

# **ADVANCED FENCING CLASS**



## **Essentials of Fencing Technique:**

1. Mental Preparation
2. Physical Preparation
3. Technical Actions
  - a. Footwork
  - b. Blade Work
    1. Straight Thrust
    2. Prise De Fer
    3. Disengage
    4. Cut Over (Coupe)
4. Strategy
5. Tactical Actions
6. Terminology

## **B. BLADE WORK**

Blade work can best be defined as actions of the weapon's blade generated through the grip of the weapon as influenced by the fingers, wrist, arm, and body.

Classically hand positions while gripping the weapon are either:

1. Prone
2. Supine
3. Neutral

At CFA what we teach is the neutral position as superior because there is a fraction of a second lost in adjusting the hand from prone or supine.

## **The essential Blade Work actions:**

### **1. STRAIGHT THRUST**

Straight Thrust is really the precursor to all other blade actions. Essentially the thrust is the offensive presentation of the weapon directed toward the target of the opponent using only the extension of the arm as the delivery system. To be effective it has to be within striking or touch range. As has already been discussed it precedes the lunge.

### **2. PRISE DE FER**

Prise de fer is a movement used in fencing in which a fencer takes the opponent's blade into a line and holds it there in preparation to attack. Translated from French, the phrase prise de fer means "taking-the-blade" or "taking-the-steel".

## 1) Four Takes of the Blade

### i. **Opposition** – lateral transfer

In the opposition, a fencer takes an opponent's blade in any line and then extends in that line, diverting the opponent's blade, until the action is complete. As the name implies the blade is used to oppose or shove aside the opponent's blade. The most common oppositions are six, four, seven, and eight.

### ii. **Bind** - diagonal semi-circular transfer

The bind takes the opponent's blade from any line diagonally to the opposing line. The action can be done from high to low line or vice versa. For example, from sixth, the opponent's blade is taken to seventh, or from eighth, the blade is taken to fourth. Today binds are most often spoken of in terms of being semi-circular diagonal transfers.

### iii. **Cross** – vertical semi-circular transfer

This is actually a mini-bind usually taken from six moving the blade down to eight. Most effectively it has the most controlling power from six to eight. In modern terms it is most often called a vertical semi-circular transfer.

### iv. **Envelopment** – circular transfer

The action moves the tip of the offending blade around the opponent's bell guard in a small circle at the same time enveloping or trapping the opponent's blade. Ideally the motion should be very small and be very tight, the tip of the offending blade beginning the move at the top of the opponent's bell and finishing in the same position. The four major envelopments are six, four, seven, and eight. The action is either clockwise or counterclockwise depending upon the relative position presented by the opponent's blade. The guiding factor is to use the envelopment to sweep the opponent's blade away your most direct target line. Envelopments today are commonly called circular transfers. A common usage is to refer to the envelopment six as the circle six, the envelopment in four as circle four, etc.

It is very important to note here that each of these four takings of the iron can be used offensively, defensively, and counter-offensively. To defend, attack, or counterattack with them can be devastatingly effective.

## 2) Four Attacks of the Blade

### i. **Beat**

It means literally to beat or strike the opponent's blade. The action can either be used as a distraction or as a precursor to another move. Beats to be effective should be taken with either the strong part of the blade or the center of the blade. The strongest beats are from six to four and from six to seven.

### ii. **Press**

The press is an attempt to push the opponent's blade aside or out of line that follows depending on the opponent's response by a offensive, defensive, counter-offensive, or counter-time action.

### iii. **Expulsion** – press and push

The easiest expulsion to define and execute is from four. The strong of the offending blade lies across the weak of the opponent's blade on the inside line and suddenly with strong straight downward forced snapping gliding motion moves from four to seven. The action is executed so strongly and quickly that it actually wrenches the opponent's wrist and can facilitate a disarm. There are two main variations: one in which the opponent's blade is forced down and the other that the opponent's blade is forced strongly to his inside line or outside line depending upon what line the action originates from. An expulsion can also easily be executed by initiating the actions from six moving to eight. It should be noted here that both of the expulsion actions move from high lines to low lines. Low to high line expulsions are awkward and ineffective. The expulsion is generally the precursor to an attack. Most often following an expulsion comes a release of the opponent's blade followed by an attacking or counterattacking action of some type.

### iv. **Glide** – take and glide over

Using timing, speed and distance it is simply an action in which the offending blade runs quickly and lightly along the opponent's blade landing a touch in the same line. It is literally a grazing type action. The action generally takes an opponent off guard because the blade contact and pressure is threatening in both the physical and psychological sense. The glide is most effectively executed from either six or four but can be done from all positions. High line action is however the most effective.

### **3. DISENGAGE**

The disengage is generally thought of as a simple attack that is executed by the blade traveling from one line to another generally by passing under the opponent's blade. Originally the name came from the release of one blade from another when they were in contact or engaged.

#### **1) Types of Disengages**

##### *i. Single Disengage*

1. Single Disengage is when the attacker fencer goes around one single parry and hits immediately after.

##### *ii. Multi-Disengage*

1. Multi-Disengage is when the attacker fencer goes around two or more parries and hits after the last parry disengaged.

#### **2) Ways of Disengages**

##### *i. While attacking*

1. While attacking a fencer might include a single or multi-disengage in order to score on the opponent's valid target area.

##### *ii. After a parry*

1. After a parry a single or multi-disengage riposte might follow. It is also referred to as an indirect riposte.

### **4. CUT OVER (COUPE)**

- 1) The cut over is generally considered a simple indirect attack executed by moving the tip of the blade from one line to the opposite line over the top of the opponent's blade. It generally moves from six to four or four to six.