

December/January/February 1988

American

FENCING

Winners - C

1. Gerard
2. Marx
3. Littell
4. Mufel

Winners - G

5. Kent
6. Massialas
7. Crable
8. Nonomura

Final Places

1. Marx
2. Mufel
3. Massialas
4. Gerard
5. Kent
6. Crable
7. Littell
8. Nonomura

Nonomura 1 Gerard
2 Nonomura
3 Kent
4 Mufel
5 Littell
6 Massialas
7 Crable
8 Marx

Foi #4 10

Familiar Face,

United States Fencing Association,
1986-88

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Official Publication of the
United States Fencing Association, Inc.

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Jose R. DeCapriles, 1912-1969
Miguel A. DeCapriles, 1906-1981

Editor: Albert Axelrod
Art Director: Irene Connors
Business Manager: Susan Shipherd

AMERICAN FENCING magazine (ISSN 0002-8436) is published quarterly by the United States Fencing Association, Inc., 1750 East Boulder Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. Subscription for non-members of the U.S.F.A. is \$12.00 in the U.S. and \$18.00 elsewhere. Single copies \$2.00. Members of the U.S.F.A. subscribe through their dues. Address all correspondence concerning membership to the U.S.F.A. office in Colorado Springs, CO. Second class postage paid at Colorado Springs, CO and additional mailing offices.

Editorial and advertising offices: 701 Ardsley Road, Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583. Contributors please note: Articles, results of competitions, photos and cartoons are cordially solicited. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double spaced, on one side of the paper only. Photos should preferably be black and white and with a complete caption. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless submitted with a stamped, self addressed envelope. No anonymous articles accepted.

Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily reflect the view of American Fencing or the U.S.F.A.

DEADLINE FOR ISSUE

Issue Date	Closing date	Mailing date
MAR/APR/MAY	APR 1	JUN 1
JUN/JUL/AUG	JUL 1	SEP 1
SEP/OCT/NOV	OCT 1	DEC 1

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: American Fencing, U.S.F.A., 1750 East Boulder Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

American FENCING

CONTENTS

Dec/Jan/Feb 1988
Volume 39, Number 2

Editorial 4

CONOCO Sponsors a Winning Team
by Sadie Kowalski 5

Junior Development and Elite Training—An Alternate View
by Edwin (Buzz) Hurst 8

To The Editor 10

Officers' Corner
by Lewis Siegel and Carl Borack 13

A Question of Loyalty
by Maestro Theodore Katzoff, Salle Gascon FC. 15

Bulletin Board—Fencing in the Los Angeles High Schools
by Phyllis Elliott 16

Observations on Circuit Event Organization
by Emmanuil Kaidanov 17

Coaches' Corner—Psychological Pitfalls Confronting the Fencer
by Mel North, Fencing Master, Salle de Nord. 18

Book Review—Fencing, by Istvan Lukovich
reviewed by William M. Gaugler. 20

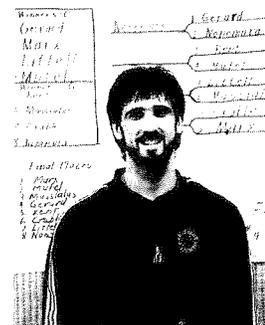
Technical Talks—Care and Feeding of Lamé Jackets
by Joe Byrnes 22

Results 23

On The Cover

Michael Marx,
holding fast against
the tide of younger fencers

Photo by A. Axelrod



Editorial

On December 24, 1987, the Los Angeles Times printed an article by Kenneth Reich, Times Staff Writer, headlined: "\$2.2 Million in Olympic Funds Disbursed—Largest Share Goes to Athletic Program Aimed at 20,000 Youths."

It appears that the Board of Directors of the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles approved about \$2.2 million in 1984 Olympic surplus funds for programs and grants to Southland youth sports.

The largest project authorized involved \$1.7 million for training sessions and competitions in 13 sports at 50 centers scattered throughout Los Angeles County. The main target group is junior high school age boys and girls. Fencing is one of the sports included, and the Westside Fencing Center, located in Culver City, CA is one of the grant recipients. They are doing big, important things for our sport, especially at the high school level. The article from the Salle Gascon Fencing Club printed in the "Bulletin Board" of this issue tells of their latest accomplishments and plans for the future.

My curiosity is aroused. Are there other Amateur Athletic Foundations elsewhere in the United States with surplus 1984 Olympic funds? If so, is fencing a beneficiary? If there are not, why not? We have knowledgeable, powerful executives in the Los Angeles area who may be interested and able to follow up on this lead.

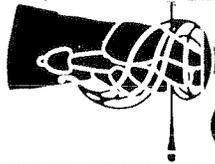
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Statement of Ownership Management & Circulation

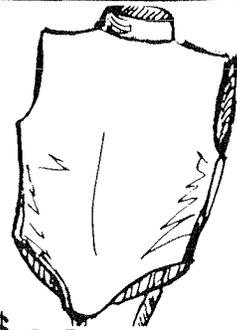
Date of Filing: 29 September, 1987
Title of Publication: American Fencing
Frequency of Issue: Quarterly
Location of Known Office of Publication: 1750 East Boulder Street,
Colorado Springs, El Paso County, CO 80909-5774
Location of Headquarters: 1750 East Boulder Street, Colorado
Springs, 80909-5774
Publisher: United States Fencing Association, 1750 East Boulder
Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774
Editor: Albert Axelrod, 701 Ardsley Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583
Owner: United States Fencing Association, 1750 East Boulder Street,
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774
Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, etc.: None

	Average No. of Copies Each Issue During Preceding Preceding 12 Months	Act. No. of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
Total No. Copies Printed	7950	8825
Paid Circulation	—	—
Mail Subscriptions	7519	8507
Total Circulation	7519	8507
Free Distribution	400	275
Total Distribution	7919	8782
Copies Not Distributed	56	43
Returns from News Agents	—	—
Total	7975	8825

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CONOCO Sponsors A Winning Team

by Sadie Kowalski



The Gold Winning Teams—left to right, Jennie Hill, Melanie Jones, Katie Kowalski, Aleizha Batson, Jennie Posthumus and Sadie Kowalski. Front row, Al Carter, John Maggio, Stephen Flores, Walter Flaschka, and Richard Cark. At left, Russell Wilson, Captain.

photo by Sadie Kowalski

It seemed like a good idea at the time. "Ask Conoco to sponsor the Cadet Fencing Team that the U.S. Olympic Committee is sending to Mexico in August." Some inquiries were made, information was received, assistance was offered, and with an abundance of enthusiasm, a sizable contribution was made to buy the team sweat suits. The team gathered in Colorado Springs at the Olympic Training Center and trained for most of August. All training expenses were paid by the USOC. But travel, equipment and training at home or school was paid by the athlete and/or parents. Team uniforms for a cadet team from an unsponsored team are usually donated. After the unavoidable corporate red tape, the suits arrived along with the CONOCO logos. My sister in the navy contributed American flag patches worn on navy top gun flight suits. After the USOC sent "U.S.A." letters, and all the other insignia were sewn on, the suits took on the aura of official Olympia. A special feeling camaraderie seemed to pass right from those threads into the minds of the Cadets the instant they put their suits on.

Finally, August 26 was upon us, and our plan was to meet everyone but the Californian contingent in Dallas, travel to Mexico City, and meet the Californians there. My daughter, Katie, and I arrived in Dallas first, followed by John from New York and Jennie from Oregon. They went exploring and left me to watch for Walter from Arizona whom they described as "tall,

hair, Walter's only comment was that he expected to be greeted by someone he knew on the team and all he got was me. Sorry, sport!

While we waited for the rest of the group to return, I found out that the coach (the only Spanish speaking member of the team) had missed his plane in New York. The group finally gathered again, only to split up to meet some other team-mates coming into Dallas. We lost half of them in the airport, realized Aleizha from Virginia had forgotten her passport, and Melanie from Ohio was with the lost group. Miraculously, the whole team made the flight. I was not only amazed, but I was left with a headache only the Ayatolla should have.

The Californians, Jenny, Stephen and Al, were waiting for us in Immigration, and after much hugging and kissing, the team was complete except for Richie from Florida who had come the day before with his father.

Another miracle—we got through Immigration with the help of another American and an irate Mexican who was in a giant hurry. All the luggage was at Customs—we were waved through—Katie had a 102° fever—there was a mob scene outside Customs—no-one knew the language—no one knew how to get to the Olympic Village, or hail a cab, or get on a bus—and my headache had surpassed all the Excedrin numbers.

I blinked again, and everything was fine. The Mexican Olympic Committee had sent Juan and a bus to meet us. Richie and

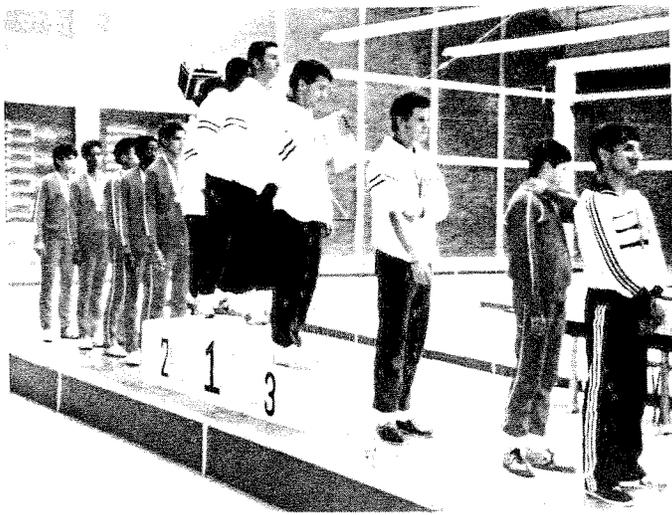


Above, Melanie Jones and Katie Kowalski.
Left, Jennie Posthumus
photo by Sadie Kowalski

to carry the extremely heavy luggage, that fencers have, across two parking lots, through the whole Olympic Village and up three flights of stairs!

Passing out the sweat suits before the team meeting was the only thing that subdued the getting re-acquainted. All of my pep talk fell on deaf ears, but the untamed delight and enthusiasm with which the team members welcomed those suits did take their minds off each other for a moment. They wore those suits every moment of the next four days except when they were actually fencing!

The team worked out and trained all day Thursday, August 27th. The individual competition was Friday, August 28th, with four boys and four girls finishing in the top eight in each event. Living so far apart from each other, and seeing each other so rarely, the Americans seemed to take a little longer to foster that necessary team spirit. The sweat suits were an integral part of helping them see each other as teammates as did the Olympic flags, the band and the traditional Olympic-type ceremony Friday morning. The individual competition continued until noon Saturday, at which time the main event began.



Two years ago, the Cuban team beat the American team in the finals. But after dispatching the two Mexican teams and the teams from Guadalupe and Guatemala, the Americans were "fired up" and ready to crush the Cubans in the Sunday morning finals. My constant companion, Mr. Headache, could get no worse, so I was oblivious to the cheering, yelling, screaming, and general whooping.

The cheering and support paid off—there was excellent fencing! The boy's team won 9-3 and the girl's team won 9-4.

The medal ceremonies were done just like in the Olympics, with banners, podiums, flags, national anthems and tears—winners cry, losers cry, boys cry, girls cry, I cry.

The team, composed of 15-17 year old boys and girls from around the United States, were chosen by their standing in the national fencing program. Having sweat suits that identified them as the American team made them the American team.



The Girl's enjoying their victory

photo by Sadie Kowalski

They conducted themselves like ambassadors of good will and made friends with all the members of all the other teams. There was no language barrier. They all spoke their native language and understood each other. If words didn't work, hugging and kissing did. The Cubans invited us to come to Cuba for an event. Sounds like fun to me....

