Sabre Duel
The rules handbook

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Summary

Introduction

Fencing is a sport with a rich history, dating back centuries as both a martial practice and a competitive duel of wits and reflexes. Sabre fencing, in particular, is a fast-paced discipline where decisive strikes and tactical feints determine victory.

This game is a strategic simulation of sabre fencing, designed to capture its essence in a structured and engaging format. By distilling the combat into a turn-based system, players can experience the thought process and decision-making involved in real fencing duels while maintaining the accessibility of a board game. The game introduces a continuous round structure, ensuring that momentum and control shift dynamically between players, much like in actual fencing bouts.
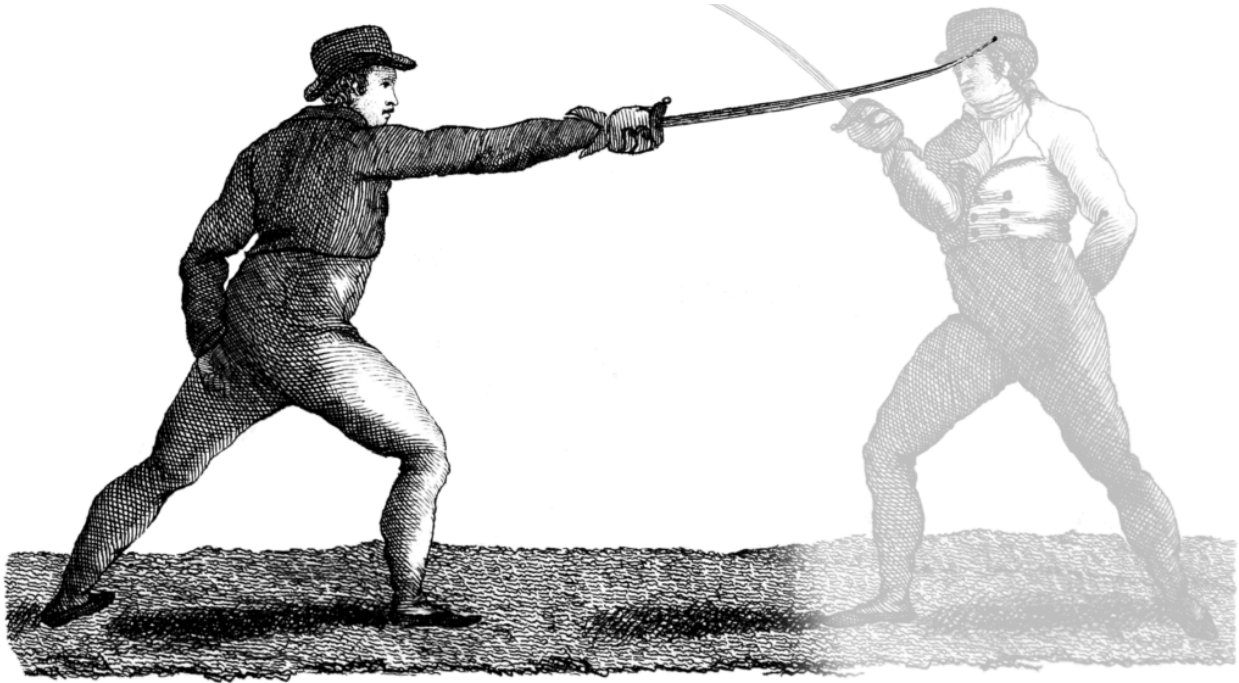
Game Overview
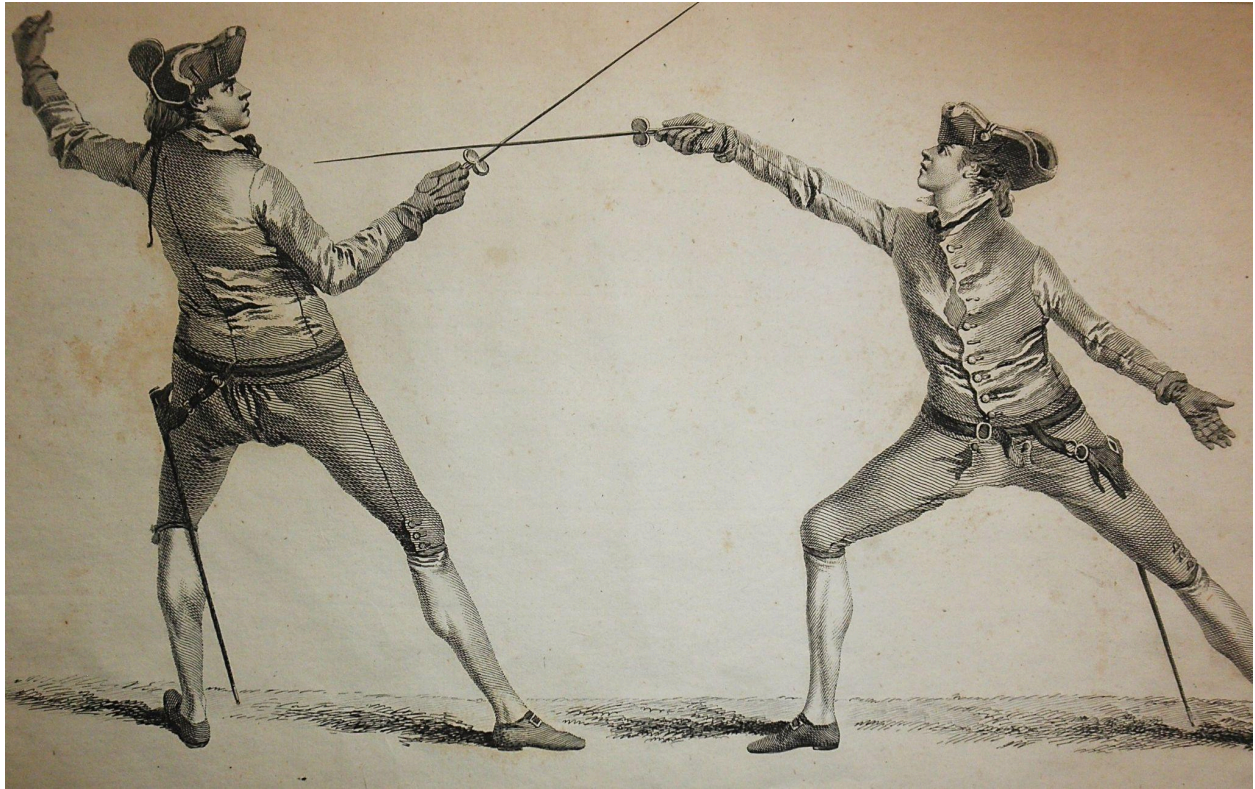
Sabre Duel is a two-player, turn-based card game where players engage in tactical fencing exchanges to score points. The game emphasizes strategic thinking, deception, and timing.
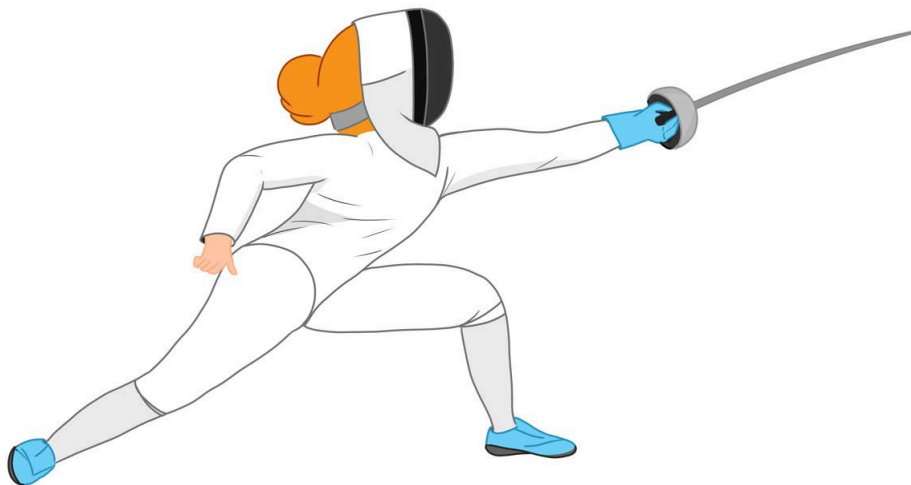
Actions - Attack, Lunge, Feint, Parry

Attack – A direct offensive move in which a fencer extends their arm to hit the opponent.

