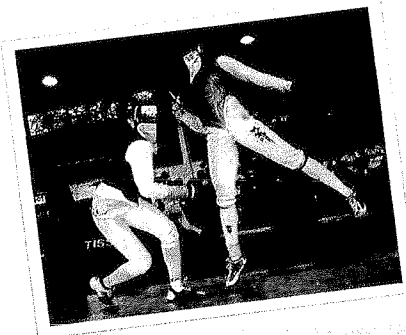
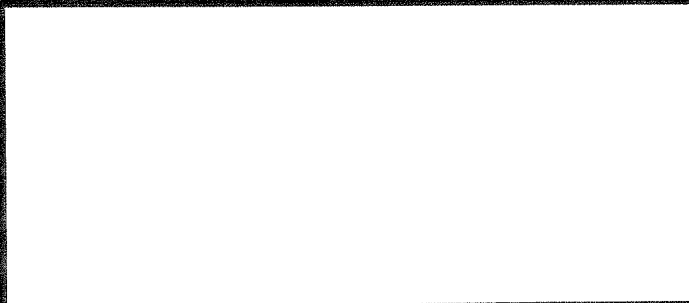


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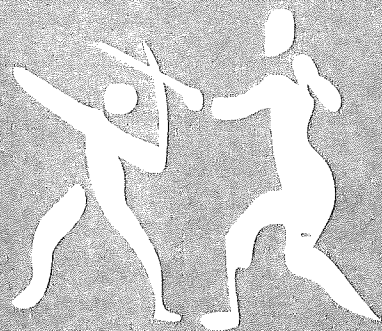
*A Family Affair: Steve
Kush and Erinn Smith
lead U.S. fencing team
Preparing for the Olympics, p. 24
Q&A with Erinn, p. 39*



*Albert Axelrod
remembered ... p. 35*



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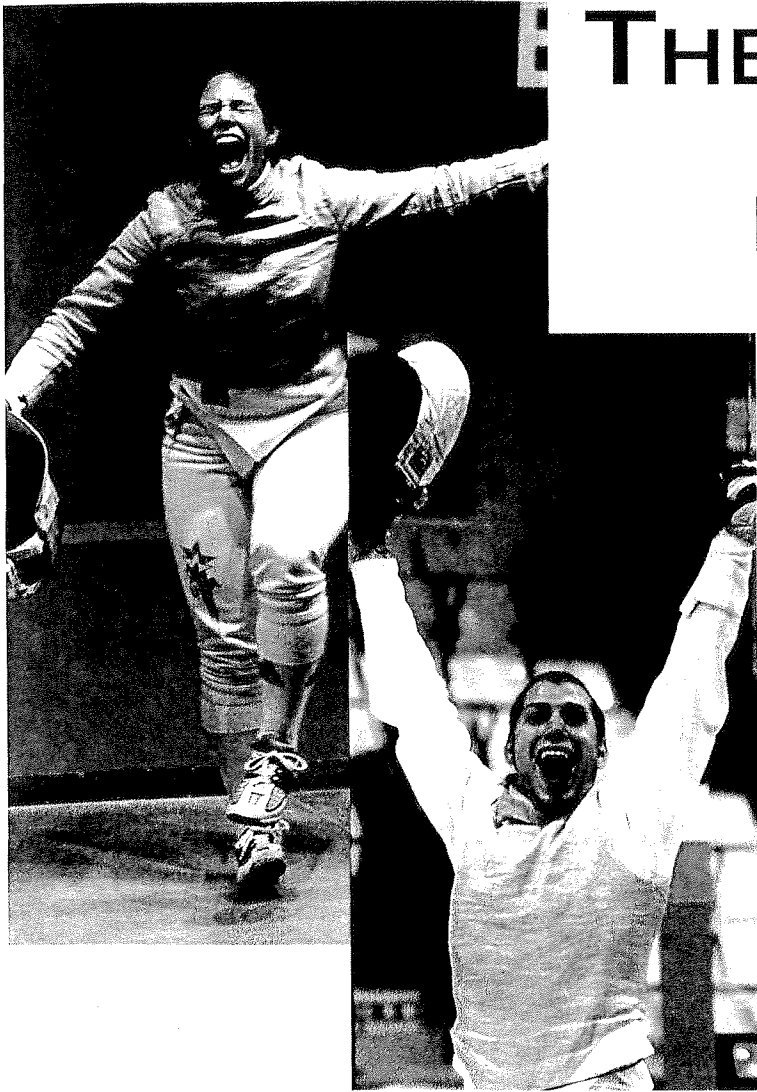
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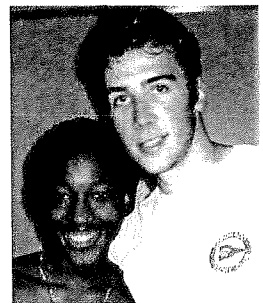
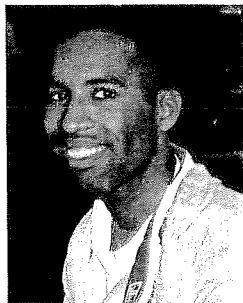
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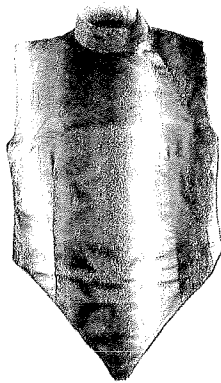
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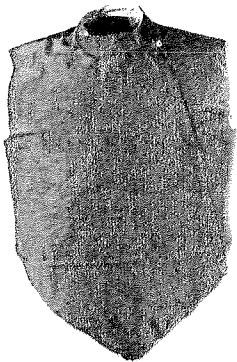
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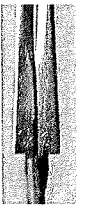
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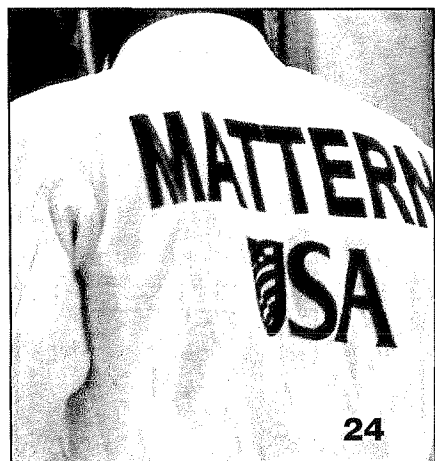
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American FENCING

Spring 2004 · Volume 54, Number 1



AF FEATURES

- 24** The Long Road To Athens
U.S. Olympic fencers prepare for 2004 Games
by Cindy Bent
- 34** Toll of the Years
Irwin Bernstein and Albie Axelrod
Remembered By Friends

AF DEPARTMENTS

- 6 **President's Letter** Time of Transition
- 8 **Your Letters** A Coach's Impact
- 8 **Fencing News** Arnold Classic, THS, Maccabiah Games
- 12 **Postcards from the Strip** Fencing In Mexico
- 14 **Sports Medicine Q&A** Flexibility + Strength = Performance
- 15 **Sport Science** The Big Point
- 16 **Rules/Referees** Blinded By The Flick
- 18 **Club Corner** Considering Incorporation
- 19 **Club Corner** NorthWest Fencing Center
- 21 **Parent's Corner** Tournament Time
- 22 **Tech Talk** Beware: Changes Ahead
- 38 **Tournament Results** Duel In The Desert, Arnold Classic
- 39 **Athlete Q&A** Erinn Smart
- 40 **In The Spotlight** Rebecca Ward

41 USA FENCING: THE USFA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

On the Cover: Siblings Keeth and Erinn Smart make the 2004 Olympics a family affair.
Photos: Serge Timacheff. Cover Design: Andy Teng

An important time for fencing **TIME OF TRANSITION**

by **Stacey JOHNSON**, President, United States Fencing Association



As this magazine goes to press we are at a critical juncture where many decisions are in the making, but not quite finalized.

First, our Cadet and Junior Team have journeyed to Plovdiv, Bulgaria and so I do not have the results of their competition at the time of this writing. In addition, our Olympic Team has not been fully determined, and at the end of April in Atlanta we will formally name our Olympic Team members. Further, we are preparing to host a critical Grand Prix World Cup and Team World Championship event in New York that has the power to positively impact both athletes and the positioning of the U.S. as a leader in the fencing world on many levels.

So this is a moment of transition and by the time you receive the magazine all the above information will have been determined and experienced.

However, now that I have served more than three-and-a-half years in this role of President, I can with confidence predict a

solid competitive outcome for the Cadet and Junior Team and believe more U.S. medals will be garnered in Bulgaria. This confidence comes from knowing our competitive pipeline has been continuously growing stronger in terms of results and world rankings over this last quadrennial.

In addition, I believe that the U.S. will qualify several of our weapon teams and a number of individuals who will be able to represent the U.S. extremely well on the competitive playing field in Greece. Further, I believe in my heart and mind that we will have great success and capture at least one medal at these Games. The time is ours to take this important step – one that hasn't been ours since the 1984 Games. We have great champions in the making.

In closing, the USFA suffered a great and historic loss with the death of 1960 Olympic Bronze Medalist Albie Axelrod this past February. I wanted to share with you my feelings about Albie's passing and the letter that appears below was sent out as a result of his death.

— AF

February 25, 2004

Dear USFA Leaders:

When I heard the news about Albie I thought to myself that one of our great champions in fencing has passed out of our lives.

I wanted to share with you my sadness and my remembrance and to take a moment to honor his memory. When I was competing as an athlete, and before Peter Westbrook won his bronze medal in 1984, it was incredibly important for me to know that it was possible that an American could reach the pinnacle of athletic achievement, garnering an Olympic medal. Albie held that candle of hope for me and all athletes for a very long time. In addition, he stayed involved with our fencing family for so

many years, contributing in other ways through the organization's magazine, officiating, and his interests in different facets of fencing. I can recall when I was 16 and visiting New York City for the first time, I fenced with him at the Fencer's Club. He was tough to fence, even in his advancing years. Also when I fenced with him – I could sense how much he loved to fence, enjoying the game, enjoying the encounter and the people he came to know through our sport.

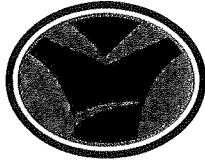
It seems that as of late we are experiencing a wave of loss in our fencing family. For me, I am taking these great losses and turning them into a time for cumulative reflection. Albie left a great wealth and legacy of passion to fencing. One of our champions has left us, but the light he showed us about what

is possible in each of us has not left us. We know we can achieve and continue to grow in concern for one another through fencing. We can grow in leading the way for our fencing youth of tomorrow and stand steady in supporting our athletes and USFA members of today.

My prayers are with the Axlerod family for their great loss and with all of the many friends in fencing that Albie had through these years. A great champion has passed out of our fencing family.

Sincerely,

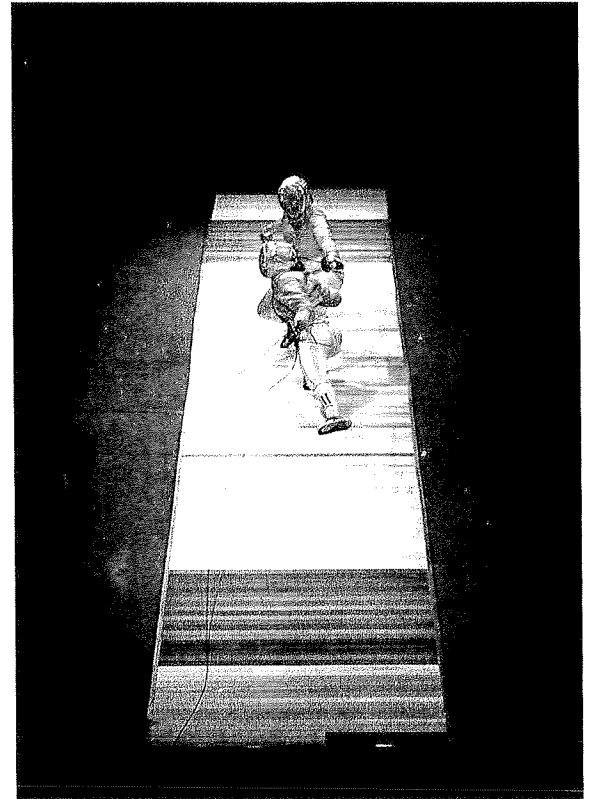
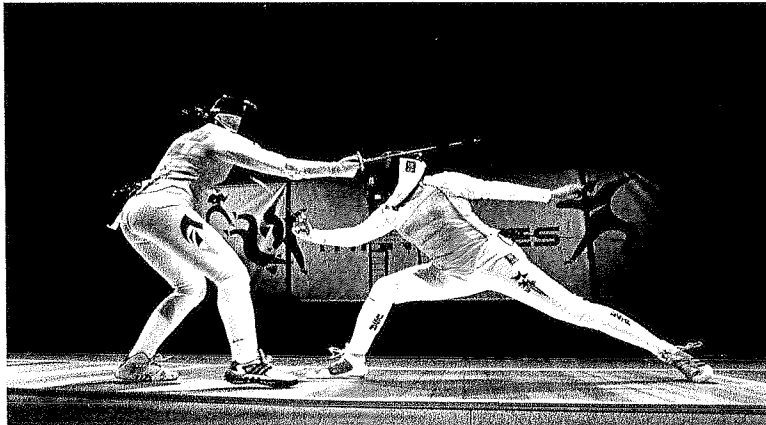
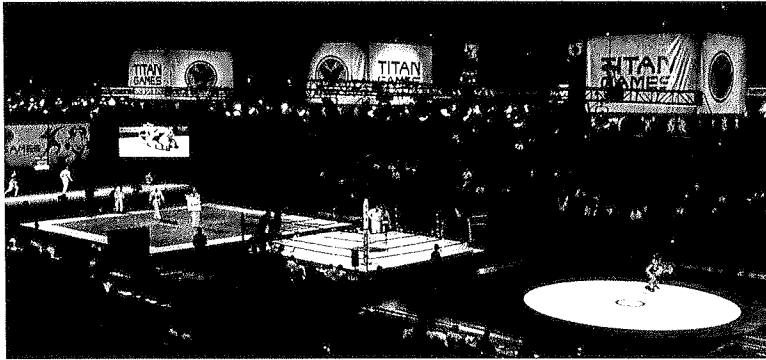
Stacey Johnson
President, USFA



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Presented by the US Olympic Committee, US Fencing Association and the Atlanta Sports Council.

A Coach's Impact Remembered

Dear Editor,

Sometimes you are lucky enough to meet someone who touches your life and makes a lasting effect. One of the people who made a difference in my life was my college fencing coach.

She was a talented coach who was dedicated to the sport of fencing. I'm sure she taught many students to fence and faced many obstacles as a woman in sports before Title IX.

Nancy Barthelemy was hired at Indiana University of Pa. in 1970 to coach women's volleyball and fencing. She was also a competitive field hockey player who several times made a regional team that competed in National tournaments.

I read this in her obituary in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and was sorry I never got to know her better. And that I never got to tell her how much the three years on my college fencing team meant to me. After I graduated, fencing was one of the things I missed most until I found a local club in 1997. I started fencing again and hope to be involved in the sport as long as she was.

By her example, Ms. Barthelemy taught us discipline, integrity and good sportsmanship – all of which are missing in many sports programs today – as well as fencing skills. She had high expectations for how hard you worked on the strip as well as how you conducted yourself in front of teammates

and opposing teams. We were not top fencers but she made me feel proud to be a part of her team and motivated me to be as good a fencer as I was able.

I also read in her obituary that she was given a Pennsylvania HERitage Award for her lifetime achievements, presented by the Pennsylvania Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. It was written on the award that Ms. Barthelemy "did not follow where the path led but instead went where there was no path and left a trail."

I'm glad I had a chance to know her.

Barbara Sheetz
Zionsville, PA

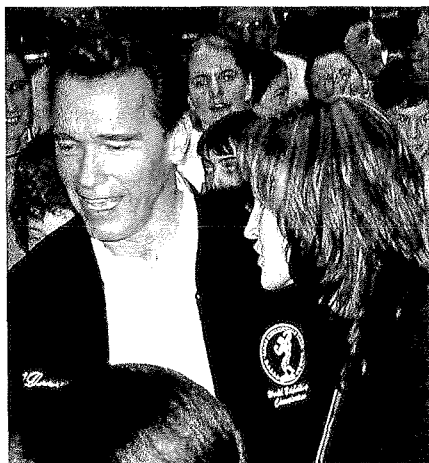
FencingNEWS

Arnold Fencing Classic To Be Back Next Year

He'll be back! The Arnold Fencing Classic, part of the Arnold Fitness Weekend fitness exposition in March in Columbus, Ohio was such a success that it was invited back again in 2005.

Fencing was included for the first time this year in the sixteenth edi-

The Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, with organizer Julia Richey, made an appearance at The Arnold Fencing Classic but (fortunately for the competitors) did not pick up a weapon.
Photo by Sam Lillard



tion of the Fitness Expo, which attracts more than 80,000 visitors annually. The Governor himself turned up very briefly at the competition site, long enough to shake a few hands and take some pictures, but did not partake in any of the fencing.

Hundreds of fencers did, however, competing in seven team events, including youth and open competitions in each weapon and a special Elite six-weapon team showcase.

The Elite teams featured a Titan Games-like contest between four teams populated by some of the country's best fencers. Among those entering the fray were Keeth Smart, Sada and **Emily Jacobson**, **Jeff Snider** and three-time Olympian **Ann Marsh**, taking a break from her career as an emergency room physician.

"We would like to invite fencers from all over the country to come back in 2005," said **Julia Richey**, organizer of the Fencing Challenge.

More information can be found at www.arnoldclassic.com.

FIE IS On Its Way

Coming to a city near you ...

- The Hyatt Hotel in Tampa, Florida will be the site for the 2005 World Veterans Championships, September 2-4.
- Leipzig, Germany will host the 2005 Senior World Championships; Turin, Italy will host the 2006 Senior World Championships; and Lenz, Austria will host the 2005 Junior Cadet World Championships.
- In the future, the FIE will limit the number of Senior World Cup competitions to 14, of which five are Grand Prix "A."

