AMERICAN FENCING

Winter 2009
Volume 59, issue 3



19 tactical tips

How to Fence Better & Still Have Fun

HIGHLIGHTS FIE WORLD CONGRESS

2009 ANTALYA WORLD FENCING CHAMPIONSHIPS

World Championships: Team Captain's Report



fencing.net

Gear for real fencers

Shop our full range of fencing gear, blades and uniforms from the major fencing equipment manufacturers.

Visit our forums for advice on equipment selection, maintenence, and repair.

We build your foil, epee, or sabre to your specifications. Each weapon is tested before we ship it to you to make sure it passes USFA regulations.

Have questions? We're here to help. Call or email us and we'll help you find the right gear for your experience level and fencing style.

Need help with your order? Call toll-free 877-452-8024

Order online: http://shop.fencing.net/

American Fencing Magazine



Cover Photo: Serge Timacheff

Dedicated to the Memory of
Jose R. DeCapriles
Miguel A DeCapriles

Executive Director Kurt Aichele
Director of Operations Christine Strong-Simmons
Director of Marketing Robert D. Weekes
National Events Director Ashley Razo
Director of Member Services Dana Brown

PUBLISHER
Robert D. Weekes
r.weekes@usfencing.org
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Serge Timacheff
serge@americanfencing.com
EDITOR
Cindy Bent Findlay
editor@americanfencing.com
ADVERTISING SALES
Robert Weekes
(719)351-5716
r.weekes@usfencing.org
PRODUCTION/DESIGN
John Bunka
johnbunka@simplexstudios.com
SimplexStudios.com

Officers of The Board of Directors
President Kalle Weeks
Vice President Jerry Benson
Vice President Jane Carter
Vice President Mark Stasinos
Secretary Bradley Baker
Treasurer Greg Dilworth
officers@usfencing.org

Please send all correspondence and articles for submission to Editor, American Fencing, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774, editor@americanfencing.com. American Fencing is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. Please contact the editor regarding submission deadlines. Please contact Robert D. Weekes at (719)351-5716 or r.weekes@usfencing.org regarding advertising.

American Fencing (ISSN 0002-8436) is published quarterly by the United States Fencing Association, Inc., 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774. Periodicals postage is paid at Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774, and additional offices. Subscriptions to American Fencing are included with membership in the association. Individuals can subscribe for $20 in the United States and $32 elsewhere. Postmaster: Send address changes to USFA, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774.

Contributors

In This issue

Bruce Milligan has been fencing for over 40 years, and was formerly the head coach both at Vassar College, and prior to that, at Huntington High School in Long Island. He fences with the Baltimore Fencing Club and has competed on two U.S. Veterans World Championship teams. Bruce believes he has lost more bouts than most fencers will fence in a lifetime. He is currently a project manager with the MedStar Health network's Simulation and Training Environment Lab in Washington, D.C., where he helps to creates games and simulations that enhance professional training for first responders and others.

Craig Harkins, author of this issue's Club Tips, is president and CEO of Fencing.net, one of the most comprehensive online fencing resources in the world. Craig started fencing in 1984 in Atlanta and fenced through college at UNC Chapel Hill. A foil fencer by nature and upbringing, Craig will occasionally pick up an epee or saber for a few bouts. His free time is currently spent chasing three young ones around as he eyes entry into the Vet events soon.

Jeff Bukantz, author of Rules and Referees, was a member of the FIE Rules Commission and has been captain of multiple U.S. international teams, including the 2006 World Championships team and the 2004 and 2008 Olympic Games teams.

Ted Li (Tech Talk) is a member of the USFA'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 Veterans World championships, as well as NCAA national championships and countless USFA North American Cups. He is a proud student of Joe Byrnes and Dan Dechaine, and has been armouring for more than 30 years.

Professor Peter Harmer, Ph.D., ATC., is the Chief Medical Officer of the USFA and a member of the FIE Medical Commission. He was a keynote speaker at the 1st International Congress on Science and Technology in Fencing in Barcelona in February, 2008, detailing his research on the epidemiology of fencing injuries. He can be contacted at pharmer@willamette.edu.

Carla Mae Richards is one of the great personalities in U.S. fencing history. She served as the USFA's first executive director from 1983 to 1994, and was a major force behind the USFA's transformation from an amateur group into the organization it is today. Richards lent a huge hand in helping to copy edit the magazine for this issue.

Kathryn Schifferle (Club Profile, product review) is a business counselor for the Small Business Development Center in Chico, Calif., teaches marketing at Chico State University and owns a marketing consulting business called Balestra .

Dr. John Heil is chair of Sport Science for US Fencing, and the author of the Psychology of Sport Injury (available at: fencing.net). He is with Psychological Health Roanoke in Roanoke, Va., and can be reached at jheil@psychhealthroanoke.com.

From The Desk Of The President



2010 will bring continuing change to the USFA as we build on our accomplishments of the past and look to new growth and development in nearly every aspect of our organization.

2010 marks the midpoint of the four-year Olympic cycle that drives the international side of the Summer Olympic sports. Our national coaches are implementing plans so that the athletes will have the greatest opportunities for success on all levels. As for the USFA itself, 2010 marks the start of a fresh look at the organization and how it operates.

During 2010 our top athletes will be seeking success around the world: Cadets and Juniors with their World Championships in April in Baku, Azerbaijan; Senior fencers with their World Championships in November in Paris, France, along with the Wheelchair Fencing Championships (held every four years); and the Veterans with their World Championships in late September in Croatia. In addition to these World Championships the Pan American Junior and Senior Championships will be held, recognized by the FIE as FIE point competitions.

2010 also will see the advent of the first Youth Olympic Games, to be held in Singapore in August. Based on their results at the 2010 World Cadet Championships, two fencers from the Americas in each weapon will compete in an Olympic environment.

Online membership registration is an outstanding success with more than 17,000 members registered in the first quarter of the membership year – the largest such enrollment in the history of the USFA. Online tournament registration is nearing completion, ensuring that the integrity of our complex entry processing will be upheld. In the words of the company developing the system, fencing's requirements are more complex than those of the national power grid – no one ever said fencing was simple!

The USFA website is striving to post news as it happens; the frequency at which reports are posted is increasing almost on a daily basis. USFA is now entering the modern world of electronic communication using Twitter and Facebook for instant communication with our members. Watch for new developments in these areas during the summer of 2010.

In seeking to modernize the USFA and its operations we have established two new task forces: one researching tournament formats used in local competitions, the other reviewing US Fencing's policies, practices and procedures at the international level for National team members – athletes, coaches, managers and cadre.

A third task force is continuing its work on revision of the organization's bylaws. An initial draft is available on the website at http://usfencing.org/news/article/28230; watch for an updated version early in 2010. The task force is eager to hear your thoughts on the changes these bylaws will bring to the organization, including a smaller Board of Directors, elected directly by members, and other modifications in our organizational structure. You can send your comments to the task force at bylaws@usfencing.org.

With all of these activities, as well as greater control of the finances of the organization, the USFA will become a more integrated organization, ensuring success of our athletes and of our sport in and out of the United States. 2010 will be a year for refining the processes and procedures necessary for a smoothly operating organization, for the benefit of all of our members and for our continuing success, on and off the strip.

Kalle Weeks

Kalle Weeks,
President, US Fencing

facebook

http://www.facebook.com/USFencing

twitter

http://twitter.com/usfencing

The Editor Speaks Out



Once again, change is in the air. Just about the time Father Time is flipping the calendar page over, a new team will be assembled to revamp American Fencing magazine, and hopefully make it bigger, brighter, and better than ever.

For example, no details are finalized yet, but a high priority for us will be to resurrect (finally!!) an American Fencing web site complete with back issues and at some point in the future expanded online content. The print magazine will be refocused and slowly redesigned, with a rigorous publishing calendar established.

You'll see a few new titles in our masthead, including that of publisher – Robert Weekes, business development director, and that of editor-in-chief Serge Timacheff – yes, that Serge, who illustrates our pages so ably. Serge has also been tapped to aid the senior leadership team in re-branding the organization and will act as the magazine's link to that effort.

I will remain as editor. I am not passing the buck or the torch here, but I am happy to have the opportunity to be a part of an expanded mission for both the magazine and the USFA's nascent marketing and sponsorship-seeking efforts. I'm also delighted that the magazine will benefit from the help of a larger team and more resources. Please rest assured that American Fencing is not just going to be chasing advertising dollars, but is going through a period of soul-searching to arrive at the best possible read for you, the fencing community, as well has help to spread the word about the most excellent sport on earth.

C.B. Findlay

Happy fencing,
Cynthia Bent Findlay

Special report from the Executive Director



2010…already?

It's hard to imagine that it's been over a year since I stepped into the role leading US Fencing, and I must say that I honestly have enjoyed it. We've cleared some of the hurdles that were before us when the year started, however the challenges we face are still rather formidable. Some might be thinking…so what's this guy done? Well, it's a reasonable question – one I hope to shed some light on, and then let you know what's in store for '10.

My initial priority was the building of trust in the context of relationships. Spending time with athletes, coaches, club owners, board members, parents, armorers, officials, directors, vendors, sponsors, volunteers, and FIE members, allowed me to learn the nuances of the sport that are an "understood" part of the culture. I appreciate the reality that the fencing community is composed of simply fabulous people, many of whom I now consider friends and look forward to spending time with at the various events next year.

…the fencing community is composed of simply fabulous people…

Many of you have noted that my travel schedule has been rather extensive. Despite hours of delays, choppy flights, and security screenings, I assure you that much work has also been accomplished "back at the ranch." In March we embarked on a process of organizational change, restructuring our work environment. Because of the staff changes we've made, a foundation of necessary financial systems and management controls have been established, along with operational maxims of Service, Communication, Trust, and Excellence. The result is a significance shift in our communication strategies, financial position. We have been able to reduce our over debt as an organization by nearly a third, realizing a bottom line change from the 2008 fiscal year of more than $1 million.

Thankfully there's more to my job though than money and systems. One of the reasons I chose to return to the Olympic family was because of the excitement that surrounds sport and competition. It has been an absolute thrill to be a part of our World Championship teams, both in Ireland last Spring, and most recently in Turkey. Since the event was broadcast over the Internet, I do hope you were able to witness the outstanding performance of our athletes, as they maintained their position as an emerging strength within the sport. This type of visibility is important for us as a sport, and we are continuing to investigate future opportunities for the broadcasting of our events as we approach the London 2012 Games.

Speaking of preparations for 2012, we have already begun the planning process both logistically and strategically. Bob Largman and I took a trip to the UK in November, where we gained a hands-on understanding of the footprint of the Games that is necessary to prepare our National Team coaches and athletes for what to expect as they head into the second half of the quadrennial cycle. While we're still seeking a director of sport strategy to head up our international performance department, we are excited about the departmental restructure that took place there and hope to have the position filled by the end of April.

As we continue to BUILD the foundation, we have also begun to look at how we might better SUPPORT our stakeholders. This fall we launched our online membership database environment, and in November we continued our journey of organizational change, launching an organizational identity and re-branding effort. Through this process, a team of people has been re-evaluating our mission, values, and purpose as an organization, and is taking steps towards setting clearly defined business strategies for us as an organization.

What's the intent of the process? Though we're not the largest or most wide known sport in the Olympic family, our desire is that our influence would extend beyond the immediate scope of strips, weapons, and events to affect the way people all over the US think about fencing. In a nutshell, our intent is to better SUPPORT our stakeholders by increasing our ability to monetize our assets while tangibly embracing and reflecting Olympic idealism.

We recognize the need to capitalize on our size as a sport to ACHIEVE desired outcomes. Broadly speaking, US Fencing is considered a "medium-sized" sport. Therefore we should be able to nimbly move to address new market opportunities and adapt new processes. But it's more than simply moving, adapting, and changing. While a long-range strategic planning process is on the horizon for Q4, it is critical that we intentionally focus on the execution of the new initiatives, translating our strategic intent into actions that produce results.

All this being said, as I look to 2010, I can assure you that our primary focus is on improving the level of service we provide in our core competencies to all of our stakeholders. Earlier I mentioned that we are in this together...in fact, we are. Each of you will have an opportunity to participate in the journey of change we're on. Your voice matters to us. Because it matters, we are laboring to establish new feedback mechanisms, and improve our ability to have a dialogue with you. As the new tools are implemented, I implore you to utilize them in two ways: to let us know what we're doing well, and where we could still improve.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part US Fencing, and am grateful for your continued support and involvement. I wish you the best for 2010.



Kurt R. Aichele
Executive Director

USA FENCING™

European medalist Richard Kruse / Olympic medalist Sylwia Gruchala / Olympic medalist Mariel Zagunis

Leon Paul
USA



Same team new website



- EASIER navigation
- Faster delivery FREE
- BIGGER pictures and more videos
- IMPROVED custom weapons creator
- BETTER product descriptions
- NEW product review section

WIN BIG

Post a product review on-line and enter our prize draw. Ten reviews will be chosen at random and the author will win a new X-Change mask worth over $200.00. Terms and conditions apply; visit the website for more information.

www.leonpaulusa.com sales@leonpaulusa.com 404-325-7272 Official sponsor of USA FENCING

contents

Winter 2009 | Volume 59, issue 3

2009 ANTALYA WORLD FENCING CHAMPIONSHIPS

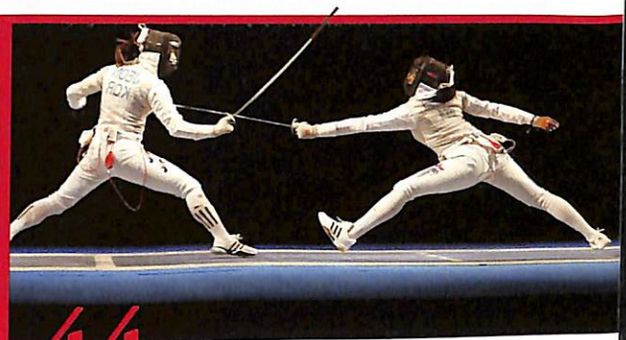
features



22
Cover Feature:
World Championships
Team Captain's Report
By Mike Pederson



32
19 Tactical Tips
By Bruce Milligan



44
How to Fence Better & Still Have Fun
By Douglas Cairns

Departments

08 Ask Us
09 In The News
16 Club Profile
18 Athlete Q&A
19 In The Trenches
20 Rules & Referees
21 Postcards From The Strip
30 Sports Science & Medicine
35 Veterans Fencing News
39 The Point - Tech Talk & Parents Corner
47 Classifieds



MATHYAS SZABO (GERMANY) AND DARYL HOMER (USA)

Photo of Dormagen Jr. saber world cup by Alexandra Pottier/FencingPhotos

Ask Us

At its February meeting, the USFA Board of Directors appointed Mary Griffith to chair the Regional Open Circuit Advisory Group. Recently, we asked her to tell us about this new circuit and the work her group is doing.

Let's start with the basics: What exactly is the Regional Open Circuit?

The Regional Open Circuit (ROC) is a series of regional events that are designed to appeal to Open/Division I-A fencers who are looking for good competitions beyond their local level but below the NAC Division I level. So far, these events have been six-weapon events, but there is some flexibility for experimentation. With Division I-A at Summer Nationals being the only open national event at this level, there simply haven't been enough opportunities for this segment of fencers to compete. Essentially, the ROC is a tool for creating more events for a segment of our fencing population that's been lacking them, just as the Regional and Super Youth Circuits have done the same for the younger age levels.

How is the ROC different from the National Open Circuit (NOC) that was started this year?

Actually, the ROC is exactly the same circuit—we just changed the name. We discovered during this past season that a lot of people were confused by the NOC's name—many thought the circuit was intended as a second high-level circuit parallel to the NACs and couldn't figure out what it was for. And with "NOC" commonly understood within the Olympic community to stand for "National Organizing Committee" or "National Olympic Committee," there was potential for confusion there, too.

It's funny—when [USFA vice president] Mark Stasinos suggested the name change, my immediate reaction was "Yes! That's much better." And almost everybody I talked to about it reacted the same way. An added bonus, as Mark also mentioned, is that this name's got a lot more potential for t-shirts, as in "I ROCed at Duel in the Desert" or "Remenyik ROCs!"



Photo by Serge Timacheff

What do you think about this past season's events? How successful was the new circuit?

I'd call it a pretty decent start, all things considered. The board created the circuit at its September 2008 meeting, so the original advisory group (David Sierra, Aaron Clements, and Alan Kuver) put a huge amount of work into soliciting and designating events to get the circuit up and running almost immediately.

We ended up with four events. The Duel in the Desert and the Remenyik Open were the most successful, not surprisingly, since they are long-established events. Both the Poujardieu Memorial and the Wolfe Challenge were later additions to the circuit and didn't attract quite the same numbers, though Jeff Salmon managed to put together a paperless tournament with real-time video displays of the pools and DEs at the Wolfe.

For the coming season, we'll have time to promote the ROC events better, at Summer Nationals, through USFA publications and email blasts, and other communication venues.

We've got some work to do, too, figuring out how to create a points system that makes sense. Right now we're awarding the same number of points to the fencer who wins a C1 event with 19 entries as we do to the fencer who wins an A4 with over 130 entries. That doesn't make for meaningful point standings, which we'll need if we want someday to be able to use those standings for further qualification paths.

What are you looking for in tournaments for the 2009–2010 season?

There are the obvious characteristics—we want events spread throughout the country, to allow as many fencers as we can the opportunity to compete in at least one or two without too much expense. We want tournaments that are well-run, comparable in quality to tournaments like Duel in the Desert and the Pomme de Terre, where fencers have come to expect good facilities and strong officiating.

