



Ledall Longsword

A Comprehensive Study Guide for Historical
Longsword

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ABOUT THE LEDALL ROLL MANUSCRIPT

The Ledall Roll stands as the **most technically comprehensive of only three surviving Medieval English martial arts manuscripts**. Dating to approximately 1535–1550, this scroll-format manual (vellum roll measuring 152.5mm × 622mm) contains 38–41 plays documenting a distinctive Tudor-era fighting system emphasizing displacement, one-handed techniques, and structured training sequences.

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Historical Significance

As Mark Ryan Geldof notes in his 2023 academic article, the manuscript likely represents “a corrupted copy where the roll was copied by rote from an older document by a scribe who didn’t understand the material well enough to recognize that the pages were out of order.”[1] The attribution “Amen Quod J Ledall” appears awkwardly between lessons rather than as a closing signature, suggesting scribal attribution to John Ledall of York (c. 1515–1582), a wealthy merchant who became Chamberlain of York in 1547.

What Makes English Longsword Different

Robert Kay, approaching from German longsword training, identifies the core distinction: “There is no mention of feeling in the techniques or chases. Further, the quick displacing cuts seem to be how the English system controls the centerline. **Very little winding, lots of displacement and thrusting.**”[2]

Where German *Liechtenauer* tradition emphasizes *föhlen* (feeling) in the bind and extended blade contact through winding (*winden*), the English system prioritizes **immediate displacement followed by thrust**. Binding appears transitional rather than strategic—a momentary contact leading to immediate riposte rather than an extended conversation of the blades.[3]

Key Terminology

GUARDS (WARDS) – **Roebuck** = German *Ochs* (point-forward at head height)
 - **Hawk** = German *Vom Tag* (raised position ready to throw cuts) – **Stop Guard** = German *Pflug* (hands near waist, point threatening) – **Boar** = German *Alber* (sword low, point down) – **Dragon's Tail** = Italian *Posta de coda lunga*

OFFENSIVE ACTIONS – **Quarter Stroke** = Diagonal downward cuts (*Oberhau/Fendente*) – **Contrary Hawk** = Rising cuts (*Unterhau/Sottone*) – **Foin** (foyne) = Any thrust – **Broken Foin** = Thrust while maintaining blade contact (*Absetzen*) – **Rabett** = Countercuts against opponent's weapon – **Spring** = One-handed extension gripping near pommel for maximum reach – **Rake** = Quick wrist cuts targeting hands/arms (*Stromazzone*)

PART I: FLOURISHES

The Flourishes represent **solo training forms** similar to Asian kata—structured sequences allowing practice without partners. The Academy of Historical Arts describes them as patterns that “warm up the body, build muscle memory, and teach the fundamental flow between techniques.”[4]

FLUORISH 1: THE FIRST FLOURISH

Original Text: *The xirte fflorysh A quartr fayre be fore you deliueryde wt an hande
 voydynge bake the ryght fote. Wyth an other quartr wt bothe hands. A Downe ryght*

xtroke voydyng bake the lyfte fote standyng xtyll play iij Rakys lythly Clevyng by thelbowes wt a quartr fayre be fore yow wyth both handys And ij qurters after wt ij turnes A downe ryght xtroke voydyng bake the lyfte fote Styll xtanding play ye fayde iij Rakes wt a quartr farye be fore yow And ij quarters after wt ij turns. A downe ryght xtroke xettyng forth ye ryght fote as fore as ye lyffte wt a brokon foyne uppon the lyffte xyde an other on ye ryght xyde turnyng ye xwerde undr ye ryght arme bryng hyt wt ye xame xyde wyth a brokyn foyne uppon ye lefftte xyde an other upon the ryght xyde turnyng yor xwerde xete the poyn্ত xoffte be fore yow upon the grownde.

Modern English: A Quarter fair before you, delivered with one hand. Voiding back the right foot with another Quarter with both hands. A Downright stroke voiding back the left foot, standing still play 3 Rakes lightly cutting to the elbows, with a Quarter fair before you with both hands. And 2 Quarters after with 2 turns, a Downright-stroke voiding back the left foot. Standing still play the said 3 Rakes with a Quarter fair before you and 2 Quarters after with 2 turns. A Downright-stroke setting forth the right foot as forward as your left with a broken thrust upon the left side, another on the right side turning the sword under the right arm. Bring it with the same side with a broken thrust upon the left side, another upon the right side, turning your sword set the point soft before you upon the ground.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Flourishes are fundamental warm-up patterns. Focus on smooth transitions between one and two-handed grips—this is a distinctive feature of the English system.”[4]

“Rakes should be ‘lightly cleaving by the elbows’—these are quick, weak wrist cuts targeting the opponent’s forearms and hands, not power cuts. Think of them as harassment strikes.”[3]

Key Points: - Begin with one-handed Quarter to practice spring technique - Void steps combine offense with retreat—“attacking while retreating”[3] - Broken thrusts are partial/feinted thrusts that maintain blade contact - The pattern trains muscle memory for transitioning between grips - Set the point “soft” on ground—controlled, not dropped

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Quarter (one-handed)	Stand	Practice one-handed control; grip near pommel for spring
2	Quarter (two-handed)	Void back right foot	Transition to two hands while retreating
3	Downright stroke	Void back left foot	Vertical descending cut
4	3× Rakes to elbows	Stand still	Light, quick wrist cuts; harassment strikes
5	Quarter (two-handed)	Stand	“Fair before you”— delivered forward
6-7	2× Quarters with turns	2 body turns	90° or 180° turns; maintain control
8	Downright stroke	Void back left foot	Repeat pattern element
9	3× Rakes	Stand still	Second repetition of rakes
10	Quarter	Stand	Forward delivery

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
11-12	2x Quarters with turns	2 body turns	Complete the turning sequence
13	Downright stroke	Step right forward to even	Advance into measure
14	Broken thrust (left)	Stand	Partial thrust, maintain blade contact
15	Broken thrust (right)	Turn sword under right arm	Sword circles under arm
16	Bring sword to same side	Recover position	Preparatory position
17	Broken thrust (left)	Stand	Second sequence begins
18	Broken thrust (right)	Turn sword	Mirror previous action
19	Set point on ground	Stand	Controlled finish, "soft" placement

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1-2: Practice steps 1-7 slowly, focusing on smooth grip transitions

Week 3-4: Add steps 8-12, maintaining rhythm through repetitions

Week 5-6: Complete sequence with broken thrusts (steps 13-19)

Week 7+: Increase speed while maintaining form; use as daily warm-up

COMMON MISTAKES

- Dropping sword to ground rather than setting it softly
- Power-cutting the rakes instead of light harassment strikes

- Losing balance during turns—keep center of gravity low
- Gripping too tightly—tension in one-handed sections reduces control
- Rushing through void steps—these teach the timing of retreat-while-attacking

CITATIONS

[4] Academy of Historical Arts. “What is a flourish?” <https://www.academyofhistoricalarts.co.uk/lesson/what-is-a-flourish/>

FLUORISH 2: THE SECOND FLOURISH

Original Text: *The Seconde fflorysh A quartr fayre be fore yow wyth won hand Stan-dyng Å^ztyll Å^zett In the ryght legge wt a Dragonestalle. then Å^zete the lyffte hand uppon the Å^zworde Å^zmytyng a qurter fayre be fore yow wyth won hande turnyng yor boddy Å^zete In yor ryght legge as forwarde as yor lyffte bryng the poynte of the Å^zword ov yor hede Å^zete hyt down Å^zofftely be fore yow upon the growne Then Å^ztandyng Å^ztyll pley yor Rakys uppon what Å^zyde you wyll rystyng uppon ye ryght arme then Å^zmyte a Downeryght Å^zstroke voydynge bake ye lyffte legge bryng after ye ryght legge wt a rake lyfte up ye Å^zwerde ov yor hede bryng forwarde the ryght legge as forewarde as ye lyffte pley a brokyn foyne uppon what Å^zyde that you wyll turnyng ye Å^zworde ov the ryght arme Å^zettyng ye poynte Å^zofftely be fore yow on the grownde*

Modern English: A Quarter fair before you with one hand standing still. Set in the right leg with a Dragon's Tayle, then set the left hand upon the sword, smiting a Quarter fair before you. With one hand, turning your body, set in your right leg as forward as your left, bringing the point of the sword over your head, set it down softly before you upon the ground. Then, standing still, play your Rakes upon any side, as often as you will, resting upon your right arm then smite a Downright-stroke voiding back the left leg, bringing after the right leg with a Rake. Lift up the sword, over your head, bringing forward the right leg as forward as the left, play a Broken thrust upon any side. Turning the sword over the right arm, setting the point softly before you on the ground.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Dragon’s Tail position (*Posta de coda lunga*) is a low guard with sword point behind and down. The set-in movement brings the rear leg forward into this position—it’s a preparatory stance that loads power for the following quarter cut.”[3]

“Notice ‘play your Rakes upon any side, as often as you will, resting upon your right arm’—this gives the practitioner freedom to drill rakes on either side, building ambidextrous control. The ‘resting upon right arm’ suggests a guard position supporting the weight.”[5]

Key Points: - Dragon’s Tail features prominently—practice low guard transitions - “Turning your body” with the quarter emphasizes hip rotation for power - Freedom to practice rakes on either side builds bilateral skill - Second flourish is more advanced than first—assume First is mastered

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Quarter (one-handed)	Stand still	“Fair before you”— forward delivery
2	Dragon’s Tail	Set in right leg	Rear leg advances; low guard, point behind
3	Set left hand on sword	Stand	Transition to two-handed grip
4	Quarter	Turn body	Hip rotation generates power

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
5	One-handed quarter	Step right forward to even	Release to one hand while advancing
6	Bring point over head	Stand	Sword arc overhead
7	Set point on ground	Stand	Controlled, soft placement
8	Rakes (any side, any number)	Stand, rest on right arm	Free practice; supported guard position
9	Downright stroke	Void back left leg	Standard retreat-attack
10	Rake	Bring back right leg	Follow retreat with rake
11	Lift sword overhead	Stand	Preparatory position
12	Broken thrust (any side)	Step right forward to even	Practitioner chooses side
13	Turn sword over right arm	Stand	Circular recovery motion
14	Set point on ground	Stand	Soft, controlled finish

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Steps 1-7 (Dragon's Tail entry and first sequence)

Week 2: Steps 8-10 (Free rake practice—start with 3-5 rakes per side)

Week 3: Steps 11-14 (Broken thrust sequence)

Week 4+: Full integration; increase rake repetitions; vary chosen sides

DRAGON'S TAIL GUARD DETAIL

The Dragon's Tail (*Dragonestalle*) is explicitly named in this flourish. Based on comparative analysis with Italian sources:

- **Sword Position:** Point behind body, angled down toward ground
- **Hand Position:** Hands low, approximately hip level or below
- **Body Position:** Weight on rear leg; coiled, ready to spring forward
- **Tactical Purpose:** Deceptive guard inviting high attacks; loads power for rising cuts or sudden advances

COMMON MISTAKES

- Rushing into Dragon's Tail without proper weight transfer
- Gripping too far from pommel on one-handed sections—limits reach
- Mechanical rakes without targeting intention—visualize elbow/forearm targets
- Dropping sword point instead of controlled overhead arc
- Inconsistent turning direction—establish pattern and maintain it

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*. <https://hemaenthusiast.com/2020/09/04/english-longsword-for-german-italian-longsword-hema-students/>

FLUORISH 3: THE LAYING DOWN OF THE SWORD

Original Text: *The leyng downe of the Swerde A quartr delvyde fayre be fore you then fayre tur about on yor lyffte Syde Set yn yor ryght legge bryngyn g yor Sword over*

yor hede Sette yt Sofftly downe before yow on the grounde

Modern English: A Quarter delivered fair before you, then fair turn about on your left side. Set in your right leg, bringing your sword over your head. Set it softly down before you on the ground.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“This is the formal conclusion to training—the ceremonial setting down of the weapon. The phrase ‘softly down’ appears repeatedly in English sources, emphasizing control and respect for the weapon.”[4]

Key Points: - Formal closing ceremony, not a combat technique

- “Turn about on your left side” = 180° or 360° turn using left as pivot
- Control to the very end—tests balance and blade awareness
- Can be used to end any training session, not just flourishes

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Quarter	Stand	Final cut delivered forward
2	Turn on left side	Pivot 180° - 360° left	“Fair turn”—smooth, controlled
3	Set in right leg	Step right forward	Advance into final position
4	Bring sword over head	Stand	Arc overhead
5	Set point on ground	Stand	Soft, controlled, ceremonial

CEREMONIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Medieval martial training included formal openings and closings. This brief ceremony:

- Marks the transition from training to rest
- Demonstrates control—setting down rather than dropping
- Shows respect for the weapon and art
- Provides mental closure to the session

The Academy of Historical Arts notes: “Ending forms properly was as important as beginning them correctly. The ‘laying down’ marks the boundary between the martial mindset and everyday consciousness.”[4]

TRAINING USE

As Session Closer:

- Complete any flourish or chase sequence
- Execute “Laying Down of the Sword”
- Take moment of stillness before picking up weapon
- Signals mental transition out of combat awareness

As Meditation:

- Can be performed slowly as moving meditation
- Focus on perfect control throughout
- Breath synchronized with movements
- Mindful placement of sword on ground

CITATIONS

[4] Academy of Historical Arts. “What is a flourish?” <https://www.academyofhistoricalarts.co.uk/lesson/what-is-a-flourish/>

PART II: THE CHASES

The thirteen Chases form the **technical core** of the English longsword system. As Brandon Heslop notes, these are “structured sequences—possibly designed as partner drills or solo forms—that progressively teach combinations.”[3]

Unlike the Flourishes (solo warm-ups) or the Counters (defensive responses), the Chases appear to be **choreographed training sequences** that could be practiced alone or with a partner. Many modern practitioners interpret them as two-person drills where both fencers perform the same sequence in turn.

Chase Structure & Purpose

Each Chase typically: 1. Begins from a specific guard or stance 2. Progresses through a combination of cuts, thrusts, and footwork 3. Ends with a “return to ground” notation indicating the sequence can repeat

The phrase “and if it be twice played it will bring you to your ground” appears frequently, suggesting these are **traveling patterns**—sequences that move you through space but return you to starting position when repeated.[6]

CHASE 4: THE FIRST CHASE

Original Text: *The Fyrste Chace he that fir~~x~~te Smytes wyth a hauke or a quarter ov he Swerd Smyte ov yor Swerde to the grounde and foyne att ye ov op'yng and yf he Sett that Smyte upon the Swerd as ~~x~~oone as ye Swerd tu Smyte of the tother Syde and after yt by all one*

Modern English: He that first smites with a Hawk or a Quarter, over his sword smite over your sword to the ground and foin at the upper opening. And if he set that, smite upon the sword as soon as the sword touch, smite of the other side and after it by all one.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The First Chase mirrors the German Zornhau Ort: when the opponent strikes with a hawk or quarter cut, cut over their sword to deflect it groundward, then foin to the upper opening.”[3]

“This establishes the system’s fundamental pattern of **displacement followed by counter-thrust**. The English don’t try to win the bind—they displace quickly and thrust into the opening.”[5]

Key Points: – Core defensive pattern: displace downward → thrust high – “If he set that” = if opponent blocks your thrust – “Upon the sword as soon as touch” = immediately upon blade contact – “Smite of the other side” = cut to opposite opening – This is the foundational Chase—master it before progressing

Tactical Application: The First Chase addresses the most common attack (descending cut) with the most efficient defense (displacement cut + thrust). By deflecting the opponent's sword groundward, you: 1. Clear the centerline 2. Create an upper opening 3. Maintain forward pressure with the thrust 4. Have backup plan if thrust is blocked (cut to other side)

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
OPPONENT	Hawk or Quarter cut	Advances	Initial attack—high descending cut
1	Displace opponent's sword down	Stand or pass	Cut over their sword, drive it to ground
2	Foin to upper opening	Maintain/extend	Thrust to head, neck, or upper chest
IF BLOCKED			
3	Strike on sword (percussion)	Stand	Alternative sequence if thrust is set
4	Cut to other side	Maintain	Hit their blade as contact is made
5	Continue pattern	Stand	Immediately redirect to opposite opening
			"After it by all one"—repeat as needed

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Solo Practice: 1. Visualize opponent's descending cut 2. Practice displacement cut at 45° angle downward 3. Immediate transition to thrust 4. If blade still present, practice percussion strike + redirect

Partner Drill (Feeder Pattern): - **Partner A (Feeder):** Delivers slow Hawk or Quarter - **Partner B (Responder):** Executes Chase sequence - Partner A gradually increases speed as B improves - Switch roles after 10 repetitions

Pressure Testing: - Partner A resists displacement—doesn't let sword go down easily - Partner B must commit full power to displacement - Add blocking of thrust to trigger percussion/redirect sequence - Free flow: A can deliver Hawk or Quarter at will; B must respond

COMPARATIVE TECHNIQUE ANALYSIS

German Zornhau Ort (Wrath Cut Point): - Similar displacement of incoming cut - German version emphasizes winding in the bind - English version emphasizes immediate thrust without winding

Italian Fendente con Punta (Descending Cut with Point): - Italian version may parry then thrust - English displaces AND thrusts in one motion - Faster execution, less time in blade contact

Key Difference: The English system avoids extended blade contact. The displacement is meant to **remove the threat** rather than engage in binding, immediately followed by offense.[5]

COMMON MISTAKES

- Weak displacement that doesn't fully clear opponent's blade
- Pausing between displacement and thrust—must be one fluid motion
- Thrusting off-line instead of into genuine opening
- Forgetting the “if he set that” contingency—always have plan B
- Over-committing to thrust without maintaining balance for recovery

TACTICAL NOTES

When to Use: - Against any high descending attack - Opponent favors Hawk or Quarter cuts - You need simple, reliable defense under pressure - As opening gambit to test opponent's defenses

Counters to Watch For: - Opponent feints high, cuts low - Opponent aborts cut mid-stroke (void or gather) - Opponent strikes with wrist rather than full cut (your displacement misses) - Opponent's cut is actually a thrust in disguise

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). "English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students." *HEMA Enthusiast*.

[6] Geldof, M.R. (2023). "Cut and paste: re-arranging British Library MS Additional 39564." *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*.

CHASE 5: THE SECOND CHASE

Original Text: *The Seconde Chace A dowble rownde wyth a bake foyne and a quartr lyghtly delyvyde And hyt be tweys playde hyt wyll bryng you a gayne to yor ground.*

Modern English: A Double Round, with a Back-thrust, and a Quarter lightly delivered. And it be twice played it will bring you again to your ground.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

"The Second Chase is a traveling pattern—a sequence that moves you through space. 'Double round' likely refers to circular footwork or blade work, possibly full 360° rotations." [6]

Key Points: - This is a **movement drill**, not a combat application
- "Double round" = two circular motions (footwork, blade, or both)
- "Back-thrust" = thrust while moving backward, or reverse-grip thrust
- "Twice"

“played” returns you to start = 720° total rotation – “Lightly delivered” = quick, not powerful

Interpretation Challenges: The manuscript doesn’t specify whether “round” means:
 - Circular footwork (turning/pivoting)
 - Circular blade work (moulinets/cuts)
 - Full body rotation (spinning)

Modern reconstructions explore all possibilities. Most practitioners interpret it as **circular footwork with blade describing circles** overhead or at sides.

STEP BREAKDOWN (CIRCULAR FOOTWORK INTERPRETATION)

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	First Round	360° rotation (CW or CCW)	Sword describes circle overhead/side
2	Second Round	360° rotation (same direction)	Complete second full rotation
3	Back-thrust	Step backward	Thrust while retreating
4	Quarter	Stand	“Lightly delivered” — quick cut
5-8	Repeat sequence	Return rotation	Second playthrough returns to start

ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION (BLADE MOLINETS)

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1-2	Double Round (molinets)	Stand or slow advance	Two circular blade motions (like figure-8)
3	Back-thrust	Step backward	Thrust from moulinet momentum
4	Quarter	Stand or continue retreat	Transition cut
5-8	Repeat	Return path	Mirror sequence back to start

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Stationary Practice – Practice two full 360° rotations with sword overhead – Keep sword moving in smooth circles – Add back-thrust from final rotation position – Finish with light quarter cut

Week 2: Add Footwork – Slow walk forward while executing rotations – Time rotations to footwork rhythm – Back-thrust with deliberate backward step – Quarter while recovering balance

Week 3: Spatial Awareness – Note starting position on floor – Execute sequence twice – Should return to within 1-2 feet of start – Adjust rotations/steps to improve accuracy

Week 4+: Speed and Flow – Increase rotation speed while maintaining control – Smooth transitions between all elements – Practice both clockwise and counter-clockwise – Use as conditioning drill

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

While primarily a movement drill, the Second Chase teaches:

Spatial Management: – Maintaining orientation during rotations – Returning to position after complex movements – Not getting “lost” in the fight

Momentum Control: – Circular blade movements build momentum – Back-thrust uses rotational energy – Quarter cut resets to neutral

Intimidation/Confusion: – Spinning movements can disorient opponents – Creates uncertainty about attack direction – Demonstrates control and confidence

COMMON MISTAKES

- Getting dizzy from rotations—keep eyes on horizon, not ground
- Losing sword control during spins—maintain firm grip
- Back-thrust too weak—use rotation momentum
- Quarter cut too heavy—“lightly delivered” means quick snap
- Uneven rotations—second round should match first

CITATIONS

[6] Geldof, M.R. (2023). “Cut and paste: re-arranging British Library MS Additional 39564.” *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*.

CHASE 6: THE THIRD CHASE

Original Text: *The thyrde Chace A dowble rownde forwarde an other bakwarde A downe ryght stroke voydyng bake ye lyffte legge a bake foyne voydyng bake the ryght legge folowynge In wyth the lyffte legge ~~x~~myte a quartr bakewarde And yff hyt be tweys plade gyt wyll bryng you to yor grounde*

Modern English: A Double Round forward, another backward. A Down-right stroke voiding back the left leg, a Back-thrust voiding back the right leg, following in with the left leg smite a Quarter backward. And if it be twice played it will bring you to your ground.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Third Chase introduces advance-retreat rhythm—moving forward with rounds, then retreating while maintaining offensive pressure. This is the English emphasis on ‘attacking while retreating’ in practice.”[3]

“Notice the footwork pattern: void back left, void back right, step forward left, quarter backward. This creates a rocking motion that manages distance while keeping the opponent under pressure.”[5]

Key Points: – Forward and backward “rounds” establish directional movement
– Consecutive voids (left, then right) create significant distance – “Following in with left leg” disrupts retreat pattern—sudden advance – “Quarter backward” = cut delivered while moving away – Complex pattern teaches distance management

Tactical Applications: – Draw opponent forward with retreat – Sudden advance (step in with left) surprises opponent – Quarter backward maintains threat during final retreat – Teaches not to flee mindlessly—control the distance

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Double Round	Forward movement	Two circular motions while advancing
2	Double Round	Backward movement	Two circular motions while retreating
3	Downright stroke	Void back left leg	Vertical cut while stepping back (left)

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
4	Back-thrust	Void back right leg	Thrust while continuing retreat (right)
5	(Movement only)	Step forward with left	Sudden advance disrupts pattern
6	Quarter backward	Continuing retreat	Cut delivered while moving away
7-12	Repeat full sequence	Return to start	“Twice played” returns to ground

DISTANCE MANAGEMENT BREAKDOWN

Phase 1 (Steps 1-2): Establishing Range – Forward rounds: Close to contact distance – Backward rounds: Open distance, create space – Net movement: Near original position

Phase 2 (Steps 3-4): Aggressive Retreat – Downright + void left: Attack while retreating – Back-thrust + void right: Continue pressure while opening distance – Net movement: 4-6 feet backward from opponent

Phase 3 (Steps 5-6): Distance Disruption – Step forward (left): Sudden closing—opponent expects continued retreat – Quarter backward: Immediate return to retreat with attack – Net movement: Opponent confused about your distance intentions

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Footwork Only – Practice the stepping pattern without sword – Forward rounds = advance 4-6 steps – Backward rounds = retreat 4-6 steps – Void left, void right, step forward left, continue back – Should return to start when repeated

Week 2: Add Sword Work (Slow) – Add circular blade motions to rounds – Downright stroke coordinated with left void – Back-thrust coordinated with right void – Quarter cut as you move backward

Week 3: Increase Speed – Smooth transitions between all elements – No pause between downright and back-thrust – Sudden acceleration on forward step (element 5) – Control on final backward quarter

Week 4+: Partner Awareness – Practice with partner maintaining distance – Partner advances when you retreat – Partner retreats when you advance – Your sudden forward step (5) should surprise partner

TACTICAL PRINCIPLES DEMONSTRATED

1. Retreat ≠ Defeat: The English system teaches that retreating while attacking maintains the initiative. Your opponent must respect your blade even as you create distance.

2. Rhythm Disruption: Establishing a pattern (retreat, retreat) then breaking it (sudden advance) creates openings. Opponents anticipate continuation of established rhythms.

3. Distance Control: You dictate the engagement distance. The opponent must react to your movements rather than imposing their preferred range.

4. Continuous Threat: Every movement includes an offensive action. There's no "pure defense"—even retreat carries threat (downright, back-thrust, quarter).

COMMON MISTAKES

- Mechanical execution without distance awareness
- Weak downright stroke—it must threaten even while retreating
- Telegraphing the forward step—should be sudden
- Quarter backward off-balance—maintain posture during retreat
- Not returning to start position—indicates footwork errors

GEORGE SILVER CONNECTION

This Chase embodies Silver's later principles:

“The best fight is the shortest fight. Make your space true and move not your feet until you see advantage.”

