

SABRE FENCING

By S. Pozdnyakov and G. Tyshler



Over the past 50 years sabre fencing undergone many changes that have resulted in the piste being made shorter and the premature introduction of the electronic scoring machine has fundamentally altered the way in which sabre is fenced and indeed the rules relating to what is in fact a valid hit.

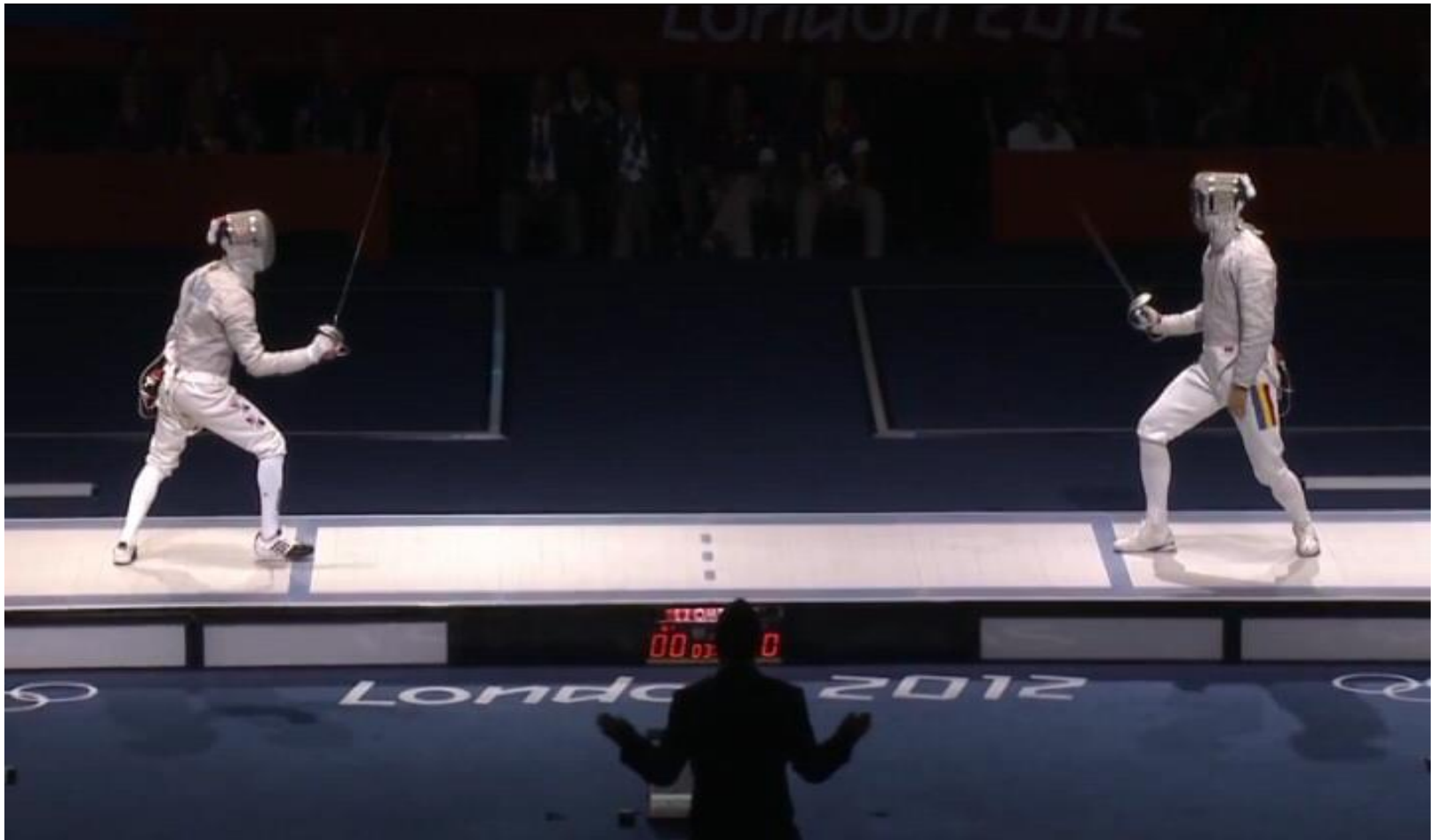
The length of the fencing piste decreased from 24 to 18 meters, and then to 14 meters. The introduction of the electronic scoring machine resulted in a huge number of compromises: the annulment of “off target” hit, the annulment of the concept of the “passé” touch", as well as the abandonment of the hit sensor which ensured that only touches made with the correct force would score.