Beyond that, I'm hoping to see a little something extra, some characteristic that gives each tournament its own personality. For instance, Duel has its Saturday Night Fights, with spotlights and color commentary and evening wear suggested. Pomme's got its reputation as an exceedingly well-run tournament. Another event might have an attractive location or unusually appealing awards.

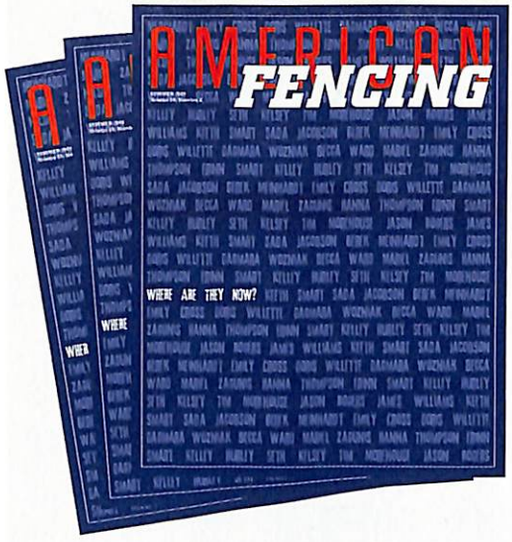
I expect we'll have a mix of established and new tournaments. What I'm hoping is that as people begin to see and experience more of these strong regional tournaments, we'll get more club owners or divisions interested in creating their own. We'll be doing what we can to help, too, by creating an operations guide and press release templates, and working with the armorers, the Tournament Committee, and the Fencing Officials Commission to collect advice on obtaining suitable equipment and hiring capable officials.

Do you expect to expand the ROC beyond six events for future seasons?

Oh, absolutely. The way USFA membership is growing, the NACs as they are currently configured simply can't keep up—we need more good tournaments. With NACs getting so large and with so many events, regional events are the best way to create those tournaments. Right now, we're planning for expanding the circuit with more open ROCs as well as ROCs dedicated to Veterans and Division II categories for 2010-2011 and beyond. In fact, to provide for future expansion, the Board has already authorized up to twelve tournaments to be designated as Open ROC's, and has further authorized up to four Veteran's ROC's and up to six Division II ROC's, and the group is working on planning to implement that.

I think there's a huge potential in these regional events. National tournaments can only get so big, and we're starting to push the limits of our resources and our volunteers there now. There's so much more room to grow at the regional level—that's where we're going to find our new fencers and officials for the years to come. ***AF***

VERBATIM



Dear Am Fence:
Why don't you run more letters? There are never more than two or three.
- Jane Fencer
Anyclub, USA

Ed: We would LOVE to run more letters. But no one ever writes to us! I mean, seriously … (thumps microphone) … is this thing on? We've even considered sneaking in articles about bocce to see if anyone noticed and wrote to us. If you have a comment, if you'd like to see some aspect of the sport covered in more depth or less, if you love it, if you hate it, let us know!

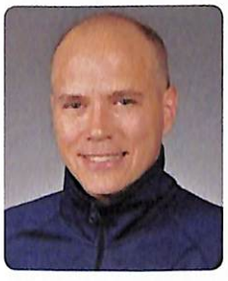
We know you're out there. Surveys show American Fencing is one of the most-mentioned and most-valued benefits to USFA membership, and that most respondents tend to not only read American Fencing cover to cover every issue, but keep it for years. So you must have an opinion. 20,000 people must have at least a few notions of how we can make American Fencing the best it can be. The sport of fencing is made up of a lot of very decisive people with very definite ideas. Let's hear 'em.

Cindy Bent Findlay
Editor
American Fencing Magazine

Please note that letters must be limited to 400 words or fewer or they will not be published. Opinions expressed in Letters are not the position of American Fencing or the U.S. Fencing Association. American Fencing reserves the right to edit letters for space and clarity. Please include your name and hometown when submitting letters to Editor@AmericanFencing.com.

IN THE NEWS

US Fencing Selects Women's Foil National Team Coach



COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. (18 November 2009) After a five-month process, a search committee has selected 2008 Olympic team coach Michael Pederson as the women's foil national team coach for the remainder of the 2009-2012 quadrennial.

After serving as the coach for the silver-medal women's foil team in the Beijing Games, Pederson took the helm of the US Fencing's performance programs as high performance director. Realizing that his passion lies in working directly with athletes as a coach, he stepped down from that role and asked to be considered for the position of women's foil coach. The search committee (consisting of Sada Jacobson Bâby, David Micahnik, and Mark Stasinos) was at that time engaged in the selection of all of the national team coaches. The committee evaluated each of the applicants, and went through a thorough interview process with each qualified candidate. When asked about the search, committee chair Jacobson Bâby said, "The impressive qualifications of each of the candidates for the women's foil national coach position made the search committee's task a difficult one. The coaches under consideration all delivered compelling presentations outlining their strategy and vision for the program. After much deliberation, the committee feels that Mr. Pederson will be an exemplary leader for our women's foil community."

"I was pleased to receive the committee's recommendation" says Kurt Aichele, executive director of US Fencing. "(Pederson) has a remarkable ability for planning, foresight, and program development. There's no doubt in my mind that the women's foil program will continue to become more cohesive and continue to improve over the next few years." The men's foil national team coach Mauro Hamza indicated his support of Pederson and the ability to develop cohesion as a weapon commenting, "I support (Pederson) as the women's foil national coach...and I am looking forward to collaborating with him to improve the foil program in US." Pederson begins his role as national coach effective immediately. ***AF***

Notice to International Foil Athletes

The FIE requirement for foil masks with the visible visor in the mask has been suspended. This is due to an incident during a foil competition in Denmark where one of the visors failed. There was no significant injury to the fencer. After a five minute break the bout was continued. The failure was attributed to the neglectful maintenance of the mask by the user. Despite this, the FIE has seen fit to suspend the requirement pending further investigation. The visors are not prohibited. They are simply not required.

If you have such a mask, please see to it that you maintain your mask as directed by the manufacturer. Specifically, when changing the visor, please reinstall all of the bolts that were originally in the mask, and make sure that the retaining frame around the visor is fit back on the mask as it was originally intended. Also make sure that you keep it clean and dry and not in contact with wet clothing.

- Fencing Officials Commission

More info on transparent masks on page 31

Saving Stanford Fencing

By Mary Griffith

Pay a visit to the Cardinal Fencing Club on the campus of Stanford University these days and you're likely to be presented with an array of "Save Stanford Fencing" t-shirts, sweatshirts, and hats for purchase. If you're not tempted by even the "Save Stanford Fencing" M&Ms, you'll undoubtedly be invited to drop your loose change into a donation jar.

The merchandising is just one small facet of a major fundraising drive now underway to save Stanford's top-10 NCAA fencing program and its associated community fencing programs. Like many universities throughout the country, Stanford was hit hard by the recession, and its athletic department must cut $1.5 million from its budget.

Stanford's athletic director, Bob Bowlsby, met with head fencing coaches Lisa Posthumus and George Pogosov on April 16 to inform them that Stanford's Division I fencing team was at risk of being dropped entirely. The two coaches met that evening at the campus fencing facility with several parents to discuss their options and create a strategic plan for saving the team, in the process sparking the formation of a new Friends of Stanford Fencing organization.

Posthumus and Pogosov took the group's ideas to the athletic department and won at least a temporary reprieve for the 2009-2010 season, but the team needs to earn $250,000 for its operating expenses for the year and make a significant start on the creation of a permanent endowment to support the team, probably in the neighborhood of $5,000,000.

Posthumus is no stranger to fundraising to support the fencing program—she and her sister Jenny were members of the first children's fencing class at Stanford in 1987, taught by her mother, the late Sherry Posthumus, then Stanford's assistant fencing coach. Sherry, along with coach Zoran Tulum, started the community classes that eventually became Cardinal Fencing Club in part to raise money to support the fencing team.

The club operation continued to contribute to the support of the NCAA fencing team until 2007, when Bowlsby, who came to Stanford in 2006, centralized athletic department fundraising, believing that coaches should be able to focus on their sports and athletes. Until the recession hit, Stanford's sports teams received their budgets from the university.

"Those two or three years were nice for the fencing club," says Lisa Posthumus. "George could finally afford to buy new some new gear since he didn't have to fund the team."

Other income supporting the team comes from camps. In addition to traditional beginner and advanced summer fencing camps there is the immensely popular Pirate Camp, an imagination and adventure camp for kids ages 6 to 10 created by Sherry Posthumus and carried on today by Lisa Posthumus and Catherine D'Arcey. Varsity team members serve as "Captains" for small groups, leading their pirate crews in fencing, pirate play, and treasure hunts that explore the whole Stanford campus.

"This year's sessions were completely booked four minutes after we opened the registration web site," says Posthumus. "The camps contribute $10,000 to $30,000 annually to the support of the team."

Melody Lowman, mother of senior saber fencer Christopher Lowman, was one of the parents at that April planning meeting. She now serves as president of Save Stanford Fencing. As of late September, according to Lowman, the group had raised about $42,000 in small donations in response to letters sent out to club fencers and parents.

Members of the fencing team only became seriously involved with the fundraising efforts this fall with the beginning of the new academic year, since the situation only broke when most were going into finals last spring. Since returning to campus, fencing team members have hosted fencing demos for children's groups visiting

Save Stanford Fencing
www.savestanfordfencing.com

If you'd like to be added to the group's mailing list, send an email with your contact information to melodylowman@gmail.com or complete the form at http://www.savestanfordfencing.com/blank.html.

Individuals or organizations interested in making donations for the permanent endowment may contact Abbas Khoshnevissan at akhosh@sbcglobal.net.

Letters of support for the team can be sent to:

Lisa Posthumus Milgram
Co-head Fencing Coach
Athletic Department
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 9405

Bob Bowlsby
Jaquish & Kenninger Director of Athletics
Stanford University
Arrilaga Family Sports Center
641 East Campus Drive
Stanford, CA 94305-6150

John L. Hennessey
President, Stanford University
Office of the President
Building 10, Main Quad
Stanford, CA 94305



"No university will ever cut a program that's got its own money. Get an endowment!"

campus, and several varsity women were invited to introduce the sport at local private girls' schools.

"There's been wonderful support from the university community and from the city of Palo Alto," says Lowman. "We've been invited to do demonstrations on the city hall plaza, there's been good local press, and a story in the Stanford Daily got picked up by ESPN and Sports Illustrated. The student who wrote that story is even copying George Plimpton —trying out fencing to write about it."

Save Stanford Fencing divided its strategic plan into a three-prong approach. The first, dubbed "Attack!," concentrates on the immediately needed $250,000 for this year's operating budget, and encompasses the more grass-roots efforts: contributions from the club and camps, cash donations, merchandise sales, gifts to Stanford Athletics targeting fencing, and proceeds from bake sales and car washes.

The second phase, "Parry!," focuses on major donations for the permanent endowment. Abbas Khoshnevissan, father of sophomore foilist Alex Khoshnevissan, spearheads this effort and is passionate about the need to save fencing at Stanford. "Fencing is where gymnastics was 10 years ago," he says. "The level has gone up dramatically. Kids at the junior and cadet levels are now going head to head with Europeans in competition, and two of the development powerhouses in the U.S. are northern California and the New York-Boston corridor."

He maintains that the fencing team helps Stanford maintain its national reputation as a west coast counterpart to the Ivies. "That US Fencing is getting stronger, that the Bay Area is a fencing powerhouse, and that Stanford is the only real fencing powerhouse in the West region are the three main arguments that seem to work for the major potential donors we are talking with."

Khoshnevissan is working with Jeff Shilling, Stanford's senior associate athletic director for development, in seeking major gifts and bequests, either to add to the existing Jacob Levitan Memorial Fencing Endowment Fund, which is not large enough to support the program, or to create additional named funds. While he won't name names, he says they are in negotiations with several potential major donors.

The third phase, "Riposte!," aims to create a permanent Friends of Stanford Fencing organization encompassing fencing alumni, current and former club members, parents and any other community members interested in maintaining high-level fencing at Stanford for years to come.

The threat to Stanford's team program also reaches beyond Stanford and its community programs. Were Stanford University to drop its Division I NCAA team, the NCAA West region would be left with only three teams: Air Force (Division I), UCSD (Division II), and Caltech (Division III). While there is no danger that the NCAA would drop the sport nationally, a loss of Stanford's team would certainly necessitate a realignment of the regions, with unknown effects.

While their future is uncertain, the Stanford fencing community is cautiously optimistic. But Posthumus offers vehement advice to other NCAA fencing coaches: "No university will ever cut a program that's got its own money. Get an endowment!" ***AF***

U.S. Fencing Hall of Fame



As happens every year, seven new members were inducted into the U.S. Fencing Hall of Fame at Summer Nationals in July. Nominees ranging from the roots of fencing in this country to the modern era are selected by the Hall of Fame committee and voted in by the USFA Congress. This year's inductees:

Gilbert Rosiere I (called Titi Rosiere by his students) was born May 21, 1812 in Bordeaux, France. He is cited in history and fiction books as the "most popular" fencing master in New Orleans and played a large role in the city of New Orleans becoming a major fencing center of the United States during the late 19th century. He is noted for fighting seven duels in one week. Rosiere Street in New Orleans is named in his honor.

Henry Harutunian

For more than 30 years, Yale fencers with the will have been counting on Harutunian to hone their skills.

Harutunian has produced numerous All-Americans and an NCAA men's foil and women's saber champion during his tenure. Harutunian, the 1996-97 USFCA Coach of the Year, had a distinguished career as a fencer and coach in his native Armenia. Harutunian came to the United States in 1966 and coached at Brandeis for three years prior to joining the Yale staff. Before long, Harutunian had joined the U.S. coaching elite. He began working with the American national team in 1977, and in 1984, he served as one of three U.S. Olympic coaches. He also coached the Americans in the 1979 and 1983 Pan American Games, and in the 1979, 1981, 1983, 1991 and 1993 World University Games.

Harutunian was named Coach of the Year by the National Intercollegiate Women's Fencing Association in 1982 and by the IWFA in 1984 and 1985 at the NCAA Championships. In 1986, the U.S. Men's Fencing Coaches Association selected him Coach of the Year.

This fall, Harutunian set a record no one else is ever likely to break: This season he started his fortieth year as Yale's head coach.

Jose Velarde

Joe Velarde, a fencer from the age of 13, was an important coach of military and non-military collegiate fencers from 1945 onward. Velarde also had a fascinating and distinguished military career, beginning with his serving from 1942-45 in the European Theatre of Operations, flying 60 bombing missions as a B-25 Armorer-Gunner.

Velarde is the only coach in the history of fencing to win NCAA team championships for two different colleges – for West Point in 1949, and for Columbia in 1951 and 1952. Velarde is known at Columbia as the progenitor of the modern golden age of fencing there.

For 25 years after his retirement from active military duty in 1971, he dedicated his efforts as an activist, advocate and organizer toward enhancing the quality of life and work of migrant farm workers, immigrants, refugees and other "working poor," who comprised some six million disenfranchised members of California's population.

Joe's major contribution to the sport of Fencing is widely considered by many to be the public actions that he took while coaching at Columbia University in November of 1949 at competition venues of the Amateur Fencers League of America (AFLA). His adamant refusal to accede to efforts to segregate his fencers ultimately led to the end of discriminatory practices against persons of color and brought about racial integration throughout American Fencing.

Arkady Burdan

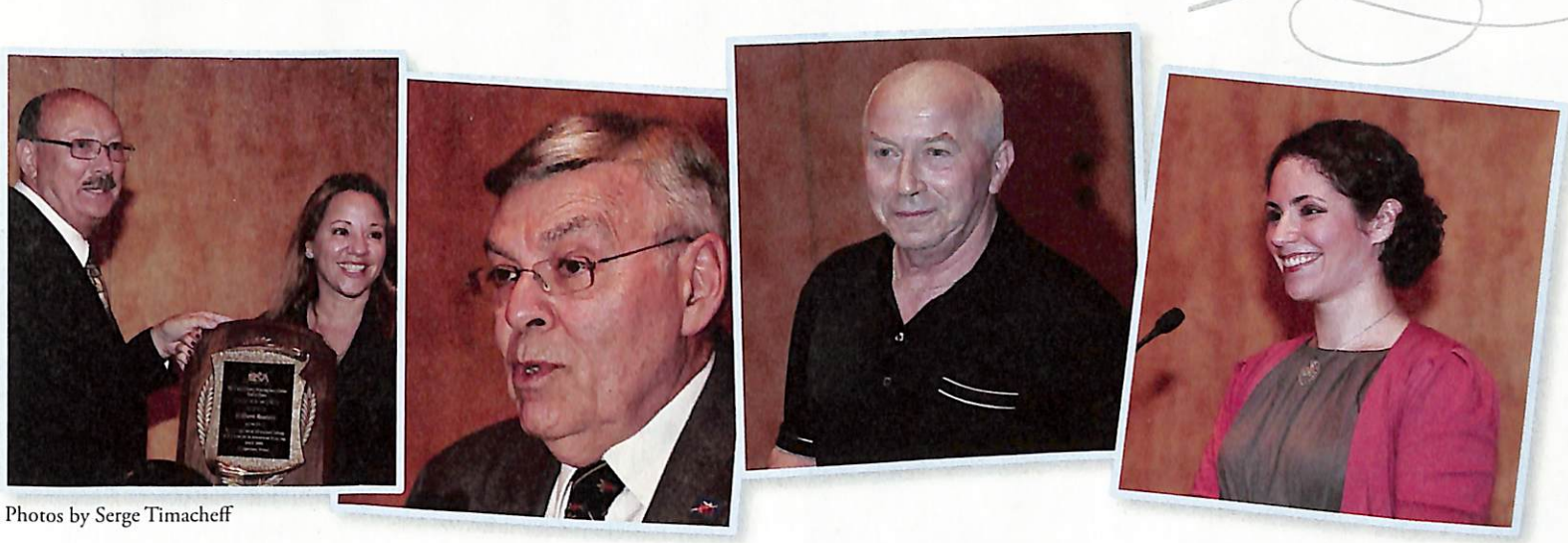
Maestro Arkady Burdan, US Olympic Coach (Athens 2004), is one of the most highly qualified fencing coaches in the world. He has coached celebrated fencers for more than thirty years.