A simple "Thank You" seems so inadequate, but hopefully, bringing home 10 Gold Medals says it all. Thanks in part to NG & GP's generosity, the Americans not only looked good, they "did good" too.

Editor's note: summary results are in "Results" section of this issue.



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Junior Development And Elite Training—An Alternate View

by Edwin (Buzz) Hurst

The American Fencing magazine, Volume 39, #2, which I received this past January contained what I thought was an interesting concatenation of features: one on the development of junior fencers written by Eric Rosenberg, and an interview with Aladar Kogler, our national coach.

In his opening paragraph, Mr. Rosenberg decries the absence of a long-term development program for our junior fencers, while Coach Kogler laments the absence of a coherent training system for our elite fencers once we develop them. Both gentlemen seem to believe that the blame for this chaotic state of affairs lies in the politics and factionalism of the USFA and the administrations which have governed it. Both also indicate their belief that a necessary step in effecting a change in this situation is to concentrate our activities and efforts in New York City.

I fear that, whatever its merits, such a step would simply not be politically feasible. For a variety of historical reasons, there is a great sensitivity in other regions of the country to a concentration of the Association's resources in New York City. If such a concentration is really deemed necessary, then I would think in terms of Chicago or Dallas (both areas have high school fencing) and then seeing if the idea retains its original luster. It tells little for me. The concept, no matter how well intentioned, seems inevitably to lead (as it has in women's gymnastics and figure skating) to an athlete being faced with the hard choice of either moving to the (Center) and disrupting his or her entire life, or being effectively barred from the "inner circle" and the international teams that are selected from it. If the fencer is an adult, I believe that such a demand is unfair; if a youngster, I think it is improper.

In any case, a USFA administration must take into account political realities. Factionalism and regionalism are part and parcel of American life and always have been. Any administration that would attempt to ignore these factors runs a great risk of being stalemated.

Moreover, I am not convinced that junior development in this country is still looking for a solution. The entry field alone for the 1987 Junior Olympics was larger than the entire membership of some fencing federations. More importantly, my observation (which is similar to that of other coaches with whom I have discussed it) is that the quality of the foil fencing in the first and second round has improved dramatically, while the quality of epee and sabre has also improved, albeit to a lesser degree. My conclusion is that somebody "out there" must be doing something right. The increase in numbers and especially quality can only be attributable to the efforts of a large number of unsung coaches throughout the country whose teaching is providing their pupils with solid fundamentals. This system has developed through many years of effort by dedicated volunteer coaches, fencers, and parents. I don't think the system is "broke", and I think we should refrain from "fixin" it.

On the other hand, whatever we are doing to develop our international fencers does not seem to be working, and Coach Kogler discussed the major problems in his interview. It should be obvious to all of us that, all other things being equal, an athlete who practices five days a week will best an athlete who practices three days a week. If, in addition, that athlete has more desire or is more driven, it is only surprising when our three-day-a-week fencer makes a world-class direct elimination.

Unfortunately, as Albie Axelrod pointed out in the interview,

members of our national teams must make a living, since they are not and probably never will be supported by our government. Perhaps more importantly, a young man or woman starting a career in our culture is expected to do so in his or her early twenties. Delaying that beginning by, say, ten years in order to compete in fencing is so risky to one's (and one's family's) long-term welfare that few people are able to take the gamble. Consequently, and unlike his European counterparts, our national team member must usually focus as much concentration and mental energy on his job as he does on his fencing. If that mental load becomes too heavy, it is not surprising that he would let his fencing slip before his job performance.

What has been unfortunate for our international efforts is that too many of our top fencers over the years have thus had to let their fencing slip but have still managed through their experience to perform well enough domestically to continue to earn spots on our teams. When, however, they encounter their more driven, better mentally and physically conditioned international opponents, the results are sadly predictable.

Is there any way out of this American predicament? I think there may be, because I believe that a solution, if there is one, is essentially administrative rather than technical. What follows is a plan for reorganizing our international efforts. It assumes that we will continue to draw on fencers from all parts of the United States and that those fencers will continue to live and work in their communities. It will, however, provide considerably more formal training for them, while at the same time provide some motivational tools to the national coaches which at present are not available to them.

The United States National Team will be selected on September 1st of each year, and will exist as a unit until August 31st of the following year. Fencers will earn spots on the team using the current point system and applying it to all applicable U.S. and international results achieved over the entire preceding season. The team will consist of five fencers in each weapon, plus a sufficient number of alternates to fill any vacancies created by accidents or administration action. The team will be equipped in September, particularly with official United States warm-ups, and will represent the United States in all designated FIE competitions leading up to the World Championships or Olympics of the following year. While team members will be required to attend all circuit events, their training progression, both psychological and physiological, will be directed toward the World Championships. All required activities of the team would, of course, be fully funded.

During the U.S. season (Sept.-June), a national team training weekend will be designated every six weeks at a central location. The team will be required to attend every one of these weekends. At the conclusion of the National Championships, after perhaps a one or two week break, every weekend preceding the World Championships will be a training weekend. The training weekends will be two days of intensive fencing, with some additional conditioning and physical testing involved. At this level, the most effective way for our fencers to improve their speed, timing, and even execution is by fencing the best of their peers in a setting that permits maximum concentration. Above all, coaches should restrain themselves from giving a multitude of individual lessons and instead observe and critique the fencing as it is taking place. The coaches would then be required to forward a written report to both the fencer and his coach encompassing those observations and recommenda-

An Alternate View —

(Continued)

tions for improvements.

Perhaps more importantly, all members of the U.S. National Team will agree in writing to work out four times a week while home. The national coaching staff will consult with each fencer and prepare a workout book which best reconciles training requirements with local conditions. The fencer's regular coach should be responsible for certifying the entries in the workout book. Certain physical testing should be conducted at the training weekends to ensure that physical conditioning progress is being maintained. There are a number of well known and validated tests that can be chosen for this purpose.

Training rules and requirements must be strictly enforced at every level. If a fencer is found wanting in his or her adherence to training requirements, then that fencer would be removed from that year's team and the next alternate moved up. Finally, national team members would be expected to achieve significant international results (as defined by the USFA). They would be allotted four years (i.e., membership on four U.S. teams) in which to achieve such results.

This plan may sound Draconian, but in reality it is still less stringent than the training regimens observed by many U.S. amateur sports teams. I believe it matches as nearly as possible the realities of American conditions with the realities of international competition. It is going to require much greater participation from our national coaching staff as well as a high degree of resolve on the part of our Association's administrations. Above all, it will require the highest degree of motivation on the part of our fencers. In most cases that motivation is already there, and I submit that this plan would nurture and enhance it.

It should be an honor to represent the United States in international competition, and I believe that fencers who will work this hard for this privilege will be so honored, both by their fellow American fencers and by their international opponents.

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To The Editor

The first of the very few letters received by the editor. William Osborne is one of the founders of American Fencing, was the publisher for twenty years and was on the policy board into the '70s. He remembers the problems of editorship despite his long absence from the scene.

The Editor

March 2, 1987

Dear Al:

Just a note to congratulate you on taking on a tough job! At my tender age of 79 I know what you are getting into. It's a heluva lot of work with little cooperation from fencers. When Joe and I started this magazine in 1949, we had high hopes of making it a great affair. Well, in 38 years the magazine has run from about 2,000 copies up to about 10,000⁽¹⁾. But I'm sure it has increased the total membership in the USFA. Now that you have some money⁽²⁾ to work with, maybe it will fly even higher.

But please take this warning: fencers are their own worst enemies on PR. They won't tell newspapers in advance of a meet, they won't turn in scores, they won't tell names of contestants and they can't spell names. Enclosed is the recent Orlando Sentinel. Even on the last picture (and the only one I saw) there is no picture of fencing and little note of the contest! How the hell do you get news to prospective fencers at this rate? Or is fencing dead in Florida?

I recall that Joe DeCapriles, Mike (his brother), Dernell Every, Ralph Goldstein and of late, Mary Huddleson pleaded with fencers to send in their news! You would think a fencer just hated to see his name in print! I recall in NYC reporters telling me that there was no notice given of a meet and "how the hell do you expect coverage"?

I suggest you start out and yell in 12 point type—"Send us your news! We will not report on any activity or meet that you don't report." Get these new fencers on the ball. If you don't, you will find yourself reporting only what a very few will send you. Ask Ralph or Dernell how they had to push to get news from people.

So I wish you well from my battered 60 year old typewriter.

Most cordially,
Bill Osborne

Editor's note

1. Membership is approx. 7000.
2. Don't believe it!

Received from Mary Huddleson, Editor Emeritus

January 20, 1988

To Albie & Members of the AF Policy Committee;

Although I have not yet received my Sept/Oct/Nov 1987 issue of AF, I would like to express to you some kudos and queries before I completely forget what was contained in the last issue.

To publish quarterly means fewer time-oriented announcements and more articles in depth. With one glaring exception, which has already been explored at length by others, the articles over the past year have been first class. Albie has done some fast footwork to fill in with some very good interviews.

I am resigned to the red-brown cover and the framed photo on every successive cover. It must make the printer's job a lot easier, but does he have any other colors?

It was great to read the editorial comments on the Pan-Ams and the accompanying article zeroed in on our star performers, Katy Bilodeaux and the women foilists. However, it is now January and I, the ordinary USFA member not privy to official information, still do not know much about how the other fencers fared at the Pan-Ams last summer—and I'm not sure I care now, as all interest is focusing on the Olympics.

You certainly gave our 1987 JO's and National Championships short shrift! There was no text to accompany the bare bones minimum results, not even an annotation of where the championships were held. The host divisions were not recognized. Am I in the minority when I say that I think that the entire results should be listed, down to, say, #258 John Smith from Timbuctoo Fencers Club? It is probably the only time the average club fencer will see his name in print. He went through some sort of qualifying procedure and paid his own way for the thrill and privilege of fencing in the U.S. Nationals as a full-fledged USFA member. Publishing the complete roster serves as a historical record otherwise lost to the general membership, which does not necessarily maintain a great interest in the shifting musical chairs of the top elite standings. Nor does the publishing of such complete details in a throw-away newsletter serve the same purpose.

It would be nice to hear from some of you others about what you think. I know I would have welcomed it when I was editor, and I hope that the above is received in the same amicable spirit in which it is proffered.

Regards to all,
Demi

January 25, 1988
701 Ardsley Road
Scarsdale, NY
10583

Dear Mary,

How you handled American Fencing as a bi-monthly staggers my imagination. Getting an issue out with practically no cooperation from any others is not easy. Only you can appreciate the fancy footwork required to do the magazine, and kudos from you are deeply appreciated. You raise a number of questions, and I would like to respond as well as I can.

- The color of the magazine—

The color I am trying to hold to is the color on the cover with the Faulkner photos. I felt that it was a good color and had a certain dignified quality. I would like a format that was constant, like some of our weekly *Time* or *Newsweek* magazines. One that could be identified in a pile of magazines.

The red? Why not! I am trying to do a duo-tone with 60% black and 15% red to produce photos in which people looked alive—that is, closer to black and white photos. The variations have been due to poor quality control by the platemaker and/or the printers press people. I have already changed printers once and am contemplating a second change.

Further, I feel that you should know that the only comment ever received prior to my first printing

To The Editor —

(Continued)

was please, no more green people, orange people, brown people, purple people or red people.

Choice of color has nothing to do with making it easier for the printer. I must still make the dummy, review the mechanical, and edit and approve the color key prior to printing. It is neither easier for him nor for me.

