

# **MINI FENCE I**

## **THE LEON PAUL JUNIOR FENCING SYSTEM**



# *INTRODUCTION*

Over the last 20 years, fencing programmes for children from 8 years upwards have been developed as a result of increasing interest and the realisation that the wide range of skills involved in fencing can help children to develop in all sorts of ways.

Younger children, however, (and some 8-10 yr olds), do not have the stamina, concentration span and motor coordination to cope with fencing lessons, even though there are now smaller, lightweight weapons to use. Also, the competitive nature of a fencing fight is not suitable for under 8 yr olds. They need to be introduced to sports and physical activity in a non-threatening, lively, varied, fun way.

This scheme is designed around the very basic fencing moves and concepts in order to improve physical and mental skills in an unusual and enjoyable way. For the under 8s the skills and educational content are far more important than the actual fencing. If any of them go on to become fencers, that will be a bonus but we want them to learn that exercise is fun and putting effort into improving is satisfying.

The manual is designed for non-fencing teachers or coaches but initially this scheme will also require some preparation before each lesson. Once the first course has been completed, it will become much easier! If you could spend an hour with a fencer going through the basic positions, it would probably make life a lot easier although the CD Rom is very helpful.

Anyone with some fencing training will find they can miss out chunks of the instruction notes.

The lesson plan is written with the 6-8s in mind so for most weeks only one new move is included ~ the pace is necessarily slow and frequent revision vital. If you are using Mini-Fence with older kids or in a holiday activity session, you will need to work out your own plan using the manual to help.

All the games and exercises have been selected from the wide variety used at Finchley Foil, the North London children's fencing club set up by Ziemek and Sue Wojciechowski in 1992. As you go along you will no doubt make up your own versions and add in new ones of your own.

Our very grateful thanks to Heulwen Rees and the 10 children from Nightingale JMI School, Wood Green, London who piloted the programme.

As this is a new development, feedback about the Mini-Fence scheme, problems encountered, suggestions, etc. are very welcome ~ please send to Leon Paul.

Best of luck with your young group and hope you enjoy the experience.

Clare Halsted

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# THE PROGRAMME

## GENERAL LESSON FORMAT

Each session follows the same general plan – approximate time in brackets

Children should if possible wear t-shirts, (sweatshirts if cold), track suit trousers and trainers.

### AIMS

#### 1. WARM UP (15-20 MINUTES)

- to get all children involved and active straight away
- to warm up muscles, especially legs
- for exercise !- encouraging the children to be fit and energetic

*Select from the games and exercises from page 29*

#### 2. SKILLS EXERCISES (10 MINUTES)

- to develop balance, coordination, reaction time, agility, concentration, cooperation

*Select from page 31*

#### 3. STRETCHING - OPTIONAL (5 MINUTES)

- to introduce the idea of stretching as part of any P.E. activity – establishing good habits early

*Select from page 34*

#### 4. THE FENCING (20-25 MINUTES)

- to introduce the basics of modern fencing in a fun way
- to teach the basic moves correctly
- to teach sportsmanship and appropriate behaviour
- to enable the group to fence with each other using the moves and footwork properly

NB The aims are NOT

- to stress the competitive aspects of fencing at this stage
- to encourage aggressive behaviour
- to differentiate between the faster and slower learners

*Pages 7 to 21 sets out the 10 lessons*

*Page 22 includes additional material for older children or longer courses*

#### 5. FINISH (5 MINUTES)

- to round off the session as a group using a calmer, cooling down routine

*Select from page 37*

# *ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES*

## **6. FOOTWORK GAMES AND EXERCISES**

*Select from page 37*

Good footwork is essential for good fencing as a sporting activity. It must be well taught from the beginning – bad habits are difficult to change later. An imaginative approach is necessary with all children, especially this age group. Little and regularly is the way to improve (for adults as well!)

*These ideas can be used at the beginning or end of the fencing lesson as required.*

## **7. QUIETER IDEAS**

*Select from page 41*

Sometimes useful      at the end of the session for calming down an excited group  
as a rest activity during a longer session  
if children are getting tired  
to be done at another time eg in the classroom

# *SO.....HAVE FUN FENCING!*

# *THE FENCING*

## 10 WEEK LESSON PLAN –SUMMARY OF NEW MATERIAL

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# THE FENCING

## WEEK 1

### Introduction

Talk about sword fighting as in films, fencing as a sport, safe behaviour.

