

Advanced Two-person Team Fighting

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Basic Assumptions – We are assuming that the students taking this class are competent fighters, have a basic knowledge of team fighting. We also assume that their partner will also have a basic understanding of these topics.

What do we want them to come away with?

1. Being the best two-person team is about thinking not about talent. (Example of talented fighters here)

2. Analysis will become natural. You will learn to think about team fighting so that it becomes automatic. You will see your team and your opponents in terms of strengths, weaknesses and matchups.

1. **Introduction** – This class is not going to teach you to fight. In this short a period, we're not even going to teach you to fight together. The goal of this class is to show you how to teach yourselves how to fight as a team. We want to teach you how to think about two-person team fighting, and show you how to turn every single match into a tool that will make you better and better.
 - a. **Class Coverage:** We're going to cover a number of points. First, we'll hit the basics: Communication, the key to working with a partner while the fight is actually happening. Then we'll go over the process from the beginning to the end of the match: Pre-fight analysis, controlling the battlefield, on field tactics and post-fight breakdown. If we have time, we'll go over the really advanced stuff.
 - b. **Thinking about fighting:** The real motto of this class is "Think about fighting". Although we will cover some of the basic in-fight techniques that help you be successful, we believe that it is what you do before and after the fight that make you a great team, not just great individuals with the same goal. We want to teach you to analyze yourselves, your opponents, and everything in between.
 - c. **Drill** – To begin the analysis, we're gonna just do some fights so that we all see what's going on and so that Cedric and I can see where everyone is. Separate into good, medium and bad two-person teams. Pair off. Fight 3 times. Goal: each time, think about what went wrong, or what went right. What does your opponent do well/badly? Start with 3 2 on 2 fights to gauge levels.

2. **Communication** – Two man team fighting starts with communication. Without communication you will never progress beyond just being two good fighters that fight against two other fighters. Communication allows them to start functioning as a team. It also builds trust.
 - a. Talking to each other before/after the fight. How is each fighter feeling that day? Any problems they should know about? Analysis is also important but that will be covered later.

- i. Drill – Not so much a drill but talk to the class. Ask them how they feel, did they eat breakfast, etc. Get them talking to you and to each other.
 - b. In fight communication.
 - i. Defensive talking. Informing your partner of something that has happened to you. “I’m Legged”, “Behind”, “Dead”. All teams should always practice defensive talking.
 - ii. Drill – 2 fights, one fight where you are allowed to have verbal communication, one where you aren’t.
 - iii. Offensive talking. Informing your partner of something you want done or have done already. “He is legged”, “Switch”. Offensive talking only works when you have trust.
 - iv. Non verbal communication. Much more difficult. Is something your partner doing just a feint? Know when to rush. Read your partners body language.
- 3. Pre-fight Analysis –
 - a. Analysis of your own team
 - i. Self Analysis. What strengths do you have? What weaknesses? What is your best fighting style? What other styles can you fight? What types of opponents are you good against? Can you hold off aggression? Can you push people around the battlefield? Do you trust your partner? How is your foot speed? How is your reaction speed?
 - ii. Partner Analysis – Same type of questions as self analysis. Sometimes an outside eye can point out something that you yourself can’t see. No matter what be honest and critical, but not mean.
 - iii. Drill – Talk amongst yourself and give the strength and weakness of your team.
 - b. Analysis of Opponents
 - i. Break them down with all the same questions you ask yourself. Who out of the other team can you beat alone? Do they always use a certain strategy?
 - ii. Drill – Bring us up first, they analyze. Bring up another two and have the class analyze them.
 - c. Mental game – We’ll cover some of mental game in the “advanced” section, but there are a number of things you need to think about that have nothing to do with the physical side, but that are still important.
 - i. One of those is what to do when the other fighters are better than you are. If both of their fighters are better than both of you, your first priority becomes not allowing one-on-one matchups. If they hit you with TnB (which is the logical choice if they know they’re better than you), bolt to one or the other, try to cut it down to two-on-one fast, even if it means wounds. Two people with a limb gone each is better than one healthy person who’s going to lose. If only one of them is better, force the bad matchup. Get your best

on their best, or alternately, if your worse teammate can play delaying games, cut it down to two-on-one by giving your better teammate the easier kill. In both these cases, the key is being a better team. Work together, communicate like crazy. Make it work.

- ii. Confidence/Tourney Fu. Have a stupid pre-game handshake you always do. Build each other up. Discuss plans and ideas ahead of time until you feel confident you are as ready as you can be. Make sure you feel into the fight. This is basic tourney fu stuff, but the key to translating it to team fighting is that you have a responsibility to make your team mate's mental game work too.
 - iii. Trust. I'll talk more about trust in the advanced section, but here I just want to say that if you don't trust your teammate, you're not a team yet. Make sure you are open to critique and analysis from him, and try to give your analyses as softly and compassionately as you can. You are doing it not to lay blame, or shirk blame, but to forge a stronger team.
4. Pre-fight controlling that Battlefield - This is what you do before the battle. During analysis you are just gathering data. Here you need to figure out how to use that data for your best advantage. No matter what, be strong in your convictions but be willing to change if something doesn't work. Work with your partner to choose a plan. If it doesn't work talk about it and change it.
- a. Picking Matchups.
 - i. Normal lineup, who will line up against who? If they let you choose the lineup, understand that either they don't care (which is what happens most of the time) or that they also feel like it's a advantageous lineup for them. If it's the 2nd case, ask yourself why they feel that way.
 - ii. Switched lineup. Do you think you can throw them off if you switch. Switch only works if practiced and sometimes is not 100%. Best used against teams that push their own lineup on you and are not quick to react. Double switching is never worth it. If the first switch doesn't work, stick to who you have.
 - iii. I formation – If you do not want to give anything away, use I formation to line up. Often confuses your opponents unless they know it as well. Then it at least gives you a 50% chance of getting who you want.
 - iv. If all else fails, plan for defeating the bad match-up. Use strategy to overcome this.
 - b. Picking Weapons –
 - i. Problem combos: Polearm and mate can seem like a great idea, but they are too easily surrounded and separated. Only extremely good polearmers should dare take pole into a two-person fight.
 - ii. Great combos: Shield gives great defense, especially against multiple opponents. Florentine gives great offense, but is hard to

capitalize on. Semi-poles are ideal as they give the benefits of both the pole and the sword.

