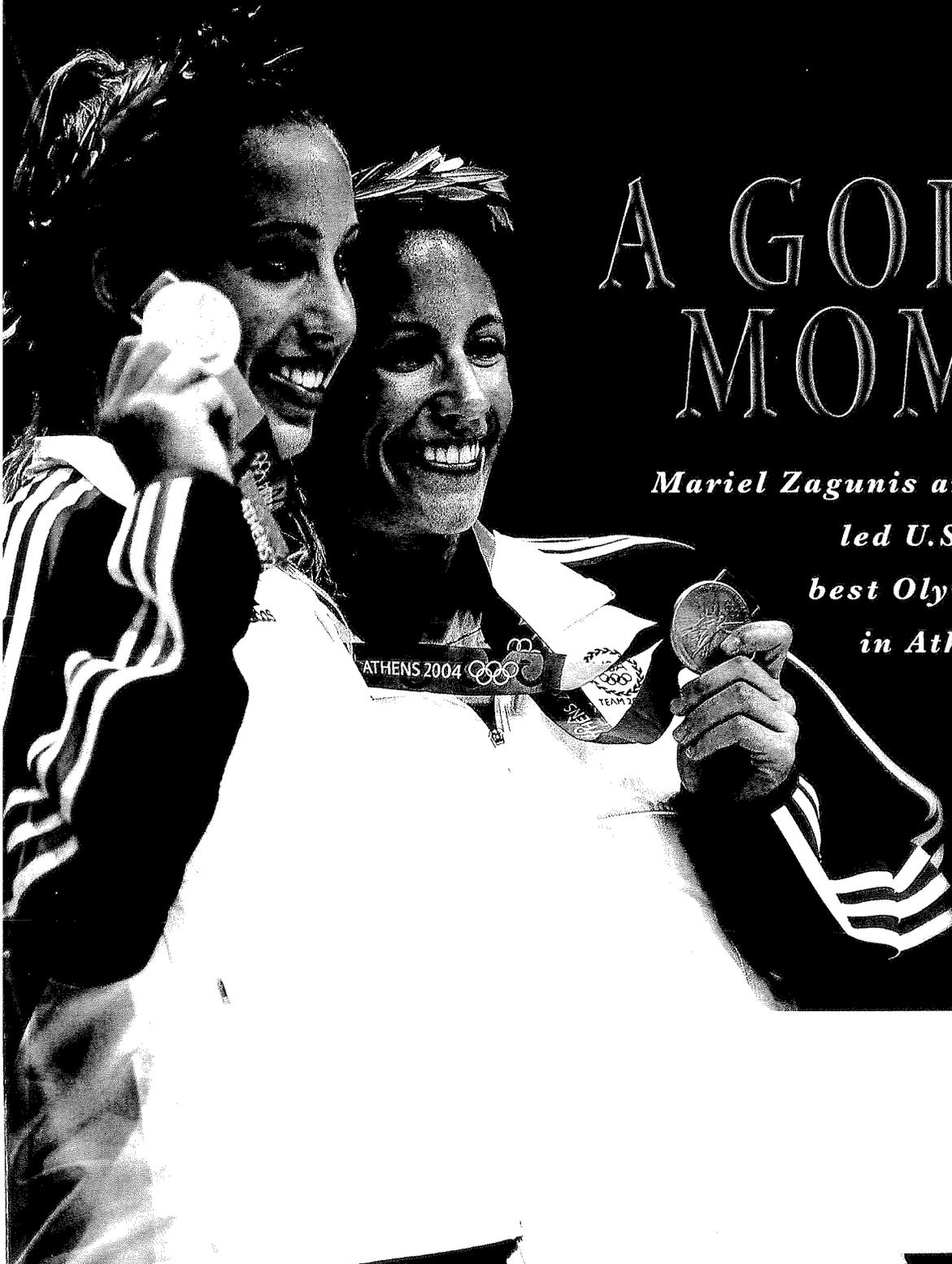


American FENCING

FALL 2004

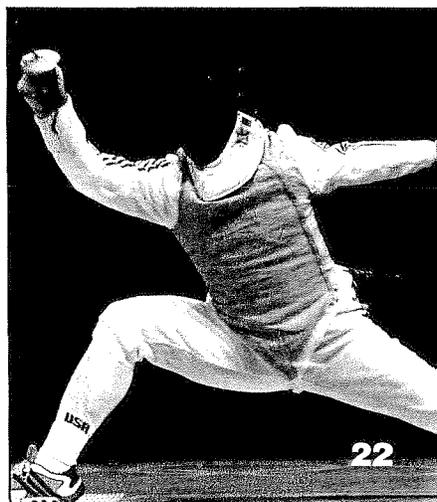
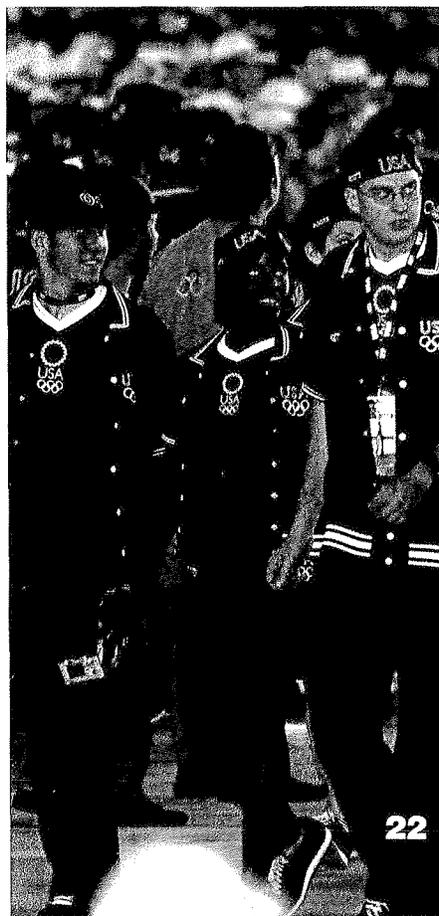
A GOLDEN MOMENT

*Mariel Zagunis and Sada Jacobson
led U.S. fencers to their
best Olympic results ever
in Athens this summer*



American FENCING

Fall 2004 · Volume 54, Number 3



AF FEATURES

- 22** **Glory In Athens ...**
U.S. Fencing History Is Made
A 2004 Olympic Games Review
by Jeff Bukantz

AF DEPARTMENTS

- 5 **Editor's Letter** Changing With The Times
- 6 **Your Letters** More Comments On Flicking
- 8 **Fencing News** Fencing Rules In Flux, Mourning Lost Friends
- 10 **Postcards from the Strip** Report From Iraq
- 11 **Sports Medicine Q&A** The Safety Factor
- 13 **Sport Science** Training The Eyes
- 14 **Rules/Referees** Olympic Shame: Inconsistent Refereeing
- 16 **Club Corner** Taking Advantage of Fencing's 'Cool'
- 17 **Parent's Corner** Taking Care of the Gear
- 20 **Tech Talk** Going Wireless
- 34 **Tournament Results** Regional Youth Circuit,
Renaissance Fencing Club Fall Classic
- 36 **In The Spotlight** Derek Cotton

On the Cover: Mariel Zagunis and Sada Jacobson celebrate their medals at the Summer Olympics in Athens.

Cover Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com

Cover Design: Andy Teng

DUEL IN THE DESERT

L A S V E G A S

The Flamingo Hotel & Casino

January 28-30, 2005

www.duelinthedesert.com

The UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION Member Services Directory

The UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION is the national governing body for the sport of fencing in the United States. The USFA is affiliated with the Federation Internationale d'Escrime, the international federation for fencing. The mission of the United States Fencing Association is to develop fencers to achieve international success and to administer and promote the sport in the United States.

The United States Fencing Association

Phone: (719) 866-4511

Fax: (719) 632-5737

E-mail: info@usfencing.org

Web: <http://www.usfencing.org>

President: Nancy Anderson

Vice President: Sam Cheris

Vice President: Ro Sobalvarro

Vice President: Edward Wright

Secretary: Linda Merritt

Treasurer: Derek Cotton

AMERICAN FENCING

Dedicated to the Memory of:

Jose R. DeCapriles 1912-1969

Miguel A. DeCapriles 1906-1981

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Meg Galipault

EDITOR Cindy Bent Findlay;

USFencingMedia@earthlink.net

PRODUCTION/DESIGN Michael Jacobsen

USFA Public Relations The Sherry Group, Parsippany, N.J.

Associate Editors:

Bob Block Veterans

Jeff Bukantz Rules/Referees

Joe Byrnes Technology

Chris Cuddy Advertising Sales

Peter Harmer Sports Medicine

John Heil Sports Psychology

Andy Shaw Official Historian

Please send all correspondence and articles for submission to Editor, *American Fencing*, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774. *American Fencing* is published quarterly in January, April, July and October. Please contact the editor regarding submission deadlines. Please contact Chris Cuddy at (719) 866-4511 regarding advertising.

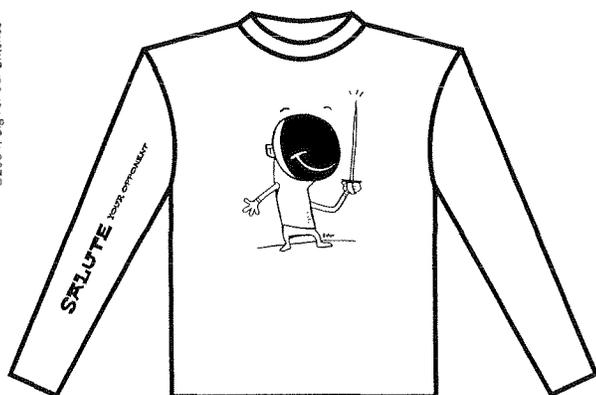
American Fencing (ISSN 0002-8436) is published quarterly by the United States Fencing Association, Inc., One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774. Periodicals postage paid at Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774, and additional offices. Subscriptions to *American Fencing* are included with membership in the association. Individuals can subscribe for \$16 in the United States and \$28 elsewhere. Postmaster: Send address changes to USFA, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774.

2004 United States Fencing Association. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission prohibited.

*Chivalric tradition, agile execution,
strategic timing, total focus and*

cool t-shirts.

©2004. Big For Our Britches



*Our t-shirts are certifiably not official, sanctioned or approved, but they are widely admired.



Now on deck! A brazen collection of original casual apparel* for fencers and friends of fencers (FOFs). Designed to answer the question: When the plastron comes off, what to wear?

ORIGINAL CASUAL APPAREL FOR FENCERS

www.big4ourbritches.com 50 styles for men and women

American Fencing: Changing with the times

A RESOURCE FOR FENCING

by Cindy **BENT FINDLAY**, Editor, *American Fencing* Magazine

In many ways, fall, not spring, is the time of fresh starts ... the start of the new school year, fencing season, and now the start of a new quadrennial for our sport.

Fall is the time when the rededication of our resources towards our sport swings into action. This year, a new board, headed by President Nancy Anderson, takes its place to guide the now more than 19,000 USFA members – 19,000 of the most passionate and loyal devotees to any avocation that ever existed.

Changes continue here at *American Fencing* as well. You may have noticed new columns, new voices, a new look over the past year. The magazine has morphed considerably over the past four issues and will change even more in the coming year. Our mission is to create a vehicle that is both entertaining and enlightening, a magazine that truly serves the fencers, recreational and elite, the coaches and club owners and fans, as best we can.

All of these additions, however, mean big changes for the other parts of the magazine. For one, features will tend to be briefer, no longer spanning half of an issue.

We know that there are many in the U.S. fencing world disappointed that we are no longer printing the entire results of National Championships and other North American Cups for posterity. Our reasoning is this: In the magazine world, space equals money – and lots of it. Some may be surprised that it costs tens of thousands of dollars to print this magazine every year. Each page must work hard, therefore, to accomplish that twofold mission of service and entertainment. In the past, these extensive results sections often took as much as half of the entire issue!

Further, the results of each North American Cup are published soon after and preserved perpetually at www.USFencing.org. It no longer made sense to repeat this publishing of results often several months old by publication date.

We therefore decided to let the Results section serve (there's that word again) regional and youth fencing by promoting the results of, and hopefully participation in, large regional tournaments and the Regional Youth Circuit.

Next month that mission will change a little further; we will start adding single-line entries publicizing upcoming regional competitions at no cost within the results section

that members may otherwise not know exist.

Our hope is that section- and division-level fencing, as well as the critical Regional Youth Circuit enterprise, is served by and grows with this publicity.

Furthermore, we have noticed that one of the greatest needs clubs is the lack of available coaches. In the Winter Issue, in response, we're also adding Coaching Connection: one-line classifieds aimed at letting aspiring coaches out there know who's hiring – and clubs know who's looking for coaching work.

We take this service mission of the magazine very seriously. By adding informational departments that appear in every issue, we're creating a knowledge base for those who have helped and continue to help the sport grow.

Even as I say this, I realize that this very special issue is dedicated to one ultimate event: the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece and the historic accomplishments of our athletes. But after this issue, our critical informational departments will continue.

Those include the **Club Corner**, one profile each issue of a successful fencing club with solid business information, plus one advice article giving those who grow clubs around the country tips on everything from their equipment rooms to their tax planning.

We've added the **Parent's Corner**, aptly scribed by New York Fencer's Club parent Ron Dilbert, for the fencing parents who make youth fencing possible.

Sport Science and **Sports Medicine Q&A** continue under the expert guidance of John Heil, Chair of the Sports Medicine and Science efforts for the USFA and Peter Harmer, FIE Medical Commission member.

Jeff Bukantz and Joe Byrnes give perspective and advice in their departments; Bukantz to fencers and referees alike in the **Rules and Referees** column, and Byrnes with **Tech Talk**.

Entertainment and education mix in Andy Shaw's **Fencing History** column; in **Spotlight**, where we profile elite and up and coming fencers, and in the **Athlete Q&A**.

We're hoping that you like these changes. We're also hoping to hear from you on suggestions for more. And send in your competition notices and results, plus coaching vacancies!!

— AF

More Commentary On Bukantz's 'Flicking' Column

NOT DISGUSTED BY FLICKING

Concerning the flick discussion (*American Fencing, Spring and Summer 2004*), I have noticed one striking pattern in many of the replies – defiant and accepting both – that I must comment on myself.

All in all, flicking is not something to be “disgusted” over in the least. It may be applauded even. To a point.

In my fencing region, those who interminably flick to the back have been labeled. Obviously, the connotation here is not a good one. These are the fencers whose only move consists of a handful of feints, a bit of footwork, and the always-ending and infamous flick. Every point they receive leaves your shoulder throbbing.

There should be a happy medium here. If the opportunity presents itself, sure you are going to flick that opponent on the back when they duck to counter. So, don't strut about with your black-or-white, one-sided opinion. Rather, realize the efficiency of mastering both flicks and straight-line attacks.

Remember, the flick is a move to be included in your fencing repertoire; it should not be your repertoire.

*Zoe Hesp
Dayton, Ohio*

.....

BOTH SIDES ARE RIGHT

The articles about whether to flick or not to flick are stimulating, but, ultimately, both sides seem (to me) to be right.