Lunge – A committed forward attack in which a fencer extends their body by pushing off with their legs and kicking forward, while simultaneously extending their arm to hit.

Feint – A deceptive move used to bait the opponent's attack, stepping back to execute a real attack.
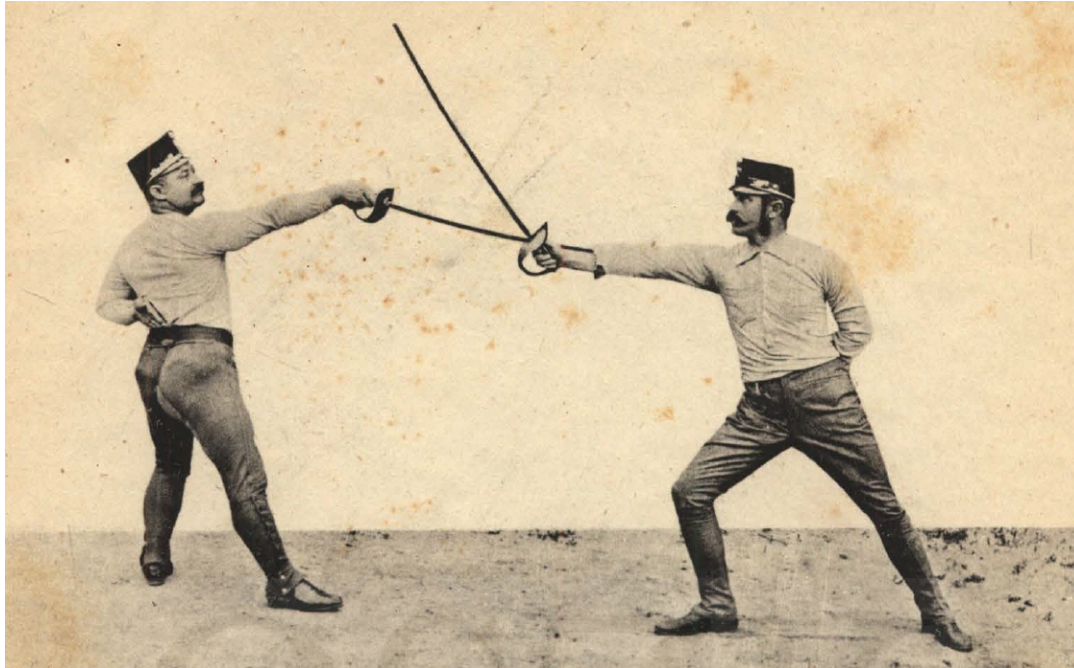
Parry – A defensive move in which a fencer uses their weapon to deflect or block an incoming attack.

