

***REFEREE MANUAL Lv2:
Head Referee (2023)***

v3.230427



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UPDATES

Version 3 “Split Update”, updated April 27, 2023

- Split document into two, advanced material moved to third referee manual
 - Lightspeed Saber Aesthetic Doctrine removed
 - CLASH method removed
 - Deliberation/investigation/etc removed
- Reduced [congruences](#) to three types instead of four (absorbed logical congruence into full congruence)
- Added more specific instructions for prosecuting the [Triple Double rule](#).
- Added note from CEO
- Added Control Break and Continuation concepts to [§4-1 How To Handle Mistakes](#).
- Added [Violations protocol](#).
- Added [Credits](#)
- Added [single hand counting methods](#).
- Codified [Mutual Hand Targeting and Defense Deferral exceptions](#)

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AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It's time to learn how to be the head referee, the most important role in Lightspeed Saber fencing, but maybe not for the reason you think. Being head ref is not merely about counting points or enforcing the rules, etc. If not these reasons, then the next thing you're probably going to assume, then, is that being the head ref is all about making accurate calls. It's a good guess, but it's wrong. You can make 100% accurate calls and still be a terrible referee if the way you ref makes your matches slow and boring, or so incomprehensible or imperceptible that the sport isn't any fun.

And that's the real importance of the head referee: fun. Are your fencers having a good time? Are people enjoying watching? Are *you* enjoying watching? If the answers are yes, then you are doing a great job as head referee. Lightspeed Saber fencing should be fun. It should be fast. It should be exciting. It should be intense. And it should be beautiful. As head ref, *you* have the power to make it so.

But don't feel too pressured. Head ref material is covered in *two* manuals, and if you only study this first head ref manual, you'll be 90% of the way to being a great head referee, and having *more fun doing it too*.

Cang Snow
Founder, President, & Chief Executive Officer

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS MANUAL

This manual is going to treat you like a technician. We will still depend on your knowledge and experience as a fencer to do the best job possible, but many decisions are taken out of your hands and treated algorithmically. Simply follow the algorithm, and you'll do well.

This document was originally a single manual, but has since been split into two, in order to simplify the learning process and expedite the creation of efficient, if slightly imperfect, head referees. As such, much of the original information has been deferred to Referee Manual Level 3. Here's what you can expect in this manual, and what you *should not expect in this manual*:

What's in this manual

- Basic procedures and responsibilities of the head referee
- Congruence
- Transparency
- Communication
- Announcement

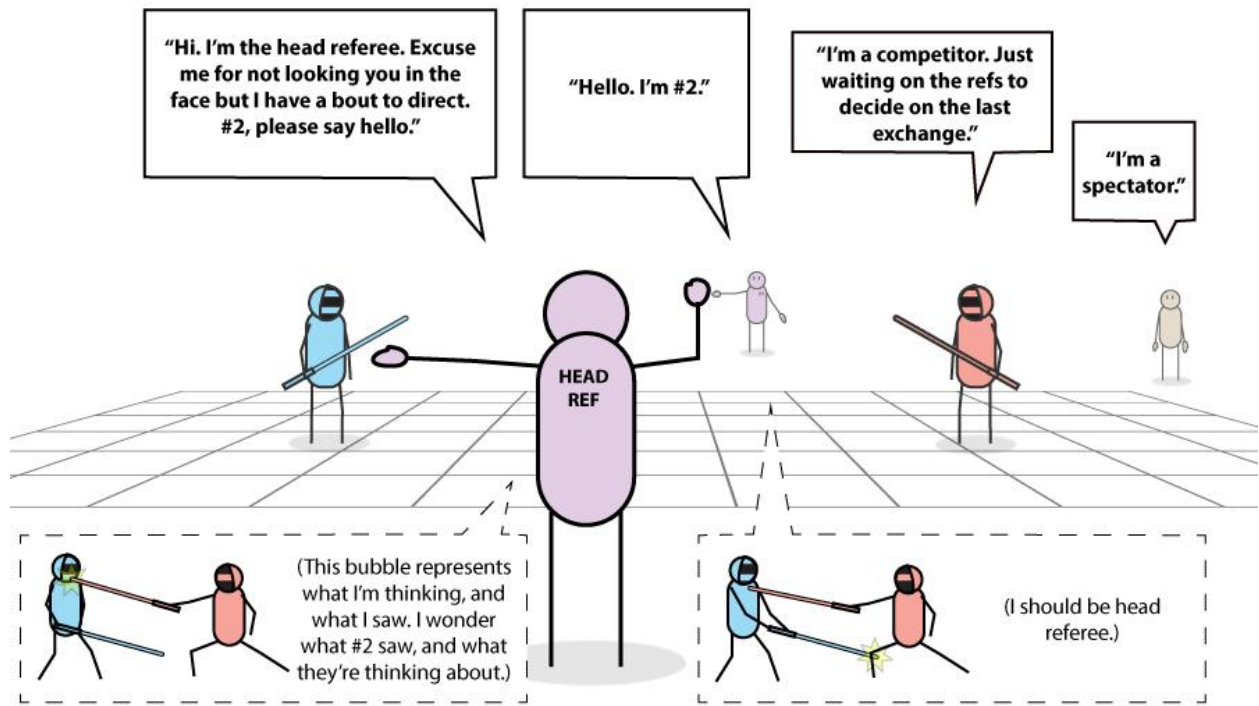
What's not in this manual

- Bout directorship
- CLASH
- Lightspeed Saber Aesthetic Doctrine (LSAD)
- Deliberation / Investigation / Conference
- Selective reffing

Comics

This manual contains comics. Bold, solid bubbles represent speech. Dashed bubbles represent thoughts.

Each scene usually represents referee action *after the exchange has already taken place*. Action depicted inside bubbles represents the recollection of the associated referee. See below.



A Note On Terms

As we continue to refine the rules and procedures, some terminology is in flux. In general, the terms *deliberate*, *confer*, and *investigate* or *deliberation*, *conference*, and *investigation* are interchangeable.

***SECTION I:
WHO IS THE HEAD REF & WHAT THEY
DO (DUTIES & PROCEDURES)***

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§1-0 INTRODUCTION

The referee in Lightspeed Saber fencing is not just an official who counts points and enforces rules. **The head referee is also the key to Lightspeed Saber League's success as a sport and an organization.**

In this section you will learn about:

- The head referee's responsibilities,
 - the detailed procedure for the head referee during bouts and tournaments,
 - and, **most importantly**, you will learn the critical importance of the head referee to the growth and proper expression of Lightspeed Saber fencing, and why understanding this importance is key to the success of our sport
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§1-1 OVERVIEW OF THE HEAD REF

Most people already understand that, as head referee, you are the final decision maker on who gets points and how many, and you are the primary announcer for the bout. Often overlooked, though, is your role as the *architect of the match*. Your reffing style or behavior determines if the match is *fun*. **This is your most important *unique* function as head referee.**

DUTIES

Your specific and *unique* duties as head referee include:

- Starting the match
- Starting each encounter
- Awarding points when able and appropriate
- Announcing calls, decisions, points, and the current leader after applicable exchanges
- Applying penalties when necessary (usually in conjunction with the secondary)
- Declaring the winner and ending the match

YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DUTY AS HEAD REF

The most important thing to do as head ref that *no one else* does is to make sure that the match is *fun*. It should be fun to watch, and fun to fence. Refing accurately is *part of* ensuring that the match is fun, but reffing quickly and efficiently is *equally important*, and a lot of referees still neglect this. It is the difference between making the *right decision* and making *the best decision* for the match, and these are not always the same answer.

You don't have to worry about this too much in this manual because this manual will show you exactly what to do in various situations, and thereby leaving you few actual decisions to make. In Referee Manual Level 3, you'll learn when *not to* follow the instructions laid out here, so you can do your absolute best as a head referee who is focused on generating the best match possible, and allowing Lightspeed Saber League to be the world's fastest *and best* light-based fencing.

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§1-2 ADVANCED PROCEDURE & REVIEW

While you saw a broad and basic procedure in Manual One, a more precise protocol is required of the referee, primarily for the sake of transparency and accuracy.

1. Call the fencers into the box.
2. If the fencers have not yet fully equipped (gloves, elbow guards, and mask/helmet on, etc), then instruct them to do so.
3. With the secondary ref, perform the equipment and safety check. If there are no problems, then the match may proceed.
4. Instruct the fencers to salute.
5. Start the encounter with three sequential commands to give the fencers adequate warning to be prepared:
 - a. If the fencers are not ready, tell them to get, "On Guard." Otherwise you can go straight to Step B.
 - b. Say, "Ready?" as a final check.
 - c. Say, "Fence!" to begin the match.
6. The bout proceeds.
7. Call, "Break!" to stop the bout once a contact has been scored, or if the bout needs to be stopped for any reason.
8. Signal Phase - Display your referee signals based on what you believe happened in the exchange.
9. Judgment Phase - Compare your signals to your Secondary's and decide who to award points and how many, if any (you don't have to make a judgment if there is no definitive winner of the exchange). (Also see [Section II: Judgment.](#))
10. Announcement Phase - Announce your judgment. (See [§3-2 Communication In the Announcement Phase.](#))
11. Repeat steps 5 thru 10 until matchpoint or matchtime is reached. (The match concludes exactly at the moment the buzzer sounds. Only hits arriving before or simultaneous with the buzzer are valid. Any hits arriving *after* the buzzer are invalid.)

12. Announce the points and the winner of the match.
13. Direct the fencers to touch blades or gloves if they have not done so on their own (they should do so with their masks removed).
14. Direct the fencers to leave the box if they have not and call the next pair of fencers in, if any.
15. Repeat from Step 1.

§1-3 TRIPLE DOUBLE RULE

Messy interactions are a part of all combat sports; Lightspeed Saber is no exception. However, some matches are inherently difficult to referee, and the match can stall due to neither fencer being able to receive a point. In such cases, the Triple Double Rule is one of the game features that provides an automatic mechanism for advancement (fight time being the other one).

TERMS REVIEW

- Primary attack, contact or fencer – The first attack or contact to be thrown or landed in a contact exchange, or the first fencer to do so.
- Secondary attack, contact, or fencer – The second attack or contact to be thrown or landed in a contact exchange, or the second fencer to do so.
- En route (aka “in time”) – Describes a secondary contact that arrived “early” enough in the exchange to be factored into scoring considerations. As opposed to errant. Generally means the contact exchange will be scored as a first contact.

RULE REVIEW

The Triple Double Rule assigns Attack Priority to a fencer. It means that the Priority Fencer is always considered to have arrived first as long as their contact was en route or simultaneous in the contact exchange. In such a case, the fencer with Attack Priority will receive one point, even if they didn’t land first. The other fencer will receive none, even if they did land first (also see §8.4.2.1 in the Basic Rules Manual).

If the Priority Fencer lands a contact first, they earn the normal quantity of points. Priority generally lasts for just one encounter.

GENERAL PROCEDURE FOR THE TRIPLE DOUBLE RULE

1. When tossing an exchange due to simultaneous contact, incongruence, or ambiguity, note whether it is the first, second, or third consecutive instance.
2. Going into Priority
 - a. If it is the first or second, proceed to the next encounter and go back to Step 1.
 - b. If it is the third, announce that Attack Priority is to be applied for the next encounter.

3. Assigning Priority
 - a. If this is the first time that Attack Priority is to be applied in this match, then assign Attack Priority by honor (if honor is being tracked) or at random (see [§3-3 Transparency](#) for more details).
 - b. If this is not the first time that Attack Priority is to be applied in this match, then assign Attack Priority to the fencer who *did not* have Attack Priority in the last instance (thus the assignment of Priority alternates between fencers).
4. Announce which fencer will have Attack Priority.
5. Begin the next encounter (we will call it the Priority Encounter).
6. In the Priority Encounter:
 - a. If the Priority Fencer is the first to land a contact, signal and score that contact normally.
 - b. If the Priority Fencer makes contact simultaneously or en route in the exchange,
 - i. signal for First Contact in favor of the Priority Fencer,
 - ii. announce that Attack Priority is being applied, and
 - iii. award the Priority Fencer one point.
 - c. In any other situation in which the fencer without priority makes contact, signal and score that normally.
7. If the match has not yet concluded, announce that Priority is now rescinded and return to Step 1.

