

# FIE COACH PROGRAMME, SABRE

## Observations, Learning and Thoughts

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### 20. Engagements

In the modern game of sabre, engagements are extremely difficult because of the distances involved. At preparation distance, the blades might just touch at the tips. As the attack is executed, a preparation, as we will see, is likely to be punished with a counter action. There are many ways to describe these distance relationships, but we will stick to the preparation-attack-hit model for simplicity and consistency. I think this lesson covers the issues well.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plvP3JjI1PE&list=PLW9OQerjy9W3kizillfQ6wokHKCpTU05Y&index=116>

In the first few actions, the coach demonstrates how dangerous the attack-au-fer can be and how easy it is to stop-hit or make it miss. If the attack is too deep, the counter action is on. However, if the attack distance is strong, the counter action will appear too early and easy to deal with via, for example, counter time.

It's at the next point in the video that the full preparation-attack-hit comes into play. The coach opens the distance and invites the fencer to make a small two-step preparation. This is outside the distance that any engagement is possible, but takes the fencer to a distance that might be possible. Where the coach counter attacks on the fencers preparation, it is easily dealt with by parry riposte.

<https://youtu.be/plvP3JjI1PE?t=116>

At preparation distance, the fencer must prepare; at attack distance, they must attack or move back to preparation distance to avoid being hit; and at hit distance, they must hit. However, for the coach, at each of these distances they can try to hit the fencer, take the blade or move backwards (and of course the option of forming point-in-line).

Here is where the coaching opportunities arise. In modern coaching parlance, it is the relationship between the task, environment and individuals that affords the coaching opportunities. How each of the distance relationships between the coach/opposition and student/fencer are manipulated will largely determine the transition of skills from at the practice environment into the competitive one.

The coach goes on to explore some of these coaching opportunities in the rest of the video, for example to try to parry the attack-au-fer.

<https://youtu.be/plvP3JjI1PE?t=540>

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