The increase of the effectiveness of the attack led to a fight for attack initiative, a huge number of simultaneous attacks and the introduction of priorities. Moreover all these changes have not affected the popularity and visual appeal of sabre fencing. Sabre competition remained the most spectacular and interesting competition of the fencing program.

CONCEPT

The current problem of sabre fencing is the imbalance between the effectiveness of attacking versus defensive actions. Attack is much stronger and more effective than defense. This encourages athletes to fight for attack initiative, and creates a huge amount of simultaneous attacks, makes refereeing difficult and shortens the time of sabre matches to seconds. It also forces the referee into making increasingly arbitrary decisions regarding the offensive action which in fact alienates spectators who are not able to understand why one fencer is considered to have the advantage.

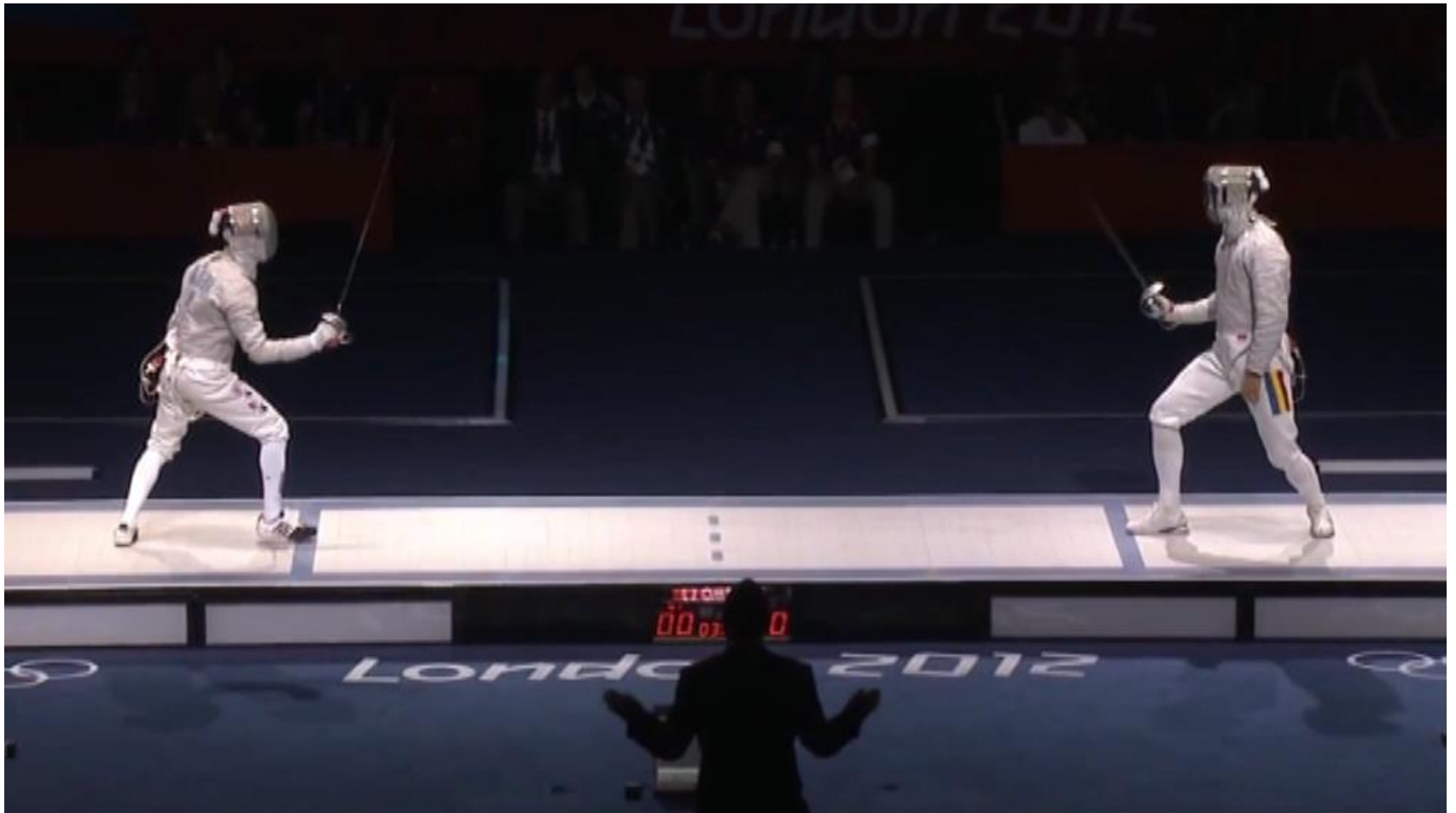
attacks made immediately after a referee's command "Allez!"



