

Special Thank to Hob Conyers (mka John Hopson). Without his work on Swetnam this class would not be possible
(<http://www.swetnam.org/>)

[illegible]

Swetnam Stance/True Guard: Stand with left foot pointing forward and to the left, and the right foot immediately ahead of it. The left leg is partially bent, and the right leg is almost straight with the thighs almost touching. In The true guard; the right-hand rests just outside and in front of the right thigh, with the rapier pointing up and forward. The dagger is held straight out from the left shoulder at cheek height, the tips of the two weapons nearly meeting directly in front of the eyes. This stance is not mobile, but Swetnam rarely recommends taking more than one step during a given fighting sequence. Most of the fencer's weight should be on the left leg, leaving the right leg ready for a quick forward lunge or a backwards void. The Fencer should keep their rear foot firmly planted. This provides a reference point for retreating back to the proper measure.



Figure 1: True Guard (Swetnam, pg86)

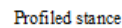
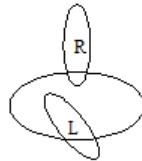
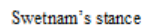


Figure 2: Stance comparison (Hopson, Swetnam.org).

Offensive Style

Swetnam's attack sequences all have one thing in common: the opponent's weapon is offline. This is either due to the opponent leaving their point offline or by luring the opponent's weapon away with a feint. Second, attacks are aimed at the most convenient target, not necessarily the most lethal one. Swetnam is nearly alone among period fencing masters in recommending non-lethal attacks.

Swetnam prefers every first intention to be a feint that causes your opponent's point to go offline. They are almost always simple in application "feint high, hit low" or "feint left, hit right". Importantly, Swetnam says not to step during a feint so you do not give up true distance and understands that this mean your opponent may not respond; if so, then attack with the same thrust to kill.

Swetnam Thrusts Drills

Staight Stock

The straight thrust or straight lunge of Italian rapier is rarely used in Swetnam's style. This is most likely because such attacks can be parried with the dagger, leaving the defender's rapier free to counter-attack, and thus pose an unacceptable risk.

Right Stock (Stokata)

A favorite attack is a Right Stock, an upwards thrust to the stomach made with a straight arm. This attack is designed to go underneath a possible dagger parry. It is important that the body be held upright during this attack, not leaning forward, to make a quicker recovery.

Slope Stock

Another basic attack is a Slope Stock, a thrust where the rapier arm crosses over to the left side of the attacker's body, with the knuckles pointing to the left. This attack is made to defender's right chest, head, or shoulder. This attack is nearly impossible to parry with a dagger.

Notes

[illegible]

Imbrokata

The final common attack from Swetnam is the Imbrokata, an attack around the outside of the defender's dagger into the left arm, shoulder, or the head. Once again, the attack reaches around the dagger's defensive zone rather than through it.

Defense Theory

Swetnam's technique is defensive. He states true defense is based on seven rules: "1) A good Guard, 2) True observing of distance, 3) To know the place, 4) To take time, 5) To keepe space. 6) Patience, 7) Often practice."

Unlike Italian masters Swetnam does not use stringing or keeping opposition to your adversary's blade with your own blade to constrain the it as they enter measure. Instead, he attacks, forcing the opponent to respond and then using that response to create an opening. Swetnam rarely defends any attack with a step or body void alone, and never ignores a potential attack as a feint. Also, every attack is parried. Swetnam points out that dagger parries are quicker than rapier parries. When dagger moves to parry the sword should move to the same side.

Swetnam divided the body into several zones, each of which has a pre-set parry and riposte. The zones are: **Below the dagger- left of the center line, Below the dagger-right of the center line, Above the dagger.**

Parry and Riposte Drills

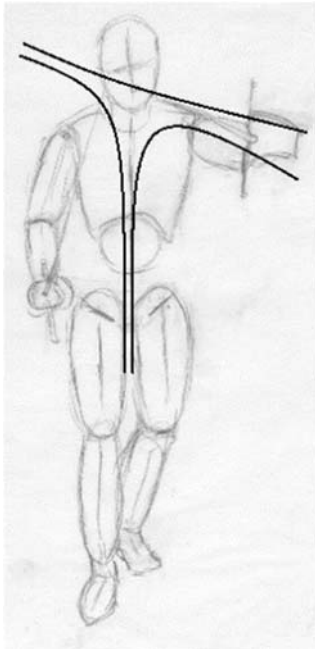


Figure 3: Defensive zones for parries.
(Hopson, Swetnam.org).

Below the dagger - left: Parried by dropping the dagger point and sweeping the thrust clear of the left side. The accompanying counterattack should be made to the right shoulder or chest, with the rapier in quarte (4th).

Below the dagger – right: Parried by dropping the dagger hilt, and then parrying down and across the body to the right with the dagger held vertically. The accompanying counterattack should be an Imbrokata to the left shoulder or face. This parry is somewhat slow, so if the incoming attack is very fast or powerful enough to blow through an incomplete parry, it can be necessary to slip back with the right foot to provide additional defensive depth.

Above the dagger: Parried by placing the dagger blade under the incoming blade and raising. It is not necessary to move the dagger very much, because the dagger should already be held at eye level. The accompanying counterattack should be a lunge in quarte(4th) to the right side of the chest or belly.

Swetnam understood that the wide measure of True Distance may prompt your opponent to quickly advance toward you to negate your advantage. To counter this, Swetnam says to falling back a single step to allow the attack to fall short (True Distance is now 14 feet and you have more time to react). The footwork for this technique is the same for both thrusts and cuts, but the bladework is different. Against a thrust, the attacker's extended blade is then captured with the defender's dagger and the right foot comes forward with the defender's counter and against a cut, as the right foot comes back, the defender's rapier draws up vertically to serve as a last-ditch defense in case the cut reaches the defender.

Notes

Sample Combat

1.

<u>Agent\Attacker</u>	<u>Patient\Defender</u>
Agent assumes a True Guard position outside of measure.	Patient with only sword; assumes a True Guard position outside of measure.
Agent attempts an "inside" thrust to Patient's body	
	Patient use a Slope Stock to parry Agent's rapier and transfers it to Patient's hand. Patient attacks Agent's right chest
Agent, unable to parry with this dagger and is hit in the chest.	
	Patient recovers to True Guard and retreats out of range.

2.

<u>Agent\Attacker</u>	<u>Patient\Defender</u>
Agent assumes a True Guard position outside of measure.	Patient assumes a True Guard position outside of measure.
Agent convincingly feints with an Imbrokata to the Patient's dagger hand.	
	Patient pulls their dagger hand back, making the Agent thrust fall short. Patient's thrust with rapier to Agent left hand or arm.
Agent disengages under the Patient's rapier, keep their rapier in second and begins a straight stock to the patient's chest. Agent's dagger drops to brace against the middle of their rapier, making the thrust much more difficult to parry.	
	Patient, unable to parry the doubled thrust with just their rapier, is hit in the chest.
Agent recovers to True Guard and retreats out of range.	