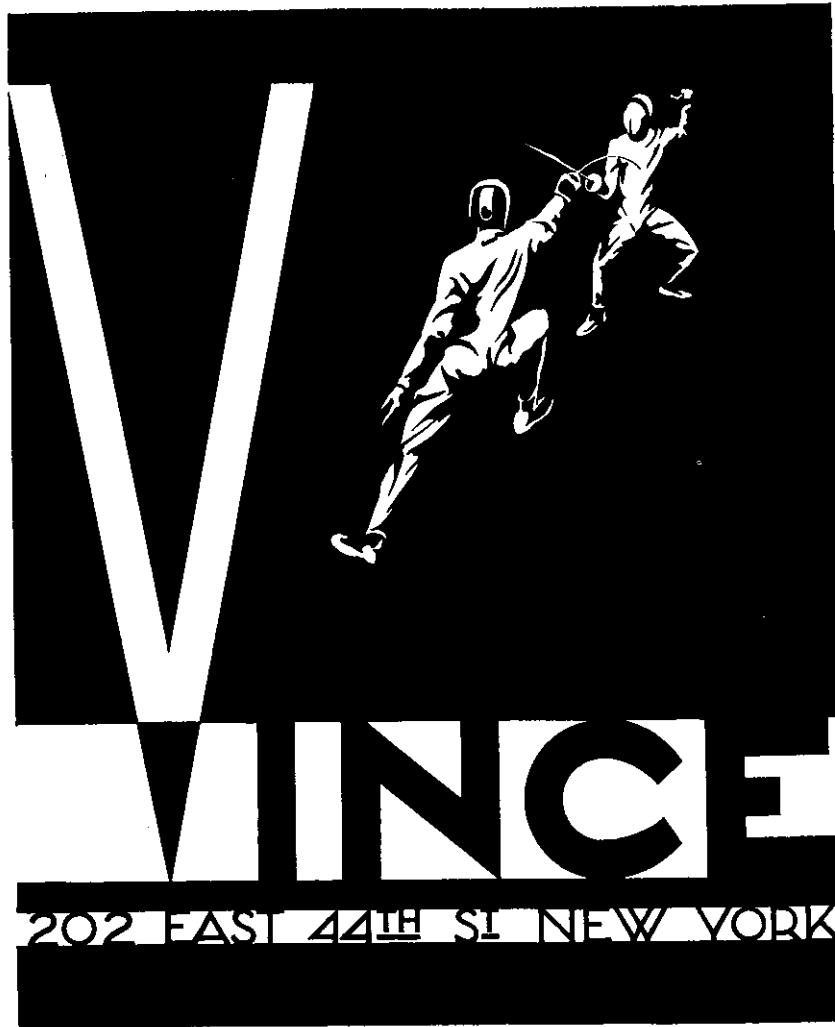


*The*  
**RIPOSTE**

NOVEMBER  
VOL. 4  
No. 6





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## NATIONAL RANKINGS

The National Rankings for 1938-1939 have now been published by the A. F. L. A. and issued by that organization to all of its members. The foil and epee lists contain many changes and new names from former years as a result of the actual results in competitions during the past season. This unprecedented shifting of positions resulted primarily from a similar shifting in positions which occurred in the National Championships which, of course, receive heaviest valuation in these rankings.

In sabre and women's foil, the 1938-1939 listing has a familiar appearance. We commend the A. F. L. A. upon a difficult job well done in foil and epee where the problem probably exceeded that of any former year.

### 1938-1939 RANKINGS

#### FOIL

- |                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Norman Lewis         | 6. Daniel Bukantz              |
| 2. Edward Carfagno      | 7. Joseph L. Levis             |
| 3. John R. Huffman      | 8. Dernel Every                |
| 4. Warren A. Dow        | 9. Nathaniel Lubell            |
| 5. Hugh V. Alessandrini | 10. Lt. Richard Steere, U.S.N. |

#### EPEE

- |                            |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Loyal Tingley           | 6. Tracy Jaeckel                  |
| 2. Andrew Boyd             | 7. Charles Corbett                |
| 3. Lt. G. M. Heiss, U.S.A. | 8. Comdr. Leonard Doughty, U.S.N. |
| 4. Norman Lewis            | 9. Winslow Cornett                |
| 5. Jose R. de Capriles     | 10. Harry Mortimer                |

#### SABRE

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Norman C. Armitage     | 6. Edward Carfagno |
| 2. John R. Huffman        | 7. Ralph E. Marson |
| 3. Miguel A. de Capriles  | 8. Bela de Nagy    |
| 4. Samuel T. Stewart, Jr. | 9. Nickolas Muray  |
| 5. Jose R. de Capriles    | 10. Ervin S. Acel  |

#### WOMEN'S FOIL

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Miss Helene Mayer       | 6. Mrs. Marion Lloyd Vince          |
| 2. Miss Madeline Dalton    | 7. Mrs. Carol Alessandrini Hamilton |
| 3. Mrs. Jarmila C. Vokral  | 8. Miss Helena Mroczkowska          |
| 4. Miss Mildred I. Stewart | 9. Miss Maria Cerra                 |
| 5. Miss Barbara L. Cochran | 10. Mrs. Lisel Oppenheim            |

× ×

## NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

A group of eastern, mid-western, and southern universities have applied to the N. C. A. A. for permission to determine national intercollegiate championships under their auspices. For the first year it is proposed that only individual events be run, leaving team championships to be developed in future years.

