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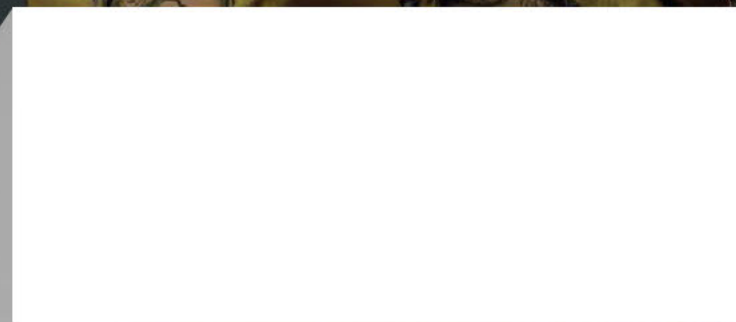
FALL 2013
VOLUME 63
ISSUE 3

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AMERICAN
fencing

FALL 2013
VOLUME 63
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Cover Photo:

Miles Chamley-Watson, his shirt and his medals. Photo by Michael Dote

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BUZZ HURST

(In The Trenches) has been a leader of initiatives on clubs and divisions for almost two decades, having formed the committee for clubs, divisions and sections in 1988, serving as its chair for eight years, and then as Vice President of USA Fencing. Most recently, Hurst worked on updating USA Fencing's highly successful guide for division officers. Hurst, a Maitre d'Armes, also coaches at the Cabrillo Academy of the Sword in San Diego.

TED LI

(Tech Talk) is a member of the USA Fencing's Technical Commission. He was the head site armourer for three Olympic Games (1984, 1996, 2000), as well as for Pan American Games, Universiade, Senior, Junior and Veteran World Championships. Li has also served as the head armourer at the NCAA National Championships and countless USA Fencing North American Cups. He is a proud student of Joe Byrnes and Dan DeChaine, and has been armouring for more than 30 years.

KEVIN MAR

who wrote the Behind the Mask profile in this issue, is the co-founder of the Washington Fencing Academy and has served as co-vice chair for the Western Washington Division for the last eight years. He has been fencing for more than 13 years.

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is a licensed psychologist, psychology professor and sport psychology consultant, based in Rochester, N.Y. who has consulted with athletes and coaches in numerous sports, including fencing.

IRIS ZIMMERMANN

is a coach and co-owner of the Rochester Fencing Center in Pittsford, N.Y. Zimmermann is also one of the most accomplished fencers in U.S. fencing history. She was inducted into the USA Fencing Hall of Fame this summer. She competed for the United States in women's foil at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, won three U.S. National Championships and was a bronze medalist at the Senior World Championships in 1999. Together, Raynor and Zimmermann wrote the feature on siblings and fencing.



Tim Morehouse likes to dress for success.

For Olympic USA silver medalist and saber champion Tim Morehouse, getting dressed for success means serious attention to detail. That's why Tim likes our super-comfortable, ultra-safe FIE Competition uniform. He knows he can count on a great fit and all-around comfort, contributing to a flawless finish on the strip.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A strong USA Fencing delegation attended the FIE Congress and Centennial Celebration in Paris in November. During the Congress, there were many important decisions affecting the future of fencing decided on and, among them, the newly modified FIE Calendar was confirmed.

USA Fencing was awarded one Grand Prix tournament in men's and women's saber and one World Cup in men's foil. Unlike previous seasons, each Grand Prix tournament will include both individual men and women's disciplines to be held in a location over the same weekend which means the number of countries who were awarded Grand Prix tournaments was reduced to nine. The Grand Prix tournaments will be showcases for what the sport of fencing is today, and we are very excited to have been selected to host one of these prestigious events.

My greatest honor in Paris was to receive the Overall World Cup medal on behalf of our men's foil team. Following a historic season in which the U.S. Men's Foil Team won medals in four World Cups as well as the Senior Worlds, Team USA ended the 2012-2013 season as the No. 1 team in the world, ahead of both Italy and Russia! Our women's saber team finished third after winning a third straight bronze medal at Senior Worlds and making four podium finishes on the World Cup circuit. In individual World Cup placement, we had 11 athletes ranked in the top 16 at the end of the season in five of the six weapons – another historic result for USA Fencing. The world of fencing is taking notice of our accomplishments.

Veteran fencing is another area where USA ranks among the powerhouses of the sport. We are also making progress in wheelchair fencing, as this discipline becomes an integral part of our major international events.

Meanwhile, the junior and cadet international competitive season has started, and our young fencers are making finals and podiums in all weapons.

On the home front, we are making great strides in our financial area thanks to the diligent work and dedication of our treasurer, Sam Cheris, and finance director, Keri Byerts. We ended last year with a surplus and reduced our debt by \$890,000. This leaves us with another \$670,000 to go to be in the black for the first time in many years. Everybody should be congratulated for these results especially compared with those of our major fencing rivals.

Challenges ahead

Membership

An organization survives and is healthy when it can show continuous and effective growth of its members. We will be assessing our membership categories, targeting and counting our active fencing members. If France, with one-fifth of our population, has almost 800 clubs and 60,000 active members, we can and will do better. Increased membership will also have an impact on our tournaments and the related services provided to our members. Our primary focus will be on retention and a reduction in membership turnover.

Tournament Structure

As our sport grows in appeal and popularity, a Tournament Improvement Plan is being developed to rationalize our tournament structure, improve the quality of our events, and clarify the role they play in our organization. I want to thank everyone working on this very important initiative, and Daugherty Solutions for its assistance in facilitating the planning process.

Finally, I want to thank Kris Ekeren for the great job she has done in stepping in as interim executive director. We are making great strides under her watch and I look forward to continuing the positive movement.

I wish everyone a very happy holiday and a prosperous new year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald K. Anthony, Jr." in a cursive script.

Donald K. Anthony, Jr.
President, USA Fencing



EDITOR'S NOTE

As the calendar year enters its long, dark end, the fencing season is just beginning. It's the height of the junior season and the start of the new for the seniors. Tournaments are held around the country almost every weekend.

This issue we bring to you a story about one very inspiring young fencer who is changing the world off the strip. Jake Shulman, a 16-year-old fencer with the Gutkovskiy Fencing Academy, has started food drives at his club and at local competitions. His zeal to give back could spark a movement throughout the whole fencing community.

We also managed to grab a few minutes with Miles Chamley-Watson, whose dance card is completely full following his historic World Championship title win in August. His zest for living is inspiring, as well. We're

eager to see what the new year brings for both of these young men attacking life full-throttle. We want to hear what you're up to, as well. Write to us on Facebook, or to editor@americanfencing.com, and let us know what you're doing to change the world, one advance at a time.

Cindy Bent Findley
Editor, American Fencing Magazine



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The company we keep.

Meet Daryl Homer and Miles Chamley-Watson. Miles just became the first individual senior men's world champion for the United States. Daryl successfully competed in the London 2012 Olympics. Miles has big, serious plans for his fencing future. Daryl is a hard-working up-and-comer who intends to do just that: come up – hard. We are proud to

announce that Miles and Daryl will be joining #TeamAbsolute through the Rio 2016 Olympics. We are very excited for Miles and Daryl to be part of the Absolute family. Find out more about what's ahead for #TeamAbsolute. Check out this year's line-up of exquisite fencing gear. Experience world-class customer service. Visit us at AbsoluteFencingGear.com.

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Miles smiles.

That's Miles Chamley-Watson and he's a history maker. Miles has made history because he has recently become the first individual senior men's world champion for the United States. Miles took some pretty fierce opponents to school in Budapest last month, and in very short order the "comeback kid" became the "destroyer king."

And we were there with him. Because while Miles was working hard to make history for American fencing, he was wearing Absolute Fencing gear. Just like a great win, great fencing apparel is all about the details. Experience world-class customer service. Find out more about our great order the "comeback kid" became the "destroyer king." fencing apparel. Visit us at AbsoluteFencingGear.com.

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Fencers Boutin Hunger

Jake Shulman believes the sport of fencing can be a weapon for good. He's decided to attack the problem of global hunger by rousing and organizing fencers around the United States.

Fencers Boutin Hunger is the brainchild of the 16-year-old Shulman, a foil fencer with the Gutkovskiy Fencing Academy. Shulman, a professed "foodie" who feels fortunate to be able to dine out at restaurants while on his fencing travels, says that he felt a connection with the fight to end hunger, and thought it only fitting that he try to help those not as fortunate.

Shulman started the project in September 2013 and, within his first three months, has collected and donated more than 40 bags of food to the Center for Food Action in Mahwah, N.J. Shulman is also working with his high school, Northern Highlands in Allendale, N.J., to coordinate food drives throughout the season at some of the state's largest tournaments.

"The reaction to this program at my club has been great. The parents all think that it is a nice way to give back to our community and also a great way for their kids to get involved in community service," Shulman says.



MTEAM COACH GREG MASSIALAS, STUDENT JARRED GOU AND JAMES DAVIS AT THE NORTH AMERICAN CUP IN DALLAS IN DECEMBER.

World Class British Fencer to Train in USA

The Massialas Foundation (MTEAM) is pleased to announce that James Davis of Great Britain, ranked no. 7 in the world Men's Foil standings, will be training in San Francisco to prepare for the start of the 2014 Senior World Cup circuit.

Davis began training in San Francisco in early November, after the World Combat Games in St. Petersburg, Russia, in October. The first World Cup of the season is the very important Challenge International de Paris, Jan. 17-19, 2014.

"We are pleased that James has chosen San Francisco for his 2013-'14 pre-World Cup training. We feel that we have a solid and healthy club environment for James to prepare for a good World Cup season," says MTEAM head coach and USA Men's Foil National Coach, Greg Massialas. "In the past, we have collaborated with many world class fencers, including Olympic and World Champions, who have trained for one or two weeks in our club in San Francisco. In this case, James will be coming for a solid two- to three-month training period. We look at this as a win-win situation for James, British fencing, and fencing in the United States as a whole." ■

— Courtesy Massialas Foundation

Shulman says his original goal was 100 bags of food donated by his initial drive. But Shulman's goals have grown. He says he believes the passionate spirit of fencers can help the hungry all around the country.

"When I began this project at my club, the goal was to have it be an ongoing food drive. I was hoping that we could roll out our program to other fencing clubs across the country. I also thought it might be fun and rewarding to have a month where clubs around the country compete against one another to see who could collect the most food," Shulman says.

Shulman says he is in the process of setting up a charitable entity which will solicit donations and sell T-shirts and create arm patches to contributors.

He's also gone a step beyond to connect fencers with charities, providing links on the FBA website (www.fencersboutinghunger.org) to hunger relief charities and food banks all over the country. FBA can be found on social media as well through a new Facebook page (Fencers Bouting Hunger) as well as a Twitter page.

Now Shulman wants to call on fencing clubs around the country to join him and turn a drive into a movement. He says getting involved with fighting hunger is a win-win for clubs and for those in need.

"Creating a successful food drive requires little individual work from a club, while the results are meaningful. With the help of USA Fencing clubs, we can spread this program nationwide and help to make a difference," Shulman says. ■



Fencers Featured at Festival

Each year, Salem, Ore. is home to the World Beat Festival, which showcases cultural traditions from throughout the world through live performances and exhibitor booths. Salem Classical Fencing has been a part of this festival since 2005 when the club first offered "mini lessons" at the festival. This year, despite temperatures hovering in the mid-90s, 22 of their fencers turned out to teach visitors about both the history and modern-day application of the sport.

