



The Society of American Fight Directors

GLOSSARY OF TERMS (revised as of 3/19/16)

It is important to note that the terms listed below may not correspond to the proper definitions of the actions as they are applied to historical or modern fencing, swordplay, boxing or wrestling. These terms are theatrical in nature, not tactical, describing the action as it is executed in the performance environment.

General Use Terms

Active Hand: The non-weapon bearing hand used to block, check, lock, parry, strike, or trap the opposing weapon or parts of a partner's body.

Attacker (also called *Aggressor*): The actor/combatant who initiates the offensive action or attack.

Center Line: An imaginary line that bisects the body.

Horizontal Center Line (also called *Mid Line*): The imaginary line that bisects the body horizontally at waist level delineating High Line and Low Line.

Vertical Center Line: The imaginary line that bisects the body vertically through the center delineating Inside Line and Outside Line.

Cue: a physical action or event that is a signal for someone to do something.

Cue-Reaction-Action: A basic stage combat principle/process used to achieve a safe and dramatically effective sequence of events

Distance (also called *Measure, Fighting Measure, and/or Fencing Measure*): The proper measure between two or more combatants to safely execute any particular technique in stage combat.

En Garde: The basic physical "ready" position of a combatant.

Eye Contact: A look to one's partner to assure mutual awareness and readiness to perform the techniques.

Fighting Measure/Fencing Measure): see Distance

Hand Positions:

Pronation: The palm is turned down.

Supination: The palm is turned up.

Half Supination: The thumb is up, palm inward.

Inverted Half Supination: The thumb is down, palm outward.

Lines of Attack or Defense: The areas delineated by the intersection of the Vertical Center Line and the Horizontal Center Line based on the position of the weapon bearing hand – *there are 4 primary lines: High Inside, High Outside, Low Inside, Low Outside.*

High Line: The area of attack and defense located above the Horizontal Center Line.

Inside Line: The area of attack and defense located opposite of the weapon bearing side, delineated by the Vertical Center Line.

Low Line: The area of attack and defense located below the Horizontal Center Line.

Outside Line: The area of attack and defense located on the weapon bearing side, delineated by the Vertical Center Line.

Closed line of attack (also called *Covered*): Said of a line of attack, when the defender's weapon placement prevents an attack to that particular line.

Off-Line: a.) Any offensive action that is directed to a target away from the body.

b.) The relationship of combatants' bodies when their Vertical Center Lines are offset.

On-Line: a.) Any offensive action that is directed to a target on the body.

b.) The relationship of combatants' bodies when their Vertical Center Lines and shoulders are lined up (also *Stacked*).

Partnering: A process in which two or more combatants work together to perform theatrical combat techniques safely and effectively.

Victim: The actor/combatant who receives the offensive action or attack. (also called *Defender* or *Recipient*)

Unarmed

Avoidance: To dodge an attack.

Block: A defensive action intended to stop a punch, kick or similar attack, usually made with the hand or arm. A block can be made on either side of the body and in all lines. These may be as follows:

Check: the defender places a hand (usually the Active Hand) on the aggressors attacking limb to control the movement of that limb. It does not stop the movement of the aggressor's limb, i.e. Transport, Bind, Envelop.

Cross Block (also called *X Block*): both hands/arms are used together. They are crossed at the forearms, the one over the other, catching the attacking limb where the forearms meet between the hands.

Descending Block: hands move downward to defend against an ascending diagonal or vertical attack.

Forearm Block: a block made with the inside or outside of the forearm, avoiding bone and joints.

Inside Block: made on the opposite side of the body from the defending hand and/or arm.

Outside Block: made on the same side of the body as the defending hand and/or arm.

Parallel Block (also called *Double Block*): the defender's hands/arms placed one beside the other. The arms are not crossed.

Redirection Block: the hand or arm intercepts the attack and then immediately displaces or removes the attack.

Rising Block: the hands move upward to defend against a descending diagonal or vertical attack.

Transfer Block (also called *Replacement Block*): uses both hands/arms, one after the other, to deflect and control the attack, freeing the first hand for a counter attack.

Wing Block: A defensive action made with the muscle groupings of the upper arm. The arm is bent, taking the attack on the back of the forearm and outside of the upper arm.

