

FOUNDATION PROGRAMME FOR BEGINNERS – SABRE DESIGNED FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED LEVEL 1 COACH

This programme is designed for the newly qualified Level 1 Coach working under the supervision of a more highly qualified coach or delivering taster sessions and foundation programmes on their own. The coach should have a variety of games and fencing related exercises to use as well as a range of warm-up and stretch activities so as to maintain interest and motivation. The exercise and games listed in this guide are suggestions only.

The planning assumption for these lessons is that they are about 60 to 90 minutes long and that the coach will have lesson plans for each topic on the Level 1 coach education syllabus for their weapon as listed under 'Specific Technical Content'. Apart from Session One, the duration (timing) of each part of each session has been left out but should be added in depending on how long the session is. Apart from Session 1, as a general rule each session should comprise:

A gentle warm up (static stretches not advised)
Fencing related exercises and games, including reaction games
A footwork session
Learning new blade and foot actions including drills for consolidation
Free fencing (sparring)
Warm-down (stretching out)
Salute at the end (to bring the session to a formal conclusion)

Coaches must adjust the duration of activities accordingly to fill the time allotted.

For Level 1 Sabre the coach must teach:

- Simple fencing-related games and exercises.
- Foot work to support simple attacks and defence; distance awareness and stance.
- Hitting skills.
- Simple attacks.
- Simple defence and direct ripostes.
- Concept of priority, attack and defence.

Specific Technical Content

- Stance, on guard in tierce, the target.
- The salute and fencing etiquette.
- Steps - advance and retire.
- Lunge & recovery, step lunge and recovery.
- The grip, blade manipulation and hitting to head, flank and chest from stationary position.
- Simple direct attacks to chest with lunge and step lunge.
- Simple parries #3, #4 and #5 and their direct ripostes.
- 1st counter ripostes (direct).

NB Fencing etiquette includes:

- Saluting before and after a bout
- Shaking hands with non-sword hand at end of bout after salute
- When sparring, acknowledging hits, saying 'Touche!' or 'on me!' or 'Off target' and indicating with non-sword hand accordingly.

BEGINNERS' COURSE LESSON PLANS (SABRE)

SESSION 1

(NB This session has a slightly different format to all the following sessions)

THEME – Introduction to fencing, and the programme, The Stance and Mobility

Resources required:

Course register
Sticky labels for names
Marker Pen
Sabres only for class and instructor
1 foil and 1 epee plus kit to show

Lay out an area with sufficient chairs + table for equipment/weapons

Part 1: 30 minutes

Introductions (include self) – who, what, where, done any before/when was the last time you exercised? (Also intro club officials as appropriate)

Explain contents of session (introductions, background to fencing, introduction to standing and moving like a fencer)

History, 3 weapons, terminology, safety, rules of the salle (weapons, running, walking around the edges, 'Halt!'), fencing kit demo

Emphasise that all sessions start at (time) with warm-up which is essential before fencing to avoid injury

Part 2: 20 minutes

warm-up – walk, reach, jog, jog backwards, side-to-side steps,
Gentle stretches with mobility
Simple reaction time game (eg, Hand tap or 'rats and rabbits'),

Part 3: 35 minutes

stance – en garde,
advance,
retire,
thrust,
'knee' fencing (or some other mobility game to practice steps forward and backward),
break for a drink of water,
introduce the weapon, (coach issues it – reminding all about how to carry a weapon when not fencing with it)
the grip, (and if time, the hitting action)
salute

BEGINNERS' COURSE LESSON PLANS (SABRE)

SESSION 2

THEME – *The Basic Attack*

Resources: all equipment

Warm-Up/Stretch

Jog in circle, swing arms (touch floor, jump, change direction) on commands 1, 2, 3.
Gentle stretches with mobility (NO STATIC STRETCHES, DEEP STRETCHES OR HYPER-EXTENSIONS at this stage)

Game/fencing-related activity

A game of tag or 'Half-on-Half': Two teams, one stops other from getting to other side, no body contact, no diving, no ganging up. Then swap (Ask: what were people's strategies? Point out relationship to tactical use of footwork and dummy moves)

Footwork session

Revise stance, advance and retire, thrust (on coach's timing)
Break (1 minute!)

