

Melee Combat Training Manual for the Kingdom of Lochac

FOREWORD BY THE LOCHAC KINGDOM RAPIER MARSHAL	2
INTRODUCTION.....	3
DEFINITION OF MELEE.....	3
AUTHORISATION REQUIREMENTS.....	3
RULES FOR MELEE COMBAT	3
ENGAGEMENT	4
FRIENDLY TROOPS	7
BREAKING THROUGH	7
CONVENTIONS.....	7
KILLING FROM BEHIND.....	7
SCENARIOS	7
DEATHS.....	8
COMMUNICATION	8
CONTROL	8
SAFETY.....	9
TERRAIN.....	9
BOUNDARIES AND OBSTRUCTIONS.....	9
DANGEROUS ACTIONS	9
RUNNING	9
MARSHALS.....	9
RATIO OF MARSHALS TO COMBATANTS.....	9
ROLE OF MARSHALS IN MELEE	10
TRAINING A BEGINNER	10
CONCLUSION.....	13
APPENDIX 1 - LOCAL HOLDS.....	14

FOREWORD BY THE LOCHAC KINGDOM RAPIER MARSHAL

Greetings and salutations to all whom read this training manual.

The rapier marshallate across the whole of the Society has been proud of its long history of extremely safe activity, almost free from any record of it's participants sustaining a major injury. Here in Lochac we have always been proactive in our methods, so that we can maintain the highest safety record. The training manual you have in your hands is a proactive response by the Lochac rapier marshallate to the reintroduction of melee rapier combat.

Our overseas brethren have shown that melee rapier combat is the most likely scenario where serious injury may occur on the rapier field. I will not accept any increase in risk, and therefore we have the almost unique rapier melee authorisation. Unlike single combat, where the teaching knowledge is widely spread across the Kingdom, the teaching resources for instructing people in rapier melee is not readily available to all. Thus the senior rapier marshals have pooled their knowledge to provide a guide for teaching rapier melee combat. This will allow us to work to common principles, so that we do not repeat the problems that have occurred overseas. Rapier combat is one of the safest activities in the Society, and I intend to maintain our exemplary safety record. Whilst we have done our best, we are still human. If you have any problems, discuss them with your superiors in the marshallate, or choose the solution which provides the greatest degree of safety to everybody.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank Henry Walker (Provost Lord Henry the Fox), Terry Cruikshank (Provost Lord Blaidh MacFaolen Tuatha Faol) and Peter Chappell (Provost Lord Piers of Malmesbury) for all their hard work in getting this manual written. Without them it would never have happened.

Have fun, train hard, stay safe and enjoy your fencing.

Don ibn Jelal, Guildmaster of Defence

Lochac Rapier Marshal.

INTRODUCTION

Melee Combat is much more high-paced than that of single combat. Various important issues come into play when there is more than one pair of combatants fighting on the field. It is these issues which it is important for both combatants and marshals to fully understand. This training manual is designed for both marshals and combatants in melee combat.

Melee Combat has not been used in Lochac for several years, and as such, not many marshals or combatants have had a first-hand experience with it, and those who have had experience with it will not be too fresh with how it runs due to the amount of time that it has been since melee combat was used. This manual is designed to refresh the memory of those who have previously done melee and teach those who have had no experience with it.

The manual will be organised under sets of headings for the vital concepts that go into what melee combat is all about. It is important for combatants to read both the combatant parts and the marshal parts so that they know what the marshal's job is, this also works vice versa so that the marshals understand what goes on from the combatants' point of view.

Each section will include suggested areas that should be included in melee training and where possible, a way to do it. Suggested training methods are just that, suggestions. Do what works for you and your people; the suggestions are only there to ensure all bases are covered, and a method is available if you haven't devised your own.

All references to rules will be from the Lochac Rapier Combat Rules. It is hoped that this manual will give meaningful and valid assistance in training fencers to meet the standards expected in these rules.

DEFINITION OF MELEE

A melee is any combat that takes place between more than 2 combatants, as stated in section 6.2.2.10(b). This means any 2 on 1 combats are classified as melee, regardless of whether they are conducted on a list field or on the open field.

AUTHORISATION REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for authorization in melee are laid out in section 5.2.6(d), and require the following:

- Consistent calibration while in melee
- Demonstrated knowledge of melee combat conventions, including engagement, obstacles and death from behind.
- The applicant must be tested in a melee scenario.