Basic Rules

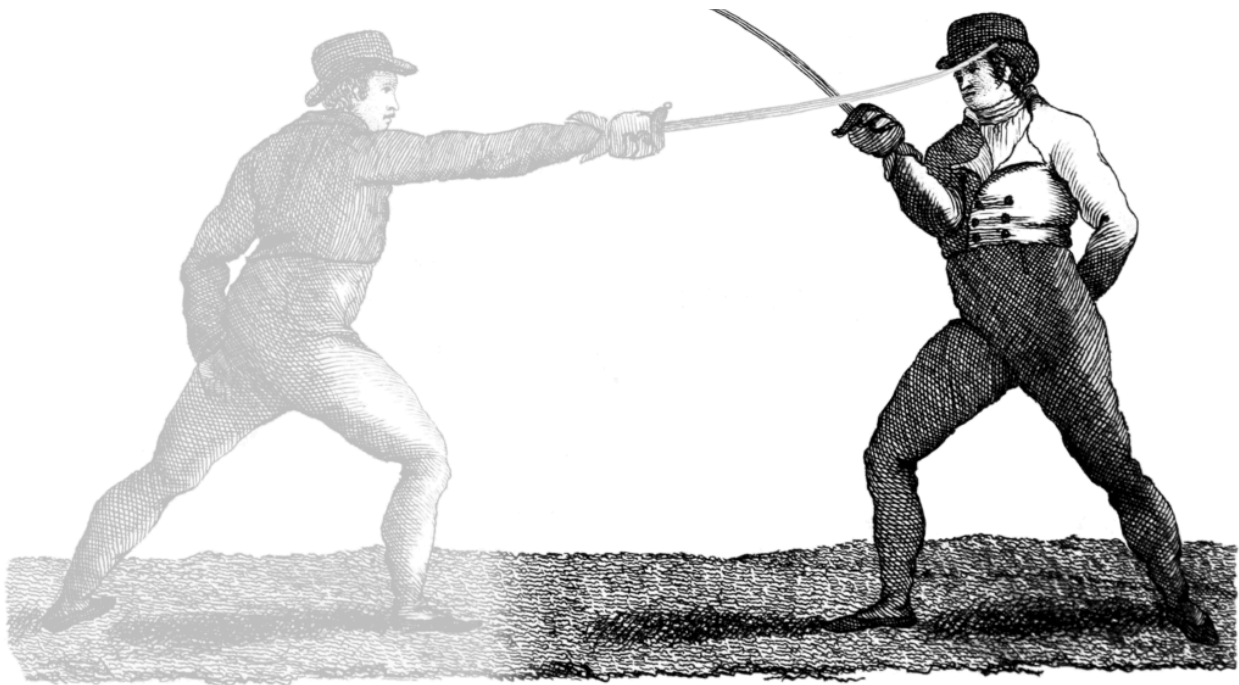**Objective & Win Condition**: Each player is given **4 Action Cards**: **Attack, Lunge, Feint, and Parry**. The goal is to outmaneuver your opponent using these limited actions to **score 15 points first**. Points are earned by successfully landing an attack while respecting fencing's priority (*right of way)* mechanics. The game continues until one player reaches **15 points**, at which point they are declared the **Champion of the Fencing Arena**.

1. Game Components

- 2 Player Boards
- 4 Action Cards per player (Attack, Lunge, Feint, Parry)
- 1 Priority Token
- Score Trackers
- Referee Call Chart

2. Setup

Each player receives **1 Attack, 1 Lunge, 1 Feint, and 1 Parry** card. The Score Trackers are placed nearby. If a player gains priority during the game, place the **Priority Token** to indicate that their next action will be executed with priority.

3. Resolution System (Without Priority)

- Same attack actions (Attack vs. Attack, Lunge vs. Lunge, Feint vs. Feint) ➥ Simultaneous, no score, round resets.

- Attack vs. Lunge ➥ Attack wins (Attack in preparation), scores.

- Lunge vs. Feint ➥ Lunge wins (Attack touch point), scores.

- Feint vs. Attack ➥ Feint wins (Feint disengages Attack), scores.

- Parry vs. Parry ➥ No score, both players wait for the next actions.
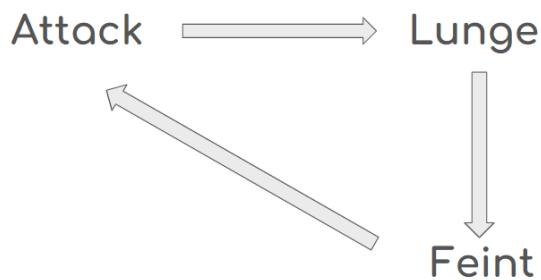
(strategic combat flow without priority)

4. Introducing Priority via Parry

- Parry vs. Attack or Feint ➜ No score, but Parry successfully **gains priority**. Both players wait for the next actions.

- Parry vs. Parry ➜ No score, continue play. However, performing a Parry action when the player already has priority causes them to **lose priority**. Both players wait for the next actions.

- Parry vs. Lunge ➜ Lunge wins (Parry No), opponent scores.

