FENCING TIPS FOR TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITIVE BOUTING

By Coach Mal-sun Marletto

Things to remember while warming up & waiting:

- Remember to finish the retreat first, then parry-riposte moving forward.
- If you start first with the offense, you must finish the attack without stopping or hesitation (it can be slow & gradual, but must be continuous).
- If you let your opponent start first with the offense, you must parry-riposte.
- If you think your opponent is going to do a compound attack (v. a direct attack), then you can try to counterattack and catch them "in preparation." If you're not so sure of your opponent's intentions, safer to retreat and parry-riposte.
- Try to watch your opponents' actions before you fence them. When they're fencing against another opponent, pretend you're fencing against them and think of things you may try against them. Pay attention to their feints, preparations, etc. Do they like to attack? Simple attacks or compound attacks? Do they like to defend? Do they have a "favorite" parry or attack? Do they counterattack? (If they like to counterattack, you must keep your attacks simple and direct--no compound attacks-- alternatively you can make feints to get the counterattack so you can parry-riposte).
- It's ok to feel nervous/anxious at competitions. It's natural! Shake off the jitters by warming up, stretching & FENCE a few touches with another competitor or teammate before you start--don't be shy about asking someone to fence a few touches with you. While fencing those warm-up touches you want to focus on proper distance, timing, and start getting your brain in gear to think fencing. Don't worry if your opponent gets more touches than you (you're just warming up!!) Don't keep track of points, just fence a little, preferably until you start breaking a sweat. Don't overly exert yourself--save energy for the real thing.

Things to remember while you're bouting:

- Stay relaxed, but focused
- DON'T RUSH! Fence your game.
- Think ONE touch at a time
- Expectations of any sort (high or low) only cause undue stress.
- Only focus on fencing--be confident!
- Surprise your opponent and don't let your opponent surprise you!
- Don't underestimate or overestimate your opponent by their appearance!
- Remember you only need to lead by one touch to win the bout, so if you're in the lead let your opponent do the hard work and focus on defense--do not get impatient.
- If you get hit, shake it off and focus on your next touch. Pay more attention to distance, defense & DON'T EVER stop fencing until you hear the HALT.
- If you lose a bout 5-0, don't worry about it--DO NOT get angry or frustrated--just focus on your next bout. It happens! 5 touches can be very quick!
- Be happy with every touch you get and focus on your next one.
- Encourage yourself, don't put yourself down.
- Fence well, have fun!

Sample positive talk (not to be confused with over-confidence or cockiness):

- "I know I can do it: I beat so & so at the club and they're a better fencer than my opponent, so I know I can do it."
- Think of a hardship you went through and overcame. Anything that will make you feel more confident compared to your opponent.

TIPS FOR FOIL REFEREEING

By Coach Mal-sun Marletto

Things to remember when you are refereeing:

- Look at the action of the fencers, NOT the machine. The machine only tells you if the fencer made a hit and if the hit was on target or off target. It does NOT tell you which fencer had right-of-way (ROW).
- Remember it's not who hit first, but who had ROW!
- Actions that establish or take ROW: point-in-line, attack, parry, prise-de-fer immediately followed by attack.
- Actions that do NOT have ROW: counterattack, attacks with hesitation or that stop (feints), remises and continuations.
- Actions that STEAL the ROW: attacks in preparation.
- Actions that make ROW end: end of the attack or riposte (if the attack or riposte is either short or misses)
- To be a good ref, you not only see the actions, but you understand the fencer's intentions. For example: is the fencer initiating a real attack with the intent to hit or is he making preparations and feints to get a response from their opponent so they can react?
- If someone hits with one light it doesn't really matter who has ROW, but as a referee you should know who has the ROW. Same thing with off-target hits. When reffing, think whether the off-target hit has ROW or not.

In the examples below Fencer A is on the left and Fencer B on the right. "x" is the moment the blade is hit. "**H**" is the moment that fencer is hit valid (not scores the hit, but IS HIT). Off target hits are "**h**". Go through the examples slowly... they get tricky!

Simple examples to get you warmed up:

Referee's call: Parry-riposte from right; touch right. (CORRECT)

Fencer A: -----(attack)-------H------

Fencer B: ------(attack)-------H-

ROW: A-----

Referee's call: Attack from left; touch left. (CORRECT)

Referee's call: Hit landed first from right; touch right. (INCORRECT)

Analysis: Note that Fencer B's action is really a counterattack, because his attack started into A's attack and it does NOT have ROW.

OK, the real examples start now:

Example 1:

I told you it would get tricky!

Example 2:

Fencer A: -----(beat-1-2-attack)--H------Fencer B: ------x----(counterattack)---H--A-----(A still has ROW!) ROW: Referee's call: Attack from left; touch left. (CORRECT) Referee's call: Hit landed first from right; touch right. (INCORRECT) Analysis: Note that Fencer B's action is really a counterattack, because his attack started into A's attack and it does NOT have ROW. The only way B's counterattack would get the point is if it was done one full action before A's completion of the attack; i.e., between the beat and the first disengage. In other words, there is a difference between the following two scenarios (cA is counterattack): A: beat--one---two AND A: beat--one---two B: сA B: cА cA is NOT in time and A has ROW cA is in time and is considered an attack in preparation

Example 3:

Example 4:

NOW A TEST:

Note that for the test I am only going to tell you what the fencers do and it is up to you to determine when and where there is an attack, if the attack stops, etc. etc. Try and picture this in your head.

"|" is when there is a stop/hesitation in the action.