

## Weapons

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More and more, it seems that instructors from everywhere adopt become specialists of the weapon they prefer teaching and so, with the onslaught of success we have been seeing here in, say, Women's Sabre, more and more aspiring coaches with a contingent of women students decide that their sale will be a Sabre salle. Another with a majority of "mature" fencers will turn to Epee as their way to teaching glory and another yet, with young, quick, rabbit-like members will stick to foil. And they may well succeed in this their personal endeavor.

Being a product of the "Old School", we prefer adapting the student and the weapon to each other rather than determining in advance what weapon everyone is going to fence from now on because that weapon is one we feel more comfortable teaching. We start everyone in Foil because it is the training arm par excellence and more to the point Foil teaches balance, footwork, reflexes, in short, body control. In our career, we have observed that a Foil student who is lacking in point-control or something so basic as the holding of the weapon can be set on the right path with a couple of Epee lessons which of course emphasize these two traits of the fencer. And we have seen would-be Foilists become excellent Epeists and radically improve their Foil game as well. And we found this phenomenon to be the rule, rather than the exception. We still maintain of course that a good Foilist will more than likely become a good Fencer. So...

But what about Sabre? Does it relate in any way to either of the other weapons? Ten years ago, it might not have; but with all the flicking that takes place in Foil, wouldn't Foil at its flicking best be a good training weapon for aspiring Sabreurs who seek precision in their cutting distance, in their choice of target for their Riposte? We think so: the Foil flick is designed to hit with the point; hitting with the point will keep the attacker or parrier farther from his/her opponent and will register just as well. So...

So, let us teach Fencing to our students and allow their personality, their size, their natural speed to choose their weapon. Let's teach them to view strategy as a goal that can be used in all three weapons and in life as well. And, more importantly, let's keep our options open and away from the limiting harnesses of specialization. Or not.