

## **Points of Emphasis on Fencing Rules for Referees as Determined by the FIE**

First, please do not argue with this material. This is all instructions given by the FIE to referees in seminars, at all referee meetings before Grand Prix World Cups and all World Championships. This is the way it is. Our fencers and coaches need to understand that they must be pragmatic in how they fence and in how they teach.

There has been an extensive discussion about "Distance Parry" and "Mal Parré" (bad parry) and priority. The two terms are incorrect, even though too many coaches and referees use them. (If you can have a "Mal Parry," why don't we have "Mal Attack," "Mal Remise," or any number of things? If an action is insufficient, then it does not exist.) Some of the concepts of priority that have been given could be called "Mal Concept."

If I make a parry or a beat, do I get the right of way? The answer is "No." It is a very important concept that it is the offensive action that gives one the right of way. A parry only stops the opponent's offensive action; the riposte gives the right of way. A beat is only a preparation; the offensive action after the beat is what can give the priority.

If I make a parry or cause my opponent to miss me or fall short, do I get the priority? Again, the answer is "No." Remember, it is the offensive action that gives one the priority. All a parry or making your opponent miss you or fall short does is to momentarily stop your opponent from having the priority. This problem very often comes up in sabre. Sue makes a cut and is short. Mary waits a second or two, and then starts moving forward with her guard down by her hip. Sue attacks and Mary then sticks out her arm with both hitting valid target. All too often the referee calls it "Attack by Sue, No. Riposte by Mary. Point for Mary." Another example is when after Sue's first cut is short, Mary does nothing, and Sue makes a new offensive action which arrives as Mary counter-attacks. There are at least two problems here. One is that there cannot be a riposte unless there is a parry, and there was no parry here. Rule t.7 includes the following two definitions:

- "The riposte is the offensive action made by the fencer who has parried the attack."
- "The parry is the defensive action made with the weapon to prevent an offensive action arriving."

The other problem exists because some coaches and some referees believe that since Sue's attack was "No," and, even though there was no action by Mary, Mary now has the priority. An action, not a movement, is what is important in determining priority. What we have in the first example, after

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Sue's attack being short, is Mary advancing down the strip without making any fencing action whatsoever and while that is going on Sue makes an attack and Mary makes a counter-attack. Point for Sue. In the second example we have Sue making a remise, a reprise, or a redoublement; again, point for Sue.

Obviously, if Sue had not started her offensive action before Mary started her offensive action, Sue would not have had the priority.

Even if one were to incorrectly think of making your opponent fall short as a "distance parry," Rule t.79 (sabre) and Rule t.57 (foil) state: The parry gives the right to riposte; a simple riposte may be direct or indirect, but in order to annul any subsequent movement by the attacker, it must be carried out immediately, without any hesitation or pause.

Another "new" thing is really an old thing. The point in line has the highest level of priority; it always has been this way. If the point in line is correctly established before an offensive action by an opponent, it has the priority. Rule 56.6 states: "If the attack is initiated when the opponent is 'point in line' (cf. t.10), the attacker must, first, deflect the opponent's blade." The priority of the point in line is retained whether one advances, retreats, or lunges. With all this in mind, it is obvious that the referees are correct when one fencer finishes an attack that is short in the position of point in line, that fencer continues to have the priority, and the opponent must deflect the opponent's blade.

Something that had confused almost everyone was the very brief period where an action from the low line was not being given the same degree of priority that was given to actions from the high line. Fortunately, that entire concept was unanimously voted out by the FIE Refereeing Commission.

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