

Introduction to the Experimental Simulators for Mounted Combat Program

Preamble and Purpose

- Introduction of additional types of simulators beyond our current “boffer” style
- Rawlins model synthetic (plastic) simulators
- Steel simulators approved for rapier cut and thrust program
- allow for a better simulation of actual sword work
- grand melees
- exploration of period manuscripts such as the 15th century Fiore and Ringeck mss

Armor Requirements

- Biggest difference is for helmets-- rigid perforated material or fencing mask mesh required
- Look online for cut and thrust helmets for examples and how to
- A three weapon mask with back and sides of rigid protection will be sufficient
- Also, at least padded gloves are required. Lacrosse gloves are readily available.
- Strongly recommend forearm and torso protection (padded gambeson and/or vambraces)

Weapon Requirements (come back to this)

- Cut and Thrust style blades: Any currently approved blade in the Cut and Thrust program is allowable for this program. Additional equivalent blades can be authorized at the discretion of the KEO and Test Program Administrator. Although, thrusting is currently prohibited in this program, thrusting tips ARE required, and must meet the standards for C&T weapons (rabbit blunts or heavy leather folded and taped down work well)
- Rawlins Synthetic blades: All Rawlins synthetic blades that reproduce period swords are acceptable. This currently includes their longsword, “short sword” (i.e, arming sword) and basket hilt sword.

Sparring Conventions

- In general, the same as for regular mounted combat
- No thrusting
- No grappling
- Any strike that if missed would hit the horse must be discontinued. Striking at the rein hand typically will not be legal, for example.
- Seriously, don't hit the horse.
- Blow calibration has not yet been established, but current mounted combat calibration levels are a good start. In all events, incidental conduct will not count as a blow. At the other extreme, a fully focused blows such as seen in armored foot combat would be excessive for the current armor requirements. In general, an unobstructed blow thrown at speed with "intent" would meet the envisioned calibration for this program.

Historical Techniques

- Not a lot out there, but we can look at the period manuals for a general notion of styles
- Further technique can be informed by the equivalent foot combat techniques
- The limitation against thrusting and grappling requires modification of many plays
- In general, we are simulating tourney combat here, which also typically prohibited thrusts
- Both the Ringeck and the Fiore manuscripts seem to presume a fight against an armored opponent who is wearing either an open faced or visored helmet (circa 1400). Accordingly, many of the plays finish with a thrust to the face/throat or grappling with the intent to unhorse the opponent.
- If thrusting becomes legal in mounted combat, these plays will be easier to simulate.

German Longsword for Dummies

-Out of the two horseback sections for longsword, the Ringeck manuscript has more detail, so we will concentrate on that. The following are VERY basic concepts

-*Fuhlen*

-*Indices*

-At the moment of *Fuhlen*, Twitch or Winden (or just press through). Respond with counter cut. Note that a thrust would typically also be a response here.

First Guards

-Von Tag

-Longpoint

Play One

-Start in *Von Tag*, cut to Longpoint, at moment of *Fuhlen* act as required.

More Guards

-*Ochs*

-*Pflug*

-*Alber*

Play Two

-Start in *Von Tag*. Opponent cuts high or low. Respond with *Pflug* or *Ochs* and counter cut.

Play Three

-Start in *Alber*, opponent in *Von Tag*. Opponent cuts with a strong overhead cut. Respond by strongly deflecting and counter cutting. Alternately, step offline and thrust (here, counter-cut) to longpoint.

Horseback Guards

First Guard: Sword angled across the saddle, resting on left arm. Preparatory position for the *Taschenbau* (“pouch strike”)

Second Guard: Right hand held “high above head”, with point dropped to threaten the face of the opponent. Note the similarity to the foot combat guard of Ochs, as well as the opponent’s position in the first image in plate one of the Fiore horseback section.

Third Guard: Sword held at right side by leg with the point rising up to threaten the opponent. Note similarity to *Pflug*.

Fourth Guard: Place the sword pommel on saddlebow, with the point upwards as with the third guard.

Fifth Guard Hold the sword across the saddle, grasping the middle of the blade with the left hand. This is the basic horseback halfsword guard. Tobler notes that while there are no Ringeck plays utilizing this guard, other contemporary German manuals use this guard in plays that hook the opponent’s neck as he rides by. Such maneuvers are outside the scope of this program.

Mounted Nebenhut: Like the fourth guard, but drop the tip so the sword is “at ease”, resting against the right leg. Think about *Alber*

Play Four

--*Taschenbau:* Start in First Guard. Ride right to right. In response to a cut or thrust to the face, displace with the strong of your sword while rotating to Third Guard and thrusting from below to his face. If he displaces the thrust by moving “high up” with his sword, change the rotation to a cut at his left hands or reins. Ringeck adds that if you desire to distress his horse, you can cut at his right leg to send the horse running. Distressing horses is a prohibited maneuver in this program.

--Again, we don’t thrust, so cut. Of course, if you were fighting an armored foe to the death, a thrust underneath his visor is an excellent idea, as would be throwing him to the ground.

--The “cut at his reins” comment is possibly not literal. Actually slicing reins in half at a pass seems both unnecessarily difficult and not particularly useful as a skilled rider (as we can presume Ringeck was writing for) is unlikely to lose control simply because he lost a rein. Rather, it seems to be an indication of sword direction, turning the opponents blade away via a downward cutting motion

Play Five

--From *Nebenhut*, as the opponent approaches, raise your sword into *Langen Ort* (Long Point, basically pointed straight at the opponent). Again, note similarity to the foot play from *Alber*

--If from the previous play, the opponent displaces the thrust, wind up to the Second Guard and hang the point at his face. If he continues to ride at you, thrust to his face.

Note: the last play was referred to as “the first play in Nebenhut” in the manuscript, but unfortunately, the mounted combat section ends abruptly here.

Fiore de Liberi

- Sadly, Fiore’s section is even more sparse than Ringeck’s.
- A full treatment of his foot combat guards is beyond the scope of this class
- Fiore specifies nine specific plays, all starting from *Coda Lunga*, with the blade held down and back on the left.
- An all-purpose guard, with the main response to an attack being to beat the opponent’s sword away, taking care to do so to the side, lifting the opponent’s blade.

Play Six

- Start in Coda Lunga
- Opponent comes in with an overhead blow
- Beat aside the blow, cut to the head

Play Seven

- Start with Play Six, after the overhead blow is deflected, that rider pommels to the face

Play Eight

- Start with Play Seven, in response to the pommel, lift your sword to block with the hilt. Counter cut as able.