THS Makes Fencing Travel Easier

Most USFA members who have competed at North American Cups this season have met THS, or The THS Company, Inc. Through a deal with the USFA struck in the fall of 2003, THS now handles many national tournament hosting services, including site location research, negotiations for rates with hotels and venues, and booking of hotel rooms for tournament competitors.

The Hackettstown, N.J.-based company provides the same service for a number of Olympic and other sports, including volleyball, taekwando, and track and field.

"They're used to dealing with very large venues and lots of housing issues, they're the experts in the field," says **Jeff Salmon**, USFA Tournament Committee member. "They can help offer sites that we couldn't have been aware of, and can help us negotiate better deals."

The Tournament Committee authorized the deal with THS for several reasons, Salmon says. First, THS will help find NAC sites in "hub" zones or larger cities, to which there

are more direct flights from most areas of the country, meaning lower travel costs for both competitors and for the USFA.

Costs to transport tournament personnel and referees, explains Salmon, are among the highest expenses of holding an NAC.

A secondary goal is to hold NACs in more desirable destinations, and for members and the USFA to reap savings by getting good hotel rates in those larger cities.

Finally, there are no direct costs to the USFA or its membership. THS earns its revenue from the hotels and venues it works with nationally.

The USFA is seeking feedback on THS's performance for members through a questionnaire on the THS website in order to address any member concerns.

THS began working with the USFA after the 2003-2004 season's sites were already set and hotel deals already struck, though the company has handled hotel room bookings for those competitions. The company will be investigating new sites in the 2004-2005 season.

Young U.S. Fencers On Track For Great Performance At Worlds

At the Junior & Cadet World Championships in April in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, the young U.S. fencing contingent took on the best in the world and emerged with a fist full of medals. By the press deadline of this magazine, U.S. Juniors and Cadets had earned five medals in individual competition – two gold, one silver and two bronze.

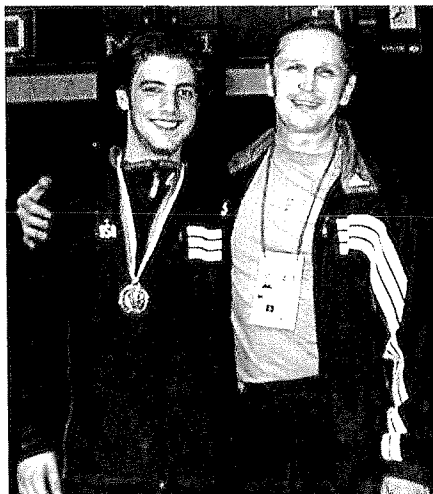
Caitlin Thompson of Oregon Fencing Alliance (OFA) in Portland won the Cadet Women's Saber event command-

ingly; her U.S. junior women's saber teammates **Emily Jacobson** (Nellya Fencers) and **Mariel Zagunis** (also of OFA) won gold and silver, respectively.

Brendan Meyers of New York Fencers Club won the bronze in the Junior Men's Foil event and **Keri Byerts** won the bronze in Cadet Women's Epee. Byerts represents NorthWest Fencing, the club being profiled in this issue on page 19.



In photo below, Brendan Meyers stops fencing for a moment to pose with coach Mike Petin. In photo at right, Caitlin Thompson receives her gold medal in Cadet Women's Saber.



Fencing Taking Center Stage At Maccabiah Games

The 17th World Maccabiah Games will be held in Israel from July 10-21, 2005. It is open to athletes of the Jewish faith. With the possible exception of women's saber, it is expected that individual and team events will be held in all weapons. The selection criteria will be the following:

- Best two out of three results from the 2004 Division 1 Nationals and the first two Division 1 NACs of the 2004-2005 season (December and January).

- Any add-on points earned at designated Senior World Cups between the 2004 Division 1 Nationals and the January, 2005 Division 1 NAC.

- Any replacement points earned at non-designated Senior World Cups between the 2004 Division 1 Nationals and the January, 2005 Division 1 NAC.

The final selection event will be the January, 2005 NAC. Up to three fencers per weapon will be selected, with the possible exception of women's saber. The cadre will consist of a Coach and a Manager.

Applications can be obtained by going to the MaccabiUSA/Sports for Israel website: www.maccabiusa.com

For further information, please contact Jeff Bukantz, bukieboy@aol.com or Dan Milgram, csdmilgram@ccsainc.com

The U.S. fencing team in 1948

THE UNKNOWN OLYMPICS

Spirit of sport overcomes war's impact • by AndySHAW

Americans are excited and proud of the many "firsts" that have recently been achieved by our new crop of young fencing stars in the international arena. But in some cases they are NOT firsts. It is not that our publicists and journalists have so easily forgotten those great performances of the past, nor are they attempting to overlook them. They have just never heard of them. To many of the great American champions, their spouses and offspring, I say, "You are not forgotten."

In this issue we are going to look at the events of war and peace that led us to the great, rarely spoken of perfor-

mances of our 1948 U.S. Olympic Fencing Team members at the London Olympics.

War had been rumbling throughout the trenches of Europe for more than a decade. The blood of the youth of the world who competed together in friendship just a few years before in 1936 in Berlin was spilt over four continents.

World War II would be the death of the 1940 and 1944 Olympics. In fact, most knowledgeable folks in the world of fencing and other Olympic sports could not imagine an Olympic Games in the foreseeable future considering the catastrophic damage across the world.

But the spirit of sport survived. After the war, Europe began rebuilding at an inspiring pace and plans were made for the 1948 Olympic Games in London. The U.S. fencing team set sail for England on July 16, 1948 aboard the R.M.S. Queen Elizabeth. Calisthenics and training were held daily on deck led by trainer Isadore Wasserman. By the third day, light workouts were held by the two coaches, Giorgio Santelli and Rene Pinchart. They reached Southampton, England on July 21.

The fencing began on July 30. The 1948 London Olympics had the largest fencing contingent in Olympic history, scheduled to go 13 full days in the Palace of Engineering at Wembley. All of the finals were to be contested on the central strip with steeply banked seating, huge scoreboard and all of the country's national flags overhead.

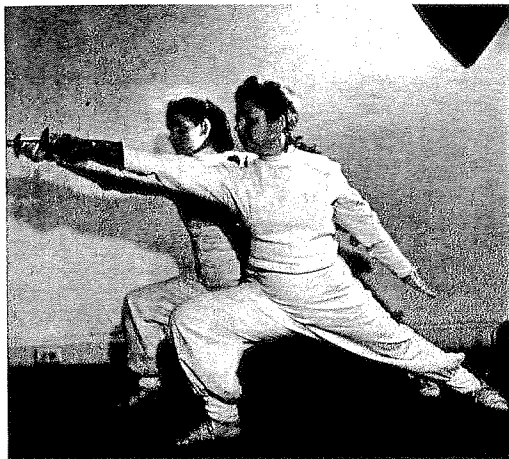
The 1948 Olympic men's foil team event had 16 countries represented. The first round put **Danny Bukantz** (father of **Jeff Bukantz**, whose column appears regularly in these pages), **Austin Prokop**, **Dernell Every** and **Dean Cetrulo** against Switzerland. Bukantz went 4-0 to lead the Americans to a 9-3 win.

Victory after victory put the U.S. into the final round of four teams, along with France, Italy and Belgium. The U.S. beat Italy in this round but lost to France and Belgium, and the U.S. team finished fourth. In the individual event, Cetrulo would finish 9th.

The women's foil event saw 39 competitors from 15 nations. Our team consisted of **Janice Lee York (Romary)**, **Helena Mroczkowska**

The 1948 U.S. Olympic Team. Top row (l to r) Dernell Every, Austin Prokop, Dr. James H. Flynn, Jose deCapriles, Dr. Danny Bukantz, Norman Armitage, Miguel deCapriles, Dr. Tibor Nyilas (7th in Men's Sabre), Donald Thompson. Third row (l to r) Coach Rene Pinchart, Dean Cetrulo, Norman Lewis, Andrew Boyd, Silvio Giolito, Albert Wolff, Coach Giorgio Santelli. Second row (l to r) Maria Cerra, Janice Lee York (Romary), Salvatore Giambra, Warren Dow (Captain), Helena Dow, Margaret Every (chaperone). Front row (l to r) George Worth, Isadore Wasserman (trainer), Ralph Goldstein, Nathaniel Lubell.





U.S. Olympic fencers Helena Dow and Maria Cerra.

Dow and Maria Cerra (Tishman).

Here is Cerra's story:

"I used to look at everything backwards," she remembers. "On Saturday, just before the Olympic preliminary round in foil, I said to myself, 'I can't lose all my bouts!'"

And she did not. Round after round, Cerra advanced with stellar records, and round after round, she vowed not

to lose all of her bouts in the next, until she advanced to the finals.

The finals of the Olympics was done as an 8-woman round-robin with 4-touch bouts. Again, for the last time in the 1948 Olympics, Miss Maria Cerra dearly hoped that she did not drop every one of her bouts.

Her victories mounted throughout the pool again. But Cerra's last bout was against the No. 1 ranked fencer in the world, **Ilona Elek** of Hungary. Cerra led 2-0 in the 4-touch bout and for an instant, was two touches away from the Olympic gold medal. The winner of the bout would take the gold, the loser would be in a three-way tie for second.

Elek made a great comeback and won 4-2. Cerra ended placing fourth. And how strong was the 1948 Olympics women's foil event? Three of the four most awarded women in fencing history were in this Olympics.

In the men's epee individual event,

Norman Lewis faced 66 participants from 25 nations. He fought into the final seeded first. Just before the final, team trainer **Isadore Wasserman** offered Norman a deep tissue massage to relax him before the big final round. This turned out to be a tragic mistake. Lewis' body was extremely sore from his rubdown and he only managed to defeat three opponents in the final, including the eventual bronze and silver medalists. Lewis took 9th.

The men's saber team produced the strongest performance of all. The team of **George Worth, Norman Armitage, Miguel de Capriles** and **Tibor Nyilas** lost only to the Italians (by two touches) and the legendary Hungarian team 6-10. The Americans won the Olympic bronze medal. Nyilas finished 7th in the individual event, and Worth, 5th. — AF

Andy Shaw is the official historian, USFA. He writes a regular column on the history of fencing for American Fencing.

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Training south of the border

FENCING IN MEXICO

A camp thrives in Mexico City • by Luis Mario **AGUIRRE-PALMA**

There is good fencing in Mexico! Last August I was able to assist at a fencing camp held in the Mexican Olympic and Sports Center (CDOM) in Mexico City, where the Olympic Games were hosted in 1968.

I am a foil and epee fencer and I started fencing at El Paso Fencing Center in 1999. I was born in Mexico City, but I was brought to the border when I was a baby, so I never had a chance to see the city before.

The camp was organized by www.EsgrimaMEX.com, a Mexican fencing website that promotes the sport all around Mexico as well as in other Spanish-speaking countries.

I knew that there were some good guys who are FIE ranked, but in general I thought that it was not going to be VERY GOOD, just good. But after fencing there for six days and meeting the different fencers my point of view really changed. There is VERY GOOD fencing in Mexico.

The other bonus to camp in Mexico: PRICE. Going to Europe or Asia is way too expensive. Also, the fact that I was going to be training in an Olympic Center really motivated me.

Mexico City is really huge, very populated, and very different from what you have heard in the news. There is a lot of stuff to do, and the city never sleeps. The Olympic Center is located in the middle of one of the nicest parts of the city, surrounded by huge trees. Usually it rains at night, so in the day you wake up with this freshness sensation in the air.

The camp lasted six days and it

was structured to train a world-class fencer, training from Monday through Friday and ending with an open tournament on Saturday.

When you wake up, around 7:30 a.m., with limited time to have breakfast, you can hear all the athletes going to train, or already training; it is just a 110 percent athletic atmosphere. Training would start at 8:30 on the track field, running and warming up, then you would go directly to the fencing arena and fence, and fence, and fence, until the lunch break.

During the lunch break the most relaxing thing was going to the pool and seeing the girls from synchronized swimming, and that was just amazing. After the break, more fencing, lessons and lectures, and it is already 8:00 p.m. Then again to the dining room, and around the time the fencing was over the boxing guys were dining, so I made some boxing friends.

During the camp there was a video session where every fencer was analyzed, and this helped me to focus on tactics and mistakes. How can you make your opponent do what you want him to do? And what psychological tricks is your opponent using on you? These were some of the questions used to analyze each participant's fencing style.

John Soter (Maitre d'armes), a French national, was the head coach for this camp, and he was helped by coaches **Emilio Ivan Arguello** (MEX Maitre d'armes) and **Gabriel Cruz** (MEX Maitre d'armes and former national coach of the Mexican junior

team). Mr. Arguello, who is a medical student in Boston and an epee coach at the Boston Fencing Club, gave a lecture on nutrition specifically designed for fencers.

There were some of the best junior foil fencers from Mexico at the camp, and all of them have represented Mexico in international competitions. That exposed me to a very different and professional fencing style. One of the fencers was **Andres De La Concha**, ranked 79 by the FIE. There was a girl from Switzerland who came to Mexico for the second time just to participate in this camp.

Some of the guys from archery, judo, boxing and table tennis would spend the little bit of fun time between the end of the training and 10:30 p.m. watching movies together; most of them were preparing to go to international cups or championships, and it was fun listening to their excitement. I went out on Friday with some gymnastic girls and some guy from boxing to a mall close to the Olympic Center, and let me tell you that there are lots of really nice restaurants and stores all around Mexico.

Now you can have an excuse to go to Mexico and train for one week in a totally competitive and professional environment, practice your Spanish, and make a bunch of Mexican friends. Try it and enjoy it. — **AF**

Luis M. Aguirre-P. is a microbiology student at The University of Texas at El Paso, and can be reached at luismag@utep.edu

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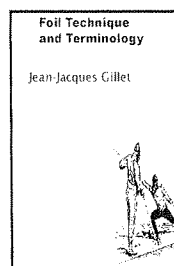
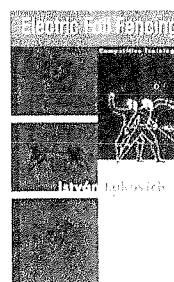
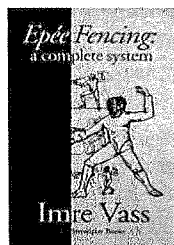
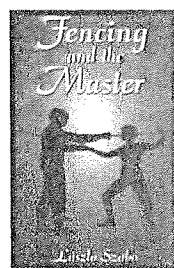
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Flexibility + strength = performance

CROSSTRAINING FOR EPEE

Olympic training tips • by Zach WEATHERFORD

What are some specific strength and conditioning exercises that might apply to epee fencers?

Fencing is a demanding sport that requires a high level of aerobic and anaerobic fitness, first step quickness, explosive power, and ability to change direction quickly with a controlled technique. These attributes can be developed through a fencing-specific, periodized ancillary program. Here are some of the basics of a crosstraining program. A detailed plan will be available at www.sportsmed.usfencing.org.

- **General Warm-up:** Every workout should be preceded by a general warm-up and flexibility routine. Warm-up must consist of low-intensity aerobic activity such as an easy jog on a treadmill or road, cycling, jump rope, or any combination of what you enjoy. Duration of the activity is five to 10 minutes, or just enough time to elevate the heart rate and increase body temperature.

- **Flexibility Program – Dynamic Stretches:** Flexibility training must follow the general warm-up. Traditional static stretches such as stretch and hold for eight to 10 seconds may not be to your advantage for increasing flexibility. Although static stretching should continue to be a part of your flexibility routine, dynamic stretches would be beneficial prior to the quick explosive movements found in fencing. It is recommended that you move the static stretches to the end of the workout.

Dynamic stretches are controlled movements that mimic fencing or the activities that will follow the warm-up. The exercises are simply stretches with movement. An example of a

dynamic stretch would be a forward or walking lunge that emulates fencing technique.

- **Plyometric, Footwork and Agility:** Movements that are explosive should be a critical part of a fencer's crosstraining regimen. If you want to be fast you must train fast, an easy concept but difficult to put in practice. The plyometric routine, footwork drills, and agility movements will help in improving speed and quickness.

Plyometrics are excellent exercises for developing power. Plyometrics are simply jump training. A basic plyometric exercise is running or jumping rope. Plyometrics incorporate both a fast eccentric and concentric contraction of a muscle or muscle group. A plyometric squat jump exercise would be executed by moving as fast as possible in the down motion of a squat exercise and transitioning quickly into a jump. All plyometrics must be executed on the surface where the athlete participates in their sport, but never on concrete or similar unforgiving surfaces. This will cause the athlete to experience acute and chronic overuse injuries.

Proper footwear should be worn, preferably a crosstraining shoe with good support. Exercises should be done at the beginning of the workout. Quality of the exercise must never be compromised for quantity. Full recovery between sets is critical to performance. Always strive for speed of execution. When performing repetitive movement of an exercise, the athlete must focus on attempting to spend as little time possible on the ground. Imagine the ground as hot coals.

- **Power Training:** Resistance training is vital to any athlete or coach that strives to enhance performance and prevent injuries. Epee is a quick, explosive sport that requires a significant amount of power. Power is the combination of both strength and speed.

Development of power is attacked from two directions. You can increase power by making gains in strength, often accomplished by traditional squat, bench press, or any fencing-specific resistance exercises. The speed component is approached by executing quick explosive movements.

- **Periodization of a Program:** It is suggested that you start easy and build. Ancillary programs should be designed to enhance fencing, not hinder the sport. Make sure you are following a program that has progressive overload and allows for full recovery during training sessions. Begin with simple movements with light intensity and move to complex, more difficult exercises. Four to six week training blocks with variation in training from block to block are suggested. As a coach, if you are bored with the exercises, chances are so are the athletes. — AF

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Zach Weatherford is Strength & Conditioning Coach at the U.S. Olympic Training Center.

16 ways to win the 14-14 bout

THE BIG POINT

by Dr. John **HEIL**, Paul **SOTER**, Eric **HANSEN**, 2Lt. Seth **KELSEY**,
Cody **MATTERN** and Soren **THOMPSON**

Is it “la belle,” the beautiful, or “schrecklich,” the terrible? How you approach the fifteenth touch will determine the answer.