Yes, fencing is a sport. But it is a sport based on combat. So the argument that we should see it just as a sport doesn't quite hold. Of course,

Editor's Note:

It was brought to the attention of the editors that in the Summer 2004 issue of American Fencing, an illustration accompanying the San Jose State Fencing Masters Program depicted coaches and students in lessons with no masks on. This photo was carefully posed off so that the three women who received credentials were identifiable, as they were the first three women to graduate from this program, and the photo should have been captioned to make that clear. The San Jose State program does not condone any fencing activity without masks.

it will have differences from its root idea; competition is not, after all, combat. Your opponent comes back tomorrow (or earlier), your opponent won't behave quite like a man or woman facing a sword, being more willing to take risks, and so on. How close it should cleave to its origin is always open for personal taste; those who are “for” the flick are proposing a less rigorous interpretation in the name of “coolness” and “fun.” Those who are “against” propose a more rigorous interpretation in the name of accuracy.

The argument that classicists are living in the past cuts both ways; we all are practicing an old skill, so, effectively, we're all living in the past. But to classify their desire for a change as retro-active seems disingenuous; they are, in fact, requesting another advancement to the sport that has always seen a great deal of change over the years. Check this year's rulebook for a bunch of changes, if you don't believe me.

Not so long ago, saber blades were stiffened to reduce whip-overs (or for some other unknown reason);

saber fencers didn't go home pouting in a fit of pique, no sir! They adapted to the new equipment, and still excelled. The change to the foil blade to reduce flicks that the foilists are requesting is another such proposed advancement. In fact, some of the foil blades already on the market are impossible to flick with ... making these the standard (and making minimum requirements for stiffness) wouldn't be so much of a change as all that. In fact, it wouldn't require some people to change their equipment at all. And it would have the added benefit of safety; many blades become more “whippy” at the end of their life. Stiffness requirements would require you to change these out before they broke.

So whether you're for or against the whip, please stop the name-calling; in effect, both sides are stuck in the past. The “modernists” are stuck in the recent past, wanting the rules to stay the same as they are now. The classicists are stuck in the far past, wanting fencing to be more like their instructors' instructors taught. Please see these proposals for what they are – an idea to change the

American Fencing reserves the right to edit letters for space and clarity.

sport that has always seen (and probably always will see) a great amount of change over the years.

Now whether the change is a good one, that I leave to your personal opinion.

*Ian Kusz
Portland, Ore.*

.....

CHANGE THE RULES?

In response to "Flicking Back" and "A Thank You" in Summer 2004 Reader's Letters: We know that each style gets an audience reaction.

Flickers rationalize their actions by citing audience popularity, which is similar to classical fencers rationalizing their actions by historical measure.

If you want the rules changed, go all the way. Don't change just one that could favor your style and give as reason for the changed rule.

Here's the answer. First, either change all weapons and the existing "museum piece" sport, or, second, add your progressive, "more exciting and fun" style [as a new weapon] and call it fencing with foil, epee, saber, and (add new event name here).

If the flick is as exciting as you say, and if you are as irritated [with it] as you indicate, start your own event. You can decide on modern rules and start with no historical encumbrances. That's a lot better for the sport than butting heads and each side trying to force their style on the other. Why deprive either style?

America could become a leader in fencing with the creation of a popular new event. Put your money where your flick is.

*Suzanne Miljevich
Fullerton, Calif.*



The pen is mightier
than the sword.

But why not use both?

Oregon Episcopal School offers a residential program where you can enjoy sterling academics and a fencing program that produced an Olympic champion. The school is home to the Oregon Fencing Alliance, where Master Ed Korfanty gave Mariel Zagunis the training that helped her win the 2004 Olympic gold medal for women's sabre. With a tradition of fencing at the school since the 1940s, the faculty understands the flexibility required for fencers who frequently fly from Portland International Airport to tournaments around the globe. Contact us to learn more about wielding your pen at Oregon Episcopal School and about wielding your sword at the Oregon Fencing Alliance.

OREGON FENCING ALLIANCE
4840 SW Western Ave. Ste. 80 • Beaverton, OR 97005
OregonFencing@aol.com • www.OregonFencing.com
Tel: 503-643-7218



OREGON EPISCOPAL SCHOOL
6300 SW Nicol Road • Portland OR USA • 97223-7566
Tel: 503-768-3115 • admit@oes.edu • www.oes.edu



New Fencing Rules In Flux

Much talk has been flying about the FIE's proposed rules attempting to change the ways foil and saber are fenced.

Finally, the curtain has been pulled back and on Oct. 2, the USFA's board approved adoption of a set of new rules regarding the timing of hits in foil and saber.

The timing changes are:

1. In foil, the lockout time decreases slightly (from 350 milliseconds to 300 milliseconds). This reduces the window of time after a fencer registers a touch that his or her opponent may also register a touch.

2. Also in foil, the amount of time

the foil tip must remain depressed in order to register a touch has increased from 1-5 milliseconds to 15 milliseconds.

3. In saber, the lockout time decreases from 350-400 milliseconds to 120 milliseconds.

Many existing scoring boxes may be converted by replacing the computer chip in the box.

Ask your equipment vendor about their procedure for making this change. Information will also be posted at the USFA website as it becomes available.

Qualifying events for Junior Olympics and National Championships

must be run with the new timing.

Please note that these are the only changes to the equipment that the FIE has finalized this year. Changes to the foil point and weight were certainly under discussion, but they are not in effect and will not be used this season.

There are other unrelated rule changes this season; check out www.fencingofficials.org for more information.

By the time this magazine is mailed out, USFA members should have received an email containing this information. Contact info@usfencing.org if you haven't.

Fencing World Mourns The Loss Of More Good Friends

Tanner City fencer **Aaron Bell** passed away in September at the age of 88. Aaron was quite a character and one year won a gold in each weapon at the Veteran National Championships. He was also a huge benefactor to TCFC, letting fencers compete in his back yard every summer for about 24 years. He even had a lighted electric strip in the back yard, and had a pool that many a fencer used to cool off after an evening of fencing.

Anyone who knew Aaron understood his passion for the sport and could recall fondly his favorite refrain at the top of his lungs – "LA - BELLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL" – whenever a bout was tied at 4-4 or 14-14. He took extra pride in this yell specifically because his last name was Bell.

U.S. Fencing Coaches Association (USFCA) Past President **Bob Scranton**, 58, passed away in September. Scranton was also head coach of the Arkansas Fencers Club in Little Rock, Ark. and the adjunct professor of Fencing and Stage Combat at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

He received his Fencing Master's Diploma at the American Fencing Academy (at Cornell University) and was certified by the USFCA that same year. He participated in over 100 fencing clinics and camps and taught and/or competed in 40 states, Canada, England, Germany, Austria, Japan and Panama.

During his tenure as President of the USFCA he worked tirelessly to promote fencing and the USFCA. He greatly expanded the USFCA's member services. He turned the organization's small quarterly publication, *The Swordmaster*, into a state-of-the-art magazine with a wealth of information for fencing coaches.

He instituted the annual USFCA Coaches Conference

where sport fencing masters from all over the world gather to teach and attend workshops and seminars, to take fencing master exams and to compete in fencing tournaments. He established the official USFCA Apprenticeship Recognition Program and made many other positive changes in the USFCA structure.

His former students have included an FIE Junior World Finalist, a two-time Junior Olympic Bronze Medallist, and many USFA Divisional Champions. He is a former NCAA Division I Fencing Coach and taught fencing and stage combat at several colleges and universities and at the Arkansas School for the Blind.

Scranton was an official "Artist-in-Residence" for the State of Arkansas, a member of the Society of American Fight Directors, and choreographed fight scenes for over 25 stage productions and two documentaries.

Ray Bautista, founder of the American Fencing Academy of Dayton, passed away suddenly of a stroke September 19 at the age of 45.

Ray was born in Manila, Philippines. He and his family moved to Daly City, Calif., when he was 6 years old. He pursued a Bachelors Degree in Finance at California State in Fullerton, where he was also an All America Fencer having won several National and NCAA titles.

His passion and desire to pursue the sport of fencing never really ceased, so after a 13 year absence he started teaching once again in the recreation centers around Greater Dayton, and eventually founded the Academy.

Ray was one of those special people gifted with both athletic ability and felicitous temperament. He was always smiling and enthusiastic in his approach to life and to the sport of fencing.

Collegiate Club Championships Set For April

The U.S. Association of Collegiate Fencing Clubs announces that the highly popular Third Annual USACFC Championships will be held at Michigan State University on April 2-3, 2005.

Interested clubs must become USACFC members by Dec. 15 in order to participate. Membership for each club is only \$50 annually.

Interest in the Championships grows annually. At the 2004 USACFC Championships 23 teams and 322 individuals competed in the two-day event at the University of New Hampshire. Famous rivals such as Michigan State vs. Michigan, Virginia vs. Virginia Tech, UMass vs. UNH, Northwestern vs. Wisconsin, and Maryland vs. Clemson all faced off, and for the first time in 25 years, Army vs. Navy.

Six-weapon, men's and women's three weapon, individual and squad Championships all were contested. The



The gold-medal women's foil club team from UNH with Coach Jon Moss.

University of Massachusetts emerged with the six-weapon championship.

"The demand for this type of competition has become evident as membership in the association has grown by 50 percent and participation in the championships has increased by 30 percent," says association co-founder Jon Moss.

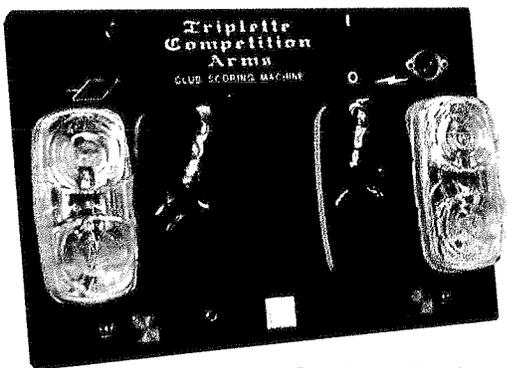
For more information and an application: www.usacfc.org or email Jon Moss at fezonh@comcast.net.

World Veteran Championships Held In Austria

More than 300 competitors from 30 countries traveled to Krems, Austria this summer for the 2004 World Veterans Fencing Championships. A team of 32 athletes represented the U.S. in grand form, bringing home one silver (won by Ed Korfanty, Portland, Ore., who may have been just a bit fatigued after coaching Mariel Zagunis to the gold in Athens!) and three bronzes (won by Jann Ream and Diane Kallus, and Bill Hall).

A complete report will be published in the Winter 2005 issue of *American Fencing*.

TCA CLUB Scoring Machine



This scoring machine is equipped with specifications for the following weapons:

FIE Epee
Current FIE Saber
Proposed FIE Saber
Current FIE Foil
Proposed FIE Foil

Sale Price \$250 Regular Price \$295

Includes 4 year warranty and lifetime of free upgrades as rules change

Anyone who has a current TCA scoring machine, please return to TCA and we will update it for free to the new specifications.

331 Standard Street, Elkin, NC 28621

The Paris of the Piedmont

Phone (336) 835-7774 Fax (336)835-4099

www.triplette.com



Fencing is alive and well **REPORT FROM IRAQ**

Living in a war zone offers unique challenges • by Pfc. Bryce **DUBEE**

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Standing against a backdrop of an Iraqi sunset, Staff Sgt. Dan Gorman stares down his foe.

A mask conceals his opponent's face, but it's the saber in the man's hand that concerns him. The man lunges forward at Gorman, swinging his weapon. Gorman parries the attack with his own saber and counterattacks, striking his opponent in the shoulder.

"Good attack," says Gorman. "Pay attention to your footwork a little more next time. Remember to finish your attack before your front foot lands."

His opponent, one of Gorman's students in the fencing class that he offers at Camp Victory here, salutes with his weapon and steps off to the side so that the next student can get ready to fence.

Gorman, the civil affairs noncommissioned officer in charge of the 420th Engineer Brigade, began fencing 14 years ago at Purdue University. He later moved to Texas, where he continued with the sport at the Salle Mauro under coaches Mauro Hamza and Andrey Geva.

While his wife was attending graduate school at Texas A&M, Gorman

started teaching some of the fencing club members saber. Eventually, they asked him to come on as a full-time coach.

"I realized I was really enjoying teaching the Ags, so when they asked me to coach, I was happy to," said Gorman.

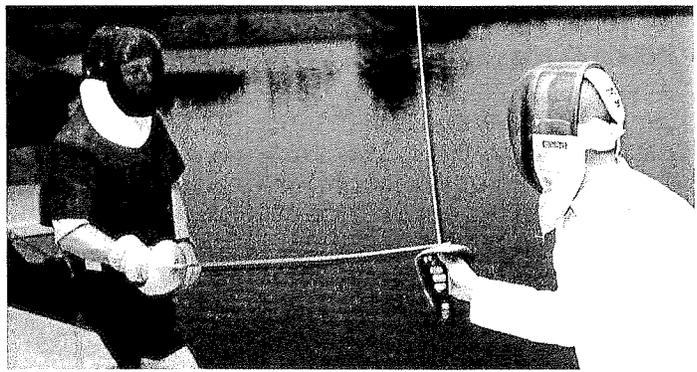
Gorman also coaches the junior saber team at the Salle Mauro in Houston.

In the sport of fencing, there are three types of weapons: foil, epee and saber, each with its own sets of rules and different styles, explained Gorman.

"Saber is fast and aggressive and is probably the least forgiving of mistakes on the strip," said Gorman, explaining why he prefers to fence saber. "Saber has the most personality to me. I suppose it just feels more natural to me when I'm on strip."

When Gorman deployed to Iraq, he made the decision to not give up fencing just because he was on the other side of the world. He had his wife send him some weapons, uniforms and masks and posted signs to attract people to his class.

"I love to fence, and this gives me an outlet. It helps me relax, and I think others can benefit from that, too. We're



Gorman (left) uses fencing to relax during his tour in Iraq.

not going to build any Olympians while we're here, but we can hopefully develop a love for a sport a person can compete in for life," said Gorman.

"Also, as a long shot," he added with a smile, "I figure if enough soldiers start fencing, the Army might be inclined to introduce a world-class-athlete program for the sport."

Currently, Gorman has about five students in his class, which meets on Sunday evenings on the back porch of Building 85.

"Our group is open to anyone who wants to fence or learn to fence. Fencing is an individual sport, but it's always fun to have lots of people to fence against, so the more that want to join our group the better."

It's a small group without a lot of equipment, he said, "so people interested would need to order some gear if they don't have it. If they wanted to check it out, I can let them know where to find it."

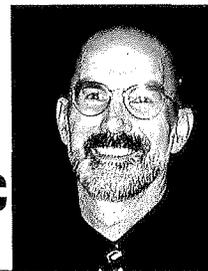
— AF

This article was first published in The Scimitar, July 9, 2004, a weekly paper published by the Multi-National Force in Iraq and Multi-National Corps - Iraq Joint Public Affairs Office.

The female 'protection' debate

THE SAFETY FACTOR

A good rule that should remain • by Peter HARMER, Ph.D, ATC



Q I heard that women have to wear breast protectors because trauma to the breasts can cause cancer. However, I have read several reports that claim that this is not true. If this is the case, why is this rule still in the rulebook? Also, why aren't men required to wear athletic cups?