Although the N. C. A. A. has not yet approved this move, tentative arrangements call for this event to take place April 6th, 1940 at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. It is hoped that schedule makers will keep this date open. Further plans as developed will be reported in THE RIPOSTE; or individual communications may be addressed to Dr. Frank Riebel, Fencing Coach, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

## GOSSIP AND MORE

Joseph L. Levis, America's outstanding International fencer, American Olympic Fencing Captain in 1936 and five-time American National Foil Champion, is turning professional and accepting a position as fencing instructor at M. I. T. The Board of Governors of the A. F. L. A. has accepted his resignation as their Vice President with regrets and good wishes for his success in the new undertaking.

× ×

Aldo Nadi has resumed his series of special Fencing Seminars. These seminars are held Tuesday and Thursday evenings at his fencing studio in the Savoy-Plaza Hotel and may be joined by personal application.

× ×

The new Salle Santelli was officially opened on the evening of October 10th with a fencing party attended by some 200 fencing friends of Mr. Santelli. The fencers of his club presented him with an oil portrait of his father, Italo Santelli. The evening was given over to fencing exhibitions and bouts, entertainment, refreshments and dancing. The party served to introduce the largest private Salle d'Armes in the United States.

× ×

The 1940 Olympic Games are still in doubt. Although the Olympic Association still insists that plans remain unchanged, developments in Europe make the holding of the Games in Finland or any other part of Europe this summer appear impossible. Rumors have been heard of a Pan-American Olympics, instigated as a substitute for the World Olympic Games. Recent visits of Mr. E. Trucco, fencing delegate from Brazil, and Mr. Mira, fencing delegate from Cuba, correspondence from Argentina and a South American Fencing Congress in Brazil in October indicate that such plans are developing rapidly.

A continuation of the International Fencing competitions between Cuba and the United States appears highly probable with plans in process for an American team to visit Cuba again in December and a Cuban team to visit the United States just prior to our National Championships in May.

× ×

Col. George V. Cherny has taken new and larger quarters for his Col. Cherny Salle d'Armes. As one of the youngest fencing clubs, this fencing group is growing rapidly and upon successive years has moved to larger quarters. Guests privileges are extended to all fencers every Wednesday evening.

× ×

The Foils Club has obtained the services of Al Hern as instructor to take the place of Matthew Gusick who has moved to California.

× ×

A much larger Salle d'Armes is under consideration by Joseph Vince for next season.

**THE RIPOSTE***America's Oldest Fencing Magazine*

114 Washington Place - New York City

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**EDITORIAL**

The Riposte is too specialized in its interests to show any concern in regard to normal wars except to admit perhaps that a great many people are going to get hurt and a considerable amount of real estate change hands. However, when two wars come along within a few short years and each has a definite effect upon the Olympic Games, causing their transfer first from Japan to Finland and now making the holding of any Games highly problematical, then we must break our Editorial calm and issue a statement. We declare that the two most recent wars are anti-social.

X X

We occasionally hear complaints from our subscribers that they did not receive certain issues of The Riposte. We wish to assure all of our readers that particular care is taken in the addressing and mailing of our magazine. However, we do operate under a third class precancelled mail permit which does not receive the careful attention in delivery that first class mail receives. We regret any failure in delivery and, of course, stand ready at all times to replace any issue that is not received. On the other hand, each subscriber must assume the personal responsibility of notifying us of any change in address immediately. The Post Office does not forward magazine mail and hence any change in address will sever your connection with us immediately. Therefore, please assist us to the extent of notifying us of any change in address.

X X

Our use of Volume and Issue numbers to designate the sequence of the issues we publish has proved confusing to our subscribers. This is particularly so, because we do not publish at regular intervals; for instance our last issue was dated July and here it is November. Henceforth we shall print the chronological number of each issue on this page. This is the 52nd issue of The Riposte since it was first published in December 1935. You may find that number printed in the column at the left.