Because it may be the most important touch of the day, it merits forethought and special preparation. Clearly, there is no short cut, no hidden secret to coming out on top. You can't win them all, but you can work to win your share. The ideas that follow offer a mix of metaphor, practical advice and philosophic perspective as a guide to approaching that critical touch.

1 Starting with the fundamentals: Seize the initiative. Make the touch happen on your action.

2 Fencing smart: The last touch of the bout is when fencers have the most information about their opponent's game on that day. Use this information to your advantage.

3 Implementing the fundamentals: Get down on your legs and pick an action you are comfortable doing under pressure. Actively lead the tempo and footwork. Then make it happen.

4 Leaving it all there: Fence with everything you have. It doesn't matter if you collapse afterward, like a warrior dying in ritual combat.

5 A metaphor for action: “Like playing poker, Put your best hand together and go with it.” Prepare to act without looking back.

6 Taking the metaphor another step: Sometimes you need to “Kick the table over!” by seeking the creative solution, one that draws from the uniqueness of the situation and capitalizes on the element of surprise.

7 Coming from behind: Maintain your momentum. Do not try to reinvent yourself in the critical moment. Trust what got you there to begin with.

8 Being caught when ahead: It is a whole new bout. All you need is that one touch. A win is a win.

9 Studying your opponent: Be ready to capitalize on your opponent's mistakes or rashness.

10 Risking losing in order to win: Come to terms with the possibility of defeat. Accept the risks inherent in taking action, knowing that the risk of inaction is greater.

11 Keeping perspective: If you lose the touch, learn from it; If you win the touch, learn from it.

12 Weighing an ounce of prevention: The best way to assure victory is to avoid letting the bout get to 14-14. When you have a lead, maintain your intensity, and fight to the finish. If at all possible don't let the bout get to the point where it is in the hands of the official, of your opponent, or of luck.

13 Fencing the overtime minute: Never expect time to elapse if

you have priority. Look for the touch. Don't allow yourself to be passive or reactive.

14 Getting the mind-set: Fence with a light heart and an iron will, and what comes next will take care of itself.

15 Facing the greater challenge: Stare with confidence into the faces of success and failure. Let it bring out the best in you.

16 Keeping it simple: Calculated Choice + Decisive Execution = Best Result

However, being prepared for a critical touch is a challenge that resists simple description. As an idea of endless depth and complexity, it lies close to the heart of the sport. Let these thoughts serve as touchstones to guide you in your personal quest for excellence. Let your awareness of the next critical touch motivate you and give fuller meaning and richness to your training. — AF

This article is a collective effort of the coaches and athletes of the U.S. Men's Epee Squad, and is completed as part of the of the USOC Sport Science Performance Enhancement Team program. The authors of this article would like to express their appreciation to those who have helped them prepare for the 14-14 bout.

Dr. John Heil is Chair of Sports Medicine & Science for U.S. Fencing and can be reached at Lewis-Gale Clinic: jheil@lewisgaleclinic.com

Time to take notice

BLINDED BY THE FLICK

Change continues to impact the sport • by Jeff **BUKANTZ**



When I read inflammatory comments about the dreaded flick on certain websites or in other publications, I shrug it off. After all, these are the havens for those who are living in the past, refuse to accept change or are, quite frankly, downright unrealistic.

However, when rules changes are proposed by respected people in the FIE in order to eliminate or mitigate the flick, it is time to take notice. Some of the recent changes that will go into effect at the Junior level next season (as a test, not necessarily on a permanent basis) were made specifically to put a damper on the rampant flicking. These changes in foil include a longer contact time, 750 grams to depress the foil point instead of 500, and the reduction of the bend from 2 CM to 1 CM.

What the FIE should have done was institute a rule that changed the underarm plastron from bullet-proof Kevlar to a suit of armor. It is likely that the end result of the tinkering will be harder and stronger flicks that will increase the amount of welts while not decreasing the amount of flicks.

But that is completely tangential to my main point, which is that those who are hysterical about the flick (and not in a laughing way) are as out of line as a Steve Mormando derobement.

When I need a reality check about the "good ol' days," I go right to the best source, which happens to be my father, Dan. His career started in the 1930s, and he is one of the few foil fencers to have competed in the Olympics with both dry and electric foil.

Of course, Dan still recalls the wonderful "conversation of the blades" that his generation lived by, and the aesthetically

pleasing and cerebral value of that style. However, when I asked him for his opinion about the flick, his answer was refreshingly open-minded. Instead of lambasting the new-age style, Dan chose to recall a story from a half a century ago that illustrated the crux of the issue, which is that people simply don't like change.

The coach of the New York Fencers Club, which was then located on East 53rd Street, was Maitre Rene Pinchart. His wife, Madame Pinchart, was the manager of the club. The game at the time was linear, of course. Disengages, beat-one-tuos, I'm sure you can imagine. Then one day, a fencer did the unimaginable: He had the audacity to cut the line with a septieme parry. That was considered to be gauche, and Madame Pinchart asked the man to leave the club.

Now, while that punishment was a bit severe, Madame Pinchart's reaction to change was eerily similar to those who are crusading against the flick. (Those who fail to respect history are doomed to repeat it.)

In contrast, my dad recalled the changes that occurred when foil became electric. He said that some fencers adapted to the new game by utilizing whippier blades that would score touches that would have been called "parried" in dry foil. In addition to the whippier blades, some fencers would also whip (or should I say "flick"?) the point in from slightly exaggerated angles. Hmmm, sound familiar?

So, what did he do to combat this? When I asked him that question, he said, "There was only one logical choice if I wanted to deal with the change, and that was by slightly altering the distance and

the angle of the parry in order to prevent the whips from scoring."

What a refreshing perspective from one who lived through the dramatic change from dry to electric. Instead of letters to the editor, and incessant belly-aching about "Old School" fencing, he devoted his energy to figuring out how to overcome the change in the game.

My dad further recalled another story about a friend of his who refused to accept change. Nat Holman was known as "Mr. Basketball." He was a Hall of Fame player and coach. In basketball's good ol' days, the players only took two-handed set shots. Imagine that! Then, the unimaginable happened when a player on Holman's championship City College of New York team had the audacity to take a one-handed shot. Holman threatened the player, and any player, with suspension for taking any one-handed shots or jump shots.

While this was another example of refusing to accept change, it is an eye-opener to the fact that change is often good, the world evolves, and you can't look back.

Can you imagine if basketball players only took two-handed set shots? Isn't the game more spectacular now?

The same goes for many sports, including figure skating. Back in the good ol' days, skaters would whirl and twirl like ballerinas on ice. It was so beautiful. Then, some skaters had the audacity to include athletic jumps and spins into their routines. Naturally, they were vilified for changing from ballerinas to gymnasts on ice.

Can you imagine watching figure skating without triple lutztes, toe-loops and Salchows?

I happened to be in the Olympic Stadium with my mom watching track and field at the 1968 Mexico Olympics while my dad was officiating fencing (At the age of 11, fencing was the last place I wanted to be!). Anyway, the men's high-jump was taking place. All of a sudden, a gasp went up from the crowd as an American named Dick Fosbury had the audacity to jump over a bar backwards! This was unheard of, and he was, of course, vilified. The new move became known as the Fosbury Flop, and is the style now employed by every high jumper.

In all walks of life, change is inevitable. In most cases, change leads to improvement.

Black-and-white televisions became color. (Do the anti-flickers prefer we go back to black-and-white?)

Propeller planes became jets. (Do the anti-flickers prefer we go back to propellers?)

Clunky typewriters became streamlined and quiet keyboards. (Do the anti-flickers prefer we go back to the clunkers?)

Snail mail became email and FedEx. (Do the anti-flickers prefer we go back to snail mail?)

Basic television, with 13 fuzzy channels and rabbit-ear antennas became digital cable with 100 channels. (Do the anti-flickers prefer we go back to basic?)

The Amateur Fencers League of America became the United States Fencing Association. (Do the anti-flickers still pine for the good ol' AFLA?)

Dry fencing became electric. (Do the anti-flickers prefer we go back to dry?)

Women didn't used to have the right to vote, let alone fence saber or epee. (Do the anti-flickers prefer the good ol' days for women, too?)

The first time I saw the flick was back in the mid '80s when **Joshua Huttenbach** imported this nasty foreign object from his training in Germany. Huttenbach's new-fangled action initially befuddled the New York foilists, and he became known (not so affectionately) as

"Hurt-my-back" for leaving raw welts on our shoulders. Well, eventually we all figured out a way to overcome the monstrous flick by utilizing the line and high-low attacks.

But this was nearly 20 years ago! It is hard to believe that the same people are still complaining about it.

The world changed. The fencing world changed. The flick, no doubt, changed the game. It led to fencers developing new defenses to combat it, as proven by the Cuban men's foilists beating the Germans at their own game for the gold at the 1995 World Championships.

When I was in Leipzig for the FIE Rules Commission meeting that dealt with the rules changes, the Italian Fencing Federation President **Antonio DiBlasi** argued that the flick was "spectacular" and exactly what makes fencing exciting to watch in person or on television. DiBlasi was in the minority at that

meeting, but he was 100 percent correct.

On one hand, the FIE is obsessed with making fencing more television-friendly. On the other hand, it has made some changes that would likely do exactly the opposite in order to appease some traditionalists who are living in the past. Go figure...

As my father so poignantly said to me, "If people want to look pretty and fence in the dignified gentle methods of yesterday it is their privilege to do so and enjoy it. If, however, they want to win championships or rank nationally then it is important for them to adopt the changes that are necessary to win bouts and forget about looking pretty on the strip."

The flick has been adopted into the game for a generation, and the fencers have adapted. It is overdue for the naysayers to stop whining, don't you agree? Or, are you blinded by the flick? — AF

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Dealing with club issues

THE BIG PICTURE

The decision to incorporate • by David **ARIAS**

We are all faced with important decisions in developing our fencing businesses. In addition to those critical issues related to coaches, insurance, facilities and equipment, the time will come when you must address how your club will operate in the future.

This involves some intimidating decisions regarding the need for incorporation, becoming nonprofit or tax-exempt, the risk of potential liability, and your ability to understand and manage the filing requirements associated with the choices you eventually make.

As long as your group is simply fencing together, and just discussing the idea of your own facility, there is no compelling reason to incorporate. If you are just a group of friends meeting to fence, your legal status is that of an Unincorporated Association. Unincorporated Associations generally do not register with the state and have the freedom to act informally, with few legal restraints. The downside is that members may be held legally responsible for liabilities that the Association may incur.

If your club is going to be around for a while and has specific goals to accomplish (which might involve enrolling members, collecting dues, and sponsoring events) it is generally best to incorporate.

A general business corporation (that is, potentially profit-making) will not be tax exempt, may not receive tax deductible contributions, and is subject to a tax on profits (the excess of income over expenses).

A nonprofit corporation, on the other hand, pays no state or federal income

taxes on the excess of income over expenses. However, while officers of the board may be reasonably compensated for services (like coaching) performed for the club, excess income from a nonprofit corporation may not be "taken out" or distributed among the officers or board members.

Becoming a nonprofit does provide a structure to handle ownership of assets and gives the club life beyond the individuals that start it. In addition, it gives you more credibility when asking sponsors for money, when asking people to volunteer, and when dealing with members and their parents.

To take things one step further, if Federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is applied for and approved, that corporation is exempt from Federal corporate income taxes and may solicit funds from donors, who are allowed to deduct gifts to the club from their income taxes.

Although regulations can vary among states, nonprofits can be organized for either Mutual Benefit (of the members) or Public Benefit (to benefit the public). Most fencing clubs are formed as the former. Only Public Benefit Corporations may qualify as 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations.

If you choose to seek Federal tax-exempt status, there is only one more choice to make. Some clubs apply for 501(c)(3) status on the basis of "educational activities." Others file for tax exemption on the basis of "encouraging local, regional, national, and international sports competition." Both exemptions are valid but the latter – encouraging competition in a recognized sport –

is the broader category, less subject to challenge and the more appropriate choice for a local fencing club.

Becoming a for-profit corporation would likely be the choice of an individual trying to make a club his/her livelihood. It requires filing tax returns and business licenses. But any profit after taxes belongs to the business owners.

There are a number of significant tax benefits available to small business owners that make this option attractive. It is a rather fundamental decision: that you want to run a business, and make money doing it.

The paperwork requirements to become a nonprofit are higher on the front end. If you simply become a nonprofit corporation in the eyes of your state but do not take the next step to become a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation, there generally is no annual paperwork. Reporting obligations of 501(c)(3) corporations, however, can be onerous.

You may find that a local law firm will be willing to assist you at nominal cost. While it may be possible to avoid the use of an attorney to incorporate your organization, it would be advisable to at least have your Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Application for Nonprofit Status reviewed by a lawyer before filing. Errors or omissions caught at an early stage are less costly to correct than if left for later. — **AF**

David P. Arias is a CPA and MBA, and is president and co-founder of the Birmingham Fencing Club, Southeast Regional Youth Circuit Coordinator and a member of the USFA Regional Youth Circuit Subcommittee.

Videos, exercise ... and fencing

FAMILY-FRIENDLY FENCING

NorthWest Fencing Center offers it all • by CindyBENT

The NorthWest Fencing Center in Oregon buzzes with activity – and not all of it is fencing.

In the lounge adjoining the fencing salle, a group of mothers chats and knits, needles clicking as fast as foils. Upstairs in the lofted exercise room, more parents peer over the half wall while they cycle away a few calories on the stationary bikes. In study carrels around the corner, young fencers catch up on their homework while waiting for the intermediate class to begin. In yet another room, younger siblings watch a video and play games.

Not to say that the fencing mission isn't taken seriously. This season alone, NorthWest Fencing is represented by several Junior World Championship team members and Olympic hopefuls, including **Cody Mattern, Keri Byerts, Julia Lezsko** and **Amy Orlando**.

But, says club coach **Michael Marx**, a five-time Olympian himself, "It's really important for us that the club is like a community." Enjoying the environment, he says, brings as many families back as the fencing does.

NorthWest Fencing is the 21st Century version of Salle Auriole, a club that has been around for more than a quarter of a century and produced some of American fencing's most accomplished champions, including Michael and his brother **Robert Marx**, three-time Olympian and current club president.

In the mid-1990s, a group of Salle Auriole fencers began working with a local sports administrator, **Chuck Richards**, to find a larger first-class facility. Richards, a 1972 U.S. Modern Pentathlon Olympian, has helped many sports get off the ground in Portland,

including baseball little leagues, tennis and soccer through a non-profit foundation – the Oregon Sports Trust (OST) – that uses many traditional fundraising tactics. He also hit upon one novel and wildly successful funding stream: bingo games.

By Oregon state law, non-profits can be granted licenses to host regular bingo games.

Kids and parents in sports programs all around the city help run the games with the OST in exchange for benefits for their organizations.

And by 1999, after several years of working with the OST, Salle Auriole was given a \$41,000 grant to help fulfill its dream: renovation of a 13,000-square-foot-space dedicated to fencing.

The building is in a complex that is host to eight other sports' competition and office sites in Beaverton, Ore., a suburb some 15 minutes west of downtown Portland. It was christened the NorthWest Fencing Center to represent the mission of a complete fencing athletic facility. Club members did almost all of the labor to transform the former supermarket, most recently a jazzercise club.

The result is a spectacular fencing environment: 15 grounded permanent strips, including a finals strip with spectator seating, are overlooked by video cameras that can tape bouts all over the center. There are showers, computers for studying students, even washers and driers in addition to the lounge,



An after-school class attracts area youths to NorthWest Fencing Center.

playroom and fitness center.

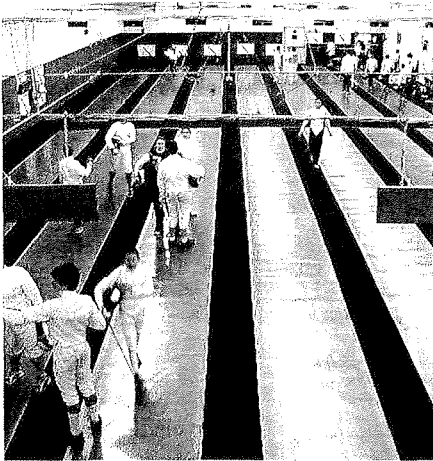
The grant didn't put the club on easy street, though. With the new facility came huge overhead – \$4,300 a month in rent plus utilities – and the responsibility to ensure that the club could thrive in perpetuity and be worthy of its new digs.

The first few years were rough going. The business model of the club had to change, moving from counting mostly on lessons for income for coaches to using fees from classes to supply the bulk of operating expenses.

The club is less dependent on any one coach, and is more viable that way, explains Michael. "If one of your coaches leaves for a week, the center is dead in the water," he explains.

NorthWest divides its classes into a range of ages and skills. Each session lasts one month. Kids ages 6-14 start in youth classes, which meet four days a week – the kids can choose two out of those four days to attend.

The youth fencers work through a series of skill tests in order to advance from youth to the youth competitive



The impressive NorthWest Fencing Center facility includes 15 permanent metal strips.

program, which they attend up to four days a week. The skill tests are great motivational and retention tools, Michael says, likening the levels to belts in karate.

Fees also increase at the competitive level, and private lessons begin. A class for homeschoolers is another good source of income and new members

and is a great use of the center's space during the day.

There is also a schedule of fees for adult classes, for additional private lessons, or for members who desire access to bouts sessions only. None of the classes break the bank – they're roughly equal to the cost of a monthly digital cable bill.

Coaching in many of the programs is a source of income for the center's elite competitors and, says Michael, an inspirational and teaching tool for the students and elite fencers alike.

Camps at the center and clinics that Michael conducts around the country are structured as additional sources of revenue. Other minor income generators include a \$10 monthly fitness center membership for parents and occasional hosting of birthday parties, which are also good recruitment events.

Finally, every member also pays a \$50 annual membership fee. Last year membership fees generated sufficient funding for new carpeting, electric rewiring and new fencing equipment.

Growth at the club has been steady through word of mouth. NorthWest had some 40 to 60 members in 1999 when they moved into the facility; that has roughly tripled to around 145 members now. Ten new inquiries a week are not uncommon, Michael says.

