

# You gotta fight for your right to parry

 [devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20120801-01](http://devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20120801-01)

August 1, 2012



Raymond Chen

(The headline was stolen from one of my cleverer friends.) I'm taking time out of my busy vacation to draw your attention (if it hasn't been already) to the story of South Korean fencer Shin A Lam, who got screwed out of her trip to the finals of the women's individual epee.<sup>1</sup> The story is heart-wrenching, and the photojournalism is moving in its simplicity. (Assisted in large part by the rule that fencers must not leave the piste while the appeal is in progress.) The FIE, fencing's international governing body, later chose to award Shin a special medal "For aspiration to win and respect of the rules." Apparently, the FIE's timekeeping equipment was not up to the task because "They never expected this kind of thing to happen in the last second, three attacks. Their timekeeping machine is only in seconds, not points of a second." Um, right. Because nobody expected fencing to have sudden bursts of intense, frantic activity which require split-second accuracy.

<sup>1</sup> To avoid matches which last indefinitely, fencing has a concept known as *priority*: Before the final overtime round, one of the fencers is chosen at random to have *priority*. If no winner is determined by the final round, then the fencer with priority is declared the winner. Shin had priority, so if the ruling had been no-touch, she would have been the one to advance.

Raymond Chen

**Follow**