The festival brings in approximately 30,000 visitors annually from around the state, and this year was no exception. SCF demonstrated all three weapons not only in its booth, but also on three different stages. In fact, SCF fencers got a foil into the hands of more than 200 people and

showed them how to stand on guard, advance, retreat and where to hit on target. Fencers also participated in two parades, representing the various countries where fencing has deep historical roots.

SCF's fencers love the opportunity to show their stuff.

"When I walked around the festival, I saw no other programs that gave youth the opportunity to represent themselves in this way," said fencing parent Pamela Moro.

"At our club, we emphasize giving back to the community," said Jill Summers, the club's executive director. "Our fencers volunteer at outreach events like World Beat throughout the year, and I always hear that they get as much out of it as the people for whom we are demonstrating. Club members get to know each other better, and you always learn so much when you have to teach the skills you think you know so well."

The club is looking forward to getting a bunch of new students from this event, as well as being able to direct people to other clubs around the state.

"People come from all over for this festival," said Summers. "We always offer information about USA Fencing clubs in their hometown, if we can. We look forward to seeing them in competition someday!" ■

— Jill Summers



RED CARD

✚ There was an omission in last issue's (Summer '13) story about the Maccabiah Games. U.S. athlete Sara Kass won the gold and Michelle Verhave won silver in the master's women's foil event. Our apologies!



CAPTAIN EMIL PETRUNCIO USN, OFFICER REPRESENTATIVE & HEAD COACH OF THE NAVAL ACADEMY FENCING CLUB, LEFT; FORMER COACH, MAESTRO ANDY DELADRIER, CENTER; AND ADM. HARRY HARRIS, RIGHT.

Fencer Harris Takes Command

There is now a fencer at the helm of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet. In October 2013, Naval Academy Fencing Team alumnus Harry Harris was promoted to the rank of admiral and assumed command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Adm. Harris was born in Japan and raised in Tennessee and Florida. He was a varsity saber fencer at the Naval Academy, and was the No. 3 fencer on the 1978 Intercollegiate Fencing Association champion saber team. Harris graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1978, and went on to attend Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Georgetown's School of Foreign Service and Oxford University. He was an MIT Seminar 21 fellow.

Harris' staff assignments include aide to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan and chief speechwriter for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). His accomplishments also included three tours on the Navy staff, including as an action officer in the Strategic Concepts Branch, director for the current operations and anti-terrorism/force protection division, and Deputy CNO for Communication Networks (OPNAV N6).

In October 2011, he was assigned as the Assistant to the Chairman of the JCS where he served as the Chairman's direct representative to the Secretary of State and as the U.S. roadmap monitor for the Middle East Peace Process.

Harris has logged 4,400 flight hours, including more than 400 combat hours, in maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft. His personal decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal (two awards), Defense Superior Service Medal (three awards), Legion of Merit (three awards), the Bronze Star (two awards), the Air Medal (one strike/flight) and the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award. He is a recipient of the Navy League's Stephen Decatur and the Who's Who in Asian American Communities' Spirit awards. ■

– Buzz Hurst with background from U.S. Navy



(L-R): JEANINE BENDER, JANE EYRE AND DELIA TURNER WON THE TOP THREE MEDALS IN THE 60-69 SABER EVENT. PHOTO COURTESY JEANNINE BENDER.

Team USA Wins 18 Medals at Veteran World Championships

The U.S. team came away from Bulgaria with some of its best results ever at the conclusion of the Veteran World Championships which were held in Varna from Oct. 1-5.

The Americans won 13 individual medals as well as five podium finishes in the first year of the team competition.

Team USA's women's saber fencers won medals in each of the three age categories (50-59, 60-69 and +70) with the ladies taking a 1-2-3 finish in the 60-69 event.

Jane Eyre (Swedesboro, N.J.), Jeannine Bender (Arlington, Va.) and Delia Turner (Philadelphia, Pa.) won gold, silver and bronze, respectively – marking the first time the feat has been achieved by a U.S. team at the Veteran Worlds since 2005.

Eyre, a two-time Veteran World Champion in

the 50-59 category, made an early statement with a 10-1 victory over Marie Josephe Lepeltier (FRA) in the table of 16.

In the quarter-finals, she faced Karin Jansen (GER) who was coming off a silver medal finish in the epee competition. Eyre took the win to advance to the semifinals of the Veteran Worlds for the fifth time in her career.

Turner, a three-time Veteran World Champion, cruised through her opening two bouts against seven-time Veteran World medalist Brigitte Martin (FRA) and Francesca Attianese (ITA) to win by 10-0 and 10-2 scores, respectively.

The wins set Turner up to fence Bender who broke through in 2012 with a bronze medal win in her last year of eligibility as a 50-59 fencer.

After a 10-1 win against Annegrett Hamann (GER) in the table of 16, Bender defeated Yvonne Walls (GBR), 10-5, in the quarter-finals.

Although Turner and Bender hadn't fenced each other in an individual event since March, the bout was bound to be close and, indeed, Bender took the win by two touches, to advance to the gold medal final against Eyre who won her semi over two-time Veteran World medalist Silvia Earl (GBR) who upset Dunn, 10-7, in the quarters.

The gold medal final came down to a 9-9 tie with Eyre scoring the final touch to win her third Veteran World title, 10-9.

Eyre and Turner would return to the podium for a second time in the team event when they joined with Heidi Runyan (San Diego, Calif.), Robin Pernice (Carlisle, Mass.), Sherry Green (Portland, Ore.) and Louisa Felty (Louisville, Ky.) to defeat Germany in the gold medal final.

After becoming the first U.S. woman ever to win a gold medal in epee at the Veteran Worlds

TEAM USA (CENTER) WON GOLD IN THE VETERAN MEN'S SABER EVENT. PHOTO COURTESY VAL KIZIK.



RITA COMES WON BRONZE IN THE 50-59 SABER EVENT AT HER FIRST VETERAN WORLDS. PHOTO COURTESY RITA COMES.

DAVID SEUSS, THE 60-69 SABER WORLD CHAMPION, AND CRISTINA GORDET WHO WON BRONZE IN THE 50-59 EPEE EVENT. PHOTO COURTESY CRISTINA GORDET.



The gold medal final came down to a 9-9 tie with Eyre scoring the final touch to win her third Veteran World title, 10-9.

as a 50-59 fencer in 2011, Elizabeth Kocab (Farmington Hills, Mich.) repeated the feat in the 60-69 event.

Kocab defeated several of the best veteran fencers in the world as she fought her way to gold with wins over two-time Veteran World medalist Liubov Mayorova (RUS), 10-4, in the table of 16 and eight-time Veteran World Champion Marja Luisa Someroja (FIN), 10-2, in the quarter-finals.

After a 10-3 victory in the semifinals against Brigitte Delacour (FRA), Kocab took out 2004 Veteran World Champion Karin Jansen (GER), 10-6, to win gold.

Kocab won gold again in the team competition when she joined with teammates Bettie Graham (Washington, D.C.), Amy Montoya (Las Vegas, Nev.) and Cristina Ford (Salem, Ore.) and captain Cynthia Runyon (Flagstaff, Ariz.) to

defeat Finland in the gold medal final.

David Seuss (Charlestown, Mass.) made his third straight Veteran World medal a gold one when he claimed the men's 60-69 saber title.

Seuss, who won bronze at the last two Veteran World Championships, earned a bye into the table of 16 as the fifth seed out of the pools. After a 10-5 win against Carl Morris (GBR), Seuss defeated teammate Garik Gutman (Rockville, Md.), 10-6, in the quarter-finals.

Seuss's success continued in the semifinals when he controlled his bout against two-time Veteran World medalist Fabrizio Filippi (ITA) for a 10-5 win.

In the gold medal final, Seuss avenged his 2012 semifinal loss to Giulio Paroli (ITA) and won the bout, 10-7.

In the team competition, the American men's saber squad also took gold. Following their sil-

ver and bronze medal wins, respectively, in the 50-59 and +70 saber events, Val Kizik (Indianapolis, Ind.) and Ray Sexton III (Round Rock, Texas) fenced with Victor Bianchini (San Diego, Calif.), Josh Runyan (San Diego, Calif.) and Joe Streb (Columbus, Ohio) in the team competition where the Americans won gold over Great Britain. ■



Veteran World Championships Full Results

ELIZABETH KOCAB (SECOND FROM LEFT)
WON GOLD IN THE 60-69 WOMEN'S EPEE
EVENT. PHOTO COURTESY CRISTINA GORDET

VETERAN MEN'S TEAM EVENTS

GOLD: U.S. MEN'S SABER TEAM

SILVER: U.S. MEN'S FOIL TEAM

6. U.S. MEN'S EPEE

VETERAN MEN'S 50-59 EPEE

BRONZE: Frank Van Dyke (Las Vegas, Nev.)

13. Timothy Glass (Deerfield, Ill.)

33. Sean Ameli (Las Vegas, Nev.)

34. Michael Perka (Mountain View, Calif.)

VETERAN WOMEN'S 50-59 EPEE

BRONZE: Cristina Gordet (Somerville, Mass.)

6. Marcia Pierce (Richmond, Ky.)

7. Amy Montoya (Las Vegas, Nev.)

13. Cristina Ford (Salem, Ore.)

VETERAN MEN'S 50-59 FOIL

14. Jamie Douraghy (Los Angeles, Calif.)

31. Christopher Hagen (Brooklyn Center, Minn.)

39. Edward Kaihatsu (Skokie, Ill.)

41. Sam Jones (Round Rock, Texas)

VETERAN WOMEN'S 50-59 FOIL

8. Ursula Szpak (Trophy Club, Texas)

10. Jennette Starks-Faulkner (Middletown, Conn.)

12. Anne-Marie Walters (Parkland, Fla.)

14. Lynn Botelho (Indiana, Pa.)

VETERAN MEN'S 50-59 SABER

SILVER: Val Kizik (Indianapolis, Ind.)

6. Will Milne (Redwood City, N.J.)

10. Joshua Runyan (San Diego, Calif.)

23. Dan Corrigan (Phoenix, Ariz.)

VETERAN WOMEN'S 50-59 SABER

BRONZE: Rita Comes (Palo Alto, Calif.)

5. Heidi Runyan (San Diego, Calif.)

12. Robin Pernice (Carlisle Mass.)

13. Beth Vance (Clarkston, Mich.)

VETERAN WOMEN'S TEAM EVENTS

GOLD: U.S. WOMEN'S SABER TEAM

GOLD: U.S. WOMEN'S EPEE TEAM

SILVER: U.S. WOMEN'S FOIL TEAM

VETERAN MEN'S 60-69 EPEE

6. Drew Ridge (Warminster, Pa.)

9. Daryl Taylor (Los Angeles, Calif.)

19. Bob Cochrane (Lake Worth, Fla.)

31. Gary Linton (Venice, Fla.)

VETERAN WOMEN'S 60-69 EPEE

GOLD: Elizabeth Kocab (Farmington Hills, Mich.)

