

Pressure with zorn and krump

IGX 2018, Saturday

Zornhaw and krumphaw are both extremely useful techniques, but many people struggle with when to apply them and how to choose which to use. Drawing from the anonymous tactical advice in the Dresden manuscript and on the four fencing roles in *L'Esprit de l'Epee*, this class explores ways to set up these techniques for improved efficiency. The approach used here is particularly helpful when for shorter fencers, who have to overcome a distance disadvantage when fencing most opponents.

Equipment: Mask, good gloves and throat protection **compulsory**. Full gear recommended.

Experience: **Intermediate**. Participants need to know basic longsword cuts along with how to make a zornhaw and a krumphaw - this is a tactics class, not a techniques one.

Material from Ms.Dresd.c.487 translated by Trosclair. Material from *L'Esprit de l'Epee* translated by Léonard Carpentier.

Intro

Give 2 minutes for people to arrive. Chat a bit while they do so.

Warmup item one: simple light cardio of some form - tag? Play for 2 minutes.

Physical sword warmup - simple cutting drills working hip engagement (this is just zorn in secret), no steps. 1 minute.

Masks, gloves (this is a good check people brought gear): practice zorn and krump to blade against simple cuts for a few minutes.

Four Roles

Theory: There's a French epee book called L'Esprit de l'Epee (lit. "The Spirit of the Sword"), which has a very interesting tactical

approach to understanding and teaching fencing. One of the most valuable ideas it has is the concept of four "fencing roles", based on who enters distance and who attacks first:

- Conquerant (conqueror, attacker): *You enter distance and attack first*
- Presseur (squeezer, constrainer): *You enter distance but they attack first*
- Conteur (counterer, ambusher): *They enter distance but you attack first*
- Blindeur (defender, tank): *They enter distance and attack first*

These form a strategic cycle - each can be used to try and exploit the weaknesses in another of the roles. They also support using different techniques - trying to make a flurry of twerhaws if you're in the blindeur role is doomed to failure.

Practice:

- Fencing at 2/3rds intensity or so – reasonable speed, **very light contact**.
- Pick a role before the exchange and try using it.
- Try to diagnose what role the opponent used.
- If yours worked, stick with it – if it's flawed, try a new plan.
- Ideally get a couple of partner changes in (swap people around every 5 exchanges)

Presseur

Theory: These four roles are a fantastically useful tool, both as a fencer and as a coach. You can use them to understand your opponent's strategy and devise a plan about how to exploit it. Today we're going to be focusing just on the presseur role – the 'squeezer' or 'constrainer', where you enter distance to draw and break an attack. Pressing in like this has the key advantage that it tends to induce the opponent to throw simpler and more direct attacks (in order to say 'fuck off'), which improves the odds of using a counter-technique like the zorn.

Practice:

- Goal: squashing people's space to get simpler attacks.
- Pick the fencer and the coach.
- As the fencer, you want to push into their space *in a way which invites an attack* – e.g. tag or pflug

- If they retreat, keep pushing
- If they attack, break it
- If they freeze, hit them
- As the coach, think about how you're feeling pressured.
 - Throw attacks in two main situations:
 - ◆ when you don't feel pressured, or
 - ◆ when you feel overly-squeezed
 - Also mix in retreating (which is another good way to reduce pressure) and sometimes just freezing
- Both: moderate intensity, we're here to think about the idea not to break each other's faces.
 - Think about:
 - ◆ what sets up squeezing like this?
 - ◆ what options does the coach have or not have?
 - ◆ how have these been restricted?

Grab water

Zorn

Theory: In MS Dresd.c.487 (the 'Dresden Ringeck') there's a partial anonymous gloss of some early Liechty verses. Uniquely – and very usefully – the author has glossed mostly tactical advice about when to use the techniques instead of technical advice about how to execute them. For the zornhaw, he says to strike it "When one strikes at you from tag" and further clarifies later that it is used against blows which "come right straight from high down onto you". We can combine this with the presseur strategy, inducing our opponent to make an attack that we can then break.

Practice:

- Goal: hardwire snap zorn vs straight
- Pick coach and fencer, both in tag.
- Fencer squeezes as before
 - Coach retreats, repeat
 - Coach cuts straight, zorn it
 - Coach freezes, hit them
- Coach: this is exactly the same drill, but at a higher intensity with a more constrained action.
 - Aim to throw your attack when you're squeezed/coerced so that you have to.

- Make sure your attack is very straight direct oberhaw from above
- Both: intensity can go up here, the goal is to connect stimulus (their straight cut) with response (zorn)

Grab water

Krump

Theory: The anonymous Dresden glossator also describes the conditions to use the krumphaw: "When you fence with someone, whatever they strike at you that does not come right straight from high down onto you, parry that with the crook." This can again be combined with the presseur strategy – when you find that your opponent responds to pressure with any other cut, you can break it with the krump and then work in with the point.

Practice:

- Goal: Hardwire snap krump vs weird
- Pick coach and fencer, coach in any cutting guard, fencer in tag or schrankhut
- Fencer squeezes as before
 - Coach retreats, repeat
 - Coach cuts weird, krump the blade and hit.
 - (Coach cuts straight, zorn it)
 - Coach freezes, hit them
- Coach: Now you aren't throwing straight descending oberhaw, but things like mittelhaw, unterhaw, twerhaw or anything else kinda strange.
 - Otherwise it's exactly the same drill and goal.

Grab water

Scout

Theory: A nice thing about this set of tactical advice is that it's complete. A straight simple oberhaw you break with the zorn, anything other or more complicated you shut down with a krump and then work the point in. We can do a scouting runs or two to put the opponent under pressure and learn what their "fuck you" cut is – then enter with commitment and counter their action.

Practice:

- Goal: Practice scout then kill.
- Pick coach and fencer. Swap after 3-5 reps
- Fencer: squash them to scout. When they throw, parry it and retreat.
 - Optionally, do so a second time to make sure you've got the read correctly.
 - Then the third time, make a zorn or krump as appropriate.
 - Make sure that you're giving the same feed in all three reps, as much as you can.
- Coach: your job is just to do what's natural to you.
 - Try to do the same thing each time.
- Once you've done 1-2 full reps (scout and kill), swap roles.
- Once you've both taken each role, salute, swords up and find new partners.

Grab water

Finish

Recap the key theory points:

- Four roles: who enters distance, who swings first
- Presseur strategy: push in, draw an attack and break it.
- Zorn versus straight down cuts from tag
- Krump versus the rest (e.g. mittelhaw twerhaw etc)
- Scout your opponent to learn their "fuck off" cut, then break it

Questions?

This document may be freely shared with credit. Please borrow or adapt exercises and ideas. Feedback and questions are welcomed: send to Tea Kew on Facebook, or to tea@ringeck.net. If you would like me to come teach at your club or event, get in touch and we'll try and make it work.

Further content will be regularly published on <https://facebook.com/CambridgeHEMA> and <https://facebook.com/illustratedRingeck> — like us to stay up to date.