In the beginning, the club got the word out through demonstrations in local schools. Michael says the club presently does no marketing because he does not want to strain the staff's resources and risk not providing the best service to club members. In other words, for now, they're almost full.

It took years of hard work and a lot of volunteering of time and resources, but Northwest Fencing Center has achieved some important goals. One fencer, **Cody Mattern**, looks to be bound for Athens, with lots of help from NorthWest and its members. And this year, for the first time, the club is able to pay most of its coaching staff, hire a part-time manager, and stay in the black.

— AF



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A fencing parent's guide – Part 1

TOURNAMENT TIME

Preparing for USFA-sanctioned events • by Ron **DILBERT**

I've been approached by many parents inquiring into what they should expect when they go to a USFA-sanctioned tournament. So to help answer the many questions, I'd like to present a two-part article on the topic. I will be writing about NACs, otherwise known as North American Cups, but most of this information will also pertain to local and regional tournaments. Part 1 addresses the planning you need to execute before the big competition. Part 2, next issue, will help you from your arrival all the way through the end of the day.

First, you must be a member of the USFA to participate in any of these tournaments. If you receive this magazine in the mail, congratulations, you are an official member of the USFA. You now have the ability to compete in North American Cup tournaments.

If you simply got passed this article and are not a member, go the USFA web site (www.usfencing.org), where you can download the membership application. In return, you will receive a USFA membership card for the year in which you (or your child) become a member. The card identifies you as a USFA member and indicates what rating (or skill level) you currently possess, and will gain you entry to the USFA tournaments. Plus, you will get a subscription to the very magazine you are now reading.

It is always a good idea to discuss with your coach what they believe are

the most beneficial tournaments to attend for your child and why. There are NACs for many age groups and also skill groups based on the fencer's rating. To see the available USFA tournaments go to the USFA web page and click on "Competitions." Here you will find a list of tournaments and what the criteria to compete are.

When you click on the link to each tournament you will see the information you need to partake in that tournament - the deadline for the USFA to receive your registration form, the schedule, the venue where the event is taking place, a link to THS (the organization responsible for making the hotel reservations for the tournaments), a link to the application for the event and finally there usually is a link to the Chamber of Commerce where the tournament is being held.

Make sure you leave plenty of time for the registration form to arrive by the deadline – which is usually at least a month before your NAC – and that you enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your confirmation to be mailed back to you.

Once you have sent your registration, then you need to make your travel arrangements. Go through the USFA's link to TSA to make your hotel reservations. It is always a good idea to confirm with the hotel afterwards and to get a confirmation number from the hotel.

With longer tournaments I prefer to

stay at suite hotels. They have kitchenettes to save on eating out and they usually include breakfast, which gives the fencer more time in the morning. In addition, they have refrigerators to keep your Gatorade and water cold. You can also make sandwiches to bring to the venue for later on. Planning for food and drink at the competition for your fencer is critical.

If you must fly to the competition and you prefer not to rent a car, then it is always a good idea to call the hotel to see if they provide a shuttle to and from the airport and, if not, who to call to reserve transportation. Some hotels may also provide transportation to and from the venue if the venue is not attached or within walking distance. That detail is a good one to check with the hotel, as well: How far is it to the competition site?

When traveling, allow yourself plenty of time for delays. Direct flights cut down on missed connections or having your luggage end up at a warmer place than where you are going. Even if my son's event starts late in the day, I arrive a day early so my son has a chance to unwind and, if we are in a different time zone, the chance to adjust. In addition, if something does happen to our luggage we have more time for the airlines to get it to us. Plus, all equipment can be checked the day before my son fences. But we will get back to this point in Part Two ... to be continued next issue. — AF

The regulation process is in motion **BEWARE: CHANGES AHEAD**

FIE taking a look at foil and saber rules • by Joe **BYRNES**

The cat was certainly let out among the pigeons last December when word began to filter through about certain FIE Special Commission recommendations on improving foil and saber fencing, made last fall at the World Championships in Havana. Naturally, it was scuttlebutt at first, and with the usual level of accuracy. Nevertheless, there are probably some interesting changes ahead for foil and saber—provided, of course, that these recommendations (and that is all they are, so far) come through the FIE Congress substantially unmodified and are actually put into

effect. The main thrust of the proposals is towards putting a lid on “flicks.”

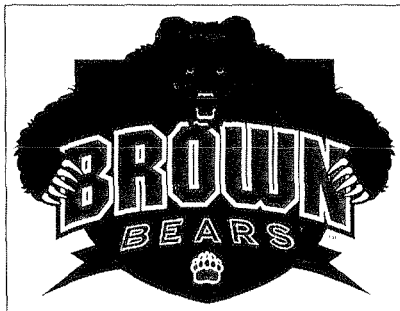
Not specifically connected with the flick, there is also a recommendation to chop down the “blocking time” for the signal lamps; this, it seems to me, has more to do with simplifying the “appearance” of a bout for those avid TV audiences, which we know are confused by more than one light on a machine. On the other hand, what effects such a change may have on the conventions of right-of-way (priority) and parry-riposte, I leave to your speculation.

Of the changes suggested specifically

to curb the flick, probably the basic one is lengthening the time required for the point to stay both open and in contact with the target in order to register a touch. At present the rule has decreed a floor and left a kind of open top. No touch may register in less than one one-thousandth of one second, and your garden-variety, normal, touch (through an average total circuit resistance) is supposed to show up at 5 one-thousandths of one second. With higher resistances, it can take up to half a second, which is still pretty fast.

The new order will have a 3X multipli-

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cation of the present rule. The time required is to be 15 of these milliseconds, plus or minus one, which substantially advances the "normal" present expectation. Not content with that (and does this mean that the grand panjandrums of the FIE perhaps have some doubt that they have hit on the right magic number?), they want foil springs to support 750 grams. Yes, that's the epee weight. With this rule in place, I can see a future for people making 250 gram caps for all of our present foil weights, which otherwise might be adapted as electrical jacket test weights. But how many of those do we need? Maybe they could make cute anchors for toy boats.

Wait, that isn't all. The last of the anti-flick provisions addresses the fleche of the blade in foil (fleche, i.e., the bend of the blade, not a movement of the feet; more about that later). They want the blade in foil to be monitored as strictly as in epee, where, you remember, it is to be

"as straight as possible" and in any case is to be allowed no more than a one centimeter bend, "near the center" (m.16).

Reflecting on this, I recollect that in the world of "period instrument" performance in classical music, the revival of the Renaissance/Baroque lute has given new currency to the ancient wheeze about the lute player getting to play the instrument only half the time, because the other half is taken up with tuning it. I can see competition organizers having to allow a lot of extra time for foil events to permit the necessary blade straightening after every action. Of course, then I think we'll start to hear calls to stiffen the blades. I can think of at least one prominent fencing nation that will be in ecstasy at such a development.

As is so often the case, what a Commission of the FIE actually says needs to be examined in the light of what they don't say, or in this case what they merely hint. The same report notes that they do not, for

now, have a recommendation about suppressing the off-target in foil, but do think that some experiments with this approach should be made in World-level Junior competitions. They are presumably split down the middle, or thereabouts, about eliminating the fleche (the footwork) in foil, so they are making no recommendation. They also can't quite bring themselves to recommend using saber masks for foil, but they have obviously discussed the idea and do "have nearly unanimous consent" that getting the bib back into the target would be real neat, if it could be accomplished. Beware, I say.

Note that these recommendations are proposed for adoption by the FIE Congress, to be put into effect, at first, only for World Cup-level Junior events, starting after the Athens Olympics. There is no need, just yet, to throw away your 500 gram weights, or start practicing how to tame the reprehensible curves in your foil blades. — AF



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An Olympic Preview

THE LONG ROAD TO ATHENS 2004

U.S. fencers prepare for the Games • by Cindy **BENT**

Athens. That one word, those six letters, have ruled the lives of athletes all around the world since it was selected at the site for the 2004 Olympic Games seven years ago. For years, even decades, every single day was dedicated in some way to getting there and competing well.

A sports industry trade group, the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, once found in a study that 400,000 people in the U.S. alone fenced at least once in a year's time. Of those, some 17,000 are so devoted to competing in the sport that they belong to the U.S.F.A. Thousands make it to the national stage to compete at North American Cups. Some 50 to 100 in each event qualify for Division 1 Nationals. Every year, 24 elite U.S. athletes reach the World Championships.

Now, that number is 13. No more than three per weapon. For some weapons, those thousands out there who fence each discipline have been narrowed down to one. One single athlete who carries the collective decades of dreams and determination of every fencer who has joined that climb along the way. That is what it means to be an Olympian.

And now, the final steps of the path leading to the Games for those few athletes gets steeper. The anxious qualification process is over, and new stress begins. By March 31, a handful of U.S. athletes knew whether their ticket was punched for Athens or not. But the Games don't begin until August 14. The future Olympians will have four-and-a-half months to prepare for the most important competition of their lives.

In this issue of *AMERICAN FENCING*, we'd like to focus on those final months of preparation. Next issue, we'll take a closer look with a complete Olympic preview.

The Olympic year presents a unique challenge to a coach. Athletes used to working toward a single goal at the end of a season – generally the World Championships – are forced, in many cases, to peak twice: once for the critical qualification competitions in March, and again in August for the Games themselves.

Further, the Olympics place an unbelievable mental and emotional stress even on veterans. Most fencers will have known exactly which opponent they will face when they walk onto the Olympic piste for more than two months. The seeding will be set

and the brackets drawn on the conclusion of the last World Cup competition in June or July, depending on the weapon. Imagine preparing for months to defeat one particular fencer!

What will those months be like? How does an Olympic fencer train? And what are the final hurdles they'll face before those select few march into the opening ceremonies in Greece? Squad by squad, we asked the six National Weapons Coaches to give us a snapshot of the preparations for the Olympic Games.

WOMEN'S FOIL

Nat Goodhartz, co-National Women's Foil Coach & Head Coach, Rochester Fencing Center, Rochester, N.Y.

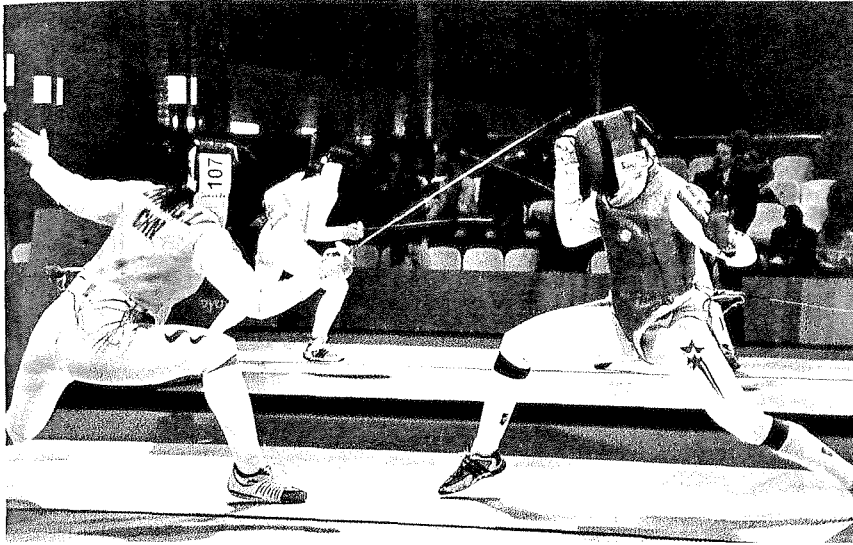
"For the women hoping make the 2004 team, the emphasis has to be on individual performance, which has been a very uncomfortable position," says Goodhartz. "They don't have the outlet of being together as a team, they are all competing against each other. It's a difficult situation they're in."

The women's foil squad does have an eye on the 2004 Women's Foil World Championships to be held in New York in June. But the cutting of the team event (*see Qualification Paths sidebar on page 28*) has been a huge motivational challenge for the women to come through, Goodhartz says. The athletes in contention have pulled together rather than split apart, and the results are showing. Three, **Erinn Smart** of New York, and Sydney veterans **Iris** and **Felicia Zimmermann**, are turning in top-16 performances at World Cups on a regular basis.

Training camps are an example of that cooperation. Many foilists have attended camps held in Rochester and New York City along with the few in real contention for the Games.

"Working with each other is crucial because the frequency of high-level drilling and bouting is what will continue to escalate the level of sophistication of our fencers," says Goodhartz.

Just before press time, the F.I.E. announced that Smart is the one who will qualify for Athens. While the exact training regime from now until August will be up to **Buckie Leach**, Erinn Smart's personal coach (and Goodhartz's former Rochester Fencing coaching partner), Goodhartz says overall, physical and tactical



Erinn Smart (right) looks to make her mark this year representing the U.S. Women's Foil Team.

strength have been the training priorities for the women's foil fencers.

Having power obviously allows for the acceleration demanded on the strip. But strength and endurance also help the athletes keep a clear mind to execute their tactics; a tired fencer is often a muddled one. Goodhartz has been working toward an increased tactical awareness of when things are going well, or aren't.

"They always have to be aware of the factors that are occurring – where they are on the strip, what is effective, and effective against them – and not be rigid in approaching the bout."

WOMEN'S SABER

Ed Korfanty, U.S. National Women's Saber Coach & Head Coach, Oregon Fencing Alliance, Beaverton, Ore.

The women's saber team is in the same boat as women's foil in that there is no team event to prepare for, but with the benefit of an additional slot. Being in the top eight in the world (see sidebar on page 28), both **Sada Jacobson** and the next highest-ranked fencer in the Americas, either **Emily Jacobson** or **Mariel Zagunis**, would make it to Athens.

But the strain of training together only to compete against each other is still there. And just as in foil, two of the contenders are sisters and the third is a good friend.

All three are training full time. Two, Emily Jacobson and Mariel Zagunis, have the added pressure of Junior competitions (Zagunis is the Junior World Cup Champion this year for the third year in a row.)

Korfanty says given all of those factors, stress has been the biggest hurdle for the women's saber contenders to overcome.

Taping every World Cup fencer he can has been part of his preparation, so that in those two and a half months before the Games, the fencers can analyze the best strategy for the bracket they face ahead. The

more tactical preparation, he feels, the more confidence the young contingent will have.

Physically, again, the preparation will depend on the individual's coach – Korfanty himself in Zagunis's case and **Arkady Burdan** in Atlanta in the Jacobsons.

He describes Zagunis's regimen as a five days per week fencing practice schedule, with two practices per day every day. Mornings are devoted to lessons and physical conditioning, strength training alternating with running or aerobic fitness. Evening practices are 1 1/2 hours long and devoted to mostly bouting. Saturday, he says, his fencers are free from practice but obligated to do some light exercise outside, such as a walk.

"Saber is a very physical game," Korfanty says. "Saber especially is over pretty fast, sometimes in 25 to 30 seconds. If the person trains hard and feels strong mentally as she goes to the bout, if she feels in superior shape, and there is no place for her to feel weak, she will be strong enough to find a way and put forward her best effort."

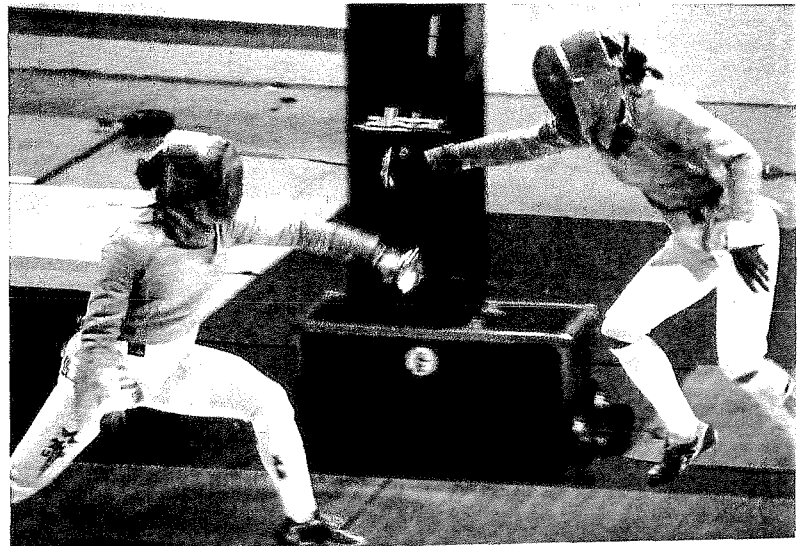
WOMEN'S EPEE

Kornel Udvarhelyi, U.S. National Women's Epee Coach & Coach, Fencers Club, New York, N.Y.

For women's epee, the struggle to qualify a team is now over with the U.S. women falling just short. Now, the challenge shifts to the individual – specifically, **Kamara James**, training in New York with Udvarhelyi.

From April forward, Udvarhelyi says, James' preparation will include hard practice in New York and a camp in Europe three weeks before the Games. World Cups this spring will also be important for seeding and experience, he says, for all of the top women.

Sada Jacobson has locked up her spot on the Women's Saber team, one of two American women who will compete in that event in Athens this summer. Photo: Serge Timacheff.



"Our girls need as much as they can get. In my opinion, that is the biggest challenge. They are not weaker than everyone else in the world, they just have less experience."

Especially in epee, a weapon with dozens of established World Cups in Europe every year, the European field competes every single weekend. Udvarhelyi emphasizes that James will be competing against virtual fencing professionals who train full time. Though she herself has taken a year off to train, that's a high mental hurdle to tackle.

James trains six days a week, Sunday through Friday. Mornings the workouts include lessons and physical conditioning, which often means a swim or a run even before breakfast. Lessons and drills focus on point control and technical perfection.

Afternoon practices include massage and stretching, he says, which are important additions, and then possibly another lesson and fencing – as much fencing as possible in a couple of hours.

After a sorely needed one-week break after the World Cup season quiets down, work will crescendo at the beginning of the summer preparation period. Lessons will be longer and harder, composed of lots of technical work. Step by step, Udvarhelyi says,

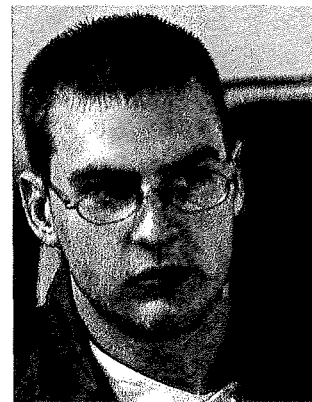
the lessons will move more into the realm of strategic sessions and simple actions all at top speed. There will be bouts every day, unless Udvarhelyi sees his fencer burning out.