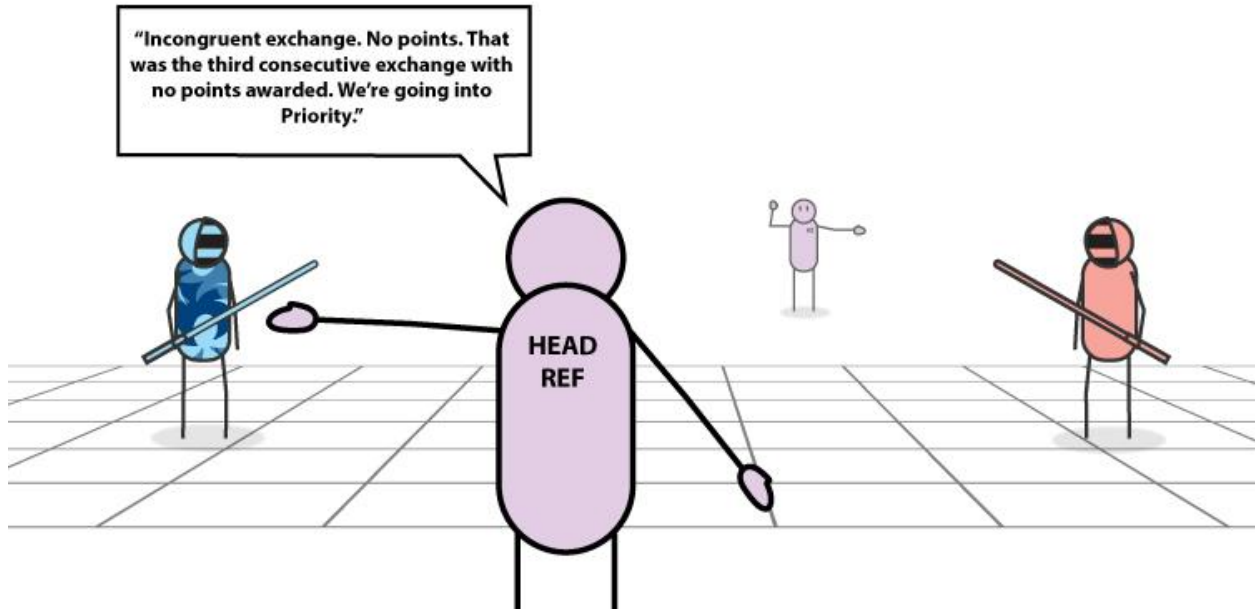
TALK TO YOUR SECONDARY

Normally, Headshots and Counterattacks do not factor in secondary action, and their hand signals reflect this fact. This makes these signals inadequate for dealing with the match when Priority is in play. Therefore, as head ref, you must pay careful attention to the exchange and discuss verbally with your Secondary if there is anything that went on that isn't described by the signals.

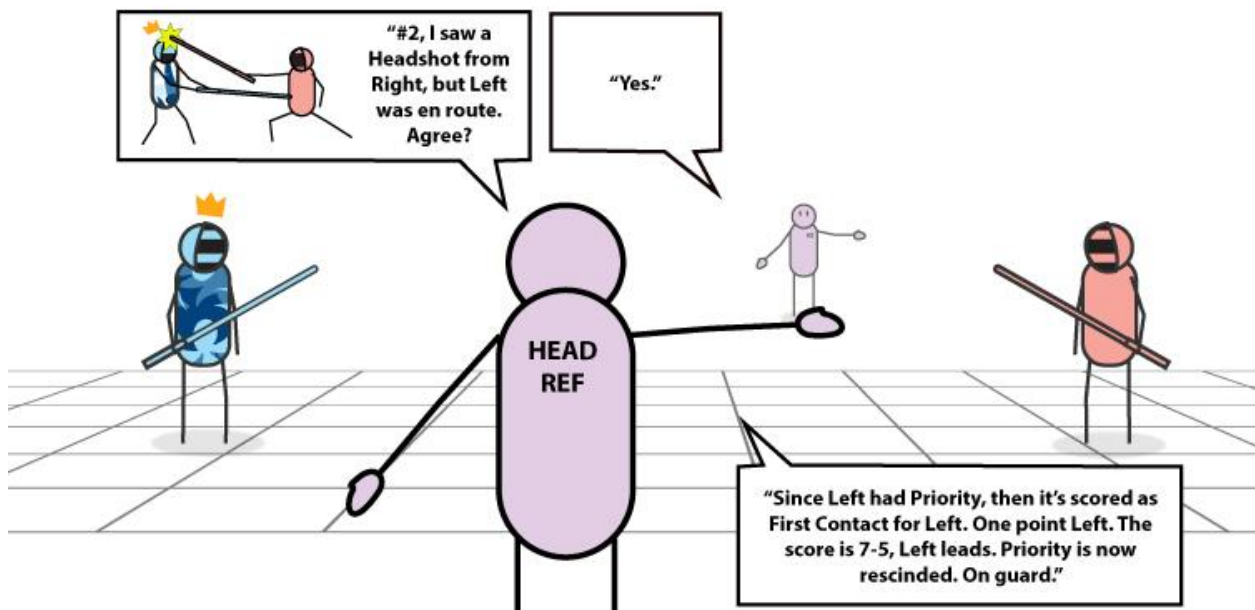
PRIORITY HIERARCHY

In the event that two different priority rules are in conflict with one another, Attack Priority takes precedence. This generally applies to a Headshot Priority versus Attack Priority.

Figures



The referees don't agree on which fencer should be awarded points, therefore no points are awarded. This is the third such instance in a row, so the head ref takes the match into Priority.



Priority was assigned to the Left fencer for the next exchange. While Right earned a Headshot, Left was en route, and therefore Priority comes into play. Left earns one point for the Priority contact.

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§1-4 ENFORCING VIOLATIONS

OVERVIEW

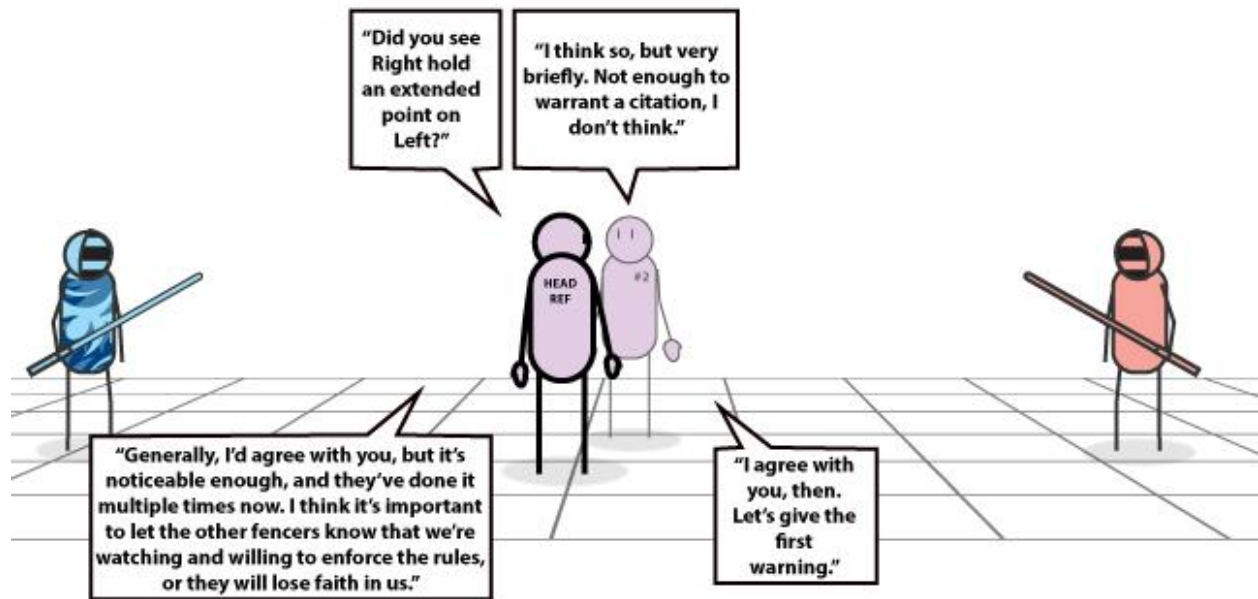
Lightspeed Saber uses a three tiered violation system, where violations are categorized in terms of severity. Repeated **minor** violations will eventually award points to the opponent, while repeated **major** violations can eventually lead to automatic forfeiture of the current match or forfeiture of the tournament. One **expulsory** violation results in instant removal from the tournament and a possible temporary or permanent ban from the league.

- Minor violations are impermanent and are only counted within the current bout.
- Major violations award event-permanent cards (yellow, red, and black) that are persistent throughout the event but generally are not tracked beyond the current tournament.
- Expulsory violations and repeat major violations in consecutive tournaments are placed on a permanent record.

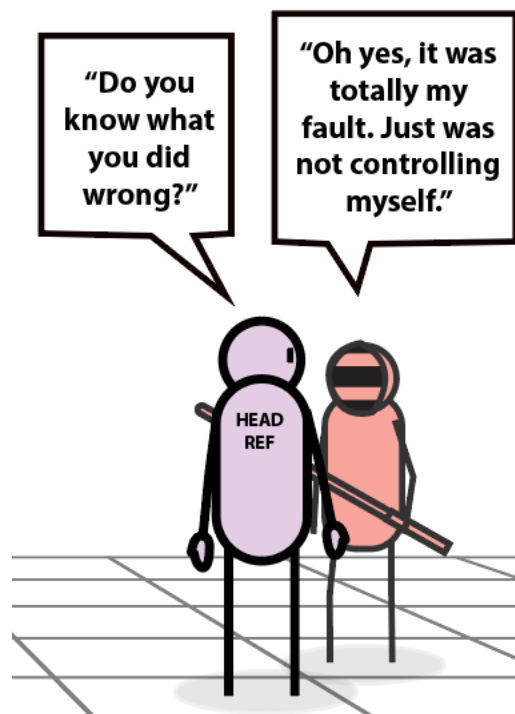
PROCEDURE

1. When a violation is detected, call “Break!”
2. Confer privately with your secondary if necessary to verify the violation.
 - a. If, after conference, you choose not to proceed with enforcement, return to the match.
 - b. If you choose to proceed with enforcement, go to Step 3.
3. Announce the violation and the violator.
4. Check that the violator understands what they did wrong. If they do not, explain it to them.
5. Assign a card, warning, and/or points based on the type of violation and the instance of the violation, according to Attachment A found in the formal Rules Document (LightspeedSaber.com/refing).
6. If the violator has not been disqualified or lost the match as a result of the penalties in Attachment A, then resume the match.

Examples



The head ref confers privately with their secondary to decide whether to make a citation or not.



The head ref confers privately with the violator to make sure they understand what *not* to do.

***SECTION II:
JUDGMENT***

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§2-0 INTRODUCTION

In the first section you reviewed the basic process of being the head referee. Now it is time for one of your most important roles, which is deciding who wins and who “dies” in each and every encounter, and, ultimately, who walks away the victor of the bout.

Experienced referees use a process called CLASH to decide the points, which guides them in how to make decisions for difficult exchanges and very disparate referee signals. In this manual, we will solely use the concept of Congruence for making referee decisions (the “C” in CLASH).

This section will explain how to:

- Interpret and compare signals between yourself and your Secondary, and
 - Identify the different types of congruence (or incongruence) between referees and what to do with them.
 - Interpret and solve abstentions
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§2-1 CONGRUENCE

According to match protocol, on calling for a break, both referees display their hand signals to denote who they believe was contacted and how. The head referee then compares the signals and makes a scoring decision based on Congruence. Congruence is the degree of agreement between the referees' signal display.

SIGNAL CONGRUENCE OVERVIEW

Signal display comparisons are categorized into three congruence types: fully congruent, partially congruent, and incongruent. These congruence types are listed below, along with a brief description and the recommended decision that should accompany it (reasons *not* to follow the recommendation are covered in Manual 3).

