

Sword and Shield  
Sir Jabberwock  
SKBC 2006

1. Introduction

- a. What we'll cover: This class is mostly going to be concerned with 1-on-1, tourney style fighting, especially shield v shield. The class is going to be a little bit of lecture, and a lot of workshop. First we'll hit the basics, then go over some close techniques, then some long techniques. Note that close vs. far is not a weapon-length description, but a style description. We're not going to do much with bucklers, but most punch-shield styles can be adapted for the faster speed and weaker defense of the buckler.
- b. First, the Basics: There are a few do's and don'ts we want to hit before we go any further. Now this isn't a 101 class, but even some more advanced fighters run into these:
  - i. Don't do stupid shit with your sword arm. Lots of fighters have a resting place for that sword arm that puts it in a bad, bad place. Tuck your elbow, and depending on your shield, cock your wrist.
  - ii. Do come back to neutral. Lots of fighters "drift" as blows are exchanged, moving their arm and body more and more out of position and not coming back. If you see someone do this, trade pointless blows with them until they hand you the kill.
  - iii. Do keep yourself balanced. If you're charging, don't over-charge. If you're standing, don't get too planted.
  - iv. **Drill: Return to Neutral – Have each person practice throwing shows on each other and returning to neutral each time.**
- c. Far vs. Close: OK, now we're gonna move on to Far v Close. Everyone know what those are? Close means you like to fight up and personal. Far means you like your long distance, you guard your personal space and you probably prefer longer weapons. **Let's split up: Close over there with Cedric and Far over here with Jabberwock.**
  - i. Personal Style: You need to find what works for you. Few people are equally good at long and close combat. Quick note: "legs on death" will destroy your ability to fight against the long game. The style you pick should match your comfort level with body contact, speed and personal space.
  - ii. Differences: Pros/Cons (general): In general, close is dominant once it passes the outside radius of the longweapon, what we call "black zone". In general, long style will dominate if it can control the tempo of the combat.
  - iii. Switching: Partly because longer weapons make the long game easier and short weapons make the close game easier, it is sometimes difficult to switch styles in battle without switching weapons (which you can and should do in open). Swords in the 36-38 inch range work fairly well for both styles and allow for some level of switching.
  - iv. **Drill: Ask what people like about their style.**

- d. Shield Type
    - i. Punch/Center: Allows for lots of movement and block interaction. Has a depth of movement that allows for greater adaptation to a number of different styles. Requires more concentration to use and is easier to fake out of the way than a strap shield.
    - ii. Strap: Gives great passive protection, hard to fake, hard to power through. Doesn't give much active protection and requires more body movement to use effectively, which is inherently slower than arm movement.
      - 1. technology and strap placement: Strap shields should not be built with the strap straight in the middle. In newer tech, the strap is lower and more forward, allowing more shrug and back protection, leaving the front to arm movement and sword blocking.
      - 2. flat v curved: Flat shields grant more protection (cone of protection), but once gotten around are less protective. Curved shields will actively bend to protect the shoulder if given force.
2. Close
- a. Pros/Cons specific
    - i. Pro: Fast, hard to defend against, requires less strength
    - ii. Con: Bad defense, can be exhausting, no room for error
  - b. Targets: **Drill: Ask for good close fighting shield v shield targets. Partner up and practice each as we go through them.**
    - i. Over the shoulder: back
    - ii. Around the side: back
    - iii. R. Side – the “torch choke” for a high cross.
  - c. Movements
    - i. Lots of motion: Stutter the charge.
    - ii. Charge: Wrist cocked back, shield high and tight. Use small steps so that you can control where you stop.
    - iii. Side to side: Not as many openings in front. Use the opponent's shield against him. Stay in the shadow of that shield and follow it, moving away from the swordarm. You get closer to the back, he gets closer to your shield. **Drill: Set up two students and show it.**
  - d. Grips and hits
    - i. Hammerfist. Close style is most often associated with a hammerfist. This gives power and speed without a lot of tip control, which is mostly unnecessary in close style.
    - ii. Blade hits. The close style fights with the whole blade, not just the tip. Blows are solid.
    - iii. Power. The close style can deliver a lot of power quickly, moving aside shields and blocks.
  - e. Stance: The stance is pretty tense, and holds a lot of energy. The idea is to ready to capitalize on a moment's weakness to move into black zone. You want to be light on your feet, with ready power. Sword is cocked and ready.