The border? I have not received a single photograph that merited bleeding to the edge of the page. There was one, by Karina Hoskyns. It was the picture of Vitalesta used in the last issue. I was tempted to use it on the cover, but I didn't feel justified in using a picture of a foreign fencer on the cover of American Fencing.

- Coverage of the Pan American Games—

It is true that the Pan-American coverage concentrated on the Women's team. Inclusion of these very late and excellent results was accomplished by scrapping the already finished mechanicals and redoing the whole issue.

The next issue was to contain the complete Captain's Report. It was never submitted. Nor was a Captain's Report ever submitted on the World Championship Games. Nor was a Captain's Report submitted for the Torneo de Mexico (where several gold medals were won by some of our young fencers). I had to cull an article written by Sadie Kowalski from a CONOCO company newsletter.

Surely, it should be the team captain's responsibility to write such reports for both USFA headquarters and American Fencing?

- 1987 JO's and Nationals—

Here, I was promised photos and an article by a Sandra B., a professional news editor in Melbourne. Nothing was ever received, even after follow-up calls.

I was assured similar write-ups in Phoenix. Again, when the event was over, everyone folded their tents, went on to everyday activities and no one delivered.

I am not a photographer, but I am forced to use the pictures I take. Only Frank Widder has ever provided competition pictures and captions. Other than these, there are no more photos of local events of the Hal Wells quality. Perhaps the hosts of each event should be required to hire a professional photographer?

- Coverage to # 258 of Timbuctoo Fencers Club—

Mary, when we were young, large competitions had sixty entries. It was simple to include all pools, all rounds and all finals.

Today there are indeed nearly 200 entries. There is also the Brazilian system with two or more flights of ten strips and no one is eliminated! Then the fencing begins and half are eliminated. Ultimately the tableau of 64 with repechage—and the submission of a tree which is complicated, space

quality. Our events *can* be fully covered, and with the advertisements, fully fill the 28 pages. I love this. It is the easiest way to do a magazine. But someplace, a cut-off must be made at the level of reporting. #258's recognition is best provided in his/her sectional or divisional newsletter.

There is no doubt that things can be improved. At present, I am editing the magazine single-handed. Any help offered (as well as constructive comment rather than criticism) would be gratefully accepted and considered.

Sincerely,
Albert Axelrod
Editor, American Fencing

cc: Lewis Siegel
Fred Rhodes
Sam Cheris
Ralph Goldstein, Editor Emeritus

10 February 1988
2201 Bywood Drive
Oakland, CA 94602

Dear Albie,

Thanks for yours of 25 January. I have a few more comments to make and then I will shut up. Serving as editor of AF is like trying to fight one's way out of a paper bag: there is precious little feedback and you never are quite sure where you stand with your readers. I liked most of the articles in your last issue. Your interview with Kogler was especially interesting. With that, here we go.

Since you rec'd only one comment re: changing cover color, it must have struck a sympathetic chord for you to follow through. I can't help thinking that your little men on the last cover would have looked great in (combat green?), but "Chacun à son goût" and that's no problem with me.

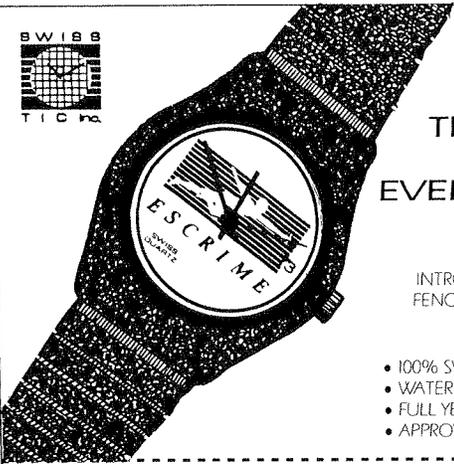
Your struggles with the "team captain's report" brought back many memories. Enough to drive one up the wall. I do not know the answer to it, except to keep yelling about it.

I would like seriously to follow through, however, re: complete coverage of the JO's and Nationals. You may not have noticed, but, since 1984 (until last year), the complete final standings in each event were listed consecutively, #1 through #238 in 8 point type, doubled up in the columns. There was only one list per event. Bout scores, pools, rounds, tableaux, flights—all eliminated. This took up only 2 to 3 pages in all. Let us not be too cavalier about dismissing #238 of Timbuctoo from his spot in the national magazine! A computer expert like you might find the way to transfer directly the complete final standing print-out to your machine and, voila! I had to do it the hard way, but I know it was worthwhile.

Photos are indeed hard to come by. You take pretty good photos. Professional photos are costly. Have you thought of running a photo contest? I lived for some time off results from one photo contest. If I could help (anonymously) with prizes, let me know.

Carry on.

My regards,
Demi



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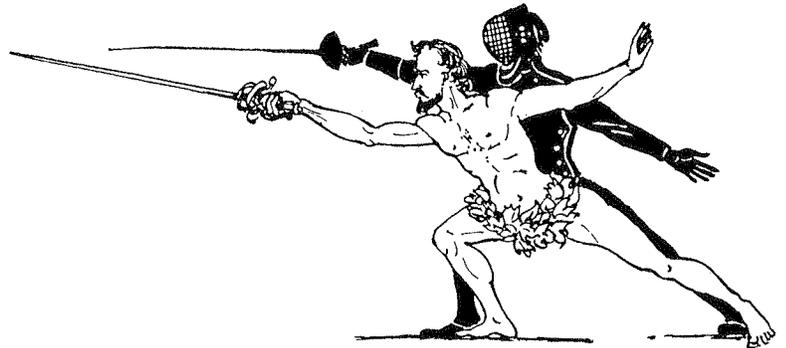
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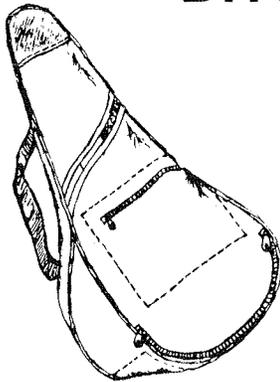
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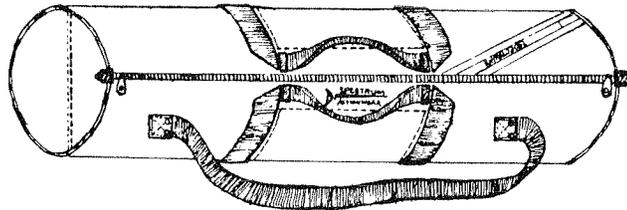


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Officers' Corner

by Lewis Siegel and Carl Borack

As the Olympics draws near, there is a heightened interest in all Olympic sports by the media. Fencing is one of the original modern Olympic sports and is one of only four sports that have been contested in every Olympics since 1896. The others are Athletics (track and field), Gymnastics and Swimming. Now is an opportune time to obtain some publicity for your division. Many newspapers are interested in anything to do with the Olympics. Are you or members of your division participating at the North American Circuit events or the Division I National Championships? These are part of the Olympic Trials for fencing. Your local newspaper may be interested in running an article about fencing or about the division members competing in the Olympic Trials. It can't hurt to ask.

You have heard it here before, but the message is so important we will repeat it. The USFA needs your help in many ways and on all levels: divisional, sectional and national. Get involved in helping at tournaments and in divisional affairs. Please don't wait to be asked—volunteer. The more people that help, the less work each person has to do and the more fun the work becomes. The following is an excerpt from the editor's column in *The Washington Fencer*, the newsletter from the Capitol Division:

Giving Back Some of What You Got

"Do you all feel that just because you "arrived", that relieves you of all responsibility outside of actually competing? WRONG. And if you think that, maybe we should stop for a minute and think about all the time and effort our mentors took to get us where we are. *Give back some of what you got.*

Perpetuation of a great sport takes commitment, dedication and INVOLVEMENT on an ongoing basis, not just in your respective salles and on the pistes at competitions, but "behind the scenes" doing the "down and dirty" work, when necessary.

Great things can come out of this division. We are growing a bit now, and I'm being guardedly enthusiastic about the slight increase of warm bodies at our competitions this year. But what do you suggest we do to entice both active and inactive members to work together in a positive, aggressive manner by giving some of their time at competitions other than just competing? The few can't *and shouldn't* carry the burden for the many. Your help is wanted, needed, and believe me, will be appreciated".

In addition to helping our sport, volunteering may benefit you. If our experience is a guide, you will meet a host of people that you never competed against and end up with a number of good friends you would not have met otherwise.

Of course, even if you don't have time to contribute, there is another way that each USFA member can help—by sending a contribution to the USFA. Your membership dues covers less than 25% of the cost of operating USFA programs. With your help, we can continue to expand the programs offered. Membership dues are kept low to encourage people to join and to make sure competitions are available to all.

One special area for contributions you might consider is the 1989 Senior World Championships. As you know, the USFA will be hosting the 1989 World Championships in Indiana. To help defray a number of expenses involved with the World Championships, the USFA has set up a special fund. You can become a GOLD Sponsor for a contribution of \$1000, a SILVER Sponsor for a contribution of \$500, or a BRONZE Sponsor for a contribution of \$100. An acknowledgment and a special surprise award will be sent as a receipt for your tax deductible contribution.

Speaking of World Championships, if you haven't already made plans, there may still be time to go to the 1988 Junior World Championships at Notre Dame University. The best of the World's Under-20 fencers will be there from March 30 through April 3. It's sure to be an exciting event.

The USFA CLASSIC VISA CARD program was designed to help you and the USFA. There is no annual fee for the first year and second year renewals are much less expensive than cards with similar or less features and benefits. The card will identify you as a member of the USFA and carries the USFA logo. With free membership for the first year and the numerous benefits which come with the card, the USFA CLASSIC VISA CARD is better than a great deal. Because the USFA receives a donation for each account opened and a percentage of each purchase made with the card, getting and using the card helps the USFA. If you haven't already obtained your USFA CLASSIC VISA CARD, apply for it now. A mailing should have already reached you or will soon come to you with application materials. More information is contained in an advertisement in this issue of *American Fencing*. If you have any questions about the program, you can call the Maryland Bank representative toll free at 1-800-847-7378 (24 hours a day) and receive immediate answers. Make sure you mention that you are calling about the USFA CLASSIC VISA CARD program.

