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Athlete's attitude to exercises, competitions and results : extreme types of "warrior" and "technician"

Idō - Ruch dla Kultury : rocznik naukowy : [filozofia, nauka, tradycje wschodu, kultura, zdrowie, edukacja] 6, 161-168

2006

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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Athlete's attitude to exercises, competitions and results – extreme types of “warrior” and “technician” (full English text)

*Motivation does not bring results unless
a person realises the aim of the
activity and the practical means of achieving the goal*
Włodzimierz Szewczuk

Key words: sport psychology, fencing, tactics and personality, achievement motivation, types of fencers.

The Author discusses the essence and importance of the principle of individualization, team coherence, and coach's leading role in modern competitive sport. He also expresses his opinion that the value of so called “champion profile” in combat sports is rather doubtful. The World Championships and Olympic medals in fencing are won by fencers, who – although display certain common traits – yet show marked differences. Among the best fencers are athletes with different somatic traits, various dimensions of personality, different traits of temperament; the winners are tall and small, right- and left-handed, using different tactics etc. etc. In order to apply successfully the principle of individualization and develop positive traits, strong predispositions, the coach must know and understand his pupils attitude to sport, fencing, exercises, his opponents, competition and results and must choose adequate methods of training and educating them. The Author describes in detail the salient features the extreme types of fencers – “warrior” type (ego-involvement) and “technician” (task-involvement).

INTRODUCTION

Sports rivalry ought to be obliterated.
Father Stanisław Ruciński

*Winning is not the most important thing.
Winning is everything*
Vince Lombardi

In this article, I describe and analyse two extreme types of fencers: “warrior” (ego-involvement) and “technician” (task-involvement). It should be understood that these names are rather conventional. I identified these two types many years ago after long and careful observation of many training sessions and competitions (and I have been involved in fencing for nearly 70!). As we know, every classification must have one clear criterion. In this case, the identification of “warrior” and “technician” types is based, above all, on the fencers' achievement motivation, strictly connected and associated with their attitudes towards sport, in general, and towards fencing, training, competitions, tasks, results, the coach, colleagues, and opponents [Czajkowski 1984].

These two types are extreme ones and, in reality, there are many fencers who display characteristic traits, in different proportions, of both types. It is worthwhile to notice that the attitude of my “technician” type corresponds, more or less, to what the majority of sport psychologists describe as “task-involvement”. The attitude of my “warrior” closely resembles one type of an “ego-involvement” personality—namely the one which is characterised by a strong desire to compete, to achieve successes, to get recognition, to show one's superiority, and all of this with a very high level of a motive of success. There are also types with highly competitive attitudes, but strongly afraid of defeat (a high level of a motive of avoiding failure); these types will not be discussed here [Czajkowski 2001]. My types of “technician” resembles what most sport psychologists call “task involvement”

Differentiating and recognising various types of fencers is extremely important for the efficacy of the training process—especially in applying the principle of individualisation, when the coach must take into account his pupils' dimensions of personality, traits of temperament, intelligence, emotional stability or instability, extroversion or introversion, as well as their attitudes towards fencing, exercises, competition, results, etc.

Even a not very experienced fencer or coach should realise that for the successful application of individualisation in training, a very important factor—one of the most important—is the pupil's attitude towards fencing, fighting, etc. To me, it is a very important thing, and it never ceases to astonish me that, in the majority of fencing textbooks, so little attention is paid to it. Yet, it is obvious that diagnosing and recognising “technician” and “warrior” types—as well as various intermediate types—allows for individual treatment and different, appropriate training methods, as well as different educational approaches. We, of course, must remember that what is good for one type may be dramatically bad for another.

By watching the practices of other branches of sport, and discussing the problems of training with coaches from other sports, one may conclude that similar types also occur in other sports and games—especially combat sports.

A general description of the “Technician” and “Warrior” types

“From among all that differentiates a human being from lower representatives of the animal world, and that differentiates people amongst themselves, nothing is more complex, interesting, and fascinating than human personality,” wrote R. Tilleard-Cole [1979], adding, “The structure of personality has no limit to its dimensions. One has got a warm heart, is magnanimous, open-hearted, and joyful; the other one is cold, mean, reserved, and spiteful; the third one is carefree, easygoing, polite, and unreliable; and the fourth one, on the other hand, is anxious, tense, quarrelsome, but reliable.” Thus, the recognition of dimensions of personality—a dynamic complex, in which the interaction of various characteristic functions occurs—is immensely difficult. It is, however, of primary importance for the fencing coach. When trying to recognise the pupil's personality and his predispositions for fencing, as well as when choosing various educational methods, one should start—in my opinion—with defining which traits of “warrior” or “technician” manifest themselves in a given pupil.