## AMERICAN FENCING HAS A SYNONYM - THE A. F. L. A.

We frequently receive letters from our readers asking for information about the Amateur Fencers League of America. They want to know what it is, what it does and how to participate in its activities. There are many ways to answer these questions and each would be the subject of a full length essay in itself. However, we usually read between the lines of these letters and give much the following answer:

"The A.F.L.A. is an amateur organization of fencers formed to provide competitions for fencers throughout the United States under standard rules which provide maximum safety under the best conditions available. It endeavors to provide as many competitions as possible, taking care at the same time that competitors are so classified as to be evenly matched in order to obtain the greatest pleasure in meeting those of equal skill. It operates these competitions at as little cost as possible, operates on moderate annual dues and awards medals, prizes and trophies to its winners to lend attraction and competitive spirit to its contests." This is a limited and perhaps stodgy definition of an organization which its long-time members know of as much more than this definition covers. However, this is an adequate definition for the purpose. This is all a young fencer needs to know to interest him immediately in its activities. To him, the A.F.L.A. becomes something to make use of, with facilities already provided for his benefit in most parts of the country.

Among the hundreds of sports engaged in throughout the United States, fencing is unique in many ways. Some day we shall get the inspiration to itemize these many unique features, list them with explanations and surprise ourself as well as our readers with their number and variety. However, we limit this writing to fencing's most unique feature, the A.F.L.A., a living, progressive, courageous, self-governing organization of amateurs which for the past forty-eight years has continuously done a job of which any professional organization with salaried officers and agents might well be proud. These amateurs have not stopped at the limits of the definition we first gave you. They have assumed full responsibility to the United States every four years in the selection and training of the best fencers for the American Olympic Fencing Team. From their limited means they have provided the major part of that team's financing. They have financed the National Championships, have provided for the expenses of

various International Fencing Teams and have assumed the heavy expense of publishing Rulesbooks, Schedules, Newsletters and Leaflets for the promotion of the sport and the help of its members.

It has done these things without any advertising. It has gone to considerable effort to return back to its members every advantage it has gained. The very fact that over the years it has grown in size, power and prestige has been a sufficient justification to its founders and later leaders for the work and thought they have volunteered to its services.

There is one great difficulty attendant to the development of fencing. This difficulty is at the same time an asset. Fencing has little appeal to the dabbler who soon discourages when he realizes that a full year of practice leaves him still a beginner. It has no appeal to the mob. It appeals only to those sportsmen who have stick-to-it-iveness. It is this quality which keeps fencing small but at the same time compact and lasting.

To any fencer who has been a member for several years, pride in the A.F.L.A. becomes just as much a part of him as pride in the sport which he enjoys. The very intangible nature of the organization appeals to him as the foremost expression of sports democracy in the United States today. He knows that he has a voice in its activities and that his voice is heard and considered.

If a fencer loses a competition and most of us do, if we disagree with some ruling of the Board of Governors (which the fencers themselves elect each year) and who has not, we immediately begin making the locker room blue with well-pointed criticisms. These criticisms, naturally enough, are aimed at the A.F.L.A. We hear, "The A.F.L.A. says so-and-so" or "The A.F.L.A. is going to do so-and-so." Pin down any of these critics and we find a self-decided grievance at the back of it. Usually the grievance causing the attack is so carefully disguised that the charge is nothing more than well-concealed spite. This is ridiculous for, after all, the A.F.L.A. is really the fencers themselves. The President of the A.F.L.A. is Harold Van Buskirk. He is not the A.F.L.A. The ruling body of the A.F.L.A. is the annually elected Board of Governors which is guided in turn by many advisory committees. These are not the A.F.L.A. The various Bout Committees throughout the United States carry on the hardest work and the main purpose of the A.F.L.A. These Bout Committees are not the A.F.L.A. The fencers are the A.F.L.A. and can and do operate their or-

(Continued on page 5)

### To American Fencers:

We have just begun our 1939-1940 fencing season. Our past season has had many highlights, such as the list of new Divisions added to the Amateur Fencers League of America, the strengthening of its Treasury and most important of all the very successful National Championships held in San Francisco for the first time in history.

From a recent survey made through the fencing goods manufacturers it would appear that there are well over 100,000 men, women and children engaged in fencing within the borders of the United States. To me these figures are astounding.

The membership of the A.F.L.A. is less than 1,200. How simple it would be to have our championships held in different sections of the country each year and to finance our Olympic Teams, if we were able to draw into our membership but one out of every ten fencers. The challenge is there. We have the organization and we have fencing consciousness in large supply. Let us see to bringing the two together for the benefit of both.

**HAROLD VAN BUSKIRK, President  
Amateur Fencers League of America.**

*The Epee*

THE PRACTICE SESSION  
Lt. Philip C. Wehle, U. S. A.