iii. You obviously want to pick weapons that give you confidence and competence. If you always go with the same combo, that's fine, but you can also switch up to make your matchups better. Shield v. pole, etc. If your opponents are going to be more reactive, the strong offense of Florentine can be deadly. If they are going to be extremely aggressive, shields can make all the difference. Hip to hip means that you get a better use out of combinations. Turn n burn means you should take your very best style, since it is basically one-on-ones.

c. Picking Strategy – No matter what strategy you use, make sure that you can always see both of your opponents.

i. Controlling the battlefield. Once the fight starts, remember that you need to control the battlefield. Push your opponents. If you let them push you, make sure that's a choice you want and are prepared to handle.

ii. Mobility. Plan for mobility. Make sure you use a plan that accounts for this and does not leave one partner high and dry.

iii. Three basic strategies in team fighting. Turn and burn, V formation and Hip to hip.

1. Turn and burn. This works well against range (especially poles). Puts your opponents back to back. Great for aggressive teams but often times can allow your opponents to divide and conquer (especially if they get a leg on one person).

2. V formation. Safest method against most teams. Keep each other in eye sight about 5-7 feet apart. Allows each partner to work by themselves but also to be able to help the other partner.

3. Hip to hip. Hardest formation to master but can be very helpful. Translates the best to line fighting/ditching. Bonus is that it allows each partner to really capitalize on cross shots.

4. Drill – Force teams to try all three strategies. Ask them how it felt? Pros and cons.

5. During Tactics –

a. The Switch

i. The switch can really fuck up opponents who particularly want a given matchup. Needs to be practiced... who goes in front? Done badly, or too close to opposition, the switch spells certain death.

b. Legging the opposition

i. Great way to make a two on two a two on one. Is best used with a wide V formation (closer to a turn n burn). Allows you to use speed to turn the two on two into two on one. Be careful not to rush the gang up, since this often leads to carelessness. If one

person is legged, the other loses mobility, since he has to stick with his partner. This is a great place for longer weapons like semi-poles.

- c. Delay
 - i. Set the matchup. Put your “killer” against the easier of the two opponents and then have your teammate play the slowdown game, preferably off a distance. This is best done with long weapons to control tempo.
 - d. Split
 - i. If you are both sure you can take your man, split further to assure one-on-one fights. This is the principle behind turn and burn.
 - e. Get them back to back (surround)
 - i. If fight tempo is slow enough, edge around until you can see your partner, but your opponents can't see each other. This puts you in an ideal position to capitalize on kills, damage and your opponents' bad communication.
 - f. Drill – Get up, get people moving around...show them why these strats work and why they don't. Set them up in positions on the field and ask them what they should do. Give them different strategies such as one person is legged and one isn't. No right or wrong answer as long as they defend what they suggest to do.
6. Are you done? NOOOO.
- a. After a fight is over, more talking. What worked? What went wrong? No matter what even if angry, don't leave the field without talking about what happened.
 - b. If you win the fight, talk about what worked. Talk about what would have worked better.
 - c. If you lost the fight, admit the problems. Make them specific (“I should have called leg”) compared to something general (“I sucked”). Plan so that you won't fall into the same problem again the next time. Do not let excuses get in the way. If someone sluffed you, do not dwell on that. Just plan for it the next time and make sure they can't do it again.
 - d. Drill – Pair them up and have them start talking. Fight 3 then have the whole class talk.
 - e. Trust, vengeance, and non verbal communication, the next step – This is the touchy feely stuff. But it will help you. There are three things I want to go over here:
 - i. Trust: It is unreasonable to ask that you trust your teammate in fights today. Ideally, find someone you always fight with, and learn with them. Fight with them. Even if that person doesn't want to enter the tourney, they should know that they have a duty to fight in two-person. If your attention is even slightly divided, by worrying if the other person is going to fail, or isn't going to call dead, or needs help... that is concentration your opponent isn't getting. I know that Ced is there for me. I don't care if he gets steamrolled by his opponent, because I know he's going to do

everything he can to give us the best shot, even if that is just to let me know that he's dead. I have seen too many teams die, because each one is spending time checking the other side of the fight.

- ii. Vengeance: When your partner dies. Get mad. Get revved and call out, in melodramatic Mel Gibson style that you will avenge his death! Fight harder and faster than you ever have before and get kill the guy who put your buddy out. It sounds crazy, but it works. If you feel protective of your partner, you can use that emotion to win, even after your partner dies, leaving you in a two-on-one.
- iii. Non-verbal communication. The ideal is to find that place where you and your partner know what you're doing without speaking. You can tell whether you are going to push left or push right. You know whether him being legged is a problem or if he is super fast on his knees. All these things can be the difference between a good team and a great one.
- iv. The Next Step: Finding a two-person team partner is like getting married. You are going to be loathe to fight in tourney with anyone else. It'll feel a little awkward, and a little like cheating. You'll revel in your successes and drink away your defeats. Its one of the coolest things in this game.