A Although the requirement of breast protection for women may seem unreasonable and overly paternalistic I think there are good grounds for maintaining the rule and it's not because of the purported "trauma-cancer" relationship. This hypothesis had a lot of support from the late 1950s-1970s but has, as you point out, fallen out of favor. However, the issue may not be completely resolved. For example, a recent study in the *European Journal of Cancer Prevention* (Rigby et al., 2002) concluded that trauma may cause breast cancer. Despite the findings in this study, I think the incidence would be very low and the risk slight.

Some of the confusion about the possibility of a trauma-cancer relationship may come from the findings that trauma can produce necrosis of the fatty tissue of the breast "which may mimic carcinoma and can also be painful or disfiguring." This seems to occur more often superficially and/or around the areola region (Bassett, Gold & Cove (1978) in the *American Journal of Roentgenology*,

130(1), 119-122; Williams et al. (2002) in *Breast*, 11(2), 107-115). The greater risk of fat necrosis and its consequences to the breast would seem to justify the continued use of breast protectors. Additionally, there is some indication that protection may be important for young female fencers. Jansen and colleagues (2002) found breast asymmetry in two prepubescent gymnasts subsequent to trauma (*Breast*, 8(2), 108-111).

Despite the possibility of these potentially significant and long term complications, I think the most compelling reason to continue to require the use of breast protectors is more pragmatic and directly related to the effect of acute (rather than chronic) breast injury to the well-being of the athletes and the smooth running of competitions. The breasts constitute a significant portion of the target area in all three weapons for women and for that reason the likelihood of breast trauma is high. Nipple injuries can be especially problematic. Without the required use of breast protectors, the well-being of the athletes would be unnecessarily jeopardized, the probability of injury stoppages would significantly increase and the efficient administration of competitions would be compromised. Obviously none of these things are in the best interests of the athletes or the sport.

As the nature of competitive fencing has changed over the past

two decades and female fencers have become stronger, faster and more aggressive on the piste, the risk of injury has grown. Perhaps an indirect indicator of the risk (and the need to maintain the requirement) is the invention and increased use of full chest protectors by female fencers over the past 15 years rather than the use of insertable cups (which would meet the requirements of the rule).

As for there being no similar requirement for men, I would point out that male genitalia are not a target area in one event (saber), and are only minimally vulnerable in the other two events. In four years of injury data that I have collected from the NACs (constituting thousands of bouts), we have not had a single case of male genital trauma requiring evaluation. Of course, it can (and does!) happen and it would be very prudent for male athletes to use a protective cup but the demonstrated low level of risk does not justify making this mandatory.

Finally, both the FIE and the USFA have an obligation to act in the best interests of their members and according to their mandates, which include regulations to protect athletes from unnecessary injury. In this regard, the mandatory use of breast protectors for female athletes is not an unreasonable burden in light of the potential benefits that derive from it and is in keeping with the organizations' responsibility.

Topic: The USFA Medical Support Program

The third season of the USFA program to provide certified athletic trainers (ATCs) or other appropriately quali-

fied sports medicine professionals to all of the NACs came to a successful conclusion with the summer national championships in Charlotte, N.C. I would like to thank the following who volunteered their time and expertise to the program: Maria Duthie (Spokane, Wash.), Doug Rank, Lonnie Sellers and Brian Risson (Seattle, Wash.), John and Marli Carollo (San Antonio, Texas), Nick Tobianski (Sterling Heights, Mich), Jim Gossett (New York, N.Y.), and April Woodward (Reno, Nev.). Any suggestions or comments on either the program or the performance of the healthcare providers at the NAC are encouraged (feel free to contact me at the email below).

I would also like to congratulate Lonnie Sellers on his selection by the U.S. Olympic Committee to work with the U.S. Fencing Team at the Olympic Games in Athens. This is the first time since the USOC re-organized its selection process that they have chosen someone who has worked with U.S. Fencing to accompany the team to the Olympic Games. Lonnie has been the athletic trainer for the senior team for the past four years and has done a wonderful job of caring for our athletes. Lonnie is stepping down to return to covering national events and I am pleased to announce that Doug Rank will be taking his place for the coming quadrennium. Doug has done an exceptional job with the cadet and junior national teams for the past several years and is well qualified to take up the challenge of the supporting the senior national team on its journey to Beijing.

— AF

CRESCENT CITY OPEN
2005

FIE DIVISION

APRIL 2 & 3, 2005
Info: www.Louisianafencing.org

Professor Peter Harmer is a member of the FIE Medical Commission and associate chair of the USFA Sports Medicine & Science Committee; pharmer@willamette.edu.

Sports vision enhancement ...

TRAINING THE EYES: PART 1

by Alan ARATA, Ph.D., Alfred WHITE, M.S., and Michael ZUPAN, Ph.D.

Fencing is a fast and athletic sport that demands great skill, stamina and quick responses. Reflexes and reactions, whether in foil, epee or saber, usually start with visual information being received and delivered to the brain. If a fencer's eyes are not sending accurate visual information or are slow in delivering that information, the fencer is at a disadvantage.

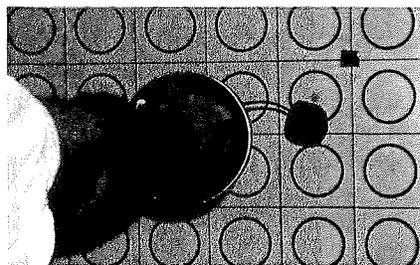
This is the first of two articles on Sports Vision Enhancement, a method designed to train an individual's visual system to work more congruently, quickly and send more accurate information. Just as aerobic training helps a runner run faster, a high-quality sports vision enhancement program can help a fencer's visual system work better, quicker, more accurately, and for a longer period of time before fatiguing. Important visual skills for fencing include dynamic visual acuity, eye focusing and binocular vision, fusion flexibility and eye tracking, all of which are trained in the Sports Vision Enhancement Training Program at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA).

The SV training methods were developed as a joint effort between the exercise physiologists in the USAFA Human Performance Laboratory and Air Force Optometrists from the USAFA medical clinic. This has been an Air Force program with some inputs from local civilian optometrists.

Before athletes start vision training they must complete a comprehensive eye examination to check for visual

acuity and any other eye abnormalities to ensure they are seeing optimally. Individual training sessions take 20-30 minutes, three times a week and are fencing-specific. Athletes are monitored during vision training and are continuously pushed to perform at higher speeds while maintaining or increasing accuracy.

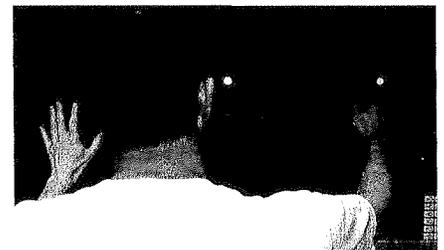
Nothing beats great point control in fencing and thus enhancing hand-eye coordination should have a direct correlation to improved performance. In addition, increased visual coordination means a fencer can notice subtle changes in an opponent's body and/or blade position. The quicker the eyes/brain recognize an opponent's movement patterns, the better the chance of a touch. Training for all these concepts can be accomplished on both the Accuvision and Sports Vision Trainer (SVT) boards.



The SVT board (pictured) is an electronic board with rows of lighted target areas that blink on until the light is hit (proactive mode), or at set intervals (reactive mode). Use of a fencing weapon (as opposed to just touching with a finger) increases the specificity of the exercise. To perform the exercise, fencers get into the "on-guard" position. When a light illuminates they must score a touch with their weapon.

Immediately, a new light will come on somewhere else on the board. The time the fencer takes to complete the 60 to 80 light routine is measured and recorded. Fencers are started in the proactive mode to determine a baseline of their hand-eye speed. After completing 10 training sessions, they are switched to the reactive mode at a speed that is .05 seconds faster than their proactive results. The reactive mode challenges the fencers to respond to a faster stimulus.

On the Accuvision board, fencers



enhance their hand-eye coordination using their fingers to touch the lights. Fencers are thus forced to use peripheral vision to catch the blinking red lights while maintaining a central focus. This is important in fencing since a turn of the head or movement of the eyes peripherally due to some type of distraction may result in the opponent scoring a touch. On the Accuvision, athletes score touches during a one-minute session. As they improve their accuracy, the speed of the lights is increased. To enhance the realism of the Accuvision training, athletes stand on a Bosu ball to incorporate the movement that is a constant with fencing.

Look for Part 2 – Training for Dynamic Visual Acuity – in the next issue of *American Fencing*. — AF

The authors are part of the Human Performance Lab, U.S. Air Force Academy

Inconsistent refereeing hurts ... **OLYMPIC SHAME**

How much should we accept? • by Jeff **BUKANTZ**



Inconsistent refereeing, and some would say incompetent refereeing, has always been, currently is, and will always be an unavoidable staple of competitive fencing. As I've said so many times, officiating is subjective and can never be a perfect science.

OK, we can accept, to some degree, the flaws of referees. At least we have the opportunity to "fence the referee," and go with the flawed flow. At least there is the chance to utilize actions they see, avoid those that they don't see, and do everything in our power to make the actions crystal clear. (As Coach Henry Harutunian of Yale University likes to say, "Make so deaf man can hear, and blind man can see!")

But, as I discussed in the last column, it is the unscrupulous referee (*"The Elephant in the Room," American Fencing Summer 2004*) who must be eliminated from the sport.

At the Olympic Games in Athens, a referee was actually banished to Bogeyland. Hungarian Jozsef Hidasi, an excellent foil ref officiating in his fifth Olympics, was given a two-year suspension by the FIE for making numerous errors, all in favor of Italy, in its gold medal foil team match against China.

It should be noted that Hidasi was invited to Athens instead of country mate Peter Erdey, who is considered to be the best saber ref-

eree in the world. It appears to me that Erdey's Olympic selection was deep-sixed by the FIE because he had made one too many, ahem, questionable calls over the years.

As one particularly astute member of the FIE Arbitrage Commission, alluding to the perception of both Hidasi and Erdey, commented during that meeting, "So, you are replacing the student with the teacher?"

If both Hidasi and Erdey had questionable reputations, then the FIE had the obligation to choose someone else, whether they were from Hungary or not!

For many years, fencers, coaches, and referees have felt that some referees play favorites. There are those who felt that Hidasi favored the Italians. Let me say, in no uncertain terms, that I have no knowledge whatsoever if these allegations are true. Hidasi is an excellent referee, and he deserves the benefit of the doubt.

Despite these concerns, the FIE brought Hidasi to Athens, which may have been a big mistake.

Hidasi's Olympics started off in grand fashion, as he officiated the gold medal bout in men's foil between France's Guyart and Italy's Sanzo. In fairness to Hidasi, the Italian did not win, nor get any questionable calls. In fact, Sanzo was all over Hidasi afterwards, and was

quoted worldwide with the following criticism, "I am disappointed with the referee. He made at least three very serious mistakes. I won the silver medal, but I can't be satisfied because I have won everything in my career except the gold medal in the Olympic Games."

Sanzo led 12-11 before losing 15-13. The bout was close enough where one well-timed, or I should say ill-timed, reversal in favor of the Italian could have done the trick. It didn't happen here, and that goes to Hidasi's defense.

However, the men's foil team gold medal match between China and Italy leads one to question the fairness of his officiating and question the decision to assign him to this particular match.

Hidasi was accused of making six errors, all in favor of Italy. The match was 45-42, and the FIE evidently felt the outcome of the Olympic gold medal match was reversed! In fact, Hidasi was removed in the middle of the match by FIE Arbitrage Rep George Kolombatovich.

And for the Chinese, a potential shiny gold medal turned into tarnished silver.

For the FIE, a fantastic Olympics was tainted by this event, which was publicized throughout the world.

I didn't see the match, as I had accompanied our randomly selected

foil team fencer, Jon Tiomkin, to doping control. I have no idea if Hidasi was fair or not. But, everyone I spoke to said that all the calls went to Italy, and there were a number of them.

We'll never really know if Hidasi favored the Italian fencers or if his two-year suspension was warranted. And, in my opinion, that is not the issue anyway. We do know that he is a convenient scapegoat, however.

The issue is: Why was Hidasi brought to Athens considering the concerns of many in the fencing community? Why was Hidasi's name

one of the six put into the computer for the Italy-China match considering the specific concerns about his officiating for Italy?

The FIE deserves the benefit of the doubt, as Hidasi is considered one of the best foil referees in the world. The FIE Arbitrage Reps in Athens deserve the benefit of the doubt assigning Hidasi to the China-Italy match, as he certainly did not favor the Italian Sanzo in the gold medal foil bout.

The Italians deserve the benefit of the doubt, as they didn't make the calls that allegedly benefited them.

Isn't it sad that that the only ones

who got no benefit of the doubt, or the calls, were the Chinese?

From a personal standpoint, I will say this: If we had beaten the Chinese in the semifinal and faced Italy for the gold, we would have been dancing in the aisles to have a guaranteed medal.

While only the Arbitrage Reps can select the referees, I can tell you that I would have been fired as Team Captain if I allowed our team to face Italy with Hidasi as referee. That speaks volumes about what the perception was of Hidasi.

And, as the saying goes, "Perception is often reality." — AF

Proprintwear

OFFICIAL MERCHANDISER OF THE USFA

Art Prints, Baby Doll Shirts, Bibs, Bumper Stickers,
Cups, Golf Shirts, Hats, Henley Tees, Infantwear,
Jewelry, Lanyards, Sleeveless Shirts, Stickers,
Post Cards, Night Shirts, Pins, Shorts, Stuffed Animals,
Sweatshirts, T-Shirts, Temporary Tattoos, Towels

(866) 776-9327



Fencing is cool ... and hot **TAKING ADVANTAGE**

Olympic success can help clubs grow • by Cindy **BENT FINDLAY**

If you've worn a fencing T-shirt out in public since mid-August, you've experienced it. Someone's going to stop you. "Fencing? I saw that on the Olympics. It was pretty cool!"

What's pretty cool for clubs all over the country right now is that after unprecedented prime-time exposure of the U.S. flag flying over gold and bronze, after repeat appearances by Mariel Zagunis and Sada Jacobson on the Today Show, after Bravo airing of the accomplishments of the men's foil and saber teams, the long-awaited has finally happened.

Fencing was on TV. Your average Joe or Jane on the street has seen it. Now what? For clubs, it's time to strike while the iron is hot.

Some clubs are already reporting increased interest. Zagunis's club in Portland — the Oregon Fencing Alliance — is crushed with phone calls, reports Cathy Zagunis, Mariel's mother and also club manager.

"For first time, everyone saw fencing. We've got a whole new beginner class because of it," reports Tina Jacobson, Emily and (bronze medalist) Sada Jacobson's mother and co-manager of Nellya Fencers in Atlanta.

"I think when you talk to any club, over the last year, clubs are seeing more kids wanting to get into fencing nationwide by word of mouth, not just great results," says Zagunis.

While it's great news that the public is seeking fencing clubs out, says Michael Massik, USFA executive director, now is the time for clubs to trumpet their presence to the world.

Projects from the USFA to help clubs publicize are now in the works,

says Massik. But, he adds, there are things that clubs can do now to take advantage of fencing's newfound fame.

"If you've ever thought about advertising, for instance," says Massik, "now is the time. People aren't going to remember a year from now."

Think about strategic advertising buys. Blanket your town and local stores with fliers about your next beginner class. Play up the sport's Olympic connection in the ad copy.