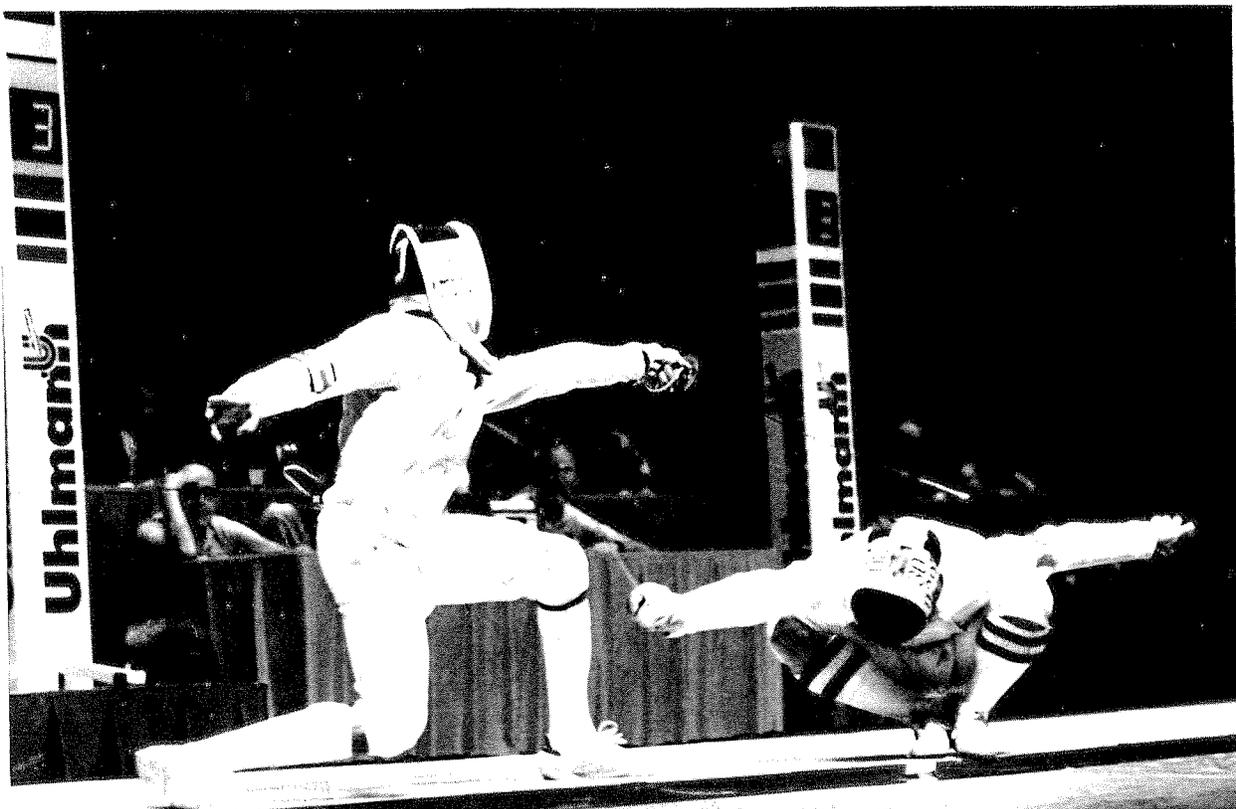
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A Question of Loyalty

by Maestro Theodore Katzoff, Salle Gascon Fencing Club

It seems odd, in a sport which has its basis upon swordplay and therefore is recipient to all its traditional trappings, such as honor and loyalty, that a question of what these things mean to modern fencers should actually come up. But there is a question, because there is a problem: in today's modern world, where people travel and rarely stay in one place for very long, and where a young person who begins his study of the sport with one individual may find himself going to college in some other part of the country, where does loyalty break off and practicality begin?

The word "loyalty" itself creates problems. It is one of those buzzwords which produce all kinds of feelings and personal interpretations, none of which deal directly with the realities of the relationship between teacher and student.

A traditional vision of loyalty is that of the squire, standing with sword in hand over the body of his fallen master, and, to the death, holding off the onslaught of enemy soldiers who would strip the armor from the knight. Can one imagine any of D'Artagnan's friends saying that he was really too busy to go riding off with him on some wild goose chase, hoping that he might survive to accomplish his task? And yet again, there is the grand gesture, in fact, of Cyrano walking into a known trap to protect a friend from assassination at the hands of many. These are traditional views of the loyalty that those who carry the sword show to one another.

In our time, we have the organization known as the Club, which focuses upon the personality of the instructor or instructors, and perhaps of several of the more respected members. A fencer declares himself or herself to be part of that organization, or a follower of that instructor's teaching, by declaring that he is a member of that Club and by wearing the Club's coat-of-arms in the form of a patch or other decoration.

Underlying this is the strong connection between one who teaches and one who learns. In a sport with such a strong tradition, and one which is so individually based, these relationships become very deep; and the coach in fencing can have an enormous impact not only on the skill of his students, but also on their growth and development as people. This becomes especially true when one considers the traditional value that carrying the sword is supposed to represent: not that of pugnacity or killing, but rather the responsibility that one has to behave honorably when one carries a weapon, and the respect one should show to others in the chivalric tradition.

But loyalty should not be considered an obligation, even though it would seem to be a natural consequence of close association. Loyalty is also a personal thing, and it is something which should not be taken for granted, but rather earned on a daily basis, by all parties. In this case these relationships extend beyond physical proximity, and beyond the outer trappings of symbols that one wears on one's arm.

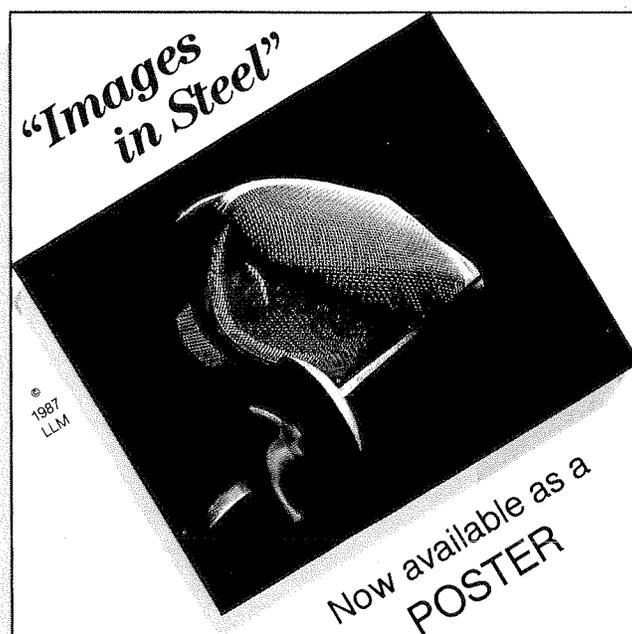
While fencers themselves are remembered, those who teach fencing are often overlooked. Who remembers Mangiarotti's teacher? D'Orvola's? Who is the person who introduced Smirnov and Romankov to fencing? Did they become good by themselves? How many fencers in the world know who Beck is, and who Di Rosa is?

Fencing is an art into which one is initiated; it is not like other sports that we pick up on the playground and refine with coaching later on. I feel that if one has studied fencing with an indi-

vidual who has taught him carefully and well, gratitude should be given, both verbally and in the way one behaves as an athlete and sportsman—to remind others, "Yes, that is so-and-so's pupil." Even though the fencer might be in some other part of the country and fencing for some other Club and coach, it does not seem proper to somehow forget the person or persons who formed and created that fencer. It should not be only the coach of an Olympic medalist who is respected and acknowledged, but the teacher who first introduced him to fencing. Are you going to turn your back on the one person who gave, or is currently giving you knowledge and values in fencing, by ignoring him or her?

Basically, it is a matter of remembering each person who helped you improve your technique, and giving credit where credit is due. A fencer is guided into growth; he does not grow by himself, and he should respect the person who has put his heart and soul into teaching him.

One may be anywhere in the world, and fence in many different places; one may move from coach to coach (hopefully, in an upward path), but he ought never to forget those who gave him his background, his foundation, and his original concepts of the values of the sport. In this way, an instructor will receive payment far richer and far deeper than anything as materialistic as money.



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High School Programs Yields Competitors

by Phyllis Elliott

Nine new high school fencing programs created in the past two years through Amateur Athletic Foundation grant projects have received the support of the U.S. Fencing Association Southern California Division, with dramatic results.

To encourage involvement of the students in their sport's national federation, the division's Executive Committee offered to underwrite a portion of each student's annual membership fee. The Division also added two standard (non-electric) foil tournaments for high school fencers to its tournament schedule for the 1987/88 season.

At the first two of the tournaments, held January 10, 1988, seven girls and 37 boys competed. The fencers represented four of the AAF-funded programs (Bellflower High, Garfield High, Nogales High, and L.A. Center for Enriched Studies) as well as two private schools where fencing is part of the curriculum. It is expected that the second tournament on May 1 will have an even larger enrollment, including those schools where classes are just beginning.

Fencing Master Theodore Katzoff, director of the Amateur Athletic Foundation grant project, praised the Executive Committee and its chairman, Joe Elliott, for coming forward to support high school fencing. "The Foundation's objective is to

direct its resources into youth programs in the community which then can become self-sustaining. Thanks to the Southern California Division, these young people are now having the opportunity to continue their fencing beyond a semester course at the high school, and to become members of the USFA; and they will be much more likely to remain in the sport as a result of this experience. Furthermore, as more young people have instruction and competition made available to them, the level of fencing in the United States will rise and our country will produce stronger national, international, and Olympic champions."

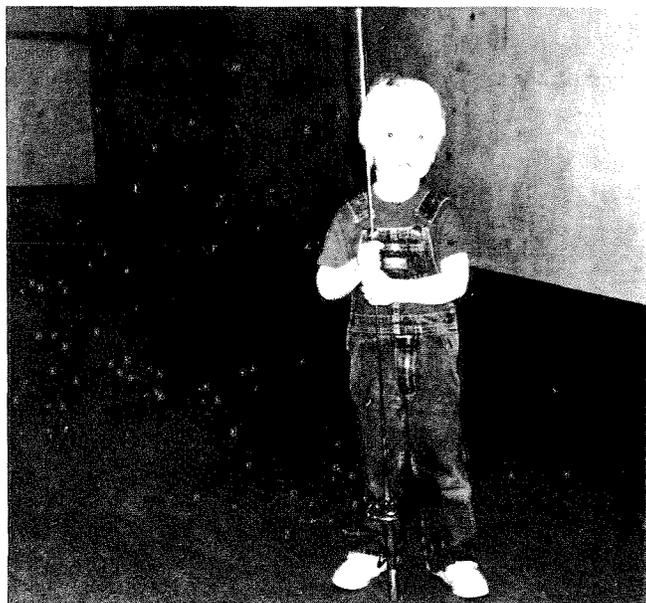
Mr. Elliott concurred, acknowledging the common goal of supporting youth fencing, and expressing satisfaction with the large turnout and level of fencing at the tournament. He stated that the Executive Committee considers the high school grant project to be the most important development in Southern California fencing in the last 20 years, in that it provides a nucleus for significant growth in the sport. "We will continue to explore new and effective ways of supporting this project and enhancing the interest of the students. The Foundations grant has put us far ahead of where we were in the past in our efforts to sustain high school fencing. We are behind it 100%: it must succeed."

* * * * *

From The Western Pennsylvania Division

by Wm. R. Hamby

Fencing is alive and well in Western Pennsylvania! We would like you to know two things: first, that the Senior Competition organized by our Max Garret was excellent and a job well done—and we are looking forward to Chicago in June; and second, that we are starting our fencers at an early age. Our youngest is Patrick Cleary, age 2 1/2. We also have a new club that is training fencers a little older, around 10-18. They are doing well!



Patrick Cleary, age 2 1/2, a future gladiator photo by Wm. R. Hamby



C'mon, dad, that was my beat!

photo by Wm. M. Hamby

Organization

by *Emmanuel Kaidanov*

There's nothing wrong in making an experiment—particularly the one I have in mind. However, because this one relates to the formats of the circuit events, one must, of course, be careful about how it is done.

It's not a bad thing to make this experiment, but one must try to be realistic and try to provide the best conditions for the fencers. In Chicago, the number of participants in the men's foil and women's foil was huge—much more than the facilities could handle. So what was done? The first twenty-one ranking fencers were given a bye in the first round. When the first round was finished and the first round fencers were seeded and the format selected by the bout committee was reached, the actual competition began.

The idea I have might need discussion. You can agree and disagree—as on many issues—because the idea of a circuit event is that it is an open tournament for all fencers in the country who are willing to spend their thirty bucks to participate. Nobody limits the number of participants. It looks like we are now at the stage where we have to think about placing limitations on the number of participants.

The ways to limit the number of participants is not something that can be decided right away. This requires thought and planning. What I find disturbing is what happened in this particular tournament.

There were 95 entries in the Portland circuit event. People who came from all different parts of the country to compete with the best fencers and to have a chance to try their best. Instead of putting them in a simple format—for example, twenty strips with five or six fencers on each strip, with three going up, and so on, to come to a tableau of thirty-two and giving only those byes absolutely necessary to arrange workable pools, the top twenty-four fencers had in the first round, and there was twelve pools with five or six fencers in each and we eliminated twenty-three fencers in that round without giving them a chance to fence with the best fencers.

