

Ask the Ref: Point in Line in Sabre

Contributed by Matthew Cox
Thursday, 19 July 2007

Fencing.Net recently sent over some common sabre refereeing questions to national sabre referee Matthew Cox.

What do you look for with a point-in-line in sabre? What kind of break in distance is needed for you to assign the PIL priority and what is the fencer "in line" allowed to do while still maintaining priority?

The most common complaint to a referee in the line-establishing debate is: "But they didn't break distance!" If the point in line is established by a fencer before their opponent starts an attack, it is established, regardless of distance. Once established, the fencer can move forward, backward, and even lunge with the line.

Derobement of an attempt to find the line by an attacker is allowed, assuming that it is a true disengage with the point, not a movement of the whole arm, for instance.

What about a passe line?

In sabre, it is very hard for the referee to see a passe line anymore, now that the artificiality of the capteur has been removed from the game. And, very few referees are willing to overrule the scoring apparatus when there's one light on the machine (as often happens now with a point in line and the most recent lock-out timing). In most cases, the referee's judgement of the point fixing is hard to question, as the scoring mechanism will show a light, even when article t. 70 (b) could be called into effect.

Matthew Cox is a Level 3 rated referee who can be found officiating at North American Cup (NAC) events. He is also coach at the Mid South Fencers Club (<http://www.midsouthfencersclub.org/>). In his competitive career, Matt has won the Pacific Northwest Sectional Championship, the Oregon State Games and North Carolina Divisional Sabre Championship several times.