**Medieval Swordsmanship**

**ES 186**

**Lesson 3 – The Secondary Guards**

* Review (*Oberhau* drill, primary guard drill)
* Secondary guards
* *Langenort* (Long Point)
* *Kron* (Crown)
* *Schranckhut* (Barrier)
* *Nebenhut* (Side)
* Integrated guard drill

The secondary guards appear in 14th and 15th century fighting manuals with one, *Langenort* (Long Point), appearing in the earliest fighting treatise known to date (the sword and buckler Royal Armouries Manuscript I.33 from the 13th century). These provide alternative positions for holding the sword or guards a swordsman might transition through during combat.

***Langenort* (Long Point):**

*Langenort* is held with the blade extended towards your opponent’s face with your arms outstretched and the blade oriented vertically (but don’t lock your elbows). *Langenort* can be adopted with either a right or left leg lead but bout 60% of your weight should be on the front foot. This is the terminal position for thrusts from *Ochs* or *Pflug*, however *Langenort* can also be used to engage an opponent’s blade at a distance.

**EXERCISE:** *Pflug to Langenort*

1. Beginning with the left foot forward and standing in right *Pflug*, advance pass forward and transition into right *Langenort*.
2. Recover the blade into left *Pflug*, advance pass and transition into left *Langenort*.
3. Recover the blade into right *Pflug*. Repeat the drill 10 times

***Kron* (Crown):**

In *Kron* the blade is close to the body with the hilt in front of the face, the blade pointed upward and slightly forward, and the flat of the blade is oriented towards the opponent. Like *Langenort*, *Kron* can be adopted from either a right or left leg lead. However, about 60% of your weight should be on the back foot.

# *Kron* is less of a guard and more of a transition point between guards. For example, from *Alber* you can assume *Kron* to intercept a downward blow. However, you must then adopt *Ochs* or *Pflug* to set up a thrust or simply close in and grapple with your opponent.

**EXERCISE:** *Alber to Kron*

1. Beginning with the left foot forward and standing in right *Alber*, advance pass forward and transition into left *Kron*.
2. Recover the blade into left *Alber* and advance pass forward transitioning into right *Kron*.
3. Recover the blade into right *Alber*. Repeat the drill 10 times

***Schranckhut* (Barrier):**

For *Schranckhut* the sword is held with the hilt is held at shoulder or head level with the blade angled downward and to the side of the body with the flat of the blade facing outward. For a right *Schranckhut*, the blade should be angled downward to the right side of the body while for a left *Schranckhut* the blade should be angled down to the left. About 60% of your weight should be on the back foot.

*Schranckhut* is an important defensive guard as the blade can shield a swordsman from many lines of attack. With the hilt held high one can defend against blows to the head, shoulders and upper torso. With the hilt held low one can defend against blows to the hips or legs. Furthermore, *Schranckhut* can be adopted to wither the right or left side regardless of which leg is forward.

Lastly, *Schranckhut* is an excellent offensive guard as very powerful circular cuts can be launched from this position.

**EXERCISE:** *Pflug to Schranckhut*

1. Beginning with the left foot forward and standing in right *Pflug*, advance pass forward and transition into left *Schranckhut* (blade over lead leg) by dropping the tip of the sword and lifting up the hilt (we’ll use this motion in a partner drill later).
2. Recover the blade into left *Pflug* and advance pass forward transitioning into right *Schranckhut* (blade over lead leg).
3. Recover the blade into right *Alber*. Repeat the drill 10 times

***Nebenhut* (Side):**

In *Nebenhut*, the sword is held with the hilt to the side of the body at waist level with the tip of the blade angled downward and forward (essentially like *Pflug* but with the tip pointed down). For a right *Nebenhut*, the left leg should lead while for a left *Nebenhut* the right leg should lead. In both positions the false edge of the blade should be oriented towards your opponent. About 60% of your weight should be on the back foot.

Like *Alber,* *Nebenhut* appears to leave the swordsman vulnerable. However, this is an excellent position for launching upward cuts to either deflect upcoming blows or strike an opponent. Also, this is a natural position for an overhand cut (*Oberhau*) to terminate.

**EXERCISE:** *Vom Tag to Nebenhut*

1. Beginning with the left foot forward and standing in right *vom Tag*, advance pass forward and transition into left *Nebenhut*.
2. Recover the blade into left *vom Tag* and advance pass forward, transitioning into right *Nebenhut*.
3. Recover the blade into right *vom Tag*. Repeat the drill 10 times

**Integrated Guard Drill:**

This drill incorporates all eight guards in a continuous sequence, providing examples of both attack and defense. As with the primary guard drill do not strike as you practice this drill! Focus on stance, footwork, balance, blade position and especially transitioning smoothly from guard to guard not power cutting (we'll get to that soon enough).

1. Stand in right *vom Tag*, left leg lead.
2. Advance pass into left *Nebehut*, right leg lead.
3. Advance pass into right *Ochs*, left leg lead.
4. Drop the tip to the outside of your lead leg (effectively passing through *Schranckhut*), advance pass and rotate the blade over into left *Pflug*, right leg lead.
5. Advance pass into right *Schranckhut*, left leg lead.
6. Rotate the blade back so that it lies against your right shoulder, advance pass and rotate the blade through the vertical plane (much like a vertical *Oberhau*) into *Alber*, right leg lead.
7. Lift the tip of the blade up to waist level, advance pass into right *Langenort*, left leg lead.
8. Advance pass lifting the blade into *Kron* with a right leg lead.
9. Recover your sword to your left shoulder to form left *vom Tag.* Repeat