11. Cynthia Runyon (Flagstaff, Ariz.)

14. Jann Ream (Iowa City, Iowa)

17. Bonnie Aher (Brookline, Conn.)

VETERAN MEN'S 60-69 FOIL

6. Joseph Streb (Columbus, Ohio)

9. Joseph Biebel (Bayside, Wis.)

11. Heik Hambarzumian (Anaheim, Calif.)

13. Thomas Lutton (Cupertino, Calif.)

VETERAN WOMEN'S 60-69 FOIL

5. Jude Offerle (Winnetka, Ill.)

13. Madelon Rosenfeld (New York City, N.Y.)

15. Muriel Cawthorn (Rehoboth, N.Y.)

19. Ruth Dodge (Loudon, N.Y.)

VETERAN MEN'S 60-69 SABER

GOLD: David Seuss (Charlestown, Mass.)

6. Garik Gutman (Rockville, Md.)

8. Wang Yung (Bellevue, Wash.)

16. Joseph Streb (Columbus, Ohio)

VETERAN WOMEN'S 60-69 SABER

GOLD: Jane Eyre (Swedesboro, N.J.)

SILVER: Jeannine Bender (Arlington, Va.)

BRONZE: Delia Turner (Philadelphia, Pa.)

5. Linda Dunn (Indianapolis, Ind.)

VETERAN MEN'S +70 EPEE

8. Peter Calderon (Plainsboro, N.J.)

13. Ray Sexton III (Round Rock, Texas)

16. Marcel Miernik (Irvington, N.Y.)

34. Kazimieras Campe (Edgewater, Md.)

VETERAN WOMEN'S +70 EPEE

9. Patricia Bedrosian (Malibu, Calif.)

10. Bettie Graham (Washington, D.C.)

14. Catherine Radle (Suwanee, Ga.)

VETERAN MEN'S +70 FOIL

BRONZE: Ray Sexton III (Round Rock, Texas)

11. Jim Adams (Rockville, Md.)

21. Davis Carvey (Seattle, Wash.)

31. Marcel Miernik (Irvington, N.Y.)

VETERAN WOMEN'S +70 FOIL

BRONZE: Patricia Bedrosian (Malibu, Calif.)

6. Ellen O'Leary (Decatur, Ga.)

12. Diane Reckling (White Plains, N.Y.)

13. Bettie Graham (Washington, D.C.)

VETERAN MEN'S +70 SABER

3. Ray Sexton III (Round Rock, Texas)

7. Victor Bianchini (San Diego, Calif.)

15. Peter Calderon (Plainsboro, N.J.)

21. Lucas Dobrzanski (Bakersfield, Calif.)

VETERAN WOMEN'S +70 SABER

SILVER: Ellen O'Leary (Decatur, Ga.)

BRONZE: Louisa Felty (Louisville, Ky.)

10. Sherry Green (Portland, Ore.)

13. Una Jackson (Hilton Head, S.C.)

The Old Guys Are Tough

I came to the United States of America in October of 2011 from China, and in February of 2012, I went to Fortune Fencing in Monrovia – my new club in the States. I used to be a saber fencer for about five years in China. Now, in the States, I decided to switch to epee. I experienced a new way of fencing and also a new way of exercising.

As I found a new way of fencing, I began making friends with the old guys, and they are tough.

Sergio Fernandez is a former member of the Mexican National Epee Team, now he is a 53-year old man in Fortune Fencing having his fencing life in the States. Sergio's arm and wrist have the strongest power I have ever seen except my coach, Steven Yang. Also, Sergio definitely knows how to use his power in fencing. He is responsible for the holes on my jacket and pants. His pick hand hurts. Sergio had apoplexy for a short time, and he still continued to fence.

Sergio taught me some skills. He taught me to extend my left arm back to add a few inches to my reach, which helped me to gain lots of points.

rules really well. He usually doesn't move a lot, but he still defeats most of the club. The first time I fenced Bill, he let me get four touches in a row. Then, he got five touches in a row. The bout ended up with his victory of 5-4, and he actually just stood on the En Garde line the whole time. Bill acts like a coach, even though he actually isn't one, but I would say that that's 40 years of experience! That is quite enough for Bill to be a coach if he wants to. Bill always talks to us young kids about our mistakes after he finishes a bout with us.

Daryl Taylor is one of the best veteran fencers I've ever seen, and he is also the healthiest. Daryl is 60. Most veteran fencers have better techniques than the young fencers, but the young guys defeat them because the old guys are

ally has lymphoma, so she can't fence and train much, but she still made many good results with lymphoma. Amy isn't just a fencer, she's also a musician. Amy plays in a saxophone band.

Geoffrey Russell is Amy's husband and actually coached his wife. Geoff is a really good fencer and coach who held many national-level titles as a junior and a senior fencer. Geoff is a really fun person, he likes to make nicknames for people that earn a new rating. When I earned a "E2012" rating, Geoff called me "Ellan" instead of "Allan." Many good junior fencers in our club are coached by Geoff.

Steven Yang, as I mentioned before, is my coach. He probably teaches the most lessons in the club. Daryl, Mark, Sergio, Lucero, Doug – they all take Steven's lessons. Steven is a former

These old men teach their experiences to us young guys whenever they fence us, and these experiences help us to improve all the time.

Lucero Fernandez is Sergio's wife. They met each other fencing. A few years ago, an accident shattered Lucero's right collarbone. After that, Lucero changed to her left hand and continued fencing from a zero. Now, Lucero has done much better left handed than right handed. The most important thing is that Lucero is still having fun with fencing.

Doug Cairns is 66 years old, and he is one of the oldest fencers I've ever known. Doug has asthma, he sometimes needs to take a break when he fences. He uses a French grip epee and he controls his point really well. I still have some trouble foiling his accuracy.

William Gelnaw (Gypsy), we call him Bill, is a 59-year-old fencer who started fencing at the age of 16. Bill teaches me a lot of lessons and skills of fencing. Bill does foil, saber and epee, though mainly epee – he does foil and saber for fun. Bill knows the controlling skill and the

slow. Daryl, however, can still move at the age of 60, which actually helped him earn lots of medals. Daryl won the Vet-60 Men's Epee event at the December NAC in 2012, and he earned the silver medal in Vet-60 Men's Epee event at the March NAC in 2013. These results helped Daryl to be a member of the U.S. veteran world fencing team of 2013.

Mark Segal is a 53-year old fencer who fences with Bill and Sergio every time he comes to the club, and it's always intense. Mark is a surgeon in California, and because of that, Mark's nickname is "Doc Segal." Mark fences just like a doctor. Everything he does is extremely accurate, pick hand, fleche, parry-riposte, attacking feet, etc.

Amy Fortune is the owner of Fortune Fencing. She's also a coach at our club. Amy was a Vet-50 National Champion in 2011 and was a member of the Veteran World Team. Amy actu-

ally has lymphoma, so she can't fence and train much, but she still made many good results with lymphoma. Amy isn't just a fencer, she's also a musician. Amy plays in a saxophone band.

Many of those experienced fencers come over to Fortune Fencing on Mondays and Wednesdays to practice and fence. These old men teach their experiences to us young guys whenever they fence us, and these experiences help us to improve all the time. I'm really grateful of what the old guys have taught me and helped me to improve my skills. Again, I announce that these old guys are tough. ■

FENCING TEAM

Part 3: Team Roles

The complexities of the tactics of team fencing give rise to a set of distinct and definable team roles. This is the third of a series on team fencing in *American Fencing*, following earlier articles on psychology and tactics in the spring and summer issues. A comprehensive, but not necessarily complete, listing of team roles follows. These are divided into two categories: strategic roles (which are hard-wired into the team competition format) and tactical roles (those which vary by situation) and may supersede the strategic roles, based on score and overall team plan. The presentation that follows applies most to epee and foil – and less so to saber.

I. Strategic Roles

Opener: The fencer of the first bout in the match.

- Get the team off to a good start.
- Be consistent and patiently assertive.
- Project confidence to teammates (without becoming overconfident).

Example: Falls into a bad situation, but limits the damage, losing the opening bout 2-0 instead of 5-0.

Swing Slot: The first fencer to finish the match. This is the slot for the weakest team fencer (who might possibly be the strongest individual fencer).

- Either keep the situation stable, or try to add 1-2 touches.
- Be able to fence specific to circumstances (adjust to score, the opponent, etc.).
- Be disciplined and stick to his task (accept you seldom get to be the hero).

Example: The task may be to get two touches, and then to stop the scoring; or to get a 0-0 non-combativity call.

Set Up: This is the next-to-last fencer in final rotation. The primary goal is to set up the closer for the final bout.

- Fence to put the final bout within the closer's range.
- Motivate the closer by example.
- Wisely take advantage of opportunities.
- Offer no significant weaknesses for the opposing team to exploit.

Example (in epee): Score doubles if the opposing team's closer is strong, and the match score is low.

Closer: Like a goalkeeper in soccer or hockey, this fencer must thrive on the pressure of being able to decide the match at the end.

- Be able to shoot or stop.
- Be able to adapt and adjust quickly.
- Either block out or embrace the emotion of the situation.
- Be confident in actions and be able to keep making them work.

Example: If significantly behind at the end, must be able execute a winning action over and over again.

4th Fencer: As described in Part 2, this is a wild card play. It may be ideal for an experienced fencer on the downside of a career who can be as good as ever for a couple of bouts – and the other team knows that. Alternately, it may be for one who lacks the endurance to fence all day (perhaps due to injury or other extenuating circumstances), but has the ability to go for a limited number of hard bouts. It may also be used to exploit an uneven match-up between fencers. This works best when the other team is left wondering about when and where this fencer will be used..

5th Fencer: A coach or athlete, or anyone who is viewed by the fencers as part of the team.

- Provide tactical advice and be a sounding board for the coach.
- Provide logistical support (keeping the team score sheet, shooting video, getting water).
- Be another pair of eyes for both the big picture and for the minutiae.
- Help limit the ambient chaos level.

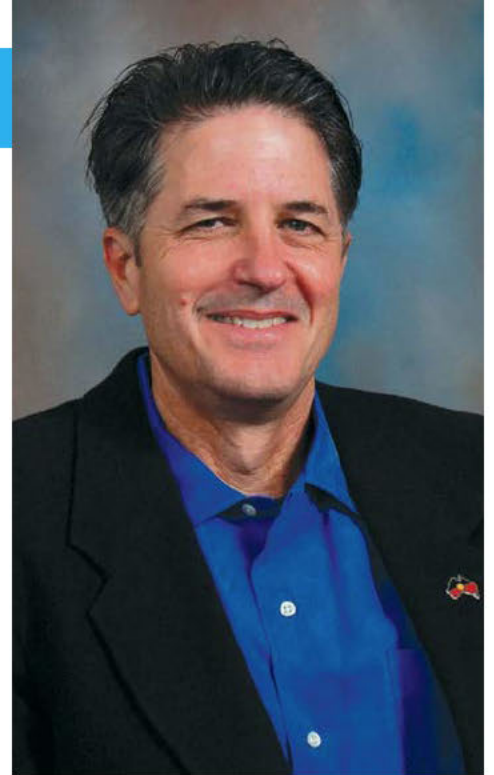
6th Fencer: A back-up to the 5th fencer.