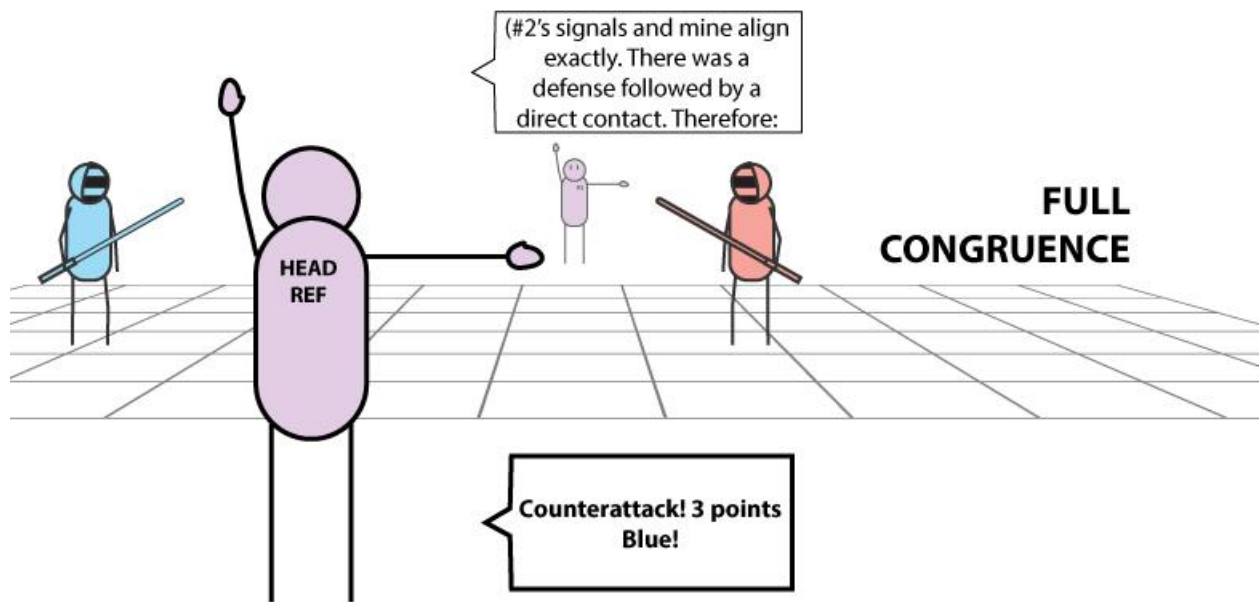
1. Fully congruent
 - a. Description: Your signals agree with your Secondary on which fencer should be awarded points, and how many.
 - b. Action: Award points as described by the signals held by either referee.
2. Partially congruent
 - a. Description: You and your Secondary are in agreement about which fencer should be awarded points, but not how many (your perception of the action is different).
 - b. Action: Choose the signal of lesser value and award points according to that signal.
3. Incongruent
 - a. Description: You and your Secondary do not agree on which fencer should be awarded points.
 - b. Action: Award no points and move to the next encounter.

Image examples and more details on these situations follow.

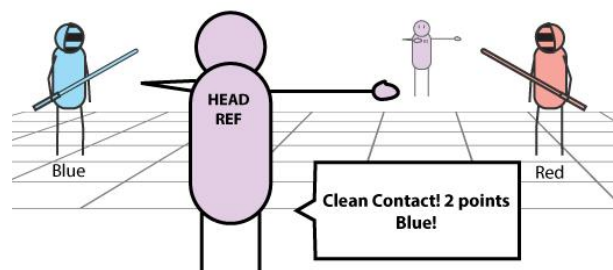
FULL CONGRUENCE

When the signals are fully congruent, the head referee doesn't need to make any decisions, as there is no disparity between the refs' opinions as to what actions were taken and what contacts were made. **When there is full congruence, the head ref can make an immediate judgment and announce the result.**

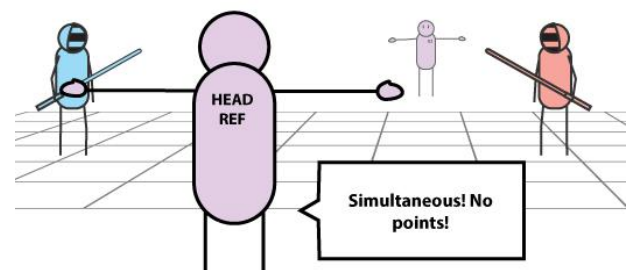
Example 1:



Example 2:



Example 3:

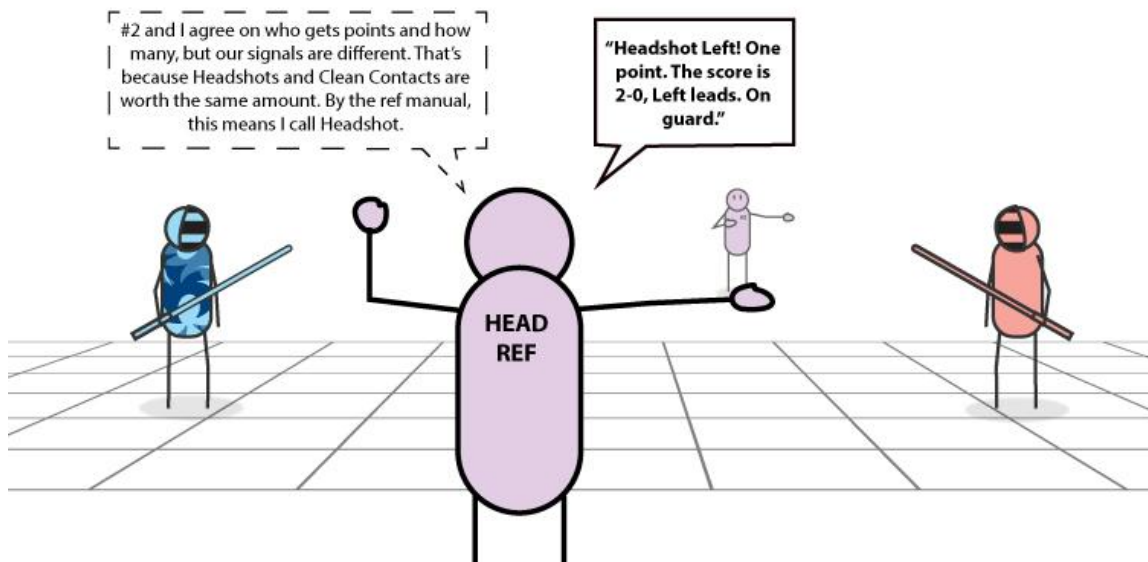
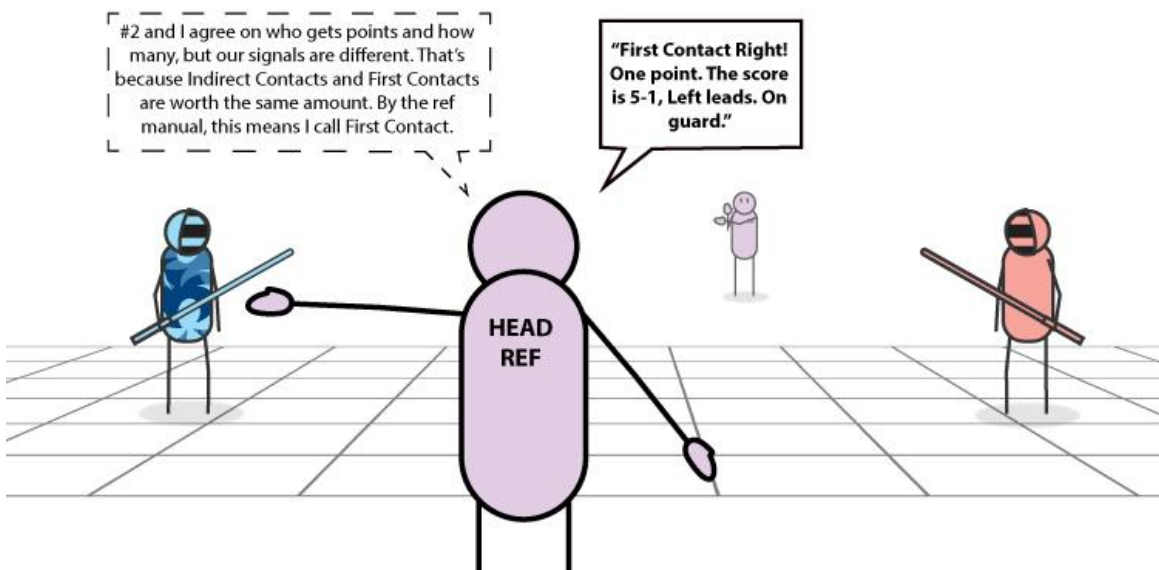


Full congruence. Left: Clean Contact. Right: Simultaneous.

Full Congruence with different signals of equal value

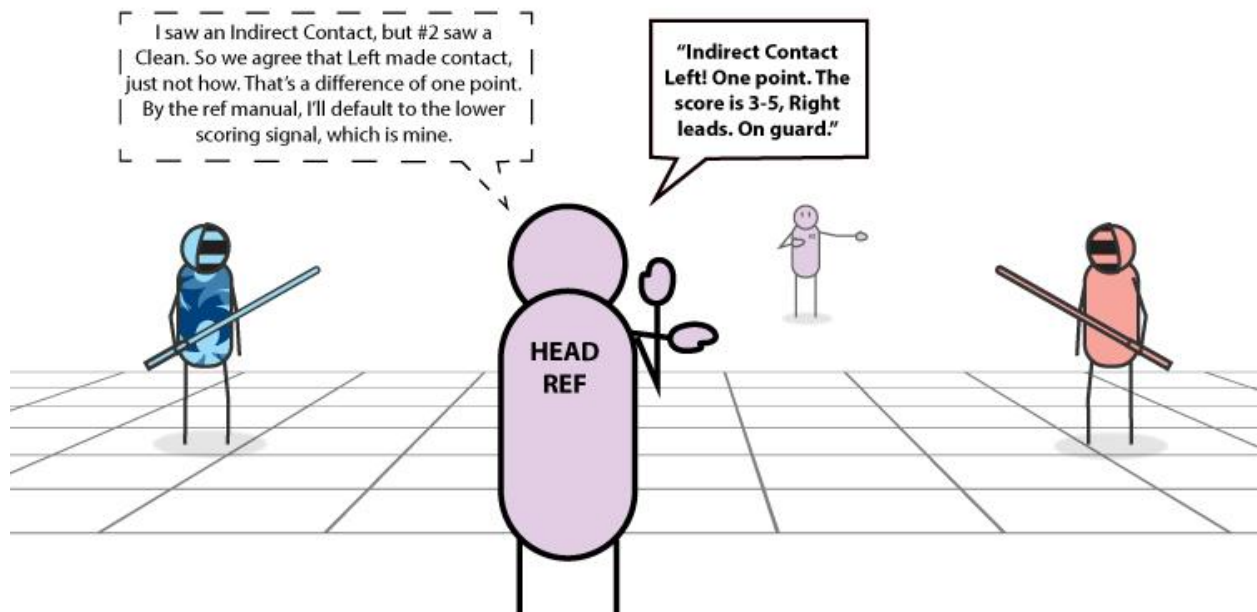
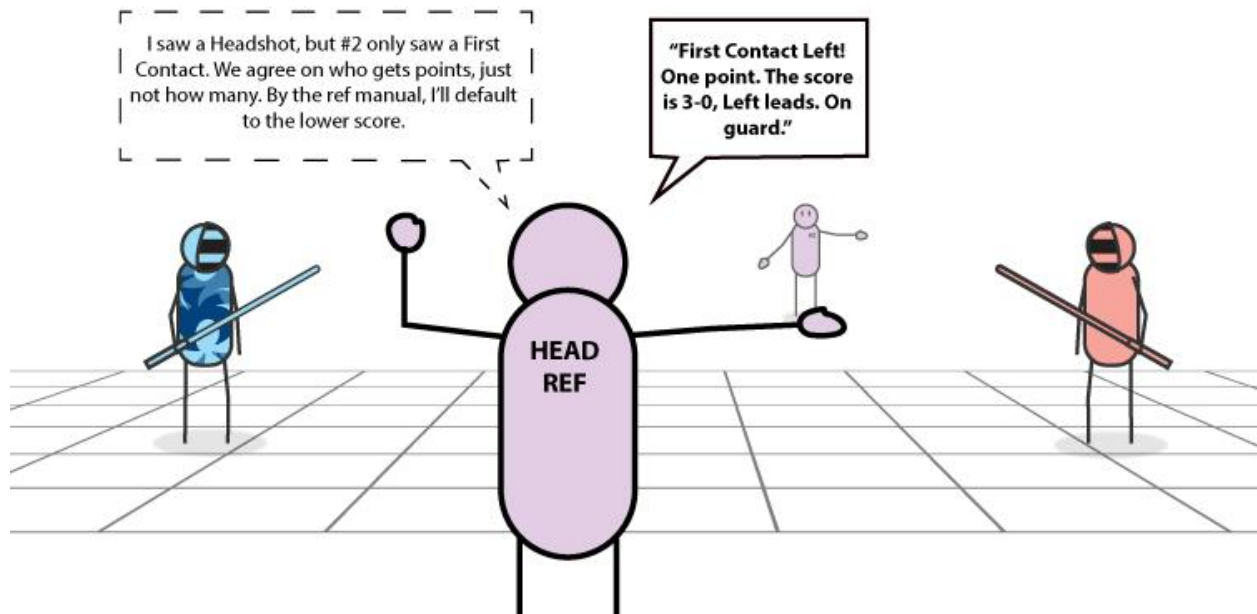
In some cases, you agree with your Secondary which fencer should receive points, and you agree on how many, but your signals don't match. This can happen between a Headshot versus a Clean Contact and an Indirect Contact versus a First Contact. Since the points are the same, this only affects how you announce and/or record the method of scoring. Use the following defaults:

- Headshot vs Clean Contact → Default to Headshot
- First contact vs Indirect Contact → Default to First Contact