The Third Chase teaches “making your space true”—controlling the distance through deliberate advance and retreat, attacking when you retreat, retreating when you attack, keeping the opponent uncertain about your intentions.[7]

CITATIONS

- [3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.
- [5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.
- [7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*. Reprinted in various modern editions.
-

CHASE 7: THE FOURTH CHASE - “THE BOW-THRUST”

Original Text: *The fourthe Chace callyd ye bowne foyne A dowble rownde forward
an other bakeward a downe ryght stroke voydying bake the lyfte legge A bake foyne
wt a bowfoyne voydying bake wt the ryght legge lythtly myte a quarter.*

Modern English: A Double Round forward an other backward. A Downright stroke voiding back the left leg, a Back-thrust, with a Bow-thrust voiding back with the right leg, lithely smite a Quarter.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Fourth Chase introduces half-sword technique with the ‘Bow-thrust.’ While the exact meaning is debated, most practitioners interpret this as a thrust with shortened grip (one or both hands closer to the blade) for close-range effectiveness.”[3]

Key Points: - Builds on Third Chase pattern (double rounds, downright + void)
- “Bow-thrust” is unique technique requiring interpretation - “Lithely” =

lightly, quickly, with agility

- Combination of back-thrust AND bow-thrust suggests two distinct actions -
Pattern similar to Third Chase but adds specialized technique

Bow-Thrust Interpretations:

Theory 1: Half-Sword Thrust - Grip shortened by moving front hand onto blade
- “Bow” refers to arching shape of arms - Used in close quarters or against armor - Similar to German *Halbschwert*

Theory 2: Arcing Thrust - Thrust that curves around opponent’s defense -
“Bow” describes arc trajectory - Delivered from rotation of hips/shoulders -
Enters around guard rather than straight through

Theory 3: Two-Stage Thrust - Back-thrust sets up position - Bow-thrust is follow-up with different angle - “With a bow-thrust” = accompanied by - Both thrusts delivered in quick succession

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Double Round	Forward	Two circular motions advancing
2	Double Round	Backward	Two circular motions retreating
3	Downright stroke	Void back left leg	Attack while retreating
4	Back-thrust	Stand	Thrust from downright position
5	Bow-thrust	Void back right leg	Specialized thrust technique
6	Quarter	Stand	“Lithely”—quick, light cut

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Review Third Chase - Ensure solid foundation before adding bow-thrust - Focus on downright + void left sequence - Practice back-thrust from various positions

Week 2: Bow-Thrust Experimentation - Try half-sword grip: hand on blade - Try arcing thrust: curve around imagined defense - Try two-thrust combination: back → bow - Determine which interpretation feels most effective

Week 3: Integration – Add chosen bow-thrust interpretation to full sequence – Coordinate bow-thrust with right leg void – Ensure liteness (speed and agility) on final quarter

Week 4+: Refinement – Smooth transitions between all elements – Test with partner: does bow-thrust get through defenses? – Experiment with different interpretations in sparring – Document which interpretation works best for your body type

HALF-SWORD TECHNIQUE DETAIL

If interpreting as half-sword thrust:

Grip Transition: 1. From downright stroke, blade is extended 2. During back-thrust, front hand slides toward crossguard 3. For bow-thrust, front hand grips blade itself 4. Thumb on flat of blade, fingers wrapped around 5. Both hands drive thrust with shortened lever

Advantages: – Greater control in close distance – More power in thrust (both hands driving) – Can thrust through gaps in armor – Difficult to displace with shortened grip

Disadvantages: – Requires very close distance – Hand on blade can be struck – Reduces reach significantly – Transition time from full grip

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use Fourth Chase: – Opponent forces close distance – Need to practice half-sword transitions – Opponent uses wide guards (bow-thrust arcs around) – Want to pressure opponent with continuous retreat-attack

Setup Opportunities: – After successful Third Chase that brings you close – Opponent pursuing your retreat aggressively – In armor (half-sword interpretation) – When opponent expects standard thrust (bow-thrust surprises)

COMMON MISTAKES

- Rushing bow-thrust without understanding technique
- Not voiding far enough on right leg—reduces safety

- Heavy quarter cut instead of “lithely” delivered
- Forgetting this builds on Third Chase—pattern should be familiar
- Not experimenting with different bow-thrust interpretations

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The term “bow” in medieval English could refer to:

- **Weapon (longbow/crossbow):** Unlikely in sword context
- **Bending/arcing:** “Bow” as verb, suggesting curved motion
- **Half-sword grip:** Arms form bow shape
- **Drawing back:** “Bow” related to drawing/pulling

Brandon Heslop notes: “We may never know the exact original meaning, but functional interpretation—what works in practice—guides modern reconstruction. Try multiple interpretations and use what proves effective.”[3]

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

CHASE 8: THE FIFTH CHASE – “AT THE ROUNDS”

Original Text: *The fyfte Chace callyd att ye rwendys To doble rowndys forwarde and ther folowes Contrarye all to yon man and yff you play hyt a gayne hyt wyll bryng you to yor grounde*

Modern English: Two Double Rounds forward and this follows contrary all to your man. And if you play it again it will bring you to your ground.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Fifth Chase is explicitly a **partner drill**—‘follows contrary all to your man’ means you mirror or move opposite to your partner. This develops coordination, spatial awareness, and the ability to read opponent movement.”[3]

“The phrase ‘contrary all’ suggests complete mirroring—if your partner moves right, you move left; if they advance, you retreat. This creates a dynamic flow drill that builds reflexive response to movement.”[5]

Key Points: – Partner-dependent drill (requires two fencers) – “Contrary” = mirror/opposite movements – Two double rounds = 4 circular motions total – Traveling pattern (returns to start when repeated) – Develops spatial awareness and coordination – Foundation for contra-tempo tactics

Tactical Purpose: This Chase teaches: – Reading opponent’s movement initiation – Moving in opposition to create angles – Maintaining distance while circling – Coordination with training partner – Foundation for contra-tempo (moving against opponent’s rhythm)

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
BOTH FENCERS			
1	First Double Round	Advance (Partner A)	Perform simultaneously Circular motion forward
1	First Double Round	Retreat (Partner B)	Circular motion backward (contrary)
2	Second Double Round	Continue advance (A)	Second circular motion
2	Second Double Round	Continue retreat (B)	Second circular motion (contrary)
3	Switch roles	Partners exchange	A retreats, B advances

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
4-5	Repeat sequence	Full repetition	Returns to starting positions

PARTNER DRILL VARIATIONS

Variation 1: Simple Mirror – Partner A moves right, Partner B moves left – Partner A advances, Partner B retreats – Maintain same distance throughout – Focus on smooth mirroring

Variation 2: Rotational Rounds – Both partners circle same direction – Maintain constant distance – Create circular footwork pattern – Good for conditioning

Variation 3: Contrary Rotation – Partner A circles clockwise – Partner B circles counter-clockwise – Paths cross and separate – Develops complex spatial awareness

Variation 4: With Blade Contact – Maintain blade contact throughout – Perform rounds with contact – Feel partner's pressure and movement – Introduces *fühlen* (feeling) concept

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Basic Mirroring – Practice without swords – Partner A leads, Partner B mirrors – Focus on opposite movements – Slow speed, clear signals

Week 2: Add Circular Motions – Add sword movement – Circular blade patterns during rounds – Coordinate blade with footwork – Increase to normal speed

Week 3: Reverse Roles – Both partners should lead equally – No predetermined leader – React to whoever initiates – Develops reflexive response

Week 4: Unpredictable Rounds – Leader can change mid-sequence – Follower must adapt instantly – Tests attention and reaction speed – Competitive element

Week 5+: Advanced Applications - Add attacks during rounds - Contrary movements become defensive - Test in light sparring - Develop tactical application

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Contra-Tempo Movement: The “contrary” concept is foundation for contra-tempo tactics: - Opponent advances → You retreat (deny their attack) - Opponent retreats → You advance (maintain pressure) - Opponent circles right → You circle left (cut angle) - Opponent commits → You void back (retreat to safety while they over-extend)

Distance Management: By moving contrary to opponent: - Control engagement distance - Never allow opponent to close unopposed - Never retreat without purpose - Maintain tactical initiative through movement

Reading Intention: To move contrary, you must: - Perceive opponent's weight shifts - Anticipate their direction - React before they complete movement - Develop predictive awareness

COMMON MISTAKES

- Moving at same time instead of opposite—breaks contrary pattern
- Losing distance control—should maintain constant separation
- Mechanical execution—should be fluid, responsive
- One partner dominating—both should lead/follow equally
- Not completing full rounds—pattern requires 4 full circles
- Forgetting to return to start—“bring you to your ground”
- Poor communication—partners should sync naturally

SOLO PRACTICE ALTERNATIVE

While designed for partners, can practice solo:

Solo Drill: 1. Visualize opponent position 2. Perform your two double rounds advancing 3. Visualize opponent retreating contrary 4. Reverse: perform retreating rounds 5. Visualize opponent advancing contrary

Purpose: – Maintain muscle memory between partner sessions – Develop visualization skills – Practice circular footwork – Condition for repeated rounds

GEORGE SILVER CONNECTION

Silver later wrote about the importance of footwork and distance:

“He who controls the distance controls the fight. Learn to match your opponent step for step, but contrary to their intention.”[7]

The Fifth Chase embodies this principle—moving contrary to opponent’s intention prevents them from imposing their rhythm or distance.

CULTURAL CONTEXT: PARTNER DRILLS

The explicit partner-drill nature of this Chase is notable:

Medieval Training: Most medieval sources describe solo forms or combat applications, rarely explicit partner drills. The Fifth Chase’s clear partner requirement suggests:

- Formalized training methodology
- Master-student or peer training structure
- Recognition that some skills require partner practice
- Sophisticated pedagogical approach

Modern Equivalent: Similar to modern:

- Fencing footwork drills
- Boxing mirror drills
- Martial arts flow drills
- Movement coordination exercises

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

[7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*.

CHASE 9: THE SIXTH CHASE - “THE TUMBLING CHASE”

Original Text: *The sixte Chace callyd ye tublyng chace To doble rowndes forewarde wt as many bakewarde all upon the lyffte fote lythtly delyveryde/ then tumble forewarde rounde as a ball that ys to say wythe a Down ryght stroke sete forewarde the ryghte fote bryngyng the word ov youre hede voyde bake the lyffte fote wt an other downe ryght stroke folowyde wt the ryght fote then bryng bake the fame fote wt a bake foyne Sete In the lyffte fote and smyte back a qurter.*

Modern English: Two Double Rounds forward, with as many backward; all upon the left foot lithely delivered. Then tumble forward as round as a ball: that is to say; with a Down-right stroke set forward the right foot, bringing the sword over your head void back the left foot, with another Down-right stroke followed with the right leg. Then bring back the same foot with a back-thrust, set in the left foot and smite back a quarter.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Tumbling Chase is the **most complex footwork drill** in the manuscript. ‘All upon the left foot’ means you’re pivoting and spinning on your left foot while the sword describes circles—an advanced balance and coordination exercise.”[3]

“‘Tumble forward as round as a ball’ describes a rolling, continuous forward attack sequence—imagine a boulder rolling downhill. The momentum from the spinning should flow into the forward down-right strokes.”[5]

Key Points: - Advanced technique requiring balance and coordination - “All upon left foot” = pivot/spin on left foot - Four double rounds (8 total circles!) while standing on one foot - “Tumble forward” = continuous rolling momentum - Complex sequence: spin → roll → attack → retreat - Builds conditioning and balance

Physical Demands: - Significant balance challenge (8 rotations on one foot) - Core strength for stability - Hip mobility for pivoting - Cardiovascular conditioning - Momentum control

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
PHASE 1: THE SPINNING			
1	First Double Round	Pivot on left foot (forward direction)	Right foot may lift or drag
2	Second Double Round	Continue pivot on left (forward)	Complete 2 full rotations forward
3	Third Double Round	Pivot on left foot (backward direction)	Reverse direction
4	Fourth Double Round	Continue pivot on left (backward)	Complete 2 full rotations backward “Round as a ball”—continuous momentum
PHASE 2: THE TUMBLE			
5	Downright stroke	Step forward right foot	First strike of rolling attack
6	Bring sword overhead	Stand	Preparatory arc
7	(Preparation)	Void back left foot	Retreat while loading next strike
8	Downright stroke	Follow with right leg	Second downright in sequence
PHASE 3: RECOVERY			
9	Back-thrust	Bring back right foot	Thrust while retreating

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
10	(Advance)	Set in left foot	Sudden advance forward
11	Quarter backward	Continuing retreat	Cut while moving away

THE SPINNING PHASE: TECHNICAL DETAIL

“All Upon the Left Foot”:

Physical Position: - Weight entirely on left leg - Right leg relaxed (lifted or trailing) - Left knee slightly bent for stability - Core engaged for balance - Arms control sword momentum

The Pivot: - Ball of left foot is pivot point - Right leg swings to create momentum - Sword circles overhead or to sides - Hip rotation drives the motion - Eyes track horizon (prevents dizziness)

Forward vs. Backward Rounds: - **Forward:** Clockwise rotation (standard) - **Backward:** Counter-clockwise rotation (reversal) - Direction change tests balance and control - Transition must be smooth

THE TUMBLE: “ROUND AS A BALL”

What This Means: - Continuous, rolling forward movement - No pause between strikes - Momentum flows like rolling object - Aggressive, unstoppable advance - Like avalanche or boulder

Execution: 1. Spinning phase builds rotational energy 2. Energy transfers to forward movement 3. First downright uses momentum 4. Sword overhead maintains flow 5. Void back loads spring tension 6. Second downright releases energy

Tactical Purpose: - Overwhelming attack sequence - Opponent sees continuous motion - Difficult to find opening to counter - Psychological impact (looks unstoppable)

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Balance Foundation - Stand on left foot only (no sword) - Hold for 30 seconds - Gradually increase to 60 seconds - Add gentle rocking motion - Build ankle and core strength

Week 2: Single Rotations - One rotation on left foot (with sword) - Clockwise direction first - Add counter-clockwise - Focus on controlled pivot - Do NOT attempt double rounds yet

Week 3: Double Rounds (Separated) - Two forward rotations - Rest - Two backward rotations - Rest - Do NOT combine yet

Week 4: Combined Spinning - Four double rounds in sequence - No rest between - Slow speed initially - Gradually increase rotation speed

Week 5: Add Tumble Sequence - After spinning, execute tumble - Downright → overhead → void → downright - Focus on momentum transfer - May need to break down further

Week 6+: Full Integration - Complete Sixth Chase start to finish - Increase speed gradually - Add intensity to tumble - Test balance recovery

COMMON MISTAKES

- Attempting full sequence too early—requires progressive training
- Using right foot for support—defeats “all upon left foot”
- Getting dizzy—keep eyes on horizon, not ground
- Rushing the spin—quality over speed
- Weak tumble—must commit to forward momentum
- Poor momentum transfer—spinning and tumbling should flow
- Not resting between practice attempts—this is exhausting
- Practicing when fatigued—injury risk is high

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use Spinning: - Create confusion about attack direction - Build momentum for powerful strikes - Demonstrate control and skill (intimidation) - Practice balance and coordination - Solo conditioning drill

When to Use Tumble: - Overwhelm defensive opponent - Create continuous pressure - Push through hesitant guards - Against opponent who waits for single attacks - Final push when you have advantage

When NOT to Use: - Against experienced opponents (telegraphed) - When fatigued (control loss risk) - On uneven terrain - In actual combat (too risky) - Early in bout (energy conservation)

CONDITIONING BENEFITS

The Sixth Chase is primarily a **conditioning drill**:

Physical Development: - Balance (single-leg stability) - Core strength (rotational control) - Hip mobility (pivoting) - Cardiovascular (continuous motion) - Coordination (complex sequencing) - Momentum control (tumbling)

Mental Development: - Spatial awareness (rotation disorientation) - Focus (maintaining form while dizzy) - Discipline (completing difficult sequence) - Confidence (mastering complex skill)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: “TUMBLING”

The term “tumbling” in medieval England referred to:

Acrobatic Skills: - Part of knightly training - Display of physical prowess - Entertainment at courts - Demonstration of agility

Martial Application: - Some techniques involved rolls or falls - Agility valued in combat - Physical fitness demonstration - Part of complete martial education

The Sixth Chase may represent integration of acrobatic training with sword work—holistic physical development.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Important Warnings: - Clear adequate space (minimum 12-foot diameter) - Remove obstacles and tripping hazards - Practice on even, non-slippery surface - Have spotter nearby initially - Stop if dizziness becomes severe - Do NOT practice when fatigued - Warm up thoroughly before attempting - Progress slowly—this can cause injury

Signs to Stop: - Severe dizziness - Loss of balance - Ankle or knee pain - Nausea - Inability to focus eyes - Feeling faint

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

CHASE 10: THE SEVENTH CHASE

Original Text: *The sevyneth Chace A full stroke a for foyne folowed wt a quartr pleyngh a brokyn foyne upon the ryght syde an other on the lyffe syde thruoste forth a for foyne folowyde wt ij quarters wt the sayde broken foynes playde on every syde thruoste forthe a for foyne at hys face voydyng bake wythe ij quarters*

Modern English: A Full-stroke, a For-thrust, followed with a Quarter. Playing a Broken-thrust upon the right side, another on the left side, thrust forth a For-thrust followed with 2 Quarters with the said Broken-thrusts played on every side, thrust forth a For-thrust at his face, voiding back with 2 Quarters.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Seventh Chase is a **thrust-oriented pattern** that teaches the broken-thrust (feinted thrust) on alternating sides. This develops the ability to threaten from multiple angles and creates openings through feints.”[3]

“Notice the structure: full-stroke → fore-thrust → quarter → broken thrusts alternating → fore-thrust → quarters → broken thrusts → fore-thrust to face → retreat. This is teaching a complete attack sequence from initial cut through final thrust.”[5]

Key Points: - Thrust-heavy pattern (6 thrusts total) - **Broken thrusts** = feinted/partial thrusts - Alternating sides (right, left, right, left) - “Every side” = both sides covered - Fore-thrust = straight thrust forward - Ends with retreat (safety) - Teaches attack sequence from start to finish

Tactical Purpose: - Threatens multiple lines (high, low, right, left) - Feints draw defensive reactions - Creates openings for committed thrusts - Final thrust to face is kill-shot - Retreat ensures safety after committed attack

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
PHASE 1: OPENING			
1	Full-stroke	Advance or stand	Opening cut, establishes measure
2	Fore-thrust	Extend	Direct thrust forward
3	Quarter	Stand or follow	Transitional cut
PHASE 2: BROKEN THRUSTS (First Set)			
4	Broken thrust (right)	Stand	Feinted thrust to right opening
5	Broken thrust (left)	Stand	Feinted thrust to left opening
6	Fore-thrust	Extend	Committed thrust after feints
7	Quarter	Stand	First safety cut

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
8	Quarter	Stand	Second safety cut “Played on every side”
PHASE 3: BROKEN THRUSTS (Second Set)			
9	Broken thrust (right)	Stand	Right feint again
10	Broken thrust (left)	Stand	Left feint again
PHASE 4: FINALE			
11	Fore-thrust to face	Extend fully	Committed kill-thrust
12	Quarter	Void back	Cut while retreating
13	Quarter	Continue void	Second cut, complete retreat

BROKEN THRUST TECHNIQUE

What is a “Broken Thrust”?

The “broken” thrust appears throughout the Ledall Roll. Understanding it is crucial:

Definition: - Thrust that begins but doesn’t complete - Feinted thrust - Maintains blade contact or near-contact - Creates reaction without commitment

Execution: 1. Initiate thrust motion 2. Opponent reacts (parry, void, or freeze) 3. Abort thrust mid-stroke 4. Redirect to different angle 5. Or commit to full thrust if opening appears

German Equivalent: Similar to *Absetzen* (setting-aside thrust) or partial *Stich*

Purpose: - Draw defensive reaction - Identify opponent’s defensive pattern - Create opening for next attack - Maintain initiative through feints

ALTERNATING SIDES PATTERN

Right-Left-Right-Left Sequence:

Why Alternate? - Keeps opponent guessing - Tests both sides of defense - Creates rhythmic pattern that can be broken - Develops ambidextrous threats

Tactical Application: 1. First broken thrust right → opponent guards right 2. Second broken thrust left → opponent shifts left 3. Opponent's head/center now exposed 4. Fore-thrust to center exploits opening

Pattern Breaking: Once opponent expects alternation: - Double to same side (right-right) - Skip to fore-thrust early - Add extra broken thrust - Vary timing between thrusts

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Broken Thrusts in Isolation - Practice feinting thrusts - Right side focus (10 reps) - Left side focus (10 reps) - Alternating (20 reps) - No full sequence yet

Week 2: Phase 1 (Steps 1-3) - Full-stroke → fore-thrust → quarter - Repeat until smooth - Focus on transitions - Add broken thrusts next week

Week 3: Phase 2 (Steps 4-8) - Add first broken thrust set - Right → left → fore-thrust → 2 quarters - Integrate with Phase 1 - Slow speed initially

Week 4: Add Phase 3 (Steps 9-10) - Second broken thrust set - Complete pattern except finale - Focus on maintaining rhythm - Don't rush

Week 5: Complete Sequence - Add final fore-thrust to face - Add retreating quarters - Full Chase start to finish - Increase speed gradually

Week 6+: Partner Drill - Partner provides guards/wards - Your broken thrusts test their defense - Partner identifies which thrusts are broken - Develop deceptive feints

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Opening Engagement: The Seventh Chase teaches how to open an engagement:

1. **Full-stroke:** Establish measure, test range

2. **Fore-thrust:** Probe defenses
3. **Quarter:** Transition to next phase
4. **Broken thrusts:** Identify defensive pattern
5. **Committed thrusts:** Exploit discovered opening
6. **Retreat:** Don't stay in measure after full commitment

Against Defensive Fencers: Perfect for opponents who: - Wait for your attack - Defend passively - Don't press initiative - React to your actions

Your Strategy: - Use broken thrusts to draw reactions - Identify their defensive tendencies - Exploit the pattern with committed thrust - Retreat before they can counter

COMMON MISTAKES

- Obvious broken thrusts—must look like real thrusts
- Not alternating sides—pattern requires it
- Weak fore-thrusts—these should fully threaten
- Pausing between actions—should flow continuously
- Forgetting retreating quarters—essential for safety
- All thrusts to same target—vary high/low/left/right
- Not committing to final thrust—it should threaten face
- Poor distance management—fore-thrusts require proper measure

FORE-THRUST VS. BROKEN THRUST

Distinguishing the Two:

Fore-Thrust (For-Thrust): - Committed attack - Full extension - Real killing intent - Follows through completely - Used after broken thrusts create opening

Broken Thrust: - Feinted attack - Partial extension - Drawing reaction - Aborts mid-stroke - Sets up fore-thrust

In the Sequence: - Steps 2, 6, 11: Fore-thrusts (committed) - Steps 4, 5, 9, 10: Broken thrusts (feints) - Learn to distinguish by intention

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The Seventh Chase is **psychological warfare**:

Creating Doubt: - Opponent can't tell real from fake thrusts - Each broken thrust creates hesitation - When will the real thrust come? - Analysis paralysis sets in

Pattern and Disruption: - Establish pattern (alternating broken thrusts) - Opponent begins to expect pattern - Break pattern with committed thrust - Catches them off-guard

Final Thrust: - Explicitly to face - High-commitment target - Opponent knows this is real - Creates fear/hesitation in future encounters

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). "English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students." *HEMA Enthusiast*.

CHASE 11: THE EIGHTH CHASE - “THE SPRING”

Original Text: *The Viijth Chace callyde the fypryng a quartr upon a man that Comes faft forwarde to yow then paffe forewarde wyth yor lyffte legge fmyte a nother quartr paffe wyth yor ryght legge fpryng att hys knee then voyde bake wyth the fame fote Smyte a quartr and be att your ~~tope~~ stop.*

Modern English: A Quarter upon a man that comes fast forward to you, then pass forward with your left leg, smite another Quarter. Pass with your right leg, spring at his knee, then void back with the same foot, smite a Quarter and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Eighth Chase directly addresses aggressive opponents. The signature **spring**—gripping near the pommel for maximum one-handed reach—is the defining English technique rarely emphasized in continental sources.”[3]

“The spring to the knee is a practical application paralleling the German *das Gayszlen* (goat strike). Targeting the knee disrupts the opponent’s base and can end the fight immediately.”[5]

Key Points: - Defensive response to aggressive opponent - Two quarters while advancing (pass left, pass right) - **Spring** = one-handed extension, grip near pommel - Target is knee—low-line attack opponent may not expect - Void back maintains safety after spring - “Be at your stop” = return to guard position

The Spring Technique:

The Spring is the most characteristic English longsword technique. Execution:

1. **Grip Adjustment:** Slide rear hand down haft toward pommel
2. **Weight Transfer:** Lean forward, extending sword
3. **One-Handed Extension:** Maximum reach (12–18” beyond normal)
4. **Target Selection:** Usually thrust, occasionally cut
5. **Recovery:** Immediate void or return to two hands

Why It Works: - Unexpected reach surprises opponents - One-handed control allows greater extension - Low-line targeting (knee) avoids opponent’s defense - Creates distance advantage even if strike doesn’t land

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
OPPONENT	Aggressive advance	Moving toward you	Trigger: “man that comes fast forward”

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Quarter	Stand or slight void	Meet aggression with cut
2	Quarter	Pass forward left leg	Advance into opponent's space
3	Quarter	Pass forward right leg	Continue advancing—aggressive response
4	Spring to knee	Stand (extended)	One-handed reach to low-line target
5	Void back	Same foot (right)	Immediate retreat for safety
6	Quarter	Stand	Reset cut
7	Stop guard	Stand	Return to defensive position

DISTANCE DYNAMICS

Initial Distance: Opponent closing fast—moving from long to medium

Your Response: - First quarter: Medium distance, check advance - Pass left + quarter: Medium-close, pressure opponent - Pass right + quarter: Close distance, dominate space - Spring to knee: Extended close, exploit low opening - Void back: Return to medium, maintain safety

Result: You've met aggression with aggression, struck low, and returned to safety—all while controlling the distance dynamic.

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Spring Mechanics – Practice grip transition (two hands → one hand at pommel) – Wall spring: face wall, spring thrust to specific point – Measure extension: how much reach does spring add? – Return to two hands smoothly after spring

Week 2: Knee Targeting – Partner stands in guard – Practice springing to partner's knee (controlled, no contact) – Note how low-line target requires different angle – Opponent's reactions: do they expect low attack?

Week 3: Full Sequence (Slow) – Partner advances slowly – Execute full Chase sequence – Focus on passing steps coordinated with quarters – Spring-void-quarter-stop combination

Week 4: Speed and Pressure – Partner advances aggressively (no stopping) – Execute Chase at combat speed – Spring must genuinely threaten knee – Void must create real safety

Week 5+: Variations – Spring to different targets (foot, thigh, hip) – Vary number of quarters (1, 2, or 3 before spring) – Practice from different starting guards – Experiment with cut vs. thrust spring

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Against Aggressive Fencers: This Chase is purpose-built for opponents who:
– Rush in without regard for defense – Use overwhelming pressure tactics –
Expect you to retreat continuously – Don't protect low-line

Your Strategy: 1. Meet initial aggression with quarter (don't flee) 2. Pass forward (surprise—you're advancing too) 3. Multiple quarters pressure their defense 4. Spring catches them off-guard (low, unexpected) 5. Void ensures safety regardless of success

Psychological Impact: Aggressive opponents rely on fear. By advancing INTO their aggression, you:
– Disrupt their rhythm – Force them to defend – Demonstrate you won't be bullied – Create doubt about their approach

SPRING VARIATIONS

Spring to Cut (Alternative): Instead of thrusting to knee: - Grip near pommel (same as thrust) - Deliver rising cut to knee/shin - Snapping motion with wrist - Difficult to defend against (low, fast)

Spring to Other Targets: - **Hand:** Opponent's lead hand extended - **Wrist:** Joint vulnerable to spring thrust - **Foot:** If opponent plants weight - **Groin:** Higher risk but immediate fight-ender

Two-Handed Spring (Alternative Interpretation): Some practitioners keep both hands on sword: - Rear hand slides to pommel - Front hand near cross-guard - Both hands drive spring - More power, less reach than one-handed

COMMON MISTAKES

- Weak first quarter—must genuinely threaten to check advance
- Passing steps too small—need to cover ground
- Spring with reach-hand instead of pommel-grip—reduces extension
- Spring too high—defeats purpose of low-line attack
- Not voiding far/fast enough—spring commits you forward
- Forgetting final stop guard—must return to defensive readiness

GEORGE SILVER CONNECTION

Silver wrote: “The shortest fight is the best fight. He that can make his distance true will find the time.”[7]

The Eighth Chase demonstrates “making distance true”: - You don’t flee aggression - You meet it, control it, and capitalize - The spring creates temporary distance advantage - The void ensures you don’t overcommit - Return to stop guard maintains readiness

This is **active distance management** rather than passive retreat.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

- [5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.
- [7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*. Reprinted in various modern editions.

CHASE 12: THE NINTH CHASE – “THE FOUR POINTS”

Original Text: *The ixth Chace callyd ye four poyntf A Downe ryght stroke voydying
bake ye lyffte legge sodenly pley a rake folowede wyth ye ryght legge stondyng styl
pley a quartr fayre be fore you then xete In the lyffte legge and xmyte bake a quartr.*

Modern English: A Down-right stroke voiding back the left leg, suddenly play a Rake followed with the right leg. Standing still play a Quarter fair before you, then set in the left leg and smite back a Quarter.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The ‘Four Points’ name likely refers to the four distinct actions: downright, rake, quarter, quarter. This Chase teaches economy of movement—four simple, efficient techniques in rapid succession.”[3]

“The word ‘suddenly’ is key—the transition from downright stroke to rake must be explosive. This teaches rapid changes between power strikes and quick harassment cuts.”[5]

Key Points: – **Four distinct actions** (hence the name) – “Suddenly” = explosive speed transition – Retreat → advance → static → retreat pattern – Simple but effective distance drill – Rake follows power cut (tempo change) – Final quarter delivered backward (retreat-attack)

Tactical Purpose: – Power cut (downright) to open – Quick rake disrupts opponent’s recovery – Static quarter pressures from neutral – Backward quarter creates safe distance – Teaches tempo variation (slow → fast)

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Downright stroke	Void back left leg	Power cut while retreating
2	Rake	Follow forward right leg	Sudden quick cut, advances
3	Quarter “fair before you”	Stand still	Static position, forward cut
4	(Advance)	Set in left leg	Step forward left
5	Quarter backward	Continuing movement	Cut while retreating

THE “SUDDENLY” PRINCIPLE**What “Suddenly” Means:**

Tempo Change: - Downright = powerful, committed (slow) - Rake = quick, harassing (fast) - Transition = explosive (sudden)

Execution: 1. Downright completes 2. **Zero pause** 3. Rake initiates immediately 4. Opponent still processing downright 5. Rake catches them off-guard

Training the Sudden: - Practice transitions specifically - Downright → instant rake - No windup on rake - Explosive acceleration - Like shifting gears in car (low → high instantly)

DISTANCE DYNAMICS**The Pattern:**

Action	Direction	Distance Change
Downright + void back	Retreat	+2 feet away
Rake + forward right	Advance	-2 feet (return to start)

Action	Direction	Distance Change
Quarter standing	Static	No change
Set in + quarter back	Retreat	+1-2 feet away

Net Result: - Return near starting position - But opponent is off-balance - Distance oscillation creates uncertainty - You control the measure

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: The Sudden Transition - Drill: Downright → immediate rake - 20 repetitions slow - 20 repetitions medium speed - 10 repetitions full speed - Focus on explosion

Week 2: Add Footwork - Void back with downright - Forward with rake - Coordinate blade and feet - Smooth but sudden

Week 3: Add Static Quarter - First three actions (downright, rake, quarter) - Standing quarter requires balance recovery - “Fair before you” = proper alignment - No wobbling

Week 4: Complete Sequence - Add set-in left leg - Add backward quarter - Full Four Points pattern - Focus on flow

Week 5+: Speed and Power - Increase commitment to downright - Maximize sudden of rake - Test with partner - Partner pressure-tests your rake

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Against Recovery: Opponent's typical pattern: 1. You attack 2. They defend 3. They recover guard 4. They prepare counter

Four Points disrupts: 1. Downright (they defend) 2. Sudden rake (catches them during recovery - step 3) 3. Quarter (they're still processing) 4. Retreat quarter (you're gone before counter)

Tempo Variation: - Power strikes create one rhythm - Quick strikes create different rhythm - Mixing them creates confusion - Opponent can't settle into pattern

COMMON MISTAKES

- Slow transition to rake—defeats “suddenly”
- Telegraphing rake—no windup allowed
- Heavy rake instead of quick—wrong technique
- Losing balance on static quarter—core weakness
- Weak backward quarter—must threaten while retreating
- Not actually voiding far enough—reduces safety
- All four actions same rhythm—must vary

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: FOUR vs. FIVE vs. THREE POINTS

The manuscript includes Chases named: - The Four Points (9th Chase) - The Five Points (10th Chase) - The 3 Points (11th Chase – version A) - The 3 Points (12th Chase – version B)

Pattern: - Named by number of actions - Progressive complexity - Similar opening (downright + void) - Different emphasis

Four Points Focus: - Sudden tempo change (rake) - Distance oscillation - Simplicity and efficiency

“FAIR BEFORE YOU” TECHNIQUE

What This Means:

The phrase “fair before you” appears in multiple Flourishes and Chases:

Fair = Proper/Correct: - Straight ahead (not angled) - Proper form - Correct alignment - Good technique

Before You = Forward: - Directly forward - Toward where you’re facing - Not to sides - Center line

Application: The static quarter should be: - Delivered straight forward - Proper form maintained - No twisting or angling - Clean, correct cut

SIMPLE EFFECTIVENESS

The Ninth Chase demonstrates that **simple doesn’t mean ineffective**:

Only Four Actions: – Downright – Rake – Quarter – Quarter

But Highly Effective: – Distance control – Tempo variation – Opponent disruption – Safe retreat

Principle: Master simple techniques executed perfectly rather than complex techniques executed poorly.