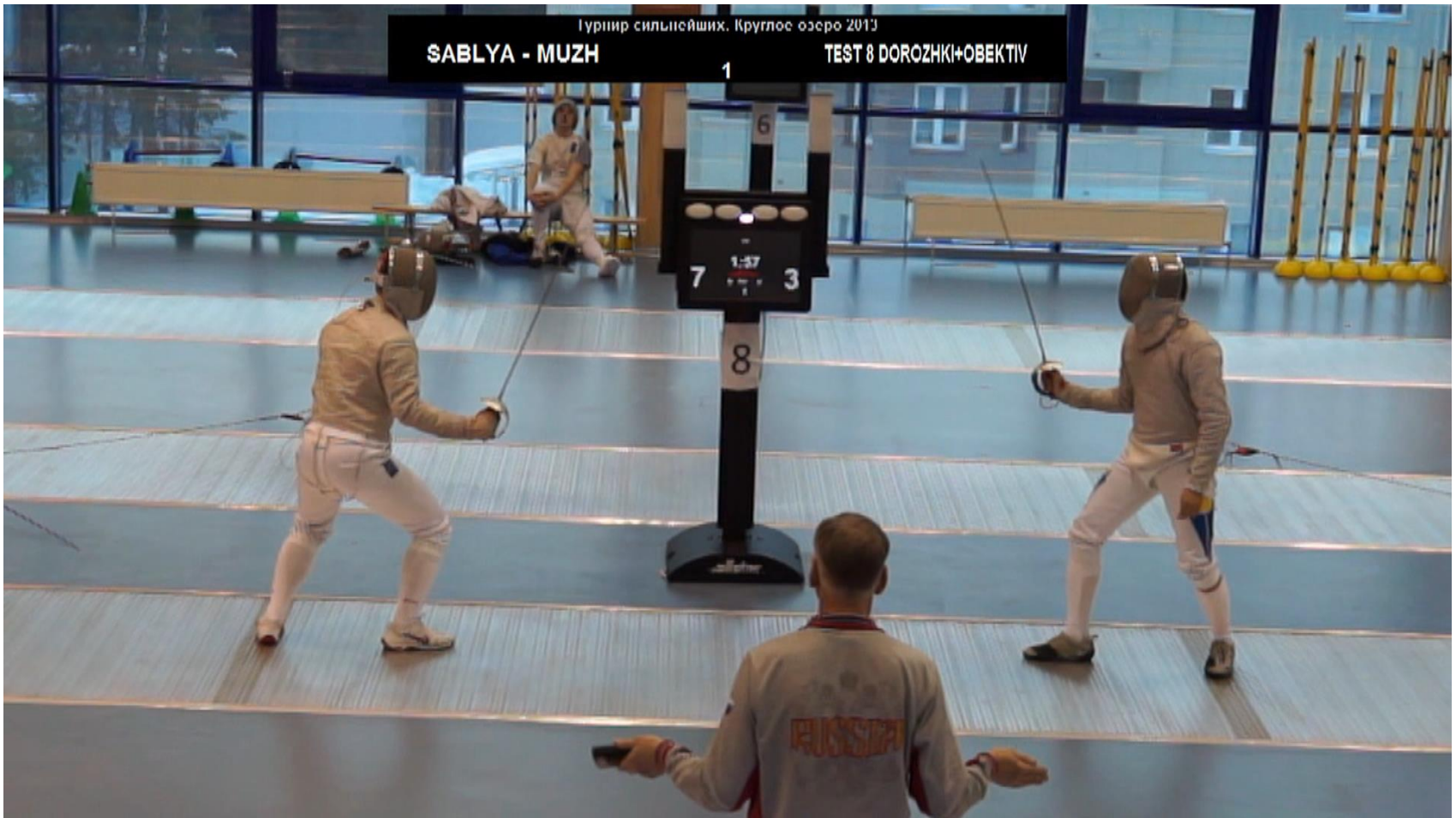
PROPOSAL 1

To reduce the distance between the fencers at the start of the engagement, from 4 to 3 meters. Before the match the fencers should adopt the “en guard” position with back leg on the start line. The goal - to reduce the number of attacks made immediately after a referee’s command "Allez!" as an attack from a short distance can be more easily parried than an attack from the longer distance.

4 meters distance

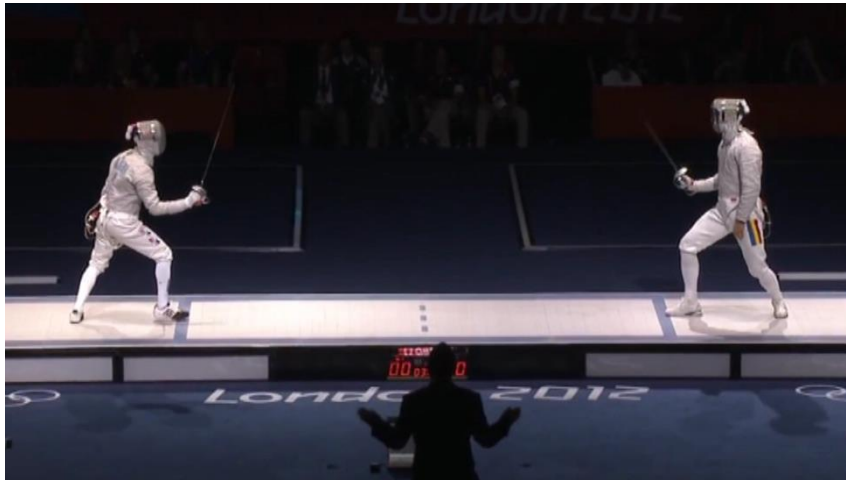


3 meters distance