RULES FOR MELEE COMBAT

The rules for melee are quite simple and few in number, however they do rely on the participant's knowledge of the rules applicable to single combat, particularly the Rules of the Lists. Melee combat should never be an excuse for bad behaviour. The following is a listing of the rules relating specifically to melee, with an added short list of rules applicable to behaviour.

3.5.1 In melees, combatants are engaged with all opponents immediately upon the call to lay on.

3.5.2 Combatants may strike any opponent with any legal blow if they are within the 180 degree arc of the opponent's front. A combatant who approaches an opponent from behind shall not deliver a blow until he is within that frontal arc. A combatant may never strike an opponent from behind.

3.5.3 Killing from behind is allowed if it has been announced beforehand. The Kingdom norm for "death from behind" in melees shall be:

If a melee scenario allows killing from behind, a combatant does so by laying the rapier blade over the opponent's shoulder, to at least a third of the blade, while calling "Dead, my Lord" (or other short, courteous phrases) in a loud, clear voice. Reaching around the neck is forbidden. The opponent shall be deemed "killed" from the instant the blade touches his shoulder and shall not attempt to spin, duck or dodge away.

Note: If death from behind is not allowed in a given melee, a combatant who deliberately ignores an attacker behind them, or repeatedly maneuvers to keep their back to an attacker (thereby preventing any attack on them) may be considered misuse of the rules and obstructive behaviour.

3.5.3 Special scenario melees such as bridge or town battles may impose additional restrictions as needed by the marshals.

The additional rules are paraphrased from section 3.2 regarding behaviour on the field; notes in italics are added for this manual:

3.2.1 Obey the marshals

3.2.3 Stay in control of your temper and behaviour at all times

3.2.4 Striking an opponent too hard is forbidden (*consistent calibration in melee is a major focus of attention and a necessity for authorization*)

3.2.5 Stop everything when you hear a hold called and assume a non threatening position. *Do not discuss tactics during a hold.*

3.2.6 Conduct obstructive of normal combat, such as ignoring blows, misuse of rules etc. is forbidden

3.2.7 Running into an engagement with rapier extended is forbidden.

3.2.8 A combatant may decline any challenge without dishonour. *Melee is not a tourney, you don't forfeit anything by not fighting someone unless you're the last person standing on your side, in which case you fight or yield. See 'engagement' for further discussion of this.*

3.2.9 Combat starts when the marshal in charge calls 'Lay On', after receiving verbal acknowledgement that all participants are ready.

ENGAGEMENT

Whilst at the call of 'Lay On' everybody is considered to be automatically engaged, that engagement will likely not be 'active' in that blades will cross immediately. The ebb and flow of combat will create situations where combatants will be entering and exiting the 'active engagement' of opponents. The following are methods of establishing that active engagement.

The questions that come up with regard to engagement are how is it done, and when is a person actively engaged? Engagement can be split into passive engagement

and active engagement, both have peculiarities about them, especially when it comes to engaging from behind or from the side.