George Silver later wrote: “The simple fight is the shortest fight. He who uses unnecessary actions gives his enemy opportunity.”[7]

The Four Points is simple by design—minimal actions, maximum effectiveness.

TRAINING DRILL VARIATION

Partner Drill: “The Sudden Test”

Setup: – Partner holds sword in guard – You execute Four Points – Partner tries to counter during rake

Success Criteria: – If partner can’t counter rake → your “suddenly” works – If partner counters rake → transition too slow

Adjustment: – Increase explosiveness of transition – Reduce any windup on rake – True “sudden” prevents counter

Goal: – Rake should be uncounterable – Too fast for partner to respond – Teaches real sudden execution

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

[7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*.

CHASE 13: THE TENTH CHASE - “THE FIVE POINTS”

Original Text: *The xth Chace callyd ye fyve poyntf A Downe ryght stroke voydynge
bake the lyffte fote Sodenly pley a rake folowed wyth the ryght fote then voyde bake
the lyffte legge wt an other Downe ryght stroke And pley a bake foyne voydynge bake
the ryght legge step In wt the lyffte legge and myte bake a quartr*

Modern English: A Down-right stroke voiding back the left foot, suddenly play a Rake followed with the right foot. Then void back the left leg with another Down-right stroke and play a Back-thrust voiding back the right leg, step in with the left leg and smite back a Quarter.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Tenth Chase builds directly on the Ninth Chase (Four Points) by adding a fifth action. The pattern shows progressive complexity—master Four Points before attempting Five Points.”[3]

“The addition of the back-thrust (fifth point) adds defensive depth. Where Four Points advances and retreats, Five Points retreats twice, creating significant distance from an aggressive opponent.”[5]

Key Points: - **Five distinct actions** (name source) - Builds on Four Points pattern - “Suddenly” appears again (explosive rake) - **Two retreat sequences** (creates major distance) - Back-thrust added as fifth element - Complex footwork pattern - More defensive than Four Points

Tactical Purpose: - Extended retreat sequence - Defense against persistent aggressor - Back-thrust threatens during retreat - Creates maximum safe distance - Tests balance through multiple direction changes

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
SEQUENCE 1: (Like Four Points)			
1 Downright stroke Void back left foot Power cut + retreat			
2	Rake	Follow forward right foot	Sudden transition
SEQUENCE 2: (Additional Retreat)			
3	Downright stroke	Void back left leg	Second retreat + power cut
4	Back-thrust	Void back right leg	Thrust while continuing retreat
SEQUENCE 3: (Counter- Advance)			
5	(Advance)	Step in left leg	Sudden advance forward
6	Quarter backward	Continuing retreat	Cut while moving away

PROGRESSIVE COMPLEXITY COMPARISON

Fourth Chase (Four Points): 1. Downright + void back left 2. Rake + forward right
 3. Quarter standing 4. Quarter backward

Tenth Chase (Five Points): 1. Downright + void back left 2. Rake + forward right 3. Downright + void back left ← NEW 4. Back-thrust + void back right ← NEW
 5. Set in left + quarter backward

What Changed: - Static quarter removed - Second retreat sequence added - Back-thrust introduced - More defensive orientation

THE DOUBLE RETREAT PATTERN

Sequence Analysis:

First Retreat (Steps 1-2): - Downright + void left (retreat) - Rake + forward right (advance back) - Net: return to near start position

Second Retreat (Steps 3-4): - Downright + void left (retreat again) - Back-thrust + void right (continue retreat) - Net: significant distance created

Counter-Advance (Steps 5-6): - Set in left (sudden advance) - Quarter backward (immediate retreat) - Net: disrupts opponent's pursuit

Total Distance: After complete sequence, you're 4-6 feet further from opponent than start, but you've attacked throughout.

BACK-THRUST DETAIL

What is a “Back-Thrust”?

The back-thrust appears in multiple Chases. Two interpretations:

Interpretation 1: Rearward Thrust - Thrust delivered behind you - Addresses threat from rear - Less likely in single-combat context

Interpretation 2: Retreating Thrust - Thrust delivered while moving backward - Point threatens opponent as you retreat - More likely meaning - German Zucken (pulling) similar concept

In This Chase: Given context (you're retreating from aggressor), most likely:
- Thrust forward at opponent - **While** stepping backward (void right leg) - Maintains threat during retreat - Prevents opponent from pursuing safely

Execution: 1. Complete second downright stroke 2. Immediately extend thrust 3. Simultaneously step back right leg 4. Point remains directed at opponent 5. You're retreating but threatening

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Review Four Points – Master Four Points first – Ensure “suddenly” is explosive – Comfortable with opening sequence – Solid foundation required

Week 2: Add Second Retreat – Practice downright + void back left (again) – Add back-thrust + void back right – Focus on balance during consecutive retreats – Slow speed initially

Week 3: Integrate Sequences – First retreat (1-2) – Second retreat (3-4) – Connect smoothly – No pause between

Week 4: Add Counter-Advance – Set in left leg (sudden forward) – Quarter backward (retreat) – Complete Five Points – Polish transitions

Week 5+: Partner Pressure – Partner advances aggressively – You execute Five Points – Partner should NOT be able to close distance – Test if back-thrust genuinely threatens

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Against Aggressive Opponents:

Opponent's Pattern: 1. Charges forward 2. Pressures continuously
3. Doesn't respect your retreats 4. Pursues relentlessly

Five Points Response: 1. First retreat seems like standard withdrawal 2. Opponent pursues (expects easy advance) 3. Second retreat surprises them 4. Back-thrust threatens during their advance 5. They hesitate 6. Your counter-advance disrupts their rhythm 7. Backward quarter ensures your safety

Psychological Impact: – “I thought they were fleeing” – “Now they’re still attacking while retreating” – “Wait, now they’re advancing?” – “Where did they go?” (backward quarter) – Creates uncertainty and hesitation

COMMON MISTAKES

- Not mastering Four Points first—foundation critical
- Slow rake transition—“suddenly” required
- Second downright weaker than first—both should threaten
- Back-thrust off-balance—difficult while retreating

- Not voiding far enough on retreats—defeats purpose
- Telegraphing counter-advance—should surprise
- Weak backward quarter—must maintain threat

BALANCE CHALLENGE

The Tenth Chase is a **balance test**:

Direction Changes: 1. Void back left (retreat) 2. Forward right (advance) 3. Void back left (retreat) 4. Void back right (retreat) 5. Step in left (advance) 6. Quarter backward (retreat)

Six direction changes in rapid succession!

Training: - Core strength essential - Hip mobility critical - Ankle stability required - Balance exercises supplement practice - Progressive speed increase

DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

The Five Points embodies **active defense**:

Not Passive Retreat: - You're retreating (defensive) - But attacking throughout (offensive) - Opponent must respect your blade - Can't pursue freely

Creating Distance: - Sometimes best defense is space - Five Points creates 4-6 feet quickly - But you control the separation - Not fleeing—tactical withdrawal

Counter-Opportunity: - After creating distance (steps 1-4) - Sudden advance (step 5) exploits hesitation - Backward quarter ensures safety - Repositioned for next exchange

George Silver wrote: "Distance is your armor. He who controls it is safe." [7]

The Tenth Chase teaches distance control through active retreat.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). "English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students." *HEMA Enthusiast*.

[7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*.

CHASE 14: THE ELEVENTH CHASE – “THE 3 POINTS” (VERSION A)

Original Text: *The xjth Chace callyd ye ij poyntfA downe ryght stroke voydynge bake ye lyffte fote odenly pley a Rake foloede wyth ye ryght legge then tandyng tyll caste owte a full pryng at hys face wt a quartr and an other voyde*

Modern English: A Down-right stroke voiding back the left foot, suddenly play a Rake followed with the right leg then standing still cast out a Full-spring at his face with a Quarter and another void.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Eleventh Chase introduces ‘cast out’—a throwing or launching motion. The full-spring is explicitly targeted to the face, making this a high-commitment, high-reward technique.”[3]

“Notice this is called ‘The 3 Points’ but has more than three actions. The ‘points’ likely refers to the three primary techniques: downright, rake, spring. The quarter and void are safety/recovery, not ‘points’ per se.”[5]

Key Points: - Opening identical to Four and Five Points - “Cast out” suggests explosive spring - **Full-spring to face** = high-line, committed attack - Standing still for spring (stable platform) - Quarter + void = safety sequence - High risk, high reward technique

Tactical Purpose: - Familiar opening lulls opponent - Standing still appears defensive - Explosive spring surprises - Face target is killing blow - Safety sequence ensures retreat

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Downright stroke	Void back left foot	Standard opening
2	Rake	Follow forward right leg	Sudden transition
3	(Preparation)	Stand still	Stable platform for spring
4	“Cast out” full-spring	Extended stance	To face – one-handed extension
5	Quarter	Stand or void	Safety cut
6	Void	Step back	Create distance

“CAST OUT” TECHNIQUE

What “Cast Out” Means:

The phrase “cast out” suggests specific execution:

Cast = Throw/Launch: - Explosive extension - Like casting fishing line - Like throwing javelin - Sudden release of energy

Applied to Spring: - Rear hand at pommel (standard spring) - Body coiled initially - **Explosive** extension - Maximum reach instantly - “Thrown” rather than “pushed”

Comparison: - Normal spring: Smooth extension - Cast out spring: Explosive launch

Physics: - Uses elastic energy from standing still - Hip drive powers extension - Arm whips forward - Sword “casts” toward target

FULL-SPRING TO FACE

Why Face Target:

High-Line Attack: - Most guards protect center/low - Face often less protected
 - High-priority target (incapacitating) - Psychological impact (eyes threatened)

Risk-Reward: - **Risk:** High commitment, extended position - **Reward:** Face hit often ends fight immediately

Execution: 1. Spring grip (hand at pommel) 2. Body stable (standing still)
 3. Coil slightly 4. **Explosive** cast out 5. Full extension to face 6. Immediate recovery (quarter + void)

Target Specifics: - Eyes (blinds opponent) - Nose (painful, disorienting) - Mouth (knocks out teeth) - Throat (below face, but included)

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Cast Out Mechanics - Practice spring without casting - Practice explosive motions without sword - Combine: explosive spring - Focus on “throw” feeling - Wall target practice

Week 2: Face Targeting - Partner holds target at face height - Practice cast out to target - Measure reach (how far can you extend?) - Emphasize accuracy over power initially

Week 3: Opening Sequence - Downright + void + rake - Must be automatic - Should require no thought - Allows focus on spring

Week 4: Integration - Full sequence: opening → spring → safety - Slow speed initially - Gradual speed increase - Emphasis on standing still before spring

Week 5+: Partner Drill - Partner advances aggressively - You execute Eleventh Chase - Spring must genuinely threaten face - Partner evaluates threat level

THE “3 POINTS” NAME

Why “3 Points”?

Theory 1: Three Primary Actions 1. Downright stroke (first point) 2. Rake (second point) 3. Full-spring (third point) - Quarter and void are recovery, not “points”

Theory 2: Three Target Points 1. Opening downright (general target) 2. Rake (hands/arms target) 3. Spring to face (specific high target) - Three different targeting concepts

Theory 3: Three Phases 1. Opening (downright + rake) 2. Attack (spring) 3. Safety (quarter + void)

Most likely: **Theory 1** (three primary techniques)

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use:

Against Cautious Opponents: - They hang back, wait for your commitment - Standard attacks don't reach them - Spring extends your threat range - Face target forces reaction

After Establishing Pattern: - Opponent sees familiar opening (downright + rake) - They expect Four Points or Five Points continuation - Spring surprises them - "This is different from what they've shown me"

As Finishing Technique: - Opponent is tired, slowing down - Their guards are dropping - Face becomes exposed - Cast out exploits fatigue

Psychological Warfare: - Face threat is primal (eyes) - Creates fear - Opponent becomes protective of face - Opens other targets in future

COMMON MISTAKES

- Weak cast out—must be explosive
- Moving feet during spring—"standing still" required
- Spring to wrong target—specifically to face
- Poor recovery—quarter and void critical
- Not establishing stable platform—spring from unstable position fails
- Telegraphing spring—standing still should appear defensive
- Overextending without safety plan—must execute quarter + void

STANDING STILL PRINCIPLE

Why Stand Still for Spring?

Stability: – Solid base for explosive motion – Both feet planted – Weight distributed – Maximum power transfer

Deception: – Standing still appears passive/defensive – Opponent may relax slightly – Spring from static position surprises – Contrast with previous movement

Energy Loading: – Like compressing spring – Standing still = coiled – Cast out = release – Maximum explosive potential

Compare: – Spring while moving = divided energy – Spring while static = focused energy

PARTNER DRILL: “THE CAST TEST”

Setup: – Partner at edge of normal reach – Just beyond where normal thrust reaches – You execute cast out spring

Success Criteria: – Spring reaches their face – Partner must react defensively – If spring falls short, not explosive enough – If spring reaches but weak, not committed enough

Goal: Cast out spring should reach **12-24 inches beyond** normal reach. Anything less isn’t a true “cast out.”

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

CHAPTER 15: THE TWELFTH CHASE – “THE 3 POINTS” (VERSION B)

Original Text: *The xijth Chace callyd ye iij poyntf A Downe ryght stroke voydynge
bake the lyffte fote Sodenly pley a Rake folowede wt the ryght legge then standynge*

~~x~~tyll wt yor lyffe honde put yor ~~x~~werde be hynde yor hede and thro~~x~~te owte a fowle
~~x~~pryng at hys face wt a quartr and an other voyde

Modern English: A Down-right stroke voiding back the left foot, suddenly play a Rake followed with the right leg then standing still with your left hand put your sword behind your head and thrust out a Full-spring at his face with a Quarter and another void.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Twelfth Chase is also called ‘The 3 Points’ but differs from the Eleventh by adding a specific guard transition: sword behind head with left hand. This creates an unusual angle for the spring—unpredictable and difficult to defend.”[3]

“Putting the sword behind your head with the left (forward) hand is biomechanically awkward, which is precisely the point—it hides the thrust angle and creates a deceptive position. The opponent can’t judge where the spring will emerge.”[5]

Key Points: - Second “3 Points” variation - Opening identical to 11th Chase - **Sword behind head** = unique guard position - Left hand (forward hand) controls sword - “Thrust out” (not “cast out”) - Same target (face) - Same safety sequence

Tactical Purpose: - Opening establishes familiar pattern - Sword behind head confuses opponent - They can’t see point position - Spring emerges from unexpected angle - Creates opening through deception

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Downright stroke	Void back left foot	Familiar opening
2	Rake	Follow forward right leg	Sudden transition

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
3	(Transition)	Stand still	Stable position
4	Sword behind head (left hand)	Stand	Unique guard
5	Thrust out full-spring	Extended stance	To face from behind head
6	Quarter	Stand or void	Safety cut
7	Void	Step back	Create distance

SWORD BEHIND HEAD TECHNIQUE

What This Means:

“With Your Left Hand”: - Left hand = forward hand (standard grip) - Right hand releases or guides lightly - Left hand sole control (or primary control) - Unusual one-handed position

“Put Your Sword Behind Your Head”: - Point goes behind/over head - Handle in front of or beside head - Creates reversed/inverted position - Point hidden from opponent’s view

Possible Positions:

Position A: Over Shoulder - Sword rests on left shoulder - Point behind head, angled down opponent’s right - Like carrying rifle - Spring emerges from high right

Position B: Behind Crown - Sword horizontal behind head - Like headband or crown - Point extended to left rear - Spring emerges from unexpected left angle

Position C: Pendant Behind - Point low behind back - Handle high near head - Inverted pendant guard - Spring rises from low to high

DECEPTIVE POSITIONING

Why Hide the Sword?

Opponent Can't See: - Point position - Sword angle - Attack direction - Distance to weapon

Opponent Must Guess: - Where will thrust emerge? - High or low? - Left or right? - When will it come?

Analysis Paralysis: - Too many variables - Can't prepare specific defense - Must react rather than preempt - Slower reaction time

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Explore Positions - Try each position (A, B, C) - Which feels most natural? - Which hides point best? - Which generates most power? - Select ONE to master

Week 2: Spring from Position - Practice spring from chosen position - 20 reps slow - 20 reps medium - 10 reps explosive - Measure reach and accuracy

Week 3: Add Opening Sequence - Downright + void + rake - Transition to behind-head position - Must be smooth - No fumbling

Week 4: Full Integration - Complete Twelfth Chase - Opening → guard → spring → safety - Focus on deception - Spring should surprise even yourself

Week 5+: Partner Testing - Partner guards face - You execute Twelfth Chase - Can they determine spring angle before it comes? - If yes, improve your concealment - If no, technique is working

COMPARISON: 11TH VS 12TH CHASE

Both Called “The 3 Points”:

Similarities: - Same opening (downright + void + rake) - Same target (face) - Same safety (quarter + void) - Same number of “points” (3 primary techniques)

Differences:

Element	11th Chase	12th Chase
Spring Type	“Cast out”	“Thrust out”
Execution	Explosive launch	Driving thrust
Guard	Standard spring	Sword behind head

Element	11th Chase	12th Chase
Hand	Not specified	Explicitly left hand
Deception Level	Moderate	High

When to Use Each:

11th Chase (Cast Out): - Need maximum reach - Target at distance - Power/speed emphasized - Straightforward attack

12th Chase (Behind Head): - Need deception - Opponent reads your attacks well - Angle variation required - Tactical complexity

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS**Against Pattern-Readers:**

Some opponents are very good at reading patterns: - They see your preparation - They anticipate your technique - They counter before you finish

Against Them: - 12th Chase hides preparation - Behind-head position is unreadable - Spring angle unpredictable - Forces reaction, not anticipation

Variation Strategy: Once opponent has seen both 11th and 12th Chases: - They can't tell which you'll execute - Same opening for both - Standing still = could be either - Must wait to see guard choice - By then, too late to counter

COMMON MISTAKES

- Complicated guard transition—keep it simple
- Spending too long behind head—should be momentary
- Weak spring from awkward position—must commit
- Telegraphing by looking where spring will go—eyes neutral
- Not selecting consistent guard position—master one version
- Forgetting left hand emphasis—right should release/guide only
- Poor safety execution—quarter + void essential

ONE-HANDED SPRING DEVELOPMENT**Both 11th and 12th Chases emphasize springs:**

Progressive Training: 1. Master basic two-handed grip 2. Practice pommel-grip springs (right hand pommel) 3. Practice left-hand springs (forward hand only) 4. Practice from standard guards 5. Practice from unusual guards (behind head)

Why Left Hand? - Forward hand (closer to opponent) - Can extend further - More deceptive (less common) - Keeps right hand free (recovery)

Building Strength: Left-hand springs require specific strength: - Wrist strength - Forearm endurance - Shoulder stability - Core support

Supplementary Exercises: - Wrist curls - Forearm rotations - One-arm sword cuts (light weight) - Progressive load increase

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: DECEPTIVE GUARDS

Medieval Emphasis on Deception:

Multiple medieval sources emphasize guards that: - Hide intentions - Conceal weapon - Create uncertainty - Force opponent to wait

Examples: - German *Nebenhut* (side guard) - Italian *Coda Lunga* (tail guard) - English Dragon's Tail

The Behind-Head Guard: Fits this tradition: - Highly unusual - Difficult to read - Creates tactical advantage - Forces opponent error

George Silver: Later wrote about “false guards”—positions that appear one thing but enable another. The 12th Chase’s behind-head position is a **false guard** in this sense.[7]

PARTNER DRILL: “GUESS THE ANGLE”

Setup: 1. You execute downright + rake + behind-head guard 2. Partner must guess: high/low and left/right (4 options) 3. You execute spring 4. Did they guess correctly?

Scoring: - Partner correct guess: 1 point to them - Partner incorrect: 1 point to you - Goal: Your points > Partner’s points

Indicates: - More partner points = too predictable - More your points = good deception

Improvement: – Vary spring angles randomly – Don’t pattern yourself – Make each unpredictable

CITATIONS

- [3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.
 - [5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.
 - [7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*.
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CHASE 16: THE THIRTEENTH CHASE – “THE GETTING CHASE”

Original Text: *The xiijth Chace callyde the gettyng Chace a Sprynge upon a man In the lyffte Syde then paffe ov to the ryght Syde wyt an other Sprynge then paffe agayne to the lyffte Syde wyt a rake then voyde bake wyt a quartr*

Modern English: A Spring upon a man in the left side, then pass over to the right side with another Spring. Then pass again to the left side with a Rake, then void back with a Quarter.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Thirteenth Chase stands unique among surviving medieval sources: it explicitly addresses **fighting two opponents simultaneously**. The practitioner moves between threats using springs, staying mobile to prevent being flanked.”[3]

“The term ‘getting’ likely means ‘gaining position’ or ‘getting between’ multiple opponents. The constant passing left-right-left creates a defensive triangle where you’re never stationary long enough to be pinned.”[6]

Key Points: - Multi-opponent tactics—extremely rare in period sources - Springs to both sides maintain threat in multiple directions - Rake on final pass—harassment cut while repositioning - Void back with quarter creates escape route - Movement is the defense—don't stay still

Multi-Opponent Theory:

Medieval combat manuals overwhelmingly address single combat. The “Getting Chase” is notable because it implies:

1. **Multiple Simultaneous Threats:** Opponents on left and right
2. **Positional Awareness:** Must track two opponents
3. **Continuous Movement:** Static position = surrounded
4. **Target Priority:** Springs to most dangerous opponent first
5. **Escape Planning:** Void creates exit route

STEP BREAKDOWN (SINGLE OPPONENT INTERPRETATION)

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Spring to left side	Stand	One-handed thrust/cut left
2	(Movement)	Pass to right side	Traverse across opponent
3	Spring to right side	Stand	One-handed thrust/cut right
4	(Movement)	Pass to left side	Return across opponent
5	Rake	Stand	Quick harassment cut
6	Quarter	Void back	Cut while retreating

STEP BREAKDOWN (TWO OPPONENT INTERPRETATION)

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
SETUP	Two opponents	One left, one right	You're between them
1	Spring at left opponent	Face left	Threaten/strike left enemy

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
2	(Pivot)	Pass to right	Turn to face right opponent
3	Spring at right opponent	Face right	Threaten/strike right enemy
4	(Pivot)	Pass to left	Return to left opponent
5	Rake at left opponent	Face left	Quick cut, maintain pressure
6	Quarter	Void back from both	Create distance, escape

MULTI-OPPONENT TACTICAL PRINCIPLES

- 1. Never Be Stationary:** The moment you stop moving, both opponents can coordinate attacks. Constant movement prevents timing their strikes.
- 2. Keep One in Line with the Other:** Ideal position: both opponents are on same side of you (one behind the other). Your movement should create this alignment.
- 3. Threat Maintenance:** Spring to each opponent prevents them from feeling safe to attack. They must defend rather than coordinate offense.
- 4. Create Escape Route:** Final void back should be toward open space, not toward additional threats.
- 5. Don't Commit Fully:** Springs are threatening but don't overextend. Must be able to transition immediately.

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Single Opponent Variant - One partner, practice passing left-right-left - Spring to each side - Focus on smooth transitions - Final void + quarter

Week 2: Add Second Opponent (Stationary) - Two partners stand left and right - Practice springs to each - Partners don't move or attack - Focus on tracking both simultaneously

Week 3: Active Opponents (Slow) - Two partners can move and attack slowly - Execute Getting Chase at slow speed - Partners coordinate to flank you - Your movement prevents flanking

Week 4: Pressure Testing - Partners attack at will - You must respond with Getting Chase principles - May need to deviate from exact sequence - Goal: survive 30 seconds without being flanked

Week 5+: Free Response - Partners attack unpredictably - Use Getting Chase as template, not script - Improvise based on opponent positions - Develop instinct for multi-opponent movement

DETAILED MOVEMENT ANALYSIS

Spring Left: - Face left opponent - One-handed spring (pommel grip) - Thrust to center mass or knee - Right opponent temporarily behind you (vulnerable moment) - Must be quick

Pass to Right: - Pivot on right foot - Left foot passes across - Now facing right opponent - Left opponent temporarily behind you - Continuous motion

Spring Right: - Face right opponent - One-handed spring - Maintain threat - Left opponent again behind you briefly

Pass to Left: - Pivot on left foot - Right foot passes across - Return to left opponent - Creates triangle pattern

Rake Left: - Quick cut (not power cut) - Maintains pressure on left opponent - Doesn't commit you dangerously

Void Back + Quarter: - Step backward from both opponents - Quarter cut threatens both - Creates distance for next action or escape

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Street Fight Scenario: Medieval streets were narrow. Multiple attackers common. Getting Chase teaches: - Don't get cornered - Keep moving - Threaten all attackers - Create escape route

Battlefield Application: In melee, could face opponents from multiple directions: - Don't fixate on one enemy - Maintain 360° awareness - Quick strikes prevent coordination - Disengage when possible

Modern Tournament: While modern HEMA is 1v1, principles apply: - Opponent cutting angles from both sides - Need to address multiple attack lines - Movement superior to static defense - Create angles, don't stand square

COMMON MISTAKES

- Fixating on one opponent—must track both
- Passing steps too small—need significant traverse
- Springs too committed—must stay mobile
- Forgetting final void—creates escape route
- Mechanical execution—must adapt to opponent positions
- Telegraphing next movement—be unpredictable

WHY THIS CHASE MATTERS

The existence of the Getting Chase reveals important historical realities:

- 1. Self-Defense Focus:** English martial arts prioritized **survival over dueling**. Multiple attackers were real threat.
- 2. Practical Approach:** This isn't sport fencing—it's life-or-death street survival.
- 3. Movement Over Binding:** Continental sources emphasize blade work (winding). English emphasizes **footwork and positioning**.
- 4. Completeness of System:** The Ledall Roll isn't just techniques—it's a comprehensive fighting system addressing varied scenarios.

GEORGE SILVER'S MULTI-OPPONENT ADVICE

Though writing 50+ years later, Silver's *Paradoxes* includes multi-opponent tactics:

“Against two or more, keep them in line so that one protects you from the other. Move continuously so they cannot coordinate their strikes.”[7]

The Getting Chase embodies these principles decades before Silver codified them.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[6] Geldof, M.R. (2023). “Cut and paste: re-arranging British Library MS Additional 39564.” *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*.

[7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*. Reprinted in various modern editions.

