

## Where Does It Go?

No matter how good or even great a fencer we are, there will come a time (OK, many times) when we miss; our attack fell short, whether or not by our opponent's design, our riposte landed flat, our counter-attack was "passé", whatever; we missed and we're in trouble and we have to find our opponent's blade so we might parry a touch that is sure to come and then riposte successfully; but while we're being anything but accurate, what is our opponent doing with his/her blade?

*Where does it go?*

Obviously, our opponent has a lot of choices and, in this article, we're going to try and explore these choices. We will also, an ambitious endeavor, suggest solutions to these problems with which our foe is only too happy to burden us.

Since we want to stay fairly organized throughout the following, we will start with Epee, continue with Foil and wrap it all up with Sabre if only to show that we can alphabetize properly.

### **PART I: EPEE~~**

Attacks:

1. Straight Thrust to the Manchette (OK, forearm) or Arm / Front Shoulder.

Problem: Here, our opponent probably will have parried since we were going for an advanced target. If he parried Sixte, he will have done it in such a way that his riposte will be delivered with an Opposition;  
Solution: Counter of Quarte Croise since a Remise or Reprise against an extended Arm could only cause more trouble.

P.: If he /she parried Quarte or (sneaky!) Counter of Quarte from a Sixte position, chances are his / her point will be elevated;

S.: Reprise Above either with the blade or without ("with" is a safer bet);

P.: if, however, his / her Riposte is in Opposition...

S.: Counter of Sixte Croise.

2. Straight Thrust to the Chest.

P.: This poor choice of an Attack will provoke a Counter-Attack to the Arm or (safer) Shoulder or Mask and stopping it will require much speed on our part;

S.: Septime Enlevee with a Riposte to the Flank; we could parry Sixte Opposition or Quarte Croise but Septime Enlevee seems a better bet.

3. Disengage Low to the Hand or Manchette.

P.: What we will probably have to deal with over here is an Octave Opposition;

S.: Counter of Septime or Prime Opposition;

P.: a Septime Opposition;

S.: Counter of Octave Opposition or Croise (fancy!);

P.: a Counter-Attack to the Arm;

S.: Septime Enlevee, Riposte Low;

P.: a "normal" Octave;

S.: Reprise High to the Shoulder;

P.: a "normal" Septime

S.: Reprise High to the Chest or Low to the Flank.

4. Disengage Outside to the Manchette.

P.: More than likely, there is a Counter-Attack coming to our Arm or Shoulder;

S.: Sixte Opposition or Croise;

P.: there might also be a Tierce Croise heading our way;

S.: yield to Prime and Riposte in Opposition.

5. Attack to the Thigh or Foot.

P.: Counter-Attack all the way on that one...

S.: Septime Enlevee or High Sixte, Riposte Low to the Flank.

We can also get in trouble with our Attacks on the Preparation, especially since our worthy rival may have prepared so as to draw our Attack...

6. Upon our rival's Engagement of Sixte, we Counter-Disengage Inside to the Manchette.

P.: He /she can parry Quarte Straight ...

S.: Quarte Opposition or Croise or Counter of Sixte Opposition

P.: ... or Quarte Opposition ...

S.: Octave Opposition or, if we're really, really fast, Counter of Sixte Croise

P.: ... or Quarte Croise...

S.: Octave Opposition

P.: ... or Counter of Sixte Opposition or Croise.

S.: Prime Opposition.

7. He / she Engages or Beats in Quarte, we Disengage - preferably into the Blade - to the Arm.

P.: He / she will probably parry Sixte Opposition ...

S.: High Sixte, Riposte to the Flank -

P.: ... or Sixte Croise.

S.: Prime Opposition.

8. He / she Engages or Beats in Octave, we Disengage High to the Arm.

P.: He / she will parry Sixte Opposition (a la Mittal)...

S.: High Sixte, Riposte to the Flank

P.: ... or Quarte Opposition (a la Poug)

S.: Counter of Sixte Opposition or Croise.

9. He /she Engages or Beats in High Septime, we Disengage High to the Shoulder.

P.: He / she will parry Quarte Opposition...

S.: Counter of Sixte Opposition

P.: ... or Sixte Opposition

S.: Prime Opposition.

More difficulties and opportunities to miss will also come, no doubt, from our attempts at Attacking with a Prise de Fer...

10. We attempt to Oppose or Cross in Sixte.

P.: Our opponent can Derobe Inside...

S.: Quarte Opposition or Counter of Sixte Opposition

P.: ... or Parry High Sixte and Riposte Low...

S.: Octave Opposition

P.: ...or Parry Prime Opposition

S.: Yield to a Low Tierce Croise.

11. We attempt to Bind from Quarte to Octave or to Oppose in Octave.

P.: He / she can Derobe High to the Arm or Shoulder...

S.: Sixte or Quarte Opposition

P.: ... or Yield to Octave, possibly to Oppose or Disengage High...

