

Fencing competition and fencing match*

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Translated by Krisztina Nagy, Hungary, 02.02.2014. (See remarks in footnotes)

Many people not only confuse the definitions of competition and match, but very often interchange them too.

One may organize a competition in anything in the world; but for matches, only three sports are suitable, namely, wrestling, boxing and fencing.

The virtual essence of a competition is not the subject itself, but the way of its pursuance, which shall, of the subject of the competition, always introduce the artistic, or at least utility-based side to the audience.

While a match is solely the measuring of the forces struggling against each other, which, with the contribution of astuteness and skillfulness, merely, prosaically represents the end result.

In a competition, the artistic skillfulness, in a match, the raw physical power and astuteness have the leading role.

Thus, a fencing competition and a fencing match are completely different things.

In case of a fencing competition, one does not regard whether this or the other received more or less; but, who fenced more beautifully, better, truer to type and more accurately.

It is self-explanatory, that here, there is no place for 'ambo'-s² as it may not count as a merit of any of the parties.

Yet, in case of the fencing match, the decisive factor at all times is, which of the parties gave more touches ('volt'-s³) to the other in a given time, or, who gives a previously determined amount of cuts sooner, in one word, which one defeats or beats up the other!

Thus, in case of a match, we shall count ambo-cuts just as in case of a duel: it very well counts at the expense of the participants, - without regard to whether they both received sharp cuts or 'touch'-es - because it is a mistake and it is inappropriate from both parties, and for this very reason, it should be counted, too, impairing the participants!

The M.A.C.⁴ declared a public fencing match on the 20th of May, wherein 1st, *masters with masters*, 2nd, *amateurs with amateurs*, 3rd, *amateurs with masters* shall encounter.

This fencing match is not only interesting because M.A.C., since its foundation, has never organized such before, but also because this very match will be carried out without 'touch'-es.

This is about the same as wrestling - without flooring each other, or a duel without a shoot or a cut.

Although the Jury expects the contestants to call 'volt' upon being touched, it [the Jury] does not count it, but has the fencers brawl as long as it prefers, etc.

* See: „*Hazánk*” 143. issue, „*Magyar Hírlap*” and „*Egyetértést*” 18. 05. 1894.

¹ Magyar Kardvívás mint női testgyakorlat ('Hungarian Sabre Fencing as Physical Exercise for Women'), PÁTRIA, 1895. Appendix/a. fragment

² points assigned for a simultaneous touch, to both fencers

³ a touch in a fencing match was called by the fencer with the word 'volt' - meaning 'there was'

⁴ Magyar Atlétikai Club

He may even disqualify the ones who perform 'ambo'-s; any remark, debate over observations is forbidden for the contestant; a member of the Jury may not participate in the match and vice versa, etc.

Thus, we shall ask the question, that, if in such a public tournament, the *most excellent amateurs and the best masters are going to enter*; who will then make the Jury?

Maybe those who feel themselves weaker and do not dare to sign up for the match? Or indeed the best, while only the weaker contest?!

As much is sure, that it is going to be a slightly controversial and strange thing, when *amateurs* will sit judgment on their *masters*; when the weaker referee over the stronger!!

In general, this, and in detail, it is the point 1 and 3 where I have objections.

If, before the audience, only young, fiery amateurs match their swords publicly, I find it appropriate, because, while the glory of victory, through the appreciating applause of the audience, taking pleasure in the pleasing spectacle, will flatter the vanity of one: it may also serve as encouragement for the other too - for the future!

This is, thus, not harmful, either to the fencing sport, or to the authority of the fencing masters; since the young amateur still collects and puts down the laurels of his victories to the wreath of his sometime master's renown, after all.

But that, to the amusement of the audience, like wrestlers on the circus floor, even fencing masters brace up and face each other: it is, to the authority of the profession of the masters, in my opinion, at least not quite becoming. That fencing masters should, on such public match performances, flaunt their ability to brawl with each other in front of the 'laic' audience; that they should make amateurs transformed into Jury-s and former students of theirs compliment them for this publicly too: I hold it not only comic but also such a controversy, which may never benefit the fencing sport or the fencing master's authority at all.

Let such a contest be given any kind of colors, the background of that envy of wage and greed always shows through, when a master desires to undermine the renown and existence of his fellow master, and at the price of this, raise his own authority and fame!

As far as I know, the old *Friedrich, Chappon*, the old *Keresztessy* and *Martinengó* never encountered each other in such public performances, but they still always competed with each other in the field of coaching, yet without ever striving to tear the laurels of appreciation off each other's foreheads!

Yet still, any one of them has greater authority and higher renown than current fencing teachers altogether!

And such an amateur, who solely out of the urge of ostentation, wishes to defeat his master also in front of an audience, publicly, affronts not only becoming, but also loosens the moral attachment that must permanently exist between student and master; affronts the recognition and respect, that a students owes his master in front of publicity as well.

Yet, the intention of such a fencing master is also incomprehensible for me, who is ready to engage in a public match with an amateur. What can possibly be his goal? What does he wish to achieve through this? It is beyond any reason in my eyes. Whether he wants to show the audience that he knows more than an amateur, or less?

But the first is rightfully expected and requested of him already due to his nature anyway, and through the latter, he would even destroy the former too, and would make himself unworthy of his position as well.

Whether there will be such an applicant too, I do not know yet; although as much I know for sure, that the fencing master of M.A.C. and Mr. Vay Lajos, who already called upon me, too, back in November, have already been training each other in 'assaut' fencing, and since that, they probably got ready for the match too.

I believe, that there will be enough amateurs too, who, being well accustomed to their partners, won't quite embarrass each other during the match.

If we also take the fact into account after all, that this fencing match will really be performed without 'touch'-es, then we might call this competition-fencing or anything else, but not a fencing match.

If, though, we are talking about the disparaging of Hungarian sabre fencing, the national honour, let not only amateurs but also the masters take the ground when necessary! But let us never make *public performances, spectacular games for the amusement of the audience* out of Hungarian sabre-fencing, let it be always a *serious, noble and chivalrous* sport in our eyes.

(...)