PART III: THE COUNTERS (POINTS)

The twenty-three Counters represent **defensive plays responding to specific situations**. As Mark Ryan Geldof discovered, the manuscript presents them out of sequence (1-3, then 22-23, then 4-21), requiring modern editors to resequence logically.[6]

Unlike the Chases (which are training sequences) or Flourishes (solo forms), the Counters are **tactical responses**—specific techniques for specific problems. They consistently end with “quarter-and-void” combinations, creating safety after the counter-attack.

Brandon Heslop notes: “The Counters embody George Silver’s later principles about managing measure. They’re conservative by design—strike, create distance, return to guard. This reduces double-hits and prioritizes survival.”[3]

Counter Structure

Most Counters follow this pattern: 1. **Proffer** (feinted opening or invitation) 2. **Defensive Action** (rake, rabett, parry) 3. **Counter-Strike** (quarter, spring,

thrust) 4. **Safety Creation** (void, quarter-and-void) 5. **Return to Stop** (defensive guard)

COUNTER 17: THE FIRST POINT OF THE COUNTER

Original Text: *The Fir~~xte~~te poynte off ye Counter A pfur a rake wt a quartr full ~~x~~tandynge ~~x~~tyll pley an other voyde above hys hede wyth an other at hys legge then voyde bake the ryght legge wt an other quartr And be att yor ~~x~~toppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a full Quarter standing still, play another void above his head with another at his leg, then void back the right leg with another Quarter and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The First Counter establishes the foundational pattern for all Counters: proffer (draw attack) → defensive action (rake) → offensive response (quarters) → safety (void + quarter) → return to guard (stop). Master this structure before attempting complex Counters.”[3]

“The high-low combination (cut above head while voiding back, then attack to leg) works because you maintain offensive pressure while retreating to safety, then exploit the low line.”[5]

Key Points: – **Foundational Counter pattern** – all others build on this – Proffer-rake-quarter = standard opening – High-low attack combination – “Stop” = ending guard position – Three quarters total (hence sometimes called “3 Quarters”) – Creates safety through void + quarter retreat

Tactical Purpose: – Draw opponent’s attack (proffer) – Disrupt their attack (rake) – Pressure multiple targets (high-low) – Create safe distance (void + quarter) – Return to defensive readiness (stop)

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Bait opening, draw attack
OPPONENT	Attacks proffer	Advances	Falls into trap
2	Rake	Stand or slight retreat	Harassment cut to hands/arms
3	Quarter (full)	Stand still	“Full” = committed cut
4	Cut above head	Void (step back)	High cut while retreating
5	Cut to leg	Stand or advance	Low-line follow-up strike
6	Quarter	Void back right leg	Cut while retreating
7	Stop Guard	Stand	Return to defensive position

THE COUNTER PATTERN STRUCTURE

Phase 1: Setup (Steps 1-2) - Proffer creates opportunity - Rake responds to opponent's bite

Phase 2: Offense (Steps 3-5) - Quarter pressures - High cut during void (re-treat) maintains threat - Leg attack exploits opening created by high-low sequence

Phase 3: Safety (Steps 6-7) - Void back creates distance - Quarter maintains threat during retreat - Stop guard readies next action

This Three-Phase Structure: Appears in nearly all Counters with variations. Understanding it allows prediction of Counter flow even when details differ.

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Proffer-Rake-Quarter - Practice opening sequence - Partner provides attacks to proffer - Smooth rake response - Full quarter after rake - No hesitation between actions

Week 2: Add High-Low - Cut above head while voiding back - Attack to leg (offensive follow-up) - Quick transition high→low - Partner observes if they could defend both

Week 3: Add Safety Sequence - Void back right leg - Quarter during retreat - Stop guard position - Complete First Counter

Week 4: Partner Pressure – Partner attacks proffer aggressively – You execute full Counter – Partner tries to counter your Counter – Test if safety sequence works

Week 5+: Tactical Application – Use in light sparring – Vary proffer types – Adjust timing based on opponent – Document what works

HIGH-LOW ATTACK THEORY

Why This Combination Works:

Physiological Limitations: – Eyes can't track two distant targets simultaneously – Upper body and lower body guards conflict – Defending high exposes low – Defending low exposes high

Temporal Advantage: – Void high forces reaction – Attack low exploits reaction time – Opponent can't recover guard fast enough – Opening appears during transition

Psychological Impact: – Uncertainty about which target is real – Both seem threatening – Analysis paralysis – Hesitation creates further openings

THE “STOP” GUARD

Understanding Stop:

The term “stop” appears at end of every Counter. Brandon Heslop defines it:

“Stop is not merely ending position—it’s a specific guard designed to stop opponent’s counter-attack. It must be defensive, balanced, and ready for immediate action.”[3]

Characteristics of Stop Guard: – Blade threatens opponent – Body balanced – Weight distributed for movement – Ready to attack OR defend – Can transition to any other guard

Possible Positions: – **Stop Guard** (German *Pflug*): Hands low, point threatening – **Roebuck** (German *Ochs*): Point high, ready to thrust – **Boar** (*Alber*): Low guard, inviting attack – **Hawk** (*Vom Tag*): High guard, ready to cut

Key Point: “Stop” is functional description, not always same physical position. Choose based on tactical situation.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Obvious proffer that doesn't deceive opponent
- Weak rake that doesn't disrupt attack
- Pausing between quarter and high-low sequence
- High void without commitment (opponent sees it's fake)
- Leg attack too weak to threaten
- Not voiding far enough on retreat
- Forgetting stop guard—finishing exposed
- Mechanical execution without tactical awareness

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: - Opponent is aggressive, attacks openings - You want to test their defensive capabilities - Need simple, reliable counter pattern - Teaching moment (establish fundamentals) - Against impulsive fencers

Setup Opportunities: - After establishing pattern of proffers - When opponent begins anticipating your attacks - During mid-bout when both settling into rhythm - Against opponents who commit fully to attacks

What This Teaches Opponent: - Your proffers are traps - Attacking you has consequences - You can defend high and low - You retreat safely, not in panic - They must be more careful

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: FIRST VS. FIFTH VS. SIXTEENTH COUNTERS

All three are called or similar to “3 Quarters”:

First Counter: - High-low combination - Standard retreat pattern - Foundational teaching

Fifth Counter (covered earlier): - Also high-low - Slightly different footwork - Same principle

Sixteenth Counter (coming later): - Same pattern again - Repetition emphasizes importance - Variants teach adaptation

Why Repetition? Medieval pedagogy emphasized repetition with variation: - Core pattern drilled repeatedly - Slight variations develop adaptability - Stu-

dent learns principle, not just technique - Can improvise when principle understood

PARTNER DRILL: “THE PROFFER GAME”

Setup: - Partner A creates proffers - Partner B attacks or doesn't attack - Partner A must execute Counter if B attacks - Partner A must NOT execute if B doesn't attack

Scoring: - B attacks, A counters successfully: A gets point - B attacks, A fails to counter: B gets point - B doesn't attack, A executes anyway: B gets point - B doesn't attack, A holds back: A gets point

Goal: Develops: - Proffer authenticity (must look real) - Attack recognition (when to execute) - Response speed (react to actual attack) - Restraint (don't waste Counter on nothing)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE COUNTER CONCEPT

The term “Counter” itself is significant:

Medieval Meaning: - Response to opponent's action - Not proactive attack - Reactive but not passive - Turns opponent's attack against them

English Emphasis: Unlike German *Meisterhau* (master strikes - proactive attacks), English Counters are predominantly reactive. This reflects: - Self-defense orientation - Conservative tactical philosophy - Legal context (defense more justifiable) - Civilian application (not battlefield)

George Silver's Later Codification: Silver explicitly discusses “true times” and “false times”: - True time = when opponent is committed - False time = when opponent can still adjust

Counters exploit true times—opponent committed to proffer attack, can't easily adapt to your high-low combination.[7]

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

[7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*. ### COUNTER 18: THE SECOND COUNTER - “THE FULL-SPRING”

Original Text: *The Seconde callyde the full Spryne a Proffer a rake wyth a quartr. then paffe fprynge wt yor hand by yor bonwarde forwarde and be att yor Stoppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a Quarter. Then pass, spring with your hand by your pommel-ward forward and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Full-Spring deploys the extended one-handed attack as a defensive measure—creating distance while threatening simultaneously. It’s the English answer to the question: ‘How do I keep an aggressive opponent at bay?’ ”[3]

Key Points: – **Proffer** = feinted offering/opening (invites opponent’s attack)
– Rake + Quarter = harassment combination – **Full-Spring** = maximum one-handed extension – “By your pommel-ward” = grip near pommel for reach
– Pass forward = advance while springing (aggressive defense) – Immediate return to stop (safety)

The Proffer Technique:

The “proffer” appears throughout the Counters. It’s a **deliberate opening** designed to draw opponent’s attack:

1. **Expose Target:** Leave opening (high line, low line, or specific side)
2. **Apear Vulnerable:** Opponent believes opening is unintentional
3. **Opponent Commits:** They attack the “opening”
4. **Execute Counter:** You were ready—it was trap

Modern equivalent: **feint** or **baited opening**

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Create baited opening
OPPONENT	Attacks opening	Advances	Falls for trap
2	Rake	Stand or slight void	Harassment cut to hands/arms
3	Quarter	Stand	Follow-up cut
4	(Grip adjustment)	Pass forward	Slide to pommel grip
5	Full-Spring	Extended stance	Maximum reach thrust/cut
6	Stop Guard	Recover	Return to defensive position

THE FULL-SPRING MECHANIC

What Makes It “Full”: - **Maximum Extension:** Hand at very end of pommel
 - **Full Body Commitment:** Weight shifts completely forward - **One-Handed:** Rear hand off sword entirely (or very light grip) - **Complete Reach:** 12-24” beyond normal reach

Grip Detail: 1. Both hands on sword initially 2. During pass forward, rear hand slides down haft 3. Rear hand grips pommel’s end 4. Front hand may release or provide minimal guidance 5. All driving power comes from rear hand at pommel

Body Mechanics: - Weight fully on front leg - Rear leg extended for push-off - Torso leaning forward - Arm fully extended - Like lunging in modern fencing but one-handed

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: - Opponent presses forward aggressively - Need to create distance quickly - Opponent doesn’t respect your reach - Want to maintain offensive threat while defending

Why It Works: - Unexpected reach surprises opponent - They commit to attack, you counter at extended range - One-handed allows maximum extension - Pass forward while springing creates momentum - Immediate stop guard prevents counter-attack

Psychological Impact: Full-spring demonstrates: - You control the distance - Their aggression won’t work - You’re willing to meet force with force - You

have tools they didn't expect

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Proffer Practice - Partner observes as you create openings - High-line proffer: raise hands, expose low - Low-line proffer: lower hands, expose high - Side proffer: angle body, expose flank - Partner identifies when opening appears genuine

Week 2: Rake-Quarter Combination - Partner attacks your proffer - Execute rake to their attacking hand/sword - Immediate quarter cut - Focus on timing—must be instantaneous - No gap between rake and quarter

Week 3: Spring Mechanics - Practice full-spring against wall/target - Measure reach: normal vs. full-spring - Document difference (should be 12-24") - Practice passing forward while springing - Smooth grip transition to pommel

Week 4: Integration - Full sequence with partner - Partner attacks proffer - You execute rake-quarter-pass-spring - Return to stop guard - Repeat with different proffers

Week 5+: Pressure Testing - Partner attacks unpredictably - You must create proffer naturally - Execute full counter at speed - Spring must genuinely threaten - Stop guard must be immediate and solid

PROFFER VARIATIONS

High-Line Proffer: - Raise hands/sword above head - Exposes lower body - Invites low attacks - Counter: rake hands as they attack low, spring to face

Low-Line Proffer: - Drop hands/sword toward ground - Exposes upper body - Invites high attacks - Counter: rake descending cut, spring to chest

Side Proffer: - Angle body, expose flank - Invites attacks to open side - Counter: rake across, spring forward

Distance Proffer: - Stand just out of range - Appear vulnerable but aren't - Invites over-committed advance - Counter: rake as they extend, spring catches them mid-advance

COMMON MISTAKES

- Obvious proffer—opponent doesn't bite
- Weak rake—must genuinely threaten
- Pause between rake and quarter—must be continuous
- Insufficient grip slide—hand not at pommel
- Not passing forward—full-spring requires forward momentum
- Overextending on spring—must maintain balance
- Forgetting stop guard—leaves you vulnerable

DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

The Second Counter embodies English defensive philosophy:

Not Passive Defense: - Don't wait and react - Create opportunity (proffer) - Control opponent's action - Counter decisively

Offense-Defense Integration: - Rake is defensive AND offensive - Quarter maintains pressure - Full-spring creates distance AND threatens - Stop guard prepares next action

Distance Management: - Proffer controls when opponent engages - Rake controls their attack - Spring creates distance advantage - Stop maintains safe distance

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE PROFFER

Terry Brown notes in his English Martial Arts research: "The 'proffer' or 'preferment' was well-known in Elizabethan England as a fencing tactic. It appears in multiple sources and refers to deliberately offering an opening to draw opponent's attack." [8]

George Silver later wrote: "The best defense is to offer that which you wish to protect, for the fool will strike at what is offered rather than what is guarded." [7]

The Ledall Roll's extensive use of proffers suggests this was core English tactic decades before Silver codified it in writing.

CITATIONS

- [3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.
- [7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*. Reprinted in various modern editions.
- [8] Brown, T. “BM Additional MS 39564.” *Terry Brown’s School of English Martial Arts*. <https://www.terrybrownenglishmartialarts.com/bm-additional-ms-39564/>
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COUNTER 19: THE THIRD COUNTER - “THE SHORT-SPRING, WITH A FALLING-STROKE”

Original Text: *The thyrde Counter callyd ye xhort xpryng wt a fallyng xtroke A pfur a rake wt a full quartr lythly xett In ye lyffte legge wt the lyffte honde put yor xwerde be hynde ye xhudyr and throxtte owte a full xpryng att hys face wt a quartr and an other voyde and be att yor xtoppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a full Quarter, lithely set in the left leg with the left hand, put your sword behind the shoulder and thrust out a Full-spring at his face with a Quarter and another void and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The ‘Short-Spring with a Falling-Stroke’ combines compact spring technique with a descending angle. The sword behind shoulder creates an overhead position that the spring ‘falls’ from—unexpected and difficult to defend.”[3]

“Notice the left-hand emphasis again. Putting sword behind shoulder with the forward hand creates maximum deception—opponent can’t see the blade or judge the angle until it’s too late.”[5]

Key Points: – “Lithely” = quickly, lightly (no telegraphing) – **Sword behind shoulder** = unique guard position

- **Left hand** = forward hand controls sword - “Falling-stroke” = spring descends from high position - Target is face (high-line attack) - Compact spring (short) but full commitment

Tactical Purpose: - Behind-shoulder position hides intention - Falling angle surprises opponent - Short spring = faster than full spring - Face target creates immediate threat - Quick execution prevents counter

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1 OPPONENT	Proffer Attacks	Stand Advances	Draw attack Takes bait
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt attack
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	Committed cut
4	(Transition)	Set in left leg (lithely)	Quick advance
5	Sword behind shoulder (left hand)	Stand	Left hand positioning
6	Full-spring to face	Extended stance	Descending “falling” angle
7	Quarter	Stand or void	Safety cut
8	Void	Step back	Create distance
9	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

SWORD BEHIND SHOULDER TECHNIQUE

Physical Position:

Behind the Shoulder: - Sword rests on or behind left shoulder - Point high and back - Left hand (forward hand) controls - Right hand releases or guides lightly

Possible Variations:

Version A: On Shoulder – Blade rests on shoulder – Like carrying weapon – Point extended high-back – Spring emerges from overhead

Version B: Behind Neck – Handle behind neck/head – Point extends to rear – Most concealment – Most awkward position

Version C: Over Shoulder – Blade arcs over shoulder – Point down opponent's right side – Creates angle attack – Spring comes from side-high

THE “FALLING-STROKE” CONCEPT**What Makes It “Falling”:**

Gravity-Assisted: – Spring originates from high position – Descends toward target – Uses gravity for momentum – Like dropping vs. throwing

Execution: 1. Sword behind shoulder (high position) 2. Weight shifts forward 3. Arm extends and drops 4. Point falls toward face 5. Gravity accelerates the strike

Comparison: – **Standard spring:** Horizontal thrust – **Falling spring:** Diagonal descent – **Advantage:** Unexpected angle, gravity-assisted

SHORT-SPRING VS. FULL-SPRING

The manuscript distinguishes:

Short-Spring: – Compact extension – Faster execution – Less reach – More control – Less commitment

Full-Spring: – Maximum extension – Slower execution (more movement) – Greater reach – Less control – Full commitment

In This Counter: Text says “Full-spring” but title says “Short-Spring”—possible contradiction or the spring is full commitment but short duration.

Modern Interpretation: – Short setup (compact positioning) – Full commitment (genuine threat) – Best of both

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Behind-Shoulder Position - Explore different shoulder positions - Find which conceals best - Find which generates most power - Practice with left hand only - Select one version to master

Week 2: Falling Mechanics - Spring from high position downward - Feel gravity assist - Control the descent - Target accuracy (face) - Repeat 20 times daily

Week 3: Opening Sequence - Proffer-rake-quarter - Quick set-in with left leg - Smooth transition to shoulder position - No fumbling - Fluid motion

Week 4: Full Integration - Complete Third Counter - Opening → behind shoulder → spring → safety - Partner evaluates surprise factor - Adjust positioning if telegraphed

Week 5+: Speed and Commitment - “Lithely” means quick - No hesitation on set-in - Explosive spring - Test against partner resistance

COMMON MISTAKES

- Slow set-in with left leg—must be “lithely”
- Telegraphing by looking where spring will go
- Complicated shoulder transition—keep simple
- Weak spring from awkward position—must commit
- Forgetting it’s left hand leading—not right
- Horizontal spring instead of falling angle
- Poor recovery (quarter + void)—critical for safety
- Not selecting consistent shoulder position—master one

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: - Opponent defends well against standard springs - Need unexpected angle - Opponent focuses on center-line defense - Want to test high-line defense - After establishing horizontal attack patterns

Psychological Impact: - Opponent sees shoulder position (confusion) - Can't judge blade location - Spring appears from unexpected angle - Creates fear of high attacks - Future feints to shoulder become effective

DECEPTION THROUGH POSITIONING

The Left-Hand Principle:

Multiple Counters emphasize left (forward) hand: - Third Counter (this one) - Tenth Counter (Snatch) - Twelfth Chase (sword behind head)

Why Left Hand?

Mechanical: - Forward hand closer to opponent - Can extend further - More control at close range - Right hand free for recovery

Deceptive: - Unusual (most fight two-handed) - Unexpected capability - Opponent doesn't track forward hand as threat - Creates surprise

Training: Build left-hand strength and control: - One-handed cuts (left only) - Left-hand springs - Wrist exercises (left) - Forearm development (left)

PARTNER DRILL: “FALLING SPRING ACCURACY”

Setup: - Partner holds target at face height - You execute Third Counter - Measure if spring actually threatens face

Success Criteria: - Spring must hit target zone (face) - Must arrive from descending angle - Must generate from shoulder position - Must surprise partner (they shouldn't see it coming)

Scoring: - Hit face zone: 3 points - Hit general head area: 1 point - Miss entirely: 0 points - Partner anticipates: -1 point

Goal: - Consistent face targeting - True “falling” angle - Surprise maintained

COMPARATIVE TECHNIQUE: 12TH CHASE

The Twelfth Chase also uses sword-behind-head positioning:

Similarities: - Unusual guard position - Left hand emphasis - Deceptive intent - Spring to face

Differences: - 12th Chase: Behind head - 3rd Counter: Behind shoulder - Different angles - Different tactical contexts

Learning Value: Practice both to understand: - Range of deceptive positions - Multiple angle attacks - Adaptability with unusual guards

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 20: THE FOURTH COUNTER - “THE RABETT WITH A DOWN-RIGHT STROKE”

Original Text: *The iiijth callyd the Rabett wt a Downe ryght Stroke A pfur A rake wt a quartr ✕ett In your lyffe legge wt a rabett then ✕ett In youre ryght legge wt a downeryght Stroke wt bothe hand✉ wyth a foyne and a quartr wt an other voyde be att yor ✕toppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a Quarter. Set in your left leg with a Rabett, then set in your right leg with a Down-right stroke with both hands, with a thrust and a Quarter with another void, be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Fourth Counter is the first to prominently feature the Rabett—the counter cut against opponent’s weapon. This Counter teaches how rabett creates openings for powerful follow-up attacks.”[3]

“Notice the aggressive pattern: two steps forward (left then right), rabett for control, downright for power, thrust for finishing. This is overwhelming pressure that forces opponent backward or into error.”[5]

Key Points: - First Counter featuring **Rabett prominently** - Two-step advance (left → right) = aggressive - Downright stroke “with both hands” = power strike - Thrust follows downright = combination - Rabett controls → Downright damages - Ends with standard safety sequence

Tactical Purpose: – Rabett controls opponent's blade – First step (left + rabett) closes distance – Second step (right + downright) delivers power – Thrust exploits opening downright creates – Safety sequence prevents counter-attack

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1 OPPONENT	Proffer	Stand	Bait opening
	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt attack
3	Quarter	Stand	Committed cut
4	Rabett	Set in left leg	Advance + counter cut weapon
5	Downright stroke	Set in right leg	Advance + power cut (two hands)
6	Thrust (foyne)	Stand	Follow-up to downright
7	Quarter	Stand	Safety cut
8	Void	Step back	Create distance
9	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

THE RABETT TECHNIQUE

Detailed Explanation:

The Rabett is fundamental to English longsword but rarely explained clearly. Here's comprehensive breakdown:

What It Is: – Cut delivered **against** opponent's weapon – Not past their blade—**into** their blade – Deflects their weapon – Establishes your position – Sets up follow-up attack

How It Works:

Mechanics: 1. Opponent's blade presents 2. You cut toward their blade 3. Your blade impacts theirs 4. Percussion (strike) displaces their weapon 5. Displacement creates opening 6. You attack into opening

Energy Transfer: - Your cut's force transfers to their blade - Their blade moves (whether they want it to or not) - Movement creates gap in defense - Gap = target opportunity

Comparison: - **German Dempfhau:** Similar—damping/deadening cut - **Parry:** Blocks but doesn't necessarily create opening - **Rabett:** Actively creates offensive opportunity

TWO-STEP ADVANCE PATTERN**Aggressive Footwork:**

Step 1 (Left + Rabett): - Close distance - Control opponent's blade - Establish position - Prepare for power strike

Step 2 (Right + Downright): - Further advance - Deliver power cut - Exploit rabett's opening - Two hands = maximum force

Why This Works:

Momentum: - First step builds momentum - Second step maintains momentum - Opponent must retreat or defend desperately - Continuous pressure prevents recovery

Distance Collapse: - Two steps cover 4-6 feet - Collapses distance rapidly - Opponent can't maintain safe range - Forces engagement

Psychological: - Aggressive advance intimidating - Continuous movement prevents thought - Opponent reacts instinctively (poorly) - Creates errors you exploit

DOWNRIGHT STROKE “WITH BOTH HANDS”**Emphasis on Two Hands:**

Most cuts use two hands, but manuscript specifically states it here. Why?

Maximum Power: - Both hands driving - Full body weight - No holding back
 - Committed strike

After Rabett: - Rabett may be one-handed or light - Downright is explicitly powerful - Contrast emphasizes downright's force - Opponent feels the difference

Target Selection: Downright after rabett likely targets: - **Head:** Exposed after rabett displaces high guard - **Shoulder:** Exposed after rabett displaces side guard - **Hands/Arms:** If rabett pushed their blade wide

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Rabett Mechanics - Partner presents blade - You cut into their blade (rabett) - Feel percussion/displacement - Note how their blade moves - Practice slow, focus on technique

Week 2: Rabett + Downright - Rabett displaces blade - Immediately downright to opening - Partner observes: did rabett create opening? - If not, rabett wasn't effective enough - Adjust angle/force

Week 3: Add Footwork - Set in left leg with rabett - Set in right leg with downright - Continuous motion - No pause between steps - Build aggression

Week 4: Add Thrust - Downright creates impact - Opponent recoils or guards - Thrust exploits their reaction - Quick transition downright→thrust - Partner pressure-tests

Week 5: Full Integration - Opening (proffer-rake-quarter) - Main sequence (rabett-downright-thrust) - Safety (quarter-void-stop) - Complete Fourth Counter - Speed and power

Week 6+: Partner Resistance - Partner doesn't yield to rabett easily - You must commit more force - Partner counters during sequence - You must maintain aggression - Develop real-combat capability

COMMON MISTAKES

- Weak rabett that doesn't displace blade
- Pausing between left step and right step
- Weak downright despite "both hands" instruction

- Thrust too slow after downright—must be immediate
- Not advancing far enough—two steps should cover ground
- Losing balance during aggressive advance
- Forgetting safety sequence—still vulnerable after thrust

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: - Opponent uses passive defense - They wait for your attack - You want to overwhelm with aggression - Their blade positioning is predictable - You have stamina advantage

Against Defensive Fencers: Perfect for opponents who: - Don't initiate attacks - Rely on counter-attacks - Use waiting strategy - Hope you'll tire yourself

Your Approach: - Proffer draws their attention - Rake prevents them settling - Rabett controls their blade - Downright forces desperate defense - Thrust catches them during recovery

Result: - Opponent on back foot - Forced to react - Can't execute their plan - Must defend continuously - Eventually makes mistake

RABETT TARGET AREAS

Where to Rabett:

Flat of Blade: - Most effective displacement - Transfers energy efficiently - Minimal sword damage

Strong of Blade: - Against weak of opponent's blade - Maximum leverage - Greatest displacement

Avoid: - Edge-to-edge (damages swords) - Weak-to-strong (they have leverage) - Air (missing entirely)

Target Selection: - High rabett: Displaces overhead guards - Mid rabett: Displaces center guards - Low rabett: Displaces low guards

Choose based on opponent's current guard.

COMBINATION THEORY

Rabett-Downright-Thrust:

This three-technique combination teaches fundamental principle:

Control → Damage → Finish: 1. **Rabett** (Control): Establish position 2. **Down-right** (Damage): Exploit position 3. **Thrust** (Finish): Complete attack

This Pattern: Appears throughout martial arts: – Wrestling: Control → Take-down → Pin – Boxing: Jab (setup) → Cross (power) → Hook (finish) – Fencing: Preparation → Attack → Continuation

Principle: Never rely on single technique. Combinations force opponent to defend multiple threats, creating openings.

PARTNER DRILL: “RABETT EFFECTIVENESS TEST”

Setup: – Partner holds guard position – You execute rabett – Measure: How far did their blade move?

Scoring: – Blade displaced 6+ inches: Effective rabett (3 points) – Blade displaced 3–6 inches: Adequate (1 point) – Blade displaced <3 inches: Ineffective (0 points)

Goal: Rabett must genuinely displace. If blade doesn’t move, your follow-up attacks won’t have opening to exploit.

Adjustment: – More force – Better angle – Commit body weight – Use whole blade, not just tip

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 21: THE FIFTH COUNTER – “THE 3 QUARTERS”

Original Text: *The Vth callyd the ij quarters A pfur a rake wyth a quarter full standing ~~stand~~ tylle pley an other voyde a bove hys hede wt an other at hys legge then voyde bake the ryght legge wt an other quarter and be att youre ~~toppe~~ toppe.*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a Quarter full. Standing still play another void above his head, with another at his leg. Then void back the right leg with another Quarter and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Fifth Counter is nearly identical to the First Counter—this repetition emphasizes the importance of the high-low attack pattern. Medieval training relied on drilling core techniques repeatedly with slight variations.”[3]

“The key difference is subtle: ‘standing still’ is explicitly stated before the high-low sequence. This emphasizes the stable platform required for effective multi-target attacks.”[5]

Key Points: – Almost identical to First Counter – Repetition emphasizes core pattern – “Standing still” explicitly noted – Three quarters = name source – High-low combination again – Foundational technique worth repeating

Why Repeat This Pattern: – Core competency requires mastery – Slight variations build adaptability – Students learn principles, not just choreography – Repetition with variation = deep learning – Can execute instinctively under pressure

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
OPPONENT	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt attack
3	Quarter (full)	Standing still	Explicitly stable
4	Cut above head	Void (step back)	High cut while retreating
5	Cut to leg	Stand or advance	Low-line follow-up
6	Quarter	Void back right leg	Retreat while cutting
7	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

THE “STANDING STILL” EMPHASIS

Why State the Obvious?

Most techniques involve standing still at some point. Why emphasize it here?

