

Reed making - Javier Defez Requena's method

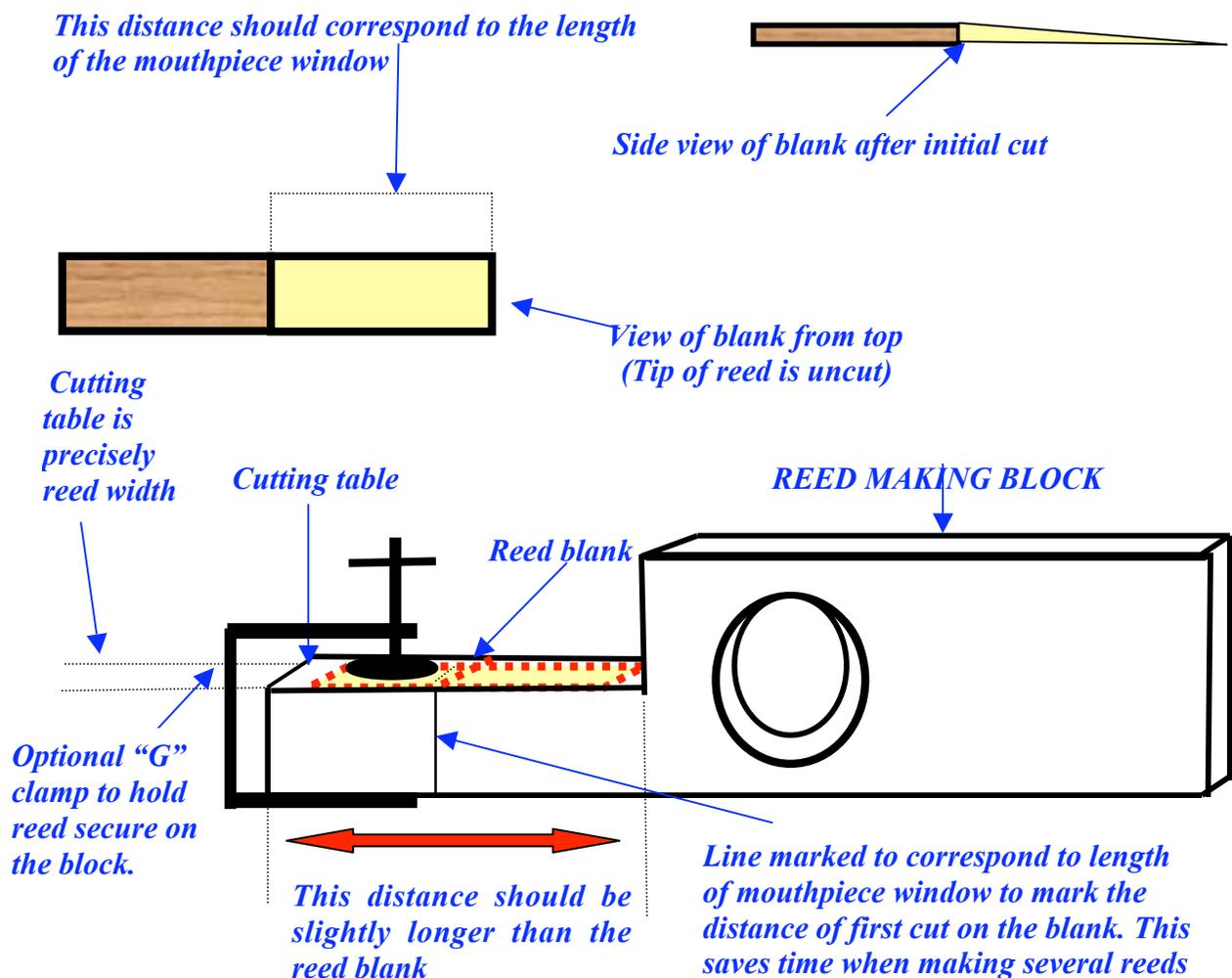
My Spanish friend Javier showed me his method of reed making that needs few tools, and uses ready made blanks - reeds that have been prepared, for finishing by hand. He kindly allowed me to describe his method. Javier uses Rigotti or Glotin blanks (He also makes excellent Paella!).