What is the difference between these two types?

For a “technician”, fencing is a complicated branch of sport, containing certain elements of art. It is entertainment and fun; serves the many-sided development of personality; teaches new skills, abilities, and capabilities; gives new feelings and experiences; promotes mental development and gives plenty of rich emotions. He is of the opinion that one should study fencing, get to know it, and enjoy its beauty. A “technician” is an advocate of systematic, precise, technical and tactical education. He always strives to better his abilities and widen his knowledge. He is interested, not only in what has direct application in competition—in the form of concrete motor skills and technical-tactical capabilities—but in all that widens his knowledge and cognitive horizons regarding fencing: thus, also, the development of weapons and the history of fencing, fencing literature, the classification of fencing actions and fencing terminology, etc. Competing, for a “technician”, is a conflicting game of minds, emotions, and learned, acquired, correct and accurate movements of the weapon. He often pays attention to the aesthetic values of fencing—the beauty of movements and exchanges.

For a “warrior”, fencing is, above all and nearly exclusively, a fight. He cultivates fencing in order to fight, hit his opponent, and win. A “warrior” does not pay much attention to detailed, and rather difficult, learning of technique; he is not interested in the theory of fencing and tactics; he does not appreciate the beauty of movements or the cleverness of tactical play. His main object, bordering on obsession, is to hit his opponent at any cost, and by any means. And so, if a typical “technician” says, “The hit is not so important, but the way you achieve it is,” then a “warrior” maintains, “It does not really matter how you score a hit, the importance is the mere fact of the hit.” A “warrior” is, then, very ambitious, aggressive, sure of himself. For him, important is: comparing himself to others, sharp rivalry, and striving—by means of good results in competition—for higher social status.

Attitude towards and perception of practice, lessons, training bouts and competitions

A “technician” constantly learns. He tries to increase his skills, abilities, and dexterity in yielding weapons. He tries to learn new strokes and fencing actions. I may quote a statement of a well-known boxer, G. Skrzecz, which depicts a typical “technician” attitude: “I spar in order to learn, not in order to fight.”

During my first visit to Budapest, in 1952, I watched, with certain surprise and great admiration, the great Hungarian sabre stars—Aladar Gerevich, Pal Kovacs, Rudolf Karpati, and others—practising with great concentration, devotion, enthusiasm, and obvious joy, paying attention to the smallest detail of the technical execution of strokes and applied tactics.

A “warrior”, in a lesson, sees only bouting situations; he wants to score a hit at any cost. Complicated, very accurate, precise technical exercises are, for him, boring and tiring. An Italian sabreur, a typical “warrior”, said to me, “I don’t care at all what I look like on the strip. It doesn’t matter what they say about my style. The important thing for me is to score a hit.”

A “technician” treats competitions, not only as rivalry, but also as a valuable occasion to learn something new—to try newly acquired skills and capabilities. For him, results—comparing his own to that of others—are not so very important; at least he says so. A “technician” assesses his progress, and strong and weak points, without necessarily comparing himself to others. Even if he loses a bout, he may be satisfied: if the opponent was very good; he thinks that he fenced well; and he noticed improvement in his fencing.

For a “warrior”, as has already been stressed, participation in competitions means only—and above all—acute rivalry. All that matters is whether he wins or not. He values the victory irrespective of how it was obtained, with what style, by what means, or who the opponent was.

The ways of fencing

A “technician”, when fencing, relies on well-acquired and -learned fencing actions, and willingly applies certain complex sets of strokes. He often uses, not only offensive, but, equally, defensive and counter-offensive movements; his movements are efficacious, economic, well-controlled, and pleasing to the eye. He uses a wide variety of tactical solutions: first and second intention actions, foreseen and unforeseen actions, etc. In the same situation, he may use different actions (e.g., defending against an opponent’s attack in low line, he may alternatively use: parry two, parry eight, stop-hit from above, stop-hit in opposition, etc.).

