

SABRE TRAINING 2

PARRIES AND RIPOSTES

The parry

The parry is a defensive action made with the blade to prevent an attack from landing. This is a protective displacement of the blade that covers the exposed area, travelling the shortest route between defensive actions.

The principle of defence is the opposition of forte to foible. A parry and riposte should be thought of as a single unit. Defence in sabre can be very difficult because of the variety of cuts, and the use of the point, combined with the size of the defensive box.

Parries should be taken as late as possible. The position of the attacker's guard towards the end of the attacking sequence may give some indication.

Parries are split into two groups:

- 1 the low defensive triangle: Prime, Seconde, Quinte
- 2 the high defensive triangle: Tierce, Quarte, Quinte

The riposte

The riposte is the offensive action made by the fencer who has successfully parried the attack. This can be direct, indirect or compound and delivered immediately or after a delay, when the fencer responds to the lightest touch of the attacker's blade. The response can be made with a cut, through cut or the point.

The high defensive triangle is a useful place to start. Maintain each of the defensive positions until the blade is touched. Ensure that all the parries are formed correctly. Wait for the opponent's blade to meet yours, then riposte – crisply, the cuts are executed lightly using the fingers.

Begin the parry of quarte by first turning the guard. Direct ripostes take the most direct route to the target.

F Koksis, July, 2006.