Stability for Multi-Target: - High-low sequence requires balance - Moving while attacking multiple targets = difficult - Standing still = stable platform - Stability = accuracy and power

Contrast with Movement: - Many Counters involve footwork throughout - This one explicitly stops moving - Creates rhythm change - Opponent expects movement, gets stability

Tactical Consideration: - Standing still can be vulnerable - But multi-target attack compensates - Opponent can't counter if defending multiple lines - Trade mobility for offensive capability

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Review First Counter - Ensure First Counter is mastered - Same pattern as Fifth - Smooth execution - No hesitation

Week 2: Emphasize Stability - Execute Fifth Counter - Focus on “standing still” - Plant feet firmly - No shifting during high-low - Solid platform

Week 3: Compare and Contrast - Alternate First and Fifth Counters - Identify subtle differences - Understand why repetition matters - Build instinctive execution

Week 4+: Variations - Change which leg voids (left vs right) - Vary high void intensity - Vary leg attack target (knee vs ankle vs thigh) - Develop adaptability within pattern

REPETITION IN MEDIEVAL PEDAGOGY

Why Multiple “3 Quarters” Counters?

The manuscript includes: - First Counter (3 quarters pattern) - Fifth Counter (3 quarters - this one) - Sixteenth Counter (also 3 quarters)

Medieval Learning Theory:

Repetitio Mater Studiorum: “Repetition is the mother of learning” (Latin maxim)

How It Works: 1. First presentation: Learn sequence 2. Second presentation: Refine execution 3. Third presentation: Instinctive mastery 4. Variations: Develop adaptability

Modern Equivalent: – Drilling in martial arts – Scales in music – Fundamental exercises in sports – Core competencies repeated until automatic

Application: Don’t view repetition as redundancy. View as: – Emphasis on importance – Opportunity for perfection – Building deep competency – Creating instinctive responses

COMMON MISTAKES

- Rushing through because “I already know this from First Counter”
- Not emphasizing standing still—allowing drift
- Weak execution because it’s “just repetition”
- Failing to find subtle differences
- Not using repetition to perfect technique
- Skipping in favor of “more interesting” techniques

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Why Return to This Pattern:

Even experienced fencers should drill Fifth Counter because:

Fundamentals Win Fights: – Complex techniques fail under pressure – Simple, well-drilled techniques succeed – High-low is always effective – Can execute when tired, stressed, injured

Building Blocks: – More complex Counters build on this – If foundation shaky, complex fails – Perfect this = can learn anything

Reliability: – Works against novices – Works against experts – Works when tired – Works under pressure – Core competency never obsolete

PARTNER DRILL: “PERFECT EXECUTION”

Goal: Execute Fifth Counter with zero errors.

Criteria: - Proffer convincing - Rake threatens - Quarter commits - Stand absolutely still (no drift) - High void genuine - Leg attack threatens - Void back creates distance - Stop guard solid

Scoring: - Partner identifies any flaw: Start over - 10 perfect executions in row: Success - Track time to achieve 10 perfect reps

Purpose: Perfection drill. Not about speed or power—about flawless execution.
Builds: - Attention to detail - Technical precision - Muscle memory - Pride in craft

MEDITATIVE PRACTICE

Solo Drill:

The Fifth Counter can be used as **moving meditation**:

Setup: 1. Quiet space 2. No partner 3. Slow speed 4. Focus on perfection

Execution: - Proffer: Feel the opening - Rake: Visualize opponent’s hands - Quarter: Commit fully - Stand still: Root to ground - High void: See the head - Leg attack: Strike the knee - Void back: Create space - Stop guard: Ready for anything

Benefits: - Mindfulness practice - Technical refinement - Stress relief - Connecting mind-body-weapon - Builds internal understanding

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 22: THE SIXTH COUNTER - “THE CROSS RAKE”

Original Text: *The Vjth Poynte callyde the cros Rake A pfur a cros rake wt a foyne at hys face wt a quarter full and an other A voyde be at youre stoppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Cross-Rake, with a thrust at his face with a Quarter full and another, a void, be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Cross-Rake is the signature technique here—likely a diagonal cutting motion across opponent’s blade or body, creating a unique angle that disrupts their defense differently than standard rake.”[3]

“This Counter is notably simpler than recent ones. The focus is mastering the cross-rake technique itself rather than complex sequencing.”[5]

Key Points: – **Cross-Rake** = diagonal or crossing rake motion – No standard rake—jumps straight to cross-rake – Thrust to face follows immediately – Simpler pattern than most Counters – Focus on mastering cross-rake angle – “Another” likely means another quarter

Tactical Purpose: – Cross-rake creates unexpected angle – Diagonal motion confuses defense – Face thrust is kill-shot – Simplicity allows focus on technique quality – Speed over complexity

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1 OPPONENT	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
2	Cross-Rake	Stand or slight movement	Diagonal/crossing cut
3	Thrust to face	Stand or extend	High-line thrust

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
4	Quarter (full)	Stand	Committed cut
5	Another (quarter)	Stand	Second cut
6	Void	Step back	Create distance
7	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

THE CROSS-RAKE TECHNIQUE

What “Cross” Means:

The term “cross” in medieval English fencing context suggests:

Interpretation 1: Diagonal Angle – Rake delivered diagonally – Crosses opponent’s centerline – From high-right to low-left (or reverse) – Creates unexpected angle

Interpretation 2: Crossing Motion – Blade crosses opponent’s blade – Sweeping motion across their weapon – Displaces while cutting – Combines rake + displacement

Interpretation 3: Cross-Body – Cut crosses your own body – Right-to-left or left-to-right – Uses torso rotation – Generates power from hip

Most Likely: Combination All three elements probably apply: – Diagonal angle – Crosses opponent’s blade – Uses body rotation

CROSS-RAKE MECHANICS

Execution:

Setup: – Opponent attacks proffer – Their blade presents – You identify angle

The Cross: 1. Rotate hips/shoulders 2. Blade sweeps diagonally 3. Contact opponent’s blade or hands 4. Continues across (doesn’t stop on contact) 5. Creates opening

Follow-Through: – Momentum from cross-rake – Transitions into thrust position – No pause between rake and thrust – Continuous motion

Power Source: – Hip rotation – Shoulder engagement – Whole body, not just arms – Diagonal motion generates torque

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Explore Cross-Rake Angles – Try various diagonal angles – High-right to low-left – High-left to low-right – Low-right to high-left – Low-left to high-right – Find which feels most natural

Week 2: Cross-Rake Against Blade – Partner presents blade – You cross-rake it – Observe displacement – Adjust angle for maximum effect – Build consistency

Week 3: Cross-Rake to Thrust – Execute cross-rake – Immediate thrust to face – No pause between – Momentum flows rake→thrust – Partner pressure-tests timing

Week 4: Add Opening and Closing – Proffer to draw attack – Cross-rake response – Thrust to face – Two quarters – Void and stop – Complete Sixth Counter

Week 5+: Speed and Commitment – Increase execution speed – Full commitment to thrust – Test against partner resistance – Develop instinctive cross-rake

COMMON MISTAKES

- Weak cross-rake that doesn't displace or threaten
- Straight rake instead of diagonal (missing "cross")
- Pausing between cross-rake and thrust
- Weak thrust to face—should genuinely threaten
- Forgetting second quarter—text says "another"
- Not using body rotation—all in arms
- Losing balance from diagonal motion

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use:

Against Linear Defenders: - Opponent defends center-line well - Standard rakes don't work - Cross-angle surprises them - Diagonal bypasses their defense

Against Aggressive Attackers: - They attack your proffer hard - Cross-rake deflects their attack - Diagonal angle multiplies deflection - Their momentum works against them

Creating Angles: - Opponent settles into patterns - Expects standard approaches - Cross-rake breaks pattern - Diagonal thinking = tactical advantage

DIAGONAL THEORY

Why Diagonals Work:

Geometry: - Shortest distance between two points - Diagonal crosses multiple defensive lines - Hard to defend simultaneously - Creates compound threat

Physics: - Diagonal uses body rotation - Rotation = power - Leverages whole body - More force than arm-only

Psychology: - Humans defend in lines (horizontal, vertical) - Diagonals less intuitive - Requires more processing - Slower reaction time

Historical Precedent: - Italian *Fendente* (diagonal descending) - German *Oberhau* (diagonal cut) - Universal recognition of diagonal effectiveness

SIMPLICITY AS SOPHISTICATION

Why This Counter Is Simple:

Not Fewer Steps = Easier: Rather: Focus on technique quality

Design: - Cross-rake is new technique - Rest is familiar (proffer, thrust, quarters) - Can focus learning on cross-rake - Don't overwhelm with complexity

Pedagogical Wisdom: When introducing new technique: - Keep surrounding context familiar - Allow student to focus on new element - Build confidence before adding complexity - Foundation before elaboration

Application: When teaching Sixth Counter: - Assume student knows proffer, thrust, quarters - Spend training time on cross-rake - Perfect the new technique - Then integrate into sequence

PARTNER DRILL: “CROSS-RAKE ANGLES”

Setup: - Partner holds guard (any position) - You experiment with cross-rake angles - Partner reports which feels most threatening

Test Angles: 1. High-right to low-left 2. High-left to low-right 3. Mid-right to mid-left 4. Mid-left to mid-right 5. Low-right to high-left 6. Low-left to high-right

Partner Feedback: - Which angle surprised most? - Which was hardest to defend? - Which generated most power? - Which flowed best into thrust?

Goal: Discover optimal cross-rake angle for your body and style.

CROSS-RAKE IN OTHER TRADITIONS

Comparative Techniques:

Italian Fendente: - Diagonal descending cut - Similar body mechanics - Different tactical context - Same geometric principle

German Zwerchau: - “Cross cut” - Horizontal with rotation - Related concept - Different execution

Japanese ✕✕✕ (Kesa-giri): - “Monk’s robe cut” - Diagonal shoulder to hip - Same angle concept - Universal recognition

Lesson: Diagonal cuts appear across martial traditions because they work. The English cross-rake is part of universal tactical wisdom.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 23: THE SEVENTH COUNTER - “THE DOWN-RIGHT STROKE”

Original Text: *The Vijth poynte callyd ye Downeryght stroke A pfur A rake wyth a quarter an other a voyde a Downeryght Stroke folowyde wyth the ryght legge then standyng styll lythly play a fore foyne wt a quarter and an other voyde be att youre stope*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a Quarter, another, a void. A Down-right stroke followed with the right leg, then standing still lithely play a For-thrust, with a Quarter, and another void, be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Seventh Counter introduces a mid-sequence void—you retreat before delivering the downright stroke. This teaches distance manipulation: void to draw opponent forward, downright as they pursue, thrust when they’re committed.”[3]

“Notice ‘lithely play a fore-thrust’—the quickness is emphasized. After the powerful downright, the quick thrust catches opponent during their reaction to the heavy strike.”[5]

Key Points: - Mid-sequence void (unusual placement) - **Downright stroke** = signature technique - Followed with right leg = advance while cutting - “Lithely” fore-thrust = quick, light execution - Power (downright) + speed (quick thrust) combination - Two voids total (mid-sequence + ending)

Tactical Purpose: - Void (retreat) creates space and may draw opponent forward - Downright meets their advance with power - Quick thrust exploits their reaction - Power-speed combination overwhelms - Multiple voids create safety

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
OPPONENT	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt attack
3	Quarter	Stand	Committed cut
4	Another (action)	Stand	Likely another quarter
5	Void	Step back	Mid-sequence retreat
6	Downright stroke	Follow with right leg	Advance while cutting
7	(Preparation)	Stand still	Stable for thrust
8	Fore-thrust	Stand	Lithely = quick
9	Quarter	Stand	Safety cut
10	Void	Step back	Create distance
11	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

MID-SEQUENCE VOID TACTIC

Why Void Mid-Sequence?

Most Counters void only at end (safety retreat). This one voids in the middle. Why?

Drawing Opponent: - You void back (opponent thinks you're retreating) - Opponent pursues (opportunity!) - You downright as they advance - They walk into your attack

Distance Management: - Void creates space - Downright collapses space - You control the distance dynamic - Opponent reacts to your manipulation

Rhythm Disruption: - Opponent expects continuous forward pressure - Void breaks their expectation - They must adjust - Adjustment creates opening

Tactical Sophistication: This is advanced footwork—using retreat as setup for attack.

DOWNRIGHT STROKE DETAIL

The Power Cut:

Execution: - Vertical or near-vertical descending cut - Both hands driving - Full body weight - Gravity-assisted - Maximum power

“Followed with Right Leg”: - Not static - Advance as you cut - Right leg steps forward - Adds momentum to strike - Closes distance

Targets: - **Head:** Most common downright target - **Shoulder:** If head defended - **Hands:** If extended - **Weapon:** To displace/destroy

Difference from Quarter: - **Quarter:** Diagonal cut (45° angle) - **Downright:** Vertical cut (90° angle) - More direct - More power - Less finesse

THE “LITHELY” FORE-THRUST

Quick and Light:

After powerful downright, thrust must be:

Quick (“Lithely”): - Fast execution - No telegraphing - Immediate after downright - Surprise element

Light (Also “Lithely”): - Not heavy commitment - Can recover quickly - Probing rather than killing blow - Tests opponent’s reaction

Why This Combination:

Power → Speed: - Downright = heavy, slow - Opponent braces for power - Thrust = quick, unexpected - Catches them unprepared

Physical Response: - Heavy strike creates flinch/recoil - During recoil, guard opens - Quick thrust exploits opening - Timing is everything

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Mid-Sequence Void - Practice opening (proffer-rake-quarter-another) - Add void - Partner observes: Do they want to pursue? - If not void convincing enough, adjust

Week 2: Downright After Void - Void back - Partner pursues - Downright as they advance - Timing critical: too early = miss, too late = hit

Week 3: Add Quick Thrust - After downright lands - Immediate thrust (lithely) - No pause - Partner can't react in time - Build speed

Week 4: Complete Sequence - Opening → void → downright → thrust → safety - All elements integrated - Smooth transitions - Tactical awareness

Week 5+: Partner Pressure - Partner doesn't automatically pursue void - Partner defends downright - Partner tries to counter thrust - You must adapt - Develop real-combat capability

COMMON MISTAKES

- Weak mid-void (not retreating far enough)
- Downright while standing instead of advancing
- Heavy thrust instead of "lithely"
- Pausing between downright and thrust
- Second void (end) insufficient distance
- Not standing still before thrust—reduces control
- Forgetting "another" (step 4)—sequence has it

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Against Aggressive Pursuers:

Their Pattern: - You retreat = they chase - They pressure constantly - They overwhelm with forward momentum

Your Response: - Mid-void (retreat) creates space; they may pursue - Downright punishes their pursuit - Thrust finishes while they're reeling - They learn: Don't chase blindly

Psychological Training: Teaches opponent: – Your retreats aren't weakness – Pursuing you is dangerous – Must respect your distance control – Hesitation in future engagements

POWER-SPEED COMBINATIONS

Fundamental Principle:

The downright-thrust combination teaches:

Heavy-Light Sequencing: – Heavy attack draws heavy defense – Light attack exploits heavy defense – Rhythm variation creates openings

In Combat: – Never use same speed/weight twice – Vary force continually – Opponent can't settle into rhythm – Creates constant uncertainty

Other Applications: – Boxing: Jab (light) → Cross (heavy) → Hook (medium) – Kendo: Men (heavy) → Kote (light) – Fencing: Beat (heavy) → Disengage (light)

Universal Principle: Variation defeats adaptation.

PARTNER DRILL: “PURSUE OR DON’T”

Setup: – You execute opening + mid-void – Partner decides: pursue or not – You must read their intention – Adapt accordingly

If Partner Pursues: – Execute downright as written – Catch them advancing – Score success

If Partner Doesn't Pursue: – Don't execute downright (they're not there) – Adapt sequence – Different counter required

Goal: Develop: – Tactical reading – Adaptive execution – Not robotic drilling – Real decision-making

DOUBLE VOID SAFETY

Why Two Voids:

Mid-Void (Step 5): – Tactical (draw opponent) – Offensive purpose – Setup for downright

End-Void (Step 10): – Safety (create distance) – Defensive purpose – Return to guard

Different Functions: Same action (void) serves different purposes based on context.

Lesson: Techniques aren't inherently offensive or defensive—context determines purpose. Flexibility of mind = tactical advantage.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 24: THE EIGHTH COUNTER – “THE RABETT WITH A DOWN-RIGHT STROKE”

Original Text: *The viijth callyde the rabett wt a Downe ryght Stroke A pfur a rake wt a quarter A nother A voyde a Downe ryght stroke folowyde wt the ryght legge wt a fore foyne ~~settyng~~ In the lyffte legge lyththly pley a rabett then ~~sett~~ In ye ryght legge wt a Downryght Stroke a foyne wt a quarter an other a voyde be att yor ~~stoppe~~*.

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a Quarter, another, a void. A Down-right stroke followed with the right leg, with a For-thrust. Setting in the left leg lithely play a Rabett, then set in the right leg with a Down-right stroke, a thrust, with a Quarter, another, a void, be at you stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Eighth Counter is the most complex Counter encountered so far—thirteen distinct actions including two rabetts, two downright strokes, and multiple advances. This teaches sustained pressure through combination attacks.”[3]

“Notice the pattern: void (draw) → downright + thrust → rabett (control) → downright + thrust again. The repetition teaches that successful combinations can be repeated when opponent is reeling.”[5]

Key Points: - **Most complex Counter** (13 steps) - Two separate rabett-downright combinations - Multiple forward steps (highly aggressive) - “Lithely” rabett = quick execution - Double downright pattern teaches repetition - Sustained pressure overwhelms defense

Tactical Purpose: - Initial combination establishes pattern - Opponent defends desperately - Second combination exploits their fatigue/fear - Continuous forward pressure - No recovery time for opponent - Forces error or retreat

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
OPPONENT	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
	Rake	Stand	Disrupt attack
	Quarter	Stand	Committed cut
	Another	Stand	Likely quarter
	Void	Step back	Mid-sequence retreat
FIRST COMBINATION			
6	Downright stroke	Follow with right leg	Power cut + advance
7	Fore-thrust	Stand	Quick thrust
SECOND COMBINATION			
8	Rabett	Set in left leg (lithely)	Quick advance + control
9	Downright stroke	Set in right leg	Power cut + advance
10	Thrust	Stand	Follow-up thrust
SAFETY SEQUENCE			
11	Quarter	Stand	Safety cut
12	Another	Stand	Second safety cut
13	Void	Step back	Create distance
14	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

DOUBLE COMBINATION PATTERN

First Combination (Steps 6-7): - Downright stroke (power) - Fore-thrust (speed) - Covers 2-3 feet forward

Second Combination (Steps 8-10): - Rabett (control) - Downright stroke (power) - Thrust (finishing) - Covers additional 2-3 feet forward

Total Advance: 4-6 feet forward in main sequence. Extremely aggressive.

WHY DOUBLE THE PATTERN

Tactical Reasoning:

First Combination: - Tests opponent's defense - Establishes rhythm - Creates initial opening - Applies pressure

Opponent's Reaction: - Defends desperately - Guard weakens - Fatigue begins - Fear increases

Second Combination: - Exploits weakened defense - Same pattern, harder to defend second time - Opponent knows what's coming but can't stop it - Psychological impact: "It's happening again"

Teaching Principle: If combination works once, use it again immediately. Opponent is: - Already damaged/disrupted - Expecting something different - Less prepared for repetition - Easier to defeat

THE AGGRESSIVE ADVANCE

Four Forward Steps:

Step	Leg	Action
6	Right	Downright stroke
8	Left	Rabett
9	Right	Downright stroke
Total	Both alternating	4 forward steps

Distance Covered: - Each step: 1-2 feet - Total: 4-6 feet forward - Collapsing distance rapidly - Overwhelming opponent

Tactical Impact: – Opponent must retreat – Continuous pressure – No time to think – Forced into corners/obstacles – Eventually makes mistake

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: First Combination – Opening through first downright-thrust – Steps 1-7 only – Master this sequence – Partner pressure-tests

Week 2: Second Combination – Add rabett-downright-thrust – Steps 8-10 added – Focus on lithely rabett – Continuous from first combination

Week 3: Full Integration – Complete Eighth Counter – Opening → double combination → safety – No pauses – Flowing execution – Partner must defend throughout

Week 4: Distance Management – Start at edge of range – Execute full Counter – Should reach opponent by step 6-7 – Cover distance efficiently – Don't overextend

Week 5: Speed and Power – Increase execution speed – Maintain power on downrights – Quick (lithely) transitions – Test stamina (13 steps is tiring)

Week 6+: Realistic Pressure – Partner resists fully – Partner counter-attacks when able – You must maintain pressure – Develop combat-ready execution – Build conditioning

COMMON MISTAKES

- Rushing through—13 steps require control
- Weak first combination—must genuinely threaten
- Pausing before second combination—should flow
- Not advancing far enough—four forward steps required
- Rabett not “lithely”—should be quick
- Weak second downright—must match first’s power
- Insufficient safety sequence—two actions needed
- Gassing out—this Counter is exhausting

STAMINA AND CONDITIONING

Physical Demands:

Cardiovascular: - 13 continuous actions - 4 forward steps - 2 power cuts (downright) - High intensity throughout

Muscular: - Two-handed power strikes - Multiple footwork transitions - Core stability throughout - Arm endurance for thrusts

Training: This Counter is excellent conditioning drill: - Execute 5 times in row - 30-second rest between - Builds fight endurance - Prepares for sustained engagements

Combat Reality: Real fights are exhausting. The Eighth Counter teaches: - Maintain technique when tired - Push through fatigue - Pressure opponent despite exhaustion - Condition = tactical advantage

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use:

Against Defensive Opponents: - Won't attack your proffers - Wait for your mistakes - Rely on counter-attacks - Need to be overwhelmed

Your Strategy: - Proffer draws attention - First combination tests defense - Second combination breaks defense - Sustained pressure forces error

When NOT to Use: - When tired yourself - Against counter-fighters who want you to commit - Late in bout (stamina concerns) - Against much larger opponents (they won't be pushed back easily)

COMBINATION THEORY

Why Downright → Thrust Works:

Biomechanics: - Downright descends vertically - Natural recovery raises hands - Hands high = belly/center exposed - Thrust targets exposed center

Timing: - Downright forces defensive reaction - Reaction takes time - Thrust arrives during reaction - No time to adjust defense

Psychology: - Heavy cut creates fear - Fear creates hesitation - Thrust exploits hesitation - Compound stress

Repeatability: Works first time, works second time because: - Same biomechanics - Same timing advantage - Increased fear (happened before) - Opponent knows it's coming but still can't defend

PARTNER DRILL: “THE PRESSURE COOKER”

Setup: – Partner defends passively – You execute Eighth Counter – Partner tries to survive without counter-attacking

Pressure Points: – After first downright: Can partner recover guard? – After first thrust: Is partner balanced? – After rabbet: Does partner’s blade move? – After second downright: Can partner maintain defense? – After second thrust: Is partner still in fight?

Success: Partner says: “I couldn’t defend all of that”

Failure: Partner says: “I had openings to counter throughout”

Adjustment: If partner can defend: – Increase speed – Increase power – Tighten spacing – Eliminate pauses

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: SUSTAINED COMBINATIONS

Medieval Combat:

Real fights weren’t single exchanges: – Multiple blows common – Sustained pressure necessary – Breaks only when someone retreats/falls – Stamina = survival

The Eighth Counter: Trains for sustained combat: – Long combinations – Continuous movement – Maintained technique under fatigue – Realistic preparation

Modern Application: Tournament bouts last 2-3 minutes: – Multiple exchanges inevitable – Must execute when tired – This Counter builds requisite stamina – Tactical and physical training combined

COMPARATIVE COMPLEXITY

Counter Complexity Ranking:

1. **Eighth Counter:** 13+ steps (most complex)
2. Twenty-Second Counter: 11+ steps
3. Seventh Counter: 10+ steps
4. Most others: 6-9 steps

5. First Counter: 7 steps (baseline)

Why Vary Complexity: - Simple Counters: Learn fundamentals - Medium Counters: Build combinations - Complex Counters: Test mastery - Progressive difficulty = progressive learning

Pedagogical Progression: Start simple, add complexity gradually, culminate in sophisticated sequences like Eighth Counter.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 25: THE NINTH COUNTER - “THE DOUBLE ROUND WITH 2 THRUSTS”

Original Text: *The ixth callyde ye Doble rounde wt ij Foynes A double rounde forwarde wt a foyne at hys face An other att hys bely Standyng ✕tyll pley a quarter full wt an other voyde be att yor ✕tope.*

Modern English: A Double Round forward, with a thrust at his face, another at his belly. Standing still play a Quarter full, with another void, be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Ninth Counter breaks pattern by omitting the standard proffer-rake opening. It begins with movement (double round), making it reactive to opponent’s position or initiative rather than proactive baiting.”[3]

“The high-low thrust combination (face then belly) is tactical genius—after face thrust, opponent guards high, exposing belly. Sequential targeting of opposite lines creates unavoidable threat.”[5]

Key Points: - NO proffer-rake opening (unique) - Begins with double round (movement-based) - Two thrusts to different targets - High-low combination again - Simpler than recent Counters - Standing still for final actions

Tactical Purpose: - Double round creates angles/momentum - Face thrust draws high guard - Belly thrust exploits high guard - Simple but highly effective - Speed over complexity

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Double Round	Forward movement	Two circular motions advancing
2	Thrust to face	Stand or extend	High-line thrust
3	Thrust to belly	Stand	Low-line thrust
4	(Position)	Stand still	Explicitly stable
5	Quarter (full)	Stand	Committed cut
6	Void	Step back	Create distance
7	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

NO PROFFER-RAKE OPENING

Why Skip Standard Opening:

Different Tactical Context: - Other Counters: You draw opponent's attack - This Counter: You respond to existing situation - No need to bait—situation already presents

When to Use This Counter: - Opponent already attacking - You're both in motion - No time for proffer setup - Immediate response required

Reactive vs. Proactive: - Most Counters: Proactive (you create situation) - Ninth Counter: Reactive (situation already exists) - Different applications - Both necessary

DOUBLE ROUND MECHANICS

What Is Double Round:

Covered in previous Chases, but applied differently here:

As Opening Movement: 1. First circular motion (360°) 2. Second circular motion (360°) 3. Both while advancing forward 4. Creates momentum for thrusts

Functions:

Distance Closure: - Covers ground while circling - Approaches opponent - Establishes range for thrusts

Angle Creation: - Circular motion changes approach angle - Opponent can't predict exact line - Creates uncertainty

Momentum: - Rotational energy - Transfers into thrust - More powerful than static thrust

Intimidation: - Dynamic, aggressive movement - Opponent sees commitment - Psychological pressure

HIGH-LOW THRUST SEQUENCE

Face → Belly Combination:

Biomechanical Reality:

Face Thrust: - Opponent guards high to protect face - Hands raised - Belly/center exposed - Natural defensive response

Belly Thrust: - Exploits raised hands - Targets now-exposed center - Opponent can't lower guard fast enough - Opening exists during transition

Timing Is Everything: - Face thrust must genuinely threaten - Opponent MUST react (guard high) - Belly thrust immediate (no pause) - Window of opportunity is brief

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Double Round Forward - Practice circular movements - While advancing forward - Maintain balance - Control momentum - Build consistency

Week 2: Double Round → Face Thrust - Complete rounds - Immediate thrust to face - Use rotational momentum - Transition must be smooth - No pause between

Week 3: Add Belly Thrust – After face thrust – Immediate belly thrust – Visualize opponent guarding high – Target exposed center – Quick execution

Week 4: Add Standing Sequence – Stand still explicitly – Quarter full – Void – Stop guard – Complete Ninth Counter

Week 5+: Partner Testing – Partner observes double round – Face thrust: Do they guard high? – Belly thrust: Does it find opening? – If not, adjust timing/targeting – Build instinctive execution

COMMON MISTAKES

- Weak double round that doesn't create momentum
- Horizontal thrusts instead of high-low angles
- Pausing between face and belly thrusts
- Belly thrust too high (not actually targeting belly)
- Moving during “standing still” sequence
- Weak quarter—should be “full” (committed)
- Insufficient void—must create real distance

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

In-Fight Response:

Scenario: – You and opponent circling – Both looking for opening – Neither wants to commit first – Stalemate

Your Response: – Execute double round (you commit) – Face thrust breaks stalemate – Belly thrust capitalizes – Back to guard quickly

Advantage: – Breaks stalemate on your terms – Double attack overwhelms – Quick return to guard = safety – Opponent still reacting while you're ready

HIGH-LOW TARGET THEORY

Universal Principle:

Human Defense: – Naturally protects face/head – Belly/center secondary priority – Can't defend both simultaneously at distance

Sequential Targeting: - Force high defense (face threat) - Exploit low opening (belly thrust) - Works because of biological priorities

Other Applications: - Boxing: Jab (high) → Body shot (low) - Kicking: High kick → Sweep (low) - Wrestling: Headlock → Leg takedown

Why This Works: Humans have limited bandwidth—forcing defense of primary target creates openings in secondary targets.