With practice and patience, excellent results can be achieved thereby ensuring a cheap and consistent supply of reeds.

Tools – You will need a Stanley knife and spare blades, a piece of thick flat glass and several sheets of abrasive paper of grades ranging from course to fine (grade 400).

Also you require a piece of hardwood fashioned with a saw to the shape in the diagram below and this has a hole drilled in it for the thumb. A “G” clamp is a useful optional extra that can be employed instead of the left-hand thumb, to secure the reed on the block, and is safer.

Finally, to clip the tip of the reed you will need a reed cutter from one of the many manufacturers; Cordier and Prestini are typical of these. The depth of the wooden “block” should be no wider than a reed. The basic design can be customised to suit the individual.



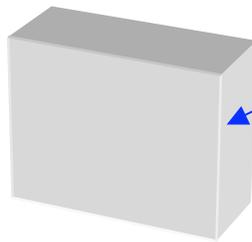
The position of the body and hands for cutting the reed.

N.B. Always keep Left Hand behind the blade. Right hand grips Stanley knife and thumb goes through the hole and is protected by upright stop.

Scrape begins at the line corresponding to the length of the mouthpiece window.

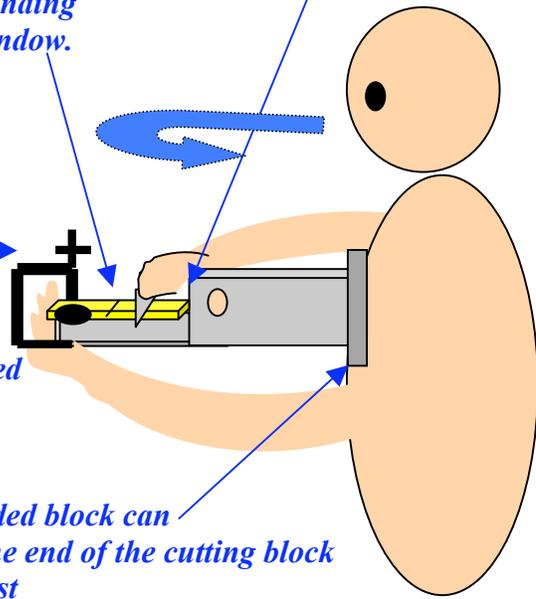
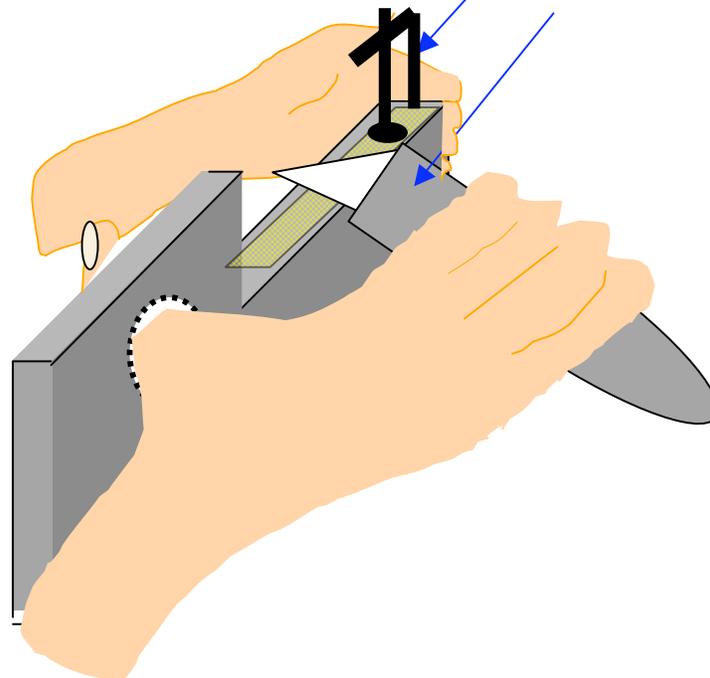
Direction of cut

