

Prise-de-fer – to transport the opponent's blade from one line into another one (more favourable for an offensive action).

There are three prises-de-fer: the bind, the envelopment, and the croisé. Some consider the coulé, engagement, and change of engagement, as takings of the blade depending on their manner of execution. We have categorised these as attacks on the blade as they often do not force the opponent's blade into another line (see ATTACKS ON THE BLADE, LESSON 2).

Bind

Bind: transports the opponent's blade diagonally across the body from a high line to a low line or vice versa.

Most common binds are octave to quartre (or quartre to octave) when riposte from octave parry is difficult because opponent's arm is low (or arm high when parried quartre).

Technique

- Opponent extends with low hand and point and is parried in octave, with foible held against forte and rim of guard.
- Using the wrist, pivot around the foible maintaining contact between the rim of the guard and forte.
- Transport blade to quartre.
- From quartre, extend to hit arm with opposition.

Variants – from quartre to octave, if opponent's arm is higher frustrating a riposte from quartre.

- ❖ Practice 1: On invitation, opponent attacks in octave line with low arm and point.
- ❖ Practice 2: Opponent attacks in quartre line with high arm and lower point.

Envelopment

Envelopment: transports the opponent's blade around a full circle returning to the original line.

Technique

- Opponent extends with low hand and higher point and is parried in sixte, with foible held against forte and rim of guard with slight domination.
- Using the wrist, pivot (clockwise for a right-hander) around the foible maintaining contact between guard rim and forte for a complete circle.
- From sixte, extend to hit arm with opposition.

Variants – from octave to octave (anticlockwise for a right-hander), or from quartre to quartre (anticlockwise for a right-hander).

- ❖ Practice 1: On invitation, opponent attacks in sixte line with low arm and point and retreats after being parried.
- ❖ Practice 2: On invitation, opponent attacks in octave line with high arm and lower point and retreats after being parried.

Croisé

Croisé: transports the opponent's blade downwards (or upwards) while on the same side of the body.

Most common binds are quarte to low quinte (or sixte to low sixte) when riposte from quarte parry (or sixte parry) is difficult because opponent's arm is high.

Technique

- Opponent extends with high hand and lower point and is parried quarte, with foible held against forte and rim of guard.
- Pronate and bear vertically down on opponent's blade to low quinte.
- Without loss of blade contact, hit with angulation.

Variants – from sixte to low sixte.

- ❖ Practice 1: On invitation, opponent attacks in quarte line with high arm.
- ❖ Practice 2: Opponent attacks in sixte line with high arm and lower point.

Now try each practice with movement, reducing time window for student to exercise the stoke by being at correct distance/blade presented only briefly. Applying increased pressure until fight mode. Correct faults as they occur.

Other Prises-de-fer

Compound Prises-de-fer: Consecutive taking of the blade without loss of blade contact throughout the action. Compound action when the first prise-de-fer does not allow an attack, as the opponent has lifted or lowered their arm to close the line.

Double Prises-de-fer: Consecutive taking of the blade where there is a momentary loss of blade contact during the action. Often used when the opponent's blade slips off contact and the opponent extends to attack.