- Support the team as directed by the coach and/or the fencers.
- Accept a limited role, being careful not to become a distraction.

II. Tactical Roles

Shooter: Score a lot of touches.

- Be physically strong and well-conditioned to sustain effort for the full three minutes.
- Be psychologically strong.
- Project confidence in the ability to score.
- Have a well-rounded game.



Example: If the team is behind by three touches, embrace the role of catching up and pulling ahead (in this case going for 8-9 touches).

Stopper: Prevent touches from being scored.

- Fence an active, assertive defense.
- Keep the bout score low so the shooter has more room to maneuver.

Example: If his team is ahead, it is fine to hold the relative score, or even fence to a 0-0 non-combativity call.

Trader: Advance the score in the situation in which the team wants the final bout to start at 40 — rather than lower.

- Be versatile and disciplined.
- Take the opportunity to shoot if facing a weak opponent.
- Concentrate on stopping or scoring double touches against a strong opponent.

Consider this a beginning and understand that there is much more that could be said. To build your Team Tactics IQ, get your fellow fencers together to discuss these roles and to flesh out their meaning for your team.



Weight Training for Youth Fencing

There are very few sports remaining that have not learned the benefit of strength training to either improve sports performance, to minimize injuries or both. There are several common questions that arise in youth weight training:

Is weight training/strength training safe for young people?

Weight training for young people is a safe exercise and safe part of the program. The most important component of young strength programs is supervision. This component is closely followed by an emphasis on proper lifting technique. The key for strength training in a young fencer is to have him/her learn proper technique for the lifts and not emphasize the amount of weight that is used.

Athletes who are new to weight training usually want to lift too much weight too soon. Over-enthusiastic coaches and parents can pressure the young athlete to lift too much weight. Patience is required on the part of the athlete, coaches and parents. The proper technique is first and foremost. Strength will follow in time.

Which exercises should we choose?

Strength and conditioning should focus on training the system and movements and should not isolate the training by joint or muscle. Fencers do not lunge, attack, retreat or fleche by moving single joints or isolated muscles. The entire body or system is involved in the training. Therefore, the exercises that are commonly selected by athletes train the entire body. Some of the names of the lifts can sound quite intimidating, but it is the manner in which we train that determines what is appropriate for the young athlete.

The manner in which our athletes train is determined by: exercise selection, the volume (number of sets and reps), intensity (amount of weight), variability of the volume and intensity in each training session, the duration of each training session, and the frequency of training (number of sessions per week). An exercise that conjures images of heavy weight, such as a power clean or a front squat, can be performed with a PVC pipe that weighs 1 lb. or with an alu-

minum training bar that weighs 15 lbs.

Conditioning can be performed on a field or a track. The athlete should warm up, perform common track drills to further enhance the warm-up and help improve hip range-of-motion, and then could include more explosive hops for distance, hops for repetition, jumps up onto a box for explosive power, medicine ball throws (also for explosive power development), and then sprints of short distances to help develop power and acceleration.

How can strength training help a unilateral sport like fencing?

I have heard fencing coaches raise the question about the reality of strength and conditioning being able to help a unilateral sport such as fencing. There is no question fencing has unique, repetitive performance characteristics as do the high hurdle sprinters, baseball pitchers, tennis players, long jump and high jump (same take-off leg), discus, javelin and shot put. These athletes still perform "bilateral" or common strength and conditioning exercises (power cleans, power snatches, squats, front squats, Romanian dead lifts, push presses, bench presses, etc.). The strength training helps balance the body to some degree in sports like fencing. It also increases force production, explosiveness, strength endurance, and also provides a degree of injury prevention.

I was told I should perform sport-specific exercises that my personal trainer gave me. Is this correct?

The concept of "sports specificity" in training has been debated for decades. The debate is whether we can really modify training to a manner that will apply to the sport more effectively. The truth is it is very difficult to reproduce sport speed and sport-related forces safely in a weight room. The most sport-specific activity is to perform the sport itself. If we spend too much time during training on training fads or gimmicks that don't help perform the sport better, we will lose too much of the benefits of the exercises' training time that we know produce results. For example, if a fencer stands on a bal-

ance board to "develop balance," the improvement is gained by the athlete who is standing vertically and not moving. There will most likely be no improvement when trying to change the distance and making your opponent fall short. So, was it beneficial to have spent the time on the balance board in training? This is actually a simple example and the balance board does not take much energy, and it shouldn't be given too much time or emphasis in training.

If you are looking for a coach to help you, there are several options. You can see if there is a Sports Performance Coach (USA Weightlifting certified), a very good sprint coach at a local college, or a weightlifting coach to help you. There is a difference between a strength and conditioning coach and a personal trainer. Leave the personal trainers for the parents of the fencers and the strength coaches for the athletes. ■

If you have a question you'd like answered in a future issue, email editor@americanfencing.com.



The Triple Whammy, the Falling Rule and an Inconsistency at the End Line

The rules of fencing have been established to provide a framework for the referee to maintain a level playing field. While referees aren't perfect, even with the aid of video replay, the best ones get most of the calls right.

However, we can't blame the refs when the actual rules don't make sense.

In my opinion, the following three rules don't make sense at all and need to be changed:

The Falling Rule

Please let me preface my comments by stating that I was a member of the FIE Rules Commission leading up to Beijing when the current falling rule was discussed at length and changed to its current format. I can be pretty persuasive when I have a logical argument on my side, but I failed on that day.

Fencer A falls while scoring a valid touch. The touch is annulled and a Group 1 penalty is given. This makes perfectly good sense, as the Rules of Fencing do not allow a touch to be scored while committing ANY infraction.

Fencer B falls while attempting to score but falls short and does not hit. There is no penalty in this case. Why not? The infraction of falling has been committed. What difference does it make if the touch was scored?

Does that mean that a fencer who commits corps a corps while scoring has the touch annulled and receives a Group 1 penalty but the fencer who commits corps a corps but doesn't score receives no penalty? Of course not! In fact, there is no other situation in the Rules of

Fencing where the penalty, or lack thereof, for an infraction is based on whether a touch was actually scored.

This bad rule looks even more illogical considering that the fencer who was good enough to score is penalized, but the fencer who wasn't good enough to score while committing the same infraction is not penalized.

The rules book does not specify whether a fall committed while scoring off-target receives a penalty. An off-target is not a touch which can be annulled, so it is to be treated same as falling without scoring a touch, which means no penalty.

Recommendation: The rule should be consistent and warrant a Group 1 penalty for falling whether scoring a valid touch, an off-target touch or no touch.

The Dreaded Triple Whammy

This rule is specific to the crossover/fleche committed in saber.

Fencer A has a previous Group 1 yellow card. Fencer A scores on an attack while fleching in the same action as Fencer B hits on the counterattack. Fencer A's touch is annulled and he gets a red card. So far, so good, it makes perfect sense.

However, it now becomes quite imperfect. Fencer B, in spite of not having the right-of-way, is also given the touch. For what? Fencer B was protected by the Rules of Fencing and Fencer A was proportionately penalized by the annulment and the penalty touch.

Why should Fencer B further benefit and Fencer A be further penalized in this case?

Now, I've been asking this question for years, both at the USA Fencing and FIE levels, and the only argument I've heard was that Fencer A "would not have been able to reach the opponent to score the touch had he not fleched." Oh, really? Well, if Fencer A would have not reached Fencer B without fleching, why are we assuming that Fencer B would have scored if Fencer A were out of distance?

It is a convoluted reach of an argument, and I don't buy it.

Wait, I almost forgot the simultaneous example. Fencer A and Fencer B make simultaneous attacks, both lights go on. Fencer A fleched during his attack. Fencer B gets the touch! Really?

This is the only example in the Rules of Fencing where both lights register, both fencers are still on the strip, and the fencer WITHOUT the right-of-way gets the touch.

The annulment is fair. The penalty is fair. But, the out-of-time counterattack and/or simultaneous also scoring? Three touches on one action? C'mon, that is ridiculous. Triple whammy, phooey!

This rule is disproportional, illogical, and, in my opinion, does not make any sense whatsoever.

Recommendation: Annul the touch made while fleching. Penalize the fleche with a Group 1 penalty. Under no circumstances award a touch to the opponent who didn't earn the right-of-way if both lights are on.

Inconsistency at the End Line

I'm disappointed that I didn't see this one long ago, but better late than never.

Fencer A is straddling the end line (rear limit). Fencer A then attacks Fencer B and commits a corps-corps. Fencer A is given a Group 1 penalty in foil and saber, and a halt is called in epee. Now, for the interesting part.

Had this occurred in the middle of the strip, rule t.25 would have taken precedent:

t.25 However, if the bout has been stopped on account of corps a corps, the fencers are replaced on guard in such a position that the competitor who has sustained the corps a corps is at the place which he previously occupied; this also applies if his opponent has subjected him to a fleche attack, even without corps a corps.

Fencer B would have held his ground and the new center would have been established from there. This would have resulted in Fencer A losing some distance.

However, at the end of the strip, the rules are different.

Rule t.17.8 states:

The competitors may not be replaced on guard, at their correct distance, in such a way as to place behind the rear line of the strip a fencer who was in front of that line when the bout was halted. If he already had one foot behind the rear line, he remains in that position.

On the surface, this seems logical and fair, as that would be a tough way to lose a touch.

However, after the next example, you might feel differently.

Let's set the same scenario. Fencer A is

straddling his end line and commences an attack. However, instead of running into Fencer B and committing corps a corps, Fencer A goes off the side of the strip (lateral boundary) during the attack.

In this case, according to Rule t.28, Fencer A must retreat a meter from the point the attack commenced.

t.28 1. If a competitor crosses one of the lateral boundaries of the strip, he must retreat one meter from the point where he left the strip, and if he goes off the strip during an attack, he must return to the position he occupied when he started his attack and then retreat a further meter (but cf. t.29).

2. If the exercise of this penalty places a competitor with both feet beyond the rear limit of the strip, that competitor is considered as having been touched.

As that point was straddling the end line, Fencer A is pushed behind the end line and Fencer B gets the point.

So, herein lays the rub. Why is Fencer A "protected" from being pushed off the rear limit while committing the combat infraction of corps a corps but not "protected" for committing the victimless crime of going off the side of the strip?

Why is Fencer B rewarded in one case and not the other?

And, if you weighed the two cases, don't you think Fencer B deserves the point more for absorbing the corps a corps than for Fencer A going off the side?

Certainly, an argument can be made that Fencer A shouldn't be "protected" in either case

and should be pushed off the end.

Certainly, an argument can be made that Fencer A should be "protected" in either case and not be pushed off the end. (Well, that's a pretty weak argument, in my opinion.)

An argument can be made that the infraction of corps a corps is more worthy of pushing a fencer off the rear limit than going off the side of the strip is.

However, an argument can't be made that Fencer A should be "protected" while committing corps a corps but not while going off the side of the strip.

Yet, that is what the Rules of Fencing incomprehensibly state at this time.

Recommendation: Make the rules consistent at the rear limit of the strip and treat corps a corps and going off the side in the same manner. In both cases, the fencer who commits the infraction will not be protected and will be considered as having been touched.