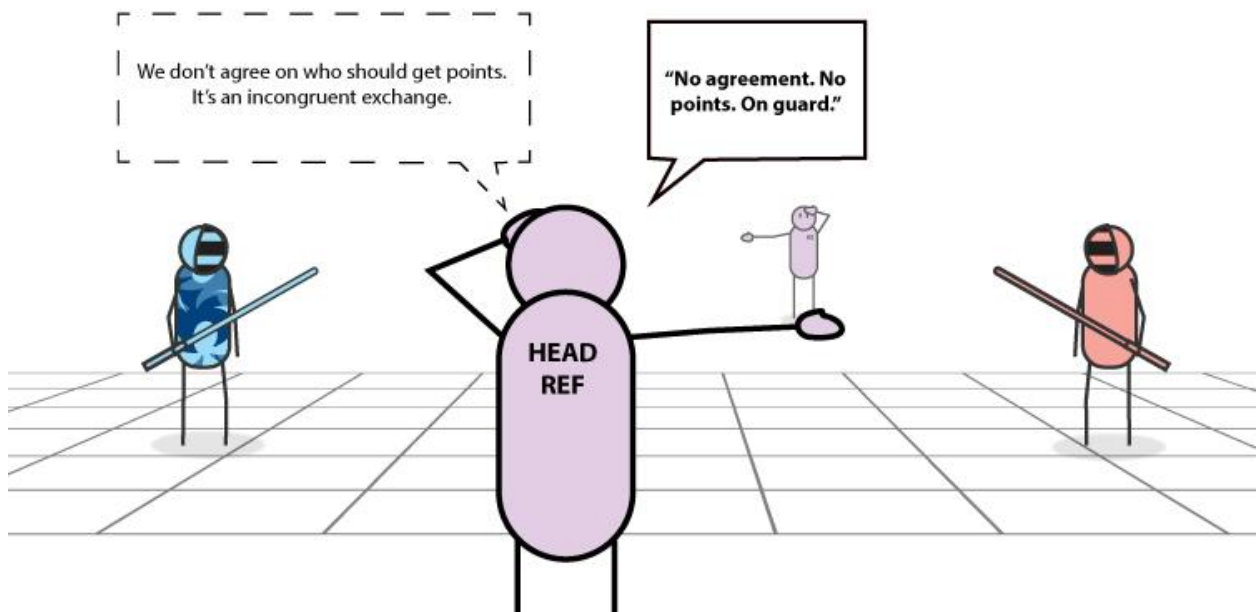
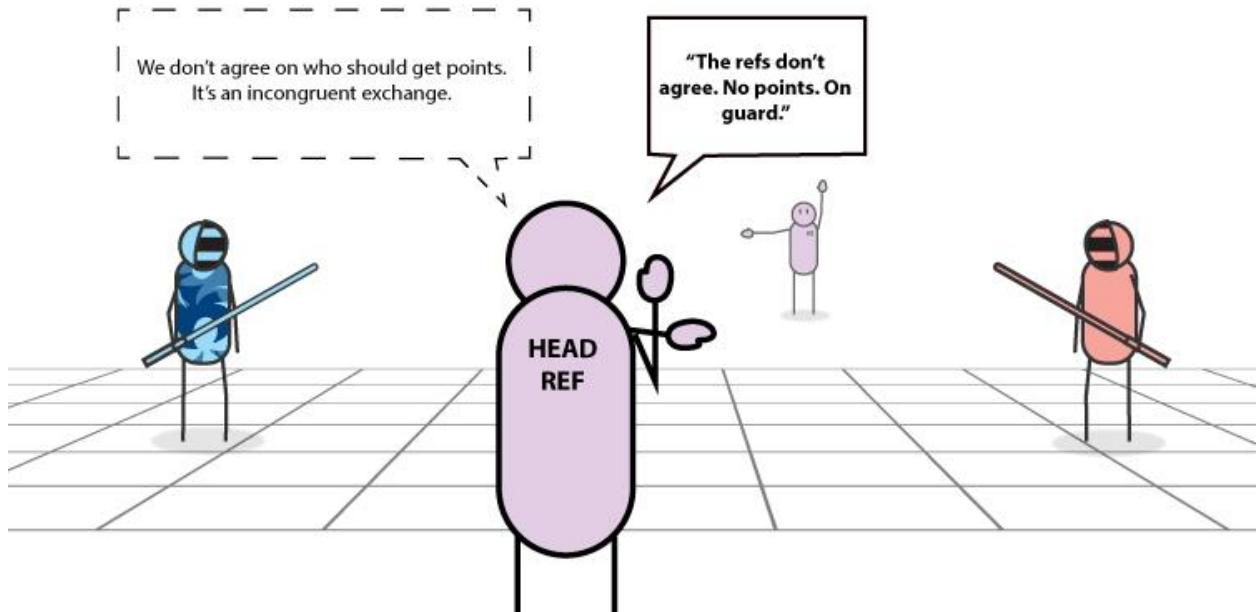
PARTIAL CONGRUENCE

In a partially congruent situation, the referees agree which fencer should receive points, but disagree on how many. In this case, a proficient referee should defer to the lower scoring signal (although an expert referee might do something different; see Refing Manual Level 3).



INCONGRUENCE

In an incongruent exchange, the referees do not agree on which fencer should receive points. While a very experienced referee might initiate an investigation, this manual is designed for basic referee proficiency and making fast decisions. So by default, incongruent exchanges are thrown out.



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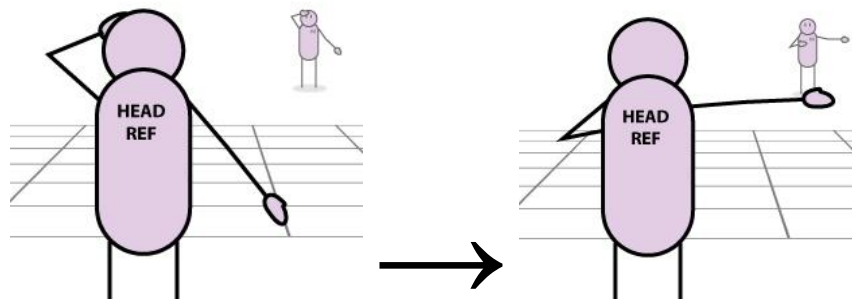
§2-3 INTERPRETING ABSTENTIONS

When a referee abstains, that means that they are acknowledging that an attack was delivered to that side of the match, but the referee is neither able to confirm nor deny whether that attack made contact with target or not.

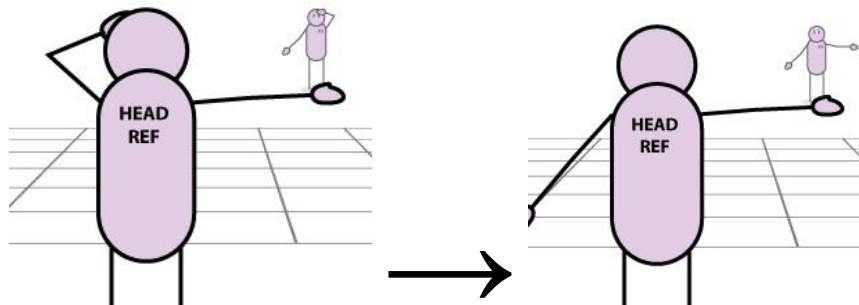
Abstentions should be treated as follows:

- When there are two abstentions on the same side, they add together to equal No Contact.
- When there is only one abstention on a given side, then the abstention is “deleted” and the remaining definitive signal is taken to determine the results of the exchange on that side.

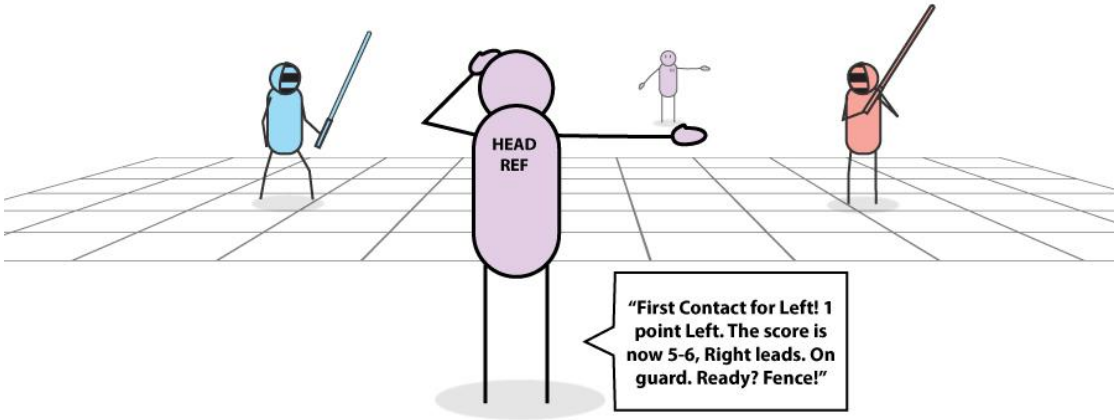
Once the abstentions have been processed, it should be possible to make a determination of congruence, and ultimately, a scoring decision.



Above: The refs have abstained on the same side. This resolves as “No Contact” on that side. Therefore, the sole confirmed contact becomes the sole contact, and resolves finally as a Clean Contact for 2 points. Below: The refs abstain on opposite sides, but each side has at least one definitive signal. Each side, then, defaults to the definitive signal. The definitive signals resolve into a First Contact call toward the right. Both of these example are considered fully congruent.

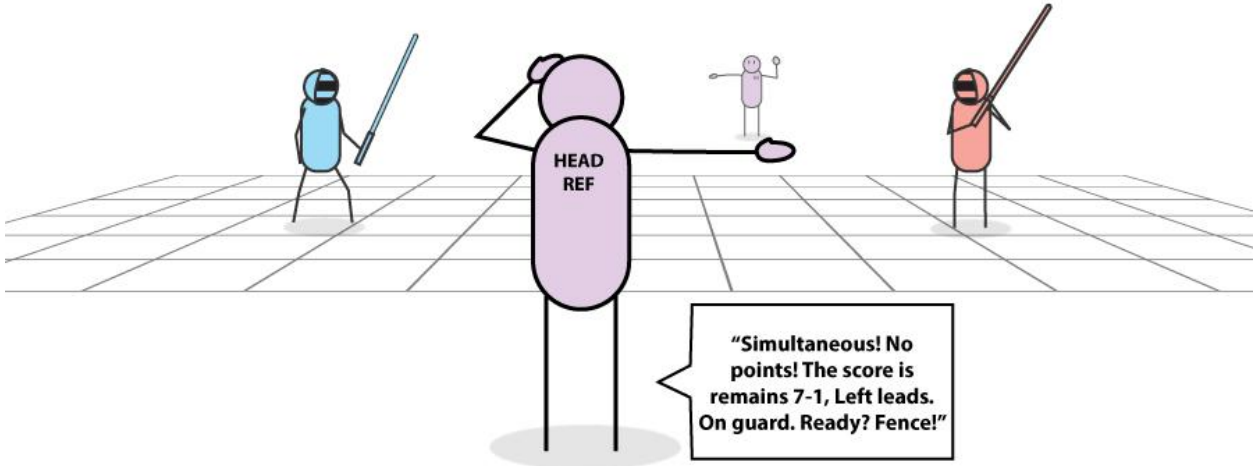


(I can't verify what happened to Left, so I abstained. But #2 saw the action. By the rules, when only one ref has a definitive signal on a side, we default to that signal. And since we agree on the right, then that translates to...)



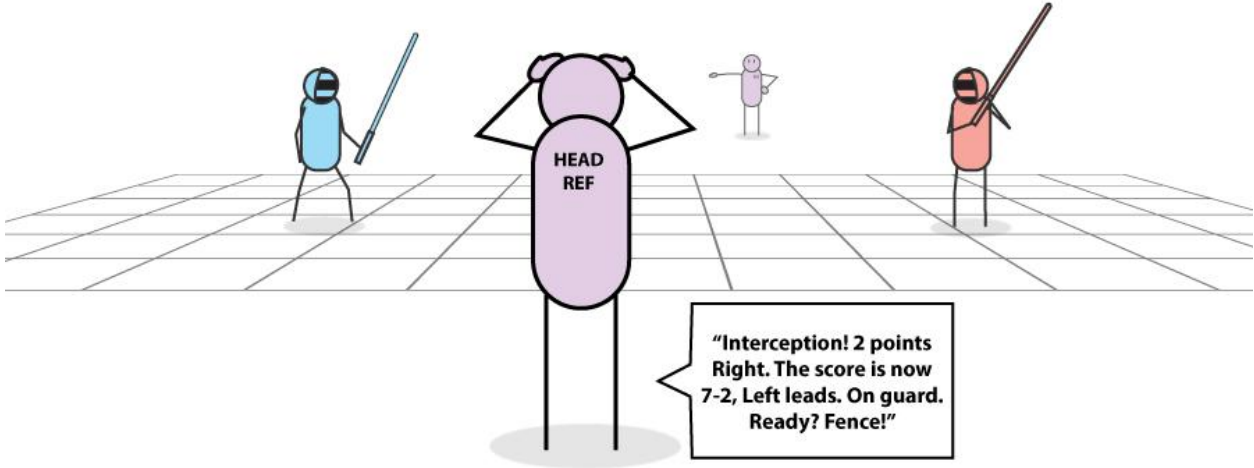
Interpretation of a single abstention with basic signals.