### Show foils and correct grip

Check if right or left handed

Put thumb on dot marked on foil handle

### Show mask

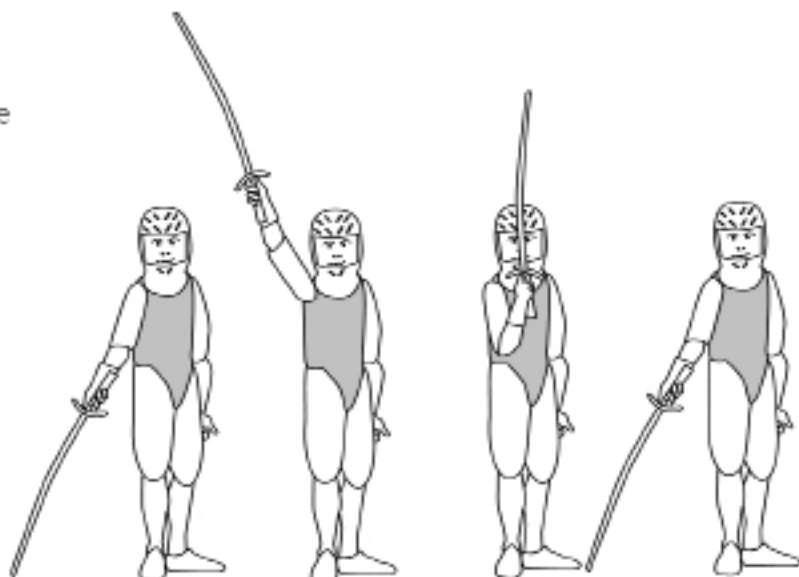
Practice putting on and off --then  
put out of the way

### Teach simple salute

feet at 90°, - dominant toe pointing forwards  
[use lines on floor if any]

1. foil down, arm straight
2. foil up, arm straight
3. guard in front of mouth, arm bent
4. foil down, arm straight

put foils down behind fencers.



### On guard position ~ legs only (see video/CD/poster)

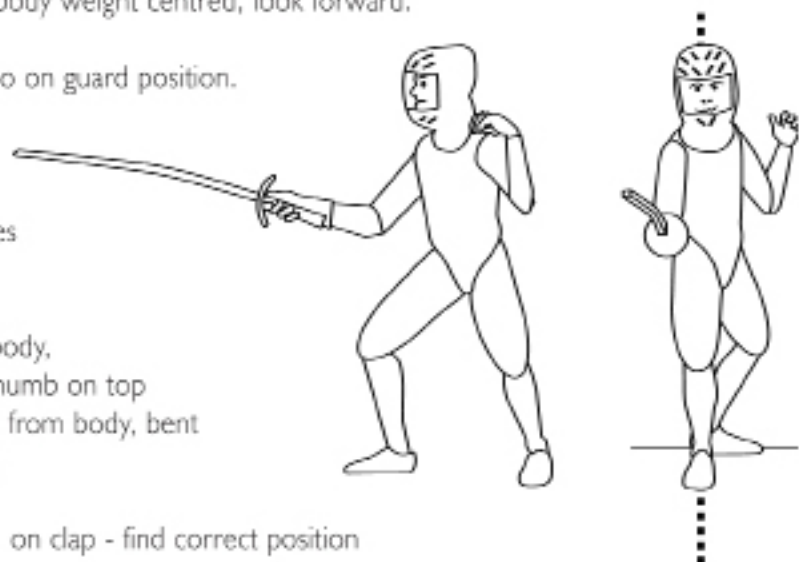
demonstrate first with hands on hips

feet at 90°, a stride apart, knees bent, body weight centred, look forward.

Relax, jog on spot ~ on clap - jump into on guard position.

Shout ON GUARD to learn the term

Variations      face backwards  
                    sit down  
                    turn round several times



### On guard position ~ arms only

leading arm bent, elbow not touching body,

foil pointing forward in line with arm, thumb on top

back arm 'balancing arm' held up, away from body, bent

Relax, shake arms in air ~ find position

Variations

make circles in air, one or both arms -- on clap - find correct position

punch forwards, sideways, up

clap hands in air

### New words

Fencing    Foil    Mask    Grip    On guard    Salute

### Salute

with foils and masks ~ in a line facing teacher ~ to finish with

### Kit away

End of fencing lesson 1  
(If time ~ finishing off activity)

# WEEK 2

## *Revision of week 1*

### **Grip**

- NB Dot marks the top of the foil grip
- Check who is L and R handed (if possible!)
- Thumb on top
- Put L handers on the L of all the R handers if in a line

### **Salute**

- Arm straight on 1, 2 and 4; bent on 3 (see diagrams)
- If any child volunteers, encourage them to stand in front of the class and lead the salute.

### **On guard position - legs**

- Use floor lines ~ stand with heels only on line, feet apart and parallel - turn dominant foot forwards along line
- Bend knees ~ look forward - voila!
- Relax, jog on spot ~ on clap ~ jump into position on the line
- Variations -- face backwards -- jump round, correct feet -- turn round several times then on guard

### **On guard position ~ arms**

- With foils
- Sword arm bent, foil pointing forward (at imaginary opponent/fencer), elbow not touching body
- Back arm -- 'balancing arm' -- bent, held up, back and away from body -- not too high -- hand relaxed.
- Drop both arms -- on clap/signal find position
- Variations - raise both arms in air - stretch arms out forwards/backwards

## *New for Week 2*

Explain that when fencers fight each other they move backwards and forwards not side to side or round in a circle.  
[Not quite the same as in films like Zorro]

Full On Guard position Now combine arms and legs  
Hold the position (knees bent) for a few seconds then shake arms and legs to relax

Variation -- all stand along a line -- one by one jump into On Guard until all are in position -- then jump out of position/ sit down - one by one or all together.  
Shout ON GUARD as they jump

### **Fencing steps**

#### Forward

- Hands on hips (so as to concentrate on feet)
- front foot first, small steps, feet always apart,
- knees always bent
- Step along line on floor if possible
- Keep front foot pointing forward, back foot at right angle, heels on line