

Which Technique Manuals are Best?

By Rich Hale

I often get asked which version of Mr. Parker's technique manuals are the best to study from. So, I've written out three versions of the Yellow Belt Technique "Delayed Sword". The first version is from my original 1970's Accumulative Journal, the next two are more recent versions from the 80's and 90's respectively. Read the below techniques, and then decide for yourself which manual may be best for you to study from.

1970s Technique Manual

1. With your feet together step back with your left foot into a right neutral bow as you execute a right inward block to the right inner wrist of opponent. Have your left hand guard near your solar plexus to act as a check if needed.
2. Immediately deliver (from your right neutral bow stance) a right front snap ball kick to opponent's groin.
3. As you plant your right foot toward 11 o'clock deliver a right outward handsword to the right side of opponent's neck.

1980s Technique Manual

1. With your feet together step back with your left foot toward 6:00 into a right neutral bow stance facing 12:00, while simultaneously executing a right inward block to the right inner wrist of your opponent. At the same time position your left hand at solar-plexus level as a precautionary check against further action.
2. Immediately slide your right foot back into a cat stance.
3. Without hesitation deliver a right front snap ball kick to your opponent's groin.
4. Plant your right foot (back to its point of origin) into a right neutral bow, facing 12:00, as you strike with a right outward handsword to the right side of your opponent's neck. Immediately slide your right hand (after the strike) to the right wrist of your opponent as a precautionary check.

1990s Technique Manual

1. Standing naturally, step back with your left foot toward 6:00 into a right neutral bow stance facing 12:00, while simultaneously executing a right inward block to the right inner wrist of your opponent. At the same time position your left hand at solar-plexus level as a precautionary check against further action. (Your block should clear your opponent's right arm, and expose the width of his body.)
2. Immediately slide your right foot back into a cat stance.
3. Without hesitation deliver a right front snap ball kick to your opponent's groin. (Your opponent's reaction should cause him to bend forward at the waist.)
4. Plant your right foot forward into a right neutral bow (facing 12:00) to check your opponent's right knee, as you deliver a right outward handsword strike to the right side of your opponent's neck. Remember to maintain the position of your left hand as a precautionary check. Immediately slide your right hand (after the strike) to the right wrist of your opponent as a precautionary check. (Your opponent's response should cause him to fall to the ground.)

The above versions of Delayed Sword are very similar - in fact they're identical for the most part. What Mr. Parker did, throughout his career, was "refine" his written work so people could more completely understand his art of American Kenpo. He knew that he wouldn't be personally teaching his art to each and every individual who was going to study it - so he put together the original "Big Red" Accumulative Journal. With a standard practice manual he could have some degree of consistency among those studying his art. Of course writing a manual of that magnitude was quite an undertaking and although Mr. Parker was college educated, he wasn't a professional writer. Besides that, it would be naive to think that Mr. Parker knew all there was to know about the art, he was creating, on opening day. The concepts, theories and principles were there, but deciding on the best way to convey this information to the masses was still in the works. It would take years of Mr. Parker refining his written work before it would start to catch up with what was going on inside his head and on the mat.

His most recent manuals simply provide more information than the previous. I guess the biggest change would be the inclusion of extensions for purple through green belt. Actually, when people complain about the "new" manuals it's usually the extensions they're complaining about. Personally, I love the extensions. But, if you don't like them, don't study them. The base techniques, in the new manuals, are still more informative than the earlier versions.