Generally, stay low, since that helps protect your vulnerable legs. Stamp and jump if you have to. **Ced demonstrates.**

- f. Fighting against other styles
    - i. Pole: Close does great against Pole. The hardest part is that close fighters are not as used to having to protect their legs, the most vulnerable target against a pole.
    - ii. Florentine: Stab. The difficulty of using close style against Florentine is the “hug”. However, stabs under the shield can protect against these. **Cedric demonstrates on Jab.**
    - iii. Far shield: Block and charge.
    - iv. Against multiple opponents: Mobility is your friend, you have to keep moving and capitalize on their desperation shots against a solid defense.
  - g. Legged:
    - i. The close style doesn't like to be legged, since it relies so heavily on mobility.
    - ii. Against a legged opponent, close has the advantage of controlling distance, but has to keep his defenses very very tight. While moving he is vulnerable until he gets into the black zone.
3. Far
- a. Pros/Cons specific
    - i. Pro: Slower, Easier (endurance-wise), Room for mistakes, Good defense
    - ii. Con: Easier to defend against, takes more strength, looked down on.
  - b. Targets: **Drill: Ask for good long fighting shield v shield targets. Match up partners and practice each shot.**
    - i. L. Shoulder: Up and over, break at the wrist.
    - ii. R. Arm: Down and under
    - iii. The money shot: Legs.
  - c. Movements
    - i. Forward: The idea of aggressive far style is to push the opponent back to control distance through intimidation. Not for everyone. Helps to be a large, intimidating brute.
    - ii. Back: Very reactive. Moving back gives you more space allowing more shots and breaking the charge's effectiveness.
    - iii. Side: Few far fighters use much of a side motion. It relies on deception and body fakes.
  - d. Grips and Hits
    - i. Epee grip. Far style is most often associated with a epee grip. This gives tip control at the expense of a little power, which can be made up for by inertia.
    - ii. Tip hits. The ideal striking point of the far style is the very end of the blade, ideally just enough to count.
    - iii. Power. The far style can work up power, but at the expense of speed. The style is much harder on joints and forearms..

- e. Stance: The stance for Far leans back a little, since you don't need to be low and fast for tight charging defense. Sword is at normal resting position OR low and under the shield for quick access to legshots. Consider switching feet if you are a defensive fighter. **Show the Jab-shot.**
  - f. Fighting against other styles
    - i. Pole: Because long weapons are still shorter than a pole, the far fighter fighting pole basically switches to close style and does his best to adapt for a slightly longer reach. The principle is exactly the same as close v pole.
    - ii. Florentine: Stab. The difficulty of using close style against Florentine is the "hug". Stabs are much less risky with the length of your weapon backing you up. Far style can also take free shots on Florentine from relative safety.
    - iii. Close shield: Control distance. Seek legs like a whore.
    - iv. Multiple opponents: Legs and sidesweeps are your friend. Keep lateral movement so that you are staying at your length by moving them around one another. Especially if their weapons are shorter, you can slow them down by leg shots or the threat of leg shots.
  - g. Legged:
    - i. The far style doesn't mind too much being legged, as mobility is not one of its key elements. The main disadvantage of being legged is not mobility but height. Shoulder shots are harder. One thing to consider is that you will get one or maybe two shots as the close fighter charges. Go high first, to try for kills or arms. Legging a close fighter as he charges does you no good. Far style v far style is not too great a disadvantage, although your opponent has better high shots, he no longer has the free leg shots.
    - ii. Against a legged opponent, far style should sit back and snipe until he wins or the fight is called on account of apocalypse. If you are adept at using a long weapon as a short sword (see Principles of Range... plug), you can move in and take the kill as a close fighter would.
4. Vs. Lefty: What are some shots against lefty?
- i. Swordside stab
  - ii. Leftarm snap
  - iii. stutterfeint, blocksnap
5. Drills and workshop
- a. **Drill – Charging - close fighters v far fighters – The goal of the close fighter is to charge the far fighter. The goal of the far fighter is to make sure they don't let the close fighter close with them.**
  - b. **Drill – Workshop – Bring up two fighters and have them fight 3 fights. After the 3 fights, have the class analyze each fight talking about pros and cons of their fighting styles. After analyzing, bring up 2 more people to fight. Repeat.**