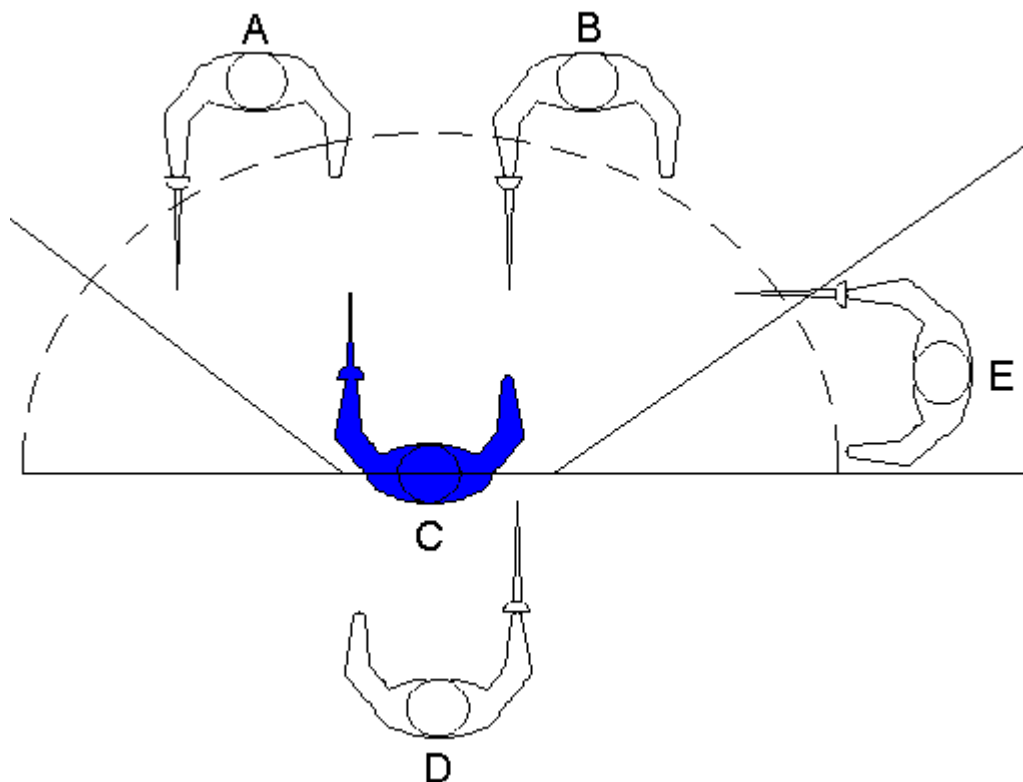
To achieve active engage from the front the procedure is quite simple. Approach as you would on the tourney field. Care should be taken when engaging someone, whether from the front or from behind. It is assumed that any opponent within a 180-degree arc of the front of the opponent is considered to be in the front arc. The front of a person is defined by common sense rather than taking a cue from the position of head, body, feet or weapon. If the target moved towards you and you felt they were 'advancing', then you are facing their front. If you think they are 'retreating' toward you, you are facing their back. If you are in the frontal arc of your intended target you may attack as normal, with thrust or cut. You DO NOT need to be in their visual arc. Two combatants who approach each other from the front may come on guard once nearing range of each other and are thus 'actively engaged', however there is nothing mandatory about this. One may decide to back away, seeking support from friends nearby and thus tipping the odds. This is NOT refusing a fight although it may be declining a challenge and is NOT counter to the rules or intent of melee. Of course, this is not to say that a challenge accepted off the field to meet in single combat during a melee could not happen, but it could be seen that both of these people are placing their own wishes above the interest of their team.

However, if the opponent is not in the frontal visual arc of their assailant, they are in a passive engagement situation. The assailant should announce their presence to their opponent, and not initiate an attack until the opponent has acknowledged their presence, either verbally or physically. They should however be prepared to parry any attack initiated by the opponent. This announcement can be made either verbally, or by gently tapping the opponent's blade and stepping back on guard. Once acknowledgment is received, the combatants are in an active engagement. It is customary to allow combatants to create an active engagement, as this result in fewer arguments between combatants. Whilst attacks may be delivered when in passive engagement, it is discouraged as this situation is usually when injuries occur during melee, due to the struck combatant being unprepared to receive a blow.

Engagement from behind is always tricky. The best way to do this would be to declare in a loud, clear voice, "You are engaged from behind my lord." Only when the opponent turns to face you and acknowledges the engagement should any offensive manoeuvres start. If there is killing from behind then engagement from behind is a moot point, unless the particular combatant wishes to face the other combatant. From behind, no physical engagement should be attempted unless it is absolutely safe to do so. If the opponent is not engaged in any other area they should turn around immediately and acknowledge the engagement. If the opponent is engaged from another source the combatant behind should wait until the other engagement is dealt with, move to the front arc of the intended target, or find another victim! A combatant who is engaged from behind cannot keep their back to their opponent in an effort not to engage them in scenarios where killing from behind is not allowed. Such behaviour should be reported to the marshal on the field, if they have not seen it. A combatant who repeatedly does this may be pronounced dead by the marshals if they continue to refuse engagement.

A seated combatant should only be engaged from the front, as it is much more difficult for that combatant to turn and face the other combatants. Killing a seated combatant from behind should be done in the same way as a combatant who is standing.

To clarify the concept of engagement, let's look at the engagement of the combatants in the following diagram.