Three weeks before Athens, he says, it should be off to training camp somewhere in Europe.

MEN'S EPEE

Paul Soter, U.S. National Men's Epee Coach & Coach, Golden Gate Fencing Center, San Francisco, Calif.

It was trumpeted around the land – the U.S. men's epee team clinched their spot at the Games in Vancouver, Canada in late March after the end of a year-long slugfest with Americas zone rival Canada. The U.S. will go into Athens seeded seventh in



OlympicQUALIFYING

The Federation Internationale d'Escrime is charged with the role of selecting the teams and individuals that will compete in Athens.

Because of ever-tightening restrictions imposed by the International Olympic Committee on the number of athletes and events at the Games, and the desire of the Federation to introduce Women's Saber to the Olympic family, the number of team events was reduced for 2004 to four, including men's foil, men's epee, men's saber and women's epee. The number of individual events increased to include all six weapons.

Only 200 fencers will compete – 108 men, 84 women, plus any 8 individuals that Greece, the home nation, chooses to compete.

A somewhat Byzantine set of qualification paths were established and are set forth below.

For weapons that have team and individual events (all men's events [foil, epee and saber] and women's epee): 36 athletes per weapon will compete.

TEAM QUALIFICATION

1) The first four teams in the FIE Official Ranking by team, irrespective of zone, qualify.

2) The highest-ranked team from each zone (Europe, Asia-Oceania, Ameri-

cas, Africa) in the Adjusted FIE Team Official Ranking (AOR) qualify. The AOR refers to the rankings after removing the teams/athletes that have already qualified for the Olympics.

INDIVIDUAL QUALIFICATION

1) If a nation qualified a team in a weapon, the three athletes who are to compete on those teams are also eligible for the individual competition. The USFA will name the three athletes plus one alternate who will compete on each qualified team at the conclusion of National Championships in Atlanta, on April 26, based on the USFA Team Standings. Those standings can be tracked at www.usfencing.org.

2) For countries that did not qualify a team in a weapon, the FIE individual AOR rankings by zone determine seven berths in each event (two competitors from Europe, Asia-Oceania and the Americas qualify and one from Africa). Only athletes from countries that did not qualify a team are eligible in this criteria, and a nation may only qualify one athlete in this way.

3) Zonal qualifying tournaments determine five more berths in each event – two from Europe, one from Asia-Oceania, one from the Americas and one from Africa. Only athletes from countries that

have not qualified by the previous criteria are eligible for the qualifying tournaments, and a country may only send one athlete per weapon to this competition.

For weapons that have only individual events (women's foil and women's sabre): 24 athletes per weapon will compete.

1) The top eight athletes in the FIE Official Ranking qualify for each weapon, to a maximum of two athletes per weapon per country.

2) Eight more athletes qualify for each weapon based on the AOR per zone – three from Europe, two from Asia-Oceania, two from the Americas and one from Africa. Each country can qualify only one athlete per weapon in this way.

3) Eight more athletes per weapon qualify via continental competitions – three from Europe, two from Asia-Oceania, two from the Americas and one from Africa. Only nations that had not previously qualified athletes in these events can compete in the continental competitions. Each country can send only one athlete per weapon to these competitions.

Note: Greece has the right to enter eight fencers, to be distributed between team and individual events as it sees fit. It could enter teams or have no team and select for only the individual events.



Seth Kelsey (facing page), Soren Thompson (above) and Cody Mattern are among the Americans battling for a spot on the Men's Epee Team.

the field of eight, and will face Russia in their first match.

The battle is now on for the three spots on that team. Hot contenders include World Championships finalist **Soren Thompson** of San Diego, Vancouver World Cup silver medallist **Cody Mattern** of Portland, recent Air Force grad **Seth Kelsey**, who holds two World Cup bronzes from this season, plus several more.

"Our first issue is geography," says Soter. The men's epeeists are spread all over the country, almost with no two in the same club. Most are self-financed, also, and are depending on part-time jobs or are taking a year off from school - or both.

Soter says long term, the goal is to find a way for fencers to work toward a real career, but do it part time. Otherwise, he says, they will retire from fencing too young to make real waves in men's epee - the largest and generally oldest, most experienced pool of athletes in fencing.

But for now, he's looking at providing what he can for the team, and that comes down to training opportunities and technical know-how.

A day in training might include two workouts each day - the first a lighter session emphasizing technique, drilling and bouting with a task in mind, and the second session intense bouting to last two or three hours. Physical training would come in between or in the morning. Sports psychology will also play a large role.

"The qualification period was brutal, and they need a rest," Soter says. He'd like to give the whole squad a month off, but that's impossible. National Championships - also the last Olympic Trial for those trying to make that team -

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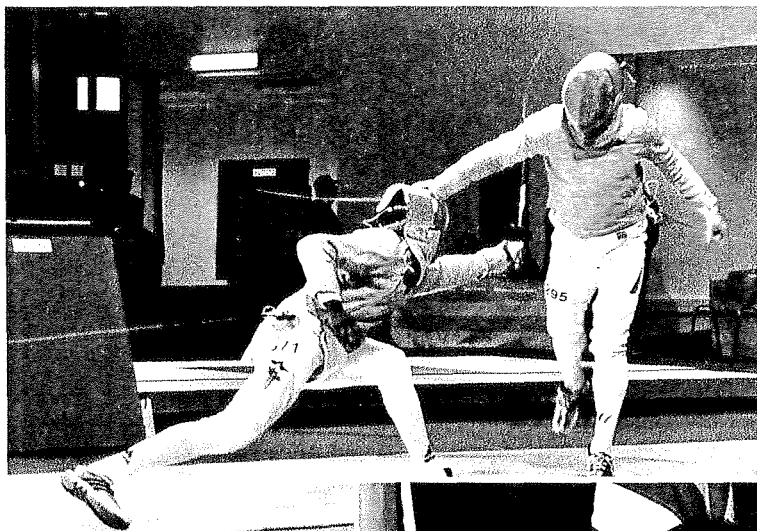
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AMERICAN FENCING cover subject Keeth Smart (above) looks to make his second Olympics appearance this year. Photo by Serge Timacheff.



At right, Ivan Lee (left) and Jason Rogers will try to repeat their medal-winning performances from last year's Pan Am Games. Photo by Bob Largman.

After that, Soter says, the men's epeeists finally will have their well-earned break. He wants the team to take three weeks off and relax, work with personal coaches and maintain physical conditioning. But in July, he says, "they're mine." Soter plans at least two camps, one of 10 days and a shorter four-day camp in locations to be determined. He plans to depart for Athens and more training there as early as August 8.

MEN'S SABER

Yury Gelman, U.S. National Men's Saber Coach & Coach, Fencers Club, New York, N.Y.

The men's saber team has been generating excitement for several seasons due to their success as individuals and as a squad. Led by **Keeth Smart** (2000 Olympian and first American ever to reach No. 1 in the world rankings), the team clinched their spot at the Games back at the beginning of March.

Smart and **Ivan Lee**, both of New York City, lead the standings and are in the most solid qualifying spot as of this publication. The No. 3 spot on the team is still up for grabs; contenders include **Jason Rogers** of Los Angeles, Calif. and **Tim Morehouse** of New York.

National Team coach **Yury Gelman** says the team has been growing into the most powerful in the world over the season, and now, the biggest challenge will be to help

begin April 24. Two weeks after that is the regular World Cup season's last team cup, important not least because the designated team will be traveling together.

them to believe it.

"They are achieving things already in individual competitions, and beating almost all of the strong teams in the world, but

GETTINGInvolved

Believe it or not, say the coaches, the average fencer can play a significant role in helping the Olympic Team on its way to Athens.

For one thing, elite athletes need to train with all levels of fencers, not just other Olympians. Nat Goodhartz notes that "warm bodies" are sorely-needed resources, and that she has yet to turn anyone away from women's foil camps. Other coaches, including Ed Korfanty, echo that call.

"Practice is not only about fencing with all the best fencers. To train in new actions it's best to train with all kinds of

fencers, to get comfortable in using all kinds of actions. So the average person can be very helpful in preparations," Korfanty says.

Paul Soter adds that housing for elite athletes at camps is a critical component to getting fencers together. Training camps are limited by availability of practice facilities and living arrangements for fencers.

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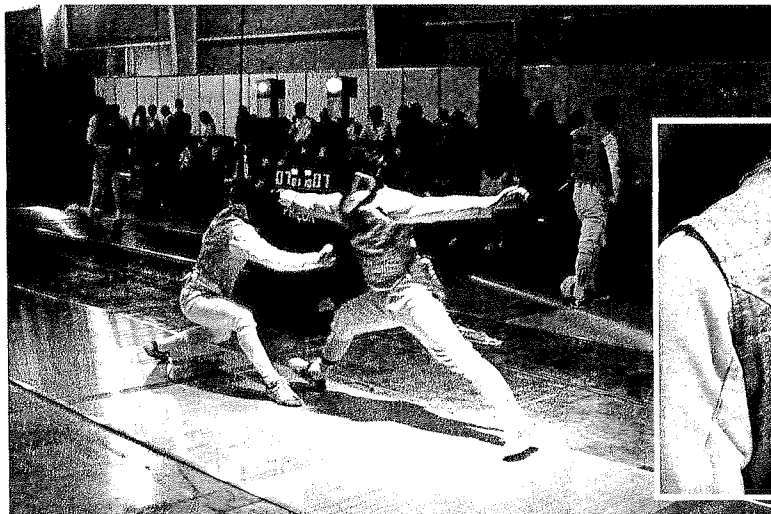
they're not consistent yet," says Gelman. "So they have to believe that this does not happen by accident, because they are strong and if they will continue their hard work, it will happen more and more often."

Part of that confidence, says Gelman, will come from the preparation. Most will have a short break through the first week of April, but then comes Nationals in Atlanta (again, the last Olympic Trials for those seeking a spot on the team) and after that, the real work begins.

Two days per week Gelman will hold two practices a day; on three more days, one practice. Fencers Club in New York is a fertile ground for this work, Gelman says, because of the concentration of saber fencers there.

Morning practices involve intense work, mainly footwork and drills among team members and one or two other high-level fencers. Every evening practice is for lessons and as much bouting as possible.

Jon Tiomkin is one of the trio of New Yorkers making an impact in men's foil.



More World Cups, in Cuba and elsewhere, will continue to be a part of the process. "They will not be afraid to fence anyone in the world today by Athens," Gelman says, "and I believe we are already close to this point."

The farther from a competition, Gelman says, the more intense the physical work will be. Due to space and time restrictions in New York, physical conditioning has to take place outside of the gym. Gelman says that's not what he would ideally prefer; he'd rather be able to have a gym full time to oversee that aspect of training, too. But, he says, all of the men's saber fencers take their physical conditioning seriously. Some prefer to run, others work in a fitness center with a personal trainer.

Just before the end of July, Gelman will move the team to Europe for a camp with a gathering of teams including the Italians, Ukrainians, Chinese and possibly the German team. From there, it's off to Athens.

MEN'S FOIL

Simon Gershon, U.S. National Men's Foil Coach & coach, Fencers Club, New York, N.Y.

The men's foil gold medallists at the Pan American Games have been working together as a squad for several years now under Gershon's capable hands. The core New York group of Dan Kellner, Jed Dupree and Jon Tiomkin, with the addition of a couple of other top men, earned their trip to Athens by the beginning of March after a year of increasingly successful campaigning around the globe.

The chemistry works, says



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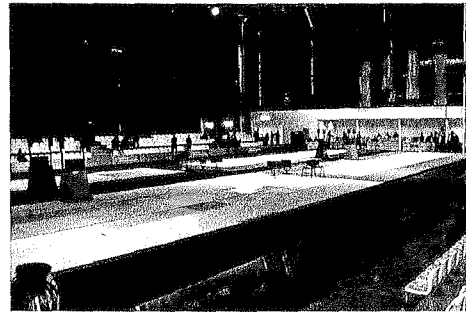
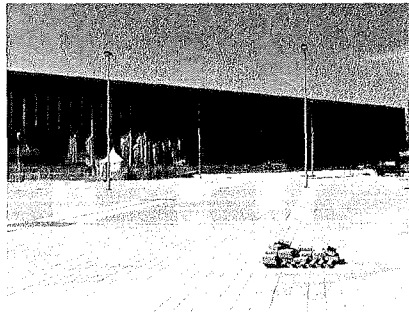
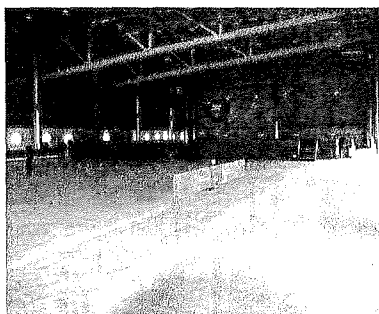
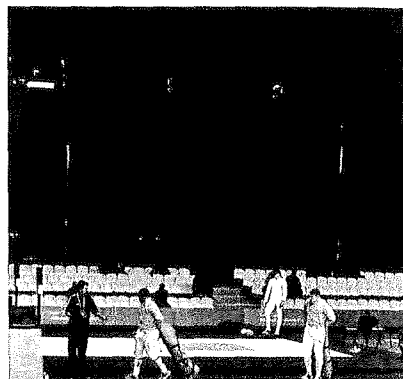
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An Athens Sneak Peek

Two members of the American fencing community – Bob Largman and Jeff Bukantz – made a trip to Athens earlier this year to check out the fencing venues. (Clockwise from right): Competitors prepare at the preliminary round venue; a wider view of the preliminary round site; the fencing venue exterior; an obviously unfinished site of the fencing finals; Largman in front of the Helleniko.



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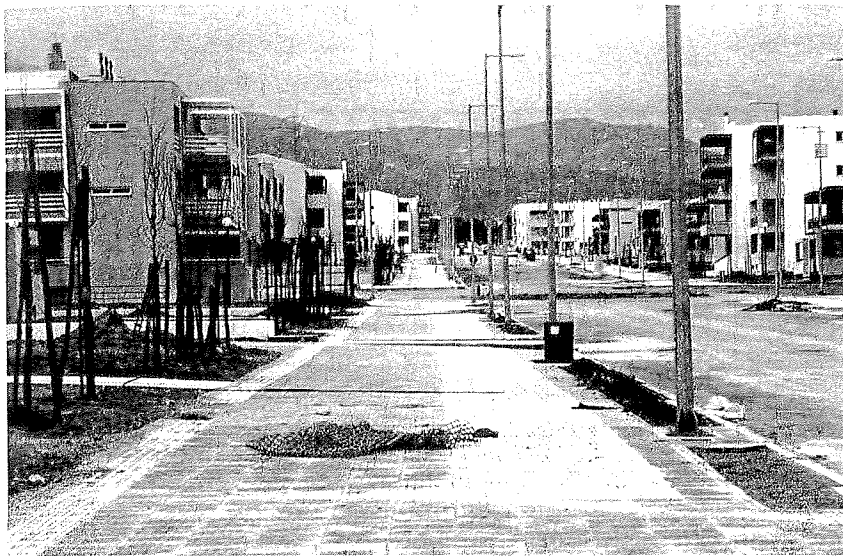
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Just like the American fencers themselves, the Athlete's Village in Athens, as seen this winter, has some work to be done yet. By the 2004 Games in August, however, both will be ready for action.

Gershon. More of the same is on the agenda. And as with many of the other Olympic athletes, psychological training is as important a priority as physical practice.

"It is the first Olympics for all of these guys, and the Olympics is an absolutely different competition," Gershon says. To help exercise the mental muscles, the entire team has been working with a sport psychologist who has been working with the team

and traveling to competitions for most of the season.

Training the team, says Gershon, is not a job for just one person. Like many of the other squads, the men's foilists work with specialists to train the mind, the body and the fencer. The sport psychologist has built a good rapport with the core men's foilists, a physical therapist works with the men on specialized strength, flexibility and muscle relaxation exercises, and then there's the 15 hours of practice plus lessons each week. Gershon says he's seen improvement on all fronts. The team has beaten such difficult seeds as Cuba, Spain and Hungary in the past season.

Workouts run through the middle of the day on weekdays – three solid hours of practice with high level foilists including Gabe Sinkin, Steve Gerberman, Sean McClain, Alex Wood, Mark Mulholland and others, depending on who can make it to New York to train.

The mix of training for speed versus stamina will also be very important in the coming months, and Gershon is tailoring special workouts for the months between the June World Cup in Cuba and the Games.