When it comes to advertising, prioritize. Local, neighborhood papers, or even student-run school newspapers, are a much more targeted as well as affordable advertising buy than the major metro daily. They're smaller, so your story or ad will stand out more. Plus, lots of parents of schoolkids read them, looking for their school's lunch menu or soccer scores.

Work the media for free PR. Contact local papers whenever you have a competition coming up, at home or away. Don't forget to report results — often, just turning in the scores is enough to spark interest from an editor who will call back to do a feature.

Be creative when you're trying to attract media attention. Many subjects you didn't think of can make a story; for instance, you could call a local editor and let him know that your fencing club has seen lots of new people walking in the door because of the Olympics, and maybe the editor sees that as a story to pursue about local sports clubs and, bingo, free PR.

"We were proactive. Instead of waiting for a medal, we started talking to media before the Games," says Paul Sears, manager of the Sacramento

Fencing Club in Rancho Cordova, Calif. He says the club sent out information on Olympic "fencers to watch" to local media, and a local television station came out to profile the sport and the club just before Athens.

That contact also resulted in a story about the growing popularity of fencing after the Olympics — and a spate of interest in taking classes.

"I came in and there were like 20 messages on the answering machine one day. We've also had a lot of interest from schools who want us to come on out and do a demo, or their class is doing a research project on the Olympics," says Sears.

Think about the ways more eyes can see your club. Holding competitions outside has been popular — in local parks or even shopping malls.

And schools are likely to be more interested than ever at having Olympic sports demonstrated. Don't forget to get as many names, phone numbers and emails as you can at all of these types of events — and call them after!

And finally, make sure that your Yellow Pages entry and web page is working well and is up to date.

"Every single club I've talked to in recent years has said that the web page is the most important driver of traffic they have," says Massik.

But it's also important to keep the focus of your club and its capabilities in mind. How much growth can you handle? What if 45 people actually show up for your next beginner class? Planning for growth can be just as important, says Massik.

"It would sure be a beautiful problem to have," says Sears. — AF

Is this your equipment? CARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S GEAR

Some insight into this familiar challenge • by Ron **DILBERT**

OK, How many parents out there are the ones taking care of their kids' equipment and uniforms? I remember when my son started fencing and even now listening to all the parents. "I have to fight with my kid to give me their clothes to wash," "She just throws everything into the bag," "What did you do with your weapon?"

Does this sound familiar to anyone?

As you probably guessed by now, this article will address equipment, clothing and kids. Let's first discuss equipment. There are certain precautions you can take before using new equipment. First, as soon as you get new equipment (weapons, body cords, etc.) you should immediately place your child's name on it using a fine tip permanent marker. You should keep one of these in your fencing bag so if you buy new equipment at a tournament you can immediately label it. For equipment that is hard to write on, you can put tape on it and write on the tape. This way if any of the equipment is left at the venue or club it can be returned.

It is also a good idea to either buy or make protection for your weapons. You can purchase material that covers the blade of your weapon or PVC piping to cover your blade. If you are handy and want to save some money, you can go to your local home

improvement store and purchase 1/8-inch PVC piping, measure out the length of the blade and cut the piping slightly longer. If you drill two holes at the end you can attach a small bungee cord or elastic to hold the cover in place. You should also place your child's name on these covers. These covers protect blades from breaking in the bottom of bags, especially during travel, and stops the blades from rusting by being in contact with wet clothing and causing those unsightly rust lines on your uniforms.

While talking about equipment, let me just touch on purchasing equipment. I find I get the best buys at bigger tournaments with a lot of vendors participating. You can shop around until you find a vendor that you feel comfortable with and who works with you and stands behind what they sell. Most vendors are very knowledgeable and will help you with your needs.

As far as the uniform, I think most kids would be happy just standing their uniforms in the corner. I found by talking to parents that if you schedule cleanings at regular intervals, then the kids know the routine. The uniforms and underarm protectors can be washed using the Gentle Cycle and cold water in a washing machine. I find that if you let it soak overnight, it comes out better. Socks, you really

want to wash regularly because the kids use these to keep the soles of their shoes clean! The glove can be hand washed in a mild detergent to keep it clean, soft, and to allow other fencers within five feet of your child because those gloves can really smell. The lamé generally can be gently rinsed off in the shower once a week or so to remove the sweat and avoid dead spots; ask your equipment vendor about care for these items.

If you do get a dead spot on your lamé, spray Windex on that spot. This helps in most instances. Worst case scenario is that you can have the lamé patched by a vendor and use that for practice. The mask can be rinsed off; some people place it through a cycle in the dishwasher. A good idea is to use your older equipment for practice and use your good/newer equipment only for tournaments.

Please remember that keeping uniforms clean is increasingly important as scientific studies have recently appeared indicating the spread of very nasty Staphococcus infections through contact with dirty fencing clothing and equipment.

Until next time, I hope this article helped some parents out and if you have any suggestions for future articles for parents please feel free to e-mail them to this magazine. Have a great season.

— AF

Making the leap GOING WIRELESS

Who is going to pay for the next big thing? • by Joe **BYRNES**

When are you going to go wireless? I have grown used to hearing that from fencers and non-fencers alike. I have a standard response, which I hope gives the questioner a little something to think about: "When somebody gives us NASA's budget. Not the current one, the one from the glory days."

I have seen first hand one wireless system for saber that the FIE had allowed to be used, and then turned against, sending it back to the drawing board a couple of years ago. Considering what a genuine Rube Goldberg of a system it was, there is no question that the drawing board, or the shelf, was where it belonged. People ask me to describe it, and before I am halfway through the exposition I see their eyes glazing over; they are shaking their heads and, metaphorically at least, throwing up their hands. The complexities that were involved in just trying to run the DE's and finals with this system were enough to make it unthinkable if tried for a whole major event. It will be a while yet before we "go wireless" in anything like that way.

I very much doubt that the wireless saber seen in the Olympic finals is a solution. It requires money, and even though fencing has always been a rather pricey avocation, I believe that it will still require too much money and cause too much trouble. Remember what J.P. Morgan said to the upstart mere millionaire who asked him how much it cost to keep a yacht: "If you have to ask, you can't afford it." Unfortunately, I think we still have to ask.

I know that some people will think that I am being eccentric or "retro." But

nothing talks louder than money, i.e. commercial considerations, and it is worth noting that in just the last year and a half, we have seen three new reel designs, plus a substantial modification in an established one, make their appearance. These are the ones I have seen, and I make no pretense that anybody seeks me out to show me all their latest whiz-bangs. Now these manufacturers are not being charitable to us worthy fencers, or quixotically throwing their money after a dying technology. Clearly, they are convinced that there is going to be a sufficient demand, for long enough to make their costs for tooling up worth while.

My own guess is that, given the FIE's rather sensible, I think, specification that any wireless system must be designed to work with the blades, points, and connectors we currently use, we will first see – maybe, some day – hybrid designs that will work with a set of reels as we now know them – up to, let's say, the semi-finals, at which time somebody throws a switch on the back of the machine, or resets the program, and, behold, we go wireless – for the last few bouts.

Once upon a time, 30 or 40 years ago, there were reels made in the U.S., England, Germany, France (these were the ones we tended to see most in this country, in about that order); they could also come from Italy, Hungary, or even Japan and Russia, but Americans usually saw these only on trips to competitions overseas. The chances are good that I have omitted some types from this admittedly hasty recollection.

These days, German, English, French, Russian, Italian, Hungarian and Chinese makes are to be found, and, it's worth noting, more than one manufacturer's model from some of these countries. Just this last year, the new producers in the picture are from Germany, Italy, Hungary and China. Obviously, there's no shortage of designers trying to cope with the old problems. And we are just as far as ever, I think, from "going wireless."

The frightening prospect of trying to troubleshoot spurious, or even merely dubious, signals that "just come out of the air" is more than most who understand what's involved are comfortable contemplating. Getting faults to repeat would be a nightmare, at the least. Even our present, hard-wired system is occasionally bugged by line-voltage-carried glitches. The prospect of what might be induced, whether accidentally or deliberately, in a machine that relies on some form of through-the-air signal is worrisome.

Only someone who is perfectly satisfied with cell phone performance, and has never had any difficulty with it, may think there's no problem. If you would like to contemplate something amusing, consider: 20 years ago, a notable FIE guru nearly had his head handed to him on a platter because he had the presumption to suggest that the United States Navy should shut down their communication gear at the nearby naval station during the fencing at the Los Angeles Olympic Games, lest there perhaps be interference with the touches. — AF

SG FENCING U.S.A.

280 N Midland Ave. Bldg W Saddle Brook ,NJ. 07663 U.S.A

Tel: 201-791-6066 Fax: 201-791-7106

www.sgfencing.com



SG Machine Upgrade Schedule

Machine style	Starting Date	Upgrade Fee
SG-31 New Version	October 20 /2004	Call
SG-21	October 20 /2004	Call
SG-12-ST	October 20 /2004	Call
SG-12 New Version	November 10 /2004	Call
SG-11	January 4 /2004	Dec.Call for price

Glory In Athens ...

FENCING HISTORY IS MADE

A gold for Zagunis, bronze for Jacobson and a some close calls for others made the Olympics a golden time for U.S. • by Jeff **BUKANTZ**, Olympic Team Captain

The era of moral victories and “what ifs” is officially over for the United States Fencing Association. After 20 long years of hoping, praying, and wondering if we’d ever see another Olympic medal, our fencers finally did it!

The glorious day was Tuesday, August 17th, as **Mariel Zagunis** won the gold in the inaugural women’s saber event, and **Sada Jacobson** took the bronze.

The two Olympic medals equaled the entire output for us since 1960, and, incredibly, we almost had two more. Both the men’s saber and foil teams scored huge upsets to reach the medal rounds, and eventually finished fourth.

To show how times have changed, we were devastated not to have three or four medals. But the United States has served notice to the world that we have arrived.

In the last quad, we’ve had four weapons (men’s and women’s foil and saber) reach the top four in either the Olympics or World Championships. We’ve had tons of cadet and junior medals, including World Championships. We’ve had two fencers attain the no. 1 ranking. We’ve had plenty of World Cup medals. We dominated the Pan Am Games in 2003. We’ve had fencers win both junior and senior World Cups.

But, finally, we have Olympic medals, too!

OFF TO ATHENS

Our fencers had attended training camps in Russia, the



Czech Republic, Hungary, Switzerland, San Francisco and Italy. They were primed, they were confident, and they were ready. The United States had qualified 14 fencers, the fourth largest contingent.

Gradually, everyone started arriving at the Olympic Village. The Village was expansive, and with the exception of some unlaidd sod, was basically completed and fully functional. The U.S. complex was at the far end of the Village and backed up to an Air Force base. We had an armed guard stationed outside our building at all times. That was welcome, even when he was asleep with the automatic weapon in his hands. I hope the lock was on!

The dining hall was gigantic. The food was varied and decent, although it all tasted the same after a few days. The McDonalds

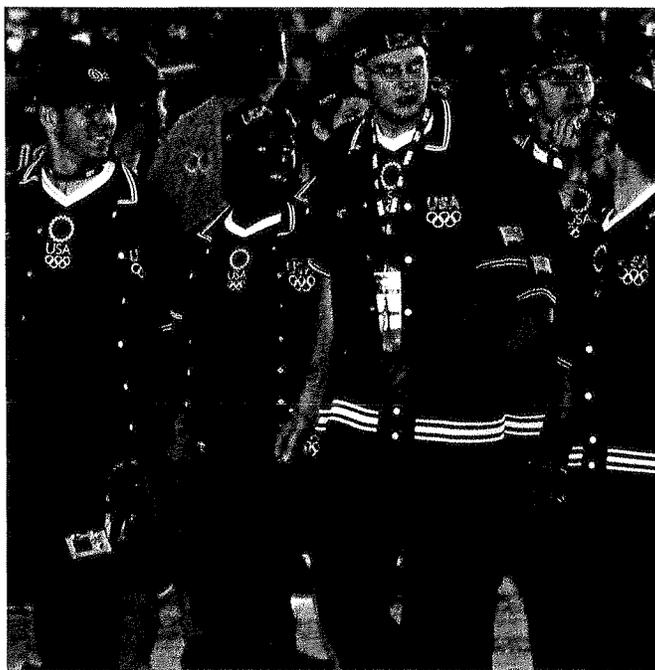
station was very popular, as you can imagine. **Keeth Smart** commented that he, with his 5 percent body fat, felt a little guilty wolfing down those fries while watching other athletes who were trying to make weight nibble at lettuce. But, Keeth overcame his guilt...every night!

Our replacement athletes and some of the supporting cadre members stayed in apartments at the American College of Greece (ACG), which the USOC had complete control of for the Games. That was convenient, as our team practiced there.

The ACG was set up with three strips with equipment, thanks to the USOC. We shared the large practice room with judo and wrestling. Wow, those guys and gals are nuts!

We were able to eat lunch at

America’s fencers in the Opening Ceremonies of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com



the ACG, as well make use of the pool, computer room, lounges and massage facilities.

Although the ACG was about 35 minutes from the village, the commute was well worth it. Furthermore, there was never any traffic for the entire time, as Athens had dedicated an "Olympic only" lane on the highways.

FRIDAY, THE 13TH

Friday, the 13th was anything but an unlucky day for us.

Our morning practice at the ACG was held a little earlier than normal in order to accommodate a special visitor. That visitor was former **President George Herbert Walker Bush**.

Bob Largman and I presented President and Mrs. Bush with t-shirts, hats and pins. We had a specially made, limited edition, bobble-head fencing pin. I told the President that we were told these pins were exceptionally rare, were already selling on EBay for \$60, and that we were not to give them away to any riff-raff. Then I gave him one in return for the promise of a Secret Service pin. Hey, pin-trading knows no pecking order! I got the pin.

We then had Sada and Emily Jacobson give the President a little exhibition, which he enjoyed. He was particularly interested to meet Sada, as he was a lefty athlete from Yale, as well.

It was a tremendous honor to spend 15 minutes with the former President, something our team enjoyed immensely.

But, that was just the appetizer. The main dish of this very lucky Friday the 13th would be the evening's Opening Ceremonies.

The moment was getting closer. After waiting in the adjacent gymnastics arena, we finally got the call. We got into line, and snaked our way towards the Stadium. The anticipation was mounting by the second. Everyone had their video camera ready, and then, we marched in.

After being in the relative darkness outside the entrance, an explosion of cheers and flashbulbs welcomed our team into the Olympic Stadium. The moment was indescribably moving, and the hair on my arms stands on end as I write about it.

We marched around, waving and cheering, and hoping that this once-in-a-lifetime experience would never end.

Well, it did, and we finally got back to the Village around 1:30 a.m.

Whew, what a day! But, in a few hours, the first day of competition would start, and it was back to business. What a contrast!

