

Sport Fencing Words of Wisdom:

(Attributed to Matt's fencing coach rec.sport.fencing 1997)

- 1) Never underestimate your opponents; encourage them to underestimate you.
- 2) Make your opponents fence their weakest game:
 - a. Opponents strong in their attacks should be attacked;
 - b. Good defenders should be enticed to attack;
 - c. Opponents who cannot handle themselves well at close quarters should be led into infighting situations.
- 3) If a strategy or move works, do not abandon it until your opponent proves they have an appropriate countermove that works. Do not abandon your move because you think your opponents might know what you are doing, until they can prevent it from working.

Converse: do not persist in a strategy that is not working, even if you know the cause. The bout is not the time to correct your strategy.

Do not persist in a strategy that the Director will not award to you, whether you are right or wrong.
- 4) When fencing technically superior fencers, do not fall into their repertoire; use unusual strategy, and take larger risks instead. Use unorthodox reactions and movements to frustrate them (Anti-game). For example, if you think it is the perfect time to attack, don't run away instead. If you think you need to make a retreat and parry-riposte, don't, attack instead.
- 5) Against a weaker opponent, take little risk, and stick to basic tactics and technique, without expending yourself physically. Rely more on mental concentration. Remember that it is often easier to make simple attacks against poor opponents than to wait, trying to parry-riposte a wild, uncontrolled attack.
- 6) Fencers that confuse the bout with fast or slow tempo should be handled with simple, controlled movements. Do not fall into your opponent's tempo.
- 7) Opponents with strong attacks should be disturbed in their preparation. This can be accomplished by;
 - a. changing the rhythm, distance and direction.
 - b. making false attacks with beats, binds, etc.
 - c. making true and false counterattacks.
- 8) Once you have given your original intention away, either replace it with another, or use it as camouflage for the next maneuver.
- 9) After an attack that fails, move in or out quickly. don't stay around to see what happens.
- 10) Keep moving, even when stationary. Don't grow roots; never plant yourself. If you are always moving, your opponents won't know when you are coming.

11) Relax! Don't get mad when you lose, because the results of the bout won't change, and you'll likely mess up your next bouts. Analyze what went wrong, that caused you to lose, and try not to do that again.

12) Keep your eyes open. Don't just do an action, think about it. Watch your opponents, when they are fencing others in your pool, and at the beginning of your bout. Look at what they are doing, think of what to do with them - DO IT!

13) Be confident. If you don't have confidence in what you do, you won't score touches. If your attacks are half-baked, they won't work, and you will only get mad (see #1). If you have confidence, and go all-out you will win.

14) Make the attack, and you will likely win. To win, you must score touches, and one way to score touches is to attack. Sometimes make straight attacks, sometimes make indirect attacks. Mix them up. Don't be too consistent with what you do. (However see#3).

15) There is nothing wrong with the parry-riposte, of course, and you can score touches with it, and win. Sometimes make straight parries, sometimes make counter parries

- a. Sometimes make straight ripostes, sometimes make indirect ripostes. Mix them up. Don't be too consistent with what you do. (Once again #3).
- b. There may be times when you will have to fall back on your strong parry-riposte to get out of the trouble you are having with a particular opponent. Don't be afraid to do so.

16) Don't rush the bout. Blindly rushing at your opponents (Fleching from out of distance, for example) doesn't often work, so don't do it. Be controlled.

17) Be cautiously aggressive. (see #16). You should control the bout, not your opponents. Push your opponents to their end of the strip, don't let them push you to your end of the strip, unless you are setting a trap. (Don't get caught in your own trap.)

18) Listen to the Director, who is the person who rewards you when you do things right. Ask the Director to describe the action; find out what the Director likes, and adjust your actions accordingly. If the Director won't give you a certain action, stop doing it (see #3).

19) Don't stop fencing until the Director calls "Halt" (then stop immediately). Anything is fair game before the "Halt", and you may get an easy touch, especially if your opponent stops early. Be ready to take advantage of such lapses. (DON'T LOOK AT THE BOX WHEN YOU ARE FENCING.)

20) Above all - THINK out there; THINK while you fence; THINK about what your opponent is doing; THINK about what you are going to do about it; THINK about your actions, and how to do them. THINK between bouts, as you watch your future opponents. In other words , to put it a different way - THINK