It is with some trepidation that I approach the problem of the practice session for the epee man. My fears are engendered by the ugly fact that the proper practice session results only from honest thought. Distasteful as it is to most of us, the act of thinking—more properly, constructive thinking—is the first consideration in the approach to a fruitful, dividend-paying practice session. Of course there are, in addition to the initial cerebral machinations, many other processes and virtues needful to complete a wholesomely productive practice period. These contributing elements will be taken up in due time; for the moment it is vital to recognize that only from thought will there stem that rarity—the constructive practice session.

But whose thought, pray tell? Fortunately, fencers do not have to do all of the thinking in planning their practice routines. Each man's fencing master does much of the thinking for his pupil. The master diagnoses weak spots, points out crudities, suggests corrective exercises, demonstrates correct technique—in short, he provides all of the materials out of which may be built the practice session. In the final analysis, however, he cannot actually supervise the practice session. The fencer's purse and the master's patience preclude such constant intimacy. Therefore, it devolves upon the fencer to organize his own practice session and to have that organization well worked out before he finds himself, epee in hand, standing on the practice strip.

This planning, what is it? The answer is simple: the plan is merely the evaluating and arranging of the work that you need to do. That part of your repertoire most deserving of attention clamors for priority in planning. But you cannot devote an entire period of practice to one or two exercises. To do so would be deadly indeed. There must be variety; otherwise your practice session becomes the most stupid form of cruelty, senseless crucifying of self. But with this variety there must be purpose. There is little of good in practicing your forte. Primarily you practice to eliminate your weaknesses, not to ignore them. But presuming that you have but one real weakness that you wish to remove, you cannot devote all of your practice period to that one great debility. After ten minutes on any one exercise in fencing you are in need of change; to go on is a waste of time. The Jesuits are accredited with believing that no souls are saved after the first ten minutes of preaching. So too, in fencing. No weakness is cured by an hour-long bludgeoning. Rather is the treatment to be administered in homeopathic and intermittent form. However, your practice session must be longer than ten minutes. To what will you turn for gainful practice?

There are, of course, certain "universals" in epee fencing. They are as household gods to the true epee fencer; every practice session should include a brief period of homage to these occupational deities. Chief among them is that of accuracy with the point. It can be said of epee more truly than of any other weapon that your first line of defense is your point. Then too, your normal target is your opponent's wrist and forearm—a relatively tiny area. To hit with certainty must be your aim. Such accuracy is vital in epee fencing; in no other weapon do you take

great risk in advancing your point six inches beyond your adversary's guard. In saber and foil such a positioning is normal. In epee such a procedure is equivalent to an invitation to the dance; it is downright dangerous. And all because of the POINT! Until you can feel your whole being concentrated at your point, until you are supremely confident that you have complete control of your point, until, in brief, you are accurate with your point all of your fencing efforts are terribly handicapped. Without accuracy you lack confidence; without confidence you cannot achieve distinction in any field. Therefore, it is axiomatic that in every practice session should be included a period of pinking a rubber ball that dangles from the ceiling or from a miniature gibbet. Such thrusting is damnably dreary; but it is essential. Five minutes of this honest labor (it is just that) is sufficient for any one practice period. Later in the period you can practice on some willing fellow who will permit you to make beat attacks or out-of-line attacks to his arm, knee, or toe. But bear in mind, your prime interest is in the accuracy of your point; you can get the feel and technique of the beat without following it up. ALL this, mind you, is but to beg you to include, ever and always, some "point-sharpening" in your planned practice session.

There is another "universal" or epee man's household god. Too often there is lacking the reverence due him in practice sessions. His name is LEGS. It is sad but true that the epee fencer generally neglects his underpinning; he is quite often content to forget his legs and to devote all of his attention to his good right arm. Perhaps it is the prevalence of this tendency that accounts for the weird stances too commonly attributed to the epee wielder. Perhaps, too, we see here the reason for the increasing use of a rather bumbling fleche and the astounding lack of anything remotely resembling an honest-to-goodness lunge. Enough of theorizing! Remember that LEGS can help you. Bear in mind, however, that no favors will be bestowed unless just due is given, and it must be given constantly. The deity is not appeased by an annual visitation. Every practice period should include some ten minutes of genuflecting (let your instructor prescribe the form) and making obeisance at the shrine of LEGS. It is not for nothing that a boxer is said to be as good as his legs. That fencing parallels boxing is obvious.

There is one other diversion from the commonplace that is always good for a laugh. It is the use of the full length mirror. Not one of us is averse to gazing deep into a mirror in order to gloat or to hope against hope. "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!" However, some good may come of such peering. Try your lunge and observe in the mirror the action of your arm. Does that action have the general effect that is noticed when a moving picture is shown of a train rushing straight on toward the camera? If so, all is well. Then, too, you can hold your lunge at the full and note the bulges, bumps and lack of alignment of you. It is most revealing and most instructive. By all means take a good gander at yourself each practice session.

