

FIE COACH PROGRAMME, SABRE

Observations, Learning and Thoughts

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28. Attacking the Counter Attack

This is a short video, but it's also a tricky one. Tricky, because there are a number of ways of interpreting what is going on.

On first view, it might appear that the fencer is making a traditional feint to head and when the coach attempts the parry or beat, the fencer makes a disengage to flank. But to teach it this way is to set the fencer up for failure. Why? Because a feint inside the attack distance is likely to result in any number of counter actions succeeding against the attack.

Therefore to understand the lesson, there are three things to consider from what we've learned so far on this course:

1. Fencers prepare at preparation distance; attack through the attacking distance; and hit at tempo distance
2. An attack is the turning of the cutting edge of the blade preceding the step-lunge
3. There are two fencers on the piste, equally competing in their role as either attacker or defender

Accepting this, we understand that the fencer is not preparing with a feint, rather they are executing an attack at attack distance. We also understand that the attack is being made against a counter attacker.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFC9OWljQ4Y&list=PLW9OQerjy9W3kizillfQ6wokHKCpTU05Y&index=155>

It is curious, because the preparatory actions in this lesson might lead one to accept the deconstruction of feint-move-disengage-hit as a perfectly acceptable explanation of what is going on. The problem of course is that to translate this skill into a fight situation, a fencer has to be trained to recognise and deal with possible defences and to prepare, attack and score in a way that is not only technically sound, but distance based and tactically relevant.

One way of thinking about an attack is that it is the thing that defeats a defence. Understanding the distance/tactical relationship, rather than seeing it as a series of prescribed techniques, is what makes sense of this lesson.

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