

INTERMEDIATE EPEE GUIDE



**Northwest Fencing Center
Tigard, OR
www.nwfencing.org**

ABOUT THIS CLASS

In this class, you will continue to improve your technical skills. You will also fence electrically, learn more advanced techniques, explore tactics, and prepare for tournaments.

You may also test, as you did in the beginner class, and remember to pay attention in class as some of the details necessary to pass some tests are not written down in this study guide.

LESSONS

Private Lessons are an integral part of fencing training. During a private lesson, the coach will provide instruction and feedback tailored to each student.

Private lessons are not a requirement, but they are highly encouraged for all fencers. One lesson a week is a good rhythm for young fencers. Two lessons a week is recommended for fencers competing on a regular basis.

EQUIPMENT

- **Complete uniform:** In the Beginner program, you purchase some of your fencing uniform (jacket, mask, & glove). As you join the Intermediate program, you are expected to complete your uniform.

The following items are required before you can attend any tournament:

- **Knickers:** These are your fencing pants.
- **High knee socks:** Preferably white.
- **Underarm protector:** It is an additional piece of clothing that will go under your jacket.
- **Chest plate:** For those using a chest plate.
- **Fencing shoes:** You should have a clean pair of shoes that you will only wear when fencing. Fencing specific shoes or indoor court shoes are recommended.

- **Electric equipment:** The electric gear can be purchased gradually. **Fencers competing on a regular basis are expected to own at least two of each:**
 - **Electric epee:** Size 2 for Y10 fencers, size 5 for Y12 & Y14 fencers.
 - **Body cord:** Should be a 3-prong epee body cord.



- **Pistol or French grip:** Epee fencers should choose the grip that fits their game the best. Consult with your coach to figure out which grip you should use.

If you choose a french grip, your coach will also advise on how to hold it properly.

FOOTWORK

- **Half advance:** Small movement of the front foot forward with a small advancement of the body without moving the back foot.
- **Half retreat:** Small movement of the back foot backward with a slight transfer of balance.
- **Check forward:** Forward movement starting with a half retreat, followed by an advance.
- **Check back:** Backward movement starting with a half advance, followed by a retreat.
- **Double check forward:** Forward movement starting with a half advance, followed by a half retreat, followed by an advance.
- **Double check back:** Backward movement starting with a half retreat, followed by a half advance, followed by a retreat.
- **Jump forward:** Starting with the front foot kicking and landing with both feet at the same time. The jump should remain low to the ground, be small, and finish en garde.
- **Jump back:** Starting with the back foot energetically thrown back and finishing en garde.

Note: Half steps, check steps, and jumps can be used to explore distance, trigger a reaction, or confuse your opponent.

- **Forward recovery:** Recovery from the lunge bringing the back leg forward into en garde.
- **Redouble:** Forward recover leading into a second lunge. The arm may stay slightly extended to facilitate the continuation of the offense.
- **Fleche:** Offensive movement starting with an extension of the front arm and shifting the balance on the front leg until imbalance is achieved. As imbalance is achieved, the front leg pushes forward while the back foot moves ahead to land in front of the front foot.



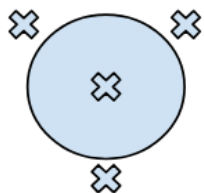
- **Drumming:** Constant movement of the feet (tippy toeing) while maintaining the en garde position. Drumming can be done staying in one spot or moving on the strip.
- **Bouncing:** Small spring movement of the knees that allows a relax and light on the feet movement. In some instances, feet may not even leave the ground.
- **Duck:** Counter offensive move, meant to evade your opponent's attack by bringing feet and legs together to a squat position. Its effectiveness increases when preceded with an advance.

TARGETS

In Epee you may hit your opponent anywhere. The choice of a specific target should be carefully considered based on the level of danger it presents, or a specific tactical planning.

Different targets can be reached at different distances:

- **The hand and the front foot:** These are the closest targets, also called short targets. They can be reached with less commitment. It is easier to reach these targets and recover quickly, however, these targets tend to require better accuracy. They can also be used as part of the preparation.
- **The elbow and the thigh:** These targets are a bit further in the distance. The elbow hit can be used to set up a deeper attack, or on a counter attack. The thigh hit should be set-up with a feint or a beat.
- **The body:** This is the furthest target. It requires full commitment and proper preparation.