(I'm abstaining on the left, but #2 saw a Headshot in that direction, so that defaults to the definitive call. But since Headshots are only signaled when they land first, the logical conclusion of our signals is that they both hit first. Which means:)

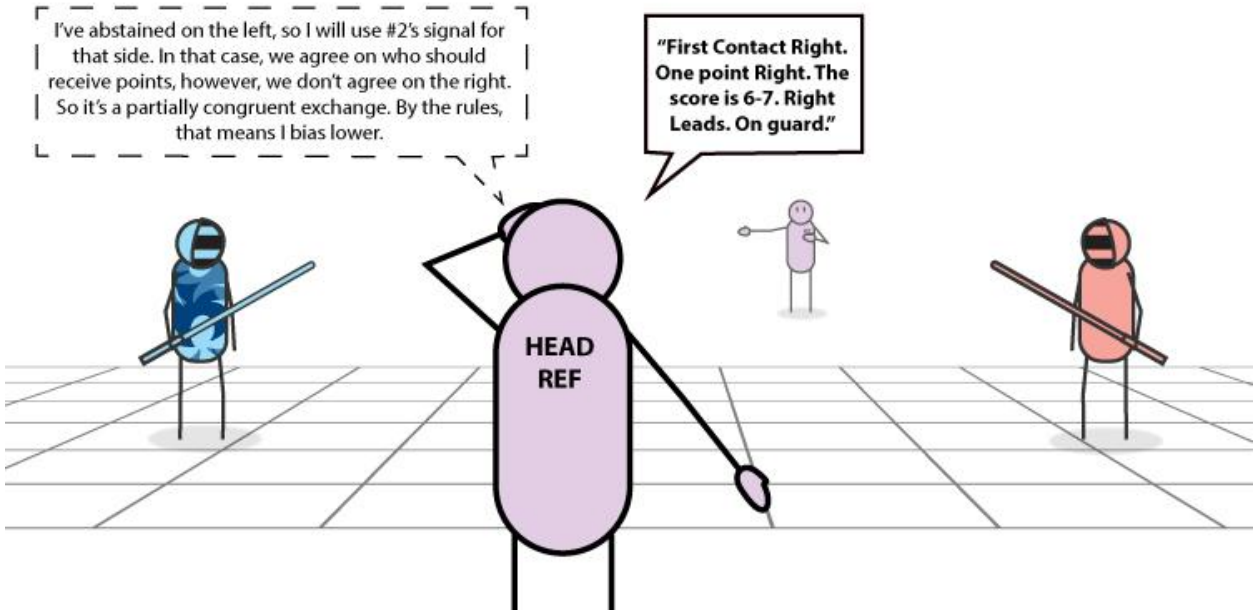


Interpretation of a single abstention with advanced signals.

(As it turns out, the fencers rotated into a position I couldn't see the action clearly on either of them. Thankfully, #2 saw the action on both sides and can fill in for my abstentions.)



Interpretation of two abstentions on a single referee.



Example of a partially congruent exchange involving at least one abstention.

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§2-4 EXCEPTIONS

Situations exist where congruent signals should not necessarily go directly to judgment, and partially congruent signals should not automatically downgrade to the lower scoring signal.

MUTUAL HAND TARGETING EXCEPTION

In the event that the referee signals are congruent but the action of the exchange consisted of both fencers trying to attack each other's hands (or hilts), at least one referee must have *visual confirmation* of the target that was contacted. **If neither ref has a visual, then the exchange must be thrown out.**

*(As there are only two referees, it is fairly common that both referees mistakenly agree on contact for the wrong fencer. This situation is responsible for 90% of all the miscalls made by referees, and it is upsetting to the fencers, and severely diminishes trust in you as an official, and in the tournament. It is crucial to avoid every possible incidence of this mistake. **The only acceptable quantity is zero.**)*

DEFENSE DEFERRAL EXCEPTION

It is common for less experienced referees to be unable to detect defensive actions. Sometimes the head referee is less experienced than the Secondary (how else would they gain experience?).

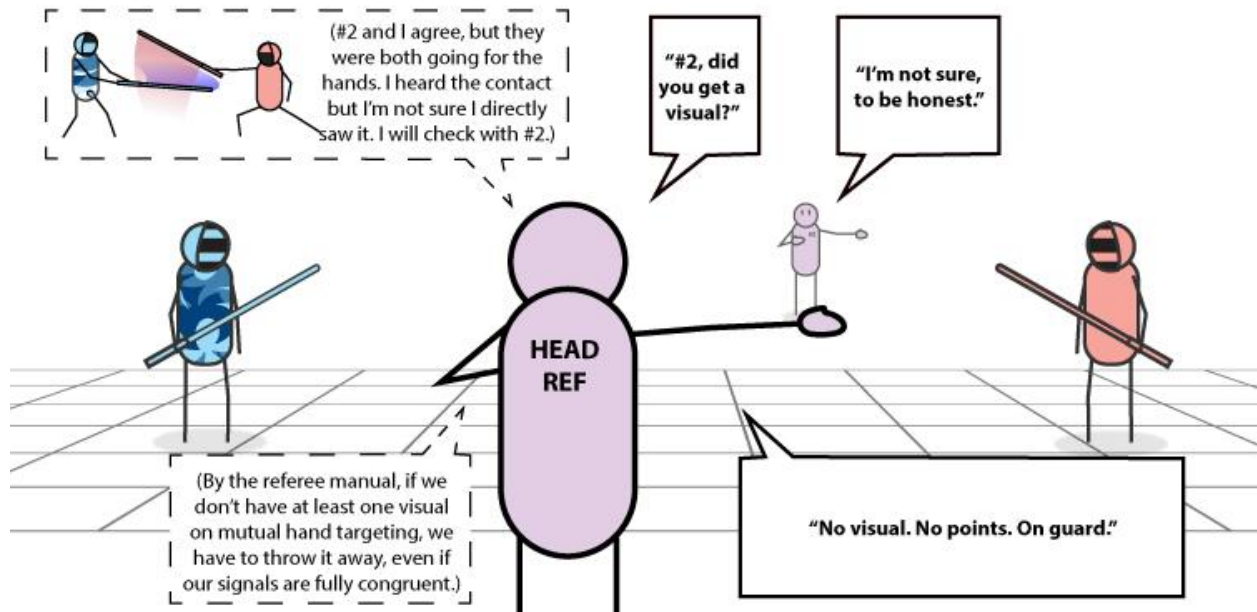
In the event that partially congruent signals are displayed, where one referee signals for First or Clean Contact and the other signals for a Counterattack, the head referee should defer to the more experienced referee.

*(Defense is worth 3 points, and many matches have been won from behind with a good Counterattack. In addition, defense is challenging in Lightspeed Saber, and as such, must be rewarded appropriately. If fencers are not recognized for their Counterattacks, they will stop using them, and this will become a lightsaber sport where the lightsabers never touch each other, because the fencers do not want to risk a block. **This will severely damage the sport.** Defense must be appropriately recognized.)*

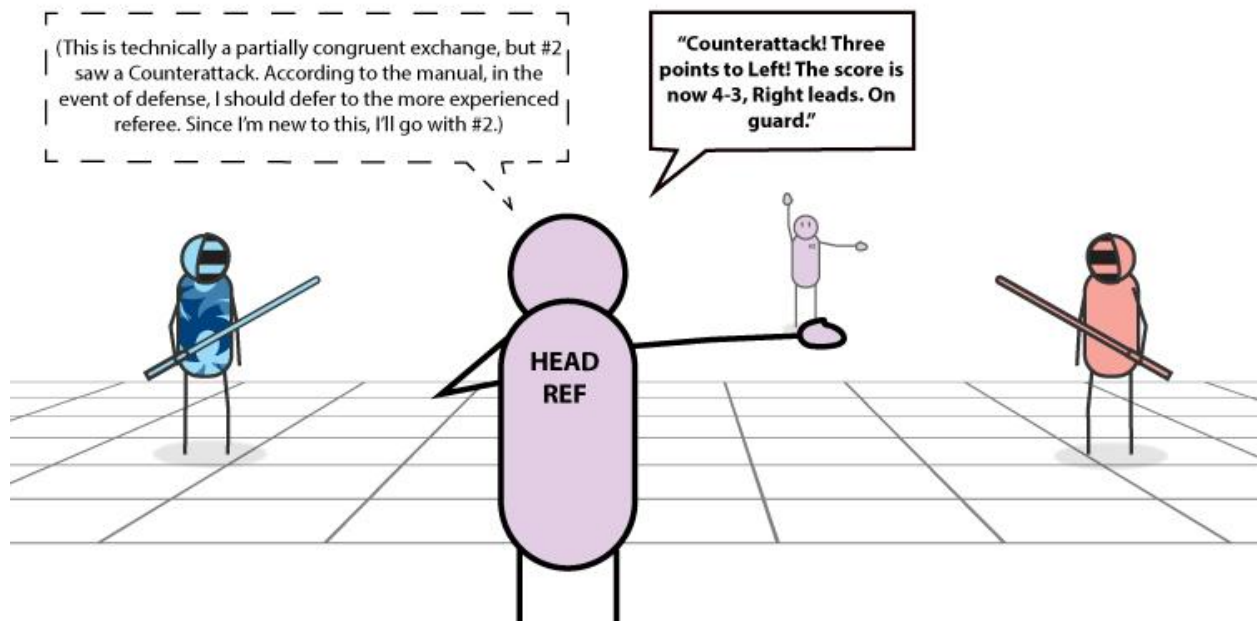
(Think About What You're Seeing

(Both the exceptions above require more of you than simply "looking for hits." You must perceive and comprehend what the fencers are doing; afterall, you can't call defense if you're not looking for it. And you can't correctly adjudicate a Mutual Hand Targeting Exception if you don't notice that both fencers are trying to do the same thing. Remember, the first referee manual instructs you to look for actions, not contacts.)

EXAMPLES



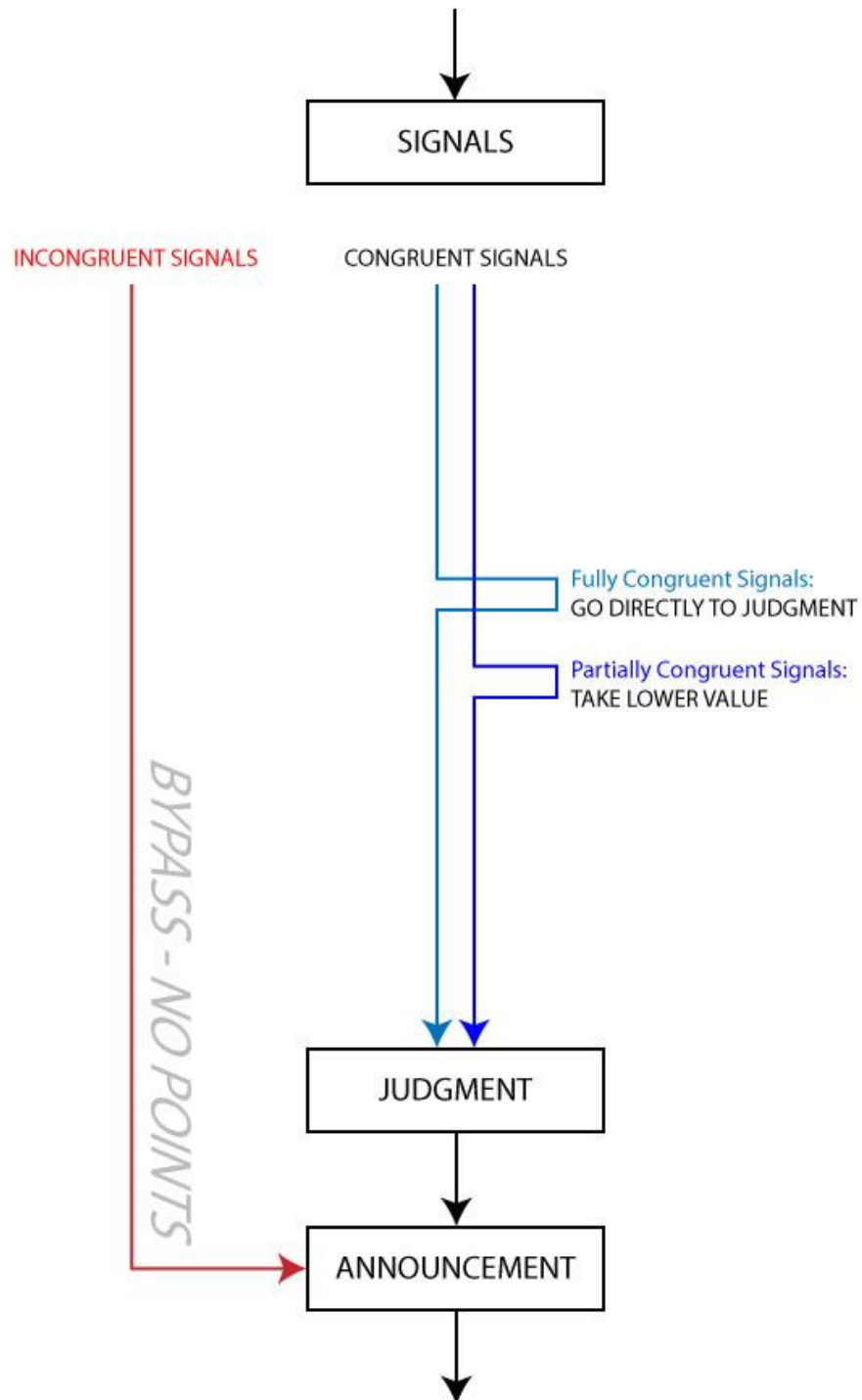
The head ref correctly checks for a visual when he interprets the action as mutual hand targeting. Referee error is very common in this situation.