S.: Reprise to the Shoulder

P.: ...or Yield to a Low Quarte, possibly to Riposte Straight -

S.: Reprise with a Disengage Above.

12. We attempt to Croise in Quarte. (See #11)

13. We attempt to Croise in Sixte.

P.: He / she can Derobe Inside...

S.: Septime Enlevee, Riposte Low

P.: ... or Yield to a Prime Opposition

S.: Yield to a Tierce Croise .

14. We attempt to Envelop in Sixte.

P.: He / she can Derobe Inside...

S.: Quarte Straight / Opposition or  
Counter of Sixte Opposition /Croise

P.: ... or Parry Sixte Opposition ...

S.: High Sixte Riposte Low

P.: or Sixte Croise

S.: Prime Opposition.

15. We attempt to Envelop in Quarte.

P.: He / she can Disengage outside into the Blade...

S.: Sixte Croise or Counter of Quarte Straight

P.: ... or Parry Quarte Opposition

S.: Octave Opposition.

16. We attempt to Envelop in Octave.

P.: He / she can Derobe High...

S.: Sixte Opposition

P.: ... or Barre in Octave

S. (if we're really, really awake): Yield to a Low Quarte Croise.

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Now if our Attack failed because our opponent simply retreated out of our reach, let us just reload and take off after him / her, with perhaps a more successful Attack?

*Next, the heart and soul of the Epee game...*

**Counter-Attacks:**

One of the things that most typify Epee is of course the Counter-Attack; our opponent attacks us, we Counter Attack and forever live in the glory of that touch. Piece of cake! ... Until we remember that the other thing Epee is most famous for is the fact that, of all three weapons, it comes closest to being a Chess Game... All of a sudden, our glory touch might not be OUR touch but our opponent's; his / her Attack might have been a ploy to draw our Counter. All this to remind us Epeists that Counter-Attacks should not be launched with the abandon we sometimes display...

But on with the Problem solving. When we Counter-Attack, how does our foe react?

1. GG (= Good Guy, that's us) Counter-Attacks to the top of the Manchette vs. a Disengage Low to the Hand (at best) or a Stright Attack to the Chest, Arm or Shoulder.

P.: BG (= Bad Guy, that's the other guy) Counter-Stop-Hits Inside the Arm...

S.: Octave Opposition / Croise

P.: ... or Parries Quarte Opposition...

S.: Counter of Sixte Opposition / Croise

P.: ... or Quarte Croise...

S.: Yield to Octave and Croise

P.: ... or Counter of Sixte Opposition / Croise...

S.: Yield to Prime and Riposte Low

P.: ... or Octave Opposition...  
S.: Yield to Octave and Croise or to a Low Quinte and Croise  
P.: ... or High Septime Opposition  
S.: Yield to Low Tierce Opposition.

2. BG Attacks Low to the Thigh or Foot - GG Counter-Attacks to the Mask or Shoulder.

P.: BG attempts to pick up the Counter-Attack with a Sixte...  
S.: GG Derobes with a Counter-Disengage Inside  
P.: ... or with a Quarte Opposition...  
S.: Counter of Sixte Opposition  
P.: ... or with a Quarte Croise...  
S.: Yield to an Octave Opposition  
P.: ... or with a Counter-Stop-Hit beneath the Hand (not likely, but let us be prepared).  
S.: Counter of Septime Enlevee and Oppose or Bind to a Sixte Opposition.

3. GG Engages Sixte, BG Attacks with a Counter-Disengage Inside, GG Counter-Attacks Outside "en cavant"

P.: BG Parries Sixte Opposition...  
S.: Yield to Prime and Oppose  
P.: ... or Counter of Quarte Straight...  
S.: Counter of Sixte Opposition / Croise or Remise Inside to the Arm  
P.: ... or Counter of Quarte Croise.  
S.: Yield to Octave and Oppose.

4. GG Engages Quarte, BG Attacks with a Disengage Inside to the Arm with the Blade, we Barre with a Sixte Opposition / Croise

P.: BG Barres back with a Sixte Opposition...  
S.: We must Yield to Prime and Oppose  
P.: ... or Parries Counter of Quarte Croise.  
S.: Yield to Octave and Oppose or Croise

5. GG Engages Octave, BG Attacks with a Disengage High atop the Arm, we Counter-Attack beneath the Hand

P.: BG Opposes in Octave...  
S.: Yield to Octave and Oppose OR Counter of Prime Opposition  
P.: ... or Parries High Septime and Oppose...  
S.: Yield to Low Tierce Croise  
P.: ... or Parries Septime bound to a Sixte Opposition  
S.: Yield to a Prime Opposition.

6. GG Engages High Septime, BG Attacks with a Counter-Disengage High to the Arm Outside, we Counter-Attack to the Arm Outside

P.: BG Parries Sixte Opposition...  
S.: Counter of Quarte Opposition  
P.: ... or Tierce Croise  
S.: Yield to a Prime Opposition.