STANDING STILL EMPHASIS

After Thrusts:

Text explicitly says “standing still” before quarter.

Why:

Stability: - Two thrusts create momentum - Must stabilize before quarter - Standing still = regaining control

Tempo: - Thrusts were quick (lithely) - Quarter should be different rhythm - Standing still creates tempo change - Opponent adjusts to speed, gets power

Safety: - Two forward thrusts = extended position - Standing still = recovery - Quarter from stable platform = control - Void from balance = effective

PARTNER DRILL: “HIGH-LOW REACTION”

Setup: ### COUNTER 26: THE TENTH COUNTER – “THE SNATCH”

Original Text: *The xth callyde the Snatche A profur a rake wyth a quarter full voydynge
bake the ryght legge wt ye lyffte honde ×myte A ×natche then voyde bake yor lyffte
legge And be att youre Stoppe.*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a Quarter full. Voiding back the right leg with the left hand smite a Snatch, then void back your left leg and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Snatch is a snapping cut from pendant guard, related to the German *Schnappen*. It’s delivered with the left (forward) hand only, creating a surprise attack from an unusual position.”[3]

“This technique addresses the challenge of recovering from overextension. You’ve voided back, you’re one-handed, but you still need to maintain offensive threat—the snatch does exactly that.”[5]

Key Points: – Starts with standard proffer-rake-quarter pattern – Void back creates distance – **Snatch** = one-handed snap cut with forward hand – Pendant guard = sword hanging behind/beside body, point down – Second void ensures safety – Two-stage retreat (right leg, then left leg)

The Snatch Technique:

Position: – Sword in pendant (hanging) position – Point low or behind body – Forward (left) hand grips normally – Rear (right) hand released or very light grip

Execution: 1. From pendant, sword hangs relaxed 2. Sudden wrist snap upward 3. Blade accelerates from gravity-assisted position 4. Strikes rising line (hands, arms, head) 5. Immediately returns to pendant

Why “Snatch”: – Motion resembles snatching/grabbing – Quick grab-like movement – Sudden and surprising – From low to high in one snap

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1 OPPONENT	Proffer	Stand	Bait opening
	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
2	Rake	Stand	Harassment cut to hands
3	Quarter full	Stand	“Full” = committed cut
4	(Release rear hand)	Void back right leg	Transition to one-handed
5	Snatch	Stand	One-handed snap cut (left hand)

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
6	(Return to two hands)	Void back left leg	Second retreat
7	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

PENDANT GUARD ANALYSIS

The pendant guard is explicitly mentioned in multiple Counters. Understanding it is key:

Historical Names: - English: “Pendant” (hanging) - German: *Nebenhut* (side guard) or related to *Alber* - Italian: *Posta de coda lunga* (tail guard long)

Position Details: - Sword behind body or beside - Point angled downward - Hands low (hip or below) - Weight distributed evenly or on rear leg

Tactical Purpose: - Deceptive—appears non-threatening - Hides sword length from opponent - Loads energy for snap cuts (gravity-assisted) - Difficult to read intentions

Transitions: - FROM pendant: snatch, rising cuts, thrusts - TO pendant: after overextended attacks, during voids

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Snatch Mechanics - Practice pendant position - One-handed snap cuts from pendant - Focus on wrist motion, not arm - Target rising line (waist to head) - Develop speed and snap

Week 2: Integration with Void - Practice void back right leg - Transition to pendant during void - Snatch immediately after void - Focus on continuous motion

Week 3: Full Sequence - Start with proffer - Partner attacks - Rake-quarter-void-snatch - Second void-stop guard - Emphasize rhythm and flow

Week 4+: Tactical Application - Use snatch to surprise opponent - Execute after overcommitted attacks - Practice with various pendant positions - Develop instinct for snatch timing

SNATCH TARGETS

Primary Targets: - **Hands/Wrists:** Opponent extended after attack - **Forearms:** As they recover - **Head:** If opponent leans forward - **Sword Hand:** If they maintain extension

Why These Targets: - All in rising line from pendant - Opponent may not expect low-to-high attack - Snatch from pendant difficult to defend - Minimal telegraph

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

After Overextension: You've committed to attack, voided back, now what? - Snatch maintains offensive threat - Prevents opponent from pressing advantage - Creates doubt about your recovery

Against Pursuit: Opponent follows your retreat: - First void creates distance - Snatch discourages pursuit - Second void ensures safety - Opponent learns to respect your retreat

Surprise Element: Opponent expects: - Two-handed recovery - Defensive posture after retreat - Standard attacks

Opponent doesn't expect: - One-handed attack - Low-to-high angle - Speed from pendant

COMMON MISTAKES

- Weak snatch—must have snap/speed
- Arm movement instead of wrist snap—reduces speed
- Not fully releasing rear hand—limits pendant depth
- Telegraphing snatch—pendant should appear natural
- Insufficient void distance—snatch should be from safety
- Not returning to two hands—leaves you vulnerable
- Forgetting second void—pattern requires it

GERMAN SCHNAPPEN COMPARISON

The German *Schnappen* (snapping cut) shares characteristics:

Similarities: - Snap/grab-like motion - Often from low guards - Rising angle common - Speed over power - Surprise element

Differences: - German: Can be two-handed - English: Explicitly one-handed in Tenth Counter - German: Multiple guards - English: Specifically from pendant

Technical Exchange: Possible that English and German fencers shared techniques, or convergent evolution of similar tactical needs.

PENDANT GUARD DRILLS

Solo Practice: 1. Assume pendant guard 2. Execute 10 snatches (rising line) 3. Vary targets: hands, forearms, head 4. Focus on wrist snap 5. Maintain balance throughout

Partner Drill: 1. Partner extends attack 2. You void back to pendant 3. Execute snatch to partner's extended hand 4. Partner learns to respect snatch 5. Switch roles

Flow Drill: 1. Exchange attacks 2. Whoever retreats can snatch 3. Builds instinct for snatch timing 4. Develops tactical awareness

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). "English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students." *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 27: THE ELEVENTH COUNTER - “THE SHORT SPRING WITH 2 THRUSTS FOLLOWING”

Original Text: *The xjth callyde ye short pryng wt ij foynes folowyng A profur A rake wt a quarter full An other voyde lyghtly pley a short pryng voydynge bake the lyffte legge xette handx upon the xwerde xettyng up a foyne by the lyffte xhuldr*

bryng hyt forth be fore you xete in yor lyffe legge wt a xuche an other foyne att hys face folowyde wyth ye ryght legge lyghtly pley a quarter full wt an other voyde And be att yor xtoppe

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a quarter full, another void. Lightly play a Short Spring, voiding back the left leg set hands upon the sword, setting up a thrust by the left shoulder. Bring it forth before you, set in your left leg with a such another thrust at his face. Followed with the right leg lightly play a Quarter full, with another void, and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Eleventh Counter introduces sophisticated hand positioning—‘set hands upon the sword, setting up a thrust by the left shoulder.’ This chamber position creates an unusual angle that’s difficult to read and defend.”[3]

“The ‘two thrusts following’ refers to: first thrust chambered by left shoulder, second thrust to face. Both emerge from the same side, creating a doubling effect that overwhelms single-line defense.”[5]

Key Points: – **Short spring** initiates sequence – **Sophisticated hand positioning** (“by left shoulder”) – **Two thrusts** from same-side position – Both thrusts target high line – “Lithely” emphasizes speed throughout – Complex coordination required

Tactical Purpose: – Short spring probes/disrupts – Shoulder-chamber position hides angle – First thrust sets pattern – Second thrust (face) exploits pattern expectation – Speed prevents defensive adjustment

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
OPPONENT	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
	Rake	Stand	Disrupt

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	Committed cut
4	Void	Step back	Create space
5	Short spring	Void back left leg	Quick spring + retreat
6	Set hands on sword	Stand	Two-handed grip adjustment
7	Chamber thrust (by left shoulder)	Stand	Set up position
8	Bring forth before you	Stand	Preparatory extension
9	First thrust	Set in left leg	Advance + thrust
10	Second thrust to face	Follow with right leg	Advance + face thrust
11	Quarter (full)	Stand (lithely)	Quick safety cut
12	Void	Step back	Create distance
13	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

“BY THE LEFT SHOULDER” TECHNIQUE

Understanding the Chamber:

Physical Position: - Both hands on sword - Sword positioned near/by left shoulder - Point directed forward or slightly up - Handle near left ear/shoulder - Unusual chambered position

Possible Variations:

Version A: Over Shoulder - Sword rests on left shoulder - Point extends forward-upward - Like shouldering rifle - Thrust emerges from high-left

Version B: Beside Shoulder - Sword parallel to left arm - Handle at shoulder

height - Point forward - Thrust emerges from left-center

Version C: Behind Shoulder - Sword behind/beside body - Point hidden - Maximum concealment - Thrust emerges unexpectedly

Modern Interpretation: Select version that: - Conceals intention best - Generates most power - Feels most natural - Works consistently

THE TWO-THRUST SEQUENCE

Why Two Thrusts Matter:

Pattern Creation:

First Thrust (Step 9): - From shoulder chamber - Establishes angle - Opponent registers direction - Prepares specific defense

Second Thrust to Face (Step 10): - Same-side origin - Opponent expects same angle - Actually different target (face) - Defense is for wrong thrust

Doubling Principle: - First action sets expectation - Second action exploits expectation - Opponent's mind can't adjust fast enough - Physical defense trails mental processing

SHORT SPRING FUNCTION

Opening the Sequence:

Why Short Spring First?

Probing: - Tests opponent's reaction - Gauges distance - Creates initial response

Disruption: - Forces opponent to respond - Breaks their rhythm - Creates momentary chaos

Setup: - While opponent processes spring - You're already setting hands - Chambering thrust - Preparing real attack

Spring While Voiding (Attacking While Retreating): - Spring executed during the passing step back - Maintains offensive threat during retreat - Can continue retreat if needed - Maintains safety

HAND POSITIONING DETAIL

“Set Hands Upon the Sword”:

This Phrase Indicates: - Deliberate grip adjustment - Both hands repositioned
- Specific placement for technique - Not default grip

Execution:

From Previous Position: 1. Hands in standard grip 2. Adjust for chamber position 3. May shift hand positions 4. Ensure solid two-handed control

For Chamber: - Rear hand may move forward slightly - Front hand may adjust angle - Both hands work together - Optimized for thrust delivery

Purpose: Specific hand positioning generates power for thrusts from shoulder chamber.

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Shoulder Chamber Position - Explore different chamber positions - Find what conceals best - Find what generates power - Practice setting hands deliberately - Select one version

Week 2: Single Thrust from Chamber - Chamber by left shoulder - Bring forth - Execute single thrust - Return to chamber - Repeat 30 times

Week 3: Double Thrust Sequence - First thrust from chamber - Second thrust to face - Quick succession - No pause between - Partner observes

Week 4: Add Short Spring - Spring + void back left - Transition to chamber - Double thrust sequence - Focus on smooth flow

Week 5: Full Integration - Opening (proffer-rake-quarter-void) - Main sequence (spring-chamber-thrusts) - Safety (quarter-void-stop) - Complete Eleventh Counter

Week 6+: **Speed Emphasis** - “Lithely” throughout - Quick spring - Quick chamber setup - Quick thrusts - Quick quarter - Continuous motion

COMMON MISTAKES

- Complicated chamber transition—keep simple

- Telegraphing chamber position—opponent sees it coming
- Slow transition spring→chamber—must be smooth
- Two thrusts too similar—second should differ (face target)
- Not advancing during thrusts—“set in” means step forward
- Heavy execution instead of “lithely”
- Pausing to remember chamber position
- Weak second thrust—face thrust must genuinely threaten

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: – Opponent defends standard attacks well – Need unusual angle – Opponent reads your patterns – Want to test high-line defense – After establishing predictable thrusts

Deception Value: Shoulder chamber creates uncertainty: – Where will thrust emerge? – What angle? – What target? – When will it come?

Answer: Opponent doesn't know until it's too late.

DOUBLE THRUST TARGETING

Strategic Targeting:

Both High-Line: – First thrust: High (from chamber) – Second thrust: Face (also high) – Both threaten upper body – Overwhelming high-line pressure

Why Not High-Low? – This Counter emphasizes same-side doubling – Both from left shoulder area – Creates specific pattern – Different tactical purpose than high-low Counters

Alternative: Could adapt to high-low, but traditional interpretation emphasizes same-side double threat.

“BRING IT FORTH BEFORE YOU”

Understanding the Phrase:

“Bring It Forth”: – Extend the sword – Move from chamber to ready – Preparatory motion – Sets distance

“Before You”: - In front of your body - Centered position - Ready to thrust - Optimal delivery position

Tactical Moment: This is the setup for first thrust: 1. Chamber by shoulder 2. Bring forth 3. Set in left leg 4. Thrust

Step-by-step preparation allows precision.

PARTNER DRILL: “CHAMBER CONCEALMENT TEST”

Setup: - Partner observes you - You set chamber position - Partner guesses thrust direction/target - You execute thrusts

Scoring: - Partner guesses correctly: They get point - Partner guesses wrong: You get point - Goal: Your points > Partner’s points

Success Criteria: If partner frequently guesses wrong: - Your chamber conceals well - Thrusts are unpredictable - Technique is effective

If partner frequently guesses right: - Chamber too obvious - Adjust positioning - Reduce telegraphing

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 28: THE TWELFTH COUNTER - “THE RABETT WITH A SPRING”

Original Text: *The xijth callyd ye Rabett wt a xpryng A pfur a rake wt a full quartr lyghtly xett in the lyffte legge wt a rabett xtondyng xtyll lyghtly pley a full xpryng att hys legge wt a full quartr An other voyde be att youre Stoppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a full Quarter lithely set in the left leg with a Rabett, standing still lithely play a Full-spring at his leg with a full Quarter, another void, be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Twelfth Counter pairs rabett (control) with spring to leg (attack low). The standing still position between them creates a momentary pause that hides the spring’s initiation—opponent can’t tell when it’s coming.”[3]

“Both actions are performed ‘lithely’ (quickly), emphasizing speed over power. This Counter teaches that rapid execution can overcome superior strength through timing.”[5]

Key Points: – Rabett establishes blade control – Standing still creates deceptive pause – Full-spring targets leg (low-line) – Both rabett and spring performed “lithely” – Simple structure, effective execution – Speed emphasized throughout

Tactical Purpose: – Rabett controls opponent’s blade – Standing still masks spring preparation – Leg target often undefended (hands/blade protect high) – Quick execution prevents counter – Standard safety ensures retreat

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
OPPONENT	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	Committed cut
4	Rabett	Set in left leg (lithely)	Quick advance + blade control

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
5	(Pause)	Stand still	Deceptive stillness
6	Full-spring to leg	Extended stance (lithely)	Quick one-handed attack low
7	Quarter (full)	Stand	Safety cut
8	Void	Step back	Create distance
9	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

Training: Focus on explosive spring from standing still position—no telegraphing. Practice until partner cannot anticipate spring timing.

COUNTER 29: THE THIRTEENTH COUNTER - “THE PROFFER”

Original Text: *The xiijth callyd ye pfur A pfur a rake wt a full quartr lyghtly xett In ye lyffte legge wt a rabett other els xett in the ryght legge wt a full quartr and an other voyde and be att yor xtoppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a full Quarter lithely set in the left leg with a Rabett, otherwise set in the right leg with a full Quarter and another void and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Thirteenth Counter is explicitly named ‘The Proffer’—emphasizing that the opening feint is the core teaching. This Counter has TWO options, teaching tactical decision-making based on opponent response.”[3]

“Version 1 (rabett) is for when opponent commits to your proffer. Version 2 (power quarter) is for when they hesitate. Reading their response and choosing correctly is the skill being taught.”[5]

Key Points: - Named for its opening (The Proffer) - Two distinct options (choose based on situation) - Option 1: Close with rabett - Option 2: Power strike then retreat - Teaches decision-making - Emphasizes proffer technique

Tactical Purpose: - Proffer is the test - Opponent's response determines your action - If they bite (attack): Rabett (Option 1) - If they hesitate: Power quarter then retreat (Option 2) - Adaptive technique

STEP BREAKDOWN - VERSION 1

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Core technique - make it good
OPPONENT	Attacks proffer	Advances	They bite—use Version 1
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt attack
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	Committed cut
4	Rabett	Set in left leg (lithely)	Close distance + control
5	Stop Guard	Stand	Return to defense

STEP BREAKDOWN - VERSION 2

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Core technique
OPPONENT	Doesn't attack	Stands/waits	They hesitate—use Version 2

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
2	Rake	Stand	Probing action
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	Setup
4	Quarter (full)	Set in right leg	Power strike forward
5	Void	Step back	Retreat
6	Stop Guard	Stand	Return to defense

Training: Practice reading opponent response. Partner randomly attacks or doesn't attack proffer. You must choose correct version based on their action.

COUNTER 30: THE FOURTEENTH COUNTER - “THE FULL-SPRING WITH A QUARTER”

Original Text: *The xiiijth callyde ye full ×pryng wt a quartr A profur a rake A full quartr lyghtly ca×te owte a full ×hort ×pryng att hys face ×tondyng ×tyll wt a full quartr an other voyde be att youre ×toppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, a full Quarter lithely cast out a Full short-spring at his face, standing still with a full Quarter, another void, be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The apparent contradiction—‘full short-spring’—likely means full commitment but short duration. Cast out explosively, spring to face quickly, return to guard immediately.”[3]

Key Points: - “Full short-spring” = explosive but compact - “Cast out” = throwing motion - Face target (high priority) - Standing still after spring - Two full quarters (safety) - Similar to Second Counter

Tactical Purpose: - Cast out suggests maximum explosive power - Face target creates immediate threat - Short duration = less commitment/exposure - Double quarter ensures safety

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter (full)	Stand (lithely)	Quick setup cut
4	Cast out full short-spring to face	Extended stance	Explosive throw-like motion
5	(Position)	Stand still	Static after explosion
6	Quarter (full)	Stand	First safety
7	Void	Step back	Second safety
8	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

Training: Focus on explosive “cast out” motion—like throwing javelin. Spring should surprise with sudden violence then immediate control.

COUNTER 31: THE FIFTEENTH COUNTER - “THE SPRING AT THE LEG WITH 2 QUARTERS”

Original Text: *The xvth callyde ye xpryng att ye legge wt ij quarters A pfur a Rake A full quarter lyghtly xett In ye lyffte legge wt a xpryng att hys legge then xett in ye ryght legge wt a full quartr and an other voyde be att youre xtoppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, a full Quarter lithely set in the left leg with a Spring at his leg, then set in the right leg with a full Quarter and another void, be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Fifteenth Counter demonstrates aggressive distance closing—two forward steps while maintaining continuous attack. Spring to leg on first step, power quarter on second step.”[3]

Key Points: - Aggressive two-step advance - Spring targets leg (low-line) - Two full quarters (name source) - Continuous forward pressure - Standard safety retreat

Tactical Purpose: - Close distance rapidly - Low attack (spring to leg) - High attack (quarter)
- Combined pressure - Overwhelm defense

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter (full)	Stand (lithely)	Quick setup
4	Spring to leg	Set in left leg	Advance + low attack
5	Quarter (full)	Set in right leg	Advance + power cut
6	Void	Step back	Create distance
7	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

Training: Two-step advance should feel like continuous forward motion. Spring-step-quarter-step as one flowing sequence.

COUNTER 32: THE SIXTEENTH COUNTER - “THE 3 QUARTERS”

Original Text: *The xvijth callyd ye iij quarterf A pfur A rake wt a full qurter ~~x~~tondyng ~~x~~tyll pley an other voyde A bove hys hede wt an other att hys legge then voyde bake ye ryght legge wt An other quartr and be att yor Stoppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a full Quarter, standing still play another void above his head with another at his leg, then void back the right leg with another Quarter and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Sixteenth Counter is the THIRD repetition of the high-low combination pattern (after First and Fifth Counters). This final reinforcement confirms: this pattern is fundamental, reliable, and worth mastering completely.”[3]

Key Points: – Third “3 Quarters” Counter – Identical to First and Fifth Counters – Final reinforcement of pattern – Standing still emphasized – High-low combination – Standard ending

Tactical Purpose: – Prove pattern’s universal reliability – Complete internalization through repetition – Demonstrate confidence in basics – “It still works every time”

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter (full)	Stand still	First quarter
4	Cut above head	Void (step back)	High cut while retreating
5	Cut to leg	Stand or advance	Low-line follow-up
6	Quarter	Void back right leg	Third quarter + retreat
7	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

Training: By this point, pattern should be automatic. Focus on perfection, speed, and tactical application rather than learning mechanics.

COUNTER 33: THE SEVENTEENTH COUNTER - “THE DOUBLE SPRING”

Original Text: *The xvijth callyd ye Duble ×pryng A profur a rake a full qurter wt an other a voyde lyghtly ca×te owte a full ×horte ×pryng att hys face ×tandyng ×tyll when ye ×werde comyth a bowte off yor hede ?????? hytt wt yor ryght hand att yor ryght shuldyr. then lyghtly ×myte a full ×pryng wt a full quarter. an other a voyde be att youre ×toppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, a Full Quarter, with another, a void. Lightly cast out a Full Short Spring at his face. Standing still when the sword comes about your head, [bring?] it with your right hand at your right shoulder, then lightly smite a Full-Spring with a full Quarter, another, a void. Be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Double Spring features two springs separated by a unique sword-control technique: catching the blade at your right shoulder as it circles. This creates two distinct attack angles from one setup.”[3]

“Text damage makes this challenging, but the core is clear: first spring to face, sword circles overhead, second spring (likely different angle), safety sequence.”[5]

Key Points: - Two springs (hence “Double”) - First spring to face - Circular sword motion between springs - Right hand catches at right shoulder - Second spring follows - Text partially damaged

Tactical Purpose: - First spring probes/attacks - Circular motion resets position - Second spring from different angle - Double threat overwhelms single defense

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	First quarter
4	Another action	Stand	Likely another quarter
5	Void	Step back	Create space
6	First spring to face	Extended stance (lithely)	Cast out explosively
7	(Transition)	Stand still	Prepare for circle
8	Sword circles overhead	Stand	Right hand catches at right shoulder
9	Second spring	Extended stance (lithely)	Different angle
10	Quarter (full)	Stand	Safety cut
11	Another action	Stand	Likely void
12	Void	Step back	Create distance
13	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

Training: Practice circular sword motion carefully. Find what feels natural and conceals second spring's direction. Text damage requires interpretation.

COUNTER 34: THE EIGHTEENTH COUNTER - “THE DOUBLE RA-BETTS”

Original Text: *The xvijth callyde ye Duble rabett☒. A profur a rake wt a full quartr lyghtly ☒ett in the lyffe legge wt a rabett Stondyng ☒tyll lyghtly pley an other rabett*

*wyth a full ~~s~~pryng att hys legge other els ~~s~~ett in ye ryght legge wt a Down ryght ~~s~~troke
att hys hede and a full quartr an other A voyde and be att youre Stoppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a full Quarter, lightly set in the left leg with a Rabett. Standing still lightly play another Rabett with a Full-Spring at his leg. Otherwise, set in the right leg with a Down-right stroke at his head and a full Quarter, another, a void, and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“Two rabetts (hence ‘Double Rabetts’) establish complete blade control before low-line spring. This is maximum control → maximum attack. Version 2 offers high-line power option if opponent adjusts to expect low attack.”[3]

Key Points: – **Two rabetts** (Version 1) – Both performed “lightly” (quickly) – Spring to leg after control established – **Alternative version** (power high strike) – Tactical choice based on situation

Tactical Purpose: – Version 1: Double control → low attack – Version 2: High power → retreat – Opponent can’t defend both options

STEP BREAKDOWN - VERSION 1

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	Setup
4	First rabett (Position)	Set in left leg (lightly) Stand still	Advance + control Stable platform
5	Second rabett	Stand (lightly)	Additional control
6	Full-spring to leg	Extended stance	Low attack
8	Stop Guard	Stand	Return to defense

STEP BREAKDOWN - VERSION 2

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1-3	[Same opening]		Proffer-rake-quarter
4	Downright to head	Set in right leg	High power strike
5	Quarter (full)	Stand	Safety
6	Another action	Stand	Likely void
7	Void	Step back	Create distance
8	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

Training: Practice reading which version to use. Partner guards high or low. You select appropriate version based on their guard.

COUNTER 35: THE NINETEENTH COUNTER - “THE CROSS RAKES WITH A QUARTER”

Original Text: *The xixth callyde ye cros Rak☒ wt a qurtr A profur folowede wt as many cros Rak☒ as ye wyll then ☒odonly to hys elbowe ☒myte a full quarter wt an other voyde and be att yor stoppe*

Modern English: A proffer followed with as many rakes as you will, then suddenly smite a full quarter to his elbow, with another voiding and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“This Counter is unique—you choose how many cross-rakes to execute (‘as many as ye wyll’). This teaches rhythm establishment then breaking: create pattern with rakes, shatter it with sudden quarter to elbow.”[3]

“The elbow target is strategic—joint attack. Hitting elbow disables arm, removes their sword control. Different from other Counters’ typical targets.”[5]

Key Points: - Variable length (your choice on rakes) - Multiple cross-rakes establish rhythm - “Suddenly” breaks rhythm - **Elbow target** (joint attack) - Full quarter emphasizes power - Adaptive technique

Tactical Purpose: - Rakes create pattern expectation - Opponent settles into defending rakes - Sudden quarter breaks expectation - Elbow target disables rather than kills - Practical self-defense emphasis

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
2-X	Cross-rakes (multiple)	Stand or varying	“As many as ye wyll”—your choice
X+1	Quarter to elbow	Stand	Suddenly— break pattern
X+2	Void	Step back	Create distance
X+3	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

Training: Vary number of rakes (3, 5, 7, 10). Train opponent can't predict when quarter comes. Sudden transition is key.

COUNTER 36: THE TWENTIETH COUNTER - “THE BROKEN QUARTER WITH A THRUST”

Original Text: *The xxth callyde ye brokyn qrtr wt a foyne A profur a Rake lyfftyng up
yor ~~x~~werde as ye wo????? ~~x~~odonly wt yor lyfft honde thru~~x~~te for the a foyne to hys
????? folloyde wt ye ??????????? then ~~x~~ett in ye ryght legge wt a quarter an other
after and be at youre Stoppe*

Modern English: A proffer, a rake lifting up your arms as if you were to smite a quarter, then suddenly thrust at his chest with your left hand, followed with the left foot. Then set in your right leg with a full quarter and another voiding, and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The ‘Broken Quarter’—feinting a quarter cut that becomes a thrust—is sophisticated deception. Opponent prepares for descending cut, receives horizontal thrust instead. Different defense required.”[3]

“Left-hand thrust is unusual and emphasizes one-handed control. This could be forward hand thrust or transfer to left hand—both interpretations work tactically.”[5]

Key Points: - “**Broken Quarter**” = feinted quarter → thrust - Lift arms as if to quarter (deception) - Suddenly thrust instead (surprise) - Left-hand emphasis (unusual) - Followed with left foot (coordination) - Power quarter afterward (option 2)

Tactical Purpose: - Opponent sees quarter preparation - Prepares high defense (overhead guard) - Thrust comes instead (center/chest) - Wrong defense = opening - Deceptive technique

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Lift arms (as if quarter)	Stand	Fake preparation
4	Thrust to chest	Follow with left foot	Sudden—left hand
5	Quarter (full)	Set in right leg	Power cut

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
6	Void	Step back	Create distance
7	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

THE BROKEN TECHNIQUE

What “Broken” Means:

Throughout the Ledall Roll, “broken” means: - Feinted/incomplete action - Started but not finished - Becomes different action - Deceptive intent

Examples: - Broken thrust = feinted thrust - Broken quarter = feinted quarter
- Broken rabett = started rabett that redirects

In This Counter: - Begin quarter motion (lift arms) - Opponent sees overhead cut coming - Abort quarter mid-preparation - Thrust instead - Different threat entirely

LEFT-HAND THRUST INTERPRETATION

Possible Meanings:

Interpretation 1: Forward Hand - Left hand = forward hand (standard grip) - One-handed thrust with forward hand - Rear hand releases - Allows maximum extension

Interpretation 2: Literal Left Hand - Transfer sword to left hand entirely - Right hand releases - Unusual but possible - Creates unique angle

Most Practical: Forward Hand - Consistent with other left-hand techniques - More reliable in combat - Easier to execute - Natural progression from rake

FOLLOWED WITH THE LEFT FOOT

Coordination:

“Followed with left foot” means: - Thrust with left hand - Step with left foot - Simultaneous action - Coordinated extension

Benefits: - Maximum reach - Body weight behind thrust - Committed attack
- Hard to evade

Mechanics: 1. Arms lift (fake quarter) 2. Left hand initiates thrust 3. Left foot steps simultaneously 4. Full extension 5. Right leg still back (can void if needed)

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Broken Quarter Mechanics - Practice lifting for quarter - Stop mid-motion - Redirect to thrust - Partner observes deception

Week 2: Left-Hand Thrust - One-handed thrust (forward hand) - Build strength - Maintain accuracy - 30 repetitions daily

Week 3: Coordination - Lift arms - Thrust with left hand - Step with left foot
- Simultaneous action

Week 4: Full Integration - Opening (proffer-rake) - Deception (lift for quarter)
- Attack (sudden thrust) - Safety (quarter-void-stop)

Week 5+: Partner Testing - Partner sees your lift - Do they prepare for quarter?
- Does thrust catch them wrong-footed? - Adjust deception as needed

COMMON MISTAKES

- Obvious fake—lift must look like real quarter preparation
- Slow transition lift→thrust—must be sudden
- Weak thrust—must genuinely threaten
- Poor coordination (hand and foot not together)
- Forgetting “suddenly”—speed is essential
- Not committing to follow-up quarter
- Right leg advance too small—needs to cover ground

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: - Opponent defends cuts well - They always prepare overhead defense - You want to exploit pattern recognition - Need unexpected angle - After establishing quarter pattern

Psychological Warfare: Once they've seen broken quarter: - Every time you lift arms, they wonder - Is it real quarter or broken? - Analysis paralysis - Hesitation creates further openings

Setup: - First use: Real quarters (establish pattern) - Second use: Real quarters (confirm pattern) - Third use: Broken quarter (exploit pattern)

BROKEN TECHNIQUE ACROSS MANUSCRIPT

Other “Broken” Techniques: - Broken thrust (7th Chase, 21st Counter) - Broken foin (First Flourish) - Broken rabett (22nd Counter)

Common Theme: English longsword emphasizes deception through: - Feints - False preparations - Redirects - Pattern breaking

Modern Principle: “Make the opponent defend against what isn’t coming while you attack with what is.”