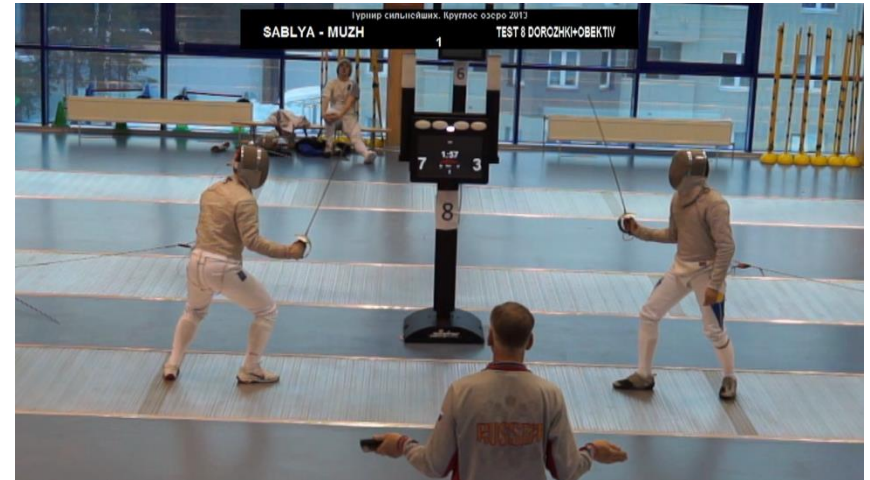


distance between the fencers at the start of the engagement

4 meters distance



3 meters distance



FIE can consider to move the lines of the beginning to the 3 meters distance for all weapons

- Picture will be more TV friendly
- Distance more convenient for referees

Advice for referee

Two fencers can
start attack
simultaneous only
with the SIGNAL

PROPOSAL 2

To increase the length of the sabre piste from 14 meters to 18 meters, by introducing a 'line of prevention' (2 meters) on either side.

