

# YOUTH BEGINNER STUDY GUIDE



## SAFETY RULES

- Keep the tip of the weapon below your knees when you are not fencing.
- No poking or fencing unless you and your partner have full fencing gear on.
- When putting on or taking off your mask, set your foil on the floor and use both hands.
- Do not cross a fencing strip if people are fencing, walk all the way around.

## PRIVATE LESSON

Private lessons are an integral part of learning how to fence. The coach will assess the student's level and provide individualized instruction tailored to that student.

Each student receives one complimentary private lesson with one of the Youth 1 coaches, to be scheduled within the first 30 days of enrollment. Please see one of our front desk staff if you have any questions on how to schedule your private lesson.

## EN GARDE POSITION & LINES

The basic stance is called **En garde**. As you learn it, you also need to know how to hold your weapon.



Tip toward the opponent



Righty: thumb at 1 o'clock  
Lefty: thumb at 11 o'clock



Pommel against the wrist  
Fingers at top, hand loose

The **target** is everything on the jacket, except the sleeves.

The target is divided into **4 lines**. Each **hand position** closes a line:



**6** (high, outside)



**4** (high, inside)



**8** (low, outside)



**7** (low, inside)

## FOOTWORK

- **Advance:** forward movement, pushing off the back leg, finishing En garde.
- **Retreat:** backward movement, pushing off the front leg, finishing En garde.
- **Half step:** forward (half advance) or backward (half retreat).
- **Check forward:** forward movement starting with half step back followed by an advance.
- **Check back:** backward movement starting with half step forward followed by a retreat.
- **Lunge:** offensive movement, extending the front arm, tip pointing at the target, then pushing off the back leg to reach the opponent (see picture below).



## RIGHT OF WAY

Right of way determines who gets the point if both fencers touch at the same time.

**Right of way belongs to whoever attacks first or defends last.**

If the fencer with the right of way hits his opponent's target he scores a point; if he hits off-target the action is reset.

## SIMPLE ATTACKS

A simple attack is an offensive action, executed with one tip motion and forward movement. There are 3 simple attacks:

- **Straight:** straight movement of the tip toward the target.
- **Disengage:** movement of the tip toward the target, from one line to another, around opponent's bellguard.
- **Cut-over:** from one line to another, going around opponent's tip.

**When testing, these attacks will be executed from engagement, at lunge distance.**

**Distance:** this is the space between you and your opponent. Lunge distance is when you can reach the target with a lunge.

**Finger work:** the execution of the tip movement in the disengage and the cut-over primarily comes from the action of the fingers on the grip.

## DEFENSES

When your opponent is attacking, you need to defend to make the attack fail.

Making the attack fail gives you the **right of way**.

You can **retreat** to make the attack fall short or you can **parry** to block the attack.

A parry can be:

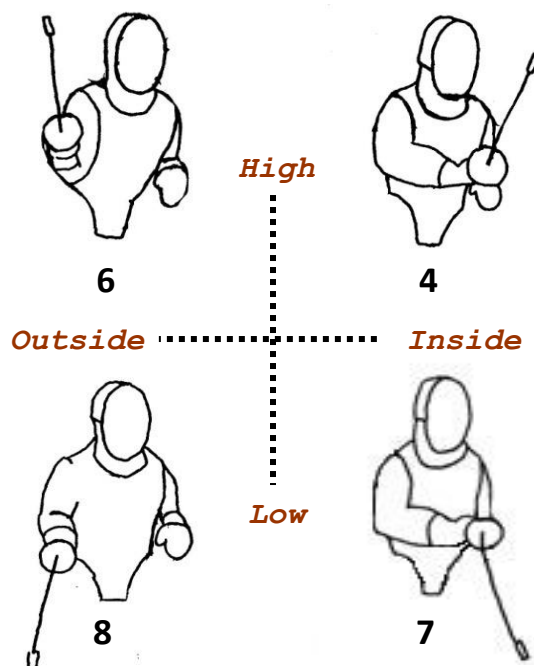
- **Lateral** = Left to Right, Right to Left
- **Circular** = Begins and ends in the same hand position (parry circle 6 starts in 6 and ends in 6)
- **Semi-circular** = High to Low, Low to High

### REMEMBER

- 1) A parry should completely deflect the blade, in other words make sure you don't get hit.
- 2) The strong part of your blade should be used against the opponent's weak part.
- 3) It should facilitate\* the riposte\*\*, or make it easy to hit after the parry.

\* **Facilitate** means to make it easier.

\*\* **Riposte** is the attack after you parry.



## PREPARATIONS

A preparation is what you do to set up your final action.

**Footwork preparations:** advances, retreats, half steps and check steps will help you in setting up the right distance and maneuvering your opponent.

**Blade preparations:** controlling your opponent blade will facilitate your hit.

-It gives you information about your opponent's intention.

-It also helps you to assess the distance.

There are 3 preparations on the blade:

- **Engagement:** when you put your blade against your opponent's blade.
- **Beat:** when you hit your opponent's blade with a quick movement of the fingers.
- **Press:** when you control your opponent's blade and push it with a small motion.

## COMPOUND ATTACKS

A compound attack is when you fake a simple attack to make your opponent parry and deceive the parry to hit in the open line.

The fake of a simple attack is called a **feint**. Your feint should look like a real attack to your opponent.

To do a compound attack well, you need precise finger work.