The frontal arc is demonstrated here for Combatant C. As we can see, Combatant C is engaged with Combatant A, B and E. Combatants A and B are in his visual arc and in active engagement, and Combatant E is at his side and in passive engagement. Combatant D is behind Combatant C and not in engagement.

Let's assume that Combatants A and B have just approached Combatant C. They are both within Combatant C's visual arc, and thus should come onto guard, and then proceed with combat once they can see Combatant C has come onto guard. Very clean cut, and no problems should occur here.

Combatant E has approached Combatant C from the side whilst Combatant C is engaged with A and B. As he is not within the visual range of Combatant C, he should inform Combatant C of his presence. This can be done either by calling "milord, engaged on your right" or something similar, or by tapping C's blade and then stepping back on guard. Combatant E should not initiate an attack until C has acknowledged his presence, either verbally or physically. He should however be prepared to parry any attack initiated by Combatant C. Once Combatant C has provided acknowledgment, the combatants have moved from a "passive" engagement situation, to an "active" engagement situation.

Combatant D has only 2 options with respect to Combatant C. He must announce his presence to Combatant C and wait for acknowledgment, or move to place himself in the frontal arc of Combatant C. If the Death from Behind convention is in force, Combatant D may choose to make a death from behind on Combatant C. However, if Combatant D is allied to Combatant C, he is free to attack either A, B or E, as they are all within each others visual arc.

Friendly Troops

If you kill a person who is on your side in a melee they are just as dead if they were on the other side. Care should be taken not to slay anyone who is on your side.

Breaking Through

It is not possible to break through an opposing force as is done with shield walls in heavy combat. Body contact is forbidden in rapier combat, so the application of muscle is not allowed. You may parry a blade and pass a line safely if you can step through a gap, but you must not charge, you cannot run into an opponent, and your weapon/s must be under control at all times.

CONVENTIONS

Conventions are an integral part of all rapier combat, and especially with regard to melee combat. The conventions cover several aspects in melee combat, which can change things during the combat. Such conventions are: killing from behind and those to do with particular scenarios.

The Marshals need to define which will and will not be used during the combat. They should be fully explained so that all of the combatants and marshals may understand which ones apply and which ones do not.

The conventions are an important part of the combat because, in a sense, they control what happens during the combat.

Killing From Behind

Killing from behind is a particularly enjoyed convention, it adds a further element to the combat. The important thing with killing from behind is that it must be done safely.

The rule for killing from behind is clearly stated in the rules. The combatant who is killing from behind should under no circumstances hit their opponent.

Scenarios

Scenario conventions also need to be described and discussed before combat commences. They should be explained as clearly and concisely as possible so that both combatants and marshals understand what is going on. The important thing is that all conventions and scenarios are explained before the combat commences. Questions should be asked for clarification. The conventions can make things much more interesting, especially when included into a scenario. It is not the purpose of this guide to define or illustrate particular scenario options. Use your imagination! However there are simple guidelines for marshals before a scenario is enacted.

- 1 Walk over the location, noting obstacles. Holes, logs, rocks etc may force you to declare the site unsuitable for the scenario envisaged. Keep it safe.
- 2 Check any man made inclusions. Hay bales in some limited cases are quite safe to walk on, but check to see what there is to fall on. Tables are a biggie with this; picnic tables in parks are usually set well into the ground and are safe to walk on, but don't let someone run over one. Fighting from a table top may look cool, but is actually a weak defensive position. Generally discourage people from trying it. Fighting OVER a table is fine. In short, if something is on the field, push it, walk on it, shove it with your foot, poke it with a sword, and see what it will do. Keep it safe.
- 3 Once you have checked the site, explain the restrictions to the Combatants. In the case of tables and chairs, they should not be moved during a melee. The complex

spatial circumstances are something which adds spice to a scenario, but people have enough to keep track of without someone pushing a table behind a group of people fighting. Keep it safe, but treat the Combatants as adults. Spot a recurring theme here?

Deaths

When a combatant is killed in a melee it is much safer for the combatant to place their weapons above their head after calling the blow and then to leave the field than to fall upon the ground. A combatant lying on the ground may be stepped upon or fallen over, this can cause an issue for the person on the ground and the person doing the falling. The combatant should leave the field with their weapons above their head via the shortest path so as not to get in the road of any of the other combats, which may be going on. It is may also unsafe to fall upon the melee field, especially if it is in an area in which there are rocks, sticks or other hard objects, which may cause damage, by falling on them.