His early distinctions include the USSR Master of Sports and Honored Coach of the Ukrainian Republic. He was principal fencing coach of the Ukrainian Olympic Training Center. His students earned more than 40 gold medals in Soviet National Championships and in international competitions. In 1994, Maestro Burdan moved to Atlanta and founded Nellya Fencers. Since then, he has trained many successful fencers, including champions at every national and international age group and level, including Olympic medalist Sada Jacobson Bâby.

The United States Fencing Association named Maestro Burdan Elite Coach of the Year in 2002.

Sherry Posthumus

A mere list of Sherry Posthumus's accomplishments – ample as that list may be – cannot begin to animate the person that she was and the impact that she had on those around her. Sherry's resume would note nearly 25 years in the athletic department at Stanford University, but no bullet point can illuminate the ever-open office door, the careers launched, the lives changed, and the scores upon scores of students who emerged from the university to take their first wobbly steps into adulthood covered with her fingerprints.



Photos by Serge Timacheff

A vital, driving force in the fencing world, Sherry represented the United States as the manager of three Olympic teams. She helped shape the growth and development of the sport domestically and at an international level, built a highly competitive collegiate program at Stanford, and left a trail of new fencing clubs like footprints in her wake throughout her adult life, sharing the sport she loved with generations to come.

She had perhaps the rarest of traits: the ability to make every single person you encounter better for having known you. And sadly, the number of people who can truthfully make that claim is less by one today. Sherry died at 62 from brain cancer in December 2007 and is survived by her husband Donald, and two daughters and their husbands, Lisa and Danny Milgram and Jennifer Posthumus and Kris Atteberry, and by two grandsons, Nathan and Josh Milgram. She also is survived by her mother Betty Rose, and her sister and brother-in-law, Evie Rose and Jerry Barnhart.

For more information on these illustrious careers, you can visit usfencinghalloffame.com. ***AF***

US Fencing's All Academic Recognition Award Program

A new US Fencing program has been instituted to recognize and reward academic achievement by junior fencers. The All Academic Recognition Award Program, to be presented annually at the Junior Olympic Championships each February, seeks to honor high school students with high grade point averages

Encouraging a high level of academic achievement in our young athletes is as important as encouraging their athletic achievement. Motivation for this achievement, while intrinsically driven, can be enhanced through recognition by US Fencing.

There are three program levels open to all students enrolled in an accredited high school program who are members of the USFA. Home schooled athletes are also eligible. Athletes do not have to qualify to Junior Olympics to be eligible.

- First Team US Fencing All Academic - students with a cumulative GPA of 3.85 or higher
- Second Team US Fencing All Academic - students who demonstrate the scholastic ability to post a cumulative GPA of 3.7 to 3.84
- Honorable Mention US Fencing All Academic - students who demonstrate the scholastic ability to post a cumulative GPA of 3.5 to 3.69

Application Procedure & Deadline

1. A minimum of two letters of recommendation are required to receive this recognition. One letter must be from the athlete's personal or high school coach and the second letter must be from one of the student's high school teachers, the high school counselor or principal.
2. The applicant's GPA must be certified by the school counselor and should appear on the application, in all cases, converted to a 4.0 scale.
3. The required application, recommendation letters and certification must be submitted to US Fencing by January 15, 2010 with a $30.00 per athlete processing fee. Incomplete applications will not be processed.
4. Appropriate forms are available from the **US Fencing website** and in the **Athlete's Handbook**, also online. For more information please email christine.simmons@usfencing.org.

Alex Jeffrey, 1960 - 2009



Well-known saber coach Alex Jeffrey passed away suddenly on Saturday, August 8th, 2009 at the age of 49.

Jeffrey was the head coach of Beaches Sabre Club of Troy, a former member of the Canadian national fencing team, and a former head coach of the Canadian women's saber team.

"His greatest gift was the ability to put a smile on the faces of those he met, and those that knew him. Alex will be remembered by the fencing community throughout the world for his contributions to the sport and he will be remembered by all who knew him as a man who always walked his own path," reads the obituary written by his family.

Jeffrey leaves behind his mother, Nan Jeffrey, his father and stepmother, Alex and Renate Jeffrey, his sister and her husband, Hazel and Greg Mason and his step-brother and his wife, David and Kelly Jeffrey. He will also be missed by his nieces Melissa, Kati, Sarah and Madeline as well as his nephew, Jack.

Donations in his name are welcomed by the Heart & Stroke Association.

His greatest gift was the ability to put a smile on the faces of those he met, and those who knew him.

Triplette Seamstresses

When you get your clothing from TCA, you not only get a great value, but you also support American workers. Your uniform is sewn by experienced professional local seamstresses working in their homes. The ladies work at their own pace, and the convenience of working at home allows them to set up their workstations in their own way so they can concentrate on making the highest quality uniforms in the world.



Skilled American Professionals

TCA Protects the Environment

Our cottage industry production method is carbon efficient. Our seamstresses work at home and do not have to waste gasoline driving to a factory. There is no factory to eat carbon in the form of air conditioning, heat or lights, not to mention the energy saved by not building the factory in the first place.











TCA Buys American Raw Materials

TCA invented and patented ultralight lames. Ultralight material is produced in the USA. All of our cotton, stretch material, lame lining, D rings, and thread is domestically produced. Not only is it the right ethical thing to do, but it also gives us good control of the quality of our materials and products.



TCA Pays Well

The money saved from energy conservation allows TCA to pay our seamstresses more than local factories, and far more than a third world sweat shop would remotely consider to be fair pay.

Triplette Competition Arms

331 Standard Street • Elkin, NC 28621
(336) 835-7774 • Fax (336) 835-8268 • www.triplette.com

TRUST NO ONE BUT YOURSELF!

DISCOVER LOWER PRICES & HIGHER QUALITY ONLY AT BLUE GAUNTLET.

YOUR ULTIMATE RESOURCE FOR QUALITY FENCING EQUIPMENT.



Blue Gauntlet Fencing Gear, Inc.
280 North Midland Ave, Bldg N-1 • Saddle Brook, NJ 07663
Tel: 201-797-3332 • Fax: 201-797-9190 • fencing@blue-gauntlet.com
www.blue-gauntlet.com

BOUNCING BACK FROM DISASTER

BY KATHRYN SCHIFFERLE

The rest of us can only imagine what it must have been like when Katrina hit the south, followed immediately by Rita, decimating New Orleans and a great portion of the USFA's Louisiana Division as well.



Ms Amanda Foy of the Tulane Fencing Club taking a saber lesson from New Orleans FC coach Chris Trammell.

New Orleans was very quiet in terms of fencing for about a year and a half after Katrina, but Jonathan Cohen of the New Orleans Fencers Club says that they are now bouncing back. Although finding a reasonably priced location is still their biggest issue, they have a core of fencers —new, young ones —with a surge of Tulane fencers coming out of the college and heading out to tournaments in the section. Cohen wants everyone to know that the city of New Orleans has been rebuilt with a passion, and should be added back into to everyone's travel schedule. He extends a special invitation to fencers nationwide for the annual Crescent City Open which traditionally has had over 125 fencers in foil and epee events.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast was probably the second-hardest hit area in the division, but they've bounced back as well. Colin Miner with Bay Blades Fencing Club is the head of the operation there, and is getting some support from the local university for the club.

Lafayette was primarily hurt by Rita, but their problems with fencing were not just from hurricanes. The only club in the division to have a devoted salle (located in a local strip mall), Lafayette Fencing Club's challenge was keeping the club afloat financially. After four or five years of operation, they had to shut the doors. They also lost their coach, John Poirot, to injuries and his return to school to get a doctorate from LSU. Krista Fontenot has since taken over the club and is managing a location and keeping fencing alive in Lafayette. Escrime d'Acadie is a very small club, but after the close of LFC, Tim Dugas and Krista decided they didn't want to stop fencing. They got together and found a Lafayette Parish Parks and Recreations facility and began to hold classes. They've lost members, gotten them back, and found new ones. Krista said that there is definitely some trial and error, especially with the 9- to 11-year-olds, as they've had to learn what works with the kids as well as what are the best training methods for the rest of them. The division has some really great members and she can always count on them to contribute help and information.

Fencing is going great guns in Baton Rouge. Benjamin Price has been coaching fencing since he started for LSU in 1971, and had a great club there until 2000 when they converted the gym into classrooms. Not willing to let fencing die, Ben continued the fencing on a strip he installed in his back yard. Then three and a half years ago Ben successfully transitioned from "Salle Garage" to a very reasonably priced fitness center in a Baptist Church. The club is expanding with beginner classes held about twice a year in a various locations attracting around twelve new members. These are reached through word-of-mouth, ads in the local parents' magazine and through LSU fliers. Their retention rate is quite good. There are 50 fencers on the roster currently, with about 30 showing up each practice (twice a week). They have two coaches with USFCA Moniteur licenses (David Burke and Marge Collier), thanks to a clinic held by Sonny Mercado last Thanksgiving. The clinic really helped the club with structure and with quality of fencing.

So overall, despite the challenges, fencing in the Louisiana Division is on the upswing. They look forward to sending a good crop of fencers to Nationals in Atlanta this season and seeing some good results from them. ***AF***



Fencers from Baton Rouge Fencing Club at a local competition.


All Your Fencing Needs in One Spot!
Quality...
Fashion...
Balestra
Gear
1-800-903-2616
1-415-252-0100
info@balestrafencing.net
www.balestrafencing.net

Athlete Q&A with Seth Kelsey, 2004 & 2008 Olympian

Q: What to do when you are frustrated in a bout?

A: If you are really frustrated in a bout, you need to take a break and make a change. Take time by tying your shoe or walking to the end of the strip.

Usually there is plenty of time in a bout. Take a minute and just frustrate your opponent by keeping big distance and moving a lot. Maybe they crack and fleche out of distance. One touch can change the whole momentum.

One piece of advice that has stayed with me over the years I heard from another coach. "Change anything. If you keep doing what you are doing, you will definitely lose." While not the most gentle advice it gets across the main thing. If you start with one plan and things are not working, then you have to change something. Changes don't have to be big. I find that most of the time very simple changes solve many problems. Working with Cody Mattern and Jimmy Moody, most of the advice we give each other on the strip boils down to changing the distance and hand position.

One time I was fencing Milanoli from Italy and I was losing. During the minute break Cody comes up and tells me that I am fencing great. My footwork is good and the distance is on. However against this opponent I need to change the game. Milanoli is a fairly unorthodox fencer who uses a lot of crazy arm and foot movement to take you out of your game. Cody told me to get as crazy. I had never beaten Milanoli before so I had nothing to lose.

So I go crazy and suddenly I can find openings. I tie things up and then go ahead. The second break comes and Cody now tells me to go back to my normal fencing style. Once I was up Milanoli had to fence me straight up and I was very prepared for that. I won 15-13 and went on to take a bronze medal in Heidenheim in 2008.

Seth Kelsey has been a member of U.S. senior national teams since 2002. He has won multiple medals at the World Cup level and has been ranked as high as in the top two in the world (in February 2009).

Kelsey also serves as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Air Force and is a member of the United States Air Force World Class Athlete Program.

BG

Blue Gauntlet Fencing
USA

Blue Gauntlet is proud to bring you the best performing lames in all classes!

Did you know that BG Olympic masks have the highest passing rate for its mesh among all masks within their class? BG Olympic masks (foil, epee, saber) are the ONLY masks in their class to give you 1000 Newton protection for your neck. All other masks in the same class merely offer you 350 Newton, less than half of what BG offers yet they may be more expensive!



Unique advantages of BG Olympic masks (epee, foil, saber)
- Multiple security straps for extra comfort, stability and safety.
- 1000 Newton protection for your neck.
- Moisture wicking sports lining keeps your face cooler and dryer.
- Its anti-bacteria nature helps reduce odor and health problems caused by excessive bacteria.



BG FIE Transparent masks for foil, epee or saber!
All BG FIE masks come with machine washable inside lining.
The ONLY quality transparent FIE mask in the world under $300!
The ONLY replacement visor in the world under $35 dollars!

280 N.Midland Ave. Bldg N-1, Saddle Brook, NJ, 07663, USA. Tel: 201-797-3332 . Fax: 201-797-9190
Web: http://www.blue-gauntlet.com



by Edwin (Buzz) Hurst

I know that you're tired of reading all that interesting stuff in the rest of the magazine, so let's enter the stultifying world of **Robert's Rules of Order**, and how they apply at the division level.

There are, I'm afraid, far fewer folks than there used to be who have ever operated under Robert's Rules, and I doubt that there are too many division officers who, upon assuming office, snuggle up with a copy. Nevertheless, that book remains the best guide for how to run meetings effectively and efficiently. For large groups, such as US Fencing board meetings and (usually) section annual meetings, there should be a copy available at the meeting and the chair should be fairly strict in utilizing, and enforcing, the rules. At most division EC meetings, where 15 attendees would be a large turn-out, you can use something that you might call Robert's Rules Lite. It's those that I want to discuss, because you would be very wise to use something.

It is necessary that the chair officially calls the meeting to order. It is also necessary that the secretary (or someone acting for him) take minutes. The group must officially approve the minutes from the previous meeting, so a motion to approve them must be made and seconded. It is only then that members may officially bring up any corrections to the minutes that they wish to make, and each suggested correction must be approved by a majority of the committee. When the dust finally settles, the chair calls for (and, we hope, gets) a vote approving the final version. I know that this procedure seems pompous and cumbersome, but in the unlikely (but possible) event that your division is ever sued by somebody, or becomes involved in some US Fencing inquiry, believe me you'll want to have followed these procedures.

In any case, once past these steps, the discussion can became considerably more free-wheeling. General Roberts says that there should be no discussion of a subject until it has been made as a motion and seconded, but at the division level the discussion usually precedes a motion actually being made. This is especially true if all of this is being accomplished electronically. If the debate is clearly becoming circular, the chair can ask a member to make a motion, and ask another to second it. The reason for requiring a second is to create the necessity for at least two people to put a proposal into play. It is a way of putting the brakes on some gadfly who would constantly make motions all by himself that no one else in the room wants to waste time on. If a motion doesn't get a second, it dies and the chair moves the meeting on to something else. Assuming it is seconded, however, the chair should allow a little more time for discussion, but if folks won't stop talking (these are usually the ones who figure that they're going to lose a vote), she can ask a member to "Call the Question." This is a motion and also needs a second, but it is not debatable and goes immediately to a vote. If approved, it permits the chair to immediately call for a vote on the original motion without further debate.

The ferally alert amongst you will have noticed that the chair isn't making any motions; that is because the chair is not supposed to. A chair is expected to act officially neutral as matters proceed, but at a division level it is usual for him, her, (or it) to pitch into the discussions like everyone else. However, the chair should **not** vote on any motions unless it is to break a tie, **or to create one**. "Huh?" I hear you grunt, but think about it for a minute. A motion needs a majority of those voting if it is to pass, so a tied vote would mean it fails. Get it now?

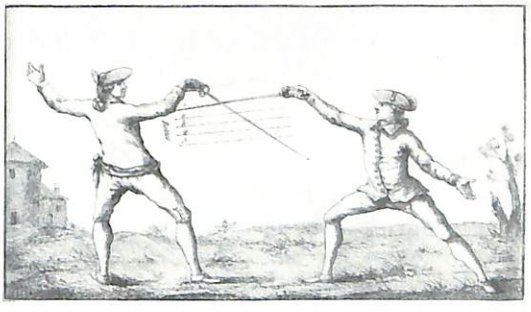
Finally, when the last remaining blood has run along the scuppers and the various sides have reached a state of mutual exhaustion, a "motion to adjourn" should be made and seconded. It must get a majority vote, which is sometimes hard since almost everybody is already streaming out of the doors and windows, but for future records you need to show an official adjournment in the minutes.

Now let me finish with one personal pet peeve: you "move" that something be done – or you "make a motion" - you don't "motion" to do something. Whenever I hear that last phrase, I can only think that the speaker is about to get into the center of the room and attempt the Moonwalk.

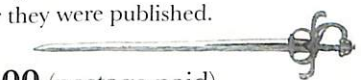
Well, that's it. If you try these few procedures I think that you will discover that your meetings go both smoother and faster, and I doubt that you will find any intelligent people who think that you're being supercilious. However, if you think it is all a lot of hooey, there is one proven alternative to Robert's Rules that will also make your meetings go smoother and faster: use a Smith & Wesson. ***AF***

Masters of the Sword *and their* Books

Important Printed Books on Swordsmanship; 1516 to 1799



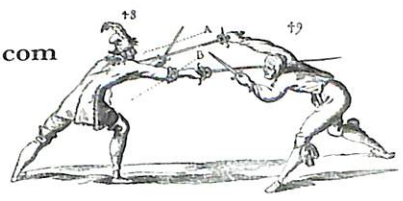
They were celebrities in their day, fighting and dueling across Europe, teaching the lethal art of swordsmanship. Their ideas and techniques were printed in books dedicated to Royalty and magnificently illustrated by some of the most famous artists of the time. Find out who they were, what they taught and see examples of the engravings that make their books collectable even today, centuries after they were published.