It may be seen that almost everything I have suggested as "variety-givers" in a practice session partakes of the nature of a solo flight. I have done so

consciously, for you may not always find a suitable practice companion. Should you be so fortunate, however, as to have an agreeable mate to work with you let me caution against your permitting your practice session to dissolve into the dangerous practice of mere loose play. I call it dangerous because few of us go about this "loose-play" business in the proper manner. The action usually develops into a polite fight with each contestant striving desperately to hit the other. Little is learned in such business; the only good you can come to in this fight-that-is-not-a-fight is to be found in the sweat forthcoming. If you must fight (and we all want to) wait until the end of your period; then challenge a lad or two to a five-touch bout. Go to town on these bouts; make them real. Only at this time during a practice session should you really FIGHT! All that goes before should be schooling. In schooling it is the execution that matters, not the touch. In fighting it is the touch that matters, all else to the winds.

Little have I written here that is new. The main consideration has been to emphasize the necessity for a planned practice session. Make that plan well in advance; then stick to it. Such a procedure requires thought, a heinous undertaking. Without such procedure your practice session is quite likely to be little more than a listless workout. Plan your practice period in order that you will derive some good from it.

## AMERICAN FENCING HAS A SYNONYM

(Continued from page 3)

ganization in just the way they want to operate it. For this reason the A.F.L.A. is truly the foremost expression of sports democracy and will survive as long as fencers survive.

The A.F.L.A. has no future planning. It is different today from what it was at the turn of the century. It shall be different in 1999 from what it is today. It changes with the times and needs of the fencers. If you or I don't like the way the A.F.L.A. is conducted neither one of us can change it, but if we are representative of the majority of fencers, the A.F.L.A. will come into line with our wishes almost before we have time to express them.

Actually, therefore, when asked "What is the A.F.L.A.?" we could save ourselves a great deal of explanation and reply only with the implication in the title of this article, "The A.F.L.A. is American Fencing."

For official information write to Dr. John Huffman, who is Secretary of the A.F.L.A. Ask him to send you a copy of the latest Newsletter and one of the very interesting pamphlets entitled "How to Watch a Fencing Competition." Membership costs only \$3.00 a year for fencers 19 years of age or over. Under 19, the annual dues are only \$1.00 per year. He will refer you to your nearest Division and if you are ready for competition, see that you are provided with a Schedule of the National Competitions and tell you how to obtain a Schedule of the local Competitions nearest you. He is a busy man himself, being an instructor in Chemistry at New York University but is willing to give you every reasonable help. Therefore, be fair in your inquiries and only ask questions that can be answered directly. He cannot take the time to tell you how to fence or give you a treatise on phases of the sport but he can direct you to other fencers or the professionals in your neighborhood. His address is 522 West 152nd Street, New York City.

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Fifteen epee men assembled at the Ambassador Hotel on August 20th to compete for the C. D. Cathcart Memorial Trophy. Tom Tarbet, the Mercury southpaw star, finally bested his clubmate Harold Swisher to win first place.

Twenty-one fencers from various Los Angeles organizations competed in the annual Bowen Foils Handicap at the L. A. A. C. on August 27th. Senior fencers were handicapped 3 out of 5 touches to Novices, 2 out of 5 to Juniors and 1 out of 5 to Intermediates. Edward Carfagno of the L. A. A. C., despite his Senior handicaps, came through the nine-man finals with a remarkably small number of touches made against him.

The annual Hal Corbin Foils Handicap for foils-women was held at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Muriel Calkins, L. A. A. C., showing a new confidence and clan, defeated the entire field, winning most of her bouts 4-1. This is the second year she has won this tournament. A third winning would retire the damascened foils that Hal Corbin has donated for this competition.

Los Angeles fencers were pleased to hear that the Japanese fencer, Mori Torao, formerly of the L. A. A. C., had entered and won the Intermediate Sabre Competition at San Francisco.

Detroit's Cornelia Sanger of the Salle de Tuscan is now in Southern California and studying under Mr. Uyttenhove of the L. A. A. C. Late in September she motored to San Francisco to give a fencing exhibition with Helene Mayer at the Marin County Grape Festival. The exhibition was given twice, once in the morning and again in the afternoon and was received with much enthusiasm.

A sports fest was held at the L. A. A. C. on October 7th. Muriel Calkins and Cornelia Sanger exhibited in foils, while the Messrs. Lemple and Gusick staged a slashing and cut-throat bout with sabres. Swimming, diving, boxing and wrestling were some of the other attractions of the evening, winding up in a dance and floor show.