Note: When executing a Counter-Attack, it is always a good idea to do so with a Lunge so as to minimize BG's distance and reaction time; then, our Counter-Attacks could be followed with an offensive move, giving us two chances to hit, instead of having to defend against BG's reaction.

To wit:

1. Counter-Attack atop the Arm

>>> Octave Opposition / Croise  
>>> Septime Opposition

## 2. Counter-Attack beneath the Hand

>>> Sixte Opposition / Croise

>>> Quarte Opp. / Croise

## 3. Counter-Attack Inside the Arm

>>> Quarte Opp. / Croise

>>> Counter of Septime Enlevee, Riposte Low to the Flank

## 4. Counter-Attack Outside the Arm

>>> Tierce Croise

>>> High Octave Opp.

Next, let us explore Epee's world of Parries. Parries, of course, are usually thought to be the exclusive domain of Foil and Sabre but I don't think I ever witnessed a single Epee bout without both the competitors Parrying at least a couple of times ... perhaps to draw a Remise / Reprise or a Counter-Riposte?

### *Parries:*

As we would expect, there is a rule of thumb regarding Parries which deserves to be kept in mind at all times. And the rule is as follows: If we're going to Parry with a bent arm, hold the Blade for a Prise de Fer; if we're going to Parry with an extended arm, let us riposte in the same motion with a Prise de Fer. The only time we can get away with a tack parry is if it is performed with a BIG retreat. Now then...

## 1. BG Attacks straight atop the Arm, we Parry Sixte (if we were in Octave) or Counter of Sixte (if we were in Sixte) and Riposte either Straight or in Opposition...

P.: BG Parries High Sixte and Ripostes Low...

S.: We Parry Octave Opposition

P.: ... or Counter of Quarte Straight ...

S.: We Parry Counter of Sixte Opposition

P.: ... or Counter of Quarte Opposition...

S.: We Parry Quarte Croise

P.: ... or Counter of Quarte Croise...

S.: We Barre in Octave

P.: ... or Counter of Octave Opposition...

S.: We Barre in Octave

P.: ... or Counter of Octave Croise...

S.: We Parry Quarte Croise or Bind to an Octave Opposition

P.: ... or Yields to a High Septime Opposition ...

S.: We Yield to a Low Tierce and Oppose or Croise

P.: ... or Reprises inside the Arm...

S.: We Parry Quarte bound to an Octave Opposition

P.: ... or Remises to the Arm.

S.: We Parry Sixte Croise.

(All of these scenarios made possible by a simple Parry of Sixte! Wow!)

## 2. BG Attacks Straight to the Arm; we Parry Quarte Straight (tack Parry)

P.: BG Parries Counter of Sixte Opposition...

S.: We Parry High Sixte and Riposte Low or... We Yield to a Prime and Riposte Straight or... We Parry Counter of Quarte Straight, Croise or in Opposition or... We Parry Sixte Croise

P.: or Quarte Straight...

S.: We Parry Counter of Sixte Opposition or... We Parry Octave Opposition or Croise or ... We Parry Septime Enlevee and Riposte Low

P.: or Prime Opposition...

S.: We Yield to Low Tierce and Oppose or... We Parry Counter of Octave and Oppose or Croise

- P.: or Quarte Croise
  - S.: We Yield to an Octave Opposition
  - P.: or BG simply Remises to the Arm Inside...
  - S.: We Parry Octave Opposition
  - P.: or Reprises outside into the Blade
  - S.: We Yield to a Tierce Croise
3. BG Attacks Straight to the Hand (again!); we Parry Quarte Opposition
    - P.: BG steals it with a Quarte Opposition of his / her own...
    - S.: We Parry Octave Opposition or...
    - We steal it back with a Quarte Croise
    - P.: or with a Quarte Croise
    - S.: We Yield to an Octave Opposition.
  4. BG Disengages Low to the Hand; we Parry Octave High to the Arm
    - P.: BG Parries Sixte Opposition...
    - S.: We Yield to a Prime Straight or in Opposition or... We Parry Counter of Quarte Opposition or Croise
    - P.: or Quarte Croise...
    - S.: We Yield to an Octave Opposition
    - P.: or Quarte Opposition
    - S.: We steal it with a Quarte Croise or an Octave Opposition.
  5. BG Disengages low to the Hand; we Parry Septime Opposition
    - P.: BG Yields to a Tierce Croise
    - S.: We Yield to a Prime Opposition and hope it'll work better than Septime Opposition that started this particular rat's nest...

As we can see, because of all the possibilities inherent to a Parrying Game, i.e., no matter what we Parry our Opponent can stop it and put us back on the Defensive, it is highly preferable to stick with the Attacking / Counter-Attacking Game and then with adequate point control manage not to have to Parry ever; yea, right.

In our next installment of "Where Does It Go?", (as the Webgoddess messages cramped fingers) we will tackle the many Foil scenarios (some of which will have us looking behind our backs) which - the refs notwithstanding - make our first weapon such a joy to practice