I could understand this if the facilities were not adequate for the number of people competing. However, in this case, we had twelve strips which was adequate for the number of fencers we had. In the first flight, we could have two flights—it wouldn't hurt us. Four or five fencers in each pool. It would not take much time. So I strongly disagree with the change in format without necessity. Yesterday we had a women's competition with 72 participants, no byes in the first round, and we had a tableau of 16. Nobody argued about it and everything went well. Today we wanted to have a tableau of 32. That's all right. That's not the principle question. But I believe that giving so many byes is overprotection of our leading fencers from possible defeat or possible elimination. It is definitely negative for the fencers who spent a lot of money to enter the competition and spent still more money to travel long distances to reach Portland and fence a total of four, maybe five bouts in a second class competition, and went home without an opportunity to cross swords with a Mike Marx or a Peter Lewison.

It is not that I disagree with the principle of giving byes, it is just that the number of byes were more than necessary to run this tournament. Perhaps two things should be done: first, require the host city to guarantee a minimum number of strips, based according to the entries received in the USFA office—here we had enough strips, and second, to find a proper way to limit the size of the circuit events. The second thought will, of course, require a lot of consideration. The circuit events is sup-

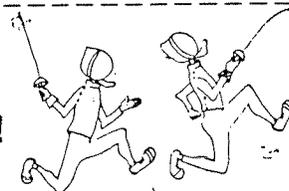
posed to be an open. Does this really mean that we are not allowed to have qualifying rounds for them? If the qualifying round is open, then are not the finals also open?

Perhaps the sections should have qualifying rounds. There need be only one sectional to qualify fencers for that season. These sectional competitions would act to re-establish the importance of the sectional competitions and revitalize activity in them. Criteria for automatic qualifiers can be established. For example, Olympians, former national finalists and leading point holders from the previous season. So, we could control the size of a circuit event and at the same time be assured that there are enough strips to run the event.

Quite apart from the matter of giving byes to nearly twenty five percent of the entries, there is another thing which I found disturbing. When the fencers with byes went into what was their first round, some found themselves on the same strip as fellow club members. The bout committee met and decided that this was the second round, and I can't agree with that decision. For the top-seeded fencers (and there were twenty-four of them), this was the first round. For the fencers who qualified, it was a second round. How can this be a first round *and* a second round? It should have been treated as the first round of the circuit event because there was no way to establish correct seeding of all entries, based on their performance on that day. If this is the procedure that the bout committee wishes to use, then it should be legalized and written into the operations manual. I just don't feel that it was properly a second round.

Going back to the number of byes—it is not that there is no precedent for many byes. In world-cup class A competitions, for example, large numbers of byes are common, but for different reasons. In Italy, for example, all the foreign fencers were given byes, while the Italians held preliminary rounds among as many as 400 fencers to determine which of them qualified for later rounds. But for these circuit events, I think fewer byes would be better.

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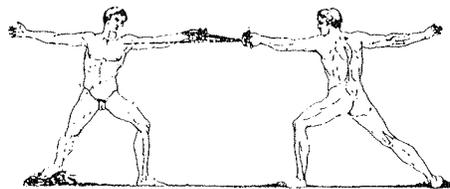
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Psychological Pitfalls Confronting The Fencer In Combat

by Mel North, Fencing Master
Salle de Nord



Psychological preparation of the Fencer-Athlete for combat is a most important component, too often missing from the lesson structure. Usually, great care is taken in perfecting the mechanics of the blade, body and foot movements and the concepts of strategy are presented. There is little value to any of these, however, if the fencer's *mind-set* is incorrect.

Every athlete is painfully aware that physical readiness for competition requires many, many hours of pure labor. These hours grow into days, weeks, months and years of pain, sweat and unbending dedication to his/her dream.

Their responsibility for the physical conditioning of an athlete is apparent to most instructors. The psychological preparation, however, is often neglected. Even when attended to, it is often insufficient or incorrect.

The psychological readiness of the coach plays an intimate role in the molding of a positive attitude within the student. The coach must be a pillar of strength, have a positive and determined attitude and let the pupil realize that the coach "hired out" to be tough physically, mentally and emotionally. These attributes, coupled with honesty, compassion and fairness, are the necessary catalysts required for the student. An amendment to any introduction of the sport of fencing should be: *The sport of fencing is a personal combat sport, whether it is Eastern (Kendo), or Western (foil, epee, or sabre).*

Psychological training should begin in the first lesson. It should begin with the definite understanding that "Western Fencing" is a martial art, replete with tradition, self-respect and discipline. This attitude must pervade the entire teaching and combat scenarios. Fencing is neither a "shoe-in" nor a fop-pish art form with weapons. The aspiring fencer should realize that mental conditioning, as well as physical conditioning, is a vital requisite in the development of the complete fencer.

Effort is required to create the behavioral pattern for physical conditioning. It takes clear concentration to acquire proper technique and strategy of the game. It takes time and experience to execute physically, what one verbalizes mentally. Needless to say, a skillful, well versed coach is required to prepare the Fencer-Athlete for competition.

Proper psychological preparation will enable one to endure the burden of training and to sustain the rigorous regime necessary to achieve combat readiness. This toughness is necessary because psychological preparation is not usually full of sweetness. It can often be harsh. It is imperative that the fencers understand and accept the training designed for them, especially when the road to the Gold appears rocky. There is no place for the prima-donna or the cry-baby on the competition piste.

The coach must also understand what comprises a correct presence for his pupils during a team or individual competition.

Well meaning team mates, as well as coaches, try to "prep" the Fencer-Athlete. Get them up for specific competition(s). Pre-competition prep or pep talks are designed, hopefully, to psych-up the competitor(s). If the team or individual is *already* mentally and physically prepared, that is, in a state of pre-competition readiness, the talk appears to be successful. On the other hand, the pep talk to an *unprepared* individual (or team) is an exercise in futility. The pep talk itself is fine. Showing the fencers that the coach has faith in them is a positive approach and important. No one, however, should play the "psych-up game". A superior and much more successful direction is to set up general strategy.

Competitions are of long duration, surrounded with excitement on the one hand and delays and boredom on the other. As a result, every competitor must learn to adjust their internal rheostat: to be able to turn it on when necessary and to recede to a calm state of readiness between fights. They should use the ABC's of Fencing—Alert, Balanced, and Calm.

The coach who attempts to psych-up a competitor is treading on thin ice. Too often, the psyched-up fencer hits bottom in the second or third round and, on too many occasions, even before the first round begins! The haunting fear that one is not as good as the coach states, or the fear of not living up to the expectations of friends and team-mates, or their own timetable, can virtually paralyze a fencer. Some fencers are actually fearful of winning. They dread being in a situation wherein the pressure to maintain their status can become overwhelming, and so will subconsciously find a way to lose. Obviously, fencers who have these assorted problems are suffering as a direct result of not having been properly prepared for competition. When an athlete enters the competition hall knowing that he/she is fully prepared, there is no need to psych-up—or out.

Tremendous harm can be done to individuals, indeed to entire teams if, after all the pep talk exhortations—"it's easy", "you are great", "you'll win easily", etc.—they are soundly beaten in competition. The traumatic exasperation felt in the realization of the contrast between the exhortations and the real experience of losing often translates itself into "somatic tension". Resulting physical manifestations can include: fatigue, depression, cramps and loss of control over even well rehearsed movements. Remaining in the fencer's mind, however, is a symbol directly associated with the event—the loss of the bout. However, one should not lament the loss of the bout. Nor should one attempt to disavow the loss in the mind. This attempt at self-deception is even more harmful than lamenting the loss of the bout.

Rather, train the fencer to bring the memory of the trauma (the lost bout) into consciousness and to confront and recognize its possible effects upon their mental and physical abilities. Instead of lamenting the loss, to recognize *how* the fight was lost. They will thus be better prepared to meet this opponent again. This screening process should not last more than one minute, after which they should focus on the next opponent. The inability to cope, fatigue, depression, etc., will usually disappear quickly.

Psychological Pitfalls—

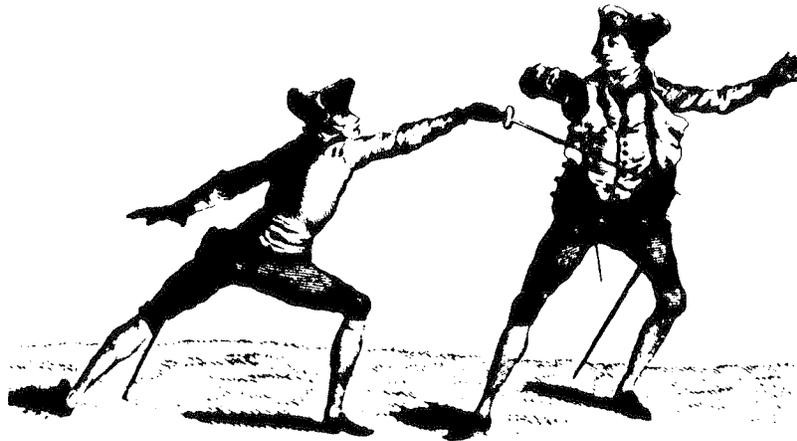
(Continued)

The time and place to investigate psychological aspects of fighting, affirmative as well as negative, is at the practice hall. This is where one learns to control emotional levels.

Utilizing the "running critique", instructors should apprise their fencers of both his strengths and weaknesses in the following areas: use of observation, use of strategy, the physical application of fencing technique and psychological approaches to the game. Thus it is in the practice hall that a fencer prepares for competition, mentally, as well as physically. Competitions offer the Fencer-Athlete the opportunity to gain experience and give the fencer an opportunity to use the skills acquired in front of

the plastron and in practice sessions with club mates. Even as the touch is the result of the action(s), so should the winning of medals and berths on international teams be the result of good fencing. Good fencing is the result of proper instruction, perfect practice and positive experience in properly conducted competitions.

Unfortunately, all the preparation in the world is not a guarantee that a fencer will perform perfectly at any time and certainly not all the time. Fencers, for all their honest labor, are still human beings, not machines.



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Book Review

Fencing

by István Lukovich

Corvina Press, Budapest 1986

Reviewed by William M. Gaugler, Director
Military Fencing Masters Program
San José State University

Prof. Lukovich, Director of the teacher-training courses at the Hungarian National School of Physical Education and Sport, and coach of the Hungarian national fencing team, is already well known to American readers through his publication, *Electric Foil Fencing* (Budapest: 1971). In that significant work he outlined the basic principles of electric foil fencing. With *Fencing* he adds another important volume to his already impressive list of publications. This time his work encompasses the theory and practice of all three weapons, and provides his readers with the most complete description of the contemporary Hungarian system of pedagogy yet published. It is a superb instructional guide, a book that, in my opinion, should be read by every fencer and fencing master in this country.

Maestro Lukovich's observations on pages 16 to 19 regarding group training, undoubtedly, will be of great interest to teachers in the United States working with large classes in colleges and universities. He criticizes certain aspects of the old system, and provides suggestions for developing a new, more imaginative and effective way to handle collective lessons. Prof. Lukovich recommends that the beginner be taught "what fencing is all about in the shortest possible time," and that he be encouraged "to use his own mind from the very first moment."