$17.00 (postage paid)

Softcover with 144 pages and over 80 illustrations

On-line by credit card:
www.TambopataPartners.com
Check or money order:
Tambopata Partners
514 Prinz
San Antonio, TX 78213



BY JEFF BUKANTZ

In Search of the Gospel? Avoid the Cesspool!



Soon after returning from Beijing last summer, I received an email from a member in response to a post made in an internet chat room.

According to the post, the FIE had eliminated the rule where left-handed fencers would hook up on the referee's left side. The post was unambiguous and treated as the gospel by many. Fortunately, an inquiring mind wanted to know if the post was accurate.

By chance, this inquisitive member had come to the right person, as I happened to be on the FIE Rules Commission at that time. In addition, I happened to be on the competition floor at the Olympics, where, in fact, the FIE did not enforce this rule.

So, I was able to clarify that the rule was not enforced at the Games, with the main reason being to avoid confusion for the television audience during team matches. After all, it would have been very confusing for the viewers to see teams and scores switching sides during a match.

However, the FIE most definitely had not changed the rule about lefties hooking up on the left! Yet, because some yo-yo saw the Olympics on the Internet, he incorrectly stated that the rule had been changed across the board.

He made the factually incorrect post, and many took it as the gospel. And, therein lays the problem.

Remember the game of "telephone?" One person would whisper something into the next person's ear and down the line it would go. By the time it reached the last person, it didn't come close to resembling the original comment.

Unfortunately, that harmless kids' game is played when it comes to determining rules, rules changes, rules clarifications, and rules interpretations. Add to this game of telephone the vast expanses of the internet, and the misinformation increases exponentially.

Now, please don't misconstrue my point. The internet is an ideal place for discussion, opinion, inquiring, and venting. Heck, where else can people hide behind the cloak of anonymity and say whatever they please? While it is unfortunate that internet chat rooms are often a cesspool of negativity, that's tangential.

The point is that, when it comes to rules and interpretations, the chat room threads are often misleading at best, and completely wrong at worst.

The cesspool is further polluted when an occasional "expert," whether from the Fencing Officials Commission or not, chimes in with either incorrect information or a personal opinion contrary to the official stance of the FOC.

Professional wrestling is totally scripted. Yet, every now and then, a wrestler intentionally goes against the script. The term is called "going into business for yourself." Let's just say that certain FOC members have been guilty of the same, and have misled people both on the internet and elsewhere.

So, the question is: Where do I go to get the official stance on rules, rules changes, rules clarifications, and rules interpretations?

If you want the gospel, you must go directly to the FOC. Do not pass Go, collect $200, or check the oft-misleading internet threads.

Every member of the organization has the right to inquire directly to the gatekeeper of the gospel, which is the FOC. The FOC will provide a timely and accurate response, and ideally put an end to the game of telephone.

As a long time chair of the FOC's Rules Committee, I've been responsible for responding to the many inquiries from the membership. In some cases, a simple quoting of a rule would suffice. In other cases, a consensus view of the FOC would be espoused. Yet, in numerous instances, I would have to initiate an email discussion of the FOC in order to determine a stance before responding to the inquiry.

However, when the inquiries don't come to the FOC, it becomes open season on misinformation.

Over the last year or so, I have been dumbfounded to hear some real doozies resulting from games of telephone (internet should be the new name of this game) gone wrong. Referees, fencers, coaches, parents, and organizers have fallen prey to the misinformation.

Among the doozies were the following:

- **There is no simple corps-a-corps in epee.** (There is, it stops the phrase, it negates any touches scored after the body contact regardless of when the referee says halt, but it does not warrant a penalty.)
- **An attack which falls short and is then left in line or put in line *automatically* gains the right-of-way of a line.** (Wrong, as determined by both the FIE and FOC despite claims to the contrary by some persuasive and outspoken 'experts' who feel otherwise.)
- **The clashing of bells in epee is corps-a-corps and stops the action.** (Wrong, as there is nothing in the rules which supports this most misunderstood and misapplied action.)
- **In order to be guilty of covering target with the head, a fencer's head must be tilted at some specific degree or angle.** (Wrong, this is solely up to the referee or side judge's discretion, not a slide ruler's!)

These are actual examples of what happens when people rely on the cesspool instead of the gospel. So, when you're done with the internet discussions and want the official answer to anything regarding the rules, just drop an email to Christine Simmons (christine.simmons@usfencing.org).

It will be passed on to the FOC, and the gospel will be passed on to you. And, thankfully, the cesspool will be passed over. ***AF***

IF YOU WANT THE GOSPEL, YOU MUST GO DIRECTLY TO THE FOC. DO NOT PASS GO, COLLECT $200, OR CHECK THE OFT-MISLEADING INTERNET THREADS.

Taking the First Step

VICTOR LUU



I remember when I started fencing; my novice equipment cost a hundred and twenty dollars, with a discount. The novice set came with a metal screen mask, a white straitjacket, a leather glove tighter than Bruce Willis' pants, and a size five stainless steel foil. When I first set my eyes on it, I thought, "I am a fencer." I had the college-fencing club I started, and my own gear. What more could I ask for? No more borrowing the school's fifty-year-old equipment that still had the sweat of its original owner.

Eventually, my fencing coach talked about college tournaments. I thought, "Why not? Let's go to a tournament." This was the first time I'd be fencing as an Advanced Fencer. You're considered one if you have fenced for a year, which means you were allowed to fence with the electric scoring system they used in the Olympics. Getting ready for the event, my coach gave us specialized training. He focused on the footwork, the foundation of fencing. Footwork determines your speed, aggression, and even timing. He also mentioned we needed more equipment: a conductive stainless steel-lined jacket, electric foil with a socket, and a long two pronged body cord to connect the whole thing.

On the day we stepped through the doors of Upper Hickey Gym at UC Davis, we were immersed in new faces. Being on a team of four, from a small community college, we looked in awe. Davis was the school that took the giant chalice every year. What could we, a team of four, do?

We each paid our entry fee of fifteen dollars and gathered in our corner. It wasn't just Davis. UC Santa Cruz, San Diego, Cal Poly and San Francisco State were there. We were a needle in a haystack.

Each of us was placed in groups of five or six. In a group I remember fighting five people. My first opponent was a female fencer with a long ponytail that ran out of her helmet. I say helmet because every time I do, an "experienced" fencer said, "It's a mask."

When our stubby director said, "Fence," my opponent threw her foil forward and stabbed me in the arm. I felt the pain run down my bicep into my hand. The director said "fence", and she stabbed me two inches above the same spot. My arm was numb and my hand barely gripped my foil. Constantly my hand shook.

I lost the first match in my first tournament ever. My next fight was up against this tiny little redhead no taller than my hipbone. My hand shook as I clipped my body cord into a three-prong reel system. Then I struggled to attach it to my blue wired lame.

"Hurry up already!" yelled our stubby director. The metal knot clipped into the plastic ring of my jacket. The little girl pushed up her glasses to the top of her nose and frowned. "Wow, I hope I don't lose this one too," I thought.

In this match I pushed the most. I won.

After each of our five matches was over we sat around waiting for instructions. I lay on a rolled up wrestling mat and asked my teammates, "Are you guys winning?" Our star fencer, who had fenced since he was sixteen, replied, "Yeah, I won four. One girl gave me trouble, though." I lay there for what seemed hours.

A man with a thick mustache walked up to me and asked, "Are you Victor Luu?"

"Yes."

"We're fighting next. Get suited up." During the walk to the strip, everyone was either fighting or chugging down gallons of water. I could see fencers let sweat fly off their hair as they took off their masks.

I stepped on the line and waited for a director to say fence. My tall opponent ran me down and stabbed me repeatedly. Occasionally, he would let me try the same, only to catch my blade and stab in return. I kept watching his torso and blade but everything was so fast. It was like I was standing still.

In the end he won 10-0.

I shook his hand and asked, "How long have you been fencing?"

"Oh, six years I think."

"Oh… I think I've been fencing for a year." My opponent smiled and a whisker curled up.

"Cheer up," said my teammate. "You gained valuable experience."

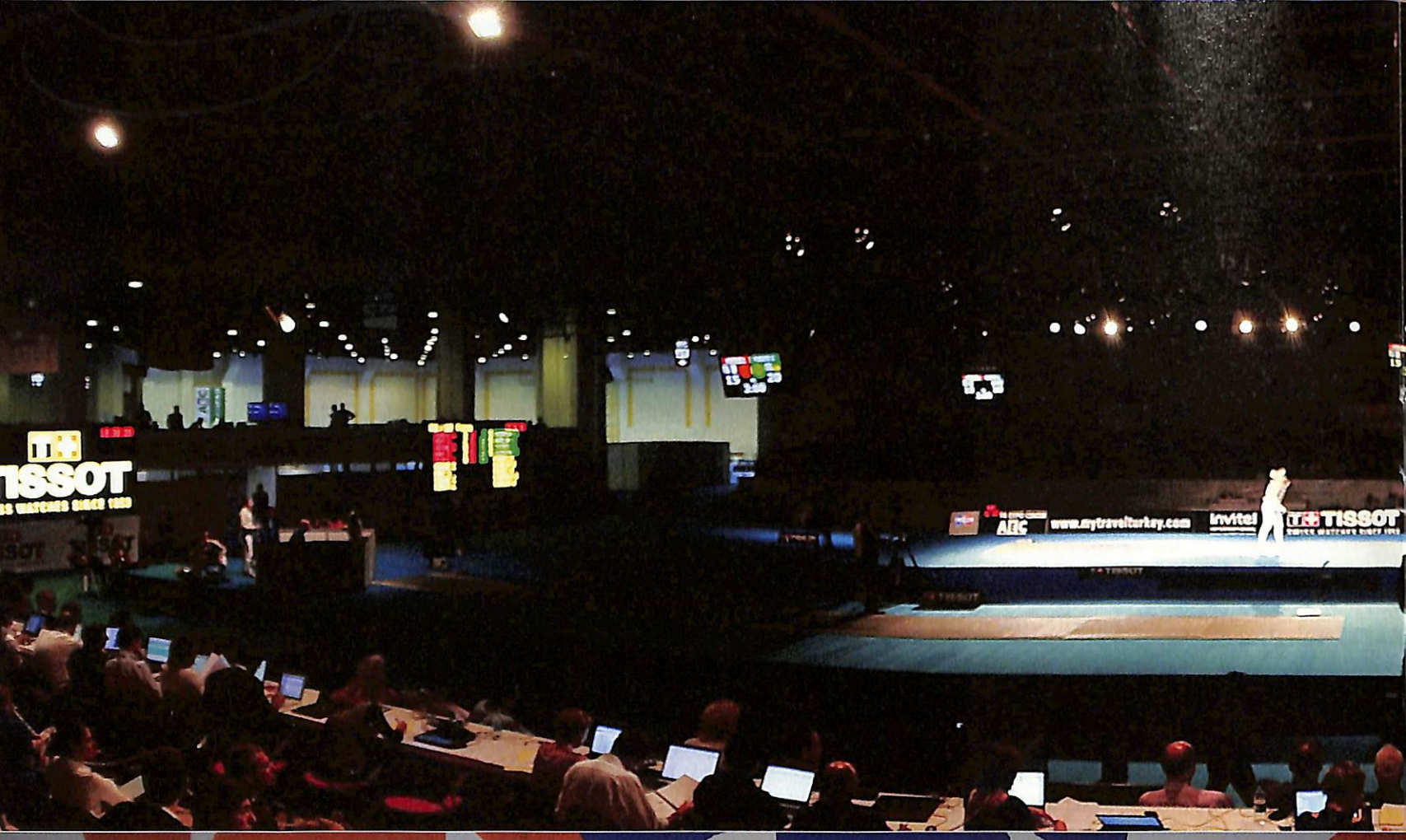
"Like?"

"Like how to lose to someone out of your league."

I lay on the mat and my hand shook.

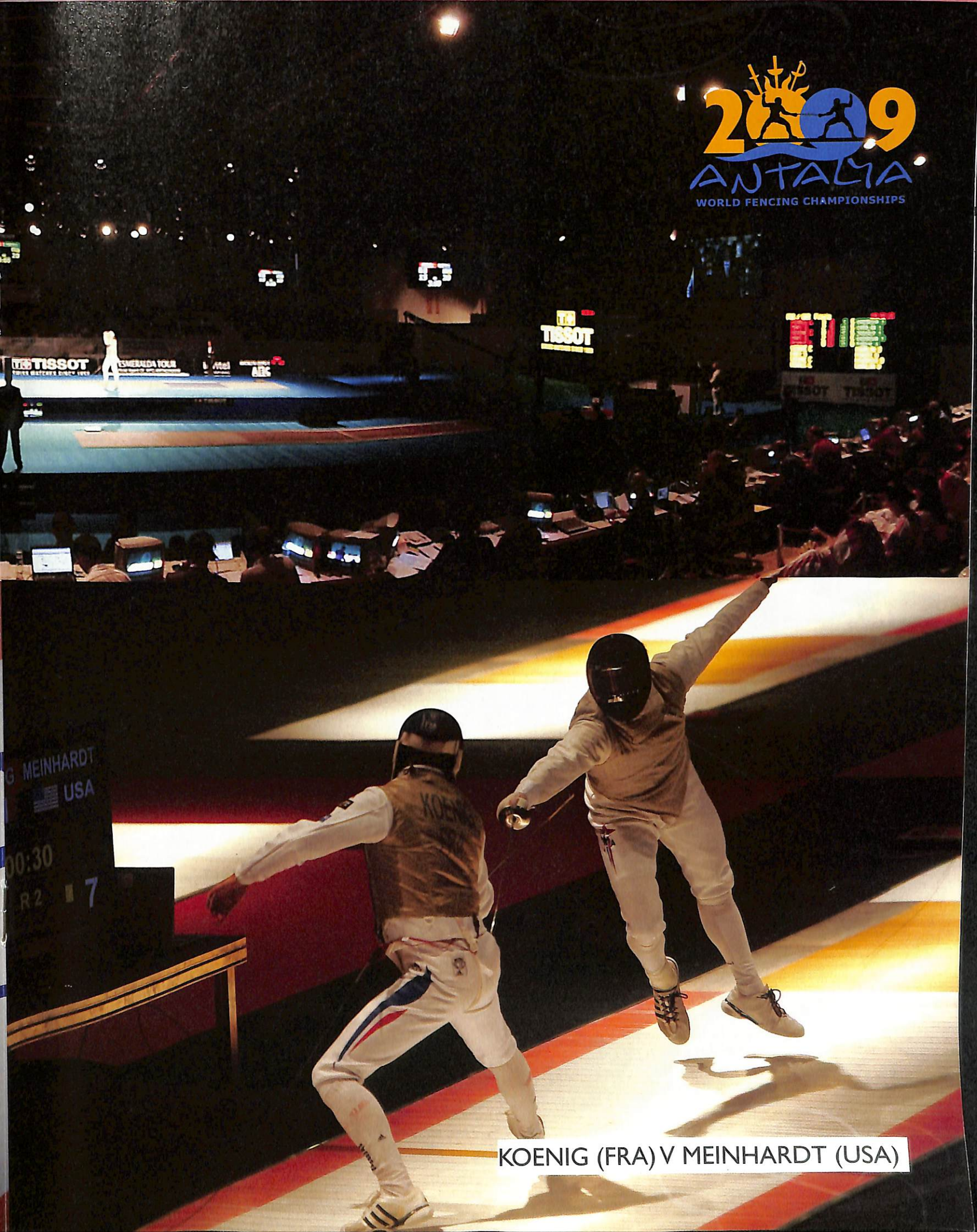
I said, "I can still feel the reels tugging at my jacket." I wanted to fight again.

Victor Luu is a student at UC Berkeley and got started fencing at the Sacramento City College Fencing Club. **AF**





USFA MENS FOIL TEAM



KOENIG (FRA) V MEINHARDT (USA)

Antalya World Championships 2009 - *Captain's Report*



MOREHOUSE (USA) V KOVALEV (RUS)

continued from p. 23

Stand-in coach Mike Aufrichtig did a great job of bringing them together but faced a difficult task. The team finished tenth, losing a very close match against Russia (39-37) in which they fenced very well. After that, they beat Hong Kong and then Switzerland, finally losing to Korea by one touch.

With team women's epee pushed out of Beijing, a consequence is that the weapon gets fractured. For the two years prior to the Olympics the emphasis was all individual. Now, they need to find their groove. One of the things they need is to learn to operate as a team. Epee is the "deepest" weapon with the most fencers worldwide, and it's a hard weapon to break into. Many current team members – including the Hurleys and Susannah Scanlan – were only juniors in the last quadrennial, and they need time to mature and to gel as a team. They have a lot of talent, and now they need a strategy, focus, and system for team events. That will make all the difference in those close matches. Our neighbor to the north, Canada, is very strong and well-funded. Our team needs to be serious about the qualification process. For now, as a team challenged, they almost made the top eight. It's clear they have the potential to go further.

Men's epee is, in my opinion, the hardest weapon in which to do consistently well. Our men's team has two members training at the Olympic Training Center (Olympic veterans Seth Kelsey and Cody Mattern), in addition to Eric Hansen and Ben Bratton. Bratton fenced very well, reaching the top 32, and for his first senior world championships showed a very impressive demeanor and focus. I think he has the potential to go far; he's young and working hard toward London.

Unfortunately, with men's team epee out of the Games in London, it's going to be an individual race. In epee, it takes a very long time to develop top athletes. This is evidenced by the average age of the top fencers, many of whom are in their 30s. For example, Seth Kelsey was ranked seventh going into the competition and therefore had a bye into the second day's tableaux of 64. He met a strong Chinese fencer, Wang, and with the Chinese you never really know what it's going to be like because you don't see them that often on the circuit. Then, it's hard when you don't fence that first day, and you really must learn the process and skill of coming in ready to fence. It's a skill that will come with time.

