

Understanding Nachreissen

Fightcamp, 2018

Nachreissen (pursuing) is a core concept in Liechtenauer's art, but often oversimplified or misunderstood. Typically it is written off as simply "they attack, so dodge out of the way and attack back", which is a summary of one small aspect of a much more general concept. It also commonly confused with the *nach* - going after your opponent's sword to stop it hitting you - when instead *nachreissen* is generally made in the *vor*.

The core idea of *nachreissen* is pursuing a careless movement from your opponent with an attack to the opening they've created. This class will review the given plays of *nachreissen* from Ringeck to show how this theme recurs throughout those plays. Then we'll look at a few extra pieces from elsewhere in the treatise to think about how to use *nachreissen* to improve the success of actions like *abschneiden* which are often difficult to apply under pressure.

Level: This class assumes that participants are familiar with the *vier versetzen* (*krumphaw*, *zwerhaw*, *schilhaw*, and *schaitelhaw*), and with some basic techniques in the *bind* such as *mutieren* and *abschneiden*. In order to focus on the tactical aspects of *nachreissen*, we won't have time to look at how to execute these.

Equipment: Participants will need at least a longsword trainer, a mask and good gloves. Additional gear is recommended to allow performing some exercises at a higher intensity.

Intro

A few minutes to let people arrive. Talk through the basic core idea from the intro section.

First *nachreissen* hand game:

- Coach starts with arm extended. Move around comfortably.
- When they enter distance, coach draws up to strike
- Fencer attacks the shoulder instantly as they lift up

Second nachreissen hand game:

- Now the coach does a long strike through
- Fencer evades this
- Then attacks during the recovery

Choice option:

- Now the coach primes then strikes
- Fencer goes before or after

First nachreissen

These are three applications of the same idea. Show each one for two mins, then practice for five.

From distance (with thrust and cut)

- Start out of measure
- Fencer sets forward in pflug/tag
- Coach draws up or pulls back, chambering to attack
- Fencer attacks during the movement

And from sprechfenster (with thrust and slice)

- Start in contact at the middles
- Fencer shifts back very slightly to cue an attack
- Coach draws up or pulls back, chambering to attack
- Fencer slices the arms or thrusts the body during the movement

With vorsetzen, pursuing a guard change

- Start out of measure
- Fencer sets forward in tag, coming to a distance to strike from
- Coach moves guard
- Fencer throws appropriate vorsetzen during the movement

Think about the common idea: their movement is removing threat and creating an opening. The same idea could also be used to set up...

Second nachreissen

...this. Use long cuts and recovering thrusts as exemplars. Ten minutes then five

Attacking into the opening created by their weapon leaving langort during an attack.

- Start well out of measure.
- Fencer comes forward to invite an attack, then steps back to make it miss
 - Coach can continue the cut through or draw back to chamber a thrust
- Fencer attacks directly, while their weapon is moving away

Hand vs sword variant

- Exactly the same drill, but now the fencer has no sword to use.
- Aim is again to draw out the attack and then to rush in during the recovery/rechambering
- Now work with cuts only

Indes/Fuhlen

We can expand on the idea of following the movement of their point with your own, to the opening they create.

10 minutes on each of these, play them nice and smooth. The focus here on the timing elements not on the techniques

First outer taking

- Fencer attacks onto a low guard (e.g. they've missed a cut)
- Coach parries, then lifts up with the strong and turns the point in to the face.
- As their point drops, follow it with your blade to control it.
- Hook over with a low thrust, thumb on the inside and hands crossed

Second outer taking

- Fencer attacks up from below
- Coach falls on it, then turns the point in.
- While they turn the point in, you bind it with your own blade
- Carry it out of presence and bring your point in.

Other uses

Now that we understand nachreissen, we can use it to make some other plays easier or safer. Just two examples here, but there's a lot of uses for this throughout the entire treatise. 10 minutes on each again

Slicing the arms (on umbschlag)

- Start in the bind. Fencer presses forward and pushes on the blade a bit.
- Coach responds by striking a twer around to the other side.
- Fencer follows the blade to the forearms
 - Then press the forearms to the ground
- Sometimes, don't make the nachreissen, to make sure the coach is striking well

Zeckrur to the forearm (on the bad wind)

- Start at measure. Fencer strikes in to begin the drill.
- Coach binds, then 'winds to ochs' at overly wide measure.
- Fencer comes under and cuts up into the rising forearm while stepping away
 - You can alternatively do mutieren, if you want a laugh.
 - Let the coach succeed sometimes just to make sure they're lifting well.

Synthesis

To finish up we're going to spend a few minutes playing with a single drill to draw on all the pieces we've looked at. While working through this, focus on 1) when their sword is moving away from you safely and 2) how you can reach into an opening they're creating by that movement. That's the essence of today's class.

An open drill:

- Start wide, fencer enters distance to initiate the action
- Attack the chambering/guard change if you can get there before
- Or attack after into the recovery
- If you get a bind, work it with one of the options we've shown

Take questions over lunch

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