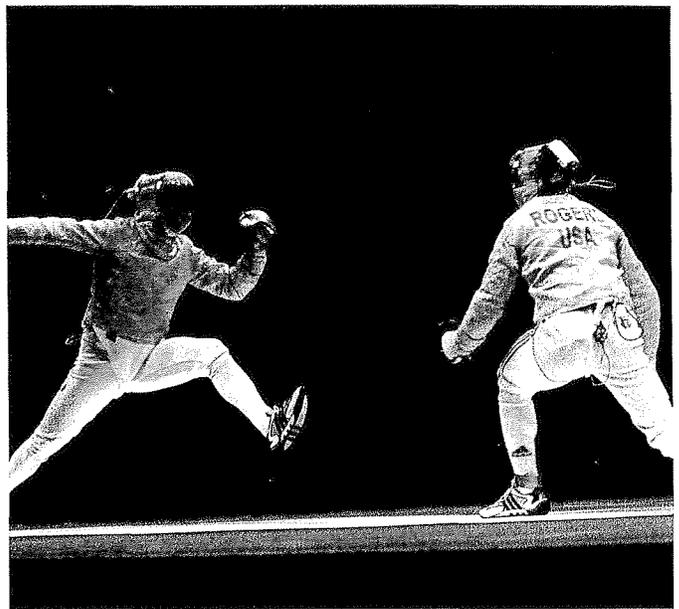
DAY 1: MEN'S SABER INDIVIDUAL

We were optimistic, as **Ivan Lee** had taken a bronze medal at the New York World Cup and Keeth Smart seemed to be returning to his 2003 form, when he was ranked No. 1.

Round of 32

Jason was seeded No. 25 and drew 8th-seeded Tarantino of Italy. Unfortunately, Jason thought he got a few tough calls early, got in a hole, and just couldn't get out. Tarantino won 15-3, and Jason will just have to chalk this one up to gaining experience. His time will come.

Ivan was seeded No. 15 and drew 18th-seeded Pastore of Italy. Ivan controlled the match and sent Pastore out to pasture by the



Jason Rogers (right) in saber action. Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com

score of 15-9. Keeth was seeded No. 22 and drew No. 11 seed Gael Touya of France. Keeth was able to overcome the spirited and wily Touya by a 15-11 score.

Round of 16

Keeth drew the eventual gold medallist, No. 6-seeded Montano of Italy. Keeth had previous success with Montano, but it was not meant to be in Athens. Montano jumped out to a quick 5-0 lead, and finally prevailed 15-7. While this was a disappointment for Keeth, but there is no shame in being beaten by the Olympic champion.

Ivan drew the No. 2-seeded Pozdniakov of Russia, who is possibly the best sabreur in the world, having won three world titles. Ivan was down 8-3 at the break, made an exciting, albeit cosmetic, comeback, and eventually succumbed 15-9.

When I was interviewed afterwards, a reporter from New York asked me if I was disappointed that Lee and Smart were gone by the second round. I answered that if the fencers had fenced terribly or lost to inferior opponents, I'd be really disappointed; but, in this case, they were simply beaten by two of the best in the field.

Final U.S. standings: Lee, 12th; Smart, 15th; Rogers, 25th
Medallists: Gold, Montano (Italy); Silver, Nemcsik (Hungary); Bronze, Tretiak (Ukraine)

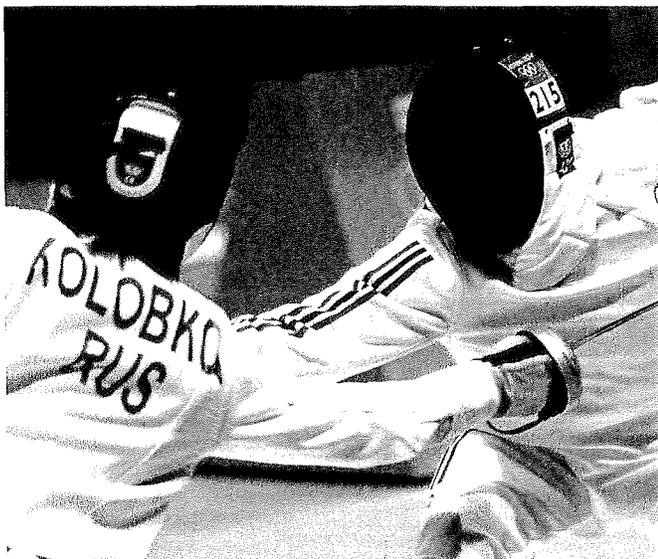
DAY 2: WOMEN'S EPEE INDIVIDUAL

Our only qualifier was **Kamara James**, who was seeded No. 23. She drew No. 10-seeded Logounova of Russia.

Round of 32

Kamara hung tough and trailed by 4-2 at the first break and 8-7 at the second. She finally tied the score at 9-9, but at this point made what appeared to be a mistake that cost her the match.

The struggle to tie the score was a long one, a grueling one, and an emotional one. Unfortunately, Kamara let those emotions get the best of her, as she celebrated on the ninth and match-tying



Soren Thompson fights for a spot in the medal round against Russia's Pavel Kolobkov. Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com

touch as if she had won. It took something out of her concentration, as Logonouva scored the next four touches, and cruised to a 15-11 victory.

Final U.S. Standing: James; 25th
 Medallists: Gold, Nagy (Hungary); Silver, Flessel-Colovic (France); Bronze, Nisima (France)

DAY 3: MEN'S FOIL INDIVIDUAL

While 27th-seeded **Dan Kellner** had a bye into the 32, both **Jon Tiomkin** and **Jed Dupree** had bouts in the 64.

Round of 64

Jon was seeded No. 31 and drew 34th seed Ben Aziza of Tunisia. Jon was a little tight and trailed by 5-2 and 8-5 until he tied it up at 9-9. He then pulled away to win 15-10. Once Jon got into gear, he outscored the Tunisian 10-2.

Jed was seeded 30th and drew No. 36 seed El Azizi of Algeria. Jed, too, was very tight at the outset of the match. The match was one-dimensional, as Jed either scored on attacks or got hit on counterattacks. Jed got on a roll, and took a commanding 13-10 lead. El Azizi tied the score on three consecutive counterattacks and they went into the second break tied at 13-13.

Jed was able to retake the lead at 14-13 before succumbing 15-14.

Round of 32

Jon had the unfortunate draw of No. 1 seed Cassara of Italy. Cassara is tall, fast, aggressive, long-armed, and seems almost impossible to hit. If you are fortunate enough to retreat from his ever-present bent-arm attacks, trying to hit him on a riposte is often futile as he flicks in multiple remises at warp speed while he seems to be out of reach as he retreats.

Cassara utilized all of his assets to beat Jon handily by 15-3. This was not Jon's day, but that would come later in the Games.

Dan drew No. 7 seed Gohy of Belgium. This was a good draw for Dan, as he had previous success against the Belgian. The bout

was nip and tuck and eventually tied at 11-11. Dan scored the next three touches and scored a big upset by winning 15-12.



Round of 16

Dan drew the 24th seed Kruse of Great Britain, who had upset the 9th ranked Wang of China. This was a very even draw to make the top 8 of the Olympics.

As with the Gohy bout, the score was within one touch until 12-12. And, similar to the Gohy bout, Dan opened it up by scoring the next two touches to go up by 14-12.

Unfortunately, Kruse did to Dan what Dan usually does to others, and came back to win 15-14.

Final U.S. Standings: Kellner, 16th; Tiomkin, 30th; Dupree, 33rd

Medallists: Gold, Guyart (France); Silver, Sanzo (Italy); Bronze, Cassara (Italy)

DAY 4; MEN'S INDIVIDUAL EPEE

All three fencers drew byes in the 64, as **Seth Kelsey** was seeded 7th, **Soren Thompson** was seeded 15th, and **Cody Mattern** was seeded 17th.

Round of 32

Mattern drew the 16th-ranked Ivan Kovacs of Hungary. Cody didn't have his A game, which had brought him a silver medal in Vancouver, and Kovacs won easily at 15-6.

Kelsey drew the 26th seed Tourchine of Russia. The score was tied at 3-3 when the Russian ran off four straight touches. From there, the fencers basically traded touches until Tourchine won 15-11.

Thompson drew the 18th-seeded Inostroza of Chile. The fencers were very tentative and it looked to be a tactically low-scoring bout as the Chilean led 5-3 after two periods. In the third period, the fur really flew. Thompson became a touch-scoring machine, as he outhit Inostroza 9-3 to take a commanding 12-8 lead. With time dwindling, Inostroza somehow scored four straight touches to send the bout into overtime. Soren prevailed with a hard-fought 13-12 victory, which prompted a collective sigh of relief from our contingent.

Round of 16

Soren drew the No. 1-ranked Rota of Italy. He started out on fire and immediately had a 5-0 lead. Thompson led by 6-3 after the first period, and 11-8 after the second. He appeared to be cruising to a major upset against the top ranked fencer, as he had a commanding 13-9 lead. Well, history repeated itself, as the Italian reeled off four straight touches and it was a new ballgame.

To Soren's great credit, he was able to maintain his composure, regroup, and score the next two touches to gain a gigantic victory over Rota by 15-13. Wow!

Round of 8 (Quarterfinals)

In the quarterfinals, Soren drew the 10th-seeded Pavel Kolobkov of Russia. Kolobkov is possibly the greatest epeeist of all time, having won five Olympic medals and 11 World Champi-



onship medals. He was the defending Olympic Champion and a three-time individual World Champion, and at the age of thirty-five, was competing in his fifth Olympics.

After opening up a 3-0 lead, Kolobkov held Soren at bay. He led 5-3 and 9-6 at the two breaks, and closed it out at 15-11.

All in all, a fantastic result for Thompson, equaling his top eight in Havana last year.

Final U.S. Standings: Thompson, 7; Kelsey, 19; Mattern, 22
Medallists: Gold, Fischer (Switzerland); Silver, Wang (China);
Bronze, Kolobkov (Russia)

DAY 4: WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL SABER

Well, we knew going in that this day would either be either a great day or a terrible day for the USFA. There was no middle ground, as the expectations were simply too high. Anything less than a medal would make for a terrible day.

Sada Jacobson was seeded 1st, wild-card Mariel Zagunis, 4th, and **Emily Jacobson** was seeded 9th.

Zagunis gained her spot when the Nigerian Fencing Federation suddenly chose not to send their qualified fencer, and as there was no other ranked fencer from that continent, Mariel got the nod as the highest ranked in the World Cup standings.

Sada and Mariel drew byes in the 32.

Round of 32

Emily drew the 23rd-ranked Chow of Hong Kong. Emily led 8-5 at the break, and they traded touches until the score was 13-11. Emily closed it out at 15-11.

Round of 16

Sada drew the 17th seed Faez Miclin of Cuba. As expected, Sada controlled from start to finish, and won 15-4.

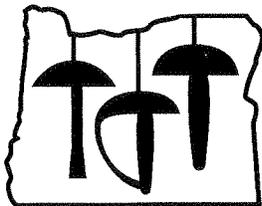
Mariel drew the 19th-ranked Hisagae of Japan. This bout was much closer than expected, as Mariel clung to an 8-7 lead at the break. They traded touches until 13-13. Then Mariel scored the next two to win 15-13.

Emily had the toughest draw by far, as she faced the 8th seed Perrus of France. Certainly, it had to be a factor for Emily that her sister was looming in the next bout if she won. The bout was nip and tuck and eventually tied at 10-10. At the point that Perrus scored three in a row to make it 13-10 and then led 14-11. Emily got it to 14-13 before succumbing by 15-13.

Emily has accomplished more before entering college than most of us accomplish in a lifetime. This close loss will not ruin a great year that included an Olympic Team and winning the Junior World Championship.

Round of 8 (Quarterfinals)

At 11:30 a.m., all four quarterfinals were to commence. As I told a reporter just before these bouts, the next 15 minutes would



OREGON FENCING ALLIANCE

The OREGON FENCING ALLIANCE (OFA) is looking for a part-time assistant coach starting January 1, 2005. The OFA is a one-weapon club that focuses on sabre fencing for both men and women. This position is to teach sabre only.

The position will work closely with head coach Ed Korfanty, Coach Adam Skarbonkiewicz and Cathy Zagunis, our Director of Programs.

Requirements:

- 5-10 years of competitive fencing experience a plus
 - 2-3 years coaching experience in sabre.
 - Must have command of the English language
- College education preferred, but relevant experience and Fencing Master Degree will be considered.

The OFA has been in existence since 1982. The OFA is unique because it is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3), one-weapon fencing club. We have a state-of-the-art facility and training room. Currently we have four world champions holding 11+ titles both individually and team as well the 2004 Women's Olympic sabre champion.

Send inquiries/resumes to:
Cathy Zagunis • Oregon Fencing Alliance
4840 SW Western Avenue • Suite 80



United States Fencing Coaches Association

- Member Academy d'Armes Internationale
- Member National Collegiate Athletic Association

Supporting fencing coaches through

- Education
- Certification
- Marketing
- Member Benefits

U.S. Fencing Coaches Association
56 Water Lane
Easthampton, MA 01027

or join online at:

www.usfca.org



be the most important of the quadrennial for United States fencing.

Sada was out for revenge against Perrus.

While I'm sure Sada wanted Emily to win, there is no doubt that the emotions of a sibling match-up in the Olympics would have been emotionally grueling.

Perrus opened up a quick 3-1 lead before Sada got going to take an 8-5 advantage at the break.

Perrus kept it close at 11-12, but Sada advanced to the medal round with a well-earned 15-11 victory.

OK, one down, one to go!

Mariel drew the two-time World Champion, the 12th-seeded Jemayeva of Azerbaijan. Mariel led 8-5 at the break, and maintained the lead to win 15-11 to also make the medal round.

So, before noon on August 17th, the United States was guaranteed an Olympic medal, our first in twenty years!

Hooray!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

But, times have changed for us since **Peter Westbrook** earned the bronze in Los Angeles. On that day, we were ecstatic to get any medal. And Westbrook's bronze, which had broken the 24-year drought since the late **Albert Axelrod's** bronze in Rome, was as good as a gold for our medal-starved country.

But, here we had a good chance at two medals, and a great chance at the gold, as Sada had been the No.-1 ranked fencer in the world since May of 2003.

Along with that lofty tag, however, came an inordinate amount of pressure for Sada. She came to Athens with the mindset that anything other than the gold medal would be a failure. Yikes, that's a no-win situation. To Sada's credit, she seemed to embrace the pressure, and was able to handle all the press requests in grand fashion.

Mariel, on the other hand, was apparently in a no-lose situation. She went from Olympic oblivion to a member of the team. In fact, when we took the team photos back in April in Atlanta, we

took one photo with Mariel (just in case), and one without. She was "Dead Woman Walking," and everyone felt for her.

Next thing you know, she's in! And, in the interim, all the media focus had been on Sada, as No. 1 in the world, and on Sada and Emily, as sisters on the team. Mariel was flying under the radar screen, playing with the casino's money, and fencing with nothing to lose. Oh, by the way, she also had been fencing as well as she ever had as Athens approached.

Round of 4 (Semifinals)

At 6:30 p.m., Sada had the first semi against 2002 World Champion and 5th seed Tan of China.

This was the tougher of the semi bouts, and Sada went to the break up 8-7. Tan came back to take a 12-10 lead before Sada tied the score at 12-12.

To the shock and dismay of all of us, especially Sada, Tan scored the last three touches to win 15-12. Sada walked off the strip in a daze, despondent and in disbelief. Many of us were concerned that she would not be able to recover before the bronze medal bout.

While the United States contingent was still reeling from the loss of our best hope for a gold, Mariel took the stage at 6:50 p.m. Her opponent was the 10th seed Gheorgitoaia of Romania.