Break Fall: Any maneuver that dissipates the energy or force from a fall or roll, giving the illusion of impact.

Choke Hold (also called *Strangle*): Any grasp or hold on the area of the throat made with the hand(s) or limb that gives the impression of strangling the victim.

Contact Strike: Any offensive action that strikes the body of the receiver.

Duck: The vertical lowering of the head and torso to avoid an attack at the head.

Elbow Attack: An offensive technique made to look as though striking with the elbow.

Expulsion: Using the energy and movement of a *Check* to throw or fling the opposing arm and/or weapon aside.

Fall: Any technique that allows a combatant to safely drop from a standing or elevated position to the floor, landing on some part of the body other than the feet.

Feint Attack: An attacking action made without intending to hit and designed to draw a reaction or a parry from an opponent.

Flip: An offensive movement that controls the victim's center, lifting them off their feet and taking them to the ground.

Grappling (also called *Struggling*): using body weight, grips, and leverage to control one's opponent while in extremely tight distance.

Hair Pull: A grasp with one or both hands in which the victim's hair appears to be clasped in the fingers.

Kick: Any offensive striking technique made with the leg/foot. May include:

Ax Kick: travels downward, would impact with the heel.

Back Kick: travels directly backwards.

Crescent Kick: travels in a semicircular arcing path that would impact with the edge of the foot.

Front Kick: travels directly forward would impact with the ball or heel of the foot.

Heel Hook Kick: a kick traveling in a circular path, generally executed in a horizontal plane that would impact with the heel or sole of the foot.

Roundhouse Kick: travels in a circular path from a chambered position of the knee, generally executed in a horizontal plane, impacts with the top of the foot.

Side Kick: travels out from the side of the body that would impact with the heel or edge of the foot.

Snap Kick: travels forward in a quick in and out action from a chambered position of the leg.

(Unarmed cont.)

Knap: A technique for creating the sound of impact of a strike.

Body Knap (also called *Self Knap*): A percussive sound made by striking a major muscle group on the body.

Cage Knap: A percussive sound made by physically connecting with their partner's crossed and slightly cupped hands.

Clap Knap: A percussive sound made when one combatant claps their hands together.

Shared Knap (also called *Partnered Knap*): A percussive sound requiring participation of both combatants, could be hand to hand or hand to body.

Slip-Hand Knap: A percussive sound made by allowing the punching hand to open, as it meets the non-punching hand, returning to a fist as it slides through.

Knee Attack: An offensive technique made to look as though it strikes with the knee.

Lock: to immobilize your partner at their joints.

Non-Contact Strike: Any offensive action that creates the appearance of contact with the intended target on the body of the receiver.

Punch: Any offensive striking technique made with a fist. May include, but are not limited to:

Back Fist: Made with the back of the hand.

Cross: Travels across the attacker's center line from either right to left, or left to right.

Hammer Punch: An attack made with the blade side of a closed hand. Can be done with one or two hands.

Hook: Delivered with the arm, fist in half supination, elbow bent at 90 degrees.

Jab: Linear in-and-out action, delivered from the leading hand.

Rabbit Punch: A sharp, chopping delivery downward with the edge of the fist in a diagonal plane (often to the back of the neck).

Roundhouse Punch (also called *Hay Maker Punch*): A large, dynamic wide arc from either right to left, or left to right.

Stomach Punch: Delivered towards the abdomen of the victim, may be either contact or non-contact.

Straight Punch: Linear, delivered from the rear or back shoulder and foot.

Uppercut: A punch delivered with a bent arm in an upward motion.

Roll: Any technique in which the body is safely turned on the floor. May be executed forward, backward, or sideways.

Barrel Roll: Sideways, body fully extended

Dive Roll: Taking air before committing the shoulder roll

Grapple roll: Two-person barrel roll or two-person shoulder roll

Shoulder roll: On a diagonal from one shoulder to the opposite buttock (forward shoulder roll), or rolling from one buttock to the opposite shoulder (backward shoulder roll).

Slap: A strike delivered with an open hand.

Throw: A move in which the defender is propelled to the ground.