If a player has priority, identical attack actions (Attack vs. Attack, Lunge vs. Lunge, Feint vs. Feint) result in a score for the player with priority. Performing a Parry (defensive action) causes the player to lose priority. Other interactions remain unchanged.
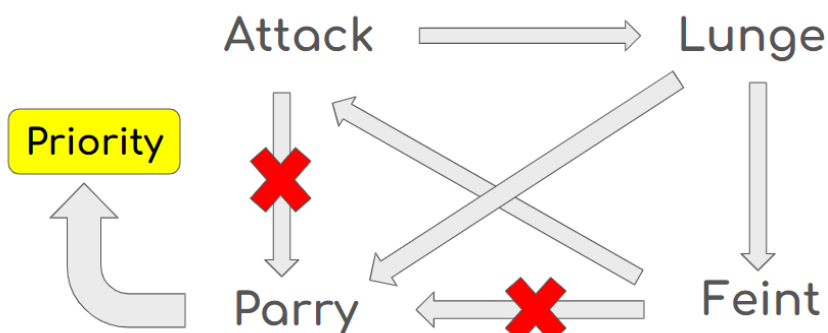
(strategic combat flow with priority)

Strategic Implications
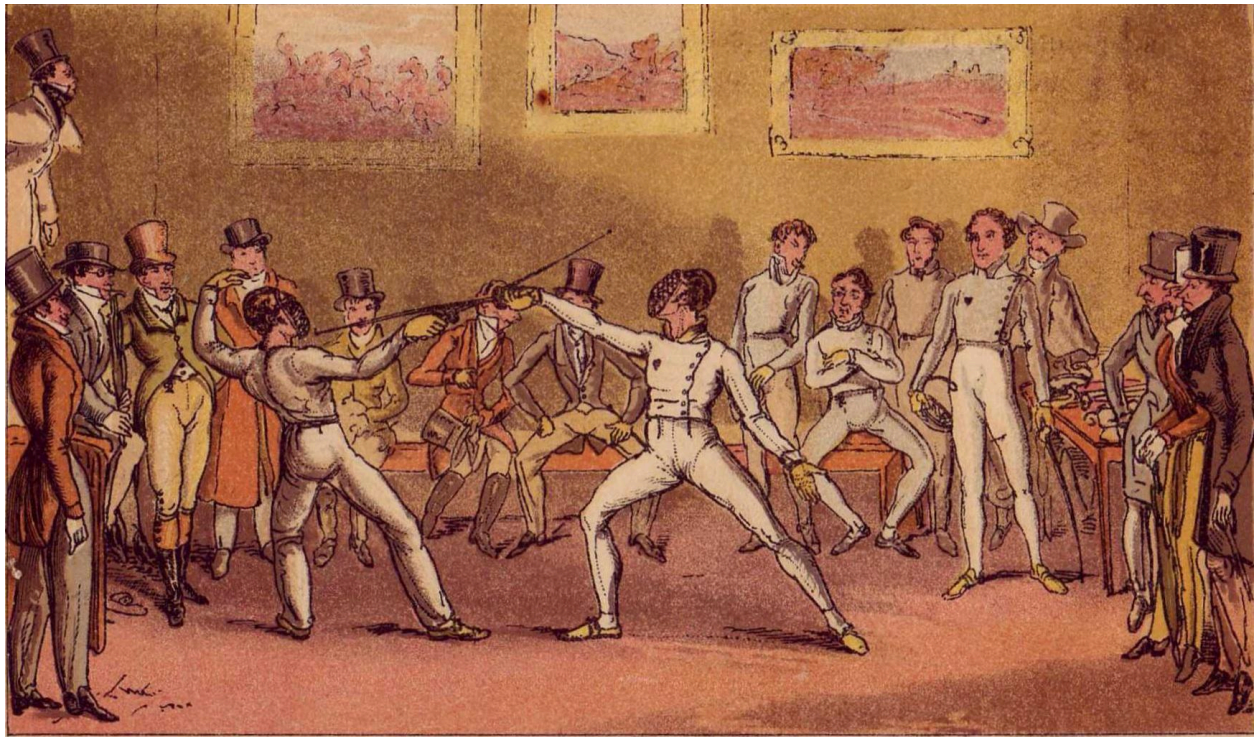
Parry is a defensive tool to turn the tide but does not score on its own.

Lunge is strong but predictable (beats Feint and Parry, loses to Attack).

Feint is effective against Attack but loses to Lunge and can be Parried.

Attack is quick but vulnerable to Feints and Parries.