As a team, the men have competed together frequently and in many locations globally, but they did not always benefit from having a coach. In fact, they haven't had a national coach for almost a year and that's hurt them significantly. They did everything on their own: training, logistics, and more. The men's team fenced the Ukraine first, a very hard draw, ranked fifth in the world. They lost, then lost to Spain, beat Japan, and then lost to Russia to finish 14th. With a coach in place, the future will be much brighter. Additionally, there is a lot of rising young talent to take US men's epee further than it's ever gone.

To sum up, the 2009 World Championships was a proving ground in many ways. Clearly, many of the teams are in a transitional stage and if there's one event that can serve as a place to experiment, tweak, and identify strengths and weaknesses, this is the one. Now it's time to evaluate, plan, and strategize, and move ahead to victory. ***AF***



ZAGUNIS & ED KORFANTY (USA)



GETZ (USA)



PRESCOD (USA) V JEON (KOR)


PRESCOD (USA)


MEINHARDT (USA)


ZAGUNIS (USA)

"An evolutionary new scoring machine from Second Intention Software and Design..."



VSM
Virtual Scoring Machine

Available From:
www.VirtualScoringMachine.com
also from: Fencing.Net
H.O.M. Fencing Supply
and through Amazon.com

- Any Windows PC is now your Scoring Machine *for under $150*
- FIE Compliant, can be updated at home
- Many features never seen before
- Scaleable to any size display



Saber Has Been Transformed – and The First New English Saber Book in 50 Years Shows You How!

And it comes with a DVD!



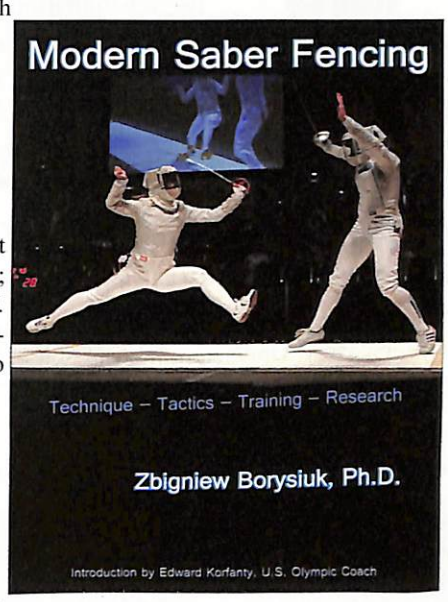
New and Available … from SwordPlay Books and your fencing supplier!
www.swordplaybooks.com

BACK IN THE DAY, when the last saber book in English came out ….

- Women "just couldn't" fence saber
- Four judges and a referee tried to judge – by eye!
- Medals were a European monopoly.

That was then. This is now. Saber has been revolutionized ...
And this book teaches the new saber!

At the 2008 Beijing Olympics: the ***U.S. women*** swept the individual saber medals and took bronze as a team; Zhong Man of ***China*** took the men's gold medal; the *U.S. men took team silver.* The fencing was not just electronically scored – the referees watched the slow-motion video replay to decide close calls.



"This book will be extremely useful in fencing training and should attract the interest of the fencing community throughout the English-speaking world -- and beyond. … " — Edward Korfanty, U.S. Olympic Coach.

The world of saber has changed, and it needs this book!

Now, for the first time, Zbigniew Borysiuk– a successful fencer, top-level coach, and outstanding sports scientist – has written a book on saber fencing that explains and teaches the ***new saber*** from the ground up – illustrates the new techniques with over ***75 photo illustrations, plus a DVD*** -- shows the technical and tactical adjustments that have transformed classical saber – explains how to train for the new saber – and more – ***presents the scientific research that underlies the latest training methods*** – how to identify fencing talent and monitor progress – understand perception and reaction in fencing.

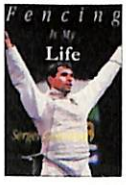
This is a book for every saber fencer and every saber coach. ISBN 978-0-9789022-3-0. $30.00.

The accompanying DVD vividly illustrates the book's method. ISBN 978-0-9789022-4-7. $30.00.

Book and DVD together: $50.00.

SwordPlay Brings You Even More Great Books!

Sergei Golubitsky
Fencing is My Life



Johan Harmenberg
Epee 2.0: The Birth of the New Fencing Paradigm



Harry James
Strength Training for Fencers



Zbigniew Czajkowski
Understanding Fencing



Istvan Lukovich
Fencing: The Modern International Style



Istvan Lukovich
Electric Foil Fencing



Aladar Kogler
One Touch at a Time



Imre Vass
Epee Fencing: A Complete System



Laszlo Szabo
Fencing and the Master



Coming soon from SwordPlay Books …



Christopher Holtzman
The Art of the Dueling Sabre

Paul Sise
A Basic Foil Companion



SKA SwordPlay Books
1.718.761.3305
publisher@swordplaybooks.com
Shop our secure website
www.swordplaybooks.com
or visit your favorite supplier

Sport Psychology for the Injured Athlete



To an athlete, injury can be annoying or devastating, or may fall anywhere in between. The ability to avoid injury and to return to play quickly when injured is critical to success. When injury does occur, it is useful to approach rehabilitation as part of the game that an athlete must play, transferring sport skills to rehab.

All injuries have a psychological side, in the form of emotional costs and behavioral challenges. Meeting these "10 Challenges" will keep the athlete on the path to recovery.

DR. JOHN HEIL

Challenge 1: Knowing the Game -

"Knowledge is Power"

Proactive education about injury and rehabilitation is the cornerstone of successful recovery. Understanding the "what" and "why" of rehabilitation empowers the athlete and cultivates a sense of personal responsibility.

Challenge 2: Identifying Goals -

"Drawing the Road Map to Success"

Realistic expectations are articulated as interrelated short term, intermediate and long term goals. These guide the day-to-day process of training and treatment. Understanding the "how" of rehabilitation defines the athlete's role in treatment and invests the athlete in the process.

Challenge 3: Visualizing the Plan -

"See, Believe & Achieve"

Mental imagery is the "soft" side of thinking, the basis of motion and emotion. Because imagery allows a focus on visual cues and physical actions as they unfold in the moment, it functions like a "language for action." The richness and varied possibilities presented by imagery make it a useful tool for the rehearsal of psychological skills in sport and rehabilitation.

Challenge 4: Focusing Thinking -

"Mental Tenacity"

Thinking about the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, is as essential to successful rehabilitation as it is to sport performance. Pain and the emotional sequelae of injury are potent distractions. The formidable challenge of rehabilitation demands a task oriented focus that endures over time.

Challenge 5: Managing Emotions -

"Bringing Heart to Rehab"

Emotion is the fire that fuels human endeavor in sickness and in health. The athlete must face and work through feelings of loss and threat that follow from injury. The channeling and modulation of emotion (positive and negative) energizes the rehabilitation process.

Challenge 6: Playing with Pain -

"Mastering the Mind-Body Paradox"

Pain is inevitable as physical limits are pushed in the pursuit of excellence. Pain assessment is a fundamental skill in sport and rehab. By differentiating performance pain and injury, the athlete adjusts actions accordingly. The greatest challenge is in the uncoupling of pain and fear.

Challenge 7: Training with Intensity - "Working smarter"

A universal set of physical training principles underlies all forms of athleticism. Modulated intensity with precise skill execution is the central task of sport and rehabilitation. Physiological conditioning and biomechanical precision are the means by which recovery and readiness for return to play unfold.

Challenge 8: Calculating Risk -

"Playing the Edge"

To strive as an athlete is to take risks of losing, of failure, and of injury. Carefully calculated risk taking moves the athlete out of harm's way and along the path to success. Incisive decision making is an executive function that assimilates knowledge of ability, intensity and pain.

Challenge 9: Staying Mentally Tough -

"Courage in Adversity"

Toughness shows when tired, hurt, discouraged, and distressed. The critical task is turning negative momentum to the positive. Surviving adversity begins with having the courage to take control of what can be controlled - personal thoughts, feelings and actions. This enables the athlete to learn to live well with winning and losing.

Challenge 10: Self-Actualizing -

"Striving for the Zone"

The desire to take one's game to a higher level is a fundamental element of the human spirit that sport celebrates. Self-actualization is the personal growth and discovery that comes as striving gives way to thriving. Peak experiences are the supremely satisfying moments when the pursuit of excellence guides the athlete into the zone.

In meeting these 10 challenges the athlete engages in the struggle with the injury, and with other forms of adversity, with a sense of direction and purpose. AF

Q. I heard that a transparent mask broke at a competition in Europe. Does this mean that they are not safe? How safe are they?

DR. PETER HARMER

A. Because a penetrating wound or severe laceration is one of the worst things that can happen to an individual fencer, and to the image of fencing, safety is the first priority of all fencing organizations, from clubs up to the FIE. The evolution of the protective equipment reflects this commitment. Unfortunately, there is no simple way to determine the characteristics of protective equipment that will guarantee a fencer will never sustain a fencing-specific injury (i.e., puncture or laceration) because fencers require that protection also be balanced with performance. In other words, while the risk of fencing-specific injuries can be minimized by making equipment thicker, heavier and/or stronger, these changes can negatively influence speed, accuracy and/or balance. The goal is to find materials or equipment designs that enhance safety without compromising performance, and then determining the specific standards to be applied.

Although both the FIE Medical Commission and the SEMI Commission work to establish viable standards (also in concert with independent bodies such as those of the European Union which establish the standards for CE mark), it is not until a failure is reported that a review of prevailing standards is likely to occur (because there is no reason to believe that the prevailing standards are insufficient). For example, although mesh masks had to meet certain puncture-resistance standards in the early 1980s, and by all accounts performed well (as evidenced by the fact that there were no reports of mask failures), the standards had to be reviewed following the death of Vladimir Smirnov at the 1982 World Championships when his mask failed to protect him from a broken blade penetration. In fact, Jean-Marie Safra, in writing about Smirnov's death in the 1982 August-September issue of Escrime, talked about research to develop Lexan masks to protect against this type of equipment failure and injury on the assumption that this material could never be broken. However, the technical challenges of engineering this sort of material to fit the equipment needs of fencing were prohibitive and, as a result, standards for mesh masks were increased and have been altered several times since in response to new information on how well the prevailing standards protect fencers. They work well.

At this point it should be evident that determining how "safe" equipment is revolves around two settings: laboratory (or standardized) testing and performance, and "real world" results. Laboratory testing is the starting point, where careful measurements to ensure material integrity can be collected and evaluated in a controlled and static environment. However, equipment in "real world" use is subject to a lot of uncontrolled (and sometimes, unforeseen) stress –quality of manufacturing, amount of use and how athletes take care of the equipment can affect its integrity. When a failure in the real world occurs, the circumstances need to be carefully investigated to identify the risk factors and to use that information to adjust the standards to improve the product. Additionally, the risk needs to be calculated based on the number of failures divided by the number of exposures, that is, how often does a failure occur to the number of times the product is used. Although it is small comfort to the athlete who is injured by a one in one million failure, from a safety perspective, this is a better (safer) product than one in which the failure rate is one in 100,000. How acceptable such rates may be depends on several factors including the consequences of the failure (such as the severity of injury) and the costs associated with changing the equipment standards.

In terms of transparent masks, they are safe when new based on laboratory testing. However, it is difficult to determine their on-going level of safety (structural integrity) once they are in use, especially when users alter the integrity of the product by changing the faceplate, or it is affected by other factors (refer to the list of "do not" that comes with a transparent mask) because there is no method to test it "in the field" as there is by using a punch to test mesh masks. Moreover, their efficacy may depend on the weapon. To date, I do not know of any transparent mask failures in saber; I know of one each in foil and epee. As transparent masks have been used for the longest time, and in greatest numbers, in saber, confidence in the safety of transparent masks in saber is high. There is, obviously, comparably less confidence in relation to the two point weapons. Given the current uncertainty, the FIE suspended the mandatory use of transparent masks in foil as of November 5, 2009, until independent testing of the most recent failure is completed. On November 18, 2009, the German Federation issued a ban on their use in all of its competitions in all weapons until further notice. Although the responses are different in magnitude, they reflect the commitment of both organizations to protecting athletes. Additional research will help determine the next step.

To help our research, if you know of any failures of any mask (transparent or mesh), in practice or competition at any level, or serious penetrating injury (in any part of the body), please contact me. ***AF***



19 Tactical Tips

By B.C. Milligan

I am an amateur coach, not a fencing master. I cannot claim to have created any world or national champions. What follows is a series of tactical suggestions, based upon my own coaching experience at the high school, college, and club level. Some people may find some of my suggestions useful. Some may not. If you do, all I ask is that you don't use my own ideas against me, should we meet on the strip!

With no further ado, here are my 19 tips, mostly aimed at foil fencers, but others may find some of them useful.

1. Fence at the Tape

By this I mean never be closer to your opponent than where the insulating tape on your blade and his or hers cross. If you are closer than that, and both decent fencers, the first person who realizes this fact is probably going to be the first one to score.

2. Start Slow, Finish Fast

This one comes from my current fencing master, Bin Lu of the Baltimore Fencing Centers, and is one of my favorites. Stalk, challenge, and test your opponents, until they take whatever bait you choose to tempt them with. And then, launch your attack at full speed. Too many fencers feint so fast their feint isn't perceived, and thus their brilliant disengage arrives in a line that is closed, not because their feint was a bad one, but merely because the victim didn't have time to see and respond to it.

3. Stay Low, Small Steps

Staying low means you are poised and balanced. Your steps are like frames in a movie. Every step is a snapshot, and it is also a decision point. With each step you take, you can decide — stop, retreat, take another step, or lunge. Larger steps mean less decision points. Less time between decisions means more tactical flexibility for you. Being able to make, say, three tactical decisions in the same time your opponent is only making two is a huge advantage, versus an opponent who has some skill.

4. The Strip is Your Battlefield

A lot of fencers never give much thought to the strip, or the conditions on their particular strip. For example, if the bout moves to either end, where the two-meter line used to mean something, and one fencer has one foot off the piste, the tactical situation is now radically changed.

Other factors come into play on the strip, too. For example, if my opponent likes to fleche, my first response when the next phrase begins is to move to the side on which he fleches. This forces him off the piste sooner, which means he has less time to hit me. It's a fairly simple response, but effective, against most fencers.

5. Break the Flow

Credit for this concept goes to Stephen Potter. You may have heard of a word he added to the language in his book, "Gamesmanship." Whatever your opponent is doing, or likes to do –don't let him do it. That's all. Potter subtitled his book, "The art of winning without actually cheating."

6. Use the Clock

It amazes me how so many fencers never, ever, ask how much time is remaining. One thing I love to do, when I have a comfortable lead and there is probably not much more than a minute left, is to loudly ask the referee how much time remains. I do this because I want my opponent to worry about the clock, instead of plan his next attack. It is my hope that this will provoke him into making desperate, ill-conceived attacks.

7. The Referee is Your Only Friend

You should treat the ref with decency, because it is the right thing to do, even if maybe you wished your cousin Earl was the ref instead of this guy. Most refs do their best to make the right calls. And if they goof sometimes, well, when it rains you get wet. Always be nice to the ref!

8. When you Begin an Attack, You Know just Two Things

Like it says above, you know just two things: what you see, and what your first move is going to be. You may have expectations of what he will do next, but no certainties.



WIE-Svatovsk (KAZ) v Campbel (USA)-prelim-Antalya 2009
Photo by Serge Timacheff

9. Since the Ref is Your Friend, Help Him Out a Bit

In foil, hold your ground when halt is called, if you got a yellow. If you registered a touch, go back to the guard line. If the ref lets this influence his call – good!

"You don't have to be better, you just have to win."

10. Never Look at the Ref When He is Making a Call

If you look at him, you are expressing doubt. Don't. Force him to make the decision without your passive help.

11. Parry an Attack – Not the Beginning of an Attack

Your opponent, when he is attacking, wants you to parry early, so he can disengage. Don't. Force him to commit himself first.

12. Be First Across the Center Line

My theory is that if you seem eager to come to grips with your opponent, at least for a moment, he might assume this is because you are more confident than he. Make him worry about what you are going to do – not vice versa.

13. Always Check the Score

This is an especially good thing to do when you are ahead, and probably know the score already. Be sure to ask for the score, when you know you have the lead!

14. Don't Wait to Lose

If your opponent attacks, and you parry without riposting, you are just staving off your inevitable defeat. Riposte if you parry, and attack when you can. Otherwise, you are just a target.

15. Footwork is the Key

Never stop moving. As long as you are moving, your opponent doesn't know where you will be when he begins his attack, nor does he know which one of your forward actions is actually an attack against him.

16. Never Stop Moving

Good fencers know when to advance. Great fencers know when to retreat.

17. The Best Parry is a Retreat

No, not social pressure! Your point should flow like water to your opponent's target. If he presses your blade, slip off his, and either attack or counter.

18. Yield to Pressure

Each fencer – the attacker and the defender – is waiting to see who is going to make the first mistake. The sooner your opponent shows you his, you can take advantage of it and hit him.

19. Force Him to Make the First Mistake

This thought occurred to me when I was coaching at Vassar, and one of my freshmen foilists was on the strip during a key bout. The score was 3-3, in a bout we needed to win. I called a timeout (the NCAA allowed them then) and went out to offer what help I could. I told my guy that as soon as the ref said, "Fence!" he should attack. His response was, "But coach – he's a lot better than me."