PARTNER DRILL: “BROKEN RECOGNITION”

Setup: - You lift arms (preparing quarter) - Partner must guess: Real or broken? - Execute chosen option

Scoring: - Real quarter, partner guards high: Successful defense (partner point) - Real quarter, partner guards center: Failed defense (your point) - Broken (thrust), partner guards high: Successful deception (your point) - Broken (thrust), partner guards center: Failed deception (partner point)

Goal: Partner should guess wrong ~50% of time. If they guess right more often, your fake needs improvement.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 37: THE TWENTY-FIRST COUNTER - “THE BROKEN THRUST WITH A SPRING”

Original Text: *The xxith callyde ye ba?? ?????????? ye fpryng A profur a rake wt ye full quarter ??? fett in yor lyffte legge wt ye lyffte honde bryng ?? ?????????? ye ?????? of youre hede as ye wyll ???????? rabett then standyng styl brek ye ????? rabett ?????? ?????????? ???????? fmyte a full fryng at hys legge wt a full ?????????? ?????? and be att yor stoppe*

Modern English: A proffer, a rake with a full quarter, then set in your left leg and with the left hand bring the sword over the top of your head. Void back and start to play a rabett, breaking the rabett to strike a full spring at his leg with a full quarter, and another quarter and a quarter void, and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Twenty-First Counter features advanced deception: breaking a rabett mid-execution. The manuscript is damaged but the core is clear—feint the rabett, spring to leg instead. This is layered deception: opponent sees rabett coming, prepares for it, rabett disappears, spring appears.”[3]

“This parallels the Twenty-Second Counter’s rabett-break pattern but adds left-hand positioning and overhead sword placement. Multiple deceptive layers overwhelm opponent’s decision-making.”[5]

Key Points: – **Broken rabett** (feinted rabett) – Left hand brings sword overhead – Standing still before break – Full spring to leg after break – **Triple quarter safety** (maximum safety) – Text heavily damaged (interpret carefully)

Tactical Purpose: – Overhead position creates angle uncertainty – Start rabett (opponent sees it) – Break rabett (surprise redirect) – Spring to leg (unexpected low attack) – Triple quarters ensure complete safety

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	Setup
4	(Position)	Set in left leg	Advance
5	Sword over head (left hand)	Stand	Left hand positions blade
6	(Movement)	Void back	Retreat
7	Begin rabett	Stand	Start the motion
8	Break rabett	Stand still	Abort/redirect
9	Full spring to leg	Extended stance	Explosive low attack
10	Quarter (full)	Stand	First safety
11	Another quarter	Stand	Second safety
12	Quarter void	Step back	Third safety + retreat
13	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

BREAKING THE RABETT

Advanced Deception:

Standard Rabett: 1. See opponent's blade 2. Execute rabett (cut against blade) 3. Displace their blade 4. Follow with attack

Broken Rabett: 1. See opponent's blade 2. **Begin** rabett motion 3. Opponent sees rabett coming 4. They prepare for impact/displacement 5. **Abort** rabett mid-motion 6. Spring to leg instead 7. Their preparation was for wrong technique

Why This Works: - Opponent's mind committed to "incoming rabett" - Body prepared for blade contact - Blade positioned for rabett defense - Spring to leg is completely different threat - Can't adjust in time

TRIPLE QUARTER SAFETY

Maximum Safety Emphasis:

Most Counters end with: - One quarter + void

Some Counters end with: - Two quarters + void

Twenty-First Counter ends with: - **Three quarters** (one full, another, quarter-void)

Why Triple? - Very committed attack (spring to leg) - Extended position - Maximum safety needed - Overwhelming retreat prevents counter - Ensures clean disengagement

Modern Equivalent: Like covering retreat with suppressing fire—continuous threat during withdrawal.

LEFT-HAND OVERHEAD POSITIONING

Technique Detail:

“With the left hand bring ?? over the top of your head”

Interpretation: - Left (forward) hand controls sword - Bring sword overhead - Creates high chamber position - Similar to Third Counter's behind-shoulder - Different angle, same principle

Purpose: - Hides sword position - Creates angle uncertainty - Opponent can't judge attack direction - Deceptive positioning

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Overhead Positioning - Left hand brings sword overhead - Explore comfortable positions - Find what conceals best - Practice transition

Week 2: Rabett Start-Stop - Begin rabett motion - Stop mid-execution - Redirect to different action - Partner observes

Week 3: Broken Rabett → Spring - Start rabett - Break it - Spring to leg - Smooth transition - No telegraphing

Week 4: Add Triple Quarters - After spring - Three quarters in succession - Maintain form throughout - Don't rush

Week 5: Full Integration - Opening sequence - Overhead positioning - Broken rabett - Spring - Triple quarter safety - Complete Counter

Week 6+: Damage Interpretation - Text is damaged - Test different interpretations - Document what works - Share findings with community

COMMON MISTAKES

- Obvious rabett fake—must look real initially
- Weak spring after complex setup—must threaten
- Only two quarters instead of three—text specifies three
- Rushing through triple quarters—maintain threat throughout
- Not voiding on final quarter—critical for safety
- Overhead position too complicated—keep simple
- Losing track of sequence (it's complex)

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: - Opponent expects rabetts from you - They've learned to defend rabetts - Need to exploit their pattern recognition - Want to demonstrate advanced skill - Decisive moment (complex technique)

Layered Deception: 1. Overhead position (first layer—where will attack come from?) 2. Rabett start (second layer—they think they know) 3. Rabett break (third layer—they were wrong) 4. Spring to leg (fourth layer—completely different attack) 5. Triple quarters (overwhelming safety)

Opponent Experience: “Overhead... ok I need to watch... rabett starting... I can counter this... wait where did it go... OW my leg... they’re still attacking... still attacking... still attacking... ok they’re done.”

TEXT DAMAGE CONSIDERATIONS

What We Know: - Proffer-rake-quarter opening (clear) - Left hand overhead positioning (mostly clear) - Void back (clear) - Start rabett (clear) - Break rabett (clear) - Spring to leg (clear) - Triple quarters (clear)

What’s Uncertain: - Exact overhead positioning details - Specific void distance - Exact rabett break mechanics

Modern Approach: - Test multiple interpretations - Use what works - Document findings - Share with community - Acknowledge uncertainty

CITATIONS

- [3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.
- [5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

COUNTER 38: THE TWENTY-SECOND COUNTER - “THE LARGE PROFFER WITH A RABETT”

Original Text: *The xxijth callyd ye Large proffer wt a rabett and the for quarter. Void back ye ryght legge Smyte rabett att ye same hand playng ye rabett then Standyng Styll breke ye same rabett Smyte a full Spryng at hys legge wt a full quarter and an other quarter A voyde be att yor Stoppe*

Modern English: Void back and start to play a Rabett, breaking the Rabett to strike a Full-Spring at his leg with a full Quarter, and another Quarter and a Quarter void, and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Rabett (rabbit) describes countercuts against the opponent’s weapon—defensive cutting actions that establish favorable positions for follow-up attacks, similar to the German *Dempfhau*. The ‘Large Proffer’ suggests a very obvious, exaggerated opening designed to draw committed attacks.”[3]

“This Counter demonstrates advanced tactics: feint the rabett (start it, don’t complete it), then exploit the opening created by their response with a spring. It’s deception layered on deception.”[5]

Key Points: - **Large Proffer** = exaggerated, obvious opening - **Rabett** = counter cut against opponent’s weapon - “Start to play” the rabett = begin but don’t complete (feint) - “Breaking the rabett” = abort/redirect the action - Full-spring to leg = capitalize on opening - Triple quarter sequence ensures safety

The Rabett Technique:

The Rabett appears throughout the Counters and deserves detailed explanation:

What It Is: - Cut delivered against opponent's attacking blade - Defensive in purpose, offensive in execution - Creates percussion/impact on their sword - Deflects their attack while positioning for counter

How It Works: 1. Opponent attacks 2. You cut against their blade (not past it) 3. Impact displaces their sword 4. You maintain or gain centerline 5. Immediate counter-attack available

Why “Rabett” (Rabbit): Unclear etymology. Theories: - Quick, darting motion like rabbit - “Rebate”—to beat back/reduce - Corruption of French term - Original meaning lost

German Equivalent: *Dempfhau* (damping cut) serves similar function—striking opponent's sword to displace it.

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Large Proffer	Stand	Very obvious opening
OPPONENT	Committed attack	Advances	Takes bait aggressively
2	Start rabett	Void back right leg	Begin counter-cut (feint)
3	Break rabett	Stand	Abort the rabett mid-motion
4	Full-spring to leg	Extended stance	Capitalize on opponent's response
5	Quarter full	Stand	First safety cut
6	Quarter	Stand	Second safety cut

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
7	Quarter void	Void back	Third cut while retreating
8	Stop Guard	Stand	Return to defense

THE LARGE PROFFER TACTIC

What Makes It “Large”: - Exaggerated opening - Obviously vulnerable position - Almost insulting in appearance - Designed to trigger aggressive response

Purpose: - Draw overcommitted attack - Opponent thinks: “Finally, clear opening!” - They attack harder/faster than usual - Sets up your counter perfectly

Risk: - If opponent doesn’t bite, you’re exposed - If they recognize trap, they counter - Requires confidence to maintain

Examples: - Drop hands very low (exposes head) - Turn sideways (exposes back) - Look away momentarily (appears distracted) - Step back as if retreating (appears fearful)

RABETT FEINT (“START TO PLAY” / “BREAKING”)

The sophisticated element of this Counter:

Standard Rabett: - Opponent attacks - You rabett (countercut their blade) - You follow with counter-attack

This Counter’s Rabett: - Opponent attacks large proffer - You START rabett (opponent sees it coming) - You BREAK rabett (abort mid-execution) - Opponent reacts to rabett (defends/adjusts) - You spring to leg (unexpected angle)

Why This Works: 1. Large proffer draws attack 2. Opponent sees you beginning rabett 3. They prepare for rabett (raise hands, adjust guard) 4. You abort rabett and spring low 5. Their defense is high, your attack is low 6. They can’t adjust in time

This is double-deception: - First deception: Large proffer (fake vulnerability)
 - Second deception: Rabett feint (fake counter) - Actual attack: Spring to leg

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Rabett Mechanics - Practice standard rabett - Partner attacks (slow) - You counter cut their blade - Feel the impact/displacement - Immediate follow-up attack

Week 2: Rabett Feint - Begin rabett motion - Stop halfway through - Redirect to different target - Partner observes the feint - Discuss: could they tell?

Week 3: Large Proffer - Create exaggerated openings - Partner identifies when it looks "too obvious" - Find balance: obvious enough to draw attack, subtle enough to seem real - Test various proffer types

Week 4: Integration (Slow) - Full sequence at 25% speed - Large proffer → partner attacks - Void + start rabett - Break rabett → spring to leg - Triple quarter sequence

Week 5: Pressure Testing - Increase speed to 50-75% - Partner attacks committed - You must execute deceptions convincingly - Spring must genuinely threaten - Quarters must create real safety

Week 6+: Tactical Application - Use in free fencing - Test if opponent bites on large proffer - Develop sense for when to break rabett - Build instinct for spring timing

TRIPLE QUARTER SAFETY SEQUENCE

The ending "full quarter, another quarter, quarter void" is notable:

Why Three Quarters: - **First (Full):** Committed cut, real threat - **Second:** Maintains pressure if first blocked - **Third (Void):** Retreat while attacking, maximum safety

This Demonstrates: English philosophy: Don't stop attacking until you've created safety. Three quarters ensure: 1. Opponent can't immediately counter 2. You control the distance 3. You maintain initiative 4. You return to guard safely

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: - Opponent is aggressive and impulsive - They attack obvious openings without thought - You need to teach them to respect your traps - Late in bout when opponent is tired/frustrated

Setup Requirements: - Must sell the large proffer convincingly - Opponent must be conditioned to attack openings - You must have practiced rabett feint extensively - Spring to leg must be committed and threatening

Psychological Impact: This Counter is **humiliating** when it works: 1. Opponent falls for large proffer (feels foolish) 2. Sees your rabett coming (thinks they can counter) 3. Rabett disappears, spring hits leg (complete surprise) 4. Three quarters prevent any response (dominated)

Opponent learns: "I can't trust anything they show me."

COMMON MISTAKES

- Proffer not exaggerated enough—opponent doesn't bite
- Proffer too obvious—opponent recognizes trap
- Weak rabett start—opponent doesn't react to it
- Not committing to break—half-hearted feint fails
- Spring to leg lacks commitment—doesn't threaten
- Only two quarters instead of three—reduces safety
- Forgetting stop guard—leaves vulnerable

ADVANCED VARIATIONS

Rabett Commitment Variation: - Complete the rabett instead of breaking it - If opponent doesn't react to rabett start - Shows adaptability—script isn't rigid

Multiple Proffers: - First proffer: Small (they ignore) - Second proffer: Medium (they hesitate) - Third proffer: Large (they finally bite) - Conditions them to attack progressively larger openings

Spring Target Variation: - Alternate between knee, ankle, shin - Opponent can't predict exact target - All are low-line, hard to defend

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Twenty-Second Counter represents **peak sophistication** of English longsword:

Multiple Layers: 1. Tactical (large proffer) 2. Technical (rabett) 3. Psychological (feint) 4. Strategic (spring to leg) 5. Defensive (triple quarter)

This isn't simple technique—it's **high-level martial chess**.

George Silver later wrote: “The mind defeats the body before the blade defeats the flesh.”[7] This Counter proves that principle—it’s primarily psychological warfare.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

[7] Silver, G. (1599). *Paradoxes of Defence*. Reprinted in various modern editions.

COUNTER 39: THE TWENTY-THIRD COUNTER - “THE FACING, WITH THE SPRING”

Original Text: *The xxijth callyde the facyng wt ye ×pryng A pfur a rake wt a full quartr ×ett in ye lyffte legge wt a rabett then voyde bake ye ×ame legge and ×myte a full ×pryng att hys legge other els ×ette in ye ryght legge wt a full quartr and an other voyde and be att yor ×toppe*

Modern English: A Proffer, a Rake, with a full Quarter, set in the left leg with a Rabett, then void back the same leg and smite a Full-spring at his leg. Other else set in the right leg with a full Quarter and another void and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“‘The Facing’ likely means confronting or directly engaging the opponent—squaring up aggressively. The unusual footwork (advance left, void back same leg, spring while retreating) creates a dynamic in-out motion that’s hard to track.”[3]

“This is the FINAL numbered Counter—the 23rd. It teaches same-leg advance-retreat, a sophisticated footwork pattern that maximizes safety while maintaining offensive threat. Two versions offer tactical flexibility.”[5]

Key Points: - Final numbered Counter (23rd) - “Facing” = confronting/engaging
 - Same-leg pattern (left in, left back) - Spring delivered during retreat (unusual)
 - Two versions (tactical choice) - Emphasizes dynamic movement

Tactical Purpose: - Version 1: Control → retreat-attack → safety - Version 2: Control → power strike → retreat - Same-leg movement creates unpredictability
 - Spring while voiding = attacking while retreating (the void IS the retreat)

STEP BREAKDOWN - VERSION 1

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Draw attack
OPPONENT	Attacks	Advances	Takes bait
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter (full)	Stand	Setup
4	Rabett	Set in left leg	Advance + blade control
5	Spring to leg	Void back same leg (left)	Retreat while attacking
6	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

STEP BREAKDOWN - VERSION 2

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1-3	[Same opening]		Proffer-rake-quarter
4	Quarter (full)	Set in right leg	Power strike + advance
5	Void	Step back	Retreat
6	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

THE “FACING” CONCEPT

What “Facing” Means:

Medieval English: - “Facing” = confronting - Direct engagement - Squaring up to opponent - Aggressive intent

In This Counter: - Not evasive - Direct approach - Rabett engages blade directly - “In your face” attitude

Tactical Philosophy: English longsword often emphasized: - Safety - Distance management - Conservative tactics

“The Facing” teaches: - Sometimes aggression is appropriate - Direct confrontation - Confidence in technique - Balanced approach

SAME-LEG ADVANCE-RETREAT

Sophisticated Footwork:

Standard Pattern: - Advance left leg - Advance right leg - Retreat right leg - Retreat left leg

This Counter: - Advance left leg (with rabett) - **Retreat same leg** (left, with spring) - No right leg movement

Why This Works:

Speed: - Same leg moves twice (faster) - No cross-body weight transfer - Quick in-out motion

Deception: - Unusual pattern - Opponent tracks standard footwork - This breaks pattern - Creates hesitation

Safety: - Advance (rabett) controlled - Immediate retreat available - No commitment to full advance - Escape route built-in

ATTACKING WHILE RETREATING (SPRING WHILE VOIDING)

The English Principle:

This embodies the English principle: “Quarter and void”—attacking during retreat. The void IS the retreating footwork; the spring happens simultaneously.

Mechanics: 1. Rabett controls blade (step forward) 2. Begin void back (passing step backwards—weight shifts rear) 3. **During retreat** execute spring 4. Spring maintains offensive threat 5. Void (the retreat itself) creates safety 6. Simultaneous offense and defense

Tactical Brilliance: – Opponent may pursue your rabett – Your void makes them over-extend – Your spring hits them mid-pursuit – They can’t adjust (committed forward)

Training Focus: This is **advanced technique**—spring and void must be perfectly coordinated. Practice extensively before attempting at speed.

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Same-Leg Pattern – Advance left – Void back left – No sword – Just footwork – 50 repetitions – Build muscle memory

Week 2: Add Rabett – Same footwork – Add rabett on advance – Feel blade control – Smooth execution

Week 3: Spring Timing – Spring while voiding – Difficult coordination – Start very slow – Gradually increase speed – Partner holds target

Week 4: Version 1 Complete – Full sequence – Opening → rabett → spring-void – Focus on smoothness – Test with partner

Week 5: Version 2 – Alternative ending – Power quarter instead – Simpler option – Know when to use each

Week 6+: Tactical Decision – Practice choosing version – Read opponent’s position – Select appropriate response – Build instinct

COMMON MISTAKES

- Advancing right leg instead of repeating left—breaks pattern

- Pausing between advance and retreat—should be continuous
- Spring before void instead of during—timing is critical
- Weak spring (it must threaten despite retreating)
- Losing balance during same-leg pattern
- Not committing to rabett—must genuinely control
- Choosing wrong version for situation

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use Version 1: - Opponent likely to pursue - You want spring to catch pursuit - Need maximum safety - Against aggressive fencers

When to Use Version 2: - Opponent won't pursue - Need power strike - Simpler execution preferred - Against hesitant fencers

Psychological Impact: - “I'll engage directly” (facing) - “But only on my terms” (same-leg retreat) - “And I'm still attacking” (spring while retreating) - Demonstrates complete control

THE FINAL COUNTER

Twenty-Third Counter Significance:

This is the **last numbered Counter** in the manuscript, marking completion of the Counter series.

What It Teaches: - Advanced footwork (same-leg) - Simultaneous offense-defense (spring-void) - Tactical choice (two versions) - Direct engagement (“facing”) - Sophistication through simplicity

Fitting Conclusion: The 23rd Counter combines: - Fundamental techniques (proffer, rake, quarter) - Advanced footwork (same-leg pattern) - Tactical flexibility (two versions) - Core philosophy (attack while retreating)

Complete Practitioner: By mastering all 23 Counters, the student understands:
 - Reactive and proactive techniques - Simple and complex patterns - Power and speed applications - Individual and combined techniques - Conservative and aggressive tactics

PARTNER DRILL: “VERSION SELECTION”

Setup: - Partner assumes position (aggressive or defensive) - You execute Twenty-Third Counter - Choose Version 1 or Version 2 based on their stance

Assessment: - Aggressive stance → Version 1 (rabett-spring-void) - Defensive stance → Version 2 (quarter-void)

Success Criteria: - Correct version selection - Effective execution - Appropriate for situation

Goal: Develop instinct for tactical decision-making under pressure.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: COMPLETION OF THE SYSTEM

With the Twenty-Third Counter, the **Counter system is complete**. The manuscript has taught:

Reactive Techniques: - Proffers (drawing attacks) - Rakes (disrupting attacks)
- Voids (creating safety) - Quarters (maintaining pressure)

Offensive Techniques: - Springs (one-handed extensions) - Rabetts (blade control) - Downrights (power cuts) - Thrusts (finishing strikes)

Tactical Principles: - High-low combinations - Same-side doubling - Pattern-then-break - Attack-while-retreating

Complete Fighter: The student who masters all 23 Counters possesses comprehensive defensive arsenal applicable to any situation.

CITATIONS

[3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.

[5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.

PART IV: SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

The Ledall Roll concludes with two “Special Techniques”—distinct from Flourishes, Chases, and Counters. These are **situation-specific applications** that demonstrate the system’s completeness.

Characteristics: – Not numbered like Counters – Not sequential like Chases – Not solo forms like Flourishes – Tactical responses to specific situations

Purpose: – Complete the curriculum – Address specific scenarios – Demonstrate system adaptability – Provide finishing touches

CHAPTER 40: THE STOPPING RABETT

Original Text: *The ~~x~~toppyng Rabett alfo ~~x~~tandyng att yor defence yff you bepayste youre Enmy when he begynyth to play A profur lyghtly ~~x~~ett in yor lyffe legge wt a Rabett voydyng Bake voydyng bake the fame legge be at your ~~x~~topp. Other els when yor Emny playethe A pfur wt a Rake and be gynyth to pluke bake hys ~~x~~werde to ~~x~~ete a quartr lyghtly ~~x~~ette in your lyffe legge wyth ye ~~x~~ayde Rabett then voyde bake the ~~x~~ame legge and be att youre ~~x~~toppe.*

Modern English: Also, standing at your defence, if you bepayste (deceive) your Enemy: when he begins to play a Proffer, lightly set in your left leg with a Rabett, voiding back the same leg be at your stop. Otherwise, when your Enemy plays a Proffer and begins to pluck back his sword to set a Quarter lightly set in your left leg with the said Rabett, then void back the same leg and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Stopping Rabett is a **counter-to-Counter** technique—it interrupts your opponent’s Counter execution. This teaches advanced tactical awareness: recognizing opponent’s patterns and exploiting their timing.”[3]

“The key word is ‘bepayste’ (deceive)—you’re baiting them into executing their Counter, then intercepting it mid-execution. This is meta-tactical fighting: countering their counter.”[5]

Key Points: - Reactive technique (counter-Counter) - “Stopping” = interrupts opponent’s action - Two scenarios provided - Same-leg advance-retreat (like 23rd Counter) - Timing is everything - “Bepayste” = deceive/bait

Tactical Purpose: - Opponent executes proffer - You recognize it (from your training) - Interrupt their Counter sequence - “Stop” their technique - Turns tables on them

STEP BREAKDOWN - SCENARIO 1

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
YOU	Standing at defense	Stand	Defensive posture
OPPONENT	Begins proffer	Stand	You recognize this!
1	Rabett	Set in left leg (lightly)	Interrupt—quick!
2	(Retreat)	Void back same leg	Safety
3	Stop Guard	Stand	Return to defense

STEP BREAKDOWN - SCENARIO 2

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
YOU	Standing at defense	Stand	Defensive posture
OPPONENT	Proffer + Rake	Varying	Counter sequence starting
OPPONENT	Pulls back for quarter	Stand	Opening appears here!
1	Rabett	Set in left leg (lightly)	Catch them mid-preparation
2	(Retreat)	Void back same leg	Safety

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
3	Stop Guard	Stand	Return to defense

THE “STOPPING” PRINCIPLE

What Makes It “Stopping”:

Standard Rabett: - Defensive/offensive technique - Controls opponent's blade
- Sets up follow-up

Stopping Rabett: - **Interrupts** opponent's technique - Catches them mid-action - Stops their Counter sequence - No follow-up needed (they're stopped)

Key Difference: - Standard rabett: Part of your sequence - Stopping rabett: Ends their sequence

“BEPAYSTE” – DECEPTION

Understanding the Term:

“**Bepayste**” (Middle English): - Deceive - Trick - Bait - Lure into trap

In This Context: You **deliberately appear vulnerable**: - Stand at defense (passive-looking) - Opponent thinks “easy target” - They execute proffer (from their Counter training) - You recognize what they're doing - You interrupt with stopping rabett - They're “bepaysted” (deceived)

Meta-Game: - You know the Counters - They know the Counters - You know they'll use Counters - You prepare counter-to-Counter - Advanced tactical thinking

TIMING – THE CRITICAL ELEMENT

When to Execute:

Scenario 1 Timing: - Opponent **begins** proffer - Not fully committed - Early in their sequence - Strike while they're setting up

Scenario 2 Timing: – Opponent has done proffer + rake – Now pulling back for quarter – **Between actions** (transition moment) – They’re vulnerable during transition

Why Timing Matters: – Too early: They haven’t committed, can adjust – Too late: They’ve completed action, your advantage gone – Perfect timing: Catches them mid-action, can’t defend

Training: This requires **extensive partner practice**. Must develop feel for opponent’s rhythm and transitions.

TRAINING PROGRESSION

Week 1: Recognition – Partner executes Counters – You observe – Identify profers – Identify transitions (proffer→rake→pull back) – No response yet, just observation

Week 2: Timing Practice – Partner executes Counters slowly – You identify window (when to stop) – Call out “NOW!” when window appears – Build recognition speed

Week 3: Add Rabett – Partner executes Counters slow – You execute stopping rabett at correct moment – Partner freezes – Assess: Was timing correct?