A “warrior” is aggressive, mobile, energetic, fast, and relentless; he bases his actions on surprise (“timing”) and speed, often using simple actions, mostly offensive actions; he often uses “cutting-through” tactics. He does not care whether his movements are precise—they are often “ugly”, sloppy, inaccurate and uneconomical. In a fight, a “warrior” uses a lot of energy “jumping” around the strip, trying to catch the opponent by surprise. His repertoire of actions is rather limited and “stereotyped”—he always reacts in the same way to the same situation. A high motive of success and high level of arousal increases the speed and efficacy of his actions, which are often based on simple reaction (easy well-acquired movements, demanding speed, are usually executed well and efficiently in a high state of arousal).

Attitude towards various tactical situations, the opponent’s movements and intentions

As far as perceiving, and reacting to, tactical situations, and the opponent’s intentions and actions, are concerned, there is a huge—though difficult to notice—difference between a “warrior” and “technician”.

A “technician”, very often, directs most of his attention to himself—his own actions and intentions. His actions are usually well-executed but, sometimes, may not be well-adapted to the actual tactical situation, distance, the opponent’s movements, etc.—which, of course, decreases the chances of their successful application. He may, for example, think, “Now, I am going to execute an attack—carte-beat and double disengagement,” oblivious to the fact that his opponent relies mostly on circular parries, and so the “technician’s” attack will be unsuccessful. He also pays attention to the quality—the correctness and “beauty”—of his movements.

A “warrior”—quite to the contrary—does not “see” his movements; he does not pay attention to whether they are nice and correct, or ugly and unorthodox. All of his attention is concentrated on assessment of distance, the opponent’s movements, and quick perception of the opponent’s mistakes (e.g., inaccurate assessment of distance, exposing the forearm in epee or sabre, signs of lowering of attention, etc.)—which he tries to take immediate advantage of. Generally, a “warrior” does not try to create situations to facilitate the use of a preconceived action, but, relying on his speed and mobility,

capitalises on his opponent's mistakes. The consequences of such attitudes and tactics are—apart from speedy and effective capitalisation of the opponent's mistakes—a small diversity of actions, tedious manoeuvring on the strip, and a certain tactical one-sidedness.

Achievement motivation, emotions, attitude towards the opponent

A typical extreme “technician” usually does not show a high level of fighting spirit—the opponent is, for him, a partner. He may even lose a bout with satisfaction, saying that the fight was “nice and interesting”, or that, although he lost, he learned a lot. The motivation of an extreme “technician”—especially his achievement motives—is not quite appropriate for rivalry in competitions; this is often why an extreme, one-sided, “technician”—with a high level of task-involvement and too low a level of motive of success—obtains results far below what one might expect, observing his skilfulness in practice.

For an extreme “warrior”, the opponent, on the strip, is a real enemy, at whom he is angry (he nearly hates him). He tries to hit him, at any cost. Fighting on the strip is, for him, not a sporting rivalry, but a real fight “for life and death”. His achievement motivation (especially motive of success), self-confidence, ambition, and strong emotions, help him to fight and overcome fatigue. He is not afraid of strong opponents—famous, well-trained, and experienced fencers. He does not respect them; he does not notice—or pretends not to notice—their values, dexterity, and strengths.

A typical “warrior” attitude was expressed by a very well-known Soviet sabreur, Victor Sidiyak (who had many characteristics of a “warrior”). To a journalist's question, “Do you have any fencing heroes, or any competitors whom you especially admire?” He replied, “Looking for heroes, I leave to my opponents. A good fencer always looks for the weak points of his opponents, and not values which deserve admiration.” A similar opinion was expressed by the great Italian sabreur, Mario Aldo Montano (who equally displayed many traits of a warrior), “It was never important for me to look nice on the piste. Really, the only things which count are scoring a hit, defeating the opponent, and victory.” Completely different attitudes and values were demonstrated by the Italian, Michele Maffei, and the very famous Polish sabreur, Jerzy Pawłowski (winner of many World Championship and Olympic Games medals).

The object of a fencing bout is, of course, scoring hits, avoiding being hit, and defeating the opponent. Technique, tactics, and the entire system of training serve this purpose. Participation in competitions is an efficacious and stimulating way to compare one's values, assets, skills, and capabilities with those of others; it constitutes, in a way, a sign of optimism and self-efficacy, as only one fencer may win, and defeats cause unpleasant emotions. Because of this, a “warrior” feels excellent at competitions, whereas a “technician” is in a slightly less happy situation. Of course, a “technician” also appreciates victory, but his satisfaction and contentment is, rather, due to self-assessment of his skills, capabilities, and his style of fencing, and not so much based on only competition results, or the assessment of other people. The ruthlessness in fight which a typical “warrior” would impose, is, for a “technician”, unpleasant and difficult to accept. An extreme type of “technician” does not consider competitive success as the final, most important, and the only object of cultivating fencing. Defending himself against the possibility of defeat, the “technician” uses the “shield” of his technical capabilities, elegant fencing, and “philosophical” attitudes towards victory and defeat.