THE GOALS

- to increase the duration of the fencing bouts in sabre
- to increase the number of premeditative defensive actions at the 2 meters due to standard situations
- to strengthen the defence due to the greater ability to retreat from the attacker
- to create a tactical uncertainty for the attacking athlete.

RUSSIAN NATIONAL COMPETITIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN



Test on the rules changing, proposals to improve sabre fencing image and understanding.

Location: International Exhibition Center, the official pistes for Junior World Championship, Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

Participants: seven junior athletes, members of the FIE training camp, participants of the World Championship, N. Kovalev, member of FIE Athletes commission. (list attached)

Date: April 2, 2014

Time: 10.00-13.00

PLOVDIV 2014



Organizers:

- **S. Pozdnyakov**, 10 time world champion, four time Olympic champion, sabre, Member of the FIE Executive Committee.
- **Dr. G. Tyshler**, coached six world champions in sabre, President of FIE Coaching Council
- Observer - participant: **N. Kovalev**, 3 times world champion, prize winner of the Olympic Games, sabre, Member of the FIE Athletes Commission.

Test Conditions

- First to conduct the “control competition”, the pool of 8 fencers under the current rules. Then to conduct the “experimental competition” the pool of the same 8 fencers under the proposed rules. 56 fencing bouts were recorded.
- **Referee** - Stanislav Pozdnyakov.
- During the test, the number of simultaneous attacks awarded by the referee and the total time of the fencing bout were recorded.

Test results:

Subjective opinion of the most athletes and experts, involved in the test, confirms the positive impact of changes on the fencing sabre bouts.

Statistics:

During the competition with the proposed rules

- The number of simultaneous attacks decreased by 23%
- Total time of the fencing bout has increased by 29%

Conclusions:

The proposed changes to the rules of sabre bouts will reduce the amount of simultaneous attacks. There will be more “clear “, beautiful hits, easy understandable to the spectators. The total time of the sabre bout will increase due to the athlete’s deep and variable footwork movements on the piste. This will make the saber fencing more interesting to watch, more entertaining and more understandable to the audience.

Recommendations:

The FIE need to test these and other proposals during the bigger tournaments involving juniors, adults, men and women. It is important to use not only the experts and fencers opinions, but to analyze the recorded data obtained from the tournaments statistically.

ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS

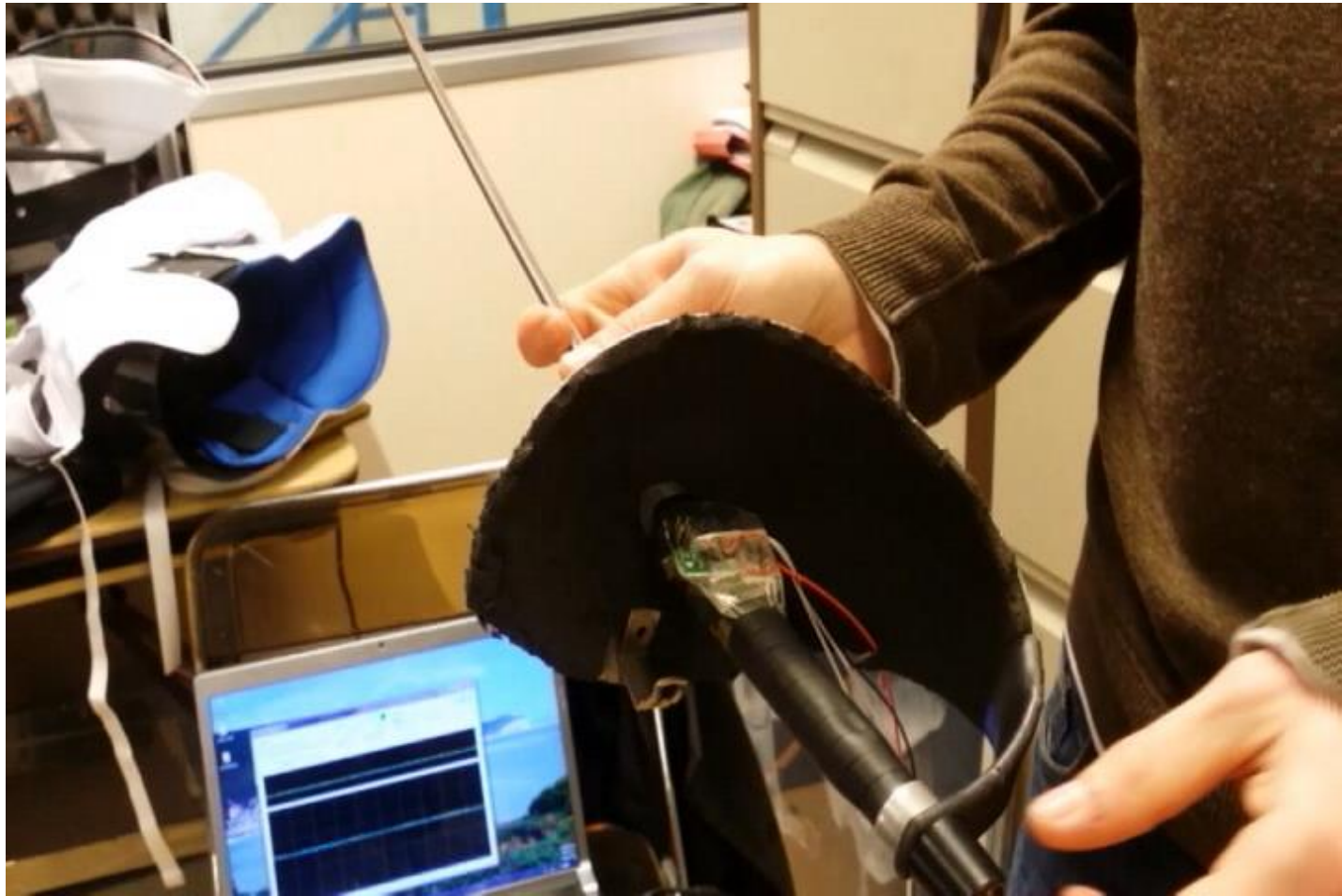
- To return the target area on the sabre fencer`s glove. The goal – to increase the number of effective counter-attacks.
- To increase the scoring machine blocking time to 160 milliseconds. The goal – to increase the number of effective ripostes.
- To consider the increasing the weight of the sabre blade. The goal – to strengthen defense and increase the difficulty of selection of the correct target sector when attacking.
- The hits should be registered (recorded) only with a cutting edge of the blade, that is - two-thirds of the blade at the bottom one-third from the top, as it was in the traditional rules. The goal – to strengthen defense due to inability to make flat cut and flick touches.

All proposals must first be thoroughly tested in practice.

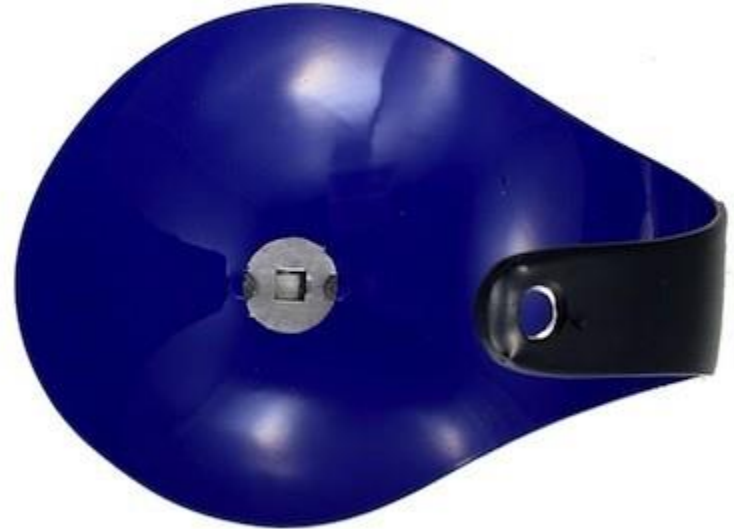
To reintroduce the sensor (the sensor of hit / touch). The goal - to reduce the number of flicks, “passé” touches and “passé” remises. Mechanical sensor -1986



Experiments with motion sensor 2014 video



The size of sabre guard



THE END