→ There are different angles of attack for the hand target: over the top inside, over the top outside, and under. The under shot can be executed with the hand in pronation or supination.

→ You should have in mind the concept of two targets when trying to score against your opponent (for example hand and body, hand and thigh).

RHYTHM & TEMPO

Rhythm and tempo are essential concepts. It is important to understand what they mean, and how they will be applied.

- **Rhythm:** This is the speed at which actions are executed. Change of rhythm refers to a change of speed between actions. A change of rhythm can be an acceleration or a deceleration, and multiple changes of rhythm can follow each other. Changing the rhythm when you fence will be essential in drawing reactions from your opponent or surprising and outpacing them.
- **Tempo:** this is the time it takes to execute a simple action. For example, a lunge is a one tempo action, and advance-lunge is a two-tempo action.

PREPARATIONS

Preparation is what you do to set up your final action. It can be a movement of the blade, body, or the legs or combination of them. Preparations can set up offensive, defensive, and counter offensive actions. When preparing, the fencer should be patient and wait for the opponent's hesitation or reaction.

- **Footwork preparations:**

- **Setting up, opening, or closing distance:** Moving closer or farther from your opponent before executing an action.

- **Trigger a reaction:** The direction, speed, or intensity of your footwork can draw your opponent out.

- **Blade preparations:**

- **On the blade:** Beat, engage, and press can be used to facilitate your action or draw the opponent into a reaction.

- **Tip presence:** Position the tip of your weapon slightly forward to encourage the opponent to interact with it before their action or to establish a safe space in front of your body.

- **Invite/Absence/Search:** Open a line or search for the blade to draw your opponent toward a specific target.

- **Disruption:** Early parries and beats will help you control the center and challenge your opponent as they attempt to set up their distance/actions.

ATTACKS

When attacking you should always close the line. Closing the line is when you finish your action with your blade blocking the opponent's blade preventing them from hitting.

- **Coupe (or cut over):** The tip moves from one line to another by pulling the blade along the opponent's blade and going around the point, combining the work of the fingers, wrist, and forearm.

- **Simple attack on preparation:** Simple attacks are most effective on the opponent's forward preparation, around or against a blade action.

- **Attack by opposition:** Attack executed while maintaining control of the opponent's blade, ending with the opponent's weak part of the blade over two support points (strong part of your blade and bell guard).

- **Compound attack:** An attack with one or multiple feints. A feint should draw your opponent's reaction.

- **Short or false attack:** You may use short attacks to explore your opponent's reactions or hide your real intention.

DEFENSES

- **Variations of parries and ripostes:**

→ **Beat parry:** You may parry your opponent's attack by simply beating their blade before they land their attack. The beat must effectively displace the blade in order for you to score a single light with the riposte.

→ **Riposte by opposition:** After parrying, you may riposte while maintaining blade control, keeping the line closed.

→ **Counter riposte:** After being parried, retake the blade, and hit. In epee is common to see yielding parries or binding parries.

- **Preparations:**

→ **Set up:** You may use footwork and blade preparation to draw your opponent into attacking at a moment you have chosen a line you are ready to close. For example, search 6 to draw your opponent disengage and then, parry 8 and riposte.

→ **Fighting pressure:** When under pressure from your opponent, use disruption or feints to interrupt their preparation or trigger their attack before they have reached their attack distance.

COUNTER ATTACKS

When counter attacking you should try to keep your arm above the opponent's arm. Ideally, the counter attack is aimed at the hand or the elbow to ensure a single light hit.

You should set up your counter attack by moving in and out of the distance, and have a clear plan in mind of how you will execute your counter attack: moving toward the target, moving away, or holding your ground (stop hit).

In some situations, you may execute a counter attack while ducking under the opponent's blade. You should close the distance (move forward) when ducking.



COUNTER TIME

This is a second intention action in which you draw your opponent's counter attack in order to parry it and riposte.

REMISE & REPRISE

This is a successive offensive action that immediately follows an attempt to hit. When attacking to the body, you should always follow with a remise or a reprise. A remise is executed in the same line as the initial action, while the reprise is executed in a different line.

