

Fairfield Fencing Academy Moniteur Clinic
December 4th and 5th, 2021
Paul Sise and John Krauss

Saturday

Safety and Professionalism (presentation and discussion)

-Safe Environment

- Room

- Equipment

- Coaches

- Coaches must be knowledgeable of proper techniques

- Train students properly to avoid overuse injuries, accidents, etc

- Students

- Must follow safety rules

- Be respectful of one another

-Risk Management

- Ensure Safety

- Act ethically

- Avoid all forms of harassment

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact

- (For instance, use a foil to help guide legs into proper guard position.)

- Insurance

-The Coach's Role

- The coach is perhaps the most influential and important person in a young person's life after their parents. He is often a role model, advisor, teacher, therapist, parental figure, and friend.

- Because of this influence we have over younger people, we ought to act in a professional manner and keep the needs of our students a top priority. This does not require a cold, callous, and humorless persona. As long as the coach maintains authority, some joking around and the occasional hug are ok and are often necessary to maintain a healthy and enjoyable environment.

-The fencer/student is the most important person in fencing. The coach's job is to facilitate the student's enjoyment, learning, and performance. In this regard he is perhaps even less valuable than the equipment the student uses. Without the student, the coach is nothing.

-Medical advice – Unless the coach is also a doctor, he shouldn't pretend to be one. Aside from the usual first aid and suggestions to stretch, rest and ice, the best advice about injuries, is "See a doctor."

Basic Teaching Methods (demonstration)

Demonstrate and say how to improve. Avoid saying, "do not do" because one "Do" can replace a hundred "do not's." Demonstrate with verbally teaching a student the guard position, first with do not's. Then with Do's. And finally end with a physical demo.

-Classical method

- 1) Demonstrate and explain the skill
- 2) Teach the skill - Student practices the skill
- 3) Fixating the skill - Coach makes corrections and student makes repetitions
- 4) Perfecting the skill - Student applies skill to bouting conditions

-Problem Solving / Task method

-Create a tactical situation that needs to be solved. (ie, The opponent keeps parrying, so how can you score?)

- The student or class must figure out ways to solve the problem
- The students demonstrate what they discover to the class
- The coach then takes over and follows the classical method.

-Blocked-Serial-Random

-Exchange drill

-Training bouts

Teaching Warm Up Activities

Games - age appropriate, everyone actively participates

Exercises - sport specific

Stretching - static vs dynamic

Footwork Technique

Pre-footwork drills

What to look for concerning technical proficiency in basic footwork:

Correcting common errors

- Errors 1) Rear foot comes up during lunge
- 2) Leaning and poor posture
- 3) No propulsion in lunge

2 tempo advance vs 3 tempo

An example of synchronizing footwork with bladework:

- Making the feint with the front or rear foot in the advance of an advance lunge.
- Advantages and disadvantages of each.
- beat-single feint-attack foot and bladework.

The Physical Job of the Coach

The coach's footwork and stance. Use of walking to simulate lunges and advance lunges.

How to cue for the basic elements of fencing including:

Controlling the distance

Simple direct attack

Indirect attacks

Compound Attacks

Parries

Lateral

Circular
semi-circular
Diagonal

Ripostes

Direct
Indirect
Compound

Counterattacks

Pris de fers

Beat, Press, Expulsion

Feint attacks

*False Cues - Cues that resemble genuine cues but are done at the wrong time or distance and should therefore be ignored by the student.

Individual and Group Lesson Construction

Blocked-Serial-Random

Exchange drill

Bouting Cue

Training Bouts

Now onto drill progression...

If for instance you have one hour to do bladework with your class that gives you enough time to do 3 drills. The rest of the hour is used up with demonstrating the drills, answering questions, water breaks, etc.

Combining 2 drills into a 3rd

One way to develop drills is to select two distinct actions and then combine them. This is good for starting easy and developing greater difficulty in the drill without making it overly complicated or hard to follow for the student. For instance:

Drill 1) Offense

Coach cues for 1 or more types of attack that are dependent on the skill of the student.