What is the attitude of technician towards warrior, and vice versa? Contrary to the known saying that one values more what one does not possess—or, “The grass is always greener on the other side”—extreme representatives of both types do not seem to like and respect each other (perhaps—as frequently happens—it is a sign of a hidden form of jealousy?). A “technician” expresses the following opinions about “warriors” and their style of fencing: “barbarian”, “primitive”, “naturalist”, “that isn't fencing”, “jumper”, etc. A “warrior” also has not got a very high opinion of technicians and their style of fencing: “gymnast”, “trained monkey”, “antitalent”, “it's a show and not a fight”, etc. Judging by the “strength” of their words, it is the “warrior” who is more jealous of the “technician” than vice-versa.

Incidentally, in the very long history of fencing, the “warrior” and “technician” types have been differentiated for many years, though by different names. It is a very interesting fact that even at the turn of the XX century, when a highly stylised, artistic, and very conventional way of fencing with

foils was predominant—when the beauty of movements and style of fencing was often more appreciated than efficacy—there occurred fencers of the “warrior” type. Then they were called “ferrailleurs” or “naturalists”. They were treated with a certain forbearance, not to say disregard—but many fencing manuals of that period gave advice on how to fence against “ferrailleurs”.

Competition results and development perspectives of the “Warrior” and “Technician”

Now an obvious question appears: What are the competition results of both extreme types of fencers, and what are their perspectives of development?

At the beginning of a fencing career, in the first stage of training, at a very young age—and even among juniors—fencers of “warrior” type possess and show a visible superiority. They achieve early results, and keep up this tendency for quite some time. They get satisfaction, both from results, as well as their style of fencing and ways of training.

A “technician”, initially, is in a much less fortunate position: his results—often for a very long time—are far below his expectations and skilfulness. His efforts are directed to acquiring, learning, and applying in competition, various fencing actions, and, to a lesser degree, to beat his opponent. At the beginning, very often, he must pass through a period of disappointment, when his precisely learned and thought-out actions are brutally stopped and annihilated by the fast, and rather primitive, “warriors”. A “technician”, at the beginning of his fencing career, often loses to opponents obviously technically weaker than himself. This often invokes the surprise of “connoisseurs”: “How could he lose with such overwhelming technical superiority?” A “technician” then begins to doubt his talent and capabilities, and sometimes even doubts the competence of, and training methods used by, his fencing master (“You’ve taught me many varieties of a beautiful lunge, and very fine yielding of the weapon, and yet others fight and hit me.”). The final reactions of a “technician” to initial failures may be of two varieties:

1. To avoid constant disappointment and the unpleasant emotions connected with defeat—and that mostly while fencing against “barbarians”—he stresses the aesthetic value of fencing, depreciating the importance of results and victories; subconsciously cultivating the syndrome: “Me—Leonardo, you—caveman”.

2. By means of further persistent effort to perfect technique and tactical capabilities, gaining competition experience, and conscious self-development of fighting traits, he arrives to the stage in which the efficacy of his actions in competition markedly increases. He begins to ably take advantage of his technical superiority, and gradually achieves better and better results. In this case, the “technician’s” way to high achievements is slow, but successes become more stable and long-lasting.

A “warrior” also has his troubles and problems. His aggressive, active, offensive attitude on the strip brings him early successes—and he and his coach often do not realise that the achieved results do not correspond to the level of his technical capabilities (the results are “higher” than his capabilities)—but the series of good results to which he was accustomed may come to an unexpected end. This might occur when his trait of aggressiveness becomes weaker, and his extremely active and mobile style of fencing, and rather modest repertoire of actions, causes undue fatigue. In the long run, the full exploitation of his natural abilities, spontaneity, and impulsiveness, ceases to be sufficient, as a lack of a good technical base makes widening the range of his applied actions, and versatile application of known actions, difficult. A “warrior” always applies the same actions; he is always waiting for the occasion to apply them—which is very tiring (he is obliged to fence with the utmost energy, effort, and concentration, from the very first bout in a competition). A disregard of technique and precise, basic education, by a “warrior” (and, sometimes, also by his fencing master!) very often leads to the appearance of technical errors (bad execution of certain strokes, when fixed and well-acquired, are very difficult—practically impossible—to remove, and are easily taken advantage of by clever opponents). Because, at the beginning of his career, a “warrior” usually begins to achieve good results very early, stagnation of his good results come as a shock to him; especially since, very often, he does not understand what is causing it. In such a situation, the logical conclusion for a “warrior” ought to be systematic, strenuous effort to develop his technical capabilities and increase the range of learned fencing actions, but that is precisely what a “warrior” does not like. Besides, as it is generally known, improvement of badly acquired, automatised movements, a change of motor