The head ref uses the defense deferral exception based on experience.

§2-5 CONGRUENCE MAP

It may benefit you to visualize the congruence process here in this map.



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***SECTION III:
TRANSPARENCY & COMMUNICATION***

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§3-0 INTRODUCTION

Most sports cannot be fully enjoyed without an understanding of the rules, nor without an understanding of who is winning and who is losing at any given time. So your ability to communicate information is vital.

At the same time, because there are winners and losers, it is paramount that you are seen as trustworthy, and that you know how to conduct yourself as an official with integrity. Because your conduct represents the league.

This section will walk you through:

- The proper procedures for announcing information,
 - Including making sure that you are understandable to the maximum number of people, and
 - Making sure that your methods fall within ethical standards
-

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§3-1 THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

Communicating is one of the main jobs of the head referee. Good communication is crucial to the enjoyment of the fencers and the audience, and is key to spreading our sport worldwide.

But what is “good” communication? Good communication is:

- Loud & clear– you must be audible in a potentially noisy and distracting place (the bigger the tournament, the more noisy it will be).
- Consistent– If our sport is to grow then competitors need to be able to come together from out of state and *out of country* and expect the same communication practices, or there will be confusion and **suspicion**.
- Redundant and accommodating– Using multiple concurrent “channels” of communication ensures that *differently abled* athletes and spectators can always understand what is going on.
- Transparent– *Trust in you and the tournament* translates to trust in the organization and the sport. You must communicate and behave in a way that manifests **your integrity** as a tournament official.

What if there is no audience? What if we’re not at a tournament?

You always have an audience. As head ref, part of your job is making sure everyone has a good time, and as long as you’re refing a bout, then you have at least two people to please: the fencer to your left and the fencer to your right. Be loud. Be clear. Do a good job.

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§3-2 COMMUNICATION IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT PHASE

The Announcement phase is where you, as head referee, do most of your communication. You will not only keep all fencers and spectators abreast of the state of the match (the score), but you will also name the winner in the final Announcement phase.

ANNOUNCING YOUR JUDGMENT

Once you have completed Judgment and are ready to state the result, be prepared to announce ALL of the following information:

1. What type of Contact is being recognized
2. How many points are being earned, if any
3. To whom
4. What the updated score is
5. And who is the new leader or winner, if any

All five of the above elements MUST be included in the Announcement phase whenever at least one point is scored. This is because:

- It ensures that everyone knows exactly what is going on– NEVER ASSUME it is obvious who just scored *or how* in the last encounter, *especially* if it may have been a messy or close exchange.
- It ensures that information can be heard in case people can't see the match clearly, can't see the referee clearly, can't see the scoreboard, or if there is no scoreboard.
- It helps prevent mistakes through overlapping data (if anything doesn't line up– for example, only 2 points for a defensive play– then someone can catch the mistake).
- It helps show that you are not cheating (via the exclusion of information).

Example for at least one point being awarded:

“Clean Contact, two points for Red. The score is now 5-3, Green leading. On guard.”

ANNOUNCEMENT WITHOUT JUDGMENT

When no points are being awarded, you are considered to be bypassing judgment. In this case, you may use an expedited version of the announcement for the sake of speed.

Example for no points being awarded:

“Messy exchange, no points. On guard.”

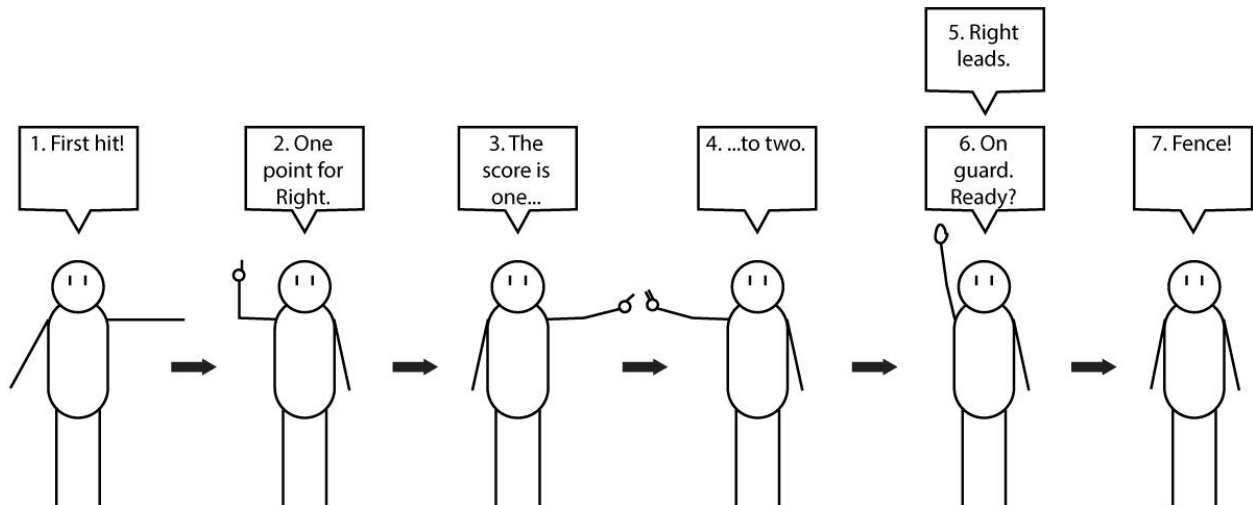
It’s generally good to include an explanation of why you’re bypassing judgment. These are usually because the exchange is messy, incongruent, simultaneous, or otherwise too close to call.

VISUAL REDUNDANCY

In addition to verbally announcing all the information above, all statements should be paired with visually redundant hand signals. Visual redundancy is important because:

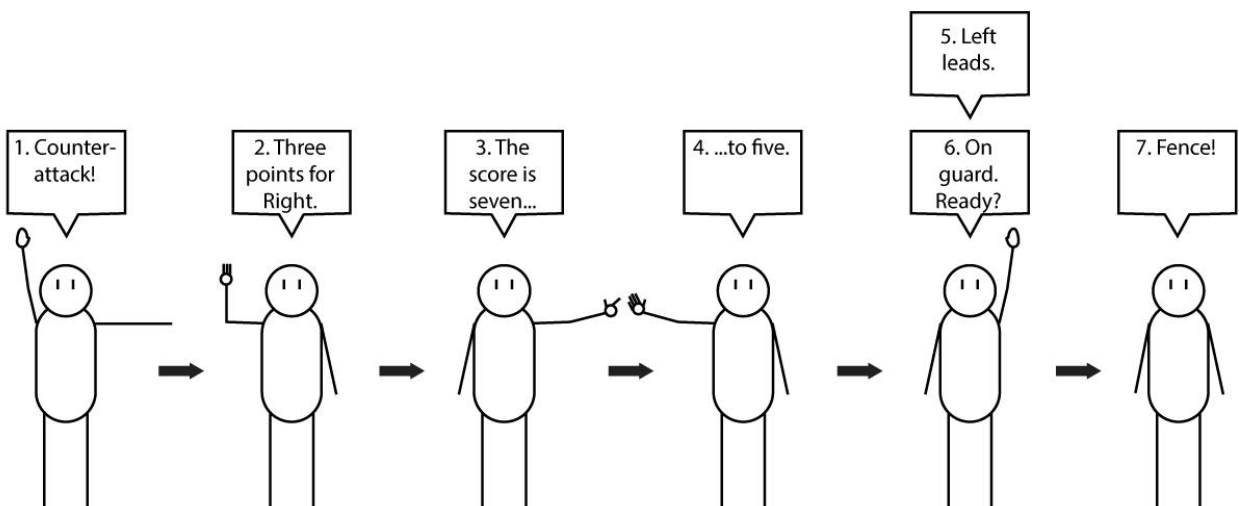
- Not everyone may be able to hear you– for example, big tournaments are noisy; some headgear impairs the wearer’s hearing; some competitors are deaf; commentators and livestream viewers often have reduced audio.
- Not everyone may understand the language you are speaking– for example, international audiences watching our streams or videos, and international tournaments including non-English speaking competitors.
- It adds another layer of overlapping information that helps prevent mistakes and cheating

Visual redundancy is performed with the hands. The following comic shows a sample judgment (remember to use the hand corresponding to the fencer on either side of you):



(Colors are usually used to identify the fencers. However, if they cannot be differentiated, Left and Right are alternatives.)

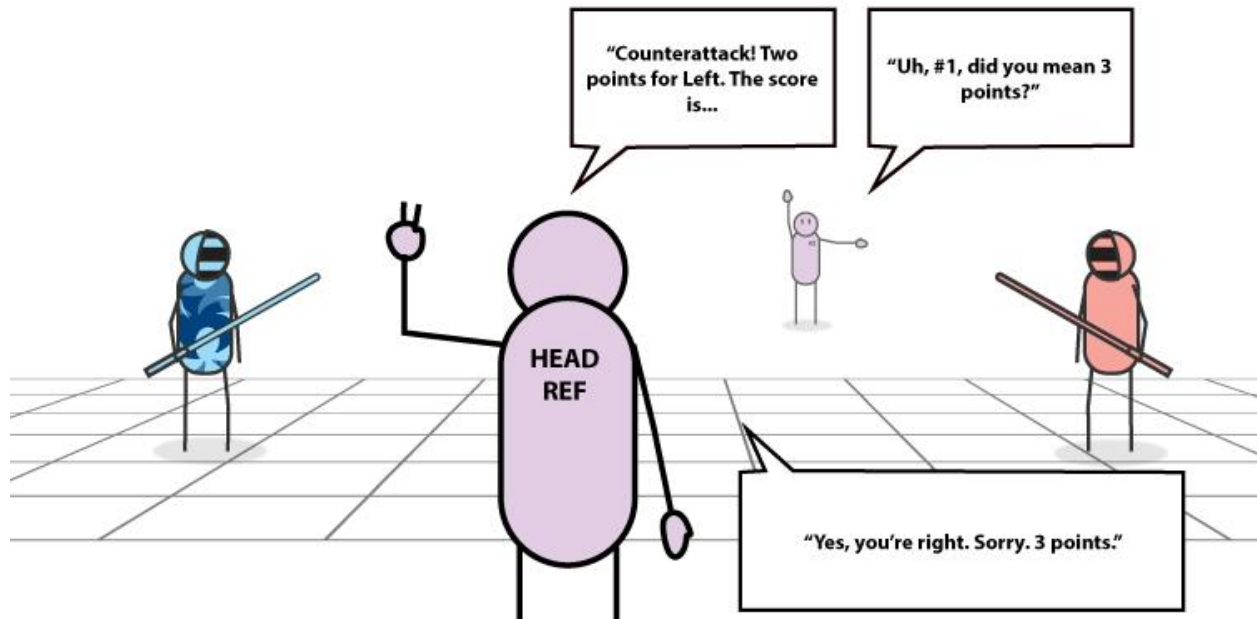
Second example (note that the hand in Steps 5-6 changes depending which fencer is leading):



Instructions:

1. Announce the type of hit paired with the appropriate hand signals (see the Basic Rules manual).
2. Announce the amount of points scored (one, two, or three). Hold up the corresponding number of fingers next to your head, using the hand nearest the fencer that just scored.
3. Announce the score by extending your hand toward one fencer and stating how many points they have...
4. And then do the same for the other.

