

This material does not appear in our book, *Passing the Guard*. Obviously, however, the subject matter is similar. Here we take a look at some basic strategies useful for vale-tudo and streetfighting situations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PASSING THE GUARD

Anyone who begins practicing any form of submissions fighting (Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Judo, Submissions Wrestling, Mixed Martial Arts...) quickly realizes the importance of the guard position. The majority of fights will include some time in the guard. Learning to defend against the opponent's attacks while in the guard and the ability to escape or pass the guard to a superior position (or how to submit the opponent while in the guard) are essential skills.

A number of variables must be considered when passing the guard. Although basic principles will apply in all situations, variables like the particular rules of the venue (for example, whether or not striking is allowed), time limits, the scoring system and allowed techniques will determine the chosen guard passing strategy and techniques. In this article, we'll focus on universal strategies that will apply in any situation that calls for passing the guard.

Guard Positions

The guard is held in one of two basic positions, closed (with the opponent locking his feet behind your back) or open. The fighter in the guard will pass in one of two basic positions, standing or on the knees. Finally, there are only three basic methods of passing the guard, over



White is on his back keeping Black away with his feet.



Black suddenly lunges in toward White, keeping his head back and pushing up below White's feet to guard against kicks.



Black steps up with his back foot and pushes White's feet up over his head.



Black throws White's feet to his left and drops his knees on White's chest as he passes the Guard and prepares to attack.

the opponent's legs, under his legs or around his legs. The guard fight will often transition between closed and open guard in various configurations as the fighter attempting to pass alternates between standing and knee pass techniques. It is important to develop a guard passing strategy that includes a variety of techniques, so you can make constructive responses in every situation. The ability to flow with the opponent's movement while taking advantage of his momentum and positioning will often be the deciding factor in passing an experienced fighter's Guard.

When caught in a closed guard, there are few options for attacking or passing. With the opponent's legs locked around your body, your will not be able to move your hips freely, thereby severely limiting your mobility. Whether standing or on your knees, the first step to a guard pass or counter attack is to break open the opponent's feet. Once the opponent's feet are open, you have the opportunity to pass the guard or to attack the opponent's feet and legs. It is, of course extremely important to guard against the opponent's attacks at all times. You must counter submission and sweep/reversal techniques as you simultaneously attempt to pass and counter attack.

The two most important factors for successful guard



Black is caught in White's closed Guard. Black pins White's upper arms to the floor to keep White from punching as he stands up in the Guard.



Black pinches his knees together to control Black's hips and grabs behind White's neck with his left hand, preventing White from sweeping. Black tucks his chin low behind his right shoulder to protect his face from White's left punch (close up).



Black lets go of White's neck suddenly and punches down with his right hand as he begins to twist his hips to his left.



Black explodes upward and thrusts his right hip and knee outside White's left hip to break the Guard. Black lifts his right arm to clear White's left foot.



Black continues pushing White's hips across to his left with his right leg and clears the Guard. Black then drops his left knee on belly and prepares to attack.



Black is caught in White's closed Guard. White is hugging Black to keep him from punching.



Black lifts his hips and drives forward to crush White's head with his left shoulder.



Keeping his weight on White's head, Black traps White's left upper arm to prevent White from punching.



Black twists his hips to his left and drives his hips forward.



Continuing the twisting motion, Black uses the force of his hips and his right hand to break White's feet open.



Black pushes White's left leg down with his right hand and slides his knee over the top of White's leg.



With his weight pressing White's left leg down, Black steps his right foot over White's left foot.



Black now slides his left knee and hips over White's left leg and moves into the scarf hold position.



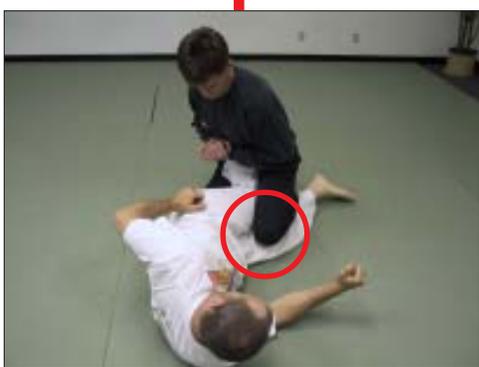
As Black attempts to punch White, White turns onto his side in the scissors Guard to hold Black away.



Black immediately traps White's top foot in a heel hook, pulling White's foot tight to his body.



Black twists his body to his left and drives his weight forward to begin applying pressure to White's ankle and knee.



White turns towards his stomach to escape the pressure on his leg. Black takes advantage of the position and clamps White's legs between his knees preventing White from escaping.



passes are base and sensitivity. "Base" implies the ability to maintain dynamic balance. You must constantly adjust to the opponent's movement and the pressure he applies so you maintain a strong and balanced position. In order to do this, you must be aware and sensitive. The opponent will be doing his best to destroy your balance and set up his own offensive techniques. You need to nullify the opponent's offense as you simultaneously set up your own offensive techniques.

It is extremely important to pay constant attention to the opponent's movement, position, grips and the amount and direction of his force. If you can use the opponent's momentum and force to your advantage, you will be able to pass the guard smoothly and quickly, while conserving your own energy.

Strategies

Strategy should be adjusted depending on the situation. Variables such as the opponent's size, strength, degree of flexibility, and endurance relative to your own will all influence your guard passing strategy. Since no two opponents are exactly alike, it is important to become proficient at a number of different guard passing strategies and techniques. The goal is to always use your strengths to your advantage.

For example, if you are larger and heavier than your opponent, you can use your weight to smash and pass. If you are lighter and quicker, you can speed and mobility to pass. Other considerations are your respective levels of strength and flexibility. Finally, in a sport match, the rules and time limits will also influence your choice of strategy and technique. ©



Black quickly changes his grip to a toe hold position, pushing on the top of White's foot with his right hand and his left hand reaches under White's ankle to a figure four position.



Black pulls White's ankle in toward his chest with his left hand and pushes the top of White's foot with his right hand as he leans forward and twists to his left for the submission.