"You don't have to be better," I said to him. "You just have to win." And he did. Sometimes it's just that simple. ***AF***

17TH ANNUAL MR. MA CUP

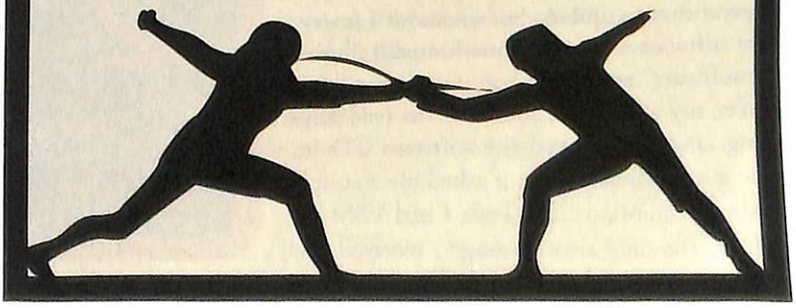
SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 5-6, 2010

- Open to USFA members of Y-10, Y-12, Y-14 & Open (men and women)
- Trophies awarded to top four finishers in each event, medals to fifth through eighth place finishers
- Over 700 participants competed in 2009

Burlington Township Middle School at Springdale
1600 Burlington, New Jersey 08016
Venue fully air-conditioned. Pre-registration required at askfred.net

For further information: www.fasj.com • fasj1@yahoo.com
(856)424-5070 • (908) 240-1911

Sponsored by: USFA South Jersey Division, Blue Gauntlet Fencing Gear, Inc., & The Fencing Academy of South Jersey



BY KATHRYN SCHIFFERLE

VIRTUAL SCORING MACHINE



This issue's product, the Virtual Scoring Machine, is one of those "why didn't I think of that??" ideas – a software and hardware package that turns your laptop, or any computer, into a scoring machine.

After slapping yourself in the head for NOT thinking about it – or at least marketing it — first, your next question might be, "Does it work?"

Yes. The VSM 2.0 is easy to use, and is a "World Cup quality" scoring system affordable for every high school, college, or small fencing club in the world.

Shawn Hart, the developer, and an avid fencer, reacted to FIE timing changes with the thought of how much easier it would be to just download a new program and be done with it. This led him to build a small, relatively simple, computer interface from a converted gamepad, which lets his software emulate a scoring machine. The refined version, a commercial product, is now available for $149 and called the VSM 2.0.

My 25 years in the software industry has made me very skeptical when it comes to claims that a product is easy to install, easy to use and easy to update. So, whenever I review new software I use my time-honored "break the software" approach.

Per my strategy, I chose not to read anything, and just shoved the software CD in. Like good software does, it asked me a couple of simple questions, and voila I had VSM installed. The only error message I received was due to not actually having hooked anything up. After I plugged in the Virtual Scoring Machine, which consists of a small black box about 3" x 6" x1", that has a 6-ft. USB cable connection on one side, a strip ground on the other, and of course the right and left reel plugs, all was well. The remote worked great – the benefit is that it is a standard "Windows Media Center" remote controller so you can use one you already have, or order one with the VSM ($15 XP - $25 Vista). The disadvantage is that you actually have to use the lookup chart to learn which buttons do what, since the remote is not customized.

Virtual Scoring Machine is one of those "why didn't I think of that??" ideas

The VSM 2.0 is 100 percent FIE compliant, can be used on a tiny netbook, or through a wall-size projector. It will run on Windows 98SE in case you have any old laptops, Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7. All of the "normal" scoring machine features are available, plus many more. And all the parameters are modifiable by the User (me). It has many interesting training features, with more to come. I easily spent an hour just playing with all the special sounds that come with it – how cool is it when you can have Homer say 'Doh' on an off-target!

In short, the VSM 2.0 delivers on its promise and is frankly a product that's long overdue to fencing. ***AF***



THE VETERANS FENCING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
MOSCOW, RUSSIA

SEPTEMBER 24TH-27TH, 2009

BY
DR. LARRY PINKUS
AND
RINALDO CAMPANA

The 2009 Veterans World Championships was another step in a the goal of achieving greater recognition of the veterans fencing movement. Thanks to the efforts of Rinaldo Campana, the head of the US delegation, and the support of the spirited cadre of diverse and skilled volunteer coaches and captains who shared a destiny with the team an exceptional team victory was achieved: 10 US medals!

The cadre was the strongest and largest ever, including co-captains Jude Offerle and Jim Adams, armorer Dan Dechaine, the US Fencing national team director, Andrea Lagan, team physician Dr. Gail Blakely and three hard working Russian-speaking coaches (Vladimir and Vitali Nazlymov and Iryna Dolgikh) who paid their own way. It is noteworthy that the members of this team not only persevered through the qualifying process but also the additional bureaucratic red tape involved in traveling to Russia. Everyone was required to obtain an invitation, a passport, and a visa, made easier through the efforts of the USFA staff, especially Andrea Lagan.

The organizers put on an excellent event, making the difficulties well worth it. The event was held at the 1980 Olympic fencing venue (CSRK Sportspalace) in Moscow from Sept. 23-27. The refereeing, the flooring (a nice soft composite track) and the lighting were all excellent. The opening ceremonies featured not only the usual welcoming speeches, but also balletic and theatrical fencing to music and an entertaining wheelchair saber bout. We were reminded of the rich Soviet and Russian tradition in fencing as the names of multiple world and Olympic champions (including our coach Vladimir Nazlymov), were read. The team accommodations at the Aerostar and Aeropolis Hotels were walking distance to the venue and to food stores and restaurants.

The results demonstrated the continued depth and sheer strength of the team. Despite the eight-hour time difference, which made sleep aids worth having, and despite the fact that some veteran teammates could not make the trip to Moscow, the strong US Team gave a fine effort and won the most medals of any team —ten. Incidentally, this is typical of our performance at the World Championships. Russia, which previously had no footprint in medals at the Veteran Worlds, found some of its former champions, and won five titles and tied with Germany at nine medals followed by England (8 medals), France (6) and Italy.

The diversity of strength in veterans fencing was evident with gold medal winners from South Africa, Norway, Bulgaria (Mihail Etropolski from the NYAC), Japan, Sweden and Austria as well as the usual powerhouses.

The medalists from the USA were a mix of expected and unexpected. Walter Dragonetti finally won the Gold in the 50-59 Men's Epee event after previous silver and bronze medals. Someone mentioned that you "don't want to make Walter angry," but that is exactly what the organizers did by giving him the wrong start time for his championship match against Tishko of the Ukraine, a former senior World Champion. Although behind at the half, Walter stood like a defensive wall and later attacked to win a close bout.

In 50-59 women's foil event, Anne Marie Walters won silver and led the entire team to top 8 finishes. Newcomer Katalin Kenessy-Gasparin won bronze, while Michelle Verhave (5th) and Jeanette Starks-Faulkner (7th), who lost to Anne Marie, all fenced very well. Team veterans Ray Sexton, bronze in 60-69 men's saber, and Delia Turner, silver in the 50-59 women's saber, were repeat medalists from Limoges last year. Ronald King, on his first team, fenced well to take 6th in 60-69 men's foil.

The tournament featured some wonderful surprises, amazing comebacks, near misses, disappointing turnarounds, and plain bad luck.

Men's 70+ events were held for the first time, and Tung-Shan (Fritz as he is known in the US) Chang, who is coached by his son, Tim Chang, came from out of the blue to win a bronze medal in the 70's men's foil event.

continued on p. 36



Vladimir Nazlimov, Ohio State fencing coach and US veterans team coach; Jude Offerle, US veterans team, co-captain; Max W.F. Geuter, secretary general, European Fencing Federation and FIE veterans official; Rinaldo A. Campana, US veterans team head of delegation; Evgenie Tsonkhlo, manager of the Moscow Veterans World Championships; James Adams, US veterans team co-captain; and Alexander Kapustin, vice president of the Russian Fencing Federation in charge of veterans fencing.

continued from p. 36



Michele Verhave, Katlin Kenessey-Gasparin, coach Iryna Dolgikh, Anne-Marie Walters, and Jennette Starks-Faulkner

His delight at this accomplishment was inspiring to see. Bob Cochrane, a former medalist, pulled the greatest comeback in the 60-69 men's epee, coming from a 5-0 deficit against former world champion Graham Paul in the round of 16 to win that match. He finally lost to another multiple world champion, Ralph Johnson, and settled for bronze.

Atilio Tass in the 50-59 men's saber faced last year's world champion, Carrara of Italy, in a medal bout. At 9-9, Atilio chased his opponent off the end of the strip to win the bronze medal. Eileen O'Leary, who travelled from her home in Atlanta to train with Wang Yung in Seattle, fenced very consistently to win a silver medal in 60-69 women's saber. She won bronze last year. Luck of the draw is the only thing that kept Jane Eyre from winning a medal. She was undefeated in her pool of 50-59 women's saber but ran into three-time world champ Jane Hutchinson of England in the round of 8 and, although fencing beautifully, lost 10-8. Ironically this occurred because Hutchinson in the seeding pool had lost two bouts, one to Douville of the USA, and had a lower seed.

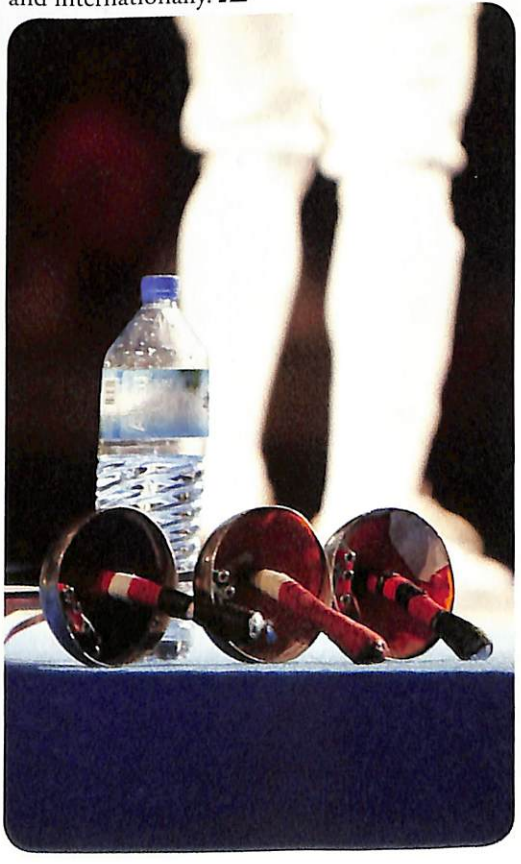
Bronze medalist David Jacobson, former member of the 50-59 men's saber team that swept the medals in 2002, seemed to be cruising, up 5-1 and 9-4 against a tough Italian, Enrico Antinoro. Then everything that had been working stopped, and he lost 10-9. Unlikely, but that's fencing at the highest level. Antinoro had defeated the U.S.'s Joshua Runyan 10-9 in a prior round.

Other examples were Heik Hambarzumian, 5th in 60-69 men's foil, who came from far behind to 9-9, only to lose the last touch and a medal. Larry Pinkus (60-69 men's saber) scored on nine attacks to reach 9-7 against Panon of France, but couldn't find a tenth. Panon then came from down 5-1 against the top-seeded Italian, Filippi, to win a silver medal. These were just a few of the many exciting bouts.

On the final day the tradition of having friendly team competitions continued with USA teams taking on Japan in women's epee and men's saber. The USA women's foil team also organized a match. Vladimir Nazlymov helped by finding referees and arranging for use of the finals piste.

The team and its cadre of professional volunteers will remember these world championships and the quality of competitors like never before. The new 70+ age categories saw great participation, with 15 to 25 fencers in each event from a variety of countries. In fact the most exceptional performance at this year's Worlds was achieved by Gari Aftandilov from Russia, who won the 70+ events in all three disciplines. It is probably an accomplishment that will never be duplicated again. In the saber final he defeated Wolf Nettingsmeyer of Germany, a two time world champion in the 60-69 age group and eight-time medalist. At the Final Gala two women from the USA team escorted him to the dance floor in recognition of his achievement. It was obvious that there is no turning back, the 70+ categories are here to stay and next year will include women's 70+ events.

. The 2010 Veterans world championships will be held in Purec, Croatia. With the success and support evident this year, the likely addition of women's 70+ events to the world championships in 2010, and the addition of team events for veterans to our national championships, veteran fencing continues to grow in the USA and internationally. ***AF***



Product Previews

Fencing Fortune Cookies

A stocking stuffer for the superstitious (or peckish) fencer. Two packs of ten cookies for $15, available from Big for our Britches.
617.515.0955
www.bigforourbritches.com



Swordplayla.com Fencing Jewelry



Beautiful sterling silver and solid 14 karat gold jewelry in hard-to-find fencer themes. These designs are modern and attractive and really reasonably priced. $32 – $99, from Swordplay Studios.
818.566.1777
www.swordplayla.com



Blackberry Storm2 ™

Others might tout the phone's enhanced SurePress touchscreen, the WiFi support, the 3.25-inch screen. Fencers, however, will of course prize the countdown timer, perfect for refereeing, and the 3.2 MP camera that can also video bouts. Available from Verizon Wireless for $200 with contract.
800.256.4646
www.verizonwireless.com



Mashoonga!

Wacky Whackers for older kids. Mashoonga is a faux-swordplay game invented by kids for kids with its own unique rules. Pick your weapon, saber or bo-staff, and whap away! Have fun at home with the non-fencing set and who knows, maybe you'll get your neighbor's family fencing! $25 for a set.

www.mashoonga.com or www.fencing.net

Want Abuse? Get Previewed!

Important Disclaimer: Tell us about your latest and greatest products —email editor@americanfencing.com. The previews found are not representative of any official position of US Fencing, nor should they be taken as any type of official endorsement.

FencingPhotos.com

Official USFA & FIE Photographer



Congratulations, Mariel!
Gold Medal, Women's Sabre
2009 World Championships, Antalya

Mariel Zagunis
World Champion and
Two-time Olympic
Gold Medalist
Photo: S. Timacheff

FencingPhotos.com

The world's largest collection of professional, high-quality fencing photographs from world championships, grand prixs, the Olympic Games, and U.S. national events. More than one milion fencing images of action, ceremony, emotion, athleticism, and pure joy.

High-resolution digital downloads.
Archival-quality prints of all sizes.
Gift items and apparel.
Licensing for commercial, personal, and editorial uses.

USA FENCING

F I E
Photographe Officiel

The Point



PARENT'S CORNER

SIDELINE BEHAVIOR FOR PARENTS

By Monica Kao

At a recent youth circuit event, some parents showed that they just don't get it. Parents of Youth-12 fencers, with perhaps three-years experience of watching fencing, were brazenly and loudly blaming referees for calls that went against their kids. One 12-year-old child who lost in overtime had a meltdown on the strip. His father, within hearing distance of the referee, accused the referee of robbing his child of the win. With not many coaches in attendance, it seemed that parents felt entitled to the role of challenging the referee, without the authority and fencing knowledge of a coach, of course. Parents didn't recognize calls and in many cases the young fencers understandably didn't either, but that didn't temper the blame game. In one instance, a father asked for a judge to watch his son's foil bout. "A hand judge?" the referee asked, though he didn't see any covering of target. "No," the father said, "someone to make better calls, a right-of-way judge." Take a deep breath, parents. You can't ask for a judge because you don't agree with the calls.

The Fencing Officials Commission explains time and time again why it's not good for anyone when those on the side of the strip interfere with the fencing on the strip. But it seems that parents aren't hearing it. No parent or coach likes to see their fencer lose, fairly or unfairly, but please, let's remember the following:

1. As a parent who has never fenced, no matter how much you've watched from the sidelines, no matter how good your club and coaches are, you are much less likely to know the rules and actions than you think you are. Rated referees are not infallible, but they are educated.
2. The Super Youth and Regional Youth Circuits are meant to be your fencer's first exposure to a national level of competition. The tournaments often provide refereeing by a few rated, national referees. These folks by definition are better than most referees at your club. They will see actions that you can't, and will determine who got the touch, not fall back on simultaneous calls that award both or no touches. Other referees at these events will be developmental, that is, intentionally assigned by the head referees to improve their skills. They also are often better than the reluctant fencer pressed into refereeing service in your division. Further, by creating bad experiences for novice referees, you discourage young talents from continuing in the sport. By acting badly in front of experienced referees, you paint yourself as a problem, and believe me, that word gets around fast.
3. Finally, and perhaps most importantly: the reason many parents love fencing is that it teaches children independence, responsibility for their actions, sportsmanship, and honor and grace in winning and losing. Parents who argue with referees during youth competitions further NONE of these ends. It reinforces the idea that fencers are not responsible for their own problem solving on the strip, and that someone, their coach or their parent, must take care of them. It supports obnoxious, unsportsmanlike behavior and makes it acceptable in a youth arena. It teaches, incorrectly, that disrespecting referees is the way to react to calls that go against you. Dealing with calls, recovering mentally, and choosing the next action is a critical skill for young fencers to develop. Don't get in the way of that learning.

So let's make a New Year's resolution to understand the rules regarding permissible protests on the strip and make it a learning experience by teaching our children those rules as well. ***AF***

HINTS FROM HELMETESE

Greasy Kids Stuff

Take a tip from Mom, wash delicate lames with Mr. Bubble.

TECHTALK

STRIP MAINTENANCE

By Ted Li

Have you ever been a local organizer of a major fencing competition or a club owner who suddenly found that the metallic strips to be used were filthy and did not ground properly? Most people take metallic strips for granted, assuming that, of course, they will function properly when we want them to. But like all the other items associated with fencing, the strips need to be given preventive maintenance.

New strips – whether rolled "copper" or plate aluminum – usually have an oily film, a residue of the manufacturing process that can make the strip extremely slippery. Older aluminum strips develop a film of aluminum oxide which acts like a lubricant. Perforated aluminum strips, the "cheese graters," collect dust and debris in their perforations. How are these conditions to be remediated?

