

Solving the High Bind

A class delivered by Tea Kew at Kings of the North 2018

In fencing and sparring, it's very common to see people end up with the swords up in a high, 'Eiffel tower' bind. At this point, most people run out of ideas which aren't 'wrestle' and so we see a lot of very messy fencing as a result. This class will look at a few alternative tools to use when in the high neutral bind, taken from Ringeck's longsword.

Participants will need a mask and a longsword simulator. Medium gloves and some form of forearm protection might also be appreciated for certain techniques.

Class plan

Intro (5 minutes)

- Describe Eiffel tower bind
- Address elephant - we won't be looking at wrestling.
- Summarise of the actions we're looking at

Warmup (10 minutes)

- Stationary cuts (descending and ascending, body engagement)
- Hand fencing game - tap upper arm, parry allowed, one hand only
- Quick stretches
 - Twisting the waist
 - Shoulder circles

Abschneiden (15 minutes)

- A good solution from the high bind. Best when very slightly shorter.
 - We need to move things well up above the head.
 - ◆ To do that, push forward towards their face (to encourage them to rise up)
 - ◆ Or if they're trying to wrestle they should naturally take it up
 - *As it goes up*, take the sword back a bit and drop it into the

underside of their arms

- ◆ Go in the direction that makes sense - away from their sword around the clock.
- Press up and through, with your arms straight
 - ◆ Reverse lunge if space needed - **do not bend arms**
- Drills: fencer attacks, coach parries with step into high bind.
 - Fencer pushes, coach rises, fencer slices
 - Or coach pushes forward to wrestle, fencer slices
 - Coach - if the fencer tries to slice without the arms going up, fall onto their head.
 - ◆ Go a bit competitive once you've got the actions down.

Hende drucken (10 minutes)

- Hand pressing, or transforming the slice, is under-appreciated and really useful.
 - Also called winding the slice. Winding just means turning, so this tells us what we need to do.
 - We take the slice from underneath their arms, make a slight step to the side, while rolling the blade over to push down from above.
 - This allows us to drive them down to the floor very quickly and efficiently, then strike back up to finish if needed.
- Drills
 - As previous, but now the fencer completes by pressing the hands instead of just stopping at the slice.

Wrench with the zwer (10-15 minutes)

- For Liechtenauer fencers, it's quite common to be in this basic position but with your short (false) edge on their blade
 - This makes it quite difficult to turn the sword in order to enter the slice.
 - However, it allows you to wrench the hilt aside and continue into a twerhaw
 - This is a particularly effective trick against someone who is giving you forward pressure
- Execution
 - Shove the hands across a bit, until the left hand is in front of the right shoulder.
 - "wrap" the right arm around to cross the hands securely together, cutting in from your left at their right side

- Compass a little out to that side and turn the hips strongly for power.
- Drill
 - Enter situation, coach gives forward (and maybe slightly upward) pressure, fencer executes.
 - Again, make it a bit competitive as it gets easier. Be careful with no bohps.
 - For the coach, if they don't do the wrench, slice their arms away as per hende drucken when they try and execute it.

Twer to half-sword (10 minutes)

- The previous technique is super-reliable, to be honest.
 - But if you want to show off a bit more, try this one.
 - ◆ Works well if they aren't giving so much forward commitment
 - As your twer comes in
 - ◆ let go with the left hand
 - ◆ Pull the right back to line up with your right shoulder now
 - ◆ And grab onto your blade with the left as it comes into line.
- Drill - as previous drill, but with this one.
 - Coach, don't give as much forward pressure.
 - Synthesis - coach drives forward so you deliver the cut, or stays a bit further out and you can half-sword.

Disarm between the hands (10 minutes)

- A nice trick for those who keep their hands well apart on the grip of their sword
 - Push up on their hands with your right hand
 - Simultaneously, reach over their right with your inverted left hand and axe it down behind their right elbow
 - This should bend their arms and give you the ability to grab their hilt (thumb down)
 - ◆ Try and keep your wrist as straight as possible
 - Then put their sword in your left hip pocket, with a strong body turn etc as required for power.
- Drill
 - Come to the bind, coach gives forward/upward pressure, perhaps planning to come under with a slice.
 - Fencer yields a little and then executes the disarm.
 - ◆ Note this might be really hard with gloves on. Good luck.

Synthesis game (10-15 minutes)

- In all cases, the coach is trying to close in through the bind and wrestle (just come to body contact)
- Fencer uses one of the five plays we've covered, depending on where the arms are and so on.
- Start friendly and varied, get a bit more difficult.

Finish (5 minutes)

- Recap techniques
- Questions?

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