## THE COLUMBIA RAPIER CLUB

*Invites the Fencers of the Metropolitan Area and Their Friends to its*

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*117th Street and Morningside Drive  
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*Dancing from 3:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.*

*Refreshments*

*Subscription - \$1.00 per couple*

*(There will be no fencing)*

## A Foil for Your Figure

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In the old days every gentleman carried a sword ready to draw, at the drop of a lace handkerchief, in the defense of a lady's honor. But today, if retorts were still made with steel, thousands of women could take care of the defense of their own honor, and carve their initials on an offender's shirtfront with a dexterity to amaze d'Artagnan.

Fencing has stepped out from under the cloak of its elegant and romantic history as a means of self defense, and has become a regular and popular sport. Women took it up after it was made safe for them by the introduction of the fencing mask. And now every sizeable city has at least one fencing salle, or club, where more and more women are combining the fun of an exhilarating sport with the benefit of the callisthenics incorporated in it.

As a sport it's a natural for women. In the first place fencing is as much a combat of wits as of physical skill. At least half the victory is won by acting, by playing up to an opponent to make her believe that you are going to do one thing and then following through with another, or letting yourself appear to be lured, pretending to fall into a trap, and then setting one of your own. If we're honest with ourselves, we'll admit that, as the weaker sex, we're pretty good at that sort of thing.

Maybe you still have visions of Douglas Fairbanks leaping from housetop to housetop, warding off an adversary with a sword. Very picturesque, of course, but very exhausting, too. You'll be involved in no such elaborate gymnastics if you decide to learn fencing, for all the action takes place on a strip 40 feet long and 6 feet wide.

The foil is the basic weapon for fencing. Both men and women use it while they are learning, and it is the only weapon ever used by women. The foil has a quadrilateral blade, about 35 inches long, with a blunt end. It is made of finely tempered steel and has a great deal of bend. It weighs only 12½ ounces, about as much as a loaf of bread.

The limit to a bout is eight minutes, and it is generally won or lost before that time expires. Your object, of course, is to touch your opponent with the tip of your foil. For women, four such touches are needed, while the rules call for five touches in a bout between men. The target for women in foil fencing is from the neck to the tops of the hip bones, and touches on the arms, legs or the mask are counted as fouls. When a foul occurs, play is interrupted and no score is made; then the play begins anew.

Fencing is a highly formalized sport. Though its rules are rigid, it affords an infinite variety of offensive and defensive actions. Each action has a counteraction distilled from the knowledge of centuries of combat. Fencing isn't a sport that you can pick up uninstructed. You will have to take lessons. To attempt to fence, before you have been taught the technique, would be as futile as trying to play tennis with a baseball bat. But after a few months of practice regularly once or twice a week, you will be ready really to enjoy fencing. And as you continue, each time you fence you will find some small improvement, some added coordination of muscles. To hear your opponent cry "touche" is as thrilling as a service ace in tennis or a strike in bowl-

ing. The first time your foil finds its target you'll experience practically an electric shock that will make up for the months of intensive work necessary to learn the mechanics of the sport.

Before crossing swords, which marks the commencement of play, the opponents salute each other. The foil is raised in a perpendicular position directly in front of the right shoulder. After a moment's pause, it is lowered in direct line with the shoulder. The masks are then put on and the on guard position is assumed.

The position on guard is the basic position of fencing, and it is the one to which the fencer returns after each lunge. The body is in profile, since it offers the smallest target, the right arm is bent so that the elbow is about six inches out from the hip and the foil is pointed toward the opponent's target; the left arm is extended behind so that the forearm is perpendicular and the upper arm is on a horizontal plane, with the hand curved in toward the head. The legs are crouched, and are separated at approximately the distance of twice the length of your foot. The right foot is pointed toward your opponent and the left foot is at right angles to it. The back is held straight and the knees are bent, the right knee directly above the instep on a plumb-line, and the left knee above the toes of the left foot.

Describing the guard position in such specific terms is difficult. Just try describing a curtsy, for instance, in terms of where to put your feet and how to bend your knee and where to bend. If you pick up a foil, or even a yardstick, and point your right toe at some object, turn your profile to it, move your left foot back a foot or so and bend both knees, you'll have it. And if you try thrusting with the foil you'll find it's the only way you can keep a solid stance and be prepared for a quick retreat.

Once you've assumed the crouch of the guard position, with your weight evenly distributed on both feet, your spine straight and your fanny tucked in, you'll realize that the position automatically corrects figure faults. No rounded shoulders, no protruding fanny, your abdominal muscles are tense and always under control, and you can actually feel the ramrod of your spine as you stand ready to parry the first lunge of an adversary's foil.