skill, is extremely difficult; and even eradicated mistakes are committed in competition, under the influence of emotions and high arousal and when attention is concentrated on tactics (what to do, and when to do it, but not how it is done).

Results obtained by “Warriors” and “Technicians”

Analysing, carefully, the course of the athletic careers of outstanding fencers—from various countries, at various times, and in various weapons—one may reach the following conclusions [Czajkowski 1983; 1957–1977; 1945–2003; 2002]:

1. The biggest achievements in the Olympic Games, World Championships, and other great international tournaments, and long-lasting high athletic form and long-lasting sustainability of high results, are generally shown by fencers with a high level of technical, technical-tactical, and tactical capabilities, and psychomotor abilities, with very good, precise, basic education, who display many traits and characteristics of a “technician” and some adequately developed (inborn or learned) traits of a “warrior”. Such fencers often display rich tactics based on impeccable, “elegant”, technique, in the wide sense of the word—such are the legendary stars of international fencing; to name only a few: Christian d’Oriola, Jean-Claude Magnan, Edoardo Mangiarotti, Aladar Gerevich, Jerzy Pawłowski, Rudolf Karpati, Victor Zhdanowicz, Egon Franke, Yakov Rylski.

2. Outstanding results in international competitions, equal to those of the above-mentioned group, are also achieved by athletes with a marked prevalence of “warrior” traits, who are able to supplement their aggressive motivation with the appropriate technical capabilities, often forming a very specific, unorthodox style of fencing. For example: Ilona Elek, Tibor Berczelly, Victor Sidiyak, Grigory Kriss, and others.

3. Fencers with extreme, one-sided, traits of a “technician” or “warrior”, mostly do not achieve very high results in international competitions. A “technician” with too low a level of fighting spirit and motive of success, becomes an average fencer with correct technique, whose style of fencing is nice to look at, but not efficacious. A “warrior” who does not improve his technique, and does not widen his repertoire of actions, after a period of initial successes, soon reaches the ceiling of his possibilities; his repertoire of actions becomes ossified; he becomes an unrelenting, fierce, mediocre fencer and, very often, finishes his fencing career relatively early.

I, myself, am a strong champion of many-sided, versatile training, developing technical and tactical capabilities, cognitive and psychomotor abilities, promoting sport enjoyment and a deep interest in fencing, at the same time enhancing the right set of achievement motivation. Many prominent coaches—who we might call “technicians” with a sound proportion of “warrior” traits—have displayed similar view and attitudes.

The traits and attitudes of a “warrior” are inborn, but they may be also developed by coaches, who we may also call “warrior” types. These coaches do not worry about their pupils’ education or the development of their personalities. “Warrior” coaches treat their students instrumentally, and their only aim is “victory at any cost”—for their own benefit and glory. If coaches of “technician” type can be described as people who love fencing in themselves, then the “warrior” coaches are people who love themselves in fencing.

Difficulties, threatening situations in competitions, responsibility for results, judges’ mistakes, a high level of arousal, and all stressful situations cause, among “warriors”, heightened mobilisation, aggressive attitudes, boldness, and recklessness, increasing the efficacy of their actions. The same situations, among some “technicians”, may negatively influence their efficiency: deteriorating speed and accuracy of perception and reaction, lowering self confidence, etc.

The above-mentioned phenomena may be explained in the following manner:

1. In accordance with the Second Yerkes-Dodson Law, high motivation and an elevated level of arousal may exert a negative influence on efficacy and results of activity, in situations where motor skills are very fine, difficult, and complicated (this means that the same level of arousal, good for “warriors” may be already too high, and negatively influence, “technicians”). So, very high arousal and motivation; ambition, great responsibility for results, hits a “technician” first. The same level of arousal may be just optimal for a “warrior” whose style of fencing is based on simple motor skills and primitive tactics. As I mention in other articles, the best remedy for a “technician” is to make difficult tasks easy by using the over-learning method.

