

FIE COACH PROGRAMME, SABRE

Observations, Learning and Thoughts

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17. Block Outs

The block out in sabre is an important skill, particularly when delivering counter actions. If there are two lights, everything else being equal, it is the fencer who has right of way who will score. The block out allows the fencer who does not have right of way to steal the hit and ensure there is one light in their favour.

The set up in the first part of this video is very nice. From a stationary position, the coach vigorously opens the line by pulling the arm back to draw the hit. Once moving the coach steps back first, then makes a fast attack with the hand back. It is the mistake on distance and the mistake with the hand that sets the conditions into which the counter attack has a chance of success. What this does is subtle but important; it ensures the counter attack is delivered as the fencer moves back.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9mFJSYkJb0&list=PLW9OQerjy9W3kizillfQ6wokHKCpTU05Y&index=87>

Once the fencer is competent, the coach can gradually begin to finish the attack to encourage the fencer to parry.

One way of thinking about this is that in defence, there is always a parry; but if there is time to take a counter action AND the parry, then that is the right timing. It is for the coach to make that distinction clear. The next part of the video demonstrates how to introduce the fencer to the block-out. Notice that the hand does not move back to the parry after the counter. Also, although the fencer here steps forward, remember that the counter attack is made whilst moving backwards. The block-out is assisted with a change in direction.

<https://youtu.be/x9mFJSYkJb0?t=47>

Things start to get a bit lively in this next section that brings it all together.

<https://youtu.be/x9mFJSYkJb0?t=346>

There is another tactical situation where you can counter attack and that is from the en guard situation. You can set this up either way, as an attack block-out, or as an attack on preparation/counter attack block-out, but the ambitions to change a potential simultaneous situation into a a single light score. Wonderful!

<https://youtu.be/x9mFJSYkJb0?t=487>

Always happy to take any questions on prof.carson@yahoo.co.uk