Planning for camps just before the Olympics in Europe, possibly in Russia, is underway. In the end, says Gershon, the year of training like professionals will pay off. — AF



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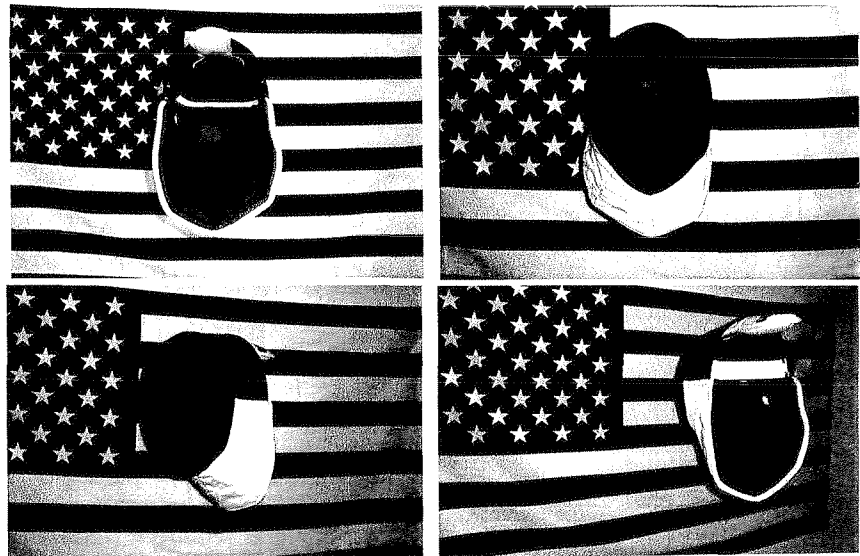
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Memories of two fencing icons

TOLL OF THE YEARS

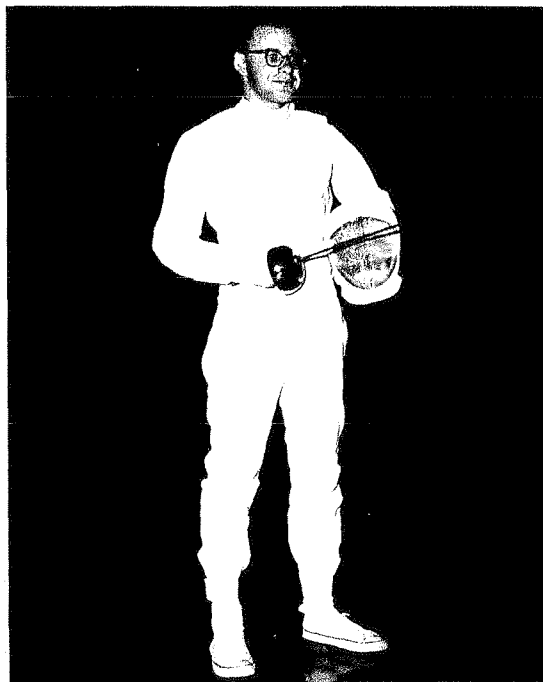
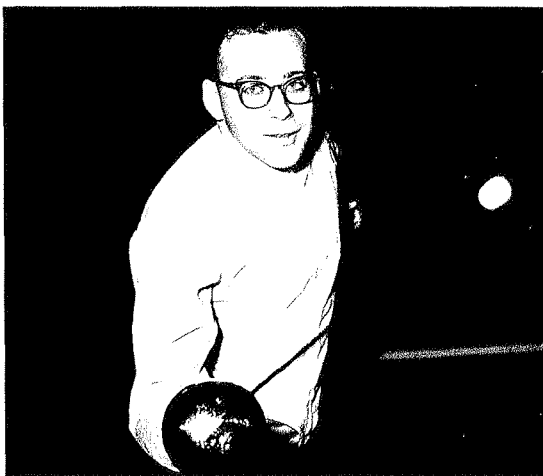
The fencing world remembers two special people

Irwin Bernstein A Great Teammate • by Steve Sobel

Fencing is a lifetime sport. There are fencers younger than 10 and older than 70 actively competing. There are also friendships that start in fencing and continue for life through participation in fencing. I met Irwin Bernstein in 1950 on the strips of Columbia University. We were teammates through 1954 on a team he captained which was undefeated, won the Intercollegiate Fencing Association championships, and tied for first at the NCAAs. After graduation we met as teammates again at the World Championships in Paris.

Our friendship continued through administration, keeping us in close contact on a regular basis. He chaired the New Jersey Division; I was his Vice-Chairman. I was President of the Association from 1972-1976 and he was secretary, he was President from 1976-1980 and I was Counsel. And so it continued for over 50 years. On the day he died Irwin and I were both members of the USFA Executive Committee. In addition, Irwin was President of the U.S. Fencing Foundation and I was Secretary. He was President of the Garden State Games and I was Vice President. He was planning the 50th anniversary of the Columbia team of 1954. He had set the date, made the reservation, and advanced the deposit. The reunion will take place as he planned, but the focus has changed from the 50th reunion of the team of 1954 to a 50-year tribute to the leadership and legacy of Irwin Bernstein.

Irwin Bernstein's funeral became a Who's Who in American Fencing. It



was standing room only in the largest room available in the funeral home. The audience included Olympians, USFA past and present officers, five starting members of the 1954 Columbia team, plus fencers from the USFA and Columbia, members of the Garden State Games Board of Directors, and others, in addition to his family and friends. Stacey Johnson, USFA President, sent a letter that I read at the service. For those unable to be at the funeral, I'll share the stories I told about a few of my experiences.

In 1954 the format for the NCAA championships was a round robin competition over two days of all teams entered, one fencer in each weapon. On Friday night after the first day, Irwin made reservations at a steak house. Irwin and I both ordered steaks. Our foilist, Ralph De Marco, asked what fish was on the menu. He informed Irwin he couldn't eat meat on Friday since he didn't get a dispensation from a priest. Irwin asked if there was any other way, and Ralph replied, "Only if my life depended on it." That was all Irwin needed. "Your life depends on it. If you don't eat steak you won't be strong tomorrow. If you are not strong tomorrow you will lose bouts. If you lose bouts it will cost us the championships. If that happens I will kill you."

As USFA Budget Director, Irwin found a new way to communicate to a speaker at a meeting the status of the request for money without interrupting the speaker. Irwin came to the meeting with two hats, one white and the other black. After the first few sen-

tences, Irwin put on a hat. If he put on the white hat, he approved the proposal. If he put on the black hat, you were in deep trouble.

Irwin's classic diplomatic example of rejecting an obnoxious proposal without saying no occurred when he was Secretary and I was President. He received a proposal he deemed strange, so he called to discuss it with me. Much to our surprise, when we compared notes we realized that the fencer sent the identical letter to me without indicating to either of us that he also asked the other, shopping for the one who would give him the most favorable response. Irwin developed a plan. Irwin answered that the fencer should send the proposal to me, and I answered that the fencer

should send the proposal to Irwin. Neither of us received a follow-up letter and the proposal ended without either of us saying no.

Irwin Bernstein lived life to the fullest until that day when, as his son, Brian Bernstein, said, "a heart attack accomplished what nothing and nobody else could: stop Irwin Bernstein." The Bernstein legacy has affected the lives of so many fencers with its wisdom, wit, integrity and dedication. It is important for those of us who knew Irwin to share our experience with those new fencers less fortunate than us, in order for the Bernstein legacy to live on in our sport for many years. I urge you to think back of your experience, and send an anecdote to AMERICAN FENCING. — AF

Albert Axelrod One Of America's Best Fencers Ever • by Richard Cohen

Albert Axelrod, known to generations of fencers as "Albie," died on 28 February following a heart attack. He was 83. There will be arguments forever over who is the greatest American fencer. Candidates include Joseph Levis, who won the foil silver medal at Los Angeles in 1932, and Peter Westbrook, who took the saber bronze, again in Los Angeles, in 1984. There are several others. But the single best result by an American is surely Axelrod's Olympic foil bronze in Rome in 1960, when he came in behind two Russians but otherwise defeated the best in the world at a time when foil fencing was at a high point.

There were 79 competitors in Axelrod's event, and they had to endure heat-wave conditions and fencing that ran without a break from 8.30 a.m. until 4 p.m. Axelrod had competed in both the 1952 and 1956 Games, making the semifinals in Melbourne, but by Rome he was 39 years old, and scraped through both his opening pools. He improved as the competition went on, however, and came in second in his semifinal pool to reach the final of eight, which included three Russians, Viktor Zhdanovich (4th in the previous year's world championships), Yuri Sisikin, and Mark Midler (2nd in 1957 and 3rd in 1959 and 1961); Witold Woyda of Poland, who was to win two gold medals at foil in 1972; Bill Hoskyns of Britain, world epee champion of 1958, and two Frenchmen, Roger Closset and the defending Olympic title-holder, Christian d'Oriola. Already eliminated were Allan Jay, the reigning world champion, Jenő Kamuti of Hungary and the French champion, Jean-Claude Magnan.

It was a lopsided final, in that Closset won two fights easily but then, against Zhdanovich, slipped on the edge of the piste and dislocated his knee, forcing him to retire. The rest of the pool was fenced off, and under the cumbersome rules then in force Axelrod had to fence Woyda to determine their placing among those who had fenced Closset. Axelrod won 5-4, and next had to fence Mark Midler, the winner of the group who had not fenced the Frenchman, to decide the bronze. Again he won 5-4. He thus not only beat two exceptionally fine foilists, but did so in barrage conditions, when it was a test of nerves as well as stamina and technique. When one considers that d'Oriola, several years younger than Axelrod, could come in only eighth it underlines the quality of his performance.

Axelrod was a member of five consecutive Olympic teams, making the Games in 1964 (where he lost to the eventual winner, Egon Franke of Poland, 10-9) and 1968 as well, but he was never again to reproduce his Rome form in individual competition. However, he was ranked in the nation's top 10 from 1942 till 1970, and was U.S. champion four times, in 1955, 1958, 1960 and 1970 – the last at the age of 49. He was part of the gold medal-winning team at the Pan American Games of 1959 and 1963, competed in six Maccabiah Games beginning in 1957, and is a member of the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

Overall, he was a formidable fighter even on in to his seventies, and when I last visited him,



two years before his death, his hand strength and speed of movement were still remarkable.

His success was all the more unexpected given that Axelrod began life as a sporting liability. Born on February 21, 1921, in the Bronx, he would call himself “the proverbial 98-pound weakling”. In an interview in *VETERAN FENCERS QUARTERLY* in 1998, he admitted: “I was born with a micro-murmur of the heart, was anemic, and was excused from physical education throughout public school.” After being pushed into taking up fencing as a “safe” sport, he taught himself out of an outdated instruction manual, checking in a mirror to see he had the movements right. But he progressed, making the Stuyvesant High School team that was given a group scholarship by Georgio Santelli to join his club. He went on to represent Santelli’s for over 20 years, but ultimately left his old master for the most unusual of replacements.

Alexander Hern was part of the post-war Roosevelt-inspired Works Progress Administration, in which teachers were recruited to coach at settlement and neighborhood houses and in recreational leagues. He was no fencer (Santelli was to ring Axelrod’s mother and plead, “Don’t let him go. That man does not really know fencing, and it will ruin him”), but he read the classic literature about fencing and decided to create his own method. Axelrod was inspired by it. An opponent’s attack was an invitation to counter-attack, not retreat; a beat against one’s blade the springboard to one’s own attack, and so on. As for the method Axelrod helped fashion, he told the *NEW YORK TIMES* in 1966, “I have no purely defensive moves.” It was to become his credo.

Axelrod was an electrical engineer by occupation, working for

the Grumman Corporation after having seen combat in the Pacific with the Navy during World War II. He was married to his wife, Henrietta, for 60 years, and is survived by her, their daughter Stephanie, son Michael, and three grandchildren. For most of his life he lived in Ardsley, N.Y., before moving to a retirement home in Somers, N.Y.

He remained a competitor for so long that he had little time left over for fencing administration, although he was a remarkably successful and lively editor of *AMERICAN FENCING* for several years. He held forceful views on most areas of his chosen sport, but above all he liked to defend his Rome achievement, about which he was understandably proud, if sometimes grandly cranky. In that 1988 interview, he ended proudly: “One of the nicest compliments I ever got was from the members of the Russian team after the 1958 world championships. They came up to me as a group and said, ‘Axelrod, you fence like a tractor.’”

“To anyone who understands Russia, Russian ideology, and Russia’s Stalinization and five-year programs...that is the supreme compliment. The tractor was the backbone and very heart of the development of the farms and industry. Although ‘You fence like a tractor’ does not sound too complimentary, it was truly a supreme compliment of its time.”

Richard Cohen, who now fences at the NYAC, represented Great Britain at saber from 1970 until 1992. He is the author of “By the Sword, A History of Gladiators, Musketeers, Samurai, Swashbucklers and Olympic Champions.” (Modern Library, \$15.95)

Albie A Personal Remembrance • by Eric Rosenberg

The first day I set foot in the Fencers Club in the fall of 1972, I saw his picture prominently displayed with a caption written in elegant calligraphy, “Albert Axelrod, winner of the Olympic Bronze medal, Rome 1960.” As all first-timers at the Club, I gazed in reverence at this photograph. It was the fencing version of a Religious Icon. “Does he still practice here?” I asked. With an ironic smirk, someone pointed to a powerfully built man aggressively advancing towards his opponent and said “there he is, go ahead, ask him to fence.”

Sensing this was a challenge as much as a suggestion, I waited until he finished his bout, and politely asked if he would like to fence. I was 16 and he was 51, and he proceeded to annihilate me ... mercilessly. The humiliation did not end with this beating. Albie then began a well-rehearsed catechism of contempt: first, for traditional fencing pedagogy in general and then, for my primitive skill level in particular. At the evening’s end, I went into the locker room, where I noticed subtle line of graffiti scrawled on one of the bathroom stalls that read “Axelrod is wrong.” Someone had neatly inserted a tiny circumflex between the “is” and “wrong” over which was written the word “never.” That was my introduction to Albert Axelrod, one of the greatest American competitive fencers of all time.

For the next couple of decades, I spent a lot of time trying to

understand exactly what made Albie tick. What drove this man’s life-long obsessive competitiveness, when he had such an impressive resume of accomplishments?

To truly appreciate Albie’s 1960 bronze medal, it should be viewed in the context of the profound changes that were taking place in competitive fencing. Beginning in the ’50s, the Soviet Union and her communist vassals in Eastern Europe began professionalizing all Olympic sports. Fencing, with its aristocratic pedigree and a bounty of medals, was a prime target for these relentless sports juggernauts. Consequently, Albie was competing against a new generation of professional athletes like Zhdanovich, Sisikin and Midler, in addition to all-time greats such as Christian D’Oriola.

Most remarkably, as a full time professional engineer with two young children, he was limited to training three times per week, never attending any World Cup events, and receiving no funding from the AFLA. Albie was an amateur in the truest sense, competing against – and defeating – adversaries who were much younger, state supported, and training professionally.

In 1964 Olympic Games, Albie lost 10-9 to Egon Franke of Poland, the eventual gold medalist. One of Albie’s contemporaries asked Franke which bout was his toughest on the way to the gold. “Axelrod,” he replied.

Even as he aged, beating Albie was a milestone for many of the best American foilists who passed through the Fencers Club over the ensuing 30 years. Sextuple bypasses, knee replacements and the ravages of time may have diminished his physical capabilities, but nothing could abate his competitive fierceness. Which brings me back to the mystery of the man – what drove him to be this way?

My personal epiphany came one evening at the FC when Albie and I were chatting while fixing weapons. He was reminiscing about how he began fencing as a freshman at New York City's Stuyvesant High School. Early in his career, Albie accompanied two of his older teammates (who later went on to be highly successful competitors in their own right) to meet the great Maestro Georgio Santelli.

After watching the boys bout, Albie reported that the Maestro "smiled at his two teammates and pronounced that they would both be great fencers. Then he looked at me, and said nothing, and I could see them smirking. I vowed that no matter how long or what it took, I would prove that I was better than all of them." Right before my eyes, this iconic 65-year-old champion and Olympic medallist seemed to morph into an angry adolescent, permanently locked in a quest for self-validation. With all he had done, he still needed to prove that he was better. I wondered if he could ever accept the luxury of self-satisfaction.

As the years passed, and Albie's achievements faded from the

collective short-term memory of U.S. fencers, he felt increasingly marginalized. While he maintained a presence as editor of AMERICAN FENCING, Chief of Mission for the U.S. Maccabiah Team, and by beating up successive generations of FC fencers, he seemed needlessly compelled to fight for his place in history. But there was also a kind and compassionate side to this man. In the 100-degree heat of the 1986 U.S. National Championships, I became severely dehydrated, and my body was seized with intense muscle spasms. When I collapsed after my final bout, and had to be carried off the strip, it was Albie who sat beside me for over an hour, patiently giving me fluids and icing me down. When I finally recovered, I thanked him.

"You can't imagine how much pain I was in," I told him.

He smiled and said, "I have a pretty good idea."

It was years later when I learned how he was forced to withdraw from the finals of one of the few World Championships he attended because of severe dehydration.

A few years ago, I asked Cliff Bayer (like Albie, another Jewish kid from New York who raised the standard of success for the next generation) what was going on inside his head as he reached the finals and won World Cup Competitions.

"I would just think about how the all those Euros looked down on us as fencers, and never had any respect for us. It would get me so pissed off that I would go out there and kill myself to beat them."

Maybe it's not so hard to understand after all.

— AF

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- ♦ *Terrence Lasker*, 5-time U.S. Sabre National Champion.
- ♦ *Alex Smerdin*, Asian Games medallist in epee.

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ELITE COMPETITION:

1st Place: Predators

Saber: Emily Jacobson, Dunwoody, Ga.
Saber: Jason Rogers, Los Angeles,
Calif./Ohio State Univ.
Foil: Ann Marsh, Farmington, Mich.
Foil: Sergey Klimov, Romania
Epee: Brittany Leader, Granger, Ind.
Epee: Sandro DiCori, Montreal, Canada

2nd Place: Terminators

Saber: Sada Jacobson, Dunwoody, Ga.
Saber: Keeth Smart, New York, N.Y.
Foil: Patricia Szelle, Columbus, Ohio
Foil: Anatolie Senic, Moldavia
Epee: Eleanor Leighton, Mishawaka, Ind.
Epee: Dick Richards, Burtonsville, Md.

