

So given that you have novice horse & rider combinations you are reducing the risk by limiting the possibilities ? I think I can understand why, but it would seem to make the exercise rather mundane & under developed for more experienced mounts & riders who want to take their skill base further ?

The "Saracen Heads" game is one of our more basic ones. We actually do many others and always try to come up with new ones. Most can be quite challenging for any skill level.

>>It is possible that a reason for this is also that in a battle you have a crowd, the swing is clearer above the crowd than trying to swing via legs etc.<<

Sure, that could be one reason though the same depiction is consistent whether in a melee or single combat.

>>I do Western Martial arts , which are based on many manual techniques etc. We use rising (upward) , descending and lateral blows, right and left using inside and outside lines. If you restrict (in combat) to one type of blow you have a large waste of time weilding back to a position to delivery the same blow, it is inefficient. In addition it makes you very predictable as an opponant. If I knew you only did descending cuts I would easily get in under you cut with a rising or lateral cut and kill you.<<

LOL, I said it was a primary blow, not the only one Mel. I know the blocks too. :-)

>> There are six basic cuts defined in a 1796 manual I have...

Lateral left to right  
lateral right to left  
descending right to left  
descending left to right  
rising right to left  
rising left to right

It is my understanding these form the basis of cavalry attack.<<

Agreed. We're taught the same ones in ACW. In point of fact SCA-wise, for those who are short enough, their blows would be more of a lateral nature rather than downward.

>>OK here everyone is taught right handed as is necessary for a military unit to be well formed, some left handers can use both, but training is all right handed, there are good practical and period reasons for this !<<

In a military sense I very much agree. If I remember right, even the Romans made all their soldiers learn to fight righthanded.

>>Where, in which period ? Example of knight dismounting are Cercy, Poitiers, Agincourt, almost any battle in the War of the Roses (in some cases both sides were dismounted). 1106 Tinchebrai nearly 1/2 the cavalry inc the commanded were dismounted.<<

I'm doing this at work so I don't have my references with me to study, but nevertheless, I still contend that the primary usefulness of the medieval knights and the factor that made them a power on the battlefield, was as a

mounted weapons system. I can agree that they may have occasionally dismounted to fight (and was it by their choice or a commanders orders?). I think the idea of cavalry dismounting to fight became more prevalent with the advent of firearms on the battlefield. This made cavalry more like mounted infantry rather than true cavalry. But that's getting off subject, sorry.

I>> can understand that to a point, but to progress do you not think it would be interesting to have a wider and more structured approach to progression ?<<

Interesting doesn't always translate into safe. Because of restrictions imposed on us by our parent organization that other mounted reenactment organizations do not have to contend with, we must always look at the activities we do in a more critical way.

>>I appreciate that point but am still unconvinced that untried combinations are overall a safe prospect (the same happens here BTW so the comment isn't meant anti SCA or anything) The rules you have are important in the situation you have, but equally I can see it would be frustrating for anyone serious about progressing their skill in that direction as a well trained.<<

It's not that the blow in question was untried, it's whether or not the blow in question should be considered the best option given the vast differences in riders and mounts with none of the type of training you used to in your organization. To us it's not a matter of individual perfection of technique. It's more a means of allowing the greatest number of people a simple, understandable rule that is the same regardless of which part of the country you live in.

Now in regards to my above statement: There is a large difference in the mindset of the average SCA equestrian and a reenactor of cavalry in other periods. As a cavalry reenactor we are trained to the cavalry manuals of the period we reenact and do so in a military manner. We drill as military units and fight as military units, using real steel weapons and have our own safety regulations in place dealing with actions involving steel weapons. We impose regulations on dress, weapons, fighting styles and sometimes even the breed of horse that can be used. Our horses are tested and brought up to speed in the role they are expected to play. At least we try to be sure of that over here. I'm sure it's the same over there. We do a lot of these things because we are representing a specific period in history, and the events therein, to the public. This doesn't mean we actually try and hack each other out of the saddle. For ACW reenactors, we are forbidden to use lateral and rising blows. Overhand only. This is to insure the safety of horses and riders while still giving a proper "show" to the watching public. Do you have any similar rules over there Mel? The average SCA equestrian doesn't have to deal with the public, doesn't have to worry about period specific dress or period sword drill. We all use the same (rattan) weapons. They don't have to worry about having to ride at a level above where they are at or worry that their horse will be excluded on the basis of breed. They ride at all levels of horsemanship and experience and many are the only rider in their area that participates in the SCA and the closest another SCA rider may be is several hours drive away. While our games are martial in nature for the most part, we approach them in a nonmilitary manner. Meaning no drill for absolute sameness. Given the much greater variables involved in getting a large number of equestrians scattered all across a very large country, (even other countries) from differing Kingdoms each with their own ideas of the SCA, some riding english style, some western, some trained in dressage, some trained in hunter/jumper, most not trained at all, we try and use rules and regulations

to impose order on chaos. To that end, the option that best suits the needs of safety overall is the one we use. It may not be the only option but given all the variables it has to contend with, it may be the safest one. The place of equestrians in the SCA, unlike other reenactment organizations, is not secure. We can be banished at anytime the governing body (or our insurance company) decides our liability outweighs our benefits to the SCA. We tread on thin ice and our regulations and common sense dictate our actions more so than the rest of the SCA.

The point of all that was, there is too much difference in the mindset of military reenactors vs. SCA equestrians. So comparing blow throwing is rather moot.

And folks are probably getting tired of this discussion anyway :-)

I will say that, as before, I thoroughly enjoy a conversation with you. If you wish to continue privately I would be delighted to do so. And may you have a wonderful New Year.

Your humble servant,  
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