Mariel was flying, using her entire repertoire, and coasted to an 8-2 lead at the break. While they traded touches, Mariel never let the Romanian get close, and won 15-10.

Wow, within a half hour, we went on an emotional roller-coaster ride. Mariel was in the gold medal bout!

Bronze Medal Bout

At about 8:30, it was time for Sada's bout against Gheorgitoaia. The bout, on paper, should have a blowout, but we were really worried about Sada's psyche.

Well, Sada erased all worries in rapid fashion, as she opened up a 6-1 lead before going into the break up 8-5. She then returned to her top form and destroyed the Romanian 15-7.

Sada Jacobson, bronze medal; our first medal in 20 years!

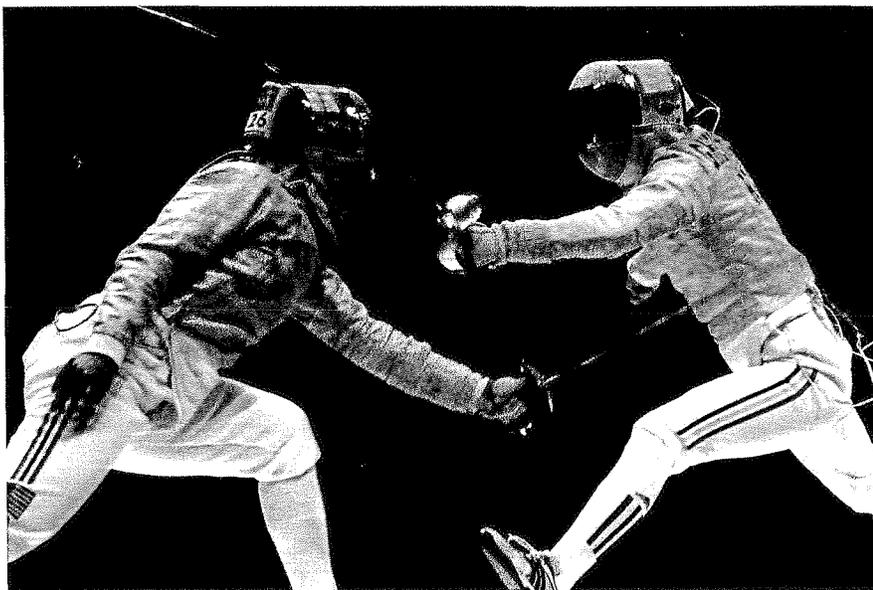
While the bronze was, in reality, a consolation prize for Sada, that's one heck of a consolation prize! Sada will forever be immortalized as an Olympic medallist, but I will always remember how she pulled herself together under the most devastating circumstances and how she carried herself with tremendous grace throughout the entire pressure-packed Olympic experience.

Gold Medal Bout

So Mariel's magical mystery tour, which almost didn't even take place, had reached the gold medal bout of the Olympic Games, the first ever for women's saber.

Would Mariel just be happy to be there,

Sada Jacobson (left) on her way to her bronze medal. Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com





knowing that she had, at worst, a silver medal? Would the clock strike 12 and the dream would be over? Would the former World Champion Tan be simply too tough to handle?

Mariel answered all of those questions within a minute of the first period. She absolutely controlled Tan and went into the break with a juicy 8-2 lead.

It wasn't the score that stood out, but rather the all-encompassing game that Mariel was employing. She was fencing and utilizing all aspects of the game. Mariel blasted Tan with strong attacks. She used the whole strip and featured a great riposte game, as well.

But, Mariel further bamboozled Tan with the use of an extremely effective line, scoring with point actions, as well. It was a beautiful thing to watch, as we could see our fencer in command of the bout from start to finish.

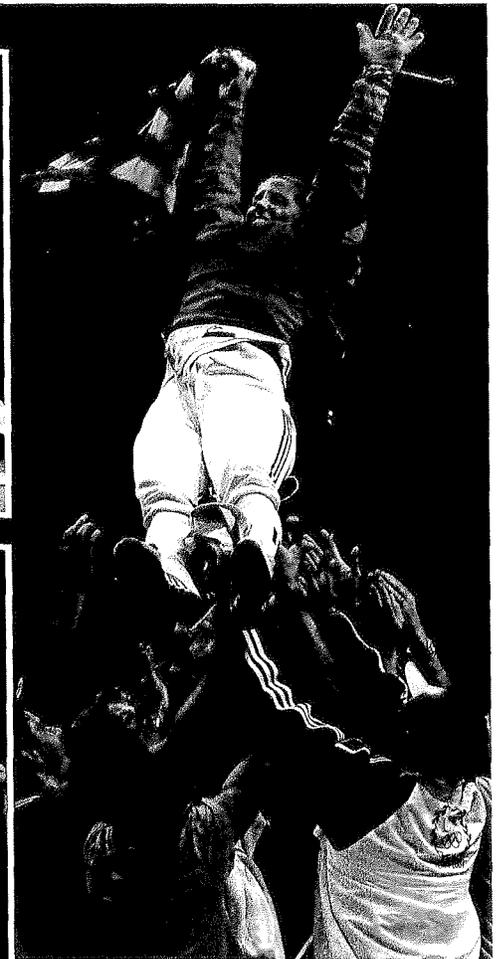
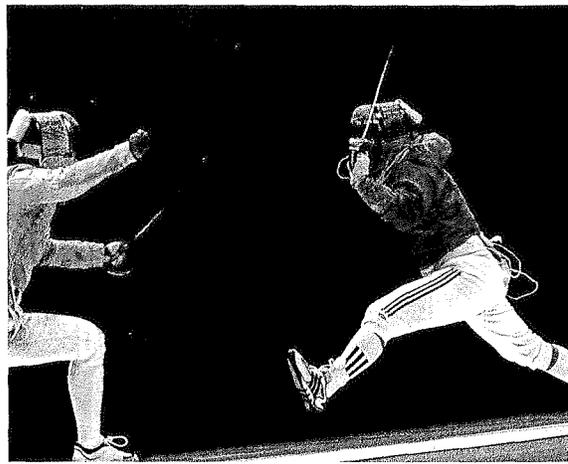
Mariel was up 14-9 when she whipped off her mask to celebrate the gold medal touch. But, not so fast, as referee Lahotska called the action simultaneous.

On the very next action, Mariel attacked in preparation, whipped off the mask again...as we prepared to charge the raised strip. This time, Lahotska gave her the touch, and Mariel was the Olympic Champion!!!

We ran onto the floor and up to the strip. As we jumped up, Mariel was jumping off to shake the referee's hand. She jumped back up, and we did something that we never thought we'd ever do on an Olympic final's strip: We threw our Champion, our American Olympic Champion, into the air three times, as is the norm. (Well, this has been the "norm" for others, but not for the United States.)

I handed Mariel my flag and she took it on a beautiful victory lap around the strip. It doesn't get any better than this! Her smile lit up the room, and it graced hundreds, if not thousands of newspapers around the world.

Shortly after, while we were all still floating in the rarified air, the moment finally arrived: The Star-Spangled Banner was being



Golden moments: Mariel Zagunis attacks in her gold medal match (top left), celebrates her winning touch (at left) and then gets a lift from her U.S. teammates. Photos: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com

played, not for the usual sports, but for an American fencer!

I was standing with President **Stacey Johnson**, **George Kolombatovich**, **Carl Borack** and **Sam Cheris** as we unabashedly and incredulously sang our national anthem with tears in our eyes and smiles on our faces.

Mariel and Sada handled themselves like pros at the press conferences. They did the USFA proud on and off the fencing strip in Athens.

It was the night of our lives. Two Olympic medals, equaling our country's entire output for the last 44 years! Congratulations to the great coaches, **Ed Korfanty** and **Arkady Burdan!**

Final U.S. Standings:

Zagunis, GOLD; Sada Jacobson, BRONZE; Emily Jacobson, 12th

Medallists: Gold, Zagunis (United States); Silver, Tan (China); Bronze, S. Jacobson (United States)

DAY 5: WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL FOIL

After two hours of sleep, it was back to work. **Erinn Smart**, the replacement athlete for the women's foil team in Sydney, was our



lone qualifier, and was seeded 15th. She drew an old nemesis, the 17th seeded Gonzalez of Venezuela.

The speedy Gonzalez had beaten Erinn in the semis of the Pan Am Games in Santo Domingo and went on to win the gold medal. Erinn had subsequently trounced Gonzalez 15-6 at a World Cup during the past season.

So, the rubber match, appropriately, was at the Olympic Games.

Gonzalez is very difficult to hit, as she is small and squirmy, and has effective parries, to boot. The game plan was to avoid attacking at all costs. Unfortunately, once Erinn was behind 0-2, she had no choice but to attack into Gonzalez's strength.

This put Erinn behind the eight-ball, and she was down 0-5 before rallying to 4-7 at the second break. She had no choice but to throw the kitchen sink at Gonzalez in the last period, and brought the score up to 8-9. That took a lot out of Erinn (similar to Kamara's mid-bout comeback), and Gonzalez scored four touches in a row to open it up again at 13-8.

It is extremely difficult to come back once in a bout, let alone twice. But, to Erinn's credit, she fought tooth and nail, using a strong riposte game (why Gonzalez would attack is beyond me!), and scored four of her own to bring the bout to 12-13. But, with time running out, the Venezuelan scored and won 14-12.

Final U.S. Standing: Smart; 17th

Medallists: Gold, Vezzali (Italy); Silver, Trilini (Italy); Bronze, Gruchala (Poland)

DAY 6: MEN'S SABER TEAM

Quarterfinals

The men's team was on a roll, having recently won the New York World Cup by beating Spain, France, Russia and Poland. However, the Olympic match-up was against Hungary, the one country this group had never beaten. In fact, the United States had never beaten Hungary in this event. **Tim Morehouse** was the replacement athlete.

The night before we had a team dinner to plan our strategy. We agreed to not let the referees and perceived bad calls take away our focus, no matter how bad it got. And, we agreed that if there was a time where the momentum was running away from us that I would try to break it.

(Easier said than done on both counts, I might add!)

Anyway, we were tested right out of the gate. Ferjancsik beat Lee in the first bout by 5-3, although we thought Ivan really won 6-2. No problem; we stuck together, stayed positive, and everyone sincerely believed that we would win. This was a little foreshadowing, however, as the referee was Alvarez of Spain.

Keeth clobbered Lengyel 7-3 to give us a 10-8 lead. Nemcsik then outhit Jason 7-2 to give them a 15-12 lead at the end of the first round.

Ivan then destroyed Lengyel 8-3 to give us the lead again at 20-18. Ferjancsik took it to Jason 7-4 and Nemcsik got Keeth 5-1 to completely change the momentum and give the Hungarians a commanding 30-25 lead at the end of the second round.

The team was down. The body language was slumped. We

could feel it slipping away. And Jason, who had been outscored by a lopsided 14-6 in his first two bouts, was up next. This was the time to take a break.

As Jason was about to hook up, I called him back and got everyone in the circle at the bench. The other referee, Florea of Romania, was sternly motioning for us to send up our fencer. I held up my hand to let him know that we'll get there when we're ready. At this point we had a little pep talk, agreed that we would take it one touch at a time, and that we're going to beat these guys.

As Florea was about to card us or something, we got the hands in and did a forceful and pointed chant of USA! I think the Hungarians were surprised by our resolve.

Jason responded by beating Lengyel 7-5, which narrowed the gap to 32-35. Ivan then followed by beating silver-medallist Nemcsik 6-5 to bring the score to 38-40.

So, Keeth was left with the unenviable task of facing Ferjancsik, who generally gave him fits, and to beat him by at least 7-4. Keeth fenced great, beat Ferjancsik 7-3, and gave the United States its first ever victory over Hungary, 45-43!

This was one of the greatest moments in our history, and the unbridled exultation of the fencers and Coach **Yury Gelman** was something to see. We were into the medal round, and there was no team that we couldn't beat.

(Captain's note: It wasn't the timeout that turned the tables, as that's Captaining 101. It was the fact that our guys showed the Hungarians that they would never quit that did the trick, as the Hungarians folded to our unyielding team spirit.)

For the match, Smart was 15-11 (+4), Lee was 17-13 (+4), and Rogers was 13-19 (-6).

Semifinals

We were now to face the second-seeded French, a team we had beaten last June in New York. This was a team that would not ever be intimidated by team spirit, as they thrived on it, as well.

The referees were Goutzait of the Ukraine and the Spaniard Alvarez, and although we were not happy to see Alvarez again, I re-emphasized that we must not let the bad calls ruin our focus.

Ivan outhit Damien Touya 5-3 before Gael Touya beat Keeth 7-3 to give France a 10-8 lead. Jason stepped up to the plate and continued where he left off against Hungary by beating Pillet 7-4 to give us a 15-14 lead after the first round.

In the second round, Gael Touya beat Ivan 8-2, Damien Touya edged Jason 5-4, but Keeth kept it close by outscoring Pillet 8-5. After two rounds, France held a slim 30-29 lead.

Gael Touya, whose +10 was the difference, opened up by beating Jason 5-3. Ivan then beat Pillet 6-5. So, Keeth again stepped up to the strip with a 40-38 deficit, this time to face Damien Touya.

Touya brought the score to 44-42, which meant double match point for him. Keeth, showing great character, tied the score at 44-44 and had all the momentum going into the final touch. However, on the match-tying touch, Keeth's point somehow went through Touya's glove and through the webbing between his fingers. This injury necessitated a 10-minute timeout, which effectively stopped Keeth's momentum cold and gave Touya a chance to regroup.

What happened next is something we'll never forget, and not



in a good way. While I was not at the best angle to see the next three actions, and definitely in the worst position to be objective, it appeared as if our hopes were

dashed by referee Alvarez.

Now, as I write this, I have the luxury of watching the actions in question at regular speed and in slow motion on the DVD containing the television feed. The camera angle was similar to the referee's as it was directly behind him in the center of the strip. Alvarez, on the other hand, had to make the call at regular speed, under the most extreme pressure, and get it right on the first try.

The two fencers stepped up again to the strip after the long pause, with the score tied at 44:44. The next three actions were very close. They were eerily similar, as both fencers appeared to try the same thing in each scenario. In my opinion, none of the three were simultaneous, although a case can be made that all of the three could have been called as such.

Keeth clearly tried to be the aggressor. As he does his lunge or flunge, he sometimes pulls his arm back, and that can cost him the touch. Touya, in direct contrast, tried to catch Keeth with a lightning-fast attack in preparation. Whatever happened, Touya was not the one initiating.

I thought the first action was clearly Keeth's attack and that we were in the gold medal bout. Alvarez called it simultaneous. OK, maybe he lacked the fortitude to decide the Olympic semifinal on a razor thin call.