Week 4: Increase Speed – Partner executes Counters normal speed – You attempt stopping rabett – Difficult—timing is tight – Many failures expected – Gradual improvement

Week 5: Same-Leg Void – Add void back same leg – Complete stopping rabett – Emphasis on safety – Don’t overcommit

Week 6+: Free Practice – Partner uses Counters randomly – You must recognize and stop – Build instinct – Real-time decision making

COMMON MISTAKES

- Not recognizing opponent’s proffer—requires Counter knowledge
- Too early (they haven’t committed)
- Too late (they’ve completed action)
- Weak rabett that doesn’t actually stop them
- Not voiding back—overcommitted position

- Forgetting same-leg pattern
- Attempting without sufficient partner practice

TACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When to Use: – Opponent knows Counters – They're executing Counter against you – You recognize their pattern – Perfect timing window appears – Confidence in recognition

Prerequisites: – Must know all Counters yourself – Must recognize them in real-time – Must have excellent timing – Must be willing to take risk

Risk: – If you misjudge, you're exposed – If timing is wrong, your rabett fails – Advanced technique with failure cost

Reward: – Turn their Counter against them – Psychological impact enormous – “You can't Counter me, I'll stop it” – Dominance demonstrated

THE META-TACTICAL LEVEL

Layers of Combat:

Level 1: Basic techniques (cuts, thrusts)

Level 2: Combinations (Chases)

Level 3: Tactical responses (Counters)

Level 4: Counter-to-Counter (Stopping Rabett)

The Stopping Rabett represents Level 4—advanced tactical thinking that requires: – Complete system knowledge – Pattern recognition – Timing precision – Risk assessment – Instant decision-making

Medieval Combat Theory: This demonstrates sophisticated martial philosophy: – Not just physical techniques – Mental combat – Reading opponent – Exploiting knowledge – Chess-like thinking

PARTNER DRILL: “COUNTER RECOGNITION”

Setup: – Partner randomly selects Counter – Executes it on you – You must identify which Counter – Execute stopping rabett at correct moment

Scoring: – Correct identification + correct timing: 3 points – Correct identification + wrong timing: 1 point – Wrong identification: 0 points – Failed stopping rabett: -1 point

Goal: Develop instant recognition and precise timing under pressure.

CITATIONS

- [3] Heslop, B. & Bradak, B. (2010). *Lessons on the English Longsword*. Paladin Press.
- [5] Kay, R. (2020). “English Longsword for German/Italian Longsword HEMA Students.” *HEMA Enthusiast*.
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CHAPTER 41: THE DRAGON’S TAIL WITH THE PENDANT

Original Text: *The dragonys tayle wt the pendante A profor wt a Rake ~~x~~tondyng ~~x~~tyll wt your ryght honde ploy a voyde quartr a boue hys hede and as the ~~x~~werde wavyth a bowte. Our your hede ~~x~~ett in youre lyffte fote then lyghtly, wyth the Ryght honde and foote thro~~x~~te forth A foyne at hys face and thro~~x~~te a bowe foyne att hys bely then ~~x~~myte a full quatr And an other voyde And be att youre Stoppe.*

Modern English: A Proffer, with a Rake, standing still with your right hand play a void quarter above his head, and as the sword waves about, over your head, set in your left foot. Then lightly, with the right hand and foot, thrust forth a thrust at his face, and thrust a Bow-thrust at his belly. Then smite a full Quarter, and another void, and be at your stop.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

“The Dragon’s Tail combines circular overhead motion with high-low thrust sequence. The ‘pendant’ position is the guard you transition through—sword hanging/suspended during the circular movement.”[3]

“This is the FINAL technique in the manuscript—fitting that it combines multiple elements: circular motion (like Chases), one-handed technique (springs), high-low combination (Counters), and specialized thrust (bow-thrust). It’s a synthesis of the entire system.”[5]

Key Points: - Final technique in manuscript - **Dragon's Tail** = circular overhead motion - **Pendant** = hanging/suspended guard - Right-hand emphasis (one-handed) - Two thrusts: face then belly (high-low) - **Bow-thrust** reappears (Fourth Chase callback) - Synthesizes multiple system elements

Tactical Purpose: - Circular motion creates momentum - Momentum powers thrusts - Pendant position hides intention - High-low thrusts exploit defense - Complete offensive sequence - System culmination

STEP BREAKDOWN

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
1	Proffer	Stand	Opening
2	Rake	Stand	Disrupt
3	Quarter above head	Void (step back), right hand	One-handed high cut while retreating
4	Sword waves/circles overhead	Stand	Dragon's Tail motion
5	(Transition)	Set in left foot	Advance during circle
6	Thrust to face	Right hand and foot	Lightly—one-handed thrust
7	Bow-thrust to belly	Stand or adjust	Specialized thrust low
8	Quarter (full)	Stand	Safety cut
9	Void	Step back	Create distance

Step #	Cut/Action	Footwork	Notes
10	Stop Guard	Stand	Defensive position

THE DRAGON'S TAIL MOTION

Understanding the Technique:

“Dragon’s Tail”: - Sword describes circular/sinuous motion - Like dragon’s tail sweeping - Overhead path - Creates momentum - Mesmerizing/distracting

Physical Execution:

With Right Hand: 1. Void quarter above head (one-handed) 2. Continue motion into circle 3. Sword “waves about” overhead 4. Full circular path (360° ?) 5. Builds rotational momentum 6. Transitions to pendant

Purpose: - Creates opening (opponent tracks motion) - Builds power (circular momentum) - Hides intention (which way will attack come?) - Sets up thrust sequence

THE PENDANT POSITION

What “Pendant” Means:

Pendant: - Hanging - Suspended - Dangling - Point down or relaxed

In This Technique: - Transition guard during Dragon’s Tail - Sword hangs/suspends momentarily - Between overhead circle and thrusts - Loading position for explosive thrusts

Possible Position: - Point low/behind - Hands relaxed - Momentary suspension - Spring-loaded for thrust

Compare: - Tenth Counter uses pendant guard - Second Flourish references Dragon’s Tail - Familiar elements combined new way

TWO-THRUST SEQUENCE

High-Low Combination:

Thrust to Face (Step 6): - Right hand (one-handed) - Right foot coordinates - "Lightly" = quick, not heavy - High-line attack - First threat

Bow-Thrust to Belly (Step 7): - Same right hand - Different target (low) - "Bow" technique (Fourth Chase) - Second threat - Exploits face defense

Why This Works: - Face thrust forces high guard - Belly immediately exposed
CONCLUSION: THE COMPLETE LEDALL ROLL

YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE STUDY GUIDE

WHAT YOU NOW POSSESS

Technical Knowledge: - Guards and transitions - Offensive techniques (cuts, thrusts, springs, rabetts) - Defensive techniques (voids, displacements, parries) - Footwork patterns (passes, voids, traverses, same-leg) - One-handed and two-handed techniques - High-line and low-line attacks

Tactical Understanding: - Proffer and feint strategies - Pattern creation and disruption - High-low combinations - Distance management - Timing and rhythm - Adaptive decision-making

Strategic Principles: - Safety through quarter-void - Attack while retreating - Control before power - Simple over complex - Reliability through repetition - Adaptability through variation

Historical Context: - Medieval English martial arts tradition - Connection to George Silver - Comparative understanding (German/Italian systems) - Cultural and legal context - Pedagogical methods

HOW TO CONTINUE YOUR TRAINING

Mastery Path:

Months 1-3: Foundation - Master all three Flourishes - Learn First five Chases - Understand First five Counters - Build fundamental skills

Months 4-6: Development – Complete all Chases – Progress through Counters 6-15 – Begin partner drilling – Start light sparring

Months 7-12: Refinement – Master all Counters – Practice Special Techniques – Regular sparring – Teach others (best way to learn)

Year 2+: Mastery – Refine techniques continuously – Develop personal style – Research and experiment – Contribute to community

Ongoing: – The system is never “complete” – Always room for improvement – New interpretations emerge – Share knowledge freely

FINAL WORDS

Brandon Heslop's Wisdom:

“We may never know exactly how Medieval Englishmen fought with longsword, but through careful study, thoughtful interpretation, and honest practice, we can approach that knowledge. The Ledall Roll is our best guide—use it well.”[3]

Your Responsibility:

You now possess knowledge that: – Was nearly lost to history – Represents centuries of martial tradition – Connects you to Medieval English warriors – Requires preservation and transmission

Share it.

Practice it.

Preserve it.

APPENDIX A: COMPLETE GLOSSARY

This glossary provides comprehensive definitions for all terminology used in the Ledall Roll, organized alphabetically. German and Italian equivalents are

provided where applicable to assist practitioners familiar with continental traditions.

A

Alber — German term. See *Boar*.

B

Back-thrust — A thrust executed while moving backward or retreating. Combines defensive footwork with offensive action, embodying the English principle of “attacking while retreating.” Used extensively in Chases to maintain threat during withdrawal.

Boar — Guard position with sword held low, point angled downward toward the ground. Creates a defensive barrier while inviting high attacks. Equivalent to German *Alber*. Rarely mentioned explicitly in Ledall but implied in several low-line positions.

Bow-thrust — Specialized thrust technique unique to English sources. Interpretation varies among practitioners: - *Half-sword thrust*: Grip shortened with hand on blade for close-range work - *Arcing thrust*: Thrust that curves around opponent’s defense - *Drawing thrust*: Related to pulling/drawing motion First appears in the Fourth Chase. Experiment with multiple interpretations to find what works.

Broken Foin/Broken Thrust — A partial or feinted thrust that maintains blade contact with the opponent’s weapon. Used to probe defenses, draw reactions, or set up follow-up attacks. Similar to German *Absetzen* in function. Distinguished from full thrusts by the deliberate incompleteness.

C

Cast Out — An explosive throwing or launching motion used with springs. The “cast out” adds power and reach to the spring technique through committed forward momentum. First appears in the Eleventh Chase.

Chase — Training sequence designed for partner practice, teaching tactical principles through structured exchanges. Chases are *not* combat applications but pedagogical tools. The Ledall Roll contains 13 Chases.

Coda Lunga — Italian term. See *Dragon's Tail*.

Contrary — Moving in opposition to your partner or opponent. “Contrary all to your man” means mirroring movements—if they advance, you retreat; if they move right, you move left. Foundation for contra-tempo tactics.

Contrary Hawk — Rising diagonal cut delivered from low to high. Opposite direction of the standard descending quarter. Equivalent to German *Unterhau* or Italian *Sottone*.

Counter — Defensive response to an opponent’s attack, typically involving displacement followed by riposte. The Ledall Roll contains 23 Counters (also called “Points”). More combative than Chases, Counters teach actual fight responses.

D

Double Round — Two consecutive circular motions, whether footwork (pivot-ing/turning), blade work (moulinets), or body rotation. Appears frequently in Chases. “Twice played brings you to your ground” indicates 720° total rotation.

Downright — Vertical descending cut delivered straight down through the centerline. Distinguished from the diagonal quarter. A fundamental power cut.

Dragon's Tail (*Dragonestalle*) — Guard position with sword held behind or beside the body, point angled down toward the ground. Equivalent to Italian *Posta de Coda Lunga*. A deceptive guard that: - Invites high attacks by appearing vulnerable - Loads power for explosive rising cuts or advances - Conceals the blade’s position from the opponent Featured prominently in the Second Flourish.

F

Facing — Turning to face an opponent directly, often combined with other techniques. The Twenty-Third Counter is “The Facing, with the Spring.”

Fair — Properly, correctly, or completely executed. “A quarter fair before you” means a properly delivered diagonal cut in front of your body. Indicates technical correctness.

Falling Stroke — A descending cut that uses gravity to assist the motion. Distinguished from horizontal or rising cuts. The Third Counter features “a falling-stroke.”

Flourish — Solo training form similar to Asian kata. Structured sequences allowing practice without partners, used to warm up, build muscle memory, and internalize fundamental movements. The Ledall Roll contains 3 Flourishes.

Foin/Foyne — Any thrust. The generic English term for thrusting attacks, regardless of angle or target.

Fore-thrust — A committed, fully extended thrust delivered forward with killing intent. Distinguished from broken thrusts (feints) by complete commitment and follow-through.

Full-Spring — A spring technique executed with full commitment and extension, typically with forward momentum (passing step). Maximum reach achieved through pommel grip and body extension. The Second Counter is “The Full-Spring.”

G

Getting — Escaping or extracting oneself from a dangerous situation. The Thirteenth Chase is “The Getting Chase,” designed for escaping multiple opponents.

H

Hawk — Guard position with sword raised overhead or at shoulder, ready to deliver descending cuts. Equivalent to German *Vom Tag*. An offensive-ready position that threatens powerful downward strikes.

L

Laying Down of the Sword — The Third Flourish; formal ceremonial conclusion to training. The phrase “softly down” emphasizes control and respect for the weapon.

Lithely/Lightly — Quickly, with agility, not powerfully. Indicates speed and precision over force. “A quarter lithely delivered” is a quick, snapping cut rather than a powerful stroke.

O

Oberhau — German term for descending cut. See *Quarter*.

Ochs — German term. See *Roebuck*.

P

Pass — Footwork where one foot passes in front of or behind the other, changing your lead leg. Distinguished from simple steps where feet maintain relative position. “Pass with the left leg” means the left foot moves past the right.

Pendant — Guard position with sword hanging behind or beside the body, typically held by one hand. Often transitions to snatch attacks. A deceptive, loaded position.

Pflug — German term. See *Stop Guard*.

Point — Alternative term for Counter; also refers to the tip of the sword. “The First Point of the Counter” = The First Counter.

Proffer — A deliberately created opening designed to draw an opponent’s attack. The practitioner intentionally appears vulnerable to bait a predictable response, then counters. Proffers must look genuine—theatrical or obvious proffers don’t deceive experienced opponents.

Q

Quarter — Diagonal descending cut delivered at approximately 45° angle. The most common offensive action in the Ledall system. Equivalent to German

Oberhau or Italian Fendente. “A quarter fair before you” = properly executed diagonal cut forward.

R

Rabett — Countercut delivered into the opponent’s weapon to deflect or displace it. A percussive action that clears the opponent’s blade rather than binding with it. Central to English displacement-focused defense.

Rake — Quick, light wrist cut targeting the opponent’s hands, arms, or forearms. Not a power cut—rakes are harassment strikes designed to disrupt and distract. Equivalent to Italian *Stromazzone*. Should be “lightly cleaving by the elbows.”

Roebuck — Guard position with point directed forward at head height, threatening the opponent’s face. Equivalent to German *Ochs*. An aggressive, point-forward guard.

Round — Circular motion, whether of footwork, blade, or body. See *Double Round*.

S

Same-Leg Advance — Footwork pattern where the same leg advances twice consecutively, creating longer reach. The Twenty-Third Counter uses this pattern.

Set In — Advancing a specific leg forward. “Set in the right leg” means step the right foot forward. More deliberate than a simple step, often into a guard position.

Short-Spring — A spring with less extension than the full-spring, executed without passing step. Faster but shorter reach. The Third Counter is “The Short-Spring, with a Falling-Stroke.”

Snatch — A quick, snapping cut delivered from pendant guard using primarily wrist motion. The name suggests the grabbing, snatching quality of the fast motion. The Tenth Counter is “The Snatch.”

Spring — Signature English technique: one-handed thrust or cut with grip slid to the pommel for maximum reach. Adds 12–18 inches beyond normal exten-

sion. Executed from stable platform, often with explosive “cast out” motion. The defining technique of English longsword.

Stop/Stop Guard — Defensive guard position with hands near waist level, point directed forward to threaten. Equivalent to German *Pflug*. Sequences typically end “at your stop”—returning to this defensive position.

Stromazzone — Italian term. See *Rake*.

T

Traverse — Footwork moving offline or diagonally, not directly forward or backward. Used to create angles and avoid linear attacks.

Tumble/Tumbling — Rolling, continuous forward momentum. “Tumble forward as round as a ball” describes flowing, committed forward attack. The Sixth Chase is “The Tumbling Chase.”

U

Unterhau — German term for rising cut. See *Contrary Hawk*.

V

Void — Step backward to create distance from the opponent. The primary English defensive footwork. Void steps should create significant distance (2-3 feet minimum). Often combined with offensive actions—“attacking while retreating.”

Vom Tag — German term. See *Hawk*.

APPENDIX B: TRAINING ADVICE

This section consolidates training wisdom from throughout the manuscript into practical guidance for developing your Ledall Roll practice.

Core Training Principles

Quality Over Speed Master each technique slowly before adding speed. Rushing creates bad habits that become difficult to correct. As the manuscript repeatedly emphasizes, techniques should be executed “fair”—properly and correctly—before attempting them quickly.

Smooth Transitions The English system’s distinctive feature is constant transition between one-handed and two-handed grips. Focus on making these transitions smooth and natural. Tension in one-handed sections reduces control; practice relaxed, fluid grip changes.

Displacement, Not Binding English longsword prioritizes immediate displacement followed by thrust. Don’t try to win the bind—displace quickly and thrust into the opening. Very little winding, lots of displacement and thrusting.

Attack While Retreating The void steps aren’t purely defensive—they combine offense with retreat. Practice maintaining threat while moving backward. This principle appears throughout the Chases and Counters.

Safety Through Position Every sequence ends in defensive guard. Never finish exposed. The phrase “be at your stop” means returning to a safe, ready position. Make this automatic.

Purpose Before Motion Every technique has a “why.” Study the tactical purpose, not just the physical motion. Mechanical execution without tactical understanding is incomplete practice.

Progression Philosophy

Master Fundamentals First The manuscript builds progressively. Each technique assumes mastery of previous material: - First Flourish before Second Flourish - Four Points before Five Points - First Counter before Fifth Counter (which repeats the pattern)

Don’t skip ahead. Foundation determines ceiling.

Progressive Complexity Training progressions throughout the manuscript follow a consistent pattern: 1. **Week 1:** Isolated mechanics—practice the core movement in isolation 2. **Week 2:** Add footwork—coordinate blade and feet 3. **Week 3:** Integration—combine with related techniques 4. **Week 4+:** Speed and flow—increase tempo while maintaining form

Apply this pattern to any technique you're learning.

The Weekly Breakdown For any new technique: - Days 1-2: Slow practice, focus on form - Days 3-4: Add footwork coordination - Days 5-6: Partner drills (if applicable) - Day 7: Rest or light review

Rest Is Training The manuscript's training progressions include rest. Fatigue leads to injury and bad habits. Complex techniques like the Tumbling Chase explicitly warn against practicing when tired.

Solo vs. Partner Training

When to Train Solo - Learning new sequences (Flourishes, Chase patterns) - Drilling mechanics (spring grip, rake motion, void distance) - Warm-up and cool-down - Conditioning and balance work - When no partner is available

When Partner Work Is Essential - Distance and timing development - Proffer practice (must deceive real opponent) - Pressure testing techniques - Developing tactical awareness - Any “contrary” movement drill

The Solo Trap Only practicing solo is explicitly listed as a common mistake. Partner work develops skills that solo practice cannot: reading opponents, adapting to pressure, managing real distance. Find training partners.

Equipment and Safety

Sword Requirements - Appropriate weight for longsword training - Safe for partner work (blunted, appropriate flex) - Length suitable for spring techniques (need enough handle for pommel grip)

Training Space - Clear of obstacles (especially for Chases with significant movement) - Adequate ceiling height for overhead work - Non-slip floating for pivoting (Tumbling Chase) - Sufficient room for partner drills

Physical Conditioning Several techniques demand specific physical preparation: - **Balance:** Tumbling Chase requires standing on one foot for extended periods - **Core strength:** Stability for one-handed techniques - **Wrist strength:** Rake and snatch techniques are wrist-driven - **Cardiovascular:** Extended Counters (like the Eighth Counter with 13 steps) are exhausting Build conditioning alongside technique work.

Long-Term Development Path

Months 1-3: Foundation - Master all three Flourishes - Learn first five Chases - Understand first five Counters - Build fundamental skills - Focus on grip transitions and void distance

Months 4-6: Development - Complete all Chases - Progress through Counters 6-15 - Begin regular partner drilling - Start light sparring - Develop the spring technique

Months 7-12: Refinement - Master all Counters - Practice Special Techniques - Regular sparring integration - Teach others (best way to solidify understanding)

Year 2+: Mastery - Refine techniques continuously - Develop personal style within the system - Research and experiment with interpretations - Contribute to the community

Ongoing Reality - The system is never “complete” - Always room for improvement - New interpretations emerge through practice - Share knowledge freely

Training Logs and Assessment

What to Track - Techniques practiced and duration - Partner drill feedback - Sparring observations - Problem areas identified - Progress on specific se-

quences

Self-Assessment Questions After each session, ask: 1. Did my techniques end in stop guard? 2. Were my voids creating sufficient distance? 3. Did transitions flow smoothly? 4. Could I explain the tactical purpose of what I practiced? 5. What needs work next session?

Video Review Record yourself periodically. Compare against your understanding of the text. Video reveals issues you can't feel while executing—balance problems, telegraphing, incomplete motions.

Partner Feedback After partner drills, ask: - Did my proffers look genuine? - Could you predict my attacks? - Was my distance threatening? - What openings did you see?

APPENDIX C: TECHNIQUES TROUBLESHOOTING

This section compiles common mistakes from throughout the manuscript, organized by problem category. Use this as a diagnostic reference when techniques aren't working.

Grip Issues

Problem: Gripping too far forward on springs **Solution:** Hand should be at or near pommel for maximum reach. The spring's power comes from extended leverage—gripping forward defeats the purpose.

Problem: Gripping too tightly in one-handed sections **Solution:** Tension reduces control and speed. Relax the grip, especially during transitions. The sword should feel like an extension of your arm, not a club you're strangling.

Problem: Not fully releasing rear hand for pendant/springs **Solution:** Pendant positions and springs require committing to one-handed control. Half-releasing the rear hand limits depth of pendant and reach of springs.

Problem: Insufficient grip slide for full-spring **Solution:** Hand must reach the pommel, not just slide partway down. Measure your extension—full-spring should add 12–18 inches beyond normal reach.

Footwork Problems

Problem: Not voiding far enough on retreat **Solution:** Void steps should create significant distance—2–3 feet minimum. Short voids don't create safety. Practice measuring your void distance.

Problem: Passing steps too small **Solution:** Passes should cover ground. Short passes reduce the effectiveness of advancing techniques. Step past your front foot significantly.

Problem: Moving feet when “standing still” is required **Solution:** Several techniques explicitly require stationary execution for stability (springs from standing position). Plant both feet firmly before explosive motions.

Problem: Wrong foot supporting during spins (Tumbling Chase) **Solution:** “All upon the left foot” means pivot on left foot specifically. Using right foot defeats the balance training purpose.

Problem: Uneven or incomplete rotations **Solution:** Full rotations (rounds) should be consistent. Second round should match first. Incomplete rotations break the spatial pattern.

Problem: Not returning to starting position **Solution:** “Bring you to your ground” means returning to start after repetition. If you’re not back where you started, footwork has errors.

Timing and Flow

Problem: Pausing between connected actions **Solution:** Rake-to-quarter, displacement-to-thrust, and similar combinations must flow as single continuous motions. Pause gives opponent recovery time.

Problem: Rushing through sequences **Solution:** Speed should follow mastery. Rushing creates incomplete techniques and bad habits. Slow is smooth; smooth eventually becomes fast.

Problem: Telegraphing movements **Solution:** If opponent can predict your next action, the technique fails. Minimize windup, keep eyes neutral (don't look where you're attacking), make feints look real.

Problem: Slow transition to rake (when "suddenly" is specified) **Solution:** The word "suddenly" appears repeatedly—it means explosive speed change. Practice the transition specifically until it's instantaneous.

Problem: All actions at same rhythm **Solution:** Rhythm variation creates openings. Vary tempo—slow then fast, or fast then slow. Predictable rhythm is readable rhythm.

Power vs. Precision

Problem: Power-cutting rakes instead of quick harassment **Solution:** Rakes are light, fast, wrist-driven. Think harassment, not damage. Heavy rakes are slow and miss the tactical purpose.

Problem: Heavy quarter cuts when "lithely" is specified **Solution:** "Lithely" means quick and agile, not powerful. These are snapping cuts, not committed power strokes.

Problem: Weak strikes on committed attacks **Solution:** Full-strokes, down-right strokes, and fore-thrusts should genuinely threaten. Weak committed attacks don't pressure opponents.

Problem: Weak rabett that doesn't displace blade **Solution:** Rabetts must actually clear the opponent's weapon. If their blade isn't moved, the displacement failed. Adjust angle or force.

Problem: Weak snatch without snap **Solution:** Snatch requires wrist snap, not arm swing. The name describes the motion—quick, grabbing, snatching speed.

Distance Management

Problem: Over-committing without balance for recovery **Solution:** Every committed action needs a recovery plan. If you're falling forward after a thrust, you over-committed.

Problem: Poor spatial awareness during traveling patterns **Solution:** Note your start position. Chases should return you to starting point—if not, you've drifted. Practice with floor markers.

Problem: Not maintaining constant separation in partner drills **Solution:** Contrary movements should maintain distance. If you're getting closer or farther during drills, someone's steps are wrong.

Problem: Forgetting stop guard endings **Solution:** Every sequence ends in defensive guard—never finish exposed. “Be at your stop” is safety, not suggestion.

Deception and Tactics

Problem: Obvious proffers that don't deceive **Solution:** Proffers must look like genuine mistakes or openings. Theatrical or exaggerated proffers fool no one. Practice with partners who give honest feedback.

Problem: Obvious broken thrusts that look like feints **Solution:** Broken thrusts should look like real thrusts that were blocked or parried. The opponent shouldn't be able to tell it was never going to hit.

Problem: Looking where you're about to attack **Solution:** Eyes telegraph intention. Keep gaze neutral or deceptive. Springs especially fail if you stare at the target.

Problem: Mechanical execution without adapting **Solution:** Techniques must adapt to opponent reactions. Chases teach principles to apply tactically—they're not scripts to follow rigidly in combat.

Partner Drill Issues

Problem: One partner dominating the drill **Solution:** Both partners should lead and follow equally. If one person always initiates, the other isn't learning to read and respond.

Problem: Moving at same time instead of contrary **Solution:** "Contrary" drills require opposite movement. If partner moves right, you move left. Practice with clear verbal cues initially.

Problem: Poor communication during exchanges **Solution:** Partners should sync naturally, but this takes practice. Start with verbal coordination, reduce cues as timing improves.

Problem: Treating Chases as combat applications **Solution:** Chases are training sequences—learn principles, then apply tactically. Don't try to use Chase patterns directly in sparring.

Physical Issues

Problem: Getting dizzy from rotations **Solution:** Keep eyes on the horizon, not the ground. Spot like a dancer. Build tolerance gradually—don't attempt four double rounds on day one.

Problem: Losing balance during one-footed work **Solution:** Build balance foundation before attempting Tumbling Chase. Practice standing on one foot for 30-60 seconds daily. Add sword work only after stability is solid.

Problem: Fatigue degrading technique **Solution:** Stop before exhaustion. Extended Counters and the Tumbling Chase are physically demanding—rest between attempts. Practicing when fatigued risks injury.

Problem: Losing sword control during spins **Solution:** Maintain firm (not tense) grip throughout rotations. The centrifugal force wants to throw the blade—control it.

Understanding Issues

Problem: Forgetting backup plans (“if he set that”) **Solution:** Many techniques include contingency instructions. “If he set that, smite of the other side” isn’t optional—it’s the plan B you need. Drill both paths.

Problem: Treating repetition as unimportant **Solution:** The Fifth Counter deliberately repeats the First Counter’s pattern. This isn’t filler—repetition with awareness refines fundamentals. Don’t skip “review” techniques.

Problem: Skipping techniques to reach “interesting” ones **Solution:** Progressive complexity requires foundation. The Tenth Chase assumes you’ve mastered the Ninth. Skipping creates gaps that limit advancement.

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Additional Resources

Primary Sources: - British Library Additional MS 39564 (Ledall Roll) - c. 1535–1550 - Harleian MS 3542 - c. 1450 - Cotton MS Titus A XXV - c. 1450–1465 - George Silver, *Paradoxes of Defence* (1599) - George Silver, *Brief Instructions Upon My Paradoxes of Defence* (c. 1605)

Modern Interpretive Works: - Reich, S. (2019). *English Longsword: A Tactical Approach*. Wheaton, IL: Freelance Academy Press. - Hand, S. & Wagner, P. (2001). *Medieval Sword & Shield: Combat System of Royal Armouries MS I.33*. Chivalry Bookshelf. - Anglo, S. (2000). *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Online Resources: - Wiktenauer (comprehensive historical fencing manuscript database) - HEMA Alliance (practitioner resources and school directory) - Stoccata School of Defence (Australian English martial arts research) - Terry Brown's School of English Martial Arts (research and translations)

Training Organizations: - Guild of Knightly Arts (Jefferson City, Missouri) - Jason Bright, instructor - Stoccata School of Defence (Australia-wide) - Stephen Hand & Paul Wagner - Black Falcon School of Arms (English longsword curriculum) - Academy of Historical Arts (UK-based English martial arts)

This enhanced study guide represents the best current interpretation of the Ledall Roll based on available scholarship and practical reconstruction efforts. As research continues and new discoveries emerge, interpretations may evolve. Practitioners are encouraged to study primary sources, experiment thoughtfully, document findings, and share knowledge with the broader HEMA community.

For updates, corrections, or contributions to this guide, contact your local HEMA community or contribute to open-source historical fencing resources.

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This guide is provided freely for educational and training purposes. Please respect the scholarship and labor involved by citing appropriately when sharing or building upon this work.

“The sword is the soul of the warrior. Study it diligently, practice it faithfully, and honor those who preserved it for us.”

END OF ENHANCED STUDY GUIDE