YOUTH TEAM FOIL

1st Place: Salle du Lion – Ryan Howell,
Aundrey Becker, Richard Bowen
2nd Place: Three Rivers Fencing Club –
Tristan Jackson, Josh Grill, Benjamin Jag-
ger, Dani Bendickson

YOUTH TEAM EPEE

1st Place: Alcazar Boys – Cesare Evan
Mainardi, Avery Mainardi, Cameron Helf-
frich
2nd Place: Alcazar Girls – Alex Dimeff, Rebec-
ca Gilman, Liz Shinkle, Akosovo Kernizan

YOUTH TEAM SABER

1st Place: Indy Saber – Ben Radding, Philip
Gast, Sam Hine, Jenna El-Amin
2nd Place: Fencing Alliance of Ohio – Nora
Wells, Nick Kots, Guram Abashidze

SENIOR TEAM FOIL

1st Place: Columbus Fencers Club – Joseph
Streb Sr., Andy Tulleners, Joseph Streb Jr.
2nd Place: Univerisity of Rochester – Rob
MacClaren, Darius Wei, Lowden Charles,
Eric Dudley

SENIOR TEAM EPEE

1st Place: Hooked on Fencing – Walter
Dragonetti, Zach Morell, Jim DeBonis
2nd Place: Renaissance Fencing Club –
Sandro DiCori, Joe Znoy, Steve Herbert

SENIOR TEAM SABRE

1st Place: IndySabre – Ellen Kizik, Rachel
Pickens, Jerry Adkins
2nd Place: Fencing Alliance of Ohio –
Marina Karaujalis, Lillian Siebert, Aaron
Nungester

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SATURDAY NIGHT FINALS

Women's Epee: Toby Tolley def. Amy For-
tune, 0-5, 5-3, 5-1, 4-5, 5-0

Men's Foil: Cedric Anen def. Alex Wood, 4-
5, 3-5, 5-4, 5-3, 5-2

Women's Saber: Eileen Grench def. Mary
Wilkerson, 5-1, 5-0, 5-1

Men's Saber: Paul Friedman def. Dmitriy
Guy, 4-5, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4

Women's Foil: Elif Sachs def. Elaine Aliber-
ti, 4-2, 5-2, 5-3

Men's Epee: Seth Kelsey def. Cody Mattern,
5-4, 5-3, 5-3

OPEN EPEE - A4 COMPETITION

1 Kelsey Weston COLORADO
2 Cox Charles (Kip) NO. CALIF
3T Baldwin Seth OREGON
3T Allen Graham CENT. CALIF

OPEN FOIL - A4 COMPETITION

1 Anen Cedric SO. CALIF.
2 Wood Alex CENT. CALIF
3T Sugimoto Scott SO. CALIF.
3T Chang Timothy NO. CALIF

OPEN SABER - B2 COMPETITION

1 Friedman Paul SO. CALIF.
2 Rubin Anthony SO. CALIF.
3T Padgitt Tedd SAN DIEGO
3T Goering William COLORADO

WOMEN'S EPEE - A2 COMPETITION

1 Tolley Toby LONG ISLND
2 Fortune Amy SO. CALIF.
3T Fox Paige OREGON
3T Hall Tasha SO. CALIF.

WOMEN'S FOIL - A2

1 Sachs (Soyer) Elif NEWENGLAND
2 Aliberti Elaine UTAH/S.IDA
3T Loper Susan GEORGIA
3T Kirk Angie SO. CALIF.

WOMEN'S SABER - C2 COMPETITION

1 Wilkerson Mary COLORADO
2 Walsh Sarah NO. CALIF
3T Baran Alexis MT. VALLEY
3T Curry Martha MT. VALLEY

VETERAN'S EPEE - A2 COMPETITION

1 Gerring Phillip NO. CALIF
2 Elliott Joseph ORANGE CST
3T Meridith David ILLINOIS
3T Glover Richard WESTERN WA

VETERAN'S FOIL - A1 COMPETITION

1 Dew Eric NO. CALIF
2 Drake David SAN DIEGO
3T Van Housen Jeff SO. CALIF.
3T Piatkowski-Nazarro Marek SO. CALIF.

VETERAN'S SABER - E1 COMPETITION

1 Nichols Costa SAN BERNAR
2 Barbour James ARIZONA
3 Juarez Martin SO. CALIF.

EXCALIBUR OPEN •

West Michigan Fencing Academy, March 23

MIXED EPEE C1 COMPETITION

1 Daniel Luke, GLSC
2 Mike Williams GLSC
3T Derek Wilkinson, Kent State
3T Daniel Rahl, GLSC

MIXED FOIL A2 COMPETITION

1 Ann Marsh, RFC
2 Samantha Nemecek, WMFA
3T Inga Wallrabenstein, RFC
3T Miike Cho, RFC

MIXED SABER

1 Timonthy Schultz, Schoolcraft
2 Cynthia Wagner, Tri Blade
3 Todd Krapp WMFA
3 Michael McCarty MMFA

WOMEN'S FOIL

1 Samantha Nemecek, WMFA
2 Beth Vance, RFC
3T Mary Douglas, MMFA
3T Elizabeth Brussel, MMFA

Erinn Smart ... OLYMPIAN & COLUMBIA GRAD

One of America's top fencers speaks on balancing sport and school

I have so much work at school. How can I balance school and still keep up with fencing?

My senior year in high school, I think I missed 30 days of school. My mother showed me my absence record one time. I was always bringing in letters from the USFA, saying that I was on the National Team and I would be gone for this and that competition – they like to see that stuff. Getting the teachers informed beforehand was always best. And in high school especially, I would sit down at the very beginning of the year and tell them what dates I was going to miss, so they were always aware of what was going on.

For me personally, when I started in junior high I learned early on always to get my schoolwork done first, and practice next. It was important to my mother, also! Basically, after a while, I learned how to be more efficient with my studying time, because I wanted to practice more! The only way to do that was to study smarter.

I was big on flashcards for chemistry or calculus, I could take them with me on fencing trips or while I was traveling between practice and home.

That's a big tip: Use the travel time, even if it's just to practice. I tried to avoid studying when I was exhausted at night. I learned that mostly in college, and I tended to study during the day between classes. It's really difficult to study at night after a long practice.

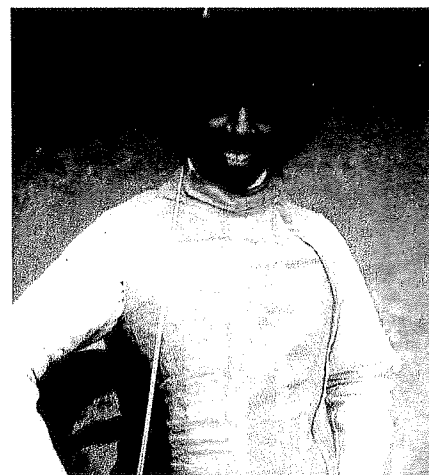
I always used the help of my teachers, in college and in high school. All of my professors were really helpful throughout school. They didn't mind all

of the traveling, as long as I talked to them ahead of time, was able to hand in papers, and set up make-up exams. They just like to be notified before the fact.

I took advantage of their office hours often. That way, I was able to tell my teachers how much I would be traveling and that could help them help me focus on what I needed to study. They also understood all the traveling better. They found it amazing that I could travel and keep up with school. So because I took the aggressive approach, it really helped. They liked that a lot.

In college, I learned to be even more organized. At Columbia, I had to be smart about scheduling my class times. I chose those that would agree with my practice schedule, and since I would be traveling on Friday often, I took sections that didn't meet on Friday. That meant my classes would usually be in early mornings – you do what you have to do.

And in college, definitely be aware of your work schedule, and how much schoolwork you can take on. My freshman year at Columbia, I took a lot of classes, and that was a big change for me – all of the fencing, so many new subjects, and it was really hard. Be aware of your limitations. You can't always do everything. — AF



Erinn Smart says a lot of people helped her keep up on her studies as she traveled the world for fencing competitions.

Erinn Smart, 23, has been a member of five Junior and five Senior World Championship teams. She was also a two-time All-America fencer for Columbia and a 1999 All-Ivy League First-Team member.

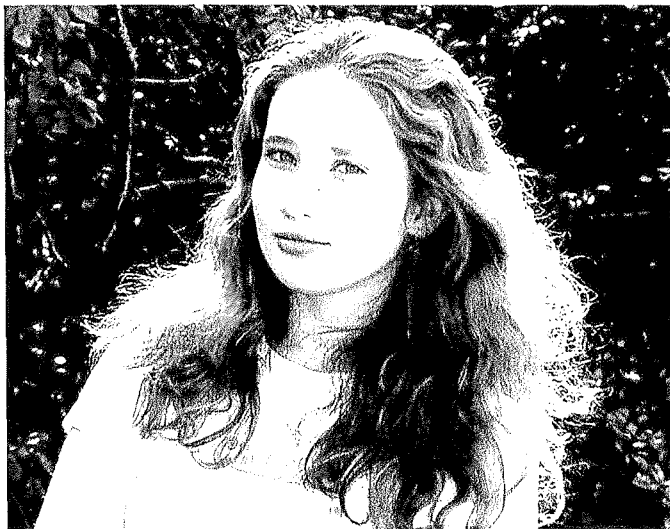
She graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School with honors and is a 2002 graduate of Barnard College of Columbia University.

Smart was a member of the women's foil team that won the bronze medal at the 2001 World Championships. First alternate to the 2000 Olympic Team, Erinn will be a member of the U.S. Olympic Team in Athens in 2004.

FencingDRILL

Fencer A attacks; Fencer B must parry and riposte. Fencer A must then avoid the counter-riposte only by moving her body (not feet), possibly to the side or by standing up or even moving their back shoulder. Since most people really do that in competition, it is a good way for Fencer B to practice hitting the riposte in very close distance. (Drill courtesy of Erinn Smart)

Rebecca**WARD** • 14, Portland, Ore./Oregon Fencing Alliance



The STATS

- Event:** Women's Saber
Hometown: Portland, Oregon
Birthdate: February 7, 1990 (Grand Junction, Colo.)
High School: Home Schooled
Club: Oregon Fencing Alliance
Coached by: Ed Korfanty, Adam Skarbonkiewicz

Rebecca Ward is one of the country's exciting young group of women's saber fencers. Only 14 years old, Rebecca is the top-ranked cadet women's saberist in the country and she won the Cadet National Championships this summer. Even more impressive, in April Ward became the 2004 cadet women's saber World Champion.

fencing to suit both my opponent and my director. I ended up winning 15-13.

Who Inspires You?

My fencing hero is anyone who is willing to push through the pain of training and never gives up during a close bout. — AF

CareerHIGHLIGHTS

- Won six National Championship titles in four age groups from 2000 to 2001
- Placed fifth at Division I Nationals in 2003 at the age of 13
- Gold, cadet international cup in Konin, Poland, September 2003
- Bronze, Junior World Cup in Arriccina, Italy, November 2003
- Gold, Under-16 women's saber, 2004 Junior & Cadet World Championships

.....
What is your favorite type of blade?

The "Mr. Chen's Ultralight" blade. It's very light and excellently balanced.

Favorite Swashbuckling Movie?

"Pirates of the Caribbean." It has several really well-done fencing scenes, and it has Johnny Depp. What more can you ask for?

Best Bout So Far?

My favorite bout was at Summer Nationals in Austin, 2003. I was down 8-2 at the break to get in the semi-finals of Juniors. I kept my head and changed my



National News

Formerly *USFA National Newsletter*

Directory

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OLYMPIC GAMES - ATHENS, GREECE

As we go to press, the United States fencers have qualified all three men's teams – epee, foil and sabre – by their placement in the FIE World Cup team standings putting the US ahead of the other countries in the Western Hemisphere zone. Also, Cody Mattern won a silver medal in the World Cup competition held in Toronto – his best result ever at a World Cup competition. Women's epee fencers fought valiantly to qualify the team but the Canadian women's team was ahead in the FIE standings throughout the season. Emily Jacobson just made another finals at a World Cup and has strengthened her position to qualify along with her sister, Sada, to the Olympic Games. One more World Cup competition remains for women's sabre to finalize the qualifiers. It is expected that there will be one US qualifier in women's epee and one US qualifier in women's foil, and 2 or 3 in women's sabre. Women's sabre team won gold at world cup team in Moscow defeating China and Russia.

Robert Largman of Morristown, NJ, has been named by the USFA as the team manager Ron Herman of Iowa City, IA, as team armorer and Jeffrey Bukantz of Livingston, NJ, as team captain. The coaches will be named after the team composition is finalized, in early May. The athletes on each of the teams will be selected after the Division I National Championships in Atlanta, GA the end of April.

Lonnie Sellers, head trainer for US World teams, has been appointed by the US Olympic Committee as one of the trainers for the USOC Olympic Team. Congratulations to Lonnie for gaining the recognition for his contribution to the fencing athletes in the care and tending of bruises, injuries and simple muscle stress and tension of world level competitions.

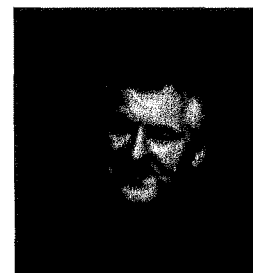
NEW ADMINISTRATION – SEPTEMBER 1, 2004

No petition was filed by anyone contesting any of the nominees from the USFA Nominating Committee before the deadline. Thus a new administration will take office September 1 composed of: President, Nancy Anderson of Princeton, NJ; Vice Presidents - Ro Sobalvarro of Saint Paul, MN; Sam Cheris of Denver, CO; and Ed Wright of Arlington, VA; Secretary, Linda Merritt of Billerica, MA; and Treasurer, Derek Cotton, Los Angeles, CA.

Congratulations are in order for the outgoing officers for the successes achieved during their watch. The USFA will be one of the few countries in the world that have qualified fencers in all the events. The USFA is ranked among the top 10 of the 106 FIE countries. Thank you to Stacey Johnson, Barbara Lynch, Sherry Posthumus, Ralph Zimmerman, Michael Sullivan, and Donald Anthony.

COACH OF THE YEAR

Ed Korfanty, of Portland, OR and Oregon Fencing Alliance head coach and USFA National Women's Sabre coach, is one of the five finalists for the National Coach of the Year for



the 2003 U.S. Olympic Committee's Coach of the Year Program. Recognition dinner will be held the evening of May 2 at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs, CO. During the dinner, the overall winners in each category (National, Developmental and Volunteer) will be announced. The USFA named Ed Korfanty as its National Coach of the Year and Mikhail Petin of New York City as Developmental Coach of the Year. Mikhail Petin is the coach of Emily Cross and Brendan Meyers of Fencers Club, fencers who have been number 1 in Cadet and Junior foil national competitions.

In This Issue

World Jr/Cdt Team	2
Drug Testing Warning	3
New York World Cup	3
Nationals Schedule	4
Summer Nationals	
Entry Form	5
Summer Camps	8
Feb. Board Actions	11
National Calendar	12
Appeals Process	12

2004 WORLD JUNIOR & CADET CHAMPIONSHIPS

April 1-8, PLOVDIV, BULGARIA

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, April 1:

Cadet Women's Sabre, Cadet Men's Foil

Friday, April 2:

Cadet Women's Epee, Cadet Men's Sabre

Saturday, April 3:

Cadet Women's Foil, Cadet Men's Epee

Sunday, April 4:

Junior Women's Sabre, Junior Men's Foil

Monday, April 5:

Junior Women's Epee, Junior Men's Sabre

Tuesday, April 6:

Junior Women's Foil, Junior Men's Epee

Wednesday, April 7:

Junior Women's Sabre Team

Junior Women's Epee Team

Junior Men's Foil Team

Thursday, April 8:

Junior Womens Foil Team

Junior Men's Epee Team

Junior Men's Sabre Team

CADET TEAM

Cadet Men's Epee:

Nicholas Chinman (Boulder, CO)

Clayton Kenney (Denver, CO)

Dwight Smith (Elmont, NY)

Cadet Men's Foil:

Brendan Meyers (New York, NY)

Clinton Kershaw (Clovis, CA)

Mark Kubik (San Antonio, TX)

Cadet Men's Sabre:

Max Williams (Sacramento, CA)

Jonathan Berkowsky (Sicklerville, NJ)

Matthew Kolasa (Princeton, NJ)

Cadet Women's Epee:

Kelley Hurley (San Antonio, TX)

Christa French (Southlake, TX)

Keri Byerts (Beaverton, OR)

Cadet Women's Foil:

Doris Willette (Lafayette, CA)

Kelsey Finkel (New York, NY)

Samantha Nemecek (Alto, MI)

Cadet Women's Sabre:

Caitlin Thompson (Portland, OR)

Rebecca Ward (Portland, OR)

Daria Schneider (Brookline, MA)

JUNIOR TEAM

Junior Men's Epee:

Nicholas Chinman (Boulder, CO)

William Verigan (Wyckoff, NJ)

Benjamin Bratton (Richmond Hill, NY)

Benjamin Ungar (Team, Bronx, NY)

Junior Men's Foil:

Brendan Meyers (New York, NY)

Clinton Kershaw (Clovis, CA)

Dimitri Kirk Gordon (Campbell, CA)

Nicholas Chinman (Team, Boulder, CO)

Junior Men's Sabre:

Mike Momtselidize (Columbus, OH)

Tim Hagamen (New York, NY)

Alex Krul (Thousand Oaks, CA)

Adam Crompton (Team, Irvington, NJ)

Junior Women's Epee:

Kamara James (Brooklyn, NY)

Kelley Hurley (San Antonio, TX)

Amy Orlando (Portland, OR)

Alexie Rubin (Team, Los Angeles, CA)

Junior Women's Foil:

Emily Cross (New York, NY)

Jacqueline Leahy (Aurora, CO)

Cassidy Luitjen (San Antonio, TX)

Samantha Nemecek (Team, Alto, MI)

Junior Women's Sabre:

Mariel Zagunis (Beaverton, OR)

Emily Jacobson (Atlanta, GA)

Caitlin Thompson (Beaverton, OR)

Amelia Gaillard (Team, Fayetteville, GA)

CADRE

Chief of Mission:

Carl Borack

Captains:

Carl Borack

Jim Carpenter

Trainer:

Doug Rank

Team Manager:

Iana Dakova

Staff Liaison:

Carla Mae Richards

Armorers:

Matthew Porter

Cliff Iverson

USFA/FIE Arbitrage:

George Kolombatovich

Invited by the FIE:

Nancy Anderson, Directoire Technique

Sam Cheris, Protocol

Dan DeChaine, SEMI

Charles Washburn, Referee

Coaches:

Arkady Burdan Marcos Lucchetti.

Gary Copeland Mike Pederson

Yury Gelman Michael Petin

Michael Itkin Kornel Udvarhelyi

Ed Korfanty

INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES

Did you know that Sada Jacobson of Atlanta, GA, is number 1 in the World rankings and has kept that ranking through months of competition? No matter how she performs in the remaining World Cup qualifying competitions she will have met the FIE qualifying criteria for the Olympic Games. A close contest continues for Emily Jacobson, Sada's sister, and Mariel Zagunis, the Junior World Cup winner for the third year in a row. We have to wait until March 28 and the last World Cup Olympic qualifying competition to know if one or both of those athletes earned berths to the Olympic Games.