Easy version – simple direct attack when coach stops footwork and opens target

Hard version – coach cues for simple and compound attacks, attack into prep, etc

Drill 2) Defense

Coach attacks the student so that the student can perform various parry ripostes

Easy version – student makes parry 4 riposte direct

Hard version – student makes various parries, ripostes may be direct, indirect, or compound, hitting various sections of the torso.

Drill 3) Offense and Defense

Coach either cues for attacks or makes attacks, thereby combining the previous 2 drills.

Using a simple drill as a foundation to build complexity:

Or the first drill can be the foundation for the second and third. Less experienced fencers can stick with drills 1 and/or 2 while the more experienced fencers progress to the 3rd.

This drill gives the student something to do if the opponent is advancing, staying still, or retreating. A simpler version could reduce the actionable moments, ie, instead of advancing, staying still, or retreating it could be only one or two of those. Notice though in this example that version 1 of the drill is very much worthwhile practicing since it deals with distance and timing, but is fairly simplistic. Version 2 is more complicated, but if done slowly is still quite manageable. It can be reduced in difficulty by incorporating only 1 or 2 of the differences from version 1 instead of using all three. Version 3 has the potential to be very challenging for even experienced competitors.

Drill version 1)

Coach advances while lowering blade – Student thrusts

Coach stops footwork and lowers blade – Student lunges

Coach retreats while lowering blade – student slowly pursues but does not attack

Drill version 2)

Coach advances while lowering blade or attacks – Student thrusts or parries and ripostes

Coach stops footwork and lowers blade or makes point in line – Student lunges or beats/takes the blade

Coach retreats while lowering blade – student slowly pursues but does not attack or makes feint attack if distance and timing are appropriate

Drill version 3)

Same as version 2 but now student leads footwork. Coach may make unforeseen actions such as parrying and riposting.

Teaching Simple Lessons

Planning the lesson ahead of time and selecting actions or tactics

Parts of the lesson:

Gauging distance

Warm up

Introduction of material

Body

Cool down

Discussion

Teaching Actions Using the Tactical Wheel

Selecting pairs of complimentary actions from the tactical wheel such as attacks and parries for use in individual lesson.

Sunday

Cueing with distance and direction changes

Demonstrate the following cueing techniques and have the coaches **practice** them, in combination with the blade cues that were practiced the previous day.

Distance

Student initiates attack when student enters distance.

Student follows when coach attempts to break distance.

Student either retreats or makes beat attack or counter attacks when coach enters distance.

Direction

Student attacks on coach changing from retreats to advances.

Student takes over the attack when coach changes from forward motion to retreats.

Repeat with Student leading footwork.

***Coach Krauss demonstrates lesson emphasizing transitions.**

Tactical Footwork:

The Slow Advance / Preparations

The use of a slow advance when entering attacking distance in order to give time to gauge the opponent's actions. This is an eye-open footwork action. The slow advance may include various preparatory blade actions, such as an invitation, attempt at engagement, or false attack.

***Coach Sise demonstrates lesson with student initiating with circle 6 sweep.**

Practice - Coaches practice being opponents for their students by reacting to the slow advance with offensive, defensive, and counteroffensive options.

Distance Stealing Footwork – Demonstration

Half advance – extension of the front leg from the knee.

Half retreat- extension of the rear leg from the knee.

(With these no distance is taken for given but the illusion of taking or giving distance is made.)

Forward check – half retreat, full advance

Backward check – half advance, full retreat

Integrating tactical footwork into lessons

Practice - Coaches practice giving short lessons using the slow advance and the forward and backward check. The student uses these to influence the distance and score with simple direct attack. Be cautious to respect right of way. **Repeat with Student leading footwork.**

Practice - Coaches review material from previous day and focus on designing simple 3 part options lessons. Simple Attack, Compound attack, and Parry riposte are recommended for the initial practice lesson.