

Competitive Clinic – Discussion Notes

Distance

- Every piece of footwork can be done large, small, and everything in between. Be able to do that.
- Use a mixture of regular and slightly smaller footwork to fool your opponent into closing the distance.
- Keep shorter fencers farther away from you. Try and stay closer to taller fencers to slip within their guard.

Tempo

- There is more than one tempo in a bout. There is the tempo your hand is moving at, your foot, your opponent's hand, your opponent's foot, and many more. Be mindful of these.
- Pick one of your tempos to pit against one of their tempos. Mix it up.
- Fencing in-time with your opponent and out-of-time with your opponent are extremely useful techniques (fence both on and off the beat). Mix it up.
- Tempo and distance go hand in hand, but are two different concepts. Don't get them confused.
- Use acceleration and deceleration to your advantage.

Knowing How to React

- Watch your opponent's eyes.
- USE YOUR PERIPHERAL VISION!!!
- Look for subtle cues. The hand drifting out, and shifting of weight, crouching or standing up, etc.
- Develop good habits. In other words, don't parry-4 if they're attacking your low-line. Think about what how to react, but make the intelligent choice be the first choice that comes to mind. Drill often to make this happen.
- Know where your blade and point are without having to look at it. Your thumb should always point in the direction your blade is. You should be aware of the distance from your thumb to your point.
- Feel your opponent's blade (whether your making contact or not). *Sentiment-de-fer*

Changing Your Game to Match an Opponent

- If what you're doing isn't working, change it.
- If what you're doing is working, DON'T CHANGE IT!!! Even if you've done the exact same thing the last three times. Don't change it. Be prepared to change it once your opponent figures it out though.
- People can generally be categorized into attackers and counter-attackers. Identify your opponent and get them to do what they don't like to do.
- Watch your future opponents in the pools. Go into the bout with an idea of how to beat them. Be flexible in case they change their game.

Self-Analyzing During a Bout

- Be aware of your own body during a bout.
- If something isn't working, try and do a small fix. If it still doesn't work, switch techniques.
- Don't over analyze. At the same time, make sure you're doing some self-analyzing. Find the right balance.
- Be aware that bad bouts and bad days happen. Don't let that get to you.
- Sometimes your opponent is just that good. No matter what you do it's their point. Learn from these bouts.
- Don't rate yourself below your opponent before the bout. You never know when you'll be hot.

Fencing When You're Tired

- No wasted motion.
- Let good technique help you survive when you're lacking energy.
- Don't let your opponent know you're tired. Use well placed bursts of energy to keep them on their toes.
- Make your opponent expend more energy than you are.
- Speed **does not** come from moving your body faster. Speed comes from making your techniques smaller and timing them better.
- Technique, Technique, Technique. You win DE bouts on technique.
- Good conditioning never hurts.

Foil

- The delayed lunge (hanging in the air for an extra fraction of a second) is just as useful in foil as it is in sabre.

Sabre

- Don't give your opponent a rest. Keep pushing them. If they're resting they're tired and likely to make mistakes.

Épée

- **Golden Rule:** Hit your opponent before they hit you.