How well have US athletes performed this season?

European Cadet "B": Rebecca Ward and Mera Keltner each won one in women's sabre. Max Williams and Jonathan Berkowsky each won a silver in men's sabre. Abby Emerson won a silver in women's foil. Bronze medals were won by: Nicholas Chinman, Clayton Kenney (2 medals) and Nathaniel Sulat in men's epee; Arielle Pensler in women's foil. Ten other cadet fencers reached the final 8 in large Cadet competitions.

Junior "A" (World Cup): Gold Medals were won in women's epee by Kamara James in Palermo and Rebecca Moss in Montreal; in women's foil by Emily Cross; in women's sabre by Amelia Gaillard, Emily Jacobson and Mariel Zagunis. Silver medals were won by Nicholas Chinman in men's epee; Tim Hagamen and Max Williams in men's sabre; Kamara James in women's epee and Caitlin Thompson in women's sabre. Bronze medals were won by Jasjit Bhinder and Rachel Kantor in women's epee; Daria Scheider, Caitlin Thompson and Becca Ward in women's sabre. 13 other fencers made the final 8 in Junior "A": 1 in men's foil, 3 in men's sabre, 5 in women's epee, and 4 in women's sabre.

Senior "A" (World Cup): Silver medals were won by Iris Zimmermann in women's foil and Emily Jacobson in women's sabre; bronze medals were won by Seth Kelsey in men's epee; Patrick Durkan in men's sabre; Kamara James in women's epee; and Sada Jacobson in women's sabre. Four other fencers made the final 8 in Senior "A" competitions through March 15th.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR 2005 WORLD JUNIOR & CADET CHAMPIONSHIPS

This notice was sent to the top 24 Under-16 and to the top 24 Under-19 fencers by e-mail, March 10.

The High Performance Committee at a recent meeting approved the following motion regarding the selection of athletes for the 2005 World Junior and Cadet Championships:

Half of the points earned for placing in the top 16 of the 2004 World Junior or World Cadet Championships, or 2004 Division I National Championships, whichever produces the largest number of points, would be included in Group II points of the team point standings for selection of the team to the 2005 World Cadet Championships. For selection of the athletes for the 2005 World Junior team half of the points earned for placing in the top 16 of the 2004 World Junior or 2004 Division I National Championships will be included in Group II points of the team point standings.

What does this mean? If you place in the top 16 at the World Junior Championships you will retain one half of the points awarded for the particular placement (assume SF = 2.0) unless you have a significantly better result at the Division I National Championships. If you place 1-16 at the Division I Nationals and one half of those points for your placement is greater than the one half for the points at the World Junior Championships, then the Division I points will be retained and the points for the World Junior Championships discarded. A similar analysis is performed for results at the World Cadet Championships. No matter what only half of the points earned for the particular placement will be considered in each case and only one result retained and the other results removed for any other consideration

WARNING ABOUT DRUG TESTING

Several drug-testing policies and procedures have changed with the introduction of the new WADA code on January 1, 2004. Recent cases highlight the need for continued care on the part of all athletes.

a) The form in the Athlete Handbook, "Restricted Substance Medical Notification Form" has been replaced by the "Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE)" or "Abbreviated Therapeutic Use Exemption (ATUE)" procedures. These applications must be completed before the use of restricted substances is permitted. This is especially important for those who use beta-2 agonists (asthma inhalers like Advair or salbutamol) and non-systemic glucocorticosteroids (topical creams, nasal spray, ear and eye drops). You can download an Abbreviated TUE form at www.usantidoping.org/athletes/forms.asp. Your doctor needs to complete the form and submit it to USADA.

WARNING: There are two very important things to note: 1) the new WADA code is more stringent on the use of glucocorticosteroids and now includes topical applications. You MUST check the guidelines to protect yourself from inadvertently contravening the rules. 2) There is a secondary clause related to the use of beta-2 agonists that is very important. Even if you have an approved TUE for beta-2 agonists, if your sample has greater than 1000 ng/ml of salbutamol this is taken as a presumptively positive test. This means it is up to the athlete to prove that he/she was using the prescribed substances appropriately. At the moment there are no clear guidelines for how this can be done and several athletes have had considerable difficulty in this regard. To lower the possibility of exceeding this limit, use your inhaler as conservatively as you can to achieve the necessary and appropriate relief.

b) Always check the list of active ingredients in ANY medication you use. Brand names are not always formulated the same way in different countries. For example, there are over-the-counter medications with the same name that have different ingredients in Europe vs in the United States. Also remember to use great care with any nutritional supplements that you use.

c) If you have any questions about procedures or restricted/prohibited substances, contact the USADA Hotline, 800-233-0393.

NOTE: Insulin now requires a Full TUE. Instructions to complete the FULL TUE can be found on page 44-45 in USADA's 2004 Guide to Prohibited Substances, found at www.usantidoping.org. You may receive assistance from the US Olympic Committee Division of Sports Medicine at 719-866-4668.

NEW YORK CITY WORLD CUP/ WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Between June 10 and June 14, New York City will be the scene of Olympic fencers competing for seeding positions at the forthcoming Olympic Games. There will be three World Cup individual competitions, all Grand Prix events – women's foil, women's sabre and men's sabre. A Grand Prix designation refers to the scale of FIE points applied to results 1-64, 1.5 times the normal World Cup FIE points, and the degree of staging required by the FIE of the organizer.

Not only will there be these three individual World Cup competitions but there will also be a World Cup team competition in men's sabre and, even more significant, World Championships in women's foil team and women's sabre team. This elevation in stature for the two team competitions for the women's events reflects the absence of those events at the 2004 Olympic Games. Those events are not at the Olympic Games to allow for the addition of women's sabre within the maximum allotment of 200 athletes for fencing at the Games. That was the number in place for the 2000 Olympic Games and the IOC (the International Olympic Committee) would only allow the addition of women's sabre as long as it did not require raising the limit on number of fencing athletes. Thus the two team events were dropped for these Games. What will happen for the 2008 Olympic Games is unknown at this time.

For the World Cup competitions in New York City, only US fencers who are on the senior national rolling point standings as of May 1 are eligible to enter. In order to compete in the World Cup competition, representing the United States, one must be on the senior national rolling point standings, be a current competitive member of the USFA, have a FIE License for the 2003-2004 season and be at least 13 years old as of January 1, 2004 (FIE rule, no exceptions allowed). A special entry form is required of US and Canadian fencers which will be posted on US Fencing web site. See the web site for the application for the FIE License for this season.

The schedule of the competitions will be posted with the special entry form on the US Fencing web site by mid April. The host hotel is the Roosevelt Hotel located at 45 East 45th Street (at intersection of Madison Avenue), NYC - Phone Toll Free – (888) 833-3969; (212) 661-9600; Fax: (212) 885-6162 special rate of \$189/double room/night. The competition venue is Hunter College, located at East 68th Street: 695 Park Ave. New York, NY.

2004 USFA SUMMER NATIONALS SCHEDULE

DATE\WEAPON	MEN'S ÉPÉE	MEN'S FOIL	MEN'S SABRE	WOMEN'S ÉPÉE	WOMEN'S FOIL	WOMEN'S SABRE
SATURDAY JULY 3	Under 19	Youth 14	Under 16	Youth 10	Under 16	Youth 14
	Wheelchair				Wheelchair	
SUNDAY JULY 4	Youth 10	Youth 12	Youth 14	Youth 14	Youth 10	Under 16
	U19 Team		Wheelchair	Wheelchair	Under 19	Youth 12
MONDAY JULY 5	Under 16	Wheelchair	Under 19	Youth 12		Division II
	Youth 12		Youth 10	Veteran 60	Youth 14	
TUESDAY JULY 6	Youth 14	Under 19	Division III	Under 16	Division II	Under 19
		Veteran 50	U19 Team		U19 Team	Youth 10
		Youth 10				
WEDNESDAY JULY 7	Division III	Division IA	Division II	Division II	Youth 12	Division III
		U19 Team	Youth 12		Veteran 60	
THURSDAY JULY 8	Division II	Under 16	Division IA	Under 19	Division III	Division IA
		Veteran 40		Veteran 40		U19 Team
		Veteran 60				
FRIDAY JULY 9	Division IA	Division II	Veteran 40	Division III	Division IA	Veteran 50
			Veteran 50	U19 Team		Team
SATURDAY JULY 10	Veteran 60	Division III	Team	Division IA	Team	Veteran 40
	Team				Veteran 50	
SUNDAY JULY 11	Veteran 40	Team	Veteran 60	Veteran 50	Veteran 40	Veteran 60
	Veteran 50			Team		

MEETING SCHEDULE:

Executive Committee meeting: Saturday July 3
 Membership meeting: Sunday July 4, 7:30am
 Congress Meeting: Sunday July 4, 7:45am
 Hall of Fame Dinner: Sunday July 4, Evening
 Board of Directors: Monday July 5, 7:30am

VENUE:

Charlotte Merchandise Mart
 Liberty Hall
 800 Briar Creek Rd
 Charlotte, NC 28205
www.charlottemerchmart.com

HEADQUARTER HOTEL:

Adam's Mark
 555 South McDowell
 Charlotte, NC 28204

Rate: \$91 + tax

RESERVATIONS:

US Fencing rate only available by making hotel reservations through:

Contact Tournament Housing Services (THS)
 Official Housing Company of US Fencing
<http://www.ths-usf.com>
 888-536-TEAM (8326)

TRAVEL:

Guide Travel: (800) 836-6072 or
 United Olympic Desk: (800) 841-0460.
Mention USFA for discounted rates.

Avis rental car call 1-800-331-1600.
 US Fencing's
 Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD)
 Number is B740999

SHUTTLES:

Airport to Hotel: Queens
 Transportation. \$9 one way/ \$16
 round trip. Call hotel at 704-372-
 4100 upon arrival.

Hotel to Venue: Free shuttle to
 be provided.

PARKING:

Venue: Free
 Hotel: \$5/day

ENTRY DEADLINE FOR YOUTH12 AND 10 FOR SUMMER NATIONALS: Youth fencers who plan to compete in regional youth competitions close to the entry deadline for Summer Nationals should send in their entry prior to the entry deadline. Their entry will be held until the results of the last Regional Youth circuit prior to the entry deadline are received. No regional youth circuit will be considered that is held after the entry deadline for Summer Nationals, i.e., May 27.

2004 Summer National Championships

July 3-11, 2004 - Charlotte, North Carolina

INDIVIDUAL ENTRY FORM

**ENTRY
DEADLINE
MAY 27, 2004**

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT ALL INFORMATION

You **MUST** follow procedures on waiver page for acknowledgement of receipt of entry!

Last name _____ First name _____ Initial _____

Mailing address _____

check box if new address

city _____ state _____ zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Fax (____) _____

Birthdate ____/____/____ Email _____

U.S. Citizen? yes _____ no _____
Permanent Resident # _____

*You must be a U.S. Citizen or
Permanent Resident to fence in any
of the events at the Summer
National Championships*

USFA Competition Club _____

School _____

Division _____

Section _____

Classification (e.g., C02): Foil _____ Epee _____ Saber _____ Male (M) _____ Female (W) _____

Method of Payment (Fees must be paid with entry)

Check or Money Order Enclosed payable to USFA. Credit Card: Visa Mastercard Amex Discover
Note: \$25 charge for returned checks

Exp. date _____ Card# _____

Cardholder _____ Signature _____

Mail or Fax to:
USFA Entries
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
FAX: 719-632-5737

1. # _____ (from p. 2) x \$50 = Event Fee \$ _____
events

2.* Non-refundable Registration Fee \$ 30.00

3. Total Amount Due (Add lines 1 + 2) \$ _____
FOR LATE ENTRIES TRIPLE THE TOTAL AMOUNT DUE

*Individuals only fencing Team must complete this page, waiver page & pay \$30 Registration Fee.

On the next page is the list of individual events by day. Please specify each event you are entering and how you qualified for the event. **FENCERS MAY ONLY ENTER ONE INDIVIDUAL EVENT PER DAY. TEAM ENTRIES MUST SUBMIT SEPARATE TEAM ENTRY FORM.**

Late entries are those received between May 28 and June 18. No entries accepted after June 18, 2004.

APPEAL PROCESS (USA Operations Manual as modified by Board of Directors)

In exceptional cases, a member of the USFA in good standing may be permitted to qualify to one or more individual competitions at the Summer National Championships by appeal. The procedures for applying for qualification by appeal for any Championship competition are as follows:

- (1) Appeals may be filed by fencers who qualified (by means of competition or appeal) to that same event in the prior season or whose competitive record during the current fencing season indicates a strong possibility that they would have qualified had they been able to compete in the qualifying competition but:
 - (a) were unable to compete in the qualifying events this season, OR
 - (b) did compete and had to withdraw because of a disabling injury or illness.

(Mere attendance at an out-of-town school at the time of the qualifying event shall not constitute inability to compete.)

NOTE 1: If a fencer is injured or becomes ill during the qualifying competition the fencer should withdraw rather than continue fencing and fail to qualify because of the injury or illness. Appeals are automatically denied for those who fenced the whole qualifying competition and then appeal on the basis they were not feeling well or were hurt. In a medical withdrawal appeal a note of explanation and/or verification of medical withdrawal from the Bout Committee Chair of the qualifying competition must accompany the appeal.

- (2) All appeals must be made in writing to the USFA National Office, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5774 and must be received within three business days following the competition at which the petitioner would have qualified, and no later than one week prior to the entry deadline for the Championships. The appeal must be accompanied by:
 - a) A non-refundable filing fee of \$30 made payable to the USFA.
 - b) A statement of specific details as to the dates, reason for absence, and other pertinent facts. Any medical reasons must be substantiated by written confirmation from a physician.
 - c) A summary of fencer's significant competitive results during the past year. Results in previous National Championships and recent North American Cup competitions should especially be noted.
 - d) A letter from an officer of the fencer's Division substantiating the reason for the petition.
 - e) A self-addressed, stamped envelope for reply to the appeal.

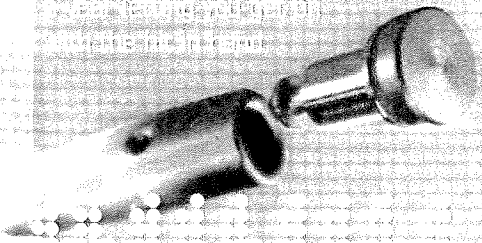
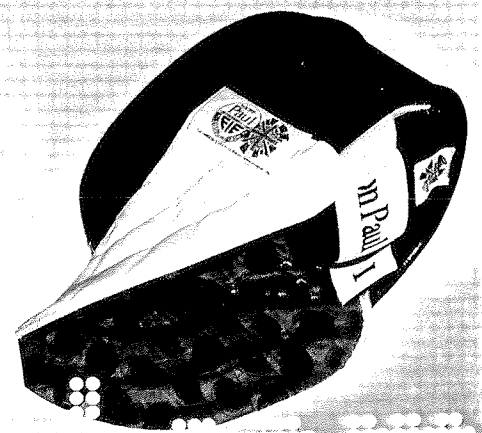
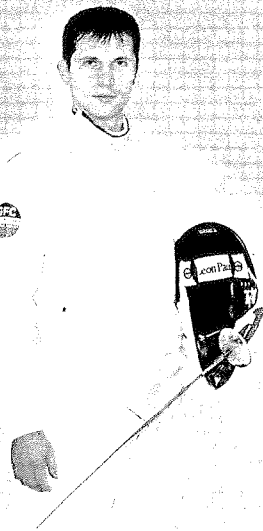
Appeals will be reviewed at the National Office and sent to the Executive Committee in case of rejection of appeal. Decisions will be based upon the validity of the reasons for absence or withdrawal and the probability of the fencer having qualified through competition, based on results achieved in other events.

The submission of an appeal does not constitute an entry into the Championships; the fencer who is appealing should send a timely entry, noting the competitions for which the fencer is submitting an appeal. If the appeal is denied, the fees related to the competitions for which there was an appeal will be refunded in full.

2004 CALENDAR (Subject to Change)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Entry Deadline</u>	<u>Tournament</u>	<u>Location</u>
Apr. 1 – 8, 2004		World Junior & Cadet Championships	Plovdiv, Bulgaria
Apr. 23– 26, 2004	March 23	Div. I National Championships, NAC Youth, NAC Wheelchair	Atlanta, GA
June 10-13, 2004		Senior "A"***: M. Sabre, W. Sabre, W. Foil , MS Team World Team Championships - W. Sabre, W. Foil ***US. Fencer must be on Sr. Point standings to enter	New York City, NY
June 18-20, 2004		TITAN GAMES	Atlanta, GA
June 19 & 20		Fencing at the Titan Games	Philips Arena
July 3 – 11, 2004	May 27	SUMMER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Charlotte, NC
Aug. 13 – 29, 2004		Aug. 13 - Opening Ceremonies	Athens, GRE
OLYMPIC GAMES		Aug. 14 - Men's Sabre, Individual	Helliniko Complex
www.athens2004.com		Aug. 15 - Women's Epee, Individual	
		Aug. 16 - Men's Foil Individual	
		Aug. 17 - Women's Sabre, Individual; Men's Epee, Individual	
		Aug. 18 - Women's Foil, Individual	
		Aug. 19 - Men's Team Sabre	
		Aug. 20 - Women's Team Epee	
		Aug. 21 - Men's Team Foil	
		Aug. 22 - Men's Team Epee	
Sept. 3-5, 2004		Veterans World Championships	Krems, Austria
Sept. 17 – 28, 2004		PARALYMPIC GAMES	Athens, GRE
Sept. 18 – 23 , 2004		Paralympic Fencing Competitions	Helliniko Complex

COACHES COLLEGE: The Annual Coaches College program, held during the summer at the USOC Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs will not be held this summer due to the demands on the Center by teams preparing for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Area clinics can be scheduled by contacting Ed Richards at 310-559-5324. The Coaches College staff are the ones who normally conduct such area clinics, depending on their availability. The Coaches College program will resume the summer of 2005.



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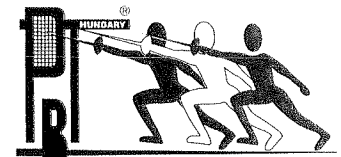
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