*"An all us other children, when the supper things is done,
we gather 'round the kitchen fire and has the mostest fun.
A' listenin' to the witches tales 'at Annie tells about;
An' the SafeSport things 'at git you ef you - don't - watch - out!"*
(with apologies to James Whitcomb Riley).



As news of the new SafeSport policy swept across our land, it has left in its wake scenes of confusion and terror – almost all of it utterly unnecessary. Even a moderately close reading of the policy will reveal that it is basically common sense for anyone with even a light exposure to the tenets of ethical behavior. What is scary is not that it is written down, but that it has had to be. (For example: no coach or team official should give an athlete a massage alone in a room – well, like duh!)

When I first encountered the text, I looked at it from a coach's standpoint and was sure that we were all about to get hit with a tsunami of California Self-Esteem which could make proper coaching almost impossible. The SafeSport policy, however, is much better thought out than anything I've encountered in the former category, and I put to you that it is better looked at as a protection for a coach, a club and a division than a piece of sabotage. As a coach, if you are in doubt about how to deal with a particular situation such as some variation of the massage question mentioned above, instead of having to guess your way through (and be told some time later that whatever you chose to do was wrong) you can simply "look it up" in SafeSport and use that as both your guide and your defense. At the same time, it provides the same set of guidelines, and protections for a club owner or board of directors; and it makes a really good read for division officers and bout committee chairs.

At first blush it may not be apparent that there is a SafeSport connection at the division level, but you will discover that there are some guidelines for when an official **may** report the

observation of a discomfiting event at a tournament and when that official **must** report it. I repeat again that most of you who were raised in a normal environment (where all immediate family members were bipedal, for instance) will see the SafeSport policies as an extended statement of the obvious, but for those out there who were raised by badgers, the document will perhaps produce an epiphany.

But what ho! (I hear you say). All well and good, but why do division officers and armorers have to obtain professional memberships and undergo background checks? Well ... that is a really good question but the answer to it isn't. SafeSport was written as a generalization that would apply to all the sports under the U.S. Olympic Committee umbrella and in some of those sports, local officials apparently can have an enormous influence over whether an athlete can achieve success. Such influence can give that official some tremendous leverage over a young athlete, and it is rather smart to wish to be assured that anyone in that position has not blotted his or her copy book in the past.

Since we do almost everything in competitive fencing by the numbers, it is challenging for me to imagine a similar situation within USA Fencing that could involve our division officials. You know that and I know that, but the insurance industry doesn't know that; so when they demand the implementation of SafeSport – or some policy very nearly like it – they swing a pretty big club in a very wide arc.

So now, after we entreat, cajole, and sometimes even grovel to get people to step up to the plate and volunteer to become division of-

ficers, we tell them that they will have to pay for the privilege by obtaining a USA Fencing professional membership. Does anyone else see an irony here? If you do, then I would suggest that the division cover the extra cost of its officers' memberships, i.e. \$35.00 (assuming, as one would expect, that the candidates currently have a regular membership) for as long as that person is an officer. This proposal wouldn't apply to anyone who was already required to have a professional membership, but it would remove a disincentive to those who are not so obligated.

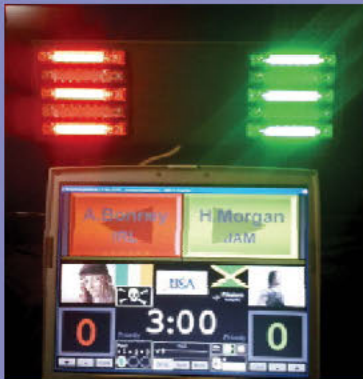
Once you look at SafeSport, you'll see that, at the local level, it is primarily the clubs that have to ensure implementation, but the division can and should be prepared act as a consultant. I would even suggest that at least one member of the division executive committee be asked to become thoroughly conversant with the national policy, and then take the job of keeping both the Division and its clubs advised – sort of like Merlin at Camelot (without the Druid thing). ■

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PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY DAN KELLNER

MILES CHAMLEY-WATSON

The world has a new BMOS (Big Man on the Strip) as its World Champion for men's foil: And it is an American. Miles Chamley-Watson is the first U.S. man crowned as the individual World Champion in history. He proved to his competitors that it doesn't matter if you get to 14 touches before him; he will rise to the occasion and get that 15th touch.



behind the mask

Miles is bigger than life. It's hard to keep up with him on the strip or off. Somehow he seems to be zooming headfirst into life and slightly awed by where it's going at the same time.

So is it in your nature that you have to spot all of your opponents a bunch of touches so you can win in a dramatic fashion?

Haha! Ummm... No! Most of the time when bouts are close, like 15-14 or 15-13, it is close throughout the bout, but, for whatever reason, I always found myself down by five or six touches in most of my bouts. I really do prefer to have easier wins! [laughs]

You had three very close bouts on your way to winning World Championships. In each of these bouts, you were down by a significant margin. It's been said most champions have one bout on their way to winning that is very close; but you had three. What type of mental adjustments did you do in these bouts?

Well, at Worlds in Budapest, I came in as the 17th seed. I was the only American who had to fence in the [men's foil] preliminary pools. Gerek [Meinhardt], Alex [Massialas] and Race [Imboden] were in the top 16, so they got a bye into DEs.

I knew I had to fence for every touch and things went really well in pools.

Those are wise words. I always tell my students that it is imperative to fight for every touch in pools, get those victories, and get good indicators. It will make a difference when you get to the DEs.

Exactly! Since I went 6-0 in pools, I was able to skip two rounds of DEs and immediately start in the 64.

It's a good thing you were able to skip those rounds! You had three close bouts where you had to expend a lot of energy and make up a lot of ground!

No kidding! It may have been a different end result if I had to do another two rounds. I'm not saying that I wouldn't have won them; I just would have been way more tired at the end! HA!

Tell me about your first 15-14 bout, with 2012 Olympic Team Champion Giorgio Avola (ITA).

Well, when I was down 10-6, I had to think how I was losing touches and what I need to do to change. If I didn't change things, then this would be my last bout of the day. I started doing more second intention actions and used my height to score. That ended up being the difference maker for that win.

OK, so now you are in the 16 and you must be thinking that you are happy that

is out of your system with a close bout, but the same thing happens again with Alexey Cheremisinov (RUS).

Yeah, it was crazy! This time I was down 11-6. My bouts with him are always close. It is always 5-4, 15-14. He's also a very tall fencer and he has really simple clean actions. He makes very few mistakes which is why he is number three in the world.

I clawed my way back to 13-9 and at that point I just said, "You know what, I'm just going to go for it!" I know he has a great parry four direct riposte so I had to be careful of attacking that area. At 13-11, I used that information against him. I feinted to his chest and I did flick to his back and scored a single.

On my winning touch, I started pushing him slowly and I attacked him really far away. I stretched out as far as I could and I was able to pull a single light. Thank God he wasn't ready for it! He didn't think that I could hit him from that far away, but I did! He was so angry!

So now you are systematically beating European powerhouses on your way to the finals. Talk to me about your quarter final bout with two-time Senior World team medalist Sebastian Bachmann (GER).

I know! I couldn't believe it happened to me twice already!

I knew I was up for a difficult match with Bachmann. He's so hard to hit! He's tall, squirrely, and will just wait for you to attack him. I hate to wait!

It started off close with 1-1, 2-2, 5-5, and then he had a crazy run! Now I am now down 12-5. I got some fortunate touches where I scored some counterattacks and I had one counter riposte that I have no idea where I hit. I found myself back in the bout down 14-13. I was able to get the next touch with time winding down and then it was 14-14.

The next point was really a whirlwind. Since Bachmann is so squirrely and moves his body all over the place, he frequently finds himself covering target with his arm and mask. I had requested side judges earlier in the bout. He had already lost points because the side judges had already caught him for covering target. For the last touch, I was attacking him and he squirmed out of the way. I thought that he had covered and wondered, "Did the side judges catch that?" I was so elated when I saw that they had! I was able to win the bout because he received a red card.

I bet you were happy that you asked for side judges!

L TO R: RACE IMBODEN, CHAMLEY-WATSON, GEREK
MEINHARDT AND ALEX MASSIALAS, THE NO. 1
MEN'S FOIL TEAM IN THE WORLD IN 2013.
PHOTO BY DAN KELLNER.

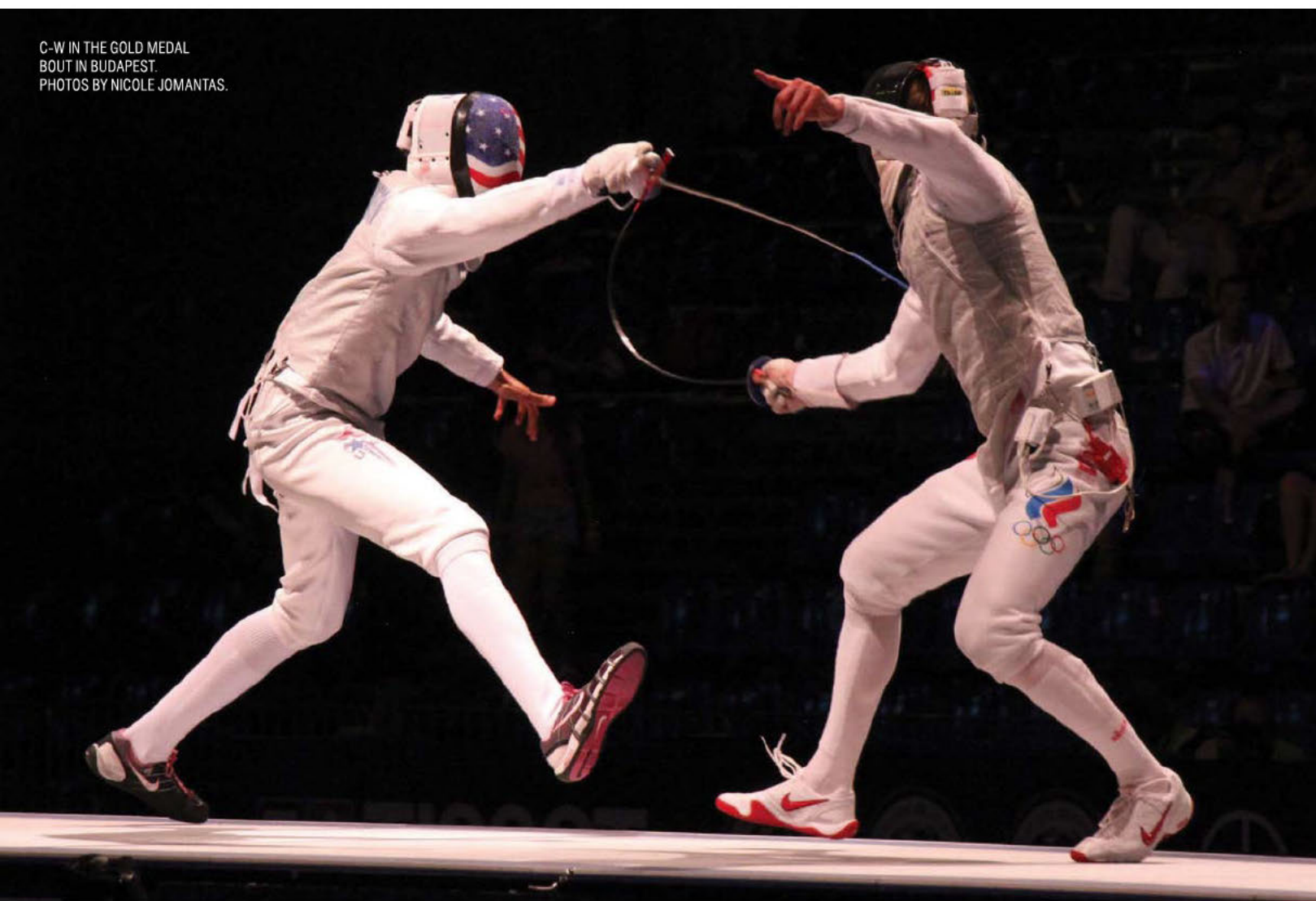
behind the mask



Miles is bigger than life. It's hard to keep up with him on the strip or off. Somehow he seems to be zooming headfirst into life and slightly awed by where it's going at the same time.

behind the mask

C-W IN THE GOLD MEDAL
BOUT IN BUDAPEST.
PHOTOS BY NICOLE JOMANTAS.