The thrust and lunge, parry, and counter or riposte are the first principles of the game. The thrust is used when the target is within arm's reach. The lunge is what its name implies, a lunge forward with the whole body thrusting the foil arm's length, when the target is out of reach. In a long distance it is necessary to make an advance and lunge. The parry is a defensive movement to divert the opponent's blade from its attack. And the riposte is simply a counterattack. The target is divided evenly into four sections and the sport is worked out with such mathematical precision that there are exact fencing positions for each of the attacks, defenses or counterattacks on these four sections. So you see, unless you know the right parry for an attack on the **upper inside target** and can apply it instantly, your opponent can make a touch without the slightest effort. There are simple and compound attacks, sixteen different parries and numerous ripostes.



Every action in fencing is as controlled and exact as a move in chess. But in fencing you have to think and act at the same time. As you become a real fencer your reflexes will be so trained that you can meet any emergency and react immediately and calmly. The beginner is inclined to plunge into action too quickly—instinctively rather than thinking first and then choosing her action. One of the first things you are taught in order to improve quick thinking is to learn to control your reflexes. If you think you have good coordination, remember it the next time you are startled and see which worked first—mind or body.

A good example of how our actions get ahead of our thoughts is in the fact that almost all beginners jump when a foil is thrust straight at their eyes. They know that they are completely protected by a mask but that doesn't seem to change matters. A good fencer never flinches. If for no other reason than that you become less susceptible to shock, fencing is a wonderful antidote for nervousness. But besides, you become so completely absorbed while you are on the strip that you forget that you ever had a worry.

This discipline that fencing gives you in mind over matter affects your coordination in everything you do, from entering a ballroom to driving a car, and it trains your reflexes to rapid response. It makes you aware of all your muscles, and makes your brain aware of its mastery of them.

Fencing brings into play practically every muscle in your body, and in fact some muscles you never knew you had. It affects the whole body. It strengthens and lengthens muscles and gives them that soft rippling power that doesn't distort the contour lines. Fencing has the same quality of movement as swimming, the same fluid, continuous motions that make for long, relaxed muscles, instead of bulging bunches. It makes women into graceful, feminine creatures—not into hardened toughies.

Don't interpret this as an extravagant promise. Fencing won't make the pounds magically roll away, but you will find that it will redistribute your weight along more graceful lines. And you may discover that what you believed was fat was merely flabby muscle tissue that the exercise of fencing will tone up and whip into shape. The constant elevation of your arms brings into play the muscles which control your bosom and helps to achieve that high-breasted ideal. Fencing won't give you what you haven't got, but it will develop what you have got.

Originally, fencing was exclusively the sport of men, primarily because of the danger attached to it. The introduction of the mask was the turning point of fencing and its beginning as a modern sport. Today, a woman who has learned to handle a foil with dexterity can hold her ground with an average male fencer, and we'll bet that most men will give ground. But male vs. female fencing is always only in fun, for now in official amateur competition the sexes don't compete. Paul Gallico, eminent sports authority, says that he would rather fence with a good woman fencer than with most men and that a man has no advantage over a girl. In his own words: "If anything, he is handicapped, because a woman's natural deceitfulness comes in handy."

Well, we won't go off the deep end and agree with Mr. Gallico that we are a deceitful lot. Nor will we stop to argue the point. We have already recognized that the inherent sense of strategy—well, cunning, then—that we all possess is a great asset to

a woman fencer. If he wants to call a spade a dredging machine, all right, but our cunning will continue to score points.

And once a woman learns to fence she can continue until she has to give it up for a wheel chair. Fencing is the one sport that doctors frequently permit when others are banned, for it is only as strenuous as you make it. We asked at the various salles about New York what the range of ages of their women members is. We were told that they ranged from twelve to fifty, but that neither of those figures could be considered limits.

You are probably ready to ask at this point, "But, if I learn to fence, whom can I fence with? My husband doesn't fence and neither do any of my friends." Every sizeable city has one or more fencing clubs, and every club has plenty of eager fencers. If you belong to a club, you need never worry about someone to go on the strip with you. Fencing is a comparatively inexpensive sport. A club membership generally averages around forty dollars a season—these dues frequently include one lesson a week. The official fencing season lasts from November to the end of May, but there is nothing to stop you from fencing all summer long, on your lawn, in your basement, any place where there is enough room.

If you want to learn to fence, it will be easy enough to find someone to teach you, even if you don't live in a city and there is no fencing club convenient. Write to the Amateur Fencers League of America, 522 West 152nd Street, New York City. They will be glad to help you find a good fencer, living near you, who can give you instruction. Fencing is a particularly fraternal sport and a good fencer, who can find time, will be glad to give lessons to a newcomer to the sport. Fees for lessons will be governed according to your teacher, but they are never higher than those of other competitive sports.