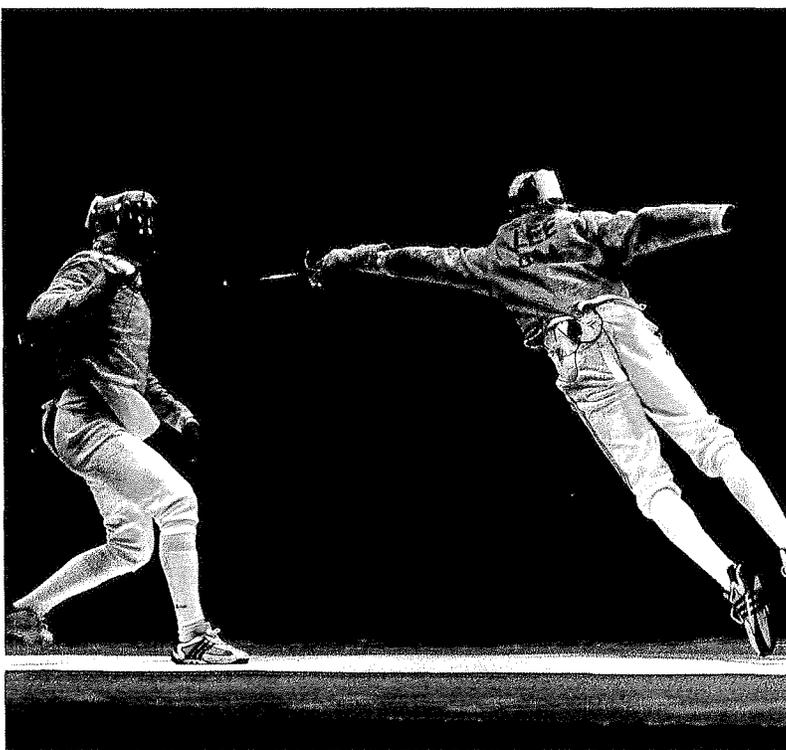
I thought the second action was Touya's, as it appeared as if Touya did catch Keeth in tempo. Alvarez again called it simultaneous. Fair enough, I can accept that maybe Alvarez had a certain window and was adhering to it in this difficult spot.

Whatever the case, we were going back for action No. 3. In my opinion, Keeth correctly executed an attack, similar to the first action, and Touya counterattacked. It was close. Incredibly, Alvarez, who chose not to split hairs on the first two actions where each fencer probably deserved one call, decided to split hairs on this call; worse, he called it for Touya.

I'm sure everyone has seen Touya's terrible lack of sportsmanship as he air-machine gunned Keeth and our team as he gloated after the last touch. Well, I guess that's as close to fighting as the French get. The FIE has carded fencers for flipping off their mask to celebrate a winning touch, but allows this type of overt taunting to take place at the Olympic Games, in front of a worldwide television audience, without any penalty. This was disgraceful, on both Touya's part and the FIE's part. Naturally, Alvarez didn't see this...either.

We were numb. How could this referee finally make the call he threw out twice in a row, and make the wrong call? If Alvarez had called it simultaneous, we could have lived with it, as he was being consistent. If Touya had nailed Keeth in his preparation, we could have lived with it, too.

But this was a travesty, as not only did Alvarez make the call,



Ivan Lee (right) stretches and attacks. Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com

he made the wrong one. It cost us a guaranteed medal, and possibly a gold.

The guys were devastated. Right in the middle of the hysteria, some well-meaning compatriots were yelling at me as we left the strip to get the guys ready for the bronze medal match. At that moment, however, we had to go through a requisite mourning period.

After about two hours of grieving, it was time to start the refocusing period. It was almost impossible, as it must have been for Sada. However, the guys came to life, and were hell-bent on beating the favored Russians, who had lost to Italy, for the bronze medal.

For the match, Rogers was 14-14 (0), Smart was 17-17 (0), and Lee was 13-14 (-1).

Bronze Medal Match

This was to be quite a hill to climb, as the Russians were the three-time defending Olympic Champions and two-time defending World Champions. They featured Olympic and World individual champion Stanislav Pozdniakov, considered to be the best saber fencer in the world, and Serguei Charikov, a member of all the championship teams and individual silver medalist in 1996.

The referees were Floria and incredibly, Alvarez for the third time! After the French match, he was the last referee we wanted to see, as you can imagine. While he has been a fair referee for us, and is considered a friend, he was not the best ref for us on this fateful day.

Keeth started off with a 5-3 win over Charikov. Pozdniakov hammered Jason 7-1 and Yakimenko beat Ivan 5-4 to give Russia a 15-10 lead after one round.

Jason made amends by clobbering Charikov 10-4 to give us



Jon Tiomkin catches some serious air. Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com

and Smart was 14-18 (-4).

For the day, Lee was 44-39 (+5), Smart was 46-46 (0), and Rogers was 43-48 (-5)

On this day we ran the gamut of human emotions. Against Hungary, we experienced the highest of highs. Against France, we experienced the lowest of lows. And, against Russia, we experienced the lowest of lows...again.

To miss an Olympic medal by one touch twice in one day was almost too much to take. But the guys showed what they are made of, as they fought for every touch, kept their cool at all times, and never gave up. Best of all, they did not let the referees get to us during the matches, although they have every right to complain after the fact.

They have proven that they are one of the elite saber teams in the world, and will continue to be a

team to contend with in future competitions.

Final U.S. Placing: 4th

Medallists: Gold, France; Silver, Italy; Bronze, Russia

DAY 7: WOMEN'S EPEE TEAM

While our team did not qualify, this day off could not have come at a better time. We were beaten up after the saber team's ups and downs.

Medallists: Gold, Russia; Silver, Germany; Bronze, France

DAY 8: MEN'S FOIL TEAM

Quarterfinals

Our guys were seeded 7th and drew 2nd-seeded Germany. Germany boasted three fencers in the top 20 of the FIE point list in Joppich, Bissdorf and Wessels. While this looked like a huge mismatch on paper, the trio of Dan Kellner, Jed Dupree, and Jon Tiomkin felt confident, as they matched up well with the Germans. **Gregory Chang** was the replacement fencer.

The foilists were loosey-goosey before the match and actually formed a conga line as they walked into the venue. On the contrary, the Germans sat motionless and expressionless, tight as a drum, in the holding room as we waited for the match. The contrast was so evident, and teams fenced accordingly.

Dan got the team off on the right foot as he beat Joppich 5-2. After Wessels nipped Jon 6-5, Jed outscored Bissdorf 5-2 to give us a 15-10 lead after the first round.

Jon started the second round with a rousing 5-1 thrashing of Joppich. Bissdorf then beat Dan 8-5 before Jed regained the

the lead 20-19. Keeth and Ivan went 5-5 with Yakimenko and Pozdniakov, respectively, and we held a 30-29 lead after two rounds.

Jason outhit Yakimenko 5-4 and Ivan opened up the match by beating Charikov 5-2 and giving us a 40-35 lead. Wow, we could now taste the bronze, but we knew it wasn't in the bag yet, as Pozdniakov was looming.

Keeth started off somewhat tentatively and Pozdniakov took full advantage. Eventually, Keeth regained his footing and the score went to 44-44...again. While the last call was again close, it went to Pozdniakov, and we were relegated to the worst place at the Olympic Games...fourth.

Keeth stood in the middle of the strip with a look of disbelief as the Russians celebrated. The television jackals were positioning for a close-up of Keeth as he broke down on the bench, but this closely-knit team once again stuck together to block them out.

As Ivan pointed out to me, Keeth is the closer on this team, similar to relief pitcher Mariano Rivera of the Yankees. He is regularly put in the toughest position. Along with the inordinate pressure comes some great victories, as he overcame a 38-40 deficit to give the United States its first saber win over the great Hungarians. Against Touya and France, Keeth again overcame a 38-40 and 42-44 deficits but couldn't get the last call.

Unfortunately, Keeth came up short against the great Pozdniakov. On the day, he came through in two of his three chances. He is a hero, and everyone should give him a pat on the back the next time they see him.

For the match, Lee was 14-12 (+2), Rogers was 16-15 (+1),



momentum by taking Wessels 5-3. So, we had a commanding 30-22 lead going into the last three bouts.

Jon kept it going by beating Bissdorf 5-4 to give us a big 35-26 lead. The next to last bout was a nightmare and turned the match around. Joppich, who had been outscored 10-3 in his first two bouts, came out with a purpose against Jed, who was 10-5 in his first two bouts. He basically scored at will on Jed, who was holding on for dear life. It was one of those things where Joppich was on a roll and Jed couldn't stop it, no matter what tactic he tried.

When the bleeding stopped, not to mention a few hearts, Joppich's 14-4 bout had turned a 35-26 deficit into a 40-39 advantage for Germany. This put Dan, the Comeback Kid, into a familiar position.

Dan once again lived up to his nickname, as he outhit Wessels 6-3 to give the United States its second monumental upset in the Olympic team events. Amazingly, we were once again in the medal round!

For the match, Tiomkin was 15-11 (+4), Kellner was 16-13 (+3), and Dupree was 14-19 (-5).

Semifinals

Next up was 3rd-ranked China.

Dong beat Dan 5-3 to open the match. Jon then exploded with a 7-3 win over Wang. Wu beat Jed 7-4, and China held a 15-14 lead after one round.

The second round saw the Chinese win all three bouts, as Dong beat Jon 5-3, Wu beat Dan 5-4, and Wang beat Jed 5-4. This gave a China a 30-25 advantage after two rounds.

Jon started the final round off with a bang, as he outhit Wu 7-5 to bring us to within 32-35. Dong then outscored Jed 5-0 to give the Chinese a commanding 40-32 lead. Well, it was time for Comeback Kellner. Just a year ago, Dan had overcome a 30-40 deficit against Cuba to give the United States the Pan Am gold medal.

Unfortunately, there was no miracle this time, as Wang beat Dan 5-3 and closed the match out at 45-35.

Don't let the score fool you; this match was extremely close until the eighth bout. The guys would now have to prepare for the bronze medal match against Russia later that evening.

For the match, Tiomkin was 15-13 (+2), Kellner was 10-15 (-5), and Dupree was 8-17 (-9).

Bronze Medal Match

Dan beat Ganeev 5-4 and Jon beat Molchan 5-4 to give us a 10-8 lead. Pozdniakov then beat Jed 7-3 to give the Russians a 15-13 lead after one round.

Jon continued his great fencing by beating Ganeev 7-4 to regain the lead at 20-19. Pozdniakov beat Dan 6-4 and Jed went 5-5 with Molchan. So, at the end of two rounds, we trailed Russia by just 30-29.

With a medal within reach, we began the third and final

Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation

Date: September 15, 2004

Title of Publication: American Fencing

Frequency of Issue: Quarterly

Location of Known Office of Publication: 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado, 80909-5774

Location of Headquarters: 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774

Publisher: United States Fencing Association, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774

Editor: Cindy Bent Findlay, USFA, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774

Owner: United States Fencing Association, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774

Known Bondholders, Mortgages, Etc.: None

	Average No. of copies each issue during preceeding 12 months	Actual No. of copies of single issue published nearest filing date
Total Number Copies Printed	13,413	17,000
Paid Circulation	-0-	-0-
Paid Mail Subscriptions	13,204	16,768
Free Distribution/Mail	25	30
Free Distribution/Not Mail	30	35
Total Free Distribution	55	65
Total Distribution	13,259	16,833
Copies Not Distributed	154	167
Return from News Agents	-0-	-0-
Total	13,413	17,000
Percent Paid/Requested Circulation	99.6	99.6

INTENSIVE WINTER TRAINING CAMP

FENCING ACADEMY OF SOUTH JERSEY

2060 Springdale Road, Suite 200
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

December 26, 2004 - January 2, 2005

The camp's objective is to improve the level of the competitive fencer in 3 weapons. The emphasis of the camp will be on training athletes for NAC, Junior Olympic and Regional Circuit competitions.

Coaches: Andy Ma, Brian Kovach,
Stanislav Gutkovskiy, Iosif Vitebskiy,
Nitai Kfir, Sergey Isayenko

Training Schedule (3 sessions per day)

Morning - Footwork, dummy, partner drills, tactics analysis
Midday - Private lessons, offense/defense, boutng
Evening - Boutng

Registration & Payment Information

\$450 for 8-day camp / \$70 per day if less than 7 days

Number of fencers is limited. Please register early.
Overnight room accommodations available.

For additional information, call (856)786-7416;
Fax (856)786-7480; Website www.FASJ.com.



round. Pozdniakov, who had replaced the injured Nassibouline, killed us again by winning his third bout over Jon 5-3. Jed then went 5-5 with Ganeev and that left Dan with a 37-40 deficit.

Dan had done it against Cuba in Santo Domingo last summer. Then, in Havana last fall, he almost did it again against this same Russian team. So, this was not a spot that bothered Dan at all. On this day, however, Molchan outscored Dan 5-1 to give the Russians a 45-38 victory for the bronze medal.

For the match, Tiomkin again led the way at 15-13 (+2), Dupree was 13-17 (-4), and Kellner was 10-15 (-5).

For the day, Tiomkin was 47-37 (+10), Kellner was 36-43 (-7), and Dupree was 35-53 (-18).

It was a tremendous result for this dedicated threesome. They trained together, traveled together, and all worked with Coach **Simon Gershon**. The win over Germany under these conditions proved they can beat most teams in the world.

On this day, Tiomkin fenced out of his mind. One of the other captains came to me and said that Tiomkin was the best fencer in the room the whole day. Kellner is always a steady influence and generally a solid closer. However, the key to this team's future suc-

cess will be Dupree's continued improvement. Once he develops confidence in his game, he has the ability to become the go-to guy on the team.

Final U.S. Standing: 4th

Medallists: Gold, Italy; Silver, China; Bronze, Russia

DAY 9: MEN'S EPEE TEAM

Quarterfinals

The epee team was seeded 7th and drew 2nd seeded France. We knew it would be an uphill struggle, as France was loaded.

Fabrice Jeannet opened with a 5-2 win over Kelsey. Mattern, normally a gunslinger, showed great patience in gaining a 2-1 edge over Boisse. Obry then beat Soren 6-5 to give France a 12-9 lead after the first round.

The second round was our downfall, as France outscored us 15-6. Boisse took Seth 6-3, Jeannet beat Soren 6-1, and Obry nipped Cody 3-2. That basically was the ballgame, as the 27-15 deficit against this team was nearly insurmountable.

Soren made a great attempt, as he started the third round with a 10-7 wild one over Boisse. Obry went 6-5 with Seth and Jeannet closed it out with a 5-2 win over Cody to give France a 45-32 victory.

The key to the lopsided victory was Jeannet. While we were basically even with Obry (+3) and Boisse (-1), it was Jeannet (+11) that made the difference.

For the match, Mattern was 6-9 (-9), Thompson was 16-19 (-3), and Kelsey was 10-17 (-7).

Placement Match (5-8)

We drew China in the first placement match.

The match was close after the first round, as we held a narrow 14-12 lead. But, when Soren clobbered silver-medalist Wang 9-4 in the fifth bout, we opened up a juicy 25-16 lead.

Soren continued his hot fencing by outscoring Tuo 7-5 to start the third round. Xie beat Cody 8-5 to bring China within reach at 36-40 with their big gun, Wang, closing. Seth handily took care of Wang 5-0 to give the team a great win at 45-36.

For the match, Thompson was 20-14 (+6), Kelsey was 13-10 (+3), and Mattern was 12-12 (0).

Placement Match (5-6)

For this match against Ukraine, replacement fencer **Jan Viviani** went in for Thompson.