If the scenario allows a person to remain dead on the field they should die in a 'controlled' manner and lie, preferably on their side, such that they can be generally aware of what's happening around them. Being aware of changing circumstances underfoot is a part of melee.

COMMUNICATION

It is important that there is clear communication between combatants, combatants and marshals, and between marshals. Communication is the vital element which keeps this high-paced form of combat under control and safe.

As a combatant you must communicate problems to the marshal and also have clear communication with the other combatants on the field.

Marshals need to communicate problems to combatants as quickly as possible. Important factors such as terrain elements need to be communicated to combatants as soon as you become aware of them. It is also important that you communicate any major problems to other marshals on the field so that they are aware of them. With so many combatants on the field it is important that you make combatants aware of each other, especially if they have not, and will not see each other. An example of this would be two groups who are fighting and about to back into each other unexpectedly. It is the marshals' job to communicate safety issues to the combatants and other marshals.

CONTROL

Control is vital to all aspects of Rapier Combat, and none so much as with melee combat. Due to the fact that melee is a high-paced form of combat and there are various other pressures that do not present themselves in normal combat, a combatant's adrenalin will be increased. Combatants must be aware that extra caution should be taken with regard to calibration while engaged in melee combat. This should include awareness of being hit as well as controlling the power of an attack, as it is likely that the increased adrenalin will 'desensitize' a Combatant somewhat, with the unfortunate side effect of encouraging people to hit harder in order for the attack to register.

It is important that the combatants retain as much control over themselves as possible. All of the normal rules apply to this form of combat, even though it is somewhat different, uncontrolled actions such as the fleché will not be tolerated, especially in melee combat.

SAFETY

Safety is the most important part of any SCA-related combat. It should be the prime concern of both combatants and marshals. There are several safety issues, which become a concern when talking about melee combat. Each one of these issues will be discussed in turn so that the marshals and combatants are aware of them.

Terrain

Terrain is the first issue. Because melee combat is conducted out of the controlled space of the list field, there is less control capable of issues such as holes, sticks and trees. The combatants should be made aware of any striking problems, which appear, in the area in which melee combat is to be conducted. The marshal's job on the melee field is also to make combatants aware of any terrain problems which may present themselves, especially if the combatant is unaware of the particular problem.

Boundaries and Obstructions

Boundaries and obstructions are the two big issues, which will arise in melee combat. The boundaries should be made clear to the combatants, and marshals should warn the combatants about where these boundaries are. Obstructions such as trees, large sticks and anything else, which a combatant may run into, should be brought to the attention of the combatant. Holes are especially dangerous because they are often not obvious at first glance. People may fall into a hole and damage themselves. These terrain issues should be brought to the attention of the combatants immediately that they come close to them.

Dangerous Actions

Wild actions should be not present, especially actions such as waving the weapons about. This becomes a real issue when the combatants come into close contact. Any action that a marshal could construe as dangerous should be pointed out to combatants and stopped. A person who persists with such actions should be removed from the field at once.

Running

Running can be extremely dangerous in melee combat, especially if it takes place outside the list field. There are terrain issues, which can cause a running combatant to fall and hurt themselves, such as holes and large sticks. There should be no running into an engagement. The only place running might be used would be to cross the field to an engagement, but the combatant must stop running well before they come into weapons range. A combatant cannot run through an engagement, nor should they run in close vicinity to combatants who are engaged. If a combatant runs in a dangerous manner they should be warned, and then removed from the field if they persist.

MARSHALS

As with any form of rapier combat the presence of marshals is vital. This is doubly so with melee combat. The marshals are mainly there for safety as per usual but they have other roles during melee combat.

Ratio of Marshals to Combatants

The ratio of marshals to combatants in a melee should be 1:6 as per sect. 6.2.2.10(b), so for every six combatants there should be one marshal, therefore if there

are 20 combatants then four marshals are required to oversee the combat. Marshals in Training (MiTs) only count when an authorised marshal is present for each MiT, which takes the field. This is to ensure that there are enough experienced and authorised marshals on the field to oversee the combat and watch the MiTs in action.

Recommendation: a Combatant to Marshal in Training ratio of 1:4. This means an authorized melee marshal and a MiT could watch 10 Combatants, not 12. This is because melee takes practice to watch and marshal (there being a lot more to see), and the marshal is also meant to be keeping an eye on the MiT.