Trap: Any technique that immobilizes an opponent's limb(s) and/or weapon(s) to effect an attack or disarm.

Swordplay

Swordplay Attacks

Attack on the Blade: Actions used to remove or displace the opposing blade before an effective offensive action can be launched. These may include a *Glissade, Beat, or Press*.

Glissade: An attack on the blade made by sliding down the opponent's blade, keeping it in constant contact.

Beat Attack: A sharp tap with the forte or middle part of one's blade against the middle or weak part (foible) of the opponent's blade to remove a threat, open a line for attack, or to provoke a reaction

Press: An attack on the blade that pushes the opposing blade aside, opening a line of attack.

Change Beat: Executing a beat by changing the line of attack.

Froissement (also called *Pressure Glide*): An attack on the opposing blade that combines a strong pressing of the blade with a fast graze from forte to foible.

Pressure Glide (also called *Froissement*): An attack on the opposing blade that combines a strong pressing of the blade with a fast graze from forte to foible.

Prise de Fer: "Taking of the iron" using the forte of the blade to move the foible of the opponent's blade: the croise', bind, and envelopment.

Bind: Taking the opponents blade from a high line to low line or low line to high line on the opposite side (when an expulsion is added, called a *Bind Off*).

Croise: Taking the opponents blade from a high line to a low line or low line to a high line on the same side (when an expulsion is added, *Croise Off*).

Envelopment: Taking an opponent's blade in a full circle back to its original line; may be done from shoulder (large- around heads) or wrist (small around guard).

Corps-à-Corps: Literally meaning "body-to-body." Describes the moment where distance is closed and there is body contact.

Counter Attack: An attack made in response to an attack.

Cut: An attack made with the edge of the blade.

Deception of Parry: The action of deliberately avoiding a partner's parry to return to a line of attack.

Double: An attack in any line that consists of two deceptions of parry in the same line, one after the other.

Disarm: An action of the blade or body that removes a weapon from the hand of one's partner.

En Garde: The position in preparation to fight.

Invitation: Position with the intention of luring an opponent in order to exploit an open line, or to deny a specific line of attack.

Engagement: The crossing, joining, or touching of blades.

Change of Engagement: To release contact of the blades and reestablish contact in a new line.

Changement: An action of the blade that carries it from one line of engagement to another.

Coupé: A changement that takes the point of the aggressor's blade around the point of the opposing blade.

Disengagement: The act of removing the weapon from contact with the partner's weapon; a *Changement* that carries the point around the pommel of the opposing blade.

Expulsion: Using the energy and movement of a *Check* or *Prise de Fer* to throw or fling the opposing arm and/or weapon aside.

Grip: The manner of holding a weapon.

Overhand Grip: Holding a sword, dagger, or knife with the blade above the hand.

Underhand Grip (also called *Reverse or Ice Pick Grip*): Holding a dagger or knife with the blade beneath the hand.

Feint Attack: An attacking action made without intending to hit and designed to draw a reaction or a parry from an opponent.

Moulinet: "Little windmill" The action of spinning the blade in a circular fashion (either forward or backward) in a diagonal, vertical or horizontal plane.

Inside Backward Moulinet: A moulinet executed on the inside line, tip up first.

Inside Forward Moulinet: A moulinet executed on the inside line, tip down first.

Outside backward Moulinet: A moulinet executed on the outside line of the body, tip up first.

Outside Forward Moulinet: A moulinet executed on the outside line, tip down first.

Overhead Moulinet: clockwise or counterclockwise horizontally above head.

(Swordplay Attacks cont.)

Pommel Attack: Any offensive action delivered with the pommel.

Punto Mandritti: A thrusting attack delivered from the attackers outside line.

Punto Reverso: A thrusting attack delivered from the attacker's inside line.

Riposte: A return attack made by a defender immediately following a successful parry.

Slash: An attack made with the edge of the blade that is avoided. The most common are horizontally at head level, horizontally across the mid-line (stomach, back, or side), and diagonally (ascending or descending).

Thrust: An attack made with the point of the weapon.

Trap: Any technique that immobilizes an opponent's limb(s) and/or weapon(s).