Your equipment will cost no more than \$25. The foil costs about \$3.50 and the mask from \$2 to \$3. The glove is not expensive. Your costume will average around \$15, although you can shoot that figure up as high as you like, if you want to get fancy. But while you're learning you don't really need to have a complete fencing outfit. Fencing trousers look very much like ski pants, with a little fullness down the pant leg that gathers into a tight cuff at the ankle. A fencing jacket is a necessary precaution. You can buy them separately without the trousers. They are padded in the front and on the upper right arm. Some have pockets over the bosom in which to insert mesh cups lined with lambs' wool. Or you can wear a protection that is made like a brassiere, tying in the back. You have a choice of materials from tin to asbestos.

Wear flat-heeled shoes, of course; either sneakers or composition-soled shoes will do. And it's a good idea to wear woolen socks to absorb perspiration. You're on your toes only figuratively in fencing, never literally. Fencing is the one sport where your feet must be flat on the floor. As a result you come down on your heels with quite a bit of unaccustomed weight—especially the right heel. So here's a tip; put a small sponge, or better yet, a piece of hard rubber, under your right heel to serve as a shock absorber.

Certainly, once you start to fence, your enthusiasm for it grows as your skill improves. The sport is full of fascination and dramatics. The lunge, the parry and the feint are bits of drama in themselves. And, as we said before, a good fencer is always a good

(Continued on page 11)

## The Remise

What with the National Championships being held in San Francisco and my purse being made of particularly inelastic material, it was pretty much up to the Editor to pinch hit for this column last issue. I was pleased to see The Remise carry on despite me and was further amused to receive a letter from The Editor a few days ago saying, "No thanks." What comments he received for his attempt as a columnist were from those personalities he dealt with who did not agree with his deal. Therein lies one virtue of my anonymity. At times I feel like a sneak but since people will not spar with a shadow they leave me very much alone. I try to respect this slightly unfair position by mentioning personalities unfavorably only where it has become necessary. Otherwise, "nil nisi bonum."

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There have been two important developments since my last writing. The first is the issuance of some two pages of new rules which have been adopted by the A.F.L.A. and mailed to all its members in the latest A.F.L.A. Newsletter. (Write to Dr. John R. Huffman, A.F.L.A. Secretary, 522 West 152nd Street, New York City for a free copy.)

You can send fencers an engraved copy of a new rule in three subsequent mailings and then see a surprised and hurt look on faces in competition when the rule is applied. We hear the old familiar, "Why doesn't somebody tell me these things?" We may save some embarrassment by reviewing the more pertinent of these rules in detail.

A Prep used to be a fencer in his first A.F.L.A. competition. This classification has now been changed to mean a fencer in his first year of A.F.L.A. competition or until he wins a medal, indicating that he is too strong for the "just beginning" class. This gives the beginner more opportunity to compete among his equals and thereby gain competitive experience without too early elimination.

"Members of composite teams must be members of the same Division." The purpose of team competition is to prove the strength of the fencers of some unit; club, college or locality. This new rule is to prevent three good fencers, say from Philadelphia, Chicago and New York from ganging together for the mere purpose of winning without being representative of the fencing strength of any unit when they do so.

"In a semi-final pool from which only two qualify, if three fencers tie with only one defeat each, all three shall be advanced to the final pool without counting touches." Often we have seen three fencers thus tied and one man eliminated on the basis of one touch. Elimination after a count of touches in a close round of this type does not appear fair. The A.F.L.A. has therefore enlarged the final round to include all three men rather than cause one man to suffer elimination after such fine showing of his competitive skill.

Fleche attacks in foil or sabre are to be frowned upon henceforth. If you close with an opponent by means of a fleche or run off the side of the strip in executing a fleche attack you shall be warned. Upon repetition of either of these offenses during a bout you shall be penalized a touch for each offense. The fleche is not forbidden, but the penalty for its

use is now so heavy that it should not be attempted without perfect timing and careful execution.

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The other development of importance is the formation of a Metropolitan Committee of the A.F.L.A. to handle the local fencing competitions in New York City. We have long felt that fencing in New York was so closely tied up with National fencing affairs that little time was being devoted to the younger fencers of that city. We argued for some such arrangement a year ago and are pleased to see that this change is now a fact. Once formed, this Committee went to work rapidly and arranged the largest Schedule of Events ever seen in these parts. It set aside some 65 separate afternoons or evenings for local competitions. It worked so hard to provide days for its competitions that it nearly scheduled some in the past. As it was it only just got in under the wire by using a supplementary mailing early in October, that caused many a young fencer to scurry to his professional for tuning.

That many fencers were caught napping was evidenced by the fact that only 12 boys entered the first competition which had attracted a field of 29 last year. This would have been unfortunate in any other year with only one Prep competition, but this year there are four of these contests in all and the other Preps will have their competitive opportunities later. Similarly, there are four girls' Prep competitions and three to five Novice competitions in all the weapons.

The younger New York fencers are now being offered their fill of competitions for the first time and the experiment should prove a huge success. If the