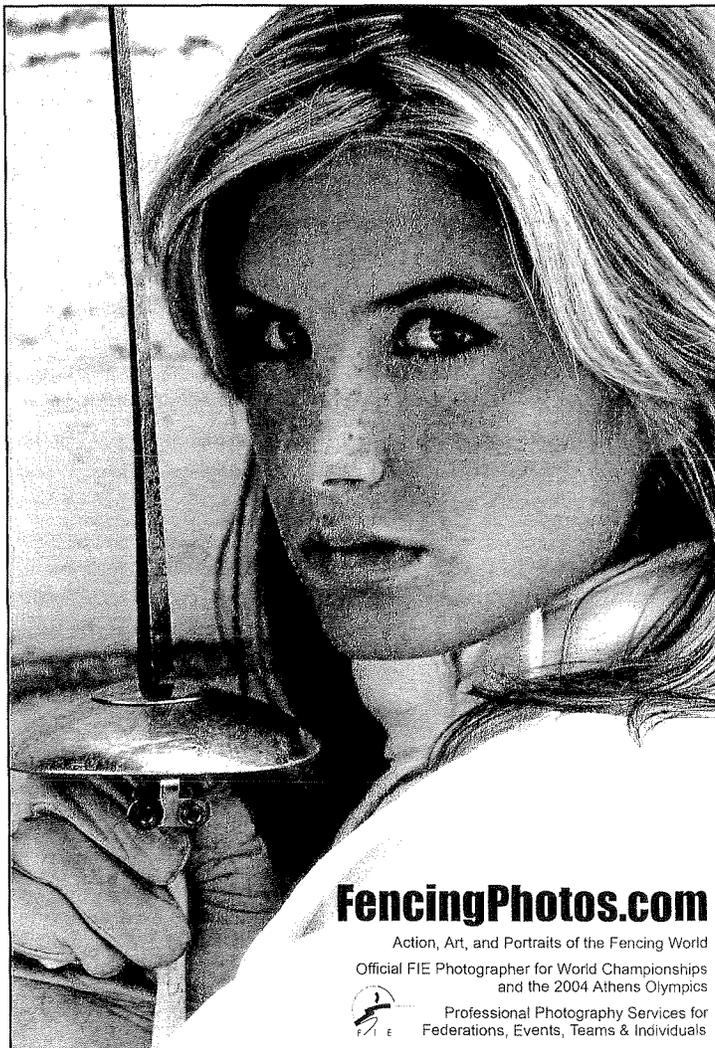
After four bouts, Ukraine built up an 18-6 lead, a hole from which we could not recover. In the last five bouts we were even with them, but came up short at 45-33.

For the match, Viviani was 6-6 (0), Kelsey was 15-15 (0), and Mattern was 12-24 (-12).

For the day, Thompson was 36-33 (+3), Viviani was 6-6 (0), Kelsey was 38-42 (-4), and Mattern was 30-45 (-15).

Final U.S. Placing: 6th

Medallists: Gold, France; Silver, Hungary; Bronze, Germany



FencingPhotos.com

Action, Art, and Portraits of the Fencing World

Official FIE Photographer for World Championships and the 2004 Athens Olympics



Professional Photography Services for Federations, Events, Teams & Individuals



THE CADRE

The Olympics are all about the athletes. But the athletes' job is made so much easier by the selfless efforts of a dedicated cadre. A million thanks to this great cadre!

Bob (Baba-booye) Largman is the most selfless and dedicated team leader (manager), and actually gave his Opening Ceremonies ticket away to another coach. That's all you need to know about Bob. He handled every possible logistical issue competently and calmly, with the latter being appreciated by everyone.

Yury Gelman and Arkady Burdan were the team coaches and did a great job with their fencers.

We had **Paul Soter**, **Ed Korfanty**, **Buckie Leach**, **Kornel Udvarhelyi** and **Simon Gershon** as additional coaches. They all helped out immensely and performed as part of the team.

Sports psychologists **Dr. John Heil** and **Dr. Rob Udowitz** brought a much-appreciated additional dimension.

Lonnie Sellers was brought over by the USOC, but he was basically our trainer. Lonnie is quick with a quip, and even quicker to help the athletes at any time.

Hawkeye **Ron Herman** set up his armory in our basement and slept on a mattress down there, too. Now, I know these guys love their equipment, but...

Ron did a great job and the athletes really appreciated it.

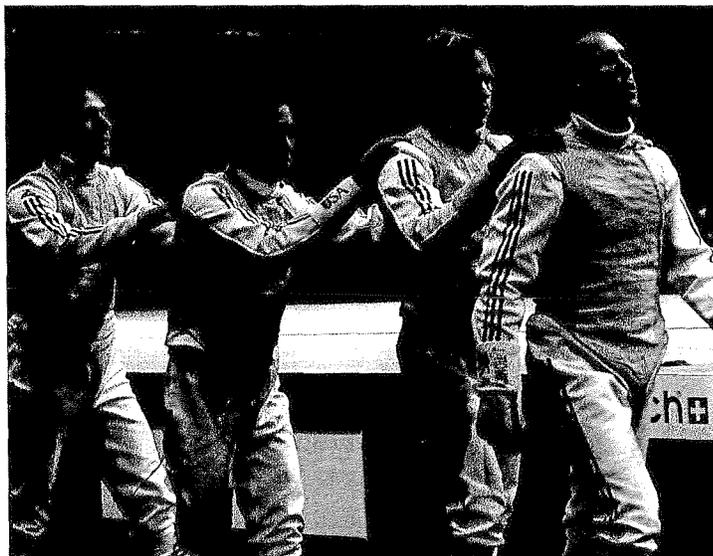
Suzie Paxton was on the ball with media relations, as she did double-duty for NBC-TV and the USOC.

Thanks to George Kolombatovich and Sam Cheris, who were there as FIE members.

Carl Borack came on his own and provided additional support. Carl had been the Team Captain at the last four Olympics and his enormous experience came in handy. In addition, Carl also made his apartment, which was close to the venue, available for the teams that made the medal round.

Last but not least was our USFA Liaison, the retiring **Carla-Mae Richards**. Carla assisted Bob and me and was always on the job. While it was great for the entire USFA that we got those

The U.S. men congo in. Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com



U.S. Olympic Team Captain Jeff Bukantz (right) watches the action with men's saber coach Yury Gelman. Photo: Serge Timacheff/FencingPhotos.com

medals, it was especially apropos that it happened under Carla's watch. For the last 20 years or so, she has devoted her life to helping United States fencing, and has given every ounce of her emotional being to the sport.

Thanks, Carla. Enjoy your retirement and your family.

APPRECIATE WHAT THIS TEAM HAS ACCOMPLISHED

Too often in life we fail to "smell the coffee" as we forge ahead to the next day or event. Naturally, we want to improve and develop more fencers capable of winning Olympic medals.

But, now is the time to take a step back and appreciate what happened in Athens.

Overall, this was our finest moment in modern Olympic history. We earned our first gold medal in 100 years and our first medal ever by a woman.

I would like to thank the High Performance Committee, the coaches, The Tournament Committee, the Board and its Executive Committee, and the Fencing Officials Commission for the hard work as volunteers during the quadrennial. Of course, the USFA staff played a huge role in the success, too.

Special congratulations go to ex-President Stacey Johnson, whose principled foresight ruffled some feathers but resulted in the long-awaited Olympic medals. Had we not earned any medals, Stacey's efforts to get women's saber into the Games still would have been worth it, as the window might have closed, according to IOC Member Dr. Thomas Bach.

The best part of my Olympic experience was the camaraderie with the athletes. They were mature, went about their training in a business-like manner, and had a winning attitude. I hope the feeling was mutual. I look forward to working with these wonderful young adults for many years to come.

Finally, my sincerest thanks to the USFA for having bestowed such an honor upon me.

— AF

TournamentRESULTS

Regional Youth Circuit

October 2-3, 2004 • Wilmington, N.C. (All events were conducted as mixed events)

Youth-10 Saber

1st Noah Poulos
2nd Ryan Regalado
3T Avonlea Bryant-Comstock
3T Alex McKenzie

Youth-12 Saber

1st Nick de Castro
2nd Hunter Alford
3rd Scott LeVine
4th Charlie Dobbins

Youth-14 Saber

1st Jackson Bryant-Comstock
2nd Scott LeVine
3rd Eli Poulos
4th Nick de Castro

Youth-10 Epee

1st Noah Poulos
2nd May Peterson
3T Jacob Lete
3T Michael Dietz

Youth-12 Epee

1st Nicole Agresto
2nd Andrew Meyers
3T Emma Peterson
3T Maxwell Tice-Lewis

Youth-14 Epee

1st Hunter Baum
2nd Alexandra Mead
3rd Maxwell Tice-Lewis

Youth-10 Foil

1st Elizabeth Meyers
2nd May Peterson
3rd John O'Regan
4th Jacob Lete

Youth-12 Foil

1st Emma Peterson
2nd Andres Meyers
3rd Jeffery Cotter
4th Elizabeth Meyers



Medallists at the Cape Fear Regional Youth Circuit, Oct. 2-3, 2004

Youth-14 Foil

1st Andrew Meyers
2nd Emma Peterson
3rd Eli Poulos
4th Jeffrey Cotter

Renaissance Fencing Club Fall Classic Open

October 2-3, 2004 • Madison Heights, Mich.

Mixed Foil

1 Hayenga, Gary AADS
2 Williams, Joe GRAFA
3T Black, Michael WMFA
3T Sarkisova, Dayana GRAFA

Mixed Epee

1 Kocab, Greg RFC
2 Dosmann, Matt RFC
3T Maczik, Adam UM
3T Bolakowski, John AADS

Mixed Saber

1 Dosmann, Matt RFC
2 Dressell, Todd RFC
3T Sollman, Doug RFC
3T Beattie, Joshua AADS

Women's Foil

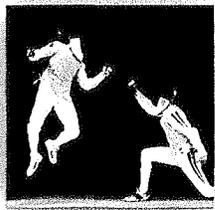
1 Sarkisova, Dayana GRAFA
2 Woehrlen, Tess RFC
3T Douglas, Mary MMFA
3T Vance, Beth RFC

Women's Epee

1 Kocab, Annemarie RFC
2 Long, Jeanne GLSC
3T Stoner, Stanna RFC
3T Jones, Pam RFC

Women's Saber

1 Jones, Pam RFC
2 Dosmann, Lisa RFC
3T Stoner, Stanna RFC
3T Hobig, Jillian RFC



allstar[®]USA

Official US supplier of Allstar Equipment



Official equipment.
Official supplier.
Lowest prices.
We guarantee it.

1-888-ALSTAR-5

2933 Vauxhall Road, Vauxhall NJ 07088

908.637.4438

908.636.7644 (fax)

10/5 (Mon-Fri)

10/8 (Sat)

Derek **COTTON** • 39, Los Angeles, Calif.



TheSTATS

Event: Referee, Rated 1 in U.S. Foil and Saber;

International "B" in all three weapons

Hometown: Los Angeles, Calif.

Education: BS, Economics, San Diego State

University; MBA, International Business, Pepperdine University

Club: Los Angeles Fencing Center (Head Coach)

In this issue, we salute one of the unheralded many — the referee. A long day of officiating is a test not only of fencing knowledge, but also of patience, nerves... and feet. Derek Cotton has represented our country at countless national and international events for many years. If you fence foil or saber, probably he has presided on your strip.

Derek officiated at his second Olympic Games this past August. He began his fencing career in 1982, taking lessons from Ralph Faulkner, fencing master to the stars in Hollywood, Calif. and member of the 1932 U.S. Olympic saber team. Derek began refereeing 15 years ago, while still a competitor. "I think like a lot of refs I started because I was good at it, and I cannot stand to see bad calls... I can hear the fencers moaning, thinking about every blown call I have ever made after reading that statement!!"

Where have you traveled to as a referee?

Korea, Japan, Taipei, England, France, Italy, Cuba, Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, the former Soviet Union, Russia, Austria, Australia, Venezuela, Argentina, Canada, but I have yet to go to Africa.

What was your most nervewracking moment?

A men's foil World Cup final in Paris. They brought us out on stage, about two and a half stories above the piste, and we had to go down this spiral staircase with no railings. Mainly, I was petrified I would fall on live TV. I said a quiet prayer, 'I'll take care of the bout if you

can just help me down this staircase without falling on my face,' and I made it.

The Olympics were not as hard as World Championships and Cups. There are so many more fencers, teams, bouts at World Cups, always a little more pressure. By the time you get to the Olympics, you know the fencers we have. It's just not as nervewracking to me.

Best Bout So Far?

Felicia Zimmermann versus Lisa Hoeing in the 1990 Junior Olympics -- it was my first national final, and I proved to everyone that I could do it.

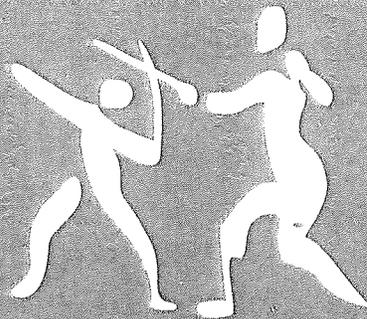
Worst Bout So Far?

Every men's foil final between Dan Kellner and Cliff Bayer in 1999. Dan says he was making parry riposte, I saw it as Cliff's beat — and what makes it worst is that Simon Gershon (Dan's coach) never lets me forget about it. — AF

CareerHIGHLIGHTS

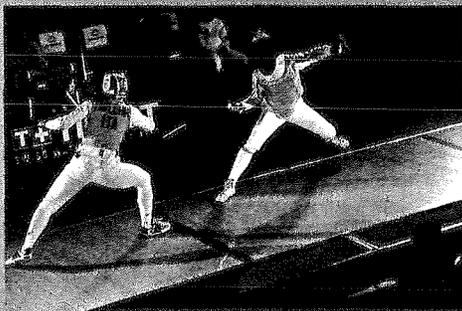
- 2000, 2004 Olympic Referee
- Four-time referee to the World Championships
- Four-time Olympic Festival participant as an athlete, and member of the National Championship Men's Foil Team

fencing.net



Visit www.fencing.net for the latest fencing news, training videos, and the newest fencing DVDs!

Now in the Fencing.Net Store:



2005 Fencing Calendar

2004 World Cup Fencing DVDs

Training of a Champion DVD Series

Fencing Posters

and much, much more!

Partnering with Leon Paul to bring you
the best in fencing equipment!

THE ROAD TO VICTORY

became

THE ROAD TO THE OLYMPICS



Erinn Smart became the first American
fencePBT sponsored athlete in 2001.
She will be the only female foil fencer
from the U.S. at the 2004
Olympics in Athens, Greece.

SMART MOVES!

www.fencePBT.com Inc.
The Official US Dealer of PBT Equipment

Erinn Smart

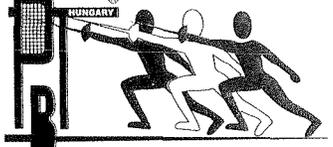
- 2002 US National Champion
- 2001 World Championship Team, Bronze
- 1999 World Cup Bronze

Look for our
special coupon
in USFA mailings!



"We're the guys with the booth"

"Quality European
Fencing Equipment"



www.fencePBT.com, Inc.

E-mail: sales@fencepbt.com
800-422-4PBT (4728)
704-676-4728 (in NC)
Charlotte, NC

"Earning the respect of each customer by providing premier sales and service"