In the first 83 pages of *Fencing*, Maestro Lukovich introduces his readers to the different types of fencing lessons and preparatory exercises employed in training fencers in Hungary today. Included in this section of the work is a full discussion of the development of the fencing lesson, and examples of various kinds of lessons. On page 24 he states: "The primary objective of the fencing lesson is to teach technique, maintain it and refine it. For this reason, the classical technical lesson should play a leading role in the training of a fencer. The addition of tactical elements through a wide range of exercises which resemble bout fencing can be introduced in the technical lesson to make a more colorful and varied experience." He writes further on pages 51 to 52: "At first, exercises (in the lesson) are of a technical nature. Gradually practice moves in the direction of tactics, but without compromising the importance of technique, by changing conditions in the exercises... At the intermediate level of fencing the synthesis of technique and tactics is balanced. With top-class fencers, tactics dominate and account for the most vital part of training."

What, perhaps, most clearly distinguishes the Hungarian—and I should add the East German, Polish, Romanian, and Russian—pedagogical approach from that of the traditional French and Italian schools is the wealth of training devices Hungarian and their Eastern European colleagues employ off the fencing strip, and without the weapon in hand, in developing fencers. Nowhere is this more evident than in the thirty pages Prof. Lukovich devotes to preparatory exercises. On a visit to Hungary in 1983 I was able to observe his students executing many of the exercises described in the text.

In his pedagogy, Maestro Lukovich stresses the use of games as a means for developing the eye-hand-foot coordinations and the sense of timing and distance peculiar to fencing. While I was present he taught his pupils to execute a *flèche*; and the remarkable thing was that this highly complex combination of



movements was mastered within a matter of minutes by athletes who had never before performed a *flèche*. The means was ingenious: Prof. Lukovich instructed each student to bounce a tennis ball off the floor ahead of the leading foot and catch it by running forward. The further the ball was thrown, the more horizontal the position of the body became.

In the section on footwork, Maestro Lukovich describes in detail the step forward, step backward, crossover step forward, crossover step backward, lunge and recovery backward and forward, jump forward, jump backward, *flèche*, stop-short, and glide. Every moment is explained in terms of its mechanics, and common errors are drawn to our attention. For instance, in his discussion of the lunge on page 89, Prof. Lukovich writes: "In his longest lunge the fencer's front thigh should be horizontal; that is parallel with the floor. The lower leg stands perpendicular to the floor. A lunge carried beyond this position is of dubious value since it becomes very difficult, if not impossible, to recover to on-guard position in a correct fashion from a lunge which resembles an acrobat's split position."

Since essentially the same footwork is used in fencing with all three weapons, this portion of the text serves as preparation for the following sections on foil, sabre, and *épée*.

The first of these, dedicated to foil, reveals the extent to which the contemporary Hungarian school has succeeded in blending Italian and French elements in its foil technique. The Italian theoretical base (introduced by Italo Santelli and Eduardo Alajmo) is evident in the hand positions, emphasis on the relationship of the blades, line of direction, grouping of renewed attacks according to fencing measure, and use of actions such as the *flanconade*, *copertino*, *feint in time*, and *arrest in countertime*, while the modifications resulting from the French influence (brought by André Gardère and Raoul Cléry) are shown in the choice of weapon grip, position of engagement, and numbering of parries.

Maestro Lukovich is critical of instructors who begin by teaching their pupils to execute the thrust with a step forward as a preliminary stage to the thrust with lunge, because, in his view, this runs counter to reality. And in his discussion of the

guard position he stresses the importance of keeping the rear knee turned outward. On pages 111 to 112 Prof. Lukovich writes: "If the rear knee turns inward in relation to the line perpendicular to the fencing line, it resembles a spring which has been stretched." He comments that even if this does not cause difficulties in the lunge, it will certainly result in "technical and dynamic distortions in the recovery to the on-guard position."

Like all teachers of the classical school, Maestro Lukovich insists on full extension of the sword arm before lunging. Reaffirmation of this cardinal principle of swordplay—so often ignored by contemporary fencers—is especially gratifying. Equally important, in my estimation, is Prof. Lukovich's recommendation that parries be taken with the arm well extended because this catches the incoming steel early, and facilitates a rapid riposte.

The sabre portion of the book will be of special interest to American readers because the sabre is the weapon with which Hungarian fencers have enjoyed their greatest success. Maestro Lukovich offers a clear and concise description of his method of instruction. He stresses a correct grip on the weapon, and precision in the placement of cuts. His guard position in third, head cut with the hand shoulder high, and parries with the arm in an extended position, point well advanced, all recall the efficient and elegant sabre technique of the older generation of Hungarian and Italian sabre fencers.

Prof. Lukovich's observation concerning the role of the elbow in sabre fencing is noteworthy. He comments: "Although the sabre as practiced today does not move only from the elbow, this joint maintains a central role in manipulating the blade, acting much like a control tower. The movements of the elbow are supplemented by the actions of the wrist and fingers, but only to the essential limits."

Comparison between this section of the book and the standard work of Salvatore Pecoraro and Carlo Pessina, *La scherma di sciabola* (Roma: 1910), underscores the fact that modern Hungarian sabre technique continues to bear a close resemblance to its Italian cousin. Exercises with molinelli or circular cuts are no longer included, but the rest of the material associated with traditional Italo-Hungarian sabre instruction is still intact.

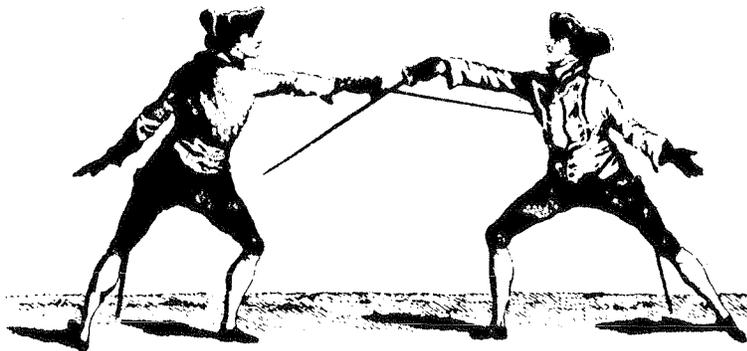
While the section on épée consists of only eighteen pages, everything essential to épée instruction can be found there. Maestro Lukovich makes it clear that his épée technique is based on foil, and he insists that students of ten or eleven years of age, even if they show aptitude for épée, should first receive solid grounding in foil technique, and then be transferred to épée at the age of thirteen or fourteen. He argues further that even an experienced épée fencer can profit from periodic training with the foil. In his own words: "Foil actions adapted in their original form make up the technical basis of épée fencing. The only difference in execution of these actions is that in épée they can be carried out against any part of the opponent's body, including the head, arms and legs, hands and feet, and not just the body."

Prof. Lukovich recommends an épée guard position similar to the one employed in foil, except that the sword arm is more extended and horizontal, with the point of the weapon directed inward and downward. He discusses the importance of attacks directed to the hand and arm, describes the use of angular thrusts, and cautions his readers against abuse of attacks to the

foot, suggesting that if such actions are employed, that they should be preceded by blade contact.

The three parts of Maestro Lukovich's book on foil, sabre, and épée follow the same basic organizational scheme, thus making it easy for the student to recognize the features shared in common by all three weapons. This naturally facilitates instruction, and makes it easier for the student to transfer from one weapon to the other.

In a few instances the translation of fencing terminology from Hungarian to English may cause readers some difficulty. The word "invito" is used for invitation. By "change thrust" or "change cut," disengagement is intended. "Rounding" the opposing steel, means eluding it. A "thrown or angular cut" appears to signify both a descending cut or cut-over, and a circular cut. The term "bind" indicates engagement, and "bind thrust," engagement and glide, or, in other words, blade seizure or opposition.



In conclusion, it is worth observing that fencing experience is passed on, verbally and in written form, from one generation of the fencing masters to another. Masaniello Parise, the founder of the celebrated Italian Military Masters School at Rome, and his successor, Carlo Pessina, trained Italo Santelli. Santelli then carried the Italian pedagogical system to Hungary, where it was modified by his pupils, László Szabó and Róbert Duronelly, and then again by Duronelly's student István Lukovich. The tradition has continued unbroken for over a century, with each new generation of teachers adding something further to the method of instruction. The basic elements of swordplay have, of course, remained unchanged, but the manner of teaching fencing has, over the years, become progressively more refined. That is why Prof. Lukovich's publication is so important: it represents not only the teaching experience of a single, gifted individual, but also the cumulative pedagogical knowledge of several generations of prominent fencing masters.

Care and Feeding of Lamé Jackets

by Joe Byrnes

Some recent inquiries into electrical foil jackets sent me to the back files, looking for what I knew I'd written about the subject before. To my surprise, I discovered it was about 11 years ago that I had my last (and first and only) say about the things.

Oddly enough—or perhaps not so oddly—there isn't very much to add to what we knew back then about the care and feeding of the beasts. Therefore, much of what I said then still applies, but here are a few observations from an up-to-date perspective. To begin with, if you want to find out the "official" quality of the jacket you have, you need to have it checked with an ohmmeter and a standard (500 gram) lamé test weight. That is the FIE test, and since that is the test your jacket is going to have to pass—every time it is handed over the inspection counter—you want to know in advance what you are facing. At least I hope you do. This is one area where optimism can be costly—and not merely in money, although that is certainly involved. Besides the ohmmeter test, and especially if you get some shaky signs from that test, you can do yourself a favor by examining the whole surface of your lamé carefully through a magnifying glass: a simple 3X will do. What you are looking for, especially if the jacket has any age on it at all, is the quantity and quality of the metal threading that runs through it. To do its job, the jacket has to have complete electrical conductivity all over its surface. That means that the individual metallic threads cannot be broken, or, at most, that only a few of them can have breaks, here and there.

If there are apparently unaffected areas of the jacket (the lower back is a good place to look) examine these and note what you see. Now look, for the comparison, at the areas around the collar and under the armpits and across the front. If these latter appear significantly different, less "metallic", shall we say, than the places that have been subjected to less wear, then you know what your problem is, or is shortly going to be. If you are still not sure, compare the fresh lamé of a new jacket to the old one. If the metal has become a "shrinking violet", and has sunk below the surface of the surrounding cloth threads—and don't think it doesn't happen: some of these lamé cloths behave like that when they get old—then there is little that can be done. If the metal is simply not there any more—and that happens too—again there isn't much that can be done. If it is totally corroded, ditto.

Well, what can be done?

If there are specific areas that have gone bad, while the rest of the jacket looks—and tests—OK, then it can be worth your while to have patches of new lamé added. Whole new collars can be added this way, for example, or sections in the under-the-armpit areas. Just be sure that there is metal-to-metal contact established by the stitching.

What about those metallic paints for repairs? The coppery stuff never worked well. The silver stuff does: but it really is too expensive, I think, for anything more than real emergency use; say, patching a little hole that somebody's unfriendly tip has just cut into your jacket in the middle of a competition. Then a stitch or two to hold the thing together, covered with a dab of silver paint, can justify itself. But the idea of trying to cover a whole collar with the stuff is grotesque.



Joe Byrnes and apprentice

photo by A. Axelrod

Never put the lamé jackets in the washing machine. Never use very hot water on them. Never knead or wring them. Dunk them in a mixture of mild detergent (even something as mild as "Woolite") along with some ammonia. How much ammonia? I have done no laboratory testing, so all I can recommend is enough that you can smell it. If you have a poor sense of smell, be careful. Never put them in a drying machine. Hang them up to dry.

Everything that I have said above applies to both the traditional lamé jackets that we have seen for years and to the latest development, the stainless model, which is a great improvement. Like the "unbreakable" Maraging steel blade, it is touted in some quarters as going to "last forever". Ho, ho. Would it were so. The maraging blade will eventually break, and the stainless steel lamé will eventually wear out, but both will last longer than their predecessors, and more than repay the initial cost.