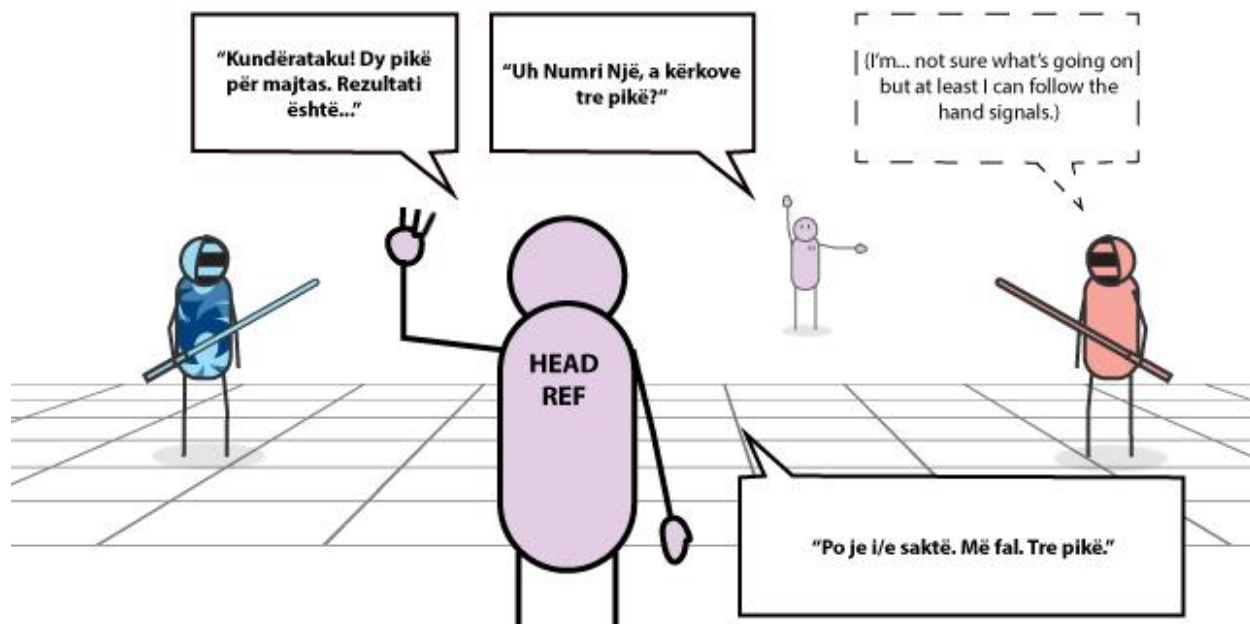
5. Announce which fencer is in the lead (if applicable). Raise the hand nearest the leading fencer above your head.
6. Get the fencers ready for the next encounter (unless the match has ended).
7. Drop your hand and say, "Fence!" to start the next encounter.



Redundancy allows someone besides the head ref to check for mistakes.

CONSISTENCY IS IMPORTANT

It's a common problem for people to be sloppy with their hand signals. Consistency in hand signals is very important, as information via hand signals is conveyed easier to streaming viewers and especially viewers who don't speak English. Consistent hand signals make it possible for international viewers to figure out what's going on, and sport comprehension is critical to gaining a following. In the future, it will become even more important as fencers from around the world come together to compete, and they won't all speak the same language as the referee. Those hand signals will be vital to those fencers.



Hand signal consistency helps fencers and viewers who either cannot hear or cannot understand the referees vocally. This is extremely important for streaming and for international audiences and participants.

COMPLETING THE MATCH

Matches generally end by one fencer reaching matchpoint, or one fencer having the highest score at the end of time. When the time is up, the match is ended immediately.

1. If the match ends by match point, then announce the final judgment as normal up until announcing the lead fencer.

OR

1. If the match ends by time, then shout, "Break!" or "Time!" as the time ends (the secondary referee can also do this).
2. Announce the winning fencer by name, side (left or right) or color AND raise the appropriate hand over your head to ensure you have a redundant visual indicator.
3. Instruct the fencers to first remove their masks, then tap blades, fist bump, or equivalent before leaving the box.
4. Either the secondary referee or yourself should then record the score and winner on the data sheet.
5. Call up the next match, if applicable.

Why Unmask?

Unmasking at the end of the bout is an important marketing procedure. It presents an opportunity to see competitors' faces. Combined with good sportsmanship, this makes for excellent photography.



This is Patricia. Patricia knows how to sell the sport. Be like Patricia.

§3-3 *TRANSPARENCY*

Transparency is the ability to believe or verify that a referee is not cheating. This is critical to establishing yourself as a reliable and trustworthy tournament official. If the fencers cannot trust you, they cannot trust the tournament; and it will surely be their last.

DURING THE SIGNAL PHASE

Head refs have been known not to display their signals, thinking that it is unnecessary, given that they are the ones interpreting the signals. While this is true, display of signal by the head ref is important so that when unexpected results come out, it can be possible to understand why the head ref made a judgment the way that they did.

DURING THE ASSIGNMENT OF PRIORITY

In the event that priority comes into play and must be assigned randomly, the assignment should occur in front of everyone using an item and/or method that is visible and verifiable by everyone involved.

Acceptable methods:

- Spinning a glove: Assign Priority to the fencer that the glove most nearly points to after coming to rest.
- Flipping a coin: Be sure to declare the terms of the outcome *before* flipping.
- Any physical object that can be spun, flipped or otherwise randomized in front of everyone.

Unacceptable methods:

- Holding fingers behind your back.
- Having the competitors guess a secret number.

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§3-4 ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT PHASE

As head referee, you may, at your discretion, provide a brief narration or clarification of the action in order to better explain the call you have just made. This is mostly done for the benefit of spectators, but sometimes fencers like it as well. Examples include:

1. Naming the specific target that was struck:
 - a. “Clean Contact to the hand, 2 points Red...”
2. Explaining an indirect hit call (as they are often perceived as defenses)
 - a. “Red’s counterattack was preceded by a slide down the blade on attempt to defend. Therefore it’s an Indirect Hit for Blue. 1 point to Blue...”
3. Explaining special rules
 - a. “First contact to the shoe by Red, however, secondary action to the head by Blue triggers Priority Override. 1 point to Blue...”
4. Explaining the order of events on more complex exchanges:
 - a. “Initial attack from Red, Blue dodges and returns fire. Red deflects and earns a Counterattack. Followup action from Blue is therefore irrelevant. 3 points Red...”

With the exception of Example #1, these should generally be done sparingly, or with consideration to the flow of the match thus far, as it does take time to do these. If the match is proceeding well, and you have an engaged audience, you may surmise that you can take a little bit of time for some of these.

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***SECTION IV:
TIPS FOR SUCCESS***

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§4-0 INTRODUCTION

We can talk all day about communication and congruence, but there are so many small things that really make a great match-official.

In this section you'll learn about:

- How to handle it when you mistake
 - How to tell when you've missed something you shouldn't have
 - How and when to use a continuation
 - How to count points on your hand
 - And other small details that will help you be the best you can be
-

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§4-1 HOW TO HANDLE MISTAKES

In general, your errors will be either 1) erroneously stopping the match for a contact that didn't actually happen, or 2) not stopping the match for a contact that actually did happen. Here are the best ways to handle these errors.

MISIDENTIFYING A CONTACT

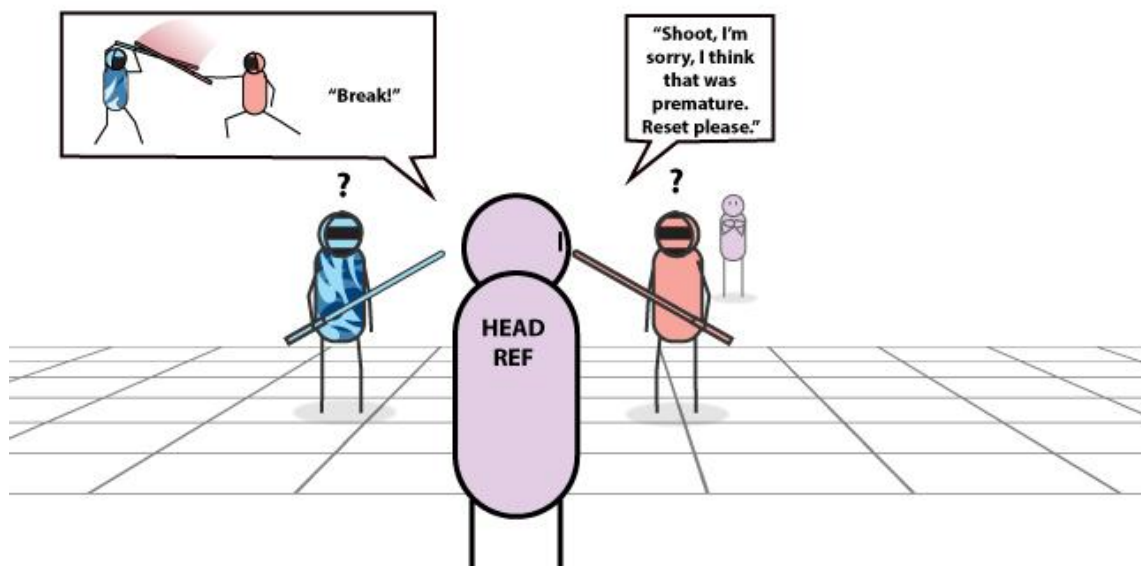
In general, we want to encourage longer encounters; you can see this everywhere in all kinds of sports: long tennis rallies, long ping pong rallies, etc. And you can see it in movies, with the general audience preference for sword fights with lots of back and forth attacks and blocks. We want to generate that in Lightspeed Saber too. That's why you're supposed to be *sure of contact* before you call a stop.

But everyone makes mistakes, and sometimes you call break for a contact you thought happened, only to realize afterward that you're not that sure. All you need to do is signal No Contact, quickly apologize, and reset the fencers.

Example

"Premature stop. Sorry about that. On guard."

Misidentified contacts happen most often when a fencer is blocking an attack too close to their hilt. Try not to stop this action! Back and forth block & attack rallies are fun to watch and fun to do!



The head ref signals No Contact (not visible), apologizes, and resets the fencers after a misidentified contact.

MISSING OR SUSPECTING A CONTACT

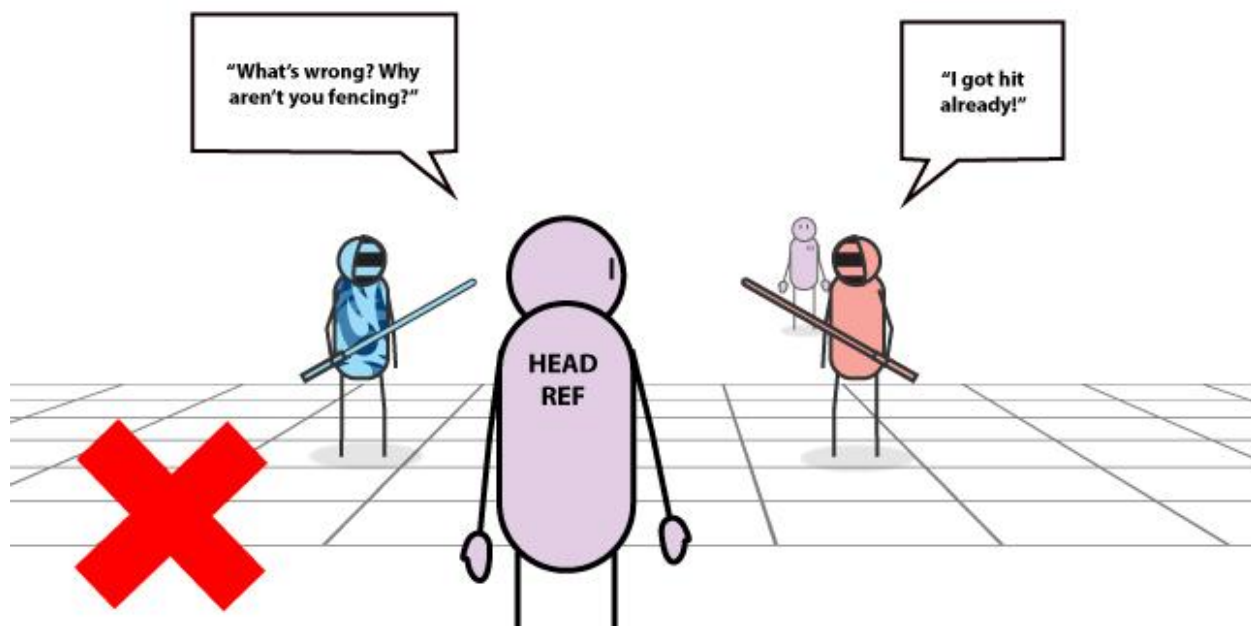
Just as common is when the refs don't see a contact that did actually happen. It's okay when this happens; often those contacts are very light. But you still need to recognize when this has happened and maintain control of the match.

