

# THE BASICS OF THE TACTICAL WHEEL

## Please Note!

This short run-through of the idea of the "Tactical Wheel" has been included in the beginners section even though you may, at this point, have no use for it or even understand it. This is done so that you can feel comfortable in future training, where the focus will be more and more on tactics, and not just the execution of movements.

**Observing and studying The Tactical Wheel** - Imagine a game of Rock, Paper, Scissors, but with many more components. The basic tactical wheel is similar, as each tactic will defeat the one before it, and be defeated by the one following if executed properly.

The pieces are as follows: **Simple Attack** (an attack executed as one quick action) is defeated by **Parry and Riposte** (defending with the blade and/or distance, and then attacking) is defeated by **Compound Attack** (an attack executed with multiple "feints" to close distance and draw out the final parry) is defeated by **Attack on Preparation** (a timed Simple Attack into the early, non-threatening phase of the Compound Attack) is defeated by **Counter Time** (a feint or preparation used to draw the Counter Attack so the ATTACKER may then make Parry and Riposte) is defeated by **Feint in Tempo** (a compound counter attack used to evade the Counter Time) is defeated by **Simple Attack** (the wheel comes full-circle.).

**Compound knowledge of fencing tactics with The Second Intention** - Each of the above actions may also be executed with a specific, pre-determined follow-up action in mind. For example, instead of answering Parry and Riposte with Compound Attack, a subtle fencer may make her next attack just out of distance, to allow time for a 'counter-parry and counter-riposte'. Her first action would thus be called "Second Intention Simple Attack". Actions can also be made in The Third (or Fourth) Intention, but discerning and employing this level of subtlety can be extremely difficult.

**Understand that experienced fencers will generally try to jump around the Tactical Wheel** in order to "out-think" their opponent, rather than trying to score touches with speed and power alone, the object being to maneuver the opponent into a position where they are vulnerable to the fencer's best actions. Keep this in mind when watching bouts.

In Epee fencing, the first fencer to hit scores and there is no priority. When both fencers hit simultaneously (within 1/25th of a second), both score. Understanding the tactical wheel will help you to "get inside the fencers' heads", increasing your enjoyment of the sport.

## Hint!

- Epee fencers tend to fence defensively, and mainly in the Second Intention. Look for subtle tactics and deeper strategy. If you are a beginning fencer, watching bouts is one of the most important things you can do with your time. Although often the actions will seem complex and incomprehensible, watching, and even directing some bouts yourself, will make learning the actions you saw on the fencing strip much easier.