Note the "G" clamp is optional as the left hand can secure the reed easily using the thumb



Optional padded block can be added to the end of the cutting block to protect chest

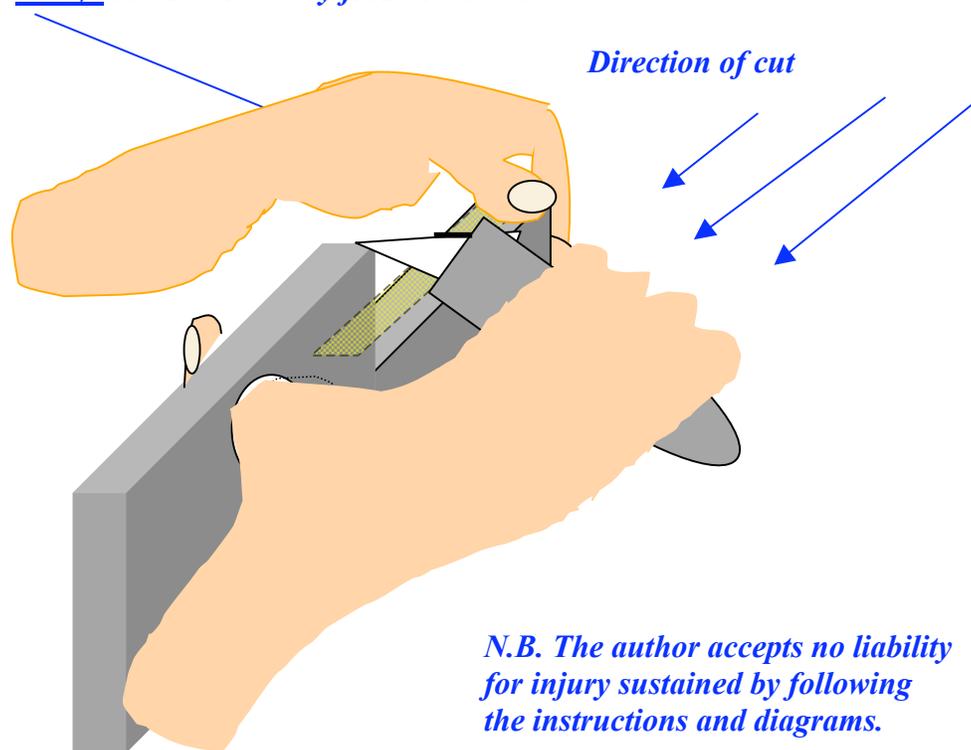
Direction of cut



(reed making continued)

N.B.

It is essential that if no G clamp is used, the thumb holds the reed firmly and the left hand is always behind and away from the blade.



N.B. The author accepts no liability for injury sustained by following the instructions and diagrams.

Secure the reed blank on the flat surface (cutting table) with a small “G” clamp or by holding with the thumb on top as illustrated. Then, mark the length of your mouthpiece window on the blank using a soft pencil. (Mark this length, (which should correspond to the length of the mouthpiece window), in ink, as a guide, on the side of the of the wooden reed making block (as shown in the diagram).

Some blanks are pre-cut to this stage; it depends on how much of the initial preparation you prefer to be done for you by the manufacturer.

Having secured the reed by means of a G clamp or by holding in place with the left hand, begin cutting by holding a Stanley knife in your right hand and placing your thumb through the hole in the reed making block. Begin the initial cut towards you from the marked point corresponding to the mouthpiece window, cutting a wedge shape, carving towards you using the upright “stop” at the end of the cut. This protects your right hand thumb. When you have carved the reed blank into a basic wedge shape it is then time to refine this either by sanding by hand on a piece of glass or by using a reed copying tool called a reed-do-all, made in America. This machine reproduces the dimensions and copies the profile of your favourite reed.

It is available from addresses in the