Issue jacket, plastron, glove, mask. Ensure all worn and fitted correctly, especially left/right handed

Coach *must* issue weapons (having checked them for serviceability)

Revise grip and introduce blade manipulation exercises

Teach the target and distinguish between on and off target

Teach basic cuts to head, flank and chest, at hitting (riposte) distance – short measure

Drills for practicing basic attack, at hitting distance

Teach lunge, then practice cuts at lunging (medium) distance then step lunge (long) distance

Free-Fence – introduce rules of etiquette (saluting before bout, acknowledging hits on target, saluting and shaking hands after bout)

Warm down and salute

BEGINNERS' COURSE LESSON PLANS (SABRE)

SESSION 3

THEME – Basic Defence

Resources: all equipment

Mark out game area with cones if no other markings available

Warm-Up/Stretch

Circle Jog, loosen arms and hands arms, 'Greek Dance', then touch floor, jump, change direction on commands 1, 2, 3 and add 'en garde!' on Command '4' they check foot position.

Isometric, resistance training in pairs

Game/fencing-related activity

Mass tag with glove

Kit-up. Coach *must* issue weapons

Footwork/arm session

Revise stance, advance and retire, thrust, lunge, step-lunge (on coach's timing)

Introduce the concept of defending with distance

Pairs distance exercise

Break (1 minute!)

Introduce the concept of ***priority***

Teach simple Parries of 4, 5, 3 and their direct ripostes

Drills to practice

Free fence – remind class of rules of etiquette

Warm down and salute

BEGINNERS' COURSE LESSON PLANS (SABRE)

SESSION 4

THEME – Basic Phrasing (1st Counter Riposte)

Resources: all equipment

Warm-Up/Stretch

Pass-the-Mask in teams
Gentle mobile stretches

Game/fencing-related activity

Circle Ball (two groups)

Footwork/arm session

Revise stance, advance and retire, hit, lunge (on coach's timing)
Break (1 minute!)

Kit-up. Coach *must* issue weapons

Free Fence as revision (practicing hitting, lunge and parries 4, 5, 3 + direct riposte)

Teach 1st Counter-riposte

Warm down and salute

BEGINNERS' COURSE LESSON PLANS (SABRE)

SESSION 5

THEME – Revision/Consolidation

Resources: all equipment

Warm-Up/Stretch

With a partner side-step facing each other and high five on coach command. Also change direction and 'en-garde'

With a partner, jumping and toe-tapping alternate feet, opposite feet

Game/fencing-related activity

Glove-on-mask (two groups)

Footwork/arm session

Revise stance, advance and retire, thrust, lunge, step-lunge (on coach's timing)

Slow/fast/varying speed

Changes of direction

Break (1 minute!)

Kit-up. Coach *must* issue weapons

Free Fence (best of 3 hits, when all bouts done, swap partners and repeat) Coach observes and gives feedback on performance as necessary, praising, encouraging, correcting.

After observation, revise technicalities of attack/hitting/parrying/basic phrasing to correct errors

Free fence

Warm down and salute

BEGINNERS' COURSE LESSON PLANS (SABRE)

SESSION 6

Resources: all equipment
Large sheet of squared paper for Poule Unique

Warm-Up/Stretch

Team Shuttles competition – fencing steps forward backward

Emphasis on balance

Break (1 minute!)

Kit-up. Coach *must* issue weapons

Poule Unique (fenced steam, no referees, fencers to judge and acknowledge hits)

Depends on time available and numbers in class. Decide how many hits will be fought for in each bout (5?) and set a finish time when the competition will end. All fencers fence as many others in the class as possible, reporting outcome of each bout to coach to mark on poule sheet. They will 'referee' themselves, ie acknowledging hits received. Winner is fencer with greatest number of victories. Might have best men's fencer, best women's fencer, prizes for style, effort (most bouts fought in time allowed) etc

Warm down and salute

ADDITIONAL SESSIONS

Though the Level 1 Coach Education syllabus does not include the following topics, the coach, with guidance, support and supervision from a more experienced or higher qualified coach, may wish to develop session plans to develop the foundation class further.

Consider introducing the class to:

- Footwork to support attacks and defence; use of steps to gain and lose distance. [Note: this is a strength and conditioning lesson, so exercises should reflect work on the strength aspects of footwork rather than skills]
- High line simple attacks.
- Simple indirect attacks by disengage and counter-disengage to chest with lunge and step lunge.
- 2nd Defensive Triangle (tierce, quarte, quinte) with direct and indirect ripostes.
- Footwork preparations [Note: This is a skills section and the drills should reflect this aspect]
- Blade preparations, engagements & beats.