Role of Marshals in Melee

The marshal's primary role in melee combat as with any other form of combat is to oversee safety on the field. Marshals also have a responsibility on the field and that is not to interfere with the flow of combat unnecessarily.

There are two types of hold in melee combat, the general hold and the local hold. In a general hold all combat on the field ceases as per usual with rapier combat, each one of the marshals and combatants should repeat the call to ensure that the call has been heard by all of the combatants. Only the RMIC may lift a hold, regardless of who called it.

As it is unlikely that circumstances will exist in Lochac requiring the use of Local Holds, these will be discussed as an appendix to this guide.

The main issue that will come up in a melee combat due to the amount of combatants on the field will be the problem of groups of combatants colliding due to not seeing each other. This can cause a real issue so combatants should be warned that they are coming close to other combatants. Anything, which the marshal thinks may be a safety issue should be brought to the attention of the combatants, preferably before it happens.

The marshal's must define conventions and other pertinent details of the combat. This includes the scenario, the boundaries to the area which will be used, and major obstructions which may be present on the field. These need to be explained clearly and concisely, and no combat should commence until all of the marshals and combatants understand what is going on. The marshals should expect queries and requests for clarification about any of these points. It is important that both the marshals and combatants understand what is going on and what is required of them.

TRAINING A BEGINNER

Calibration for single combat is not difficult; calibrating and teaching attacks on potentially multiple targets is much harder. The great dangers are really twofold; one is of course the excitement level being higher as it's a much more intense environment. The Second area to consider is the likelihood of distraction from a third party. In modern fencing terms, the potential is quite real for someone you aren't even facing to 'attack into your preparation' as you initiate an action against someone else. You may be required to parry one person while completing the attack on another. If the focus of attention becomes the parry, the attack will be completed blind.

One method of teaching a safe way to do this is to take away the visual cues for an attack. Have both trainee and trainer in full protective gear. The trainer may want additional protection at first! Stand at normal engagement distance for a lunge, let the trainee have a few practice lunges to set the line in his/her mind, then get them to make the attack with their eyes closed.

The objective is to get them to take ALL of their force information through their hand and wrist. They won't have the visual cue of distance, or the vision of point on body/cloth or anything else. Teach them what is sufficient force. Adjust their grip so that once sufficient force is achieved, they AUTOMATICALLY ease off by bending/flexing wrist, shoulder and elbow.

Once they can do this, start changing distances once their eyes are closed. Let them get used to a varying environment. Finally, have them practice this in offline attacks. Needless to say, they'll have to be able to do this with both hands, and with any other weapon/device they're authorized in!

The ultimate objective of this exercise is to allow the trainee to parry effectively and still safely attack another target, offline, using peripheral vision only, with no risk of overpowering the attack.

Authorising Marshal's Note: Test for this during an authorization. With the candidate facing two opponents, have them try to parry one and thrust at another. You may need to 'set up' the circumstance. It doesn't really matter whether someone says they'll never do it; the rules allow it and it's better to be sure. Besides, it isn't all that difficult to do!

Control is an issue as well, and not just in regards to temper or excitement. There is a tendency for new melee Combatants when engaging two opponents to stand in range of both and try to move their sword quickly back and forth to cover both. This can rapidly degenerate into uncontrolled motion and whippy/chopping strikes, even accidental ones. Remind them of footwork and tactics of range; a half pace to one side should take one of them out of range, or at least narrow their line of approach to you, thus allowing a more controlled defence.

Authorising Marshal's Note: Be hard on this during testing. Many will test with fiberglass weapons, and an occasional bump from them may be annoying but aren't damaging. Visualise a ragged, 'windscreen wiper' parry with a metal blade crashing into your knuckles and you'll see the importance. It can break fingers. Remember, these people are automatically authorised in the use of metal once they pass the test with fibreglass.

Footwork may also need to be addressed. Practice on different types of ground, even walking on or over things. Slips and passes become even more useful in melee! Let them learn what they can safely do while in training, and hopefully they won't be tempted to try something excessive in an actual fight. Redo your footwork drills in a cluttered space (tables and chairs are good) so they can develop their spatial awareness.

Conventions cover things like killing from behind, arcs, terrain, engagement and so on.