Among the few wrinkles that have come up in recent years is the discovery that spot cleaning can be performed on electrical jackets with mild ammonia-based, or ammonia reinforced, solutions. I have found that the glass cleaner known as WINDEX—particularly the foamy version, i.e., foamy Windex "with Ammonia-D", can be sprayed on areas that are not past salvation, although they are badly stained and read as questionable, or even bad, on an ohmmeter check. Gently rubbed in and let dry (and you don't want to spray it on too heavily) you may find that what seems like a real rejuvenation has been worked. Unfortunately, it will not raise the dead. If areas of the jacket are too far gone, see above.

Let me conclude by quoting myself from eleven years ago. Simple common sense practices can help preserve your lamé jackets, so that they don't get into a condition that requires heroic rescue efforts—or at least so soon. The thing to do is not huddle the lamé jacket into a soggy bundle after a meet and just stuff it into your fencing bag. Don't let it contact the metal of the blades. Avoid pressing in creases. Preferably, carry it on a hanger in a ventilated (perhaps plastic) garment bag. If you have to pack it away in a fencing bag, roll it, rather than fold it, to avoid putting too much strain on those delicate threads. And get it out of the bag as soon as you are home so that you can hang it up to dry.

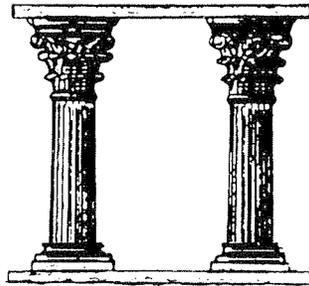
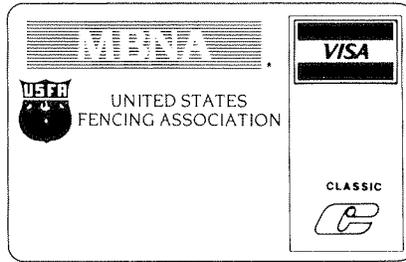
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Men's Foil—146 Entries

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2. Royer, Bruno—France
3. Rocheleau, Luc—Canada
4. Marx, Michael—Oregon
5. Littel, David—Philadelphia
6. Giasson, Benoit—Canada
7. Tichacek, Jack D.—New Jersey
8. Burchard, Peter—No. Cal.
9. Massialas, Gregory—No. Cal.
10. Rosenberg, Eric—Metro., NY
11. Angers, Stephen—Canada
12. Des Georges, Pierre—No. Cal.
13. Mufel, Edward—Cent. Penn.
14. Nonomura, George—No. Cal.
15. Carter, Al—So. Cal.
16. Bukantz, Jeffrey—New Jersey

Dec 12-13, 1987 New York, NY

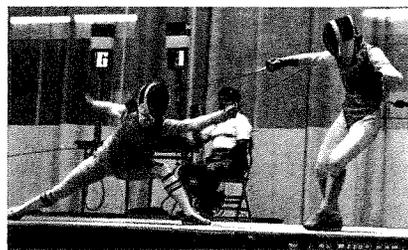
Men's Epee—135 Entries

1. Trevor, Stephen—Metro., NY
2. Moreau, John A.—So. Texas
3. Dessureault, Michael—Canada
4. Nowosielski, Dan—Canada
5. Normile, Jon—Metro., NY
5. Shelley, Lee—New Jersey
7. Stull, Robert—So. Texas
8. Young, Christopher P.—Michigan
9. Marx, Robert—Oregon
10. Nieman, Robert L.—So. Texas
11. Phillips, Miles D.—Illinois
12. Perreault, Daniel—Canada
13. Farley, Holt—Metro., NY
14. Masin, George C.—Metro., NY
15. Glass, Timothy C.—Illinois
16. Losey, R. Gregory—So. Texas

Dec 6, 1987 Elizabeth, NJ

Men's Sabre—86 Entries

1. Banos, Jean-Paul—Canada
2. No Award
(Westbrook expelled for improper behavior)
3. Friedberg, John—Metro., NY
4. Banos, Jean-Marie—Canada
5. Mormando, Steve—Metro., NY
6. Lofton, Michael—Metro., NY
7. Friedberg, Paul—Metro., NY
8. Gonzalez-Rivas, G.—Metro., NY
9. Rodrigues, Gerard—Metro., NY
10. Pleskun, Igor—Metro., NY
11. House, Edgar Jay—Metro., NY
12. Keane, Brian G.—Metro., NY
13. Deschenes, Bruno—Canada
14. Reilly, Phillip—New Jersey
15. Goering, William A.—Michigan
16. Reohr, Christopher—Metro., NY



Luan Jujie attacks Katie Bilodeaux

photo by A. Axelrod



Peter Lewison prepares to meet Michael Marx

photo by A. Axelrod

Dec 11-12, 1987 Chicago, IL

Women's Foil—96 Entries

1. Bilodeaux, Caitlin—Metro., NY
2. Jujie, Luan—China
3. Stone, Donna Lee—New Jersey
4. Pillion, Madeline—Canada
5. Monplaisir, Sharon—Metro., NY
6. Zhu, Yan—China
7. Hayes, India Ruth—New Jersey
8. Sullivan, Molly—New England
9. Cheri, Elaine—Colorado
10. Piazza, Lisa—Metro., NY
11. Metkus, Andrea—Illinois
12. Clark, Laurel—No. Cal.
13. Yu, Jennifer—Cent. Cal.
14. Hayes, Rachael—Phila.
15. Hamel, Louise—Canada
16. Barreda, Abbe Marie—Indiana



Luan Jujie and Katie Bilodeaux

photo by A. Axelrod

Dec 13, 1987 New York, NY

Women's Epee—52 Entries

1. Wylie, Dorshka—New England
2. Lewis, C. Kathryn—Philadelphia
3. McClellan, Cathy—New England
4. Clark, Laurel—No. California
5. Littman, Jane R.—Piedmont, SC
6. Arata, Kimberly D.—So. Texas
7. O'Donnell, Judith B.—New Eng.
8. Holly, Madeleine C.—Metro., NY
9. Brown, Xandy—So. Cal.
10. Adrian, Marlene—Illinois
11. Barry, Nora L.—Phila.
12. Chaplinsky, Sharon—Phila.
13. Maskell, Laura—Oregon
14. Askins, Leith—So. Texas
15. Collinge, Amy C.—Phila.
16. Loscalzo, Katherine—Metro., NY



Yan Zhu unhooks Luan Jujie

photo by A. Axelrod



Results

NORTH AMERICAN CIRCUIT #2 RESULTS

Jan 9-10, 1988 Portland, Oregon

Men's Foil—95 Entries

1. Marx, Michael—Oregon
2. Mufel, Edward—Cent. Penn.
3. Massialas, Gregory—No. Cal.
4. Gerard, Pascal A.—Oregon
5. Kent, Marc—Metro., NY
6. Crable, Arthur Dennis—So. Cal.
7. Littell, David—Phila.
8. Nonomura, George—No. Cal.
9. Lewison, Peter—Metro., NY
10. Burchard, Peter—No. Cal.
11. Fox, Frank Oliver—So. Cal.
12. Kovacs, Yehuda—Indiana
13. Bukantz, Jeffrey—New Jersey
14. Yorukoglu, Murat—Georgia
15. Epply-Schmidt, Paul—Conn.
16. Headley, Mark Wold—No. Cal.

Jan 9-10, 1988 Colorado Springs, CO

Men's Epee—132 Entries

1. Stull, Robert—So. Texas
2. Marx, Robert—Oregon
3. Cote, Alain—Canada
4. Nowosielski, Dan—Canada
5. Chouinard, Jean-Marc—Canada
6. Trevor, Stephen—Metro., NY
7. Carpenter, James—National
8. Zorn, Aaron—Canada
9. Moreau, John A.—So. Texas
10. Dessureault, Michel—Canada
11. Losey, R. Gregory—So. Texas
12. Phillips, Miles D.—Illinois
13. Steward, Bernard—Cent. Penn.
14. Glass, Timothy, C.—Illinois
15. Block, Claus Dieter—Michigan
16. Zebuth, Christopher E.—L.Is. NY

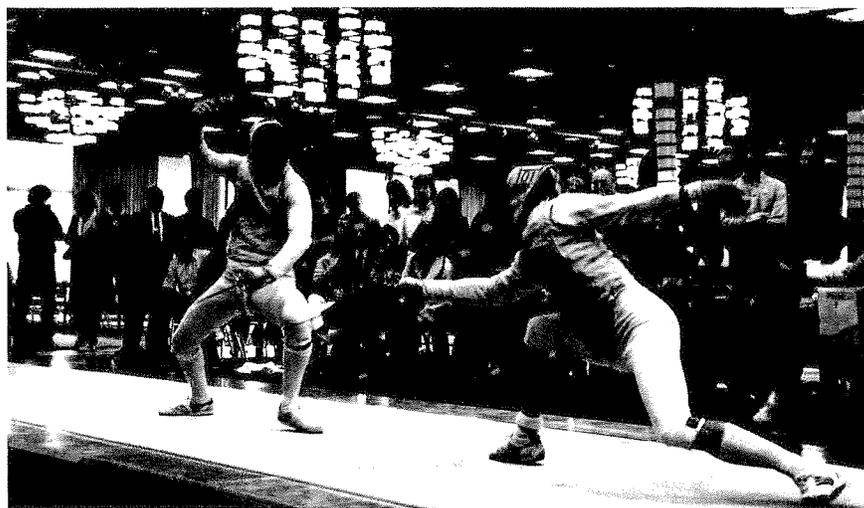
Jan 24, 1988 New York, NY

Men's Sabre

1. Mormando, Steve—Metro., NY
2. Westbrook, Peter—Metro., NY
3. Friedberg, Paul—Metro., NY
4. Lofton, Michael—Metro., NY
5. Anthony Jr., Donald K.—Phila.
6. Rodriguez, Gerard—Metro., NY
7. D'Asaro II, Michael—Metro., NY
8. Gonzalez-Rives, G.—Metro., NY
9. Friedberg, John—Metro., NY
10. House, Edgar Jay—Metro., NY
11. Pleskun, Igor—Metro., NY
12. Deschenes, Bruno—Canada
13. Reilly, Phillip—New Jersey
14. Mandell, David—Metro., NY
15. Carignan, Steve—Canada
16. Toomer, John—New Jersey

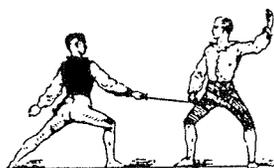


Michael Marx attacks Massialas



Michael Marx continues his pursuit of Massialas

photo by A. Axelrod



Victor Katie Bilodeaux holding her awards

photo by A. Axelrod

Jan 8-9, 1988 Portland, Oregon

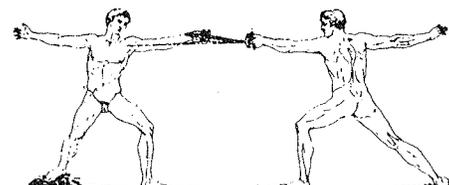
Women's Foil—72 Entries

1. Bilodeaux, Caitlin—Metro., NY
2. Cheris, Elaine—Colorado
3. Monplaisir, Sharon—Metro., NY
4. Clark, Laurel—No. Cal.
5. Sullivan, Molly—New England
6. Yu, Jennifer—Cent. Cal.
7. Yu, Jessica—No. Cal.
8. Hall, Jane P.—New England
9. Piazza, Lisa—Metro., NY
10. Hamori, Isabelle—Metro., NY
11. Hayes, India Ruth—New Jersey
12. Hayes, Rachael—Phila.
13. Starks-Faulkner, Jennette—Conn.
14. O'Neill, Mary Jane—New England
15. Stone, Donna Lee—New Jersey
16. Miller, Margo—So. Cal.