*An example of a compound attack: feint straight (to draw parry 4), disengage (around the parry 4)*

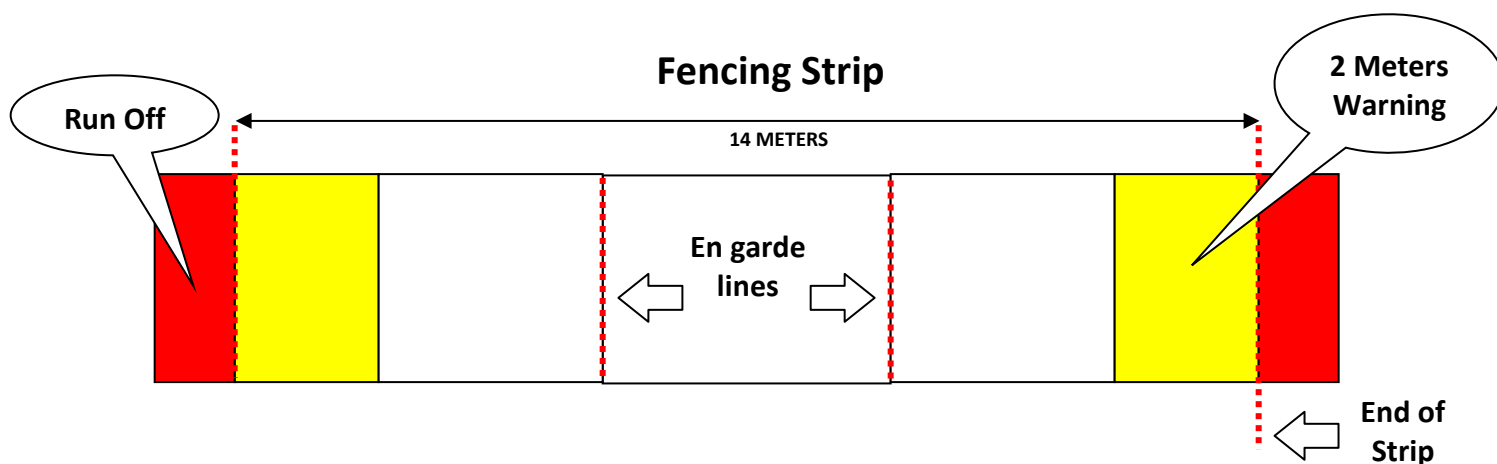
## EQUIPMENT

As you improve your skills you should start getting your own equipment:

- **Glove**: it protects your front hand. You should have your own after one month in the Youth Class.
- **Mask**: it protects your head and neck. You should have your own after one month in the Youth Class.
- **Jacket**: it protects your body. You should have your own after three months in the Youth Class.
- **Plastron**: it protects the underarm. You should have your own when attending your first tournament.
- **Knickers**: it protects the legs. You should have your own when moving up to Youth 2.
- **Socks**: knee high socks are required when wearing knickers.

## STRIP RULES

- If you go off your end of the strip, your opponent is awarded a point.
- If you go off the side of the strip with one or both feet, you move one meter back from where you started your attack.
- To find your distance when not at the on guard lines, face the opponent and extend your weapon arm; the blades should not cross. This is used for finding distance on the strip after off-target actions.



# REFEREEING

In fencing, the referee determines which fencer is getting a point. He is also making sure that all safety rules are respected.

**Right of way:** the referee must watch the bout carefully and assess which fencer has the right of way.

Right of way determines who gets the point if both fencers touch at the same time.

**Right of way belongs to whoever attacks first or defends last.**

If the fencer with the right of way hits his opponent's target he scores a point; if he hits off-target the action is reset.

**Commands:** the referee must be seen and heard by the fencers. When testing, you should know the referee commands.



## En garde

Order the fencers in  
En garde position



## Ready

Determine if both  
fencers are ready to  
begin



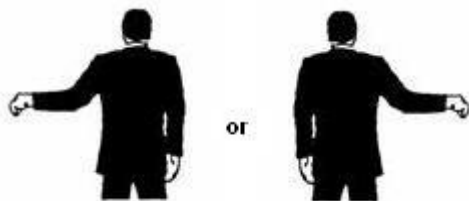
## Fence

Order the  
fencers to start  
fencing



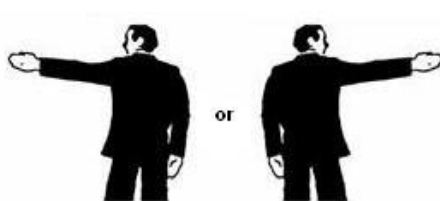
## Halt

Order the  
fencers to stop  
fencing



## Attack

Determine which  
fencers attacked  
first



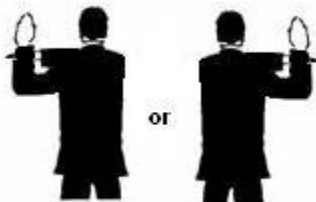
## Touch

Determine which  
fencer got hit



## Point

Determine which  
fencer is getting a  
point



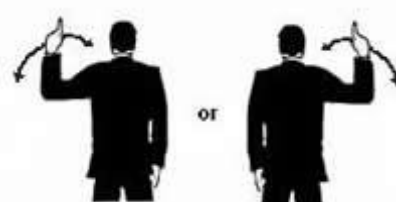
## Parry

Determine which  
fencers parried last



## Off target

Shows an action  
that has hit a non-  
valid target



## Miss

Shows an action  
that has failed  
(no hit)