

Fencing Terms

Fencing Rules

Refereeing vocabulary:

“Allez”: to start and restart the fencing bout.

“En guard”: for the fencers to adopt the on guard position.

“Halt!”: to stop the fencing bout.

“Pret”: to find out if the fencers are ready.

“Off-target”: when the hit was not made on the valid target (in foil, it's the torso).

Attack: the initial offensive action made by extending the arm and continuously threatening the opponent's target.

- **Counter-attack**: offensive action made during the offensive action of the opponent.
- **False attack**: an attack that is intended to miss or fall short, so as to produce a reaction from the opponent.

Fencing piste: fencing playing area which is 14 meters long and 1.5-2 meters wide.

Point in line: a specific position in which the fencer's sword arm is kept straight and the point of his weapon continually threatens the opponent's valid target.

Preparation: any action that precedes the actual execution of an attack.

Right of way: the rules of fencing that have to do with actions on the fencing piste, i.e. an attack beats a counter-attack, a parry beats an attack, a counter-parry beats a parry etc.

Salute: a blade action performed before and after a bout or lesson which indicates respect and good sportsmanship. A handshake is exchanged after a bout.

Simultaneous: in foil and sabre, two attacks for which the right-of-way is too close to determine, as the result, no point is being made.

Target Area: the area delimited for valid hits in that weapon. Foil target area consists of the entire torso, including the groin, and down to the waist in back. Head, arms and legs are considered off-target in foil.

Footwork

Advance: the basic forward movement. The front foot moves first, beginning by lifting the toes. Straighten the leg at the knee, pushing the heel out in front. Land on the heel, and then bring the back foot up to en guard stance.

- **Advance-Lunge**: an advance followed immediately by a lunge.

Ballestra: the move that involves a small jump forward. It is faster than the advance and made by pushing the rear leg while moving forward and the front leg while moving backward.

En guard: position taken before the fencing bout begins.

Flèche: The arm reaches forward, the body leans, the rear leg crosses the front leg and the fencer runs forward reaching the target. Flèche means “arrow” in French.

Lunge: most common attack in which the fencer extends his arm and closes the distance by moving the front leg forward while the back leg remains stationary and straightens out. |

- **Recover (back or forward)**: return to the en guard position after lunging.

Retreat: the basic backwards movement. Rear foot reaches backwards and is firmly planted, then front leg pushes body weight backwards smoothly into “en guard”.



Bladework

Absence of blade: the situation in a bout when the fencers' blades are not touching (opposite of engagement).

Beat: a sharp tap on the opponent's blade to initiate attack or threat of attack.

Disengagement: a movement made by passing the blade under the opponent's blade.

Extension: a simple offensive action, consisting of extending the weapon arm forward.

Engagement: blade contact during preparation of the attack which lasts longer than the beat.

Feint: a false attack into one line with the intention of switching to another line before the attack is completed. A feint is intended to draw a reaction from an opponent.

Line: the main direction of an attack (e.g., high/low, inside/outside), often equated to the parry that must be made to deflect the attack.

Parry: the defensive action made with the weapon to prevent an offensive action arriving.

- **Circular parry:** when they are made in the opposite line to that of the attack.

Remise: a simple and immediate offensive action which follows the original attack, without withdrawing the arm, after the opponent has parried or retreated, when the latter has either quitted contact with the blade without riposting or has made a riposte which is delayed, indirect or compound.

Riposte: defender's attack after parrying.

- **Counter-Riposte:** a second, third, or further riposte in a fencing 'phrase' or encounter. A counter-riposte is the offensive action following the parry of any riposte.