2. The great majority of “warriors” possess a strong nervous system (nervous cells with a high capacity of effort and high resistance to fatigue), whereas, among some “technicians”, one meets individuals with rather weak nervous systems. As we know—and it has been stressed many times—difficulties, threatening situations, and rivalry mobilise, and increase the efficacy of actions of, competitors with strong nervous systems, and decreases the efficacy of actions of fencers with weak nervous systems. My observations, in this respect, have been verified by much scientific research [Vyatkin 1978] Besides, competitors with weak nervous systems, much more often display their states of anxiety—which may also diminish the quality and efficacy of actions.

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR COACHES

“Time and quality of work will provide better results than selection based on any champion profile; we don't select champions, they select themselves by work, passion and determination to achieve the highest results.”

Janusz Bednarski

These observations and considerations imply that a fencing master, in his coaching—which, of course, includes education—should not act against the nature of a given competitor, but should rather ably apply the principle of individualisation of training, taking advantage of an athlete's strong points and tendencies, reducing his weak points and negative traits.

It is necessary to ensure the pupil's active and close co-operation in enhancing the right direction, kind, and level of motivation, and in building and developing his style of fencing, taking into account his dimensions of personality, temperament, and psychological and tactical tendencies.

Coaching a fencer who mostly displays traits of the “technician” type, the fencing master should take advantage of the pupil's good points—his assets (fondness of systematic effort, desire to deeply understand fencing, intellectual approach towards training, task-involvement, a high level of motor co-ordination—which helps in the acquisition of sensory-motor skills, etc.)—at the same time influencing his fighting spirit, enhancing his motivation, and carefully and gradually introducing difficult situations, psychological pressure, and elements of his rivalry.

When coaching a fencer with overwhelming “warrior” traits, the fencing master should take advantage of the pupil's inborn aggressiveness, strong desire to compete, love of rivalry and fighting, and—making use of the difficult situations of bouts and rivalry—create good and variable bases of technique, gradually enriching his range of acquired and applied fencing actions and capabilities.

One should not, however, strive to impose complete uniformity nor conformity of fencer's styles and tactics to these two contrasting types. It is not desirable and, anyway, it is impossible to attain. What really matters is taking advantage of the good points and assets of both types, and a certain balancing of their qualities, assets, and weak points. A “technician”, just the same, will base his fencing style on technique and an “intellectual-technical” variety of tactics; and a “warrior”, mainly on fighting spirit, speed, sense of timing, boldness, and an impulsive style of tactics. For fencers of both types, the appropriate training and supplementary influences facilitate them becoming more versatile and efficient fencers.

In applying the principle of individualisation in tactical preparation (and in the entire process of training, as a whole), it is important to differentiate various traits of temperament and—influencing these temperamental traits—various qualities of the nervous system, mainly the strength of neurological processes and, especially, the strength of excitatory processes.

Among pupils with a weak nervous system, difficult conditions of exercises and, especially, situations of competition and rivalry, cause intimidation, confusion, a lack of self-confidence, and certain difficulties in acquiring motor skills and capabilities. Pupils with a strong nervous system enjoy difficult situations, rivalry, and exercises demanding high speed and orientation in time and space [Czajkowski 2001; 2002; Strelau 1978].

Very early introduction of competitions, ranking lists, awarding various points, and various complicated systems of rivalry (sometimes on the border of the absurd), connected with the ease with which “warriors” obtain their first successes—due only to mobility, speed, aggressiveness, and other “warrior” traits—may cause a coach certain serious difficulties in many-sided training and education of the pupil. To pupils who do not appreciate the importance of technique and tactical capabilities, who try to avoid the sometimes difficult exercises which ensure basic skilfulness, a coach should try to explain that, although rivalry and competition are most typical and very important factors of sport, yet there are also other values which one should appreciate, like: developing one’s personality, cognitive processes, motor control and adaptability, and other factors, such as aesthetic ones. A coach should educate his pupils in such a way—developing such qualities and attitudes—that fencing is not only a kind of rivalry, but fulfils a very valuable educational role and gives pleasure and sport enjoyment; a very one-sided, aggressive attitude may only appeal to a small bunch of bloodthirsty people.

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