

Counter Parries - Which Way Do They Go?

Originally Hacked Together by Jeff Powell, 1/30/2010, Updated 4/6/2013

A couple of people have asked how to remember which way counter parries go. In response I've created the following two pictures.

NOTE WELL: the view in these pictures is *out your own mask*. That's your opponent you're looking at.

The view is divided into quadrants. These are *your own quadrants*, and consequently your own parries. The two diagrams differ only in their numbering for left and right handed fencers.

As I have described in class, a counter parry starts with a movement towards a horizontal line at about your own waist level, then moves towards a vertical center line. Those horizontal and vertical lines are shown on the diagram and they are related to you, not your opponent.

The blades shown in each picture the ones with the circular arrows showing motion are your own blade in each one of the 4 parry positions. So, upper left (red) for a right handed fencer shows your blade in a parry 4 position, and the arrow shows the logical movement for a counter 4 parry.

Our class actually uses different terminology:

- 4 = quarte
- 6 = sixte
- 7 = septime
- 8 = octave

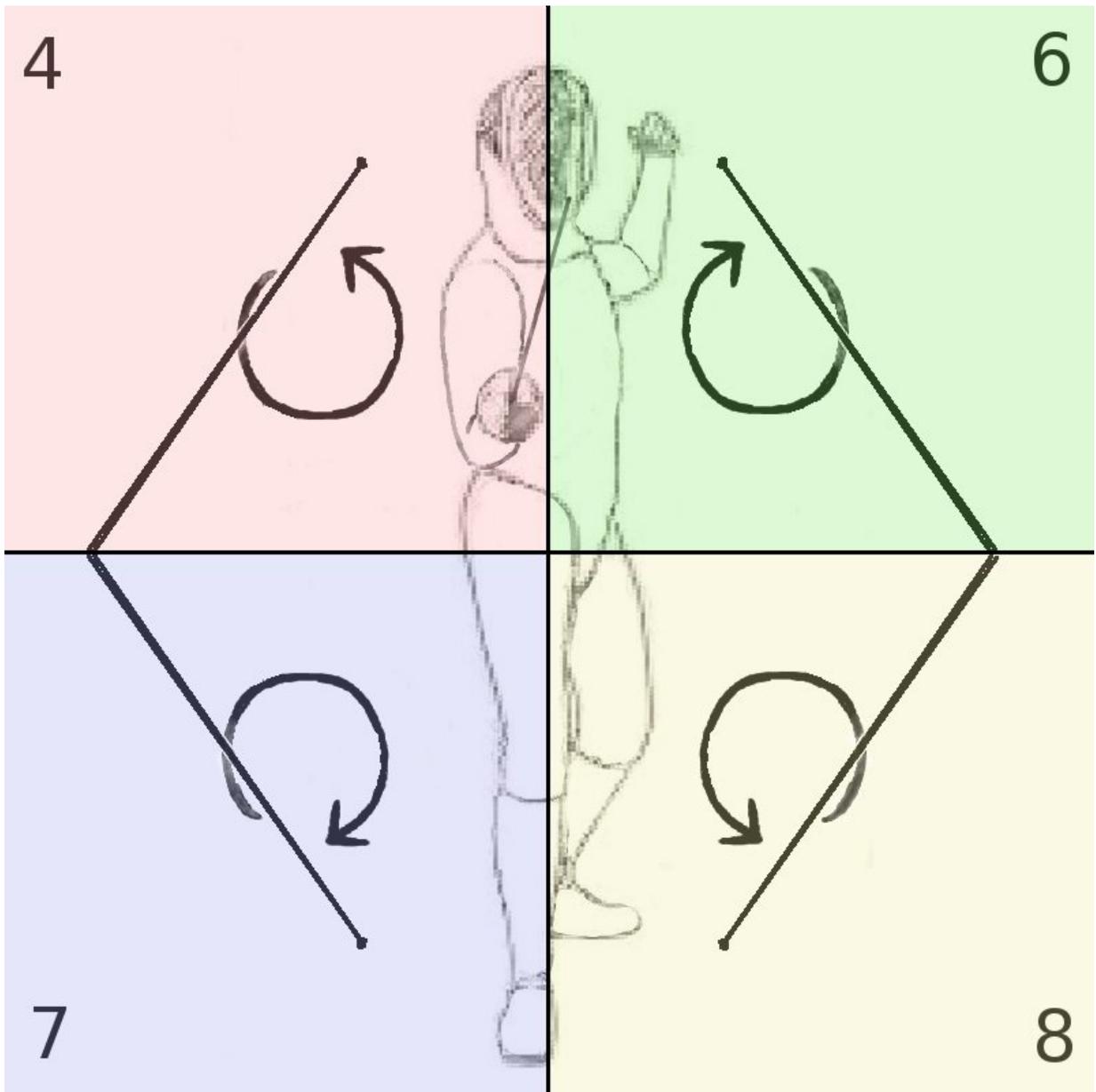
Thus a "counter quarte" is also called "counter 4" and "circle 4". Similarly for the other parries.

Next, think about the intent of a counter parry. Your goal is to take someone's blade that is inside yours in a particular line and move it (with your parry) so it is on the outside of your body and unable to hit you. For the 4 and 6 parries, you cut under your opponent's blade and then back into your original location, moving their blade to the outside. For the lower parries you cut over your opponents blade and back to the original position. A few minutes of thinking about these actions will reveal why the movements that make up a counter parry do what they do.

Finally, for a counter parry to be effective it must be small. Your circle needs to be as small as possible so your opponent doesn't see it and simply counter your counter.

Also, an actual counter parry may not be a real circle. Simply dropping below your opponent's blade and coming right back up may be adequate. So your actual parry may be a two simple vertical movements (down then up for 4 & 6; up then down for 7 & 8), it might be V shaped, or it could actually be a circle. The specifics depend on how far your blade is from your opponent's blade when you make your parry.

Right Handed Counter Parries



Left Handed Counter Parries