Swordplay Defenses

Avoidance: A movement of the body and/or feet vertically, horizontally or diagonally in order to dodge an attack.

Duck: The vertical lowering of the head and torso to avoid an attack at the head.

Parry: A defensive action which blocks or deflects an attack.

One (Prime, Prima, also called *Watch Parry*): Defending the low inside line with the point down, the hand in half supination with the thumb down.

Two (Seconde, Seconda): Defending the low outside line with the point down, the hand in pronation.

Three (Tierce, Terza): Defending the high outside line with the point up, the hand in pronation.

Four (Quarte, Quarta): Defending the high inside line with the point up, the hand in supination.

Five (Quinte, Quinta): Defending the head with the blade held above the head, the hand and hilt on the weapon bearing side.

Five A (Reverse 5): Defending the head with the blade held above the head, the hand and hilt on the non-weapon bearing side.

Six (Sixte, Sesta): a.) Defending the high outside line with the point up, the hand in supination.

Seven (Septime, Septa): Defending the low inside line with the point down, the hand in supination.

Eight (Huit, Octave): Defending the low outside line with the point down, the hand in supination.

Beat Parry Deflecting the incoming attack with a sharp striking motion.

Cross Parry: A double fence parry where the weapons are crossed at or near the forte, forming an "X" with the blades, catching the attacking weapon between the points of the two defending weapons.

Counter Parry (also called *Circular Parry*): A defensive action that begins in one line, then travels in a full circle, returning to the line of the original parry.

Hand Parry: A method of defense where the active hand is used to deflect or block the opposing weapon.

Hanging Parry: A defensive action protecting a high line with the hilt high and the point down, to deflect the attack.

Opposition Parry: A simple defensive action made by meeting the attack with the defending weapon.

Reinforced Parry: A parry that is given extra support from another source.

Replacement Parry (also called *Transfer Parry* or *Sequential Parry*): A double fence parry where the attacking blade is stopped with a single weapon and then a second weapon engages the attacking blade and takes the place of the first parry.

Parallel Parry: A double fence parry made by placing the defending weapons parallel to each other.

Yield Parry: A parry made from engagement, where the blades remain in contact throughout.

Quarterstaff

Butt End: The trailing end of the staff in the En Garde position.

Fore End: The leading end of the staff in the En Garde position.

Long Form: The hand placement that utilizes the full length of the quarterstaff for attack and defense; grip holding from the lower third to the butt end.

Middle: The central third of the staff.

Short Form: A hand placement that divides the quarterstaff into three equal sections.
Close quarters fighting.

Note: attacks and defenses use swordplay and unarmed terminology.

Footwork

Advance: Linear footwork that carries the body forward by moving the lead foot first, followed by the rear foot (without crossing them). (also called Fencing Step).

Balestra: A compound piece of linear footwork carrying the body forward by executing a jump and a lunge in quick succession.

Cross Step: The moving foot crosses in front of the stationary foot.

Demi-Volte: a volte turning the hips 90 degrees in relation to the attack.

Grande Volte: a volte turning the hips 180 degrees in relation to the attack.

Lunge: The 'extended' leg position used as a method to 'reach' the partner on an attack. The leading leg extends in a long step, while the back leg straightens and the back foot stays in place. (An offensive action)

Pass Step: The placing of the moving foot ahead or to the rear of the stationary foot without crossing the centerline (a walking step).

Patinando: A compound piece of linear footwork carrying the body forward by executing an advance and a lunge in quick succession.

Pivot: The adjustment of the hips, feet and body to face a new direction.

Retreat: Linear footwork carrying the body backwards by moving the rear foot first, followed by the lead foot (without crossing them).

Recover: - carrying the body to an En Garde position from a lunge.

Recover Forward: returning to En Garde from a lunge by moving the rear foot.

Recover Back: returning to En Garde from a lunge by moving the front foot.

Slip Step: The moving foot slips behind the stationary foot.

Thwart: The same body action as the lunge, used in conjunction with a defensive action.

Traverse: An "advance" or "retreat" in any direction. When moving to the right the right foot leads; when moving to the left the left foot leads.

Volte: Circular footwork which removes the body from the line of attack by swinging one foot behind the other, turning the body.