INFIGHTING & PRIME

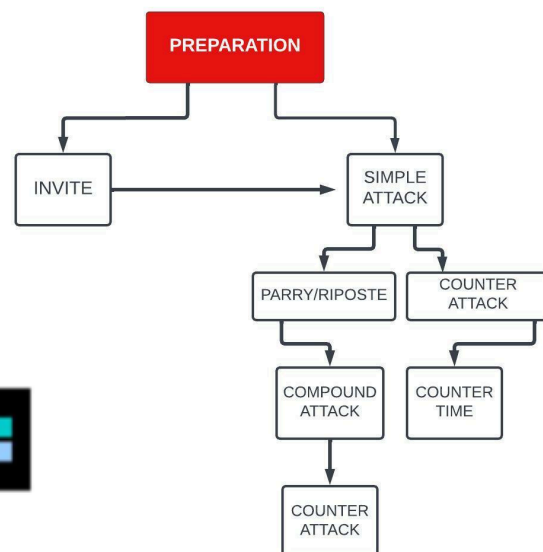
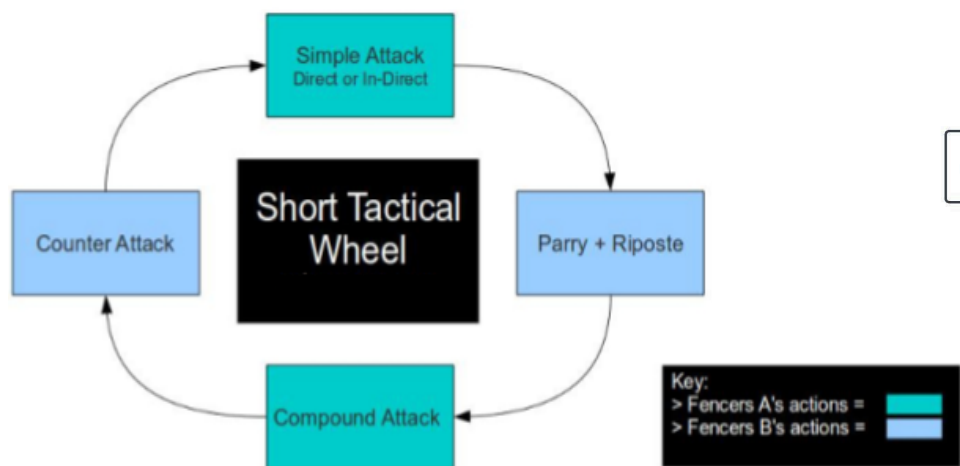
Infighting is the situation in which two fencers are in a very close distance without touching each other. You must learn to deal with infighting situations as these will often happen in bouts.

- **Corps à corps (pronounced cor-a-cor):** It is the situation in which fencers are in contact. Referee will call "Halt" when it happens. It will be sanctioned by a yellow card if it prevents the opponent from executing their action.
- **Prime:** It is a hand position closing the high inside line in which the fencing hand is high and turned down and the tip of the weapon is pointing down. Parry prime, or hitting from prime, is very effective when infighting.



TACTICAL WHEEL & TACTICAL TREE

It lays out the logical progression of a fencing exchange and provides a tactical map.



PROGRESS TRACKER

Equipment		Basics & Concepts		Actions	
Complete Uniform		Footwork		Attacks	
Electric Equipment		Targets		Defenses	
		Rhythm & Tempo		Counter Attacks	
		Preparations		Counter Time	
		Tactical Wheel & Tactical Tree		Remise & Reprise	
				Infighting & Prime	

TOURNAMENTS

Fencing tournaments are a fun and enriching experience. They allow you to meet new people, fence with fencers from other clubs, and challenge yourself in a new way.

The important thing going into a tournament is to give your best and have a positive attitude.

Some of the fencers you will encounter might be more experienced than you. The final result is not the best way to determine how well you performed. Instead, focus on how much effort you put into each bout, and how you managed challenging situations

- **Local events: Pacific Northwest Cups (PNWC)**

Pacific Northwest Cups are designed as a first tournament for fencers to build confidence by giving you experience in a low pressure environment. These tournaments are organized in-house but will often welcome fencers from other clubs.

You should have a complete fencing uniform before signing up for one of these events.

We recommend that you fence at least 3 Pacific Northwest Cups before considering regional tournaments.

- **Regional events: Regional Youth Circuit (RYC)**

Regional events will happen across the states of Oregon and Washington.

These events will bring the challenge to a new level as you might fence fencers with several years of experience.