- Killing from behind is an option. Make sure the trainee knows how to do it, and ensure they are aware that it is not necessarily included in every melee.
- Frontal arc is important. The front of a person is defined by common sense rather than taking a cue from the position of head, body, feet or weapon. If the target moved towards you and you felt they were 'advancing', then you are facing their front. If you think they are 'retreating' toward you, you are facing their back. If you are in the frontal arc of your intended target you may attack as normal, with thrust or cut. You DO NOT need to be in their visual arc. The hard line on this is that if a person cannot safely execute a controlled attack on a person's blind spot in the

frontal arc, they should not be authorised. Participants should also be made aware that they are likely to be hit from a blind spot during melee. This can cause distress to some, and should be tested for and worked on in training prior to their being authorised. In all cases, combatants should be encouraged to achieve active engagements during melees.

- Terrain is a fairly broad concept. When a person fences rapier in a tourney setting they are supposed to assess the list field as they walk on; how big it is, what shape it is, what the surface is like (slippery, rocky, etc). Melee is just an extension of that. They should know where they can fence, and how to deal with what they are allowed to do. If you have access to a good, solid table, let them try walking on it. Most will find the situation too precarious and too vulnerable. Don't discourage that, it is! Teach them how to cross an obstacle safely (a table, for example, may be crossed by sitting on one side, facing in the direction you intend going, and swinging the legs across. It 'can' be done safely even while engaged). Marshals should endeavour to warn Combatants of dangerous ground and define where they can and cannot go, but that doesn't excuse the Combatant from being aware of their own circumstances and position!

When building a beginner melee fencer's awareness of multiple opponents and the concept of teamwork, a method which has shown rapid results is to start with a group using single rapier only, and begin with two people attacking one. The pair learn teamwork while the one learns to move and defend against two. Swap them around so each has had a turn alone. Then repeat allowing them to use whatever they have been authorised in. Once this has been done, build up as far as you can with two on two, three on three, four on four and so on. Remember that once you go past three on three you need a second marshal!

CONCLUSION

Melee combat can be a lot of fun, but there are important safety aspects, which must be taken into consideration. All of the points above are important to the smooth-running of melee combat. Certain words and phrases have been repeated during this manual, this is done because they are the most important.

The vital things to ensure that melee combat goes safely and so is enjoyable to all of those participating are safety, communication and control. Each combatant and marshal has a vital role to play to ensure that rapier melees go safely. It is important that each person plays their part to ensure that things run smoothly. Combatants need to listen to the marshals and be aware of the other combatants and marshals on the field. The marshals need to communicate all safety issues to both the combatants and the other marshals, they also need to explain the pertinent issues, which apply to the combat, and the combatants should get clarification for anything and everything that they do not understand.

Combatants and marshals should read all of the sections of this manual so that they know what theirs and the others' responsibilities are.

It is the knowledge and application of the points, which have been discussed, which will ensure that the melee combat proceeds safely and is fun and exciting for both marshals and combatants.

Once this document has been read, and comprehended, the best way to teach melee from a practical point of view is to put both the combatants and marshals through a number of scenarios and point out all of the problems.

This manual is designed to provide a set of guidelines for instruction and participation in rapier melee. It is important that these points be read, comprehended and then seen to be in a practical context. Various issues will arise from both this particular manual and the processes of rapier melees, most importantly it should be common sense and what ever is safest for the combatants and marshals which decides the final decision as to what is done.

APPENDIX 1 - LOCAL HOLDS

Local holds are different as they only affect one area of the fighting, the particular marshal's "zone of control". Marshals in melee combat operate in these zones so that each marshal can oversee a particular area, rather than trying to observe the whole combat. The marshal should be aware of other areas in case a safety issue comes up in another area. Typically a zone of control covers either an area or a group of combatants. It is the marshal's job to oversee the safety in this area.

The procedure for calling a local hold is a marshal calls, "Local hold." which the combatants in the area respond to, this only affects the combatants in that marshal's area. Combat in other areas of the field may continue unless they pose a safety issue to the particular area.

These local holds can be used to sort out problems within a particular area without affecting the whole combat. In this way marshals are able to control the flow of combat so that things do not get out of hand, and so that issues may be resolved quickly so that the combat can continue.

They are used at very large melees such as occur at Pennsic.