Jan 10, 1988 Colorado Springs, CO

Women's Epee—55 Entries

1. Stone, Donna Lee—New Jersey
2. Bannon, Margaret—Canada
3. Lewis, Kathryn C.—Phila.
4. McClellan, Cathy—New England
5. Klinger, Anne—Oregon
6. Roldan, Pilar—Mexico
7. Ezzell, Ann McBain—Michigan
8. Kellman, Lisa—Canada
9. Brown, Xandy—So. Cal.
10. Clark, Laurel—No. Cal.
11. Morrison, Veronica S.—Capitol
12. Adrian, Marlene—Illinois
13. O'Donnell, Judith B.—New Eng.
14. Littman, Jane R.—Piedmont, SC
15. Reid, Allison S.—Cent. Cal.
16. Barry, Nora L.—Phila.



Results

TORNEO INTERNACIONAL DE "CADETES"

AUG 28-29, 1987—Mexico City, Mexico

Men's Foil Individuals

1. Neury Padron—Cuba
2. Stephan Flores—U.S.A.
3. Al Carter—U.S.A.
4. Sergio Salazar P.—Guatemala
5. Walter Flaschka—U.S.A.
6. Rainier Herrera—Cuba
7. John Maggio—U.S.A.
8. Fernando Ramirez—Mexico "B"
9. Daninthe Gregory—Guadalupe
10. Alfonso Cadena—Mexico "A"
11. Richard Clark—U.S.A.
12. Rodolfo Salazar P.—Guatemala
13. Eddy Patterson—Cuba
14. Rolando Garcia—Cuba
15. Alain Tandron—Cuba
16. Hector Montero—Mexico "B"

Women's Foil Individuals

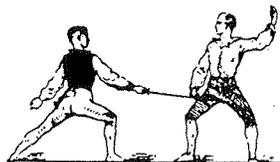
1. Laura Flessel—Guadalupe
2. Dulsu Milsey—Cuba
3. Melanie Jones—U.S.A.
4. Iidoris Diaz—Cuba
5. Laritza Baez—Cuba
6. Jennifer Posthumus—U.S.A.
7. Jennifer Hill—U.S.A.
8. Aleizha Batson—U.S.A.
9. Angelica Duenas—Mexico
10. Cynta Rojas—Mexico
11. Katie Kowalskie—U.S.A.
12. Rosa Fajardo—Mexico
13. Odalys Gorgue—Cuba
14. Yurizan Martinez—Cuba
15. Liliana Robles—Mexico
16. Miriam Robles

Men's Foil Team

1. U.S.A.
2. Cuba
3. Mexico

Women's Foil Team

1. U.S.A.
2. Cuba
3. Mexico

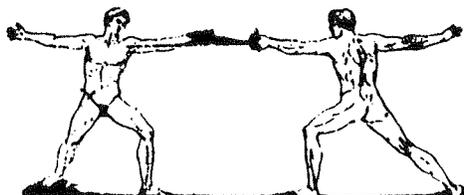


CHALLENGE "VILLA de MADRID"

Oct 17-18, 1987—Madrid, Spain

Men's Sabre Ind. Tournament—74 Entries (from tableau of 32)

1. Couderc, L.—FRA
2. Rubino, C.—ITA
3. Pavan—ITA
4. Russo, C.—ITA
5. Peinador, Raul—ESP
6. Sirovich, G.—ITA
7. Zanotti—ITA
8. Dentico—ITA
22. Stollman, D.—USA
56. Roeth, C.—USA



FLEURET et EPEE d'OR

Oct 31, 1988—Montreal, Canada

Men's Epee—68 Entries

1. Cote, Alain—MOU
2. Perrault, Daniel—MOU
3. Fekete, Nicolas
4. Dessureault, Michel—RA
5. Griffiths, Steven—U.S.A.
6. Nowosielski, Dan—RA
7. Bramall, Ian—VAN
8. Pinel, Jean-Francois—MOU
15. Normile, Jon—IND
19. Binder, Randit—Santelli
20. Hill, Jason—IND
24. Oshima, Marc—IND
26. Suick, Kerry—Santelli
27. Alexander, Ross—FC.
30. Scott, Joe—IND
40. Wiederhorn, Michael—Santelli
58. Klaus, Chris—Santelli

Women's Foil—65 Entries

1. Bilodeaux, Caitlin—BRE
2. Steiner, Shelley—MEC
3. Pillion, Madeleine—MEC
4. Hayes, India—U.S.A., SSNJ
5. Poirier, Jacynthe—MEC
6. Aubin, Renee—UA
7. Leblanc, Louise-Marie—RA
8. Stone, Donna L.—U.S.A., SSNJ
9. Greene, Stephanie—SSNJ
17. Piccinnino, Denise—SSNJ
- 18.(t) Medina, Blanca—SSNJ
20. Hanrakan, Kathy—IND
22. Nagy, Marta—SSNJ
27. Tavares, Debra—SSNJ
34. Medina, Paula—FC.
50. Ragany, Rita—IND
51. Jone, Juliette—IND
53. Nettles, Cassandra—IND
- 62.(t) Hicks, Yolanda—IND
- 62.(t) Bitar, Sara—IND

AIRBORNE TROPHY

Nov 7-8, 1987—Arnhem, Holland

Men's Epee Ind. Tournament—74 Entries (from tableau of 32)

1. Gerull, Thomas—ALF
2. Mazzoni, Angelo—ITA
3. Schmidt, Arndt—ALF
4. Steifensand, Marc—ALF
5. Gaille, Patrice—SUI
6. Pusch, Alex—ALF
7. Bellman, Achim—ALF
8. Cote, Alain—Can
23. Shelley, Lee—USA
32. Trevor, Steve—USA
141. Farley, Holt—USA

MAX GARRET PENN STATE OPEN Penn State—State College Park

Nov 14, 1987

Men's Foil—81 Entries

1. Mufel, Ed—Penn State
2. Kiel, Albrecht—Wayne State
3. Kovacs, Yehuda—Notre Dame
4. Weber, Allan—Unat.
5. Kent, Marc—Unat.
6. Fernander-Madryd, Ivan—Unat.
7. Rosario, Jose—Unat.
8. Ellingson, Mark—Unat.

Nov 15, 1987

Men's Epee—88 Entries

1. Phillips, Miles—Un. of Illinois
2. O'Loughlin, Chris—Unat.
3. Hitchcock, David—Navy
4. Marsh, James—Penn State
5. Shinberg, Scott—U.S.A.F. Acad
6. Griffee, Todd—Notre Dame
7. Coyne, Doug—Penn State
8. Fay, Ted—Notre Dame

Nov 14, 1987

Men's Sabre—76 Entries

1. Mandell, David—Unat.
2. Cox, Peter—Penn State
3. Abbey, John—Unat.
4. Ciemens, Peter—Unat.
5. Reohr, Chris—Unat.
6. Nowosielski, Leszek—Notre Dame
7. Kamper, Reiner—Un. of Illinois
8. Salmon, Jeffrey—Penn State

Nov 15, 1987

Women's Foil—98 Entries

1. Sullivan, Molly—Notre Dame
2. Rossman, Gail—Unat.
3. Piccinino, D.—Fair. Dickenson
4. Hall, Jane—Unat.
5. Papailias, Penelope—Unat.
6. Hynes, Janice—Notre Dame
7. Weber, Christa—Unat.
8. Fox, Lauren—Penn State

SPOKANE FENCERS UNLIMITED FALL TOURNA.

Sept 19-20, 1987—Spokane, WA

Mixed Foil

1. Paul Clark—Wild Horse F.C.
2. Mike McElroy—Wallingford F.C.
3. Sean McEldry—Wild Horse F.C.
4. Todd Albertson—Wild Horse F.C.
5. Chris Ford—Wallingford F.C.
6. Bob Rears—Pierce F.C.

Novice Foil

1. Sean Dykstra—Spokane Fenc. Un.
2. Donovan Vidarine—Pierce F.C.
3. Kirk Frye—Wild Horse F.C.
4. Jason Nurenberg—Spokane Fenc. Un.
5. Marshall Smith—Wild Horse F.C.
6. Eric Sinclair—Spokane Fenc. Un.

Epee

1. K.P. Selzler—Pierce F.C.
2. Travis Foley—Wild Horse F.C.
3. Gibb Brantlet—Spokane Fenc. Un.
4. Todd Albertson—Wild Horse F.C.
5. Rich Raines—Wild Horse F.C.
6. Sean McEldry—Wild Horse F.C.

Results

CUMBERLAND OPEN

Nov 14-15, 1987—Nashville, TN

Men's Foil

1. Paul Smith—Chattanooga
2. Lee Isbell—Vanderbilt Un.
3. Frank MacKenzie—Kentucky

Men's Epee

1. Lee Isbell—Vanderbilt Un.
2. Frank MacKenzie—Kentucky
3. Brent Nieman—Atlanta

Men's Sabre

1. Frank MacKenzie—Kentucky
2. Greg Bean—Chattanooga
3. Lee Isbell—Vanderbilt Un.

Women's Foil

1. Laura Underwood—Un. of Tenn.
2. Katy Simpson—Kentucky
3. Cynthia Ziegler—Vanderbilt Un.

Women's Epee

1. Katy Simpson—Kentucky
2. Laura Underwood—Un. of Tenn.
3. Cynthia Ziegler—Vanderbilt Un.

Women's Sabre

- 1.(t) Katy Simpson—Kentucky
- 2.(t) Laura Underwood—Un. of Tenn.
3. Cynthia Ziegler—Vanderbilt Un.



SAN DIEGO DIVISION

28th SAN DIEGO FOIL OPEN INVITATIONAL

Jan 24, 1988—San Diego, CA

Men's Foil

1. Geoff Russell—Salle Gascon
2. Al Carter—Salle Gascon
3. Brian Peña—Salle Couturier

Women's Foil

1. Heidi Runyan—Unatt.
2. Christina Lang—Unatt.
3. Rita Ringle—SDAA



ARK-LA-MISS DIVISION

Aug 29, 1987—Trinity Cathedral Little Rock, Arkansas

Open Foil—19 Entries

1. Ralph Neal—Texarkana Fencers
2. Pierce, Nobel—Texarkana
3. Lev Desmarais—Fayetteville FC

Open Epee—12 Entries

1. Scott Campbell—Caddo Magnet HS
2. Robert Lee—Ark. Fencing Acad.
3. Wes Kinney—Unat.

Novice Foil—9 Entries

1. Evan Chynoweth—Fayetteville FC
2. Kennan Shelton—Ark Fencing Acad
3. Michael Lea—Ark Fencing Acad

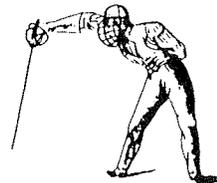
Oct 31, 1987—Caddo Magnet High School Open Tournament Shreveport, Louisiana

Open Foil—21 Entries

1. Greg German—Caddo Magnet HS
2. David Rodgers—Barksdale AFB FC
3. Ralph Neal—Texarkana

Open Epee—15 Entries

1. Michael Aufrichtig—Caddo Mag HS
2. Scott Campbell—Caddo Magnet HS
3. Wes McKinney—Unat.



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ELECTRIC EPEE COMPLETE	\$21.50
ELECTRIC FOIL BARE	\$11.00
ELECTRIC FOIL COMPLETE	\$19.80
SABRE	\$11.00

COPPER LAMÉ \$55.00

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Sabre masks have leather trim,
All masks have elastic retainers)

