugs at each end – one end plugs into the spool and the other into the weapon socket. Fencers "test guards" before each fight – hitting your opponent's guard once – to make sure that no scoring lights come up on the box.

Electric fencing is simple for the most part, with just two fencers and a referee. Fights progress as detailed earlier in this handout. During play, any hits registered by either fencer will cause the box to beep and show some pretty lights, signalling the referee to call "halt" – in foil, a **white light** signifies a "non-valid" hit (i.e. hitting off target, like the arm, or the floor). In all three weapons a **coloured light** signifies that a valid hit has been scored. The side on which the light appears is the same side by which it was scored. As you'll appreciate, in foil and sabre there tends to be a bit of polite discussion before any hits, if any, are actually awarded, in accordance with Right of Way. In épée competitions, it is not uncommon for there to be **floor judges**, because if the weapon hits the floor it will register a coloured light which may not be valid. To eliminate this, and usually at competitions, fencers will sometimes play on what is called an **electric/metallic piste**, which is hard-wired to the box and will eliminate most floor hits by earthing them out.

'Steam' Foil Fencing (Week 6)

Steam fencing is old school (how Al and Robin learnt when they were lads). Points are awarded by the referee but, as there's no fancy electrical equipment involved, four 'judges' are also required. Each fencer will have two judges stood either side (and *not* on the piste) and just behind them. As fencing begins, the judges will follow their allocated fencer up and down (staying just behind) and, when they see a point scored on *OTHER* fencer, will raise their hand up to notify the referee. If the ref sees a point scored at any time, or one of the judges raise their hands, then they will call halt to stop play. Then the fun begins...

- ✂ First, the referee will rephrase the actions from both fencers leading up to the moment when halt was called.
- ✂ Once the ref has established which of the two fencers (if any) he thinks originally *established* Right of Way, he will ask the judges behind that fencer what they saw: "Did Bob hit Joe with his (first) lunge?", for example. Judges can answer in one of four ways:
 - "Yes, on target" – if they saw their fencer hit the other on their valid target area. E.g. if the judges behind Bob saw him hit Joe plum in the chest, they would give this answer.
 - "Yes, off target" – if they saw their fencer hit the other, but *not* on the valid target area. E.g. if the judges behind Bob thought he hit Joe on the leg or arm.
 - "No, no hit" – if they did not see their fencer score a hit on that action. E.g. if the judges behind Bob thought he missed Joe completely.
 - "Abstain" – if they don't know what happened. E.g. weren't paying attention, or weren't in a good position to see.
- ✂ Then comes the voting and maths (yes, that's right, voting and maths – it's an all-round sport!). The referee's **vote** counts for 1.5, and each judge has a vote that counts for 1. The action is then weighed up according to how each of the 3 votes (i.e. the referee's, and each of the two judges behind Bob)... four things can happen from here:

- **Hit, on target** – the majority of votes support the fact that Bob really did hit Joe plum in the chest. In this case, Bob wins the point – well done him.
- **Hit, off target** – the majority of voters think Bob hit Joe off target, so no point is awarded. As it was off target, the referee will neither award a point nor continue his phrasing of what happened afterwards – play will resume from where it last stopped.
- **No hit** – the majority of voters think Bob didn't hit Joe at all; the referee will continue in his phrasing of what happened leading up to the moment that halt was called, and ask the next relevant pair of judges and start the whole voting process again.
- **Doubt** – nobody really has a clue. Either everyone abstains, or there's a tie on votes deciding whether or not the hit was on or off target (i.e. ref abstains, no vote; first judge thinks Bob hit on target, one vote for; second judge thinks Bob either hit off target or missed, so one vote against). Doubt is treated in the same way as an off target hit – no point is awarded and play resumes where it last stopped.
- Note: the extra weight of the referee's vote is important but not final: if one judge abstains and the other thinks that Bob's hit was valid, but the ref thinks it was off target, then the ref's decision will prevail (1 vote for, 1.5 votes against). However, if both judges think that the hit was on target then they will out-vote the referee (2 votes for, 1.5 against).

✂ After all of this, the 2 most important things you need to remember are:

- 1) What happened in real life isn't necessarily translated into the correct decision by the referee. What he saw, and his interpretation of who had Right of Way, will decide who (if anyone) scores the point. So – make sure *you* establish RoW clearly: prepare your attacks clearly, extend your arm clearly, parry clearly, and shout with every hit to add authenticity!
- 2) Epée is so much easier to understand!!!

Note: this is the last handout for the Foil Course. In week 7 we will do the Grade 1 Foil test, and go over anything else you haven't understood or would like to do in more detail; in week 8 we will do a small competition within the group!