AND IN THE TOP 32 IN
BUDAPEST. PHOTO BY
NICOLE JOMANTAS.



Haha! Yeah, no kidding! He probably has the most red cards from covering target out of all men's foilists on the circuit! Everyone knows that he does it. Even his coach said he covered on that last touch.

OK, let's fast forward a bit. You had a four hour break before starting the semi-finals. For these bouts, there was a completely different fencer on the strip. You handily beat Valerio Aspromonte (ITA), the 2012 London team champion 15-9. What changed?

Umm... I didn't want to have to fence to a 15-14 victory again if I could help it? HA!

I knew I had a fair amount of luck during the day and I didn't want to keep having to do that. I just relaxed more and I fenced my game and I came out on top.

So that brings us to the gold medal bout with Artur Akhmatkhuzin (RUS) who had already been on the medal stand three times this season. How did you get ready for this bout?

Well, the great thing was I knew I had a medal. When they announced my name for the gold medal bout, it was a very surreal experience. Everyone who wasn't a Russian was chanting, "Chamley-Watson! Chamley-Watson!" I mean the whole stadium! I've never encountered something like this before. It was such a rush! It was like I took a whole bunch of 5-Hour Energies.

So did you take a whole bunch of 5-Hours?

HA! Not this time! They are one of my sponsors though, so I do know the feeling of energy that they give me.

I can only imagine what the place was like because you dominated Akhmatkhuzin 15-6. Each touch must have been deafening.

Yeah, it was crazy! They just kept chanting my name over and over again and cheering me on.

It didn't stop there at the stadium either. When Mariel [Zagunis] and I were at the airport in Budapest, the police had to shoo away 500 hundred people so we could check in. This was at 5 a.m.!

So what memento did you get for winning Worlds? I heard you absolutely love shoes.

Yeah, I got a pair of orange Nike 1's! Just the thing for clubbing!

Do you think Obama would like them also? I heard you guys had a bit of an exchange over the years!

HA! I first met him during NCAA's in 2010 and I was able to introduce myself and say hello. Well, at the London Olympics in 2012 he saw me and said, 'Hey Miles, how's it going? You dyed your hair.' All I could think was, 'Oh my God! You remember who I am?!' Then six months ago at the White House, I quipped to him while we were invited as the Olympic Team, 'Hey Obama, I look like you!' to which he replied, 'No son, you are better looking than me!' **President Obama is not the only celebrity you've rubbed shoulders with lately. What have you been up to?**

It's crazy. I was on Regis Philbin's new show. I was invited to a Vogue dinner with Tom Ford and Todd Schneider. I did Relapse Magazine, GQ [which just came out as this magazine was going to press], I'll be doing Rolling Stone and Flatt magazine... I got to party with the Prince of Monaco!

You what?

It was a benefit dinner for a charity to benefit autism research. They flew me over there. They picked me up at the airport in Nice, there was security ... The Prince was an extremely nice guy. We talked for a bit – about how he watched my match, which is pretty incredible, and he's a big fan, and he was taking pictures of me, and I was taking pictures of him – it's just amazing to say.

So, you're pretty in demand – is it hard to find time to fence?

I'm getting ready to work out right now. I'm doing the full season, for sure. It's not easy doing both, the fashion route and the fencing – it's crazy what I'm doing.

Is [Coach] Simon [Gershon] putting up with this?

I'm here whenever he tells me to be! I work twice as hard because now I know I have a target on my back, and I want to win every one, not win just one. I want to win everything till Rio. I hopefully want to do something else that's historic. I'm doing a lot of this for everyone younger than me, trying to make sure they get the respect when they're coming up, too.

You've been doing some modeling. Is the fashion gig a long-term goal?

Fashion has been a part of my life for a long time. I did photo shoot when I was five for Ralph Lauren in England. But I got some bigger things up my sleeve than taking pictures. Rio is just one thing – that's on mind first, but then – I've got big things planned. ■

QUICK FACTS

CLUB: The Fencers Club

COACH: Simon Gershon

SCHOOL: B.S. Sports Management, Penn State

CURRENT LOCATION: New York, N.Y.

BEST RESULTS: 2013 World Champion, Men's Individual Foil

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: 2013 World Champion, Men's Individual Foil

FAVORITE FENCING ITEM: Absolute Fencing mask prototype (only one in the world), inside lining feels cool on his face. Will be on sale soon.

JOCK OR GEEK: Jock

TRAINING REGIMEN: Training with Simon and other fencers, 5 hrs/day

Lessons 6/wk. (40 min.)

Stretching for 1 hr. Chuck Rowland (New York, N.Y.)

Boxing for cardio 2/wk. for 1 hr. (Anthony Brye), Miles has a good right hook

Crossfit 2/wk.

Did track also and plans to compete in the 100m at an upcoming track meet.

behind the mask ↙



PHOTO BY SERGE TIMACHEFF



Then six months ago at the White House, I quipped to him while we were invited as the Olympic Team, 'Hey Obama, I look like you!' to which he replied, 'No son, you are better looking than me!'

Athlete's Drill

By Miles Chamley-Watson

The drill that I do a lot with my coach is very simple. It just involves one other opponent. You simply take turns attacking and defending. One opponent is allowed to do any attack, and the other opponent can take any parry but cannot do more than a lunge. The idea of this drill is to get comfortable with fencing others who are aggressive or defensive.



C-W AND A FEW FANS.



MILES AND MICHELLE OBAMA.

PROMOTING HEALTHY SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS IN FENCING

by Douglas A. Raynor, Ph.D. and Iris T. Zimmermann, M.B.A

Sibling pairs are visible at the highest levels of sport: Peyton and Eli Manning (football), Serena and Venus Williams (tennis), Pau and Marc Gasol (basketball), to name a select few. American fencing has also seen several highly successful siblings in recent years, such as the Zimmermanns (Felicia and Iris), the Smarts (Erinn and Keeth), and the Hurleys (Courtney and Kelley).



Felicia and Iris Zimmermann are one of American fencing's most successful sibling pairs.

The trend of sibling fencers continues, as shown in the spring issue of American Fencing Magazine, where Jerry and Jason Chang recount their 5-4 bout at the 2013 Ivy League Championships. Since the average American household consists of approximately two children, we can assume that a significant number of siblings will participate at all levels of this increasingly popular sport. This article highlights some potential benefits and pitfalls of sibling co-participation in fencing, and offers some key recommendations for parents to reduce trial and-error learning.

Since thousands of hours of physical, mental, technical and tactical skill development are necessary to perform at an elite level, it is clearly advantageous to begin training earlier than later. By virtue of their older siblings already being integrated into a fencing club, it is often the case that younger siblings begin at an earlier age and progress within the sport more quickly.

Moreover, younger siblings often observe their older siblings at competitions and therefore know what to expect when their opportunity arrives. According to Iris Zimmermann, "Felicia had four years of fencing experience before I started, and I spent those years watching her

at practice and competitions, picking up what I could at a young age. I also found that she fast tracked my learning by teaching me what she knew." Big sisters and brothers often function as role models and mentors. This is consistent with personality research showing that first-born children are often more conscientious and achievement-oriented than later-born children within families.

Independent of birth order, siblings may also provide each other with social support and companionship that will promote confidence and resiliency during the challenges of year-round training and the adversity that will inevitably occur when competing in an individual sport in which no one goes undefeated.

However, there are potential drawbacks to sibling participation in the same competitive sport. The most important may be comparisons among siblings, which are sometimes reinforced by coaches, parents and other competitors. Often the less successful siblings live in the oversized shadows of their more highly ranked brother or sister. This type of upward comparison may undermine fencers' confidence. A large body of research has shown that the combination of low self-efficacy and social

comparison of ability leads to a diverse array of negative outcomes, including increased performance anxiety, self-handicapping, burn-out, poorer performance and eventual drop-out.

Listed below are some key recommendations for parents to enhance positive experiences of siblings in fencing, to reduce sibling rivalries, and to promote healthy relationships among all family members.

Before we begin, it is important to note a few caveats. Each sibling relationship is unique and therefore generalized suggestions may not be applicable in each case. Moreover, although these suggestions may seem self-evident, it is surprising how easy it is to lose sight of some fundamental parenting behaviors in our hectic daily lives.

1 Provide each sibling with unconditional positive love and respect for her or his inherent worth as a person.

Communicating that your positive regard exists without strings will foster an unwavering confidence that is critical for taking risks, rebounding from setbacks, and reaching one's athletic potential. This does not mean that parents should adopt a Pollyanna bias in which

Courtney and Kelleg Hurley



they focus exclusively on the positive and reward all of their fencers' efforts, while selectively accepting or ignoring inappropriate behavior, poor attitude, or lack of improvement.

Once developing fencers truly believe that they will be accepted as worthy individuals independent of their athletic performance, they are more likely to be receptive to constructive feedback and more willing to work to overcome weaknesses. In short, securely attached relationships between parent and child open the door for parents to create challenging yet attainable goals for their children while teaching self-regulatory skills (e.g., problem-solving, concentration, emotion regulation, etc.). These skills will promote fencers' mental toughness on the piste and their ability to cope independently in other areas of life.

2 Avoid comparisons among siblings.

Although they share genes, siblings are likely to have varied personalities, learning curves and athletic potentials. By tailoring expectations to fit each sibling, the fencer may be able to focus on mastering the skills of the sport at his or her own pace and to engage in self-referenced

goal-setting over time. Striving to improve one's own performance in achievement contexts has been shown to be highly effective for promoting a range of positive outcomes, including improved athletic success and enjoyment.

"They understood that we were separate individuals and constantly pushed us to go to practice, but never dwelled on our results," says Keeth Smart of his parents." They would celebrate with us, but it was never 'Erinn did this' or 'Keeth did that.' It was more 'Congratulations and don't forget to continue to work hard.'"

3 A "laissez-faire" approach is typically ineffective when communicating with siblings.

In particular, failure to receive and send messages accurately is apt to contribute to siblings taking on roles that are developmentally inappropriate. For instance, older siblings may see the need to play the "motherly" or "fatherly" role to the younger one in the absence of parents' active support and presence.