The first step is to sweep or vacuum all the dust and debris from the strip. Then damp mop the strip vigorously with a solution of water and methyl (denatured) alcohol. The proportions of the solution are not critical but one (1) part alcohol to ten (10) parts water seems to work well to remove both the dust and the oily film.

If a strip has chewing gum on it, you can use mineral spirits, ice, or chocolate to remove it. As strange as it sounds, chocolate does dissolve chewing gum!

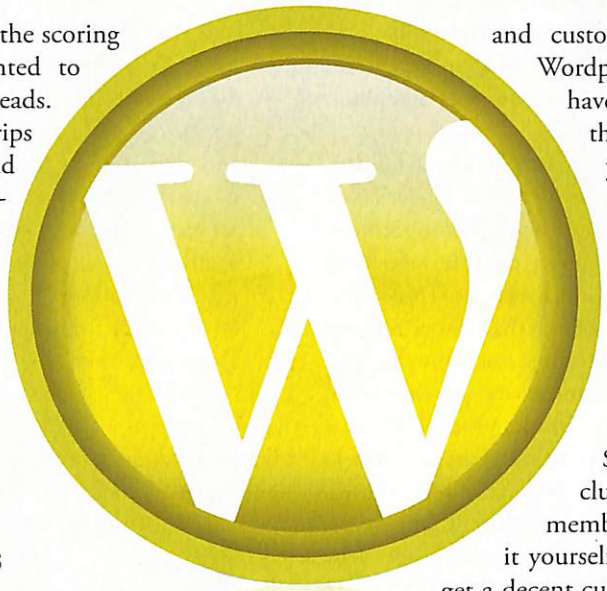
Another problem that older strips develop is intermittent grounding – the rules specify a maximum electrical resistance of 5.0 ohms from end to end. Intermittent grounding is a problem found most in the aluminum panel strips. The solution: place a piece of heavy duty aluminum foil under each joint where the panels meet each other. Voila! You have a huge ground plane at a minimal cost. Of course the electrical connection between the strip and the scoring machine (not the reels), should be clean and electrically conductive.

Spending some time once or twice a year can assure that your metallic strips will continue to function as if they were new. It's well worth the investment in time. ***AF***

ONLINE MARKETING

By Craig Harkins

The floors are done; the scoring machines are mounted to the walls and overheads. Reels are in place. Strips are marked off and installed. The equipment is all ready and set up for your beginner classes and your coaches are eager to start up the next round of classes.



Now all you have to do is find some more customers.

If you're like most local small business, you've tried a host of marketing programs and promotions to get new members in the door to take a stab at fencing. You've got a good product and your club members are your raving fans, and word of mouth is bringing in a good number of new members.

You're probably getting sales calls from companies such as YellowBook.com or even ad reps from some local search marketing company that promises to deliver traffic to your web site. Maybe they are even offering to build a web site for you as part of the package.

Here are a few things that should get you moving along with creating your online lead generation and sales machine:

Get a web site with a content management system (CMS).

A "content management system" refers to any process you have in place for managing news and other content for your web site.

A blog is just one type of CMS, but blogs usually only show the newest content first where a more advanced CMS (or blog setup) lets you specify what content shows up at the top of the home page.

A couple of good options are Joomla and Wordpress. A year ago I would have endorsed Joomla, but now there are so many developers and customizations available for Wordpress that if you don't have someone in the club that can do the work for you, finding a programmer is not difficult and the work is not expensive.

Hosting your web site should cost about $10 to $25 per month and registering your domain name is about $12 per year. If your club does not have any members who are able to do it yourself, you should be able to get a decent customized Wordpress site built for between $500 and $1000.

The great thing about a CMS is that you can specify content that stays up on the home page of your web site, but also have a section that changes over time when you have news or events to publish. All of those items are your content and those content items get wrapped up by Joomla and Wordpress into something called an RSS feed, which makes it easier to push your site's content out to your customers and prospects.



Another great feature of web sites driven by a CMS is that you can have your current members register so that when they are on the site, they can get information relevant to them but anyone else that is new to the site sees a site that is focused on introducing the sport and getting them to take the next step in your sales process.

Once your web site is developed, have someone with no knowledge of fencing go through it to make sure that the site makes sense to them and that they can easily find all of the information they need in order to contact you to sign up for classes.



In a follow-up article, we'll go over more tactics that you can put in place to engage with more prospects. ***AF***

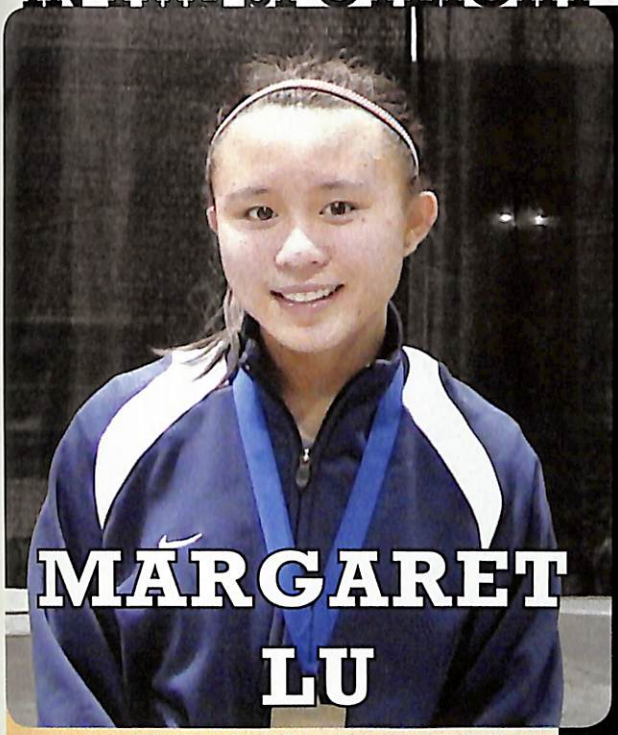
NECESSITIES FOR YOUR WEB SITE:

- A clear unique selling proposition (USP) – Why a person should choose to spend their time and money on fencing at your club rather than a karate class, soccer league, or any of the myriad outlets that are your competition at the local level.
- An offer. This could be anything that you use as your main promotion to get people in the door. Some clubs offer a free lesson or free group class. Whatever your offer is, make sure it stands out on your home page.

Schedule of events and classes. If you have a new class starting up, make sure that it is publicized on your site. Have a calendar up on the site that shows when the group classes are and what age/ability groups can participate.

- Contact Information: This should be the easiest thing to find on your site as you want to generate calls to sign up for your class.
- Frequently Asked Questions: Use part of your site to answer the most common questions and concerns that you've been asked in the past. You can call it a FAQ, or better yet something catchy like "10 Reasons Why Fencing Trumps Soccer." Articles and Q&A resources serve to highlight your expertise.
- Map and directions to your facility along with hours of operation. Linking to Google Maps or MapQuest so that people can grab driving directions is a big help.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



MARGARET LU

On center stage of US Fencing Juniors and Cadets this season will be Margaret Lu. The 15-year-old foil fencer is the current Under-19 and Youth 14 US National Champion. At the same Summer National Championships last July, she won the silver in the Cadet event. So far this season she won the November Junior NAC in Kansas City and the Cadet silver medal in the same tournament.

Margaret's brother, Enzo, began fencing after seeing Star Wars, and Margaret, then 9, tagged along. He has since stopped but for Margaret the passion lives on. She practices four to five days each week, an hour drive each way to practice.

Fencing To Her Own Beat:
"I play the drums in a band called Inparentheses. We are a two-girl band and we meet one to two times a week after school on days that I am not fencing. It helps to keep me sane. We are currently working on our first album and we'll have a Myspace page with songs soon."

Who is your "fencing hero":
"My fencing hero is Sean McClain, and not just because he is my coach. Sean was an amazing fencer who had beautiful technique and was a great competitor."

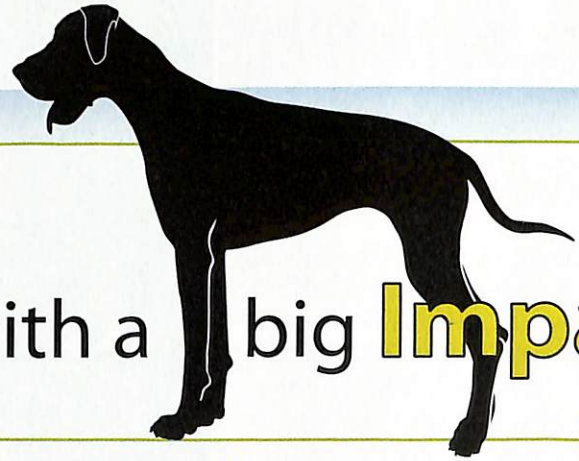
STATS & FACTS

Hometown: Greenwich, Conn.
Birthdate: March 21, 1994 (Manila, Philippines)
High School: Greenwich High School, 2012
Club: Empire United Fencing
Coached by: Sean McClain

Highlights:
Bronze, Cadet World Cup, Samorin Slovakia 10/08;
Silver, Cadet World Cup, Salzburg Austria 11/08;
Bronze, Cadet World Cup, Cabries France 11/08

Simplex Studios
We Create Your Image





...with a big Impact!

+ Wordpress Design
- Custom Templates
- Theme Editing
- Wordpress Training
- Social Media

+ Graphic Design
- Advertising
- Logos
- Marketing Materials
- Newsletters

+ Business Services
- Google Apps Setup
- Custom Email
- Website Design
- SEO & Analytics

Call Us Today!
(719)623-5208

facebook.com/simplexstudios @simplexstudios

free marketing & design tips at: www.simplexstudios.com/fencing

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2009 FIE WORLD CONGRESS



US Fencing's delegation with Maxim Paramanov, FIE Secretary General: left-right: Jason Rogers, Amy Timacheff, Mariel Zagunis, Maxim Paramonov, Francisco Martin, Sam Cheris, Sunil Sabharwal | Photos by Serge Timacheff

At the recent FIE (International Fencing Federation) Congress meeting in Palermo, Italy, there were a number of key decisions that directly affect US Fencing. Most notably, the "principles of rotation" were reiterated such that two team events will not be included on the 2012 Olympic fencing schedule in London.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) continues to limit the sport of fencing to ten events, rather than the 12 events at World Championships – two genders, three weapons, team and individual. For each Olympic Games the FIE must decide which two events will not take place. A system of rotating the team events was begun in Athens so that all six team events would have equal opportunity to be on the schedule over a period of three Olympic Games.

The FIE, after review by the Congress, announced that women's team saber and men's team epee would not be on the program in 2012 in London. This is disappointing news for the US, given our international successes in women's saber, especially at the recent Olympic Games.

Mariel Zagunis received another accolade when Alisher Usmanov, FIE president, announced the decision to award the Challenge Feyerick award to Mariel. This prestigious award, named after Chevalier Feyerick, the Secretary General of the FIE from 1933 to 1940, is an honorary trophy awarded, every two years, to an individual fencer, fencing team, group of fencers, or federation who have shown the most chivalrous and unselfish attitude and spirit of sportsmanship.

A number of other key decisions took place at the meeting, that had representatives from 116 national federations (either present or represented). Here are a few of them:

- Catania, Italy, was selected to host the 2011 World Championships.
- The Olympic qualification path was modified in a proposal to the



JASON ROGERS (USA)

International Olympic Committee, increasing the number of total fencers participating and affecting zonal qualifications.

- The cadet events were voted to remain as part of the annual Junior/Cadet World Championships. It had been proposed to separate or eliminate them.

- Ukraine withdrew its hosting for the 2011 Junior/Cadet World Championships, while Jordan announced its candidacy to host them.

- Bulgaria announced its candidacy to host the 2013 World Championships, and Ukraine announced its candidacy for the 2013 Junior/Cadet World Championships

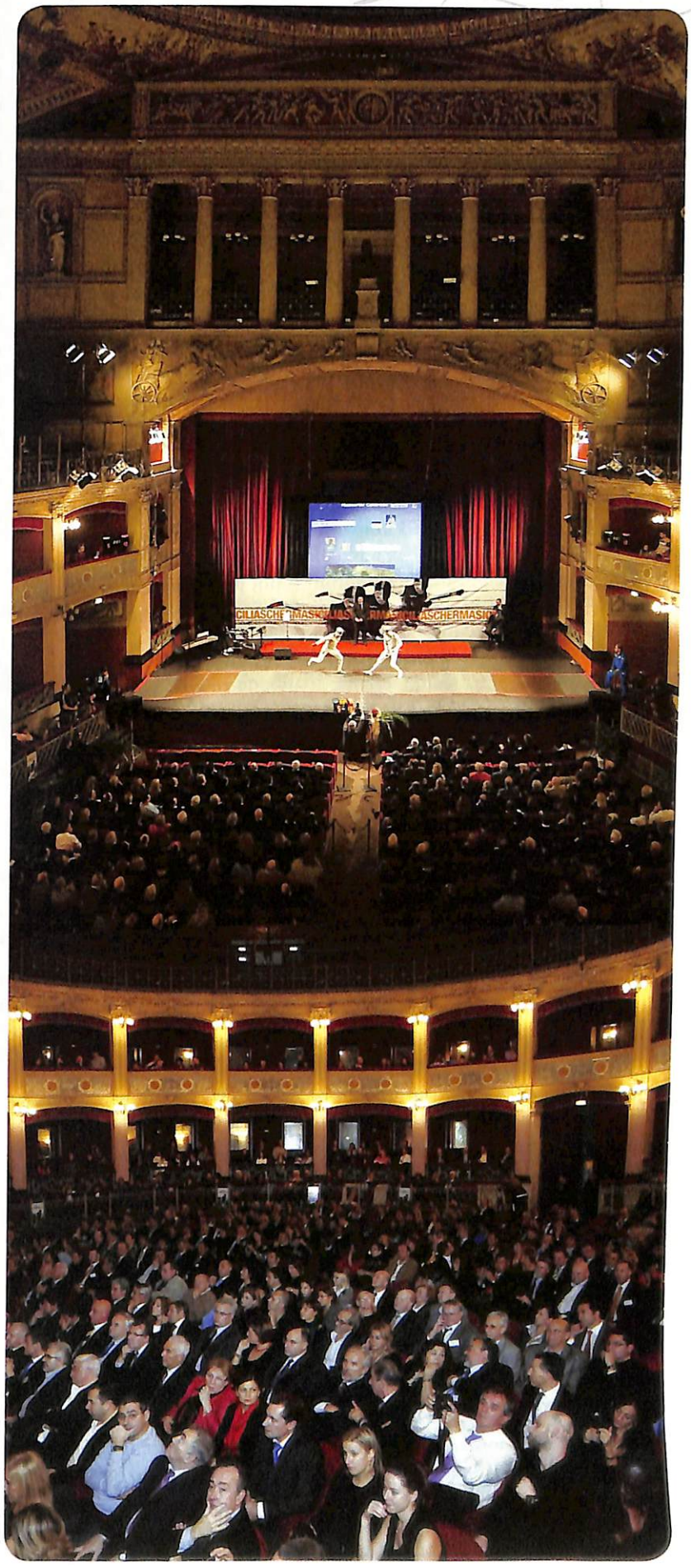
- Italian Marcello Baiocco, a long-time member of the FIE SEMI commission, was nominated as Member of Honour of the FIE.

Among some of the social events at the congress, a mini-fencing competition featuring Olympic fencers from six countries (Italy, Senegal, China, Russia, USA, Germany) took place at the beautiful and grand Teatro Politeama opera house in Palermo. The event, a memorial for legendary Italian Olympic fencer Wladimiro Calarese, was an eight-person direct elimination. USA Olympic silver medalist Jason Rogers, the only American fencer in the group, went out in the eight, losing to Italian Olympic gold medalist (Athens) Aldo Montano.

US delegation members to the FIE Congress, held November 20-22, included Sam Cheris, Sunil Sabharwal, and Francisco Martin.

-Serge Timacheff





How to Fence Better and Still Have Fun

BY DOUGLAS CAIRNS, PH.D., LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST

1. Who You Are Influences How You Fence

Complete the following sentence, then see the last page of this article for discussion:

When I have an important decision to make I usually _____.

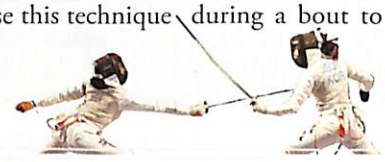
Aldo Nadi, reportedly the greatest fencer of the 20th century, said that after five minutes on the fencing strip he knew all there was to know about a person. Who you are as a person will surface early in your fencing. People who are thoughtful and considerate will fence in a thoughtful and considerate manner. People who are aggressive by nature will fence in an aggressive manner. Passive thinkers will fence passively and analyze every action. Impulsive people will tend to rush their fencing. Whatever your style you will need to adapt to the demands of the fencing strip. Passive people will need to learn to attack. Impulsive people will need to learn patience and plan their actions.