But how can you know something has happened when you can't detect it in the first place? The main indication is when you notice both fencers suddenly stop fencing for a moment, or the fencers seem to relax, or they begin to back away from each other. This almost always means that a contact was made somewhere.

Missing a contact can be handled in two ways, either with a **Control Break** or a **Continuation**. Regardless of which method you use, the important thing is to be in control of the match, and not let there be any confusion among the fencers as to whether the match is on or off.

Control Break

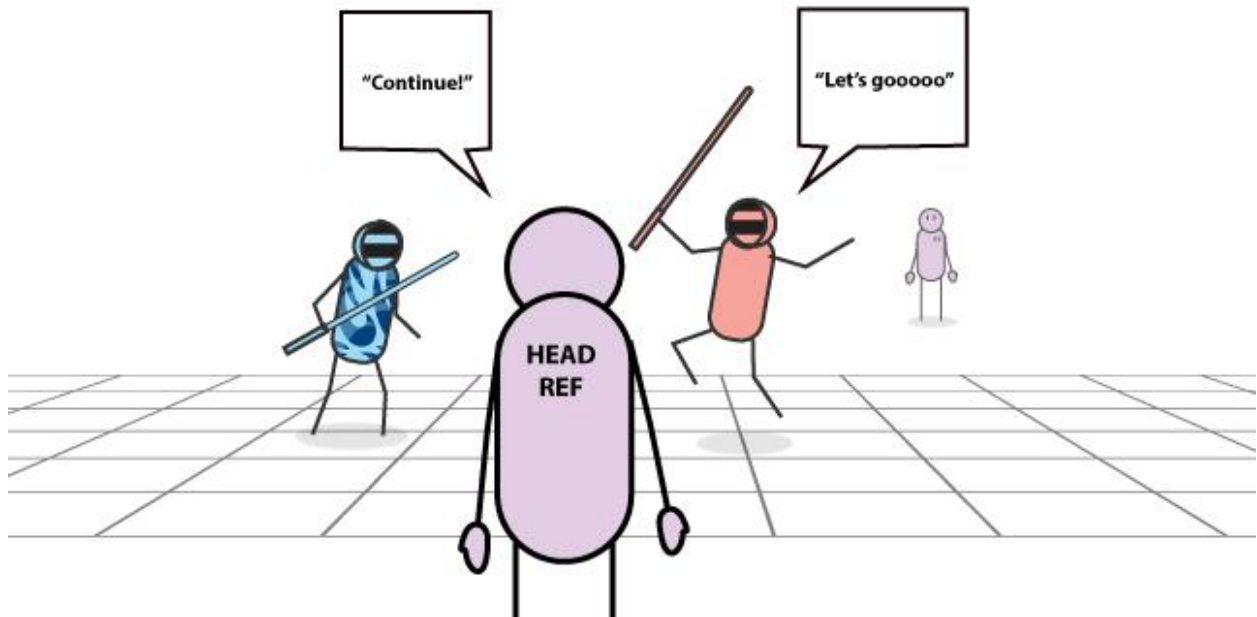
A Control Break is simply a break call made solely based on the fencers' body language, and not on any detected contact. Since you didn't see or hear anything, and neither did your secondary, just signal No Contact, say, "Break. Reset," and start a new encounter.



DON'T let this happen. Be in control of the match at all times. If the fencers seem to suddenly stop, relax, or begin to back away from each other, something happened and you missed it. Say, "Break" or "Continue." This is important to ensuring a sense of competence for the referees, even if they miss something.

Continuation

With a continuation, rather than stopping the fencers, just say, "Continue" to let the fencers know the match is still on. No signals are necessary.



The head ref, on suspecting a contact,

The continuation is the preferred method for dealing with missed contacts, as it keeps the action on with less interruption. However, there *are* times when the Control Break is more appropriate. It will be up to you to make the decision you feel is best for the match at the moment.

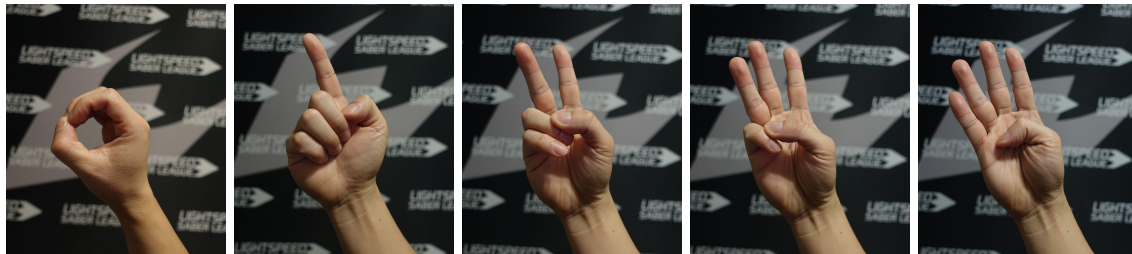
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§4-2 HOW TO COUNT ON YOUR HAND

There are multiple ways to count points above 5 on one hand; one simple system can count as high as 12, and advanced systems can count even higher. Here are two simple ones to help you:

METHOD 10

This method is pretty easy for others to see, but more importantly it's easy to do, although not that comfortable to hold for a long time if you want to actively track the score. For that, try Method 12 below.



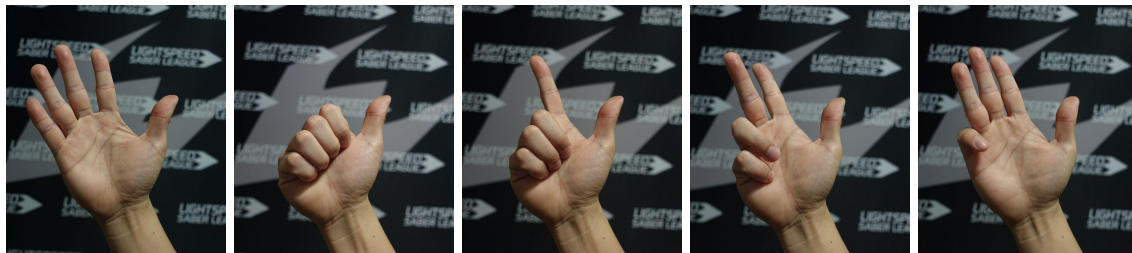
Zero

One

Two

Three

Four



Five

Six

Seven

Eight

Nine

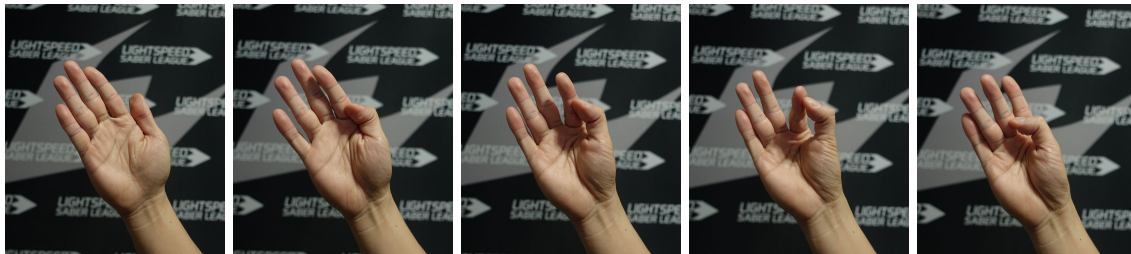


Ten

METHOD 12

This method uses your thumb as a marker and each segment of your other fingers to count from zero to twelve. Each finger other than your thumb is considered to have three segments.

This method is particularly nice if you like to hold your fingers in formation to remember the score, as it's relatively easy to hold, and you can count pretty high. It's only drawback is it's not easy to see from a distance in case anyone needs to visualize it.



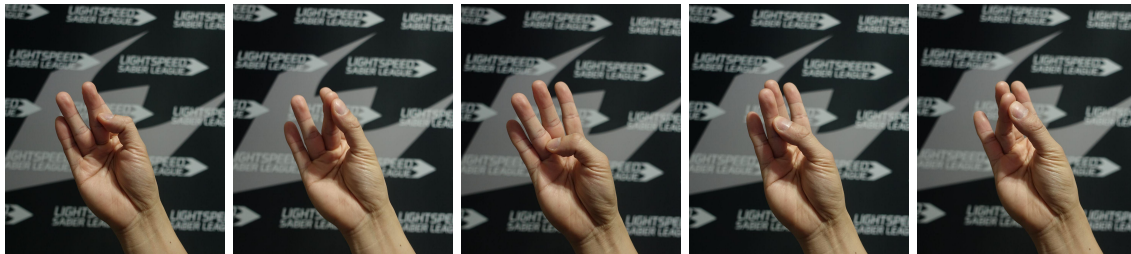
Zero

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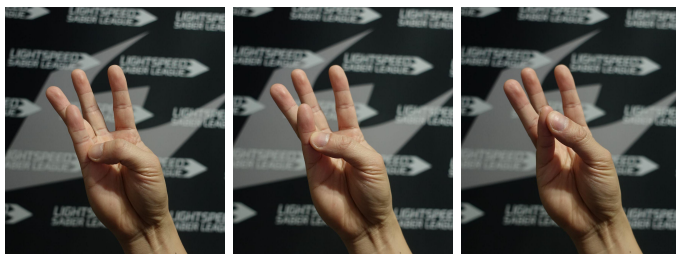
Five

Six

Seven

Eight

Nine



Ten

Eleven

Twelve

§4-3 DO'S AND DON'TS

These are common pitfalls and helpful tips for head referees. Some of these are wholly inappropriate, and some of these will actually make your job easier.

DO

- DO remember that it is *not your job* to figure out who scored first within fractions of a second. Not only is this not good fighting, but scoring these kinds of exchanges actually hurts the sport. So remember that if you don't have congruence with your Secondary, then you don't need to score or discuss it. Throw it away and move on.
- DO stop a match for small violations. You don't have to apply penalties necessarily, but merely letting the fencer know that *you noticed* is often enough to instill better behavior.
- DO speak loudly and clearly, and be excited about the match you're reffing! Refs can have fun and *be fun* to watch too!
- DO remember that good head reffing matters even when you're not in a tournament. As expressed earlier, an often neglected aspect of your job is to help your fencers *have fun*. So be efficient and enact this manual well!
- DO remember to run your matches with time and the Triple Double rule even when you're not in a tournament– these are both features designed to bring matches to a close, even when they can be difficult to call due to inexperienced or overaggressive players crashing into each other. This helps *you*; so do yourself a favor and don't forget these.
- DO refer to this manual when needed. If any fencer tries to give you trouble, explain to them that you are operating on official instruction from Lightspeed Saber League, and if they have a problem with that, they can take it up with the president.

DON'T

- DON'T EVER assign points to the wrong fencer. This is the worst mistake you can make. You can overaward points or under-award points, or you can throw the points away– the fencers will forgive you. If there's any chance you are giving points where they don't belong, DISCARD THE EXCHANGE. DON'T forget the [Mutual Hand Targeting exception](#). 90% of misassigned points happen right here.
- DON'T feel pressured to score messy, ambiguous, or incongruent exchanges. Some fights are hard to call. This is not your fault. What *can be your fault* is rewarding this

behavior.

- DON'T ask a competitor if they were hit. This is completely inappropriate behavior and should never be engaged in by any referee (unless it may be relevant to an injury or other safety concern). In addition to being unprofessional, it rewards dishonesty and punishes honesty. Do your job.
- DON'T let any fencer disrespect you. Refereeing is an important job, and Lightspeed always backs its referees. Punish and reprimand competitors as needed.
- DON'T let fencer behavior influence your decision (ie celebrating). Stay calm and proceed as normal, even if it means you have to throw the point away, no matter how much they may crow.



There may be some limits to how much fun you're supposed to have as head referee, but that will be for another time.

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FINAL NOTE

*While this manual largely removes most decisions from your process as head ref, it is still **your decision to make**. In Manual Three, you will learn when **not to** do what you've been taught here. It is not our goal right now either to tell you to stick to what this manual says, nor to tell you to decide based on your own intuition rather than these instructions. Our goal is to give you a formal procedure which you can fall back on in case you are unsure of how to proceed, or if anyone questions why you ruled the way you did. If you obey this manual's instructions, then you will always be able to fall back on its dictates, and no one can question your judgment. This is a tool that absolves you of responsibility, as long as you use it. With experience, you will learn how to operate without it, and bear that responsibility with skill and honor.*

MTFBWY

Cang Snow
Lightspeed Saber League
Chief Executive Officer

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CREDITS

AUTHORSHIP

Cang Snow

ART

Cang Snow