In some cases, older siblings may engage in a form of self-handicapping by attributing their own performance failures to the sacrifice required from this surrogate parental role. Younger siblings, on the other hand, may assume

that they have to perform as well as or better than their older siblings in order to receive elusive attention and positive reinforcement from their parents. Instead of taking a hands-off approach, it is recommended that parents carefully listen, empathize and provide individualized guidance and support to each sibling on a consistent basis. Although clashes among siblings have been documented throughout history (from the days of Cain and Abel), maintaining an active channel of communication among parents and their fencers will likely mitigate the short- and long-term adverse consequences of sibling rivalries.

4 A sibling may choose to cut back or may not participate in the sport at all.

It is critical that parents make the effort to reinforce siblings' non-fencing interests, even if they do not perform at a high level. Parents should make it clear that, whenever possible, siblings should attend and support each other in their respective activities, fencing or otherwise. Parents commonly report that one of their primary goals is for their children to become unwavering friends for life. Promoting reciprocity

Once developing fencers truly believe that they will be accepted as worthy individuals independent of their athletic performance, they are more likely to be receptive to constructive feedback and more willing to work to overcome weaknesses.



Erinn and
Keeth Smart

among siblings is an effective way of achieving this objective.

Raising siblings in the sport of fencing is a highly challenging endeavor, especially considering the significant financial and time commitments. However, if done well it could result in positive lifelong outcomes for the entire family.

"Felicia and I have shared difficult practices, the highlights of walking into the Olympic Opening Ceremonies together, and the lows of

fencing each other for a place on a team," says Iris. "It is the culmination of all those shared moments that have forged a strong bond that makes us more than just sisters but teammates, confidants and lifelong friends." ■

*Author Note: **Douglas Raynor** is a licensed psychologist, psychology professor and sport psychology consultant, based in Rochester, New York, who has consulted with athletes and coaches in numerous sports, including fencing.*

***Iris Zimmermann** competed for the United States in Women's Foil at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, won three U.S. National Championships, and was the bronze medalist at the Senior World Championships in 1999. Her older sister, Felicia Zimmermann, competed for the United States in women's foil in the 1996 and 2000 Olympics. The Zimmermann sisters are co-owners and coaches at the Rochester Fencing Club.*

BY NICOLE JOMANTAS
PHOTOS BY SERGE TIMACHEFF / FIE / FENCINGPHOTOS.COM

RACE IMBODEN SETS THE TONE FOR 2014 WITH SILVER AT THE



WORLD COMBAT GAMES



AN ARTFUL SHOT OF CHAMLEY-WATSON VS.
IMBODEN IN THE SEMIS.







Rarely do you see the best athletes in the world fencing in a format condensed down to the top 16, but the second edition of the World Combat Games did just that in October as four members of Team USA took on Olympic and World Champions in St. Petersburg, Russia.

A top-16 finisher in the individual event and silver medalist in the team competition at the Senior Worlds in August, foil fencer Race Imboden (Brooklyn, N.Y.) showed that he continues to be one to watch for a chance at an individual podium finish next year as he picked off three previous World and Olympic medalists in Russia.

Imboden began the Combat Games with a chance to resolve unfinished business from the Senior Worlds when he drew Ukrainian Rostyslav Hertsyk in the first round.

In August, Hertsyk was upset by Imboden, but the American ensured that wouldn't happen again when he took the bout, 15-9.

After a 15-6 win over 2012 Olympic silver medalist Alaaeldin Abouelkassem (EGY) in the quarter-finals, Imboden faced his teammate, Miles Chamley-Watson (New York City, N.Y.), in the semis.

Chamley-Watson made history at the Senior Worlds and another gold appeared to be within reach after he won his opening bouts against Siu Lun Cheung (HKG) and Erwan Le Pechoux (FRA).

Chamley-Watson scored first against Imboden in the semifinals, but injured his back shortly thereafter, and Imboden held his teammate to just two touches as he won the bout, 15-3.

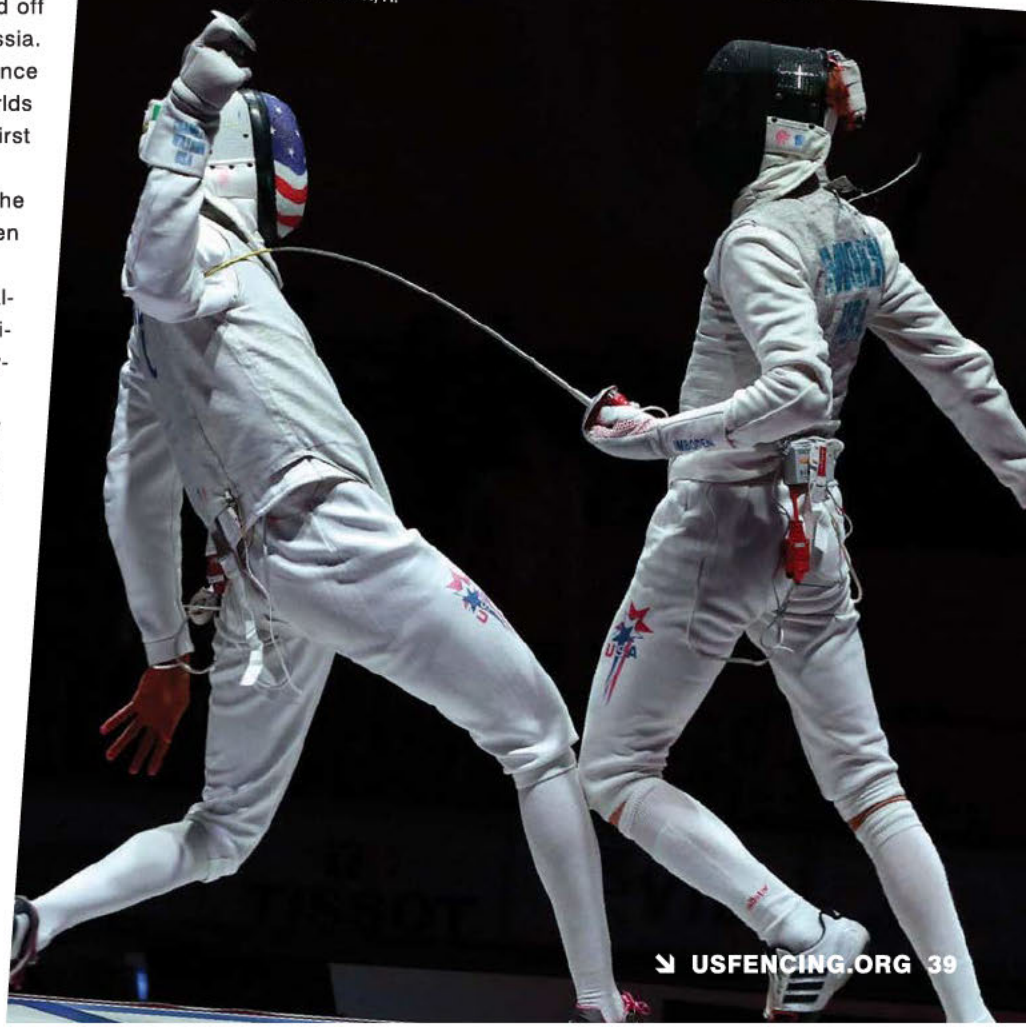
Imboden kept the gold medal final close early in the bout, but Richard Kruse (GBR) went on a seven-touch run to take gold, 15-4.

Chamley-Watson decided not to withdraw from the tournament due to his injury and returned to the finals strip to take on Artur Akhmatkhuzin (RUS) in a rematch of their gold medal final from Senior Worlds.



CHAMLEY-WATSON TAKES
ON AKHMATKHUZIN

CHAMLEY-WATSON, L, V. IMBODEN, R.





IMBODEN, KRUSE AND AKHMATKHUZIN

Fencing in front of a home crowd, the Russian led the bout, 14-9, but Chamley-Watson fought back to score three touches before Akhmatkhuzin finished the bout, 15-12.

Women's saber fencers Mariel Zagunis (Beaverton, Ore.) and Ibtihaj Muhammad (Maplewood, N.J.) also represented Team USA in St. Petersburg just two months after winning their third team bronze together at the Senior Worlds.

Zagunis entered the World Combat Games as the tournament's top seed and dominated her opening bout against Maria Perez Belen Maurice (ARG) for a 15-5 win.

In the quarter-finals, Zagunis fenced Rajin Lee (KOR) – a London Olympian whom Zagunis has only fenced once in individual competition.

Zagunis controlled the bout early, but Lee came back to take the victory, 15-14, and went on to take silver behind her teammate Jiyeon Kim (KOR).

In the table of 16, Lee defeated Team USA's Ibtihaj Muhammad (Maplewood, N.J.) by a score of 15-13.

All four fencers will return to the international circuit in January when the senior international season begins for both squads in France, with the men's foil World Cup in Paris and women's saber Grand Prix in Orleans. ■



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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Monir Fahri

+ STATS & FACTS

EVENT: Women's Saber

HOMETOWN: South San Francisco, Calif.

BIRTHDATE: July 25, 2002
(Walnut Creek, Calif.)

SCHOOL: Westborough Middle School,
6th grade

CLUB: Cardinal Fencing Club,
Stanford, Calif.

COACHED BY: George Pogosov

+ HIGHLIGHTS

+ **GOLD**, Youth-10 North American Cup,
Columbus, Ohio, July 2013

+ **5TH**, Youth-12 North American Cup,
Columbus, Ohio, July 2013

+ **32ND**, Cadet North American Cup,
Milwaukee, Wis., October 2013.

+ **GOLD**, Youth-10 Super Youth Circuit,
Los Angeles, Calif., May 2013

+ **SILVER**, Youth-14 Super Youth Circuit,
Los Angeles, Calif., May 2013



How did you start fencing?

I started fencing at seven at a local recreation center. My mom took me there to get some exercise. I really liked it and joined a club, and fencing became my life.

Who is your fencing hero?

My fencing hero is my coach George Pogosov. He is a gold and silver Olympic medalist, Junior World Champion and six-time World Champion. One day I would like to follow in his footsteps.

Favorite bout:

It will have to be the gold medal bout at the NAC in Columbus, Ohio, in July... It was my last year in Y10 and I was ready to take the gold. I was confident going into the bout. I prepared for it all year. I was leading most of the time and won the bout, but I had to work on my confidence because in April in Richmond, Va., I lost the gold medal bout because I was not confident enough. I did not make the same mistake.

by Kirsten Crouse

Greater Expectations

Part 2

"Second place is first place for losers!"

Most folks will recognize this as a movie quote. Some will attribute it (incorrectly) to "Talladega Nights" when actually it comes the movie "Black-balled." A smaller set will realize this is just a variation of the Dale Earnhardt quote "Second place is just the first place loser."

I, however, had never heard it before until a dad was yelling it at his 10-year-old kid – at a local fencing match, no less. I was appalled that an adult would say that to a youngster just starting out.

When I was sharing how much this incident bothered me, I was told it was just a quote from some movie. It would have been easy to walk away with the impression that I should have known the dad was "just joking" since it seems to be a well-known quote that I had never heard before.

This was on the heels of a coach threatening physical violence on a referee during a youth bout at Summer Nationals and some in the fencing community later writing it off as a "temper tantrum" and "heat of the moment."

I think this is an unacceptable and destructive attitude for the following reasons: There is a second-hand smoke effect of the message it sends to new fencers and parents, and their expectations of what it takes to succeed in our sport. A thousand great examples can be undone in minutes by one bad example.

Extreme toxicity of a few can label a community. For example, what comes to mind when I mention Soccer Parent, Cheerleading Mom, Football Dad, Dance, or Beauty Pageant Parent? (We got 'em all in Texas.) When I mention women's figure skating in the '90s, do you think of Tonya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan or do you think of Oksana Baiul who actually won the Olympic gold medal at the 1994 Games that became so infamous in the sport of skating?

Clearly, you can see the similarities to last century's thinking of "can't-you-take-a-joke" bullying.

Kids and young adults are very perceptive to recurring and underlying messages, even if the overlaying message is meant as tough love or "just joking."

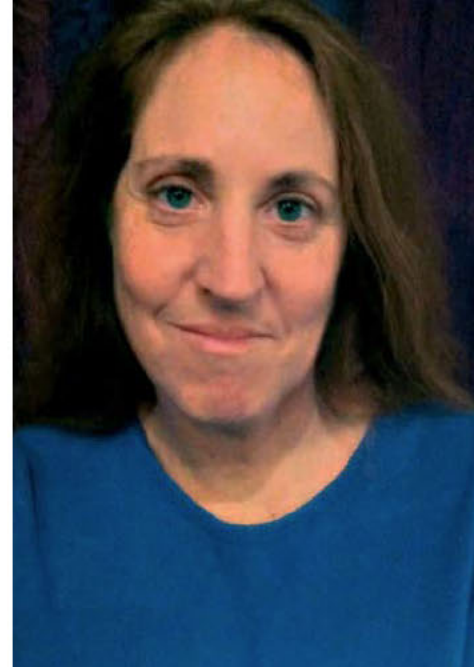
It is very easy to talk among parents at the club or tournament about the "psycho parents from hell" or, in some cases, "coaches from hell," or go online anonymously and type out everything that is wrong with fencing and fencing parents today. All of us can share stories of bullying and abusive behavior by parents and coaches. We know this problem exists because so many of us have seen it firsthand.

As a community, we need to start a public conversation of what our expectations are, how behavior taken to the negative extreme affects us all, and what are the best ways to deal with this matter. This is a complex subject and I see our community as the greatest asset in handling this issue. The best tools are information, communication, and a resolve to address peer, parental and coach abusive behavior at all levels — local club, division and national.

I am not promoting political correctness or a witch hunt on any fencer, parent or coach whose behavior/parenting/coaching style one may not agree with or may find distasteful. Instead, I'm saying that, once clearly defined lines have been crossed with verbal personal attacks or threats of physical violence, our community must take a zero tolerance stand.

Unfortunately, there is at times the appearance of a double standard or at least an arbitrary interpretation of unacceptable behavior depending on who is at fault, be it the bad behavior of an adolescent fencer or that of a well-known coach. I have seen fencers banned from any type of competition for a certain time period and be directed to take anger management classes while a coach may only be banned from the venue for a couple of days.

We must have consistent high standards for our parent/spectators, athletes, tournament officials and most importantly, the



coaches, as they set the example for parents and fencers. There must be consistent high standards of enforcement to all matters related to negative behavior/breaking of rules without exception.

At all levels of competition, for every parent screaming some quote that devalues the accomplishments of any fencers within earshot, I hope there is a coach, club owner or community member who will speak up, demonstrate better ways to motivate athletes and educate better definitions of winning so that new parents and fencers will not develop this toxic habit.

For the record, the vast majority of athletic quotes were said by adults to adult athletes or in an adult context. Most of these quotes are great motivational sound bites ONLY IF you have a good grounding in self-esteem, maturity and realize that losing a bout does not define who you are as a person or athlete at that moment in time. For the record, it should ALSO be stated quite clearly that winning a bout does not define who you are as a person or athlete at the time. Especially in epee!

Fortunately, a very high percentage of our community is comprised of incredible fencers and families who represent the best that fencing has to offer. Together, we must be proactive to prevent, as best as possible, the actions of some of our extreme members defining who we are as a community.

It cannot just be the authoritative, vague "THEY" of USA Fencing who will take care of this issue, as in "What will THEY do about this?"

It is the "US" and "WE" and each "I" who create our community and make it what it is.



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the point

TECH TALK

by Ted Li



Care of Lamé Materials

It often comes as a surprise to fencers that the electrically conductive materials (lamé) can be washed. But, due to the nature of the material, it should be washed in a special way. Traditionally, the lamé material has metallic threads woven into the cloth; more recent lamés have metal-impregnated threads composing the entire fabric. In the traditional lamé material, excessive folding, agitating, or physical abuse (associated with machine washing) would break the metallic threads and severely degrade the electrical conductivity of the lamé — if not totally ruin it. The newer conductive cloths are more physically durable, but are not immune to the physical thrashing that machine washing and drying can administer.

The best way to wash the conductive materials used in fencing is to hand-wash them. As the purpose of washing a lamé is to rid the material of accumulated salts and surface dirt, soaking the conductive material in warm water with a little Woolite® and ammonia is highly effective. Rinsing the lamé twice in clear warm water and then air-drying the material on a coat hanger completes the process. Do not wring the water from the lamé, as that will destroy the metallic fibers.

How often? To put it delicately, as soon as you begin to smell the lamé, it's time to wash it. There's no harm in rinsing the lamé every time you wear it.

Saber and foil masks with their conductive bibs, and masks in general, can also be washed. One of the most effective ways is to put it through a dishwasher cycle. Again, air-drying is mandatory, as the heat of a dishwasher's drying cycle may destroy the foam padding inside the mask. Hand scrubbing the mask is also quite effective. ■



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by Nathaniel Cerf



Louisville Fencing Center

Many clubs develop a reputation for being really strong in one or two weapons. The Louisville Fencing Center prides itself on excellence in all three weapons in two formats of the sport: wheelchair fencing and able-bodied fencing.

LFC's head coach Les Stawicki is also head coach of the U.S. Wheelchair Fencing Team and counts an able-bodied Olympic gold medalist and Paralympic World Cup gold medalist among his students in a coaching career that spans 53 years and three nations: Ukraine, Poland and the United States. The club's wheelchair fencers have amassed an impressive number of national champions and international medalists over the years.

"We are extremely proud of all of our wheelchair fencers," said Ken Hagan, LFC board of directors president.

The club has a long history of involvement in wheelchair fencing.

"The Louisville Fencing Center had some connections with a local rehab facility, Frazier Rehab," said Hagan. "We partnered together in the early 1990s and worked with several athletes including a few former wheelchair rugby and wheelchair basketball players. We sent several athletes to the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta, and the program has continued since then."

Despite USA Fencing's long involvement in the sport, wheelchair fencing remains a bit of a mystery to many able-bodied competitors, coaches and clubs.

For the most part, it is fairly similar to able-bodied fencing. Competitors follow most of the same rules used in foil, epee and saber. The basic differences are pretty obvi-

ous. Opponents sit in their wheelchairs that are locked into special frames that allow for greater stability while keeping both fencers at a distance in which they can still touch each other. Aprons are strapped over the legs and wheels, changing the target in all weapons to be above the waist. In epee, the chair back is also a target.

Fencers are also divided into three categories based on their abilities. Category A fencers have complete mobility and strength above the waist. Category B fencers might have some spinal damage that limits their mobility above the waist. Category C fencers are the most limited in their ranges of motion and control.

As there is no footwork, fencers must lean in and out to attack and defend.

"You have to train your unarmed arm," Stawicki said, explaining how fencers use their



back arm to help push and pull on the back of the chair or armrest to more quickly maneuver.

Catherine "Cat" Bouwkamp, who is the reigning wheelchair national champion in all three weapons for the past four years and represented the U.S. in foil at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London, trains with Stawicki.

The 17-year-old champion started fencing as an able-bodied sabrist, and she says there are some major differences in the nuance of strategy and bladework due specifically to the lack of footwork.

"It is a different state of mind," Bouwkamp said, adding that you no longer have the time to probe and posture with your footwork. "Close quarters means you gotta be ready. You have to have your plan set before they say en garde."

Your parries and ripostes must be stronger and more accurate, she said.

There is another element she says that surprises some able-bodied fencers.

"It is equally, if not more, vocal," she said. "The directors are more easily swayed by vocality."

Some ask if coaching wheelchair fencing is more difficult than coaching able-bodied fencing.

"It really is no problem," Stawicki said. Patience and acceptance are important, but he emphasized that the things that make a coach good remain the same.

"Learn the personality of your student, regardless of if they are able-bodied or disabled."

Hagan also advanced that point: "The coach should be aware of each fencers' specific strengths and limitations and must tailor the training routine very specifically."

Depending on the abilities of the fencer, the coach offers more than just strategic guidance.

"You are not just a coach," Stawicki said. "You need to help them with anything they need."

Most often that means helping the students with their gear and getting situated in their frame, he said.

Due to differences in the nuance of blade-work and timing in wheelchair fencing, Hagan has some additional advice for coaches look-

ing to improve their teaching of rookie wheelchair fencers.

"We recommend initially getting some of the better able-bodied fencers to work in the chairs and frames," he said. "This can help the coach see what transfers and what does not. The Louisville Fencing Center has used wheelchair frames regularly since the 1990s as a way for able-bodied fencers to continue training when recovering from leg injuries, and it's an excellent way for fencers to retain their point control and timing."

Building and maintaining a wheelchair program offers challenges similar to developing an able-bodied club. Space, gear and enough fencers remain the concern.

"We had to find space for the frames, scoring machines, and for the athletes to be able to maneuver comfortably," Hagan said. "We went through several generations of frames ranging from the current state-of-the-art equipment, to other frames that were not terribly sturdy — especially with the strength and tenacity of some of the athletes involved."

"Once we had the space, the challenge was ensuring we always had a variety of opponents and partners for the athletes. The population of wheelchair fencers is even smaller than the able-bodied fencing population. It took a bit of nudging to get the able-bodied fencers to give it a try and realize what a workout it really is, and how much wheelchair fencing isolates and develops bladework and timing."

To aid in recruitment, Hagan recommends engaging local rehab centers and working with their staffs to offer an exciting opportunity to potential new fencers that will further their health and recovery.

By being long established in the sport, LFC has become a regional—if not national—destination for wheelchair fencers looking to advance their skills.

"There are fencers who come to town regularly to train in the center," Hagan said.

Cat Bouwkamp is one of those fencers and travels all the way from Indianapolis, Ind.

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"None of the National Team members live in Louisville," she said. "We just commute there to train."

Bouwkamp also plays wheelchair basketball, holds down a part-time job and still attends high school. She has fibular hemimelia and scoliosis and is still willing to make the two hour drive south to Louisville to train.

Why does she do it? It has everything to do with the coaching and club atmosphere.

"He's [Stawicki] 100 percent dedicated to the betterment of U.S. Paralympic Fencing," Bouwkamp said. "He's selfless about getting what we need. ... Since he has been an Olympic coach for a vast number of years in multiple countries, his knowledge is something we can all learn from."

As for the club, Bouwkamp said, "The club is spacious and welcoming. They understand the wheelchair fencers. Plus, the able-bodied fencers fence in with us, which helps." ■



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