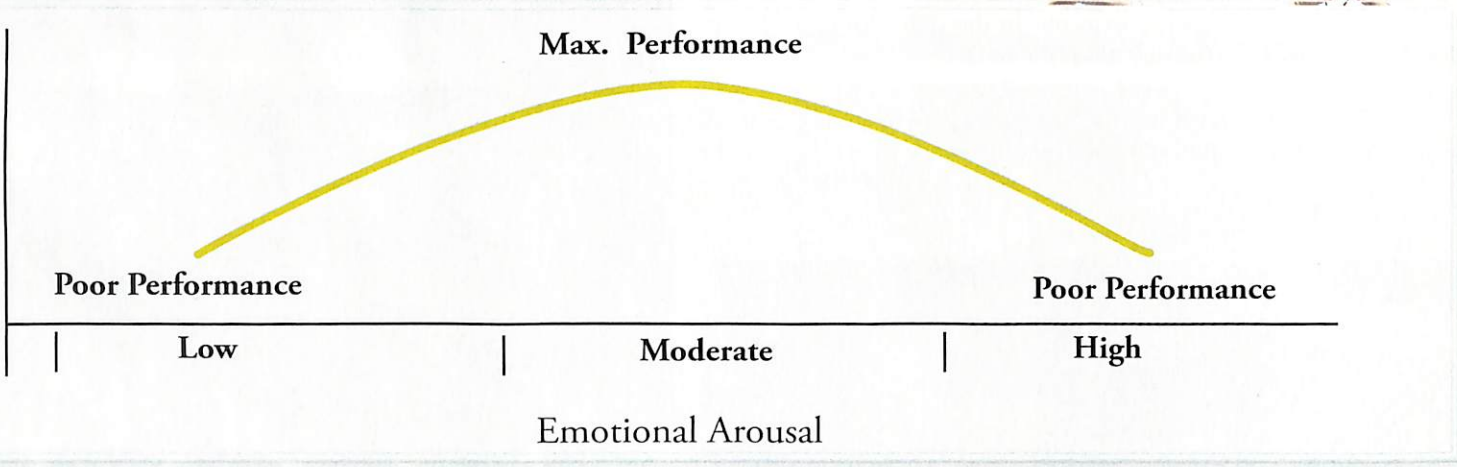
No matter how successful you are in adapting your personality style to the demands of the strip, mismanaged stress will snap you back like a rubber band. Skilled opponents know this and will push you to the limits. As frustration increases so does adrenaline. Fine motor actions needed for point control disappear. Fluid motion is not possible. Fencing actions become wider and faster. Psychological meltdown is imminent.

3. Moderate Your Emotional Arousal Levels

Finding the balance between feeling overly energized and overly-relaxed is the key to mental training. Your optimum level of arousal may shift from right to left depending on your personality and coping style. This is further influenced by your level of training and physical fitness. The well-trained (physically and mentally) athlete faced with critical performance situations is better able to tolerate increasing arousal levels and may even draw extra energy from the pressure of competition.

One way to view arousal is to think in terms of tire pressure. Many people approach a performance situation with over-inflated tires. You must relieve some of the tire pressure by activities such as relaxation, self-talk, imagery, calm diaphragmatic breathing, or easy stretching. If your tires are under inflated you must increase the pressure by running in place, fast breathing to increase heart rate, imagery to view yourself in the heat of competition, or listen to energizing music. One technique is to rapidly squeeze the grip of your weapon between the thumb and forefinger as if pumping up a tire. Stop when you feel the optimum level of pressure (arousal) has been achieved. Use your middle finger to press on the grip to relieve pressure if too much has been added. Use this technique during a bout to add or relieve pressure as necessary.





2. Eliminate Fear of Failure

What do you think about the fencer who has temper tantrums when they lose a touch or bout? Are they having fun? Are they successful overall? For these fencers, frustration and anger take over. What fuels their feelings? They have expectations that are not being met. Their heads are filled with "shoulds" about their performance, and when expectations are not met they become frustrated and angry about fear of failure. They tell themselves to "try harder" and as a result feel they *should* then succeed. If they try harder without a plan or tool to manage frustration they most likely will not succeed. So begins the downward spiral.

How you handle failure and defeat during the first three years of your fencing career will determine your fencing future. By placing unrealistic expectations on yourself and having a "winning is everything" approach you will not be happy. Developing a successful fencing game takes years (some estimate it to be three to five years). Not many people can sustain efforts in the face of "failure" year after year.

4. Establish Your Goals

The quickest way to become frustrated with fencing is to not set goals. If you have no goals for your fencing game you will not progress.

Fencers often fall into the "I must win to be successful" way of setting goals. The problem with this thinking is that you might fence the best bout of your life and still lose. Goals need to be linked to performance, but the performance must be within your control. The outcome of a bout is determined by not only your fencing but that of your opponent also. You have no control over how your opponent fences. You do have control over your game provided you understand the necessary components.

Fencing is made up of four skill sets:

1. Physical condition
2. Mental preparation
3. Technical skills
4. Tactical sense

How do you set goals?

Progress must be made in each of these skill sets for fencing to improve. Therefore, each skill set needs its own goal program. Recognize that these skill sets are inextricably bound to one another. It is no good to set goals for improved lunging ability if you have poor leg strength. If your tactical thinking is far in advance of your technical skill "your brain will be writing checks that your body can't possibly honor." Goals for each area must be challenging but not unrealistic.

Goals must have a language that relates to measurable progress. For example, let's say you set a goal to achieve a national ranking. The first question must be, "How do I measure my progress?" You either have a national ranking or you don't. It would probably be better to view this as an achievement outcome and not as a measurable goal. On the other hand, you might have a goal of winning the next bout. How would you measure progress toward that goal?

Goals need to be easily linked to performance. Long-term goals must be broken down into measurable steps. To achieve a national ranking you must first qualify for the Nationals by finishing in the top 25% at a division qualifying tournament. To achieve that goal you must outscore the majority of your opponents. To do this you must win bouts, which means you must give more touches than you receive. An appropriate interim goal then might be to improve your indicators over the course of a competitive season and be successful in DE bouts. To do this you must track your indicators for each pool and DE bout you fence. To further break down the goal setting process you might say that for your indicators to improve, you need to improve your ability to carry out successful attacks, parry riposte, develop a better sense of distance, be able to get that elusive final touch when the bout goes 4-4, etc.



Goal setting means record keeping. You must have a written record of your performance if you are to see progress. There is an axiom in performance improvement that says, "If you don't measure it, it won't change." Therefore, keeping a small notebook in your fencing bag and recording the outcome of all of your tournament bouts is the only way to see change.

5. Develop a Tool Box of Stress Management Skills

The pyramid of escalating anxiety provides a model for understanding the need to master mental skills training in order to progress up the performance pyramid. The example below shows that anxiety tends to increase as you move up the pyramid. The level labels are used as examples. You should decide on your own labels to identify progressively increasing levels of anxiety that inhibit and erode performance.

Each level needs to be mastered before moving on. For example, if you cannot control anxiety during friendly practice bouting, you are not likely to perform well when bouting in a club tournament. This is not to say that you should strive to eliminate anxiety. Recalling the arousal model above, you need to find your optimum level of arousal for peak performance.

Typically, the skills applied to manage the mental game involve Relaxation/Activation, Concentration, Self-Talk, Imagery, and Performance Routines.

Relaxation is designed to slow the heart rate and reduce the effects of adrenaline. Simple breathing techniques can reduce tension enough to allow for further muscle relaxation. Taking slow and deliberate breaths using the diaphragm instead of chest and shoulder muscles promotes relaxation. Listening to quiet music or thinking about some noncompetitive event can focus your attention away from anxiety provoking images related to the competition. One fencer I have witnessed did crossword puzzles between his pool bouts.

Concentration issues are one of the most difficult and essential skills to master in mental skills training. No matter how well thought out your game plan, during the stress of competition the most common reaction is to experience "vapor lock" in your thinking. All of a sudden, your mind goes blank. Concentration training requires practice if you are going to be able to implement your game plan based on what your opponent is doing. Concentration does not mean looking at some minute aspect of your opponent's actions (e.g., watching the blade movements). Concentration allows you to develop a more comprehensive picture of your opponent. Exercise practice involves focusing on internal sensations and external stimuli while at the same time being able to avoid distractions of noise and unwanted visual cues. Concentration skills allow you to have better peripheral vision, which makes you better able to respond to your opponent's style and recognize patterns in their game.

Self-Talk is something that people engage in thousands of times a day. Statements range from harsh and unforgiving to non-judgmental and supportive. There is little question that performance is adversely effected by harsh and unforgiving self-talk (e.g., "I never get it right," "I always lose to this opponent," "I can never figure out how to win"). Negative self-statements seem to be a natural reaction to mistakes ("Oh, that was stupid") and performance below our expectations ("I'll never get this right"). The concept of the "self-fulfilling prophecy" is related to negative self-talk where your belief that you will not succeed actually leads you to failure. At the first sign of negative statements you should take control by saying "STOP" and begin to reframe your thinking. Instead of thinking "How will I ever beat this opponent", change the self-talk to "OK, if I just stay calm and be patient, I will see an opportunity for a touch. If I can get one touch then I can get another."

continued on p. 46

How to Fence Better and Still Have Fun

continued from p. 45

One of the best Larsen cartoons shows two elderly ladies cowering inside at their front door, while through the window can be seen a huge monstrous bug on the front porch. One lady says to the other, "Yes, dear, I realize that it is a huge, incredibly monstrous, and hideously ugly bug, but perhaps it is a huge, incredibly monstrous, and hideously ugly bug that needs help." Changing and reframing negative statements into positive self-talk can often produce a dialogue to work through problems.

Imagery involves visualization of positive outcomes. Seeing successful performance in your mind's eye can influence the outcome. Jack Nicklaus, for example, has said that he always tried to imagine the shot before he actually hit it. He not only imagined the feel of the shot, but actually pictured the flight of the ball. Gustav Weder, the great Swiss bobsled driver, used visualization to help him win the gold medal in the two-man event at Lillehammer. A year before the games he took more than 40 pictures of the race course showing every curve and straight. He laid out the entire course, photo by photo, on his living room floor. Each day, he sat on the floor in front of the photos for an hour and mentally rehearsed every turn. A sense of mastery over performance skills can be developed by using this "inner theater" in your mind. Imagine yourself facing a known opponent and watch his/her attacks unfold in slow motion. See your response and rehearse it over and over until it becomes automatic. Another way to develop imagery is to watch fencing DVD's. Analyze the actions as you watch in slow motion. Develop a theater in your mind to display these images over and over as you see the touch land.

Performance Routines involve preparation for competition. Careful planning allows your mind to relax and avoid having to deal with the minutia associated with preparation. Check all equipment the day *before* a tournament. Review your goals and establish positive self-talk for improving confidence. Be familiar with your equipment bag and make sure you can find everything, even in the dark. Do not add new equipment routines (new bag, new gear storage system) for at least two weeks before a tournament. Establish your plan for nutrition during the tournament. Use food that you are familiar with and have used before. You may need to plan for breakfast and start fencing at 8am, or plan for lunch and start fencing at noon. Establish *sameness* in your equipment. All weapons should be exactly the same. Many people have favorites in their weapon inventory (I know one fencer who actually names them). What happens if your favorite breaks during competition? Now you must use a weapon with less confidence.

Plan for periods of inactivity between bouts, and between pools and DE's. Keeping muscles warm for periods of up to two hours may be necessary. Pace yourself so that you will be at peak performance levels throughout the day. Be mindful of the need to increase arousal or decrease anxiety between bouts.

Those who are successful with mental skills training recognize that fencing is a learning process. Just as one does not become angry with children who make mistakes when learning to read, successful beginning fencers do not punish themselves with critical self-statements when they lose a bout. They do not view an opponent as someone who is going to "beat" them with unfamiliar moves and make them appear foolish. Instead, they view the bout as a series of obstacles to overcome. Each touch is a puzzle to be solved. Instead of saying to themselves "I can *beat* this person," they say things like, "this opponent is an obstacle for me to overcome," and "the only touch that matters is the next one, so I need to solve the puzzle and make the next touch."

Fencing is a game that requires commitment. You will find that progress will be in direct proportion to the time invested. This investment must include physical as well as mental training. Remember, it was Yogi Berra who said "fencing is 50 percent physical and 90 percent mental."

Sentence Completion from page 44

The sentence completion on page 44 can reflect a style of decision making that often influences fencing. Typically, there are two styles of response. One style suggests a cautious approach to making decisions where the sentence is completed with: When I have an important decision to make I usually "think about it," or "consider all aspects." or "weigh the possibilities," etc. The other style reflects an action oriented style where the sentence is completed with: When I have an important decision to make I usually "make it." One style is not better than the other. They simply reflect different approaches to the same problem. Taken to their extremes, one would reflect a style where the individual is crippled by indecision as the result of obsessive rumination over every conceivable outcome. The other style would risk impulsive behavior, acting on whim and irrelevant stimuli. ***AF***

This article is an outline for discussion related to topics on the mental aspects of fencing. Additional information on this topic may be found in:

Heil, J. & Zealand, C. (2001). Psychological Skills Training Manual. United States Fencing Association Technical Report (No. 2001-10). Colorado Springs, CO: United States Olympic Training Center.

FENCING CAMP AT PENN
THE 2010 JUNIOR FENCING CAMP
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
IS SCHEDULED FOR:
JULY 18-JULY 24 AND JULY 25-JULY 31, 2010
OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL STAFF
AIR-CONDITIONED DORMS AND PLENTIFUL MEALS INCLUDED

WEEK 1: EMPHASIZES TRAINING, SKILL DRILLS, BOUTING LESSONS, LEARNING AND IMPROVING ABILITIES, APPLYING SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES TO COMPETITIVE SITUATIONS
WEEK 2: EMPHASIZES TOURNAMENT COMPETITION AND MAXIMIZING COMPETITIVE SUCCESS, LESSONS, STRATEGY, TACTICS, BOUT STRUCTURE, AND TIME MANAGEMENT, COMPETITIVE BOUTING FORMATS.

YOU MAY ATTEND WEEK 1, WEEK 2, OR 2 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS.
FOR MORE INFORMATION AND AN APPLICATION
PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE AT:
www.FencingCampAtPenn.com

OR CONTACT COACH ANDY MA, FENCING CAMP DIRECTOR:
PHONE: 215-898-6116
EMAIL: ANDYMA@UPENN.EDU
AGES 14-17. MINIMUM ONE-YEAR COMPETITION EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
SIGN UP SOON, SPACE IS LIMITED

Classifieds

Antalya 2009 Photo by Serge Timacheff



COMPETITION CLASSIFIEDS

17th Annual Mr. Ma Cup will be held on June 5 and June 6 (Saturday and Sunday), 2010 for all levels and all ages (Y-10, Y-12, Y-14 and open for both men and women and all 3 weapons) in Burlington Township Middle School at Springdale, 1600 Burlington Bypass, Burlington, NJ 08016. Last year more than 700 fencers participated. For more information, check web at www.fasj.com or askfred.net, or phone (908)240-1911 or (856)424-5070, or email: fasj1@yahoo.com.

COACH CLASSIFIEDS: WORK WANTED

Alexey Karpov, 45 years old, 25 years of epee coaching experience. Has coached five champions of All-Russia fencing championships. Took part as a coach in training camp of Russia National team for 1996 Olympic Games. Has been a coach of Singapore National team for three years and has prepared champions of both individual and team events in South East Asia Fencing Federation in 2006. Please contact karpovsin@gmail.com.

Italian Fencing Master, current coach of the University of Verona Fencing Team; graduate of National Academy of Fencing in Naples, seeking teaching position in scholastic or club fencing in the U.S. Contact Carmino Galanto, tel. 045-522084, address Via A. Scarlatti, 1/A, 37131 - Verona, Italy.

COACH WANTED

The South Coast Fencing Center (SCFC) is looking for a foil coach to complement their current coaching staff. This coach would work closely with the intermediate and competitive level foilists at the center, both in group and private instruction, and be willing to travel for national competitions. SCFC is located in Orange County, CA, just south of Los Angeles. The coach should have solid communication skills, a willingness to work in a team environment and a commitment to our program. Relocation expenses may be provided, depending on the coach's background. A temporary contract is also possible to ensure a good fit for both parties. Contact Brenden Richard at info@southcoastfencing.com / (714) 549-2946.
First posted Fall '09

FASJ and Mr. Ma Fencing Center are looking for quality foil and sabre coaches. Please email your resume and contact information to: fasj1@yahoo.com. *First posted Fall '09*

New England fencing club seeks high-level coach for growth expansion. Candidates must be eligible to work in the U.S. and speak English. Students from beginners to elite competitors; must be able to teach child and adult group classes. All weapons considered; multi-weapon experience, good organization and leadership skills a plus. Interested applicants please send resume to fencesmart@gmail.com
First posted Summer '09

Seeking Coach: Oregon Fencing Alliance in Portland, OR has an opportunity for a sabre coach to work alongside Ed Korfanty and his World and Olympic Champions. This is a part time position teaching Beginners the sport of fencing. Individual needs good communication skills and must enjoy working with young kids. Send resume and contact OFA Director of Programs: CZagunis@aol.com//503.880.3512
Renewed Fall '09

Intermediate/Advanced Foil and Saber Coach Wanted for growing three-weapon fencing club in Albuquerque. Must speak some English. Students age 8 years to adult, group classes and individual lessons. Some relating to parents expected. Must be able to armor. Base 20-25 hours/week, extra hours possible. Occasional paid travel. Three-month trial offered, travel allowance for moving. Contact Toby Tolley at Duke City Fencing, (505)872-0048.
Renewed Fall '09

SALLE FOR SALE

Fairfax Fencers club, and facilities (2700 sq. ft.). Current location Chantilly, Va. for over 6 years see www.fxfencers.com. See loopnet.com for comparable prices. Current owner and head coach relocating next three years or so. Email tomj@fxfencers.com.
First Posted Fall '08

Got a big competition coming up? Looking for a coach? Looking for a job? Send FREE classified listings to: Cindy Bent Findlay, editor@americanfencing.com. Make sure to include contact information. American Fencing will not act as an intermediary for advertisers and does not research backgrounds or legitimacy of either coaching candidates or advertising employers or clubs.

Coach Classified Adverts will run for two consecutive issues only and then be removed UNLESS requested by advertiser. *AF*

Official sponsors of the US fencing team



Leon Paul

Mariel Zagunis

USA FENCING

Join the team

W: www.leonpaulusa.com E: sales@leonpaulusa.com T: 404-325-7272