Referee Call Chart

Table 1: Actions Without Priority

Action1 (P1)	Action2 (P2)	Priority	Result	Score	Round Condition
Attack	Attack	-	Simultaneous attacks	No	Round End
Attack	Lunge	-	Attack wins (Attack in preparation)	P1	Round End
Attack	Feint	-	Feint wins (Feint disengages Attack)	P2	Round End
Attack	Parry	-	Attack Parry Right, P2 gains priority	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)
Lunge	Lunge	-	Simultaneous attacks	No	Round End
Lunge	Feint	-	Lunge wins (Attack touch point)	P1	Round End
Lunge	Attack	-	Attack wins (Attack in preparation)	P2	Round End
Lunge	Parry	-	Lunge wins (Parry No)	P1	Round End
Feint	Feint	-	Simultaneous attacks	No	Round End
Feint	Attack	-	Feint wins (Feint disengages Attack)	P1	Round End
Feint	Lunge	-	Lunge wins (Attack touch point)	P2	Round End
Feint	Parry	-	Attack Parry Right, P2 gains priority	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)

Parry	Parry	-	No score, both players wait for next actions	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)
Parry	Attack	-	Attack Parry Left, P1 gains priority	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)
Parry	Lunge	-	Lunge wins (Parry No)	P2	Round End
Parry	Feint	-	Attack Parry Left, P1 gains priority	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)

Table 2: Actions With Priority

Action1 (P1)	Action2 (P2)	Priority	Result	Score	Round Condition
Attack (priority)	Attack	Yes	Attack wins, player with priority scores	P1	Round End
Lunge (priority)	Lunge	Yes	Lunge wins, player with priority scores	P1	Round End
Feint (priority)	Feint	Yes	Feint wins, player with priority scores	P1	Round End
Parry (priority)	Parry	Yes	player with priority loses priority (P1 with no priority because of defensive action)	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)
Attack (priority)	Lunge	Yes	Attack wins (Attack in preparation)	P1	Round End
Attack (priority)	Feint	Yes	Feint wins (Feint disengages Attack)	P2	Round End
Attack (priority)	Parry	Yes	Attack Parry Right, P2 gains priority	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)
Lunge (priority)	Attack	Yes	Attack wins (Attack in preparation)	P2	Round End
Lunge (priority)	Feint	Yes	Lunge wins (Attack touch point)	P1	Round End

Lunge (priority)	Parry	Yes	Lunge wins (Parry No)	P1	Round End
Feint (priority)	Attack	Yes	Feint wins (Feint disengages Attack)	P1	Round End
Feint (priority)	Lunge	Yes	Lunge wins (Attack touch point)	P2	Round End
Feint (priority)	Parry	Yes	Attack Parry Right, P2 gains priority	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)
Parry (priority)	Attack	Yes	Attack Parry Left, P1 gains priority	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)
Parry (priority)	Lunge	Yes	Lunge wins (Parry No)	P2	Round End
Parry (priority)	Feint	Yes	Attack Parry Left, P1 gains priority	No	Round continues (waiting for next actions)

FAQs

1. Is this game the same as real fencing, like sabre fencing?

Answer:
Not exactly. While this game draws inspiration from sabre fencing, it is simplified for strategic gameplay. In real fencing, fencers can move around the entire area, adding complexity. Our game focuses more on simulating the battle in the middle of the piste and the interactions between specific actions like Attack, Lunge, Feint, and Parry.

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2. I'm still confused about how the Priority rule works. What should I do?

Answer:
It's totally understandable! I've created a simple HTML web page that can help you determine the outcome of each action round. The page automatically calculates the priority and tells you which action wins, so you don't have to worry about remembering all the priority rules during gameplay.

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3. Why do you lose priority after performing a Parry?

Answer:

Parry is a defensive move. Losing priority encourages offense and prevents players from relying too much on defense. It keeps the game dynamic and strategic.

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4. Should you never use Parry with Priority?

Answer:

Not necessarily! Parrying with priority can be a smart move, especially if you predict an attack. It's a mental game—using defense while in a strong position can surprise your opponent and force them to rethink their strategy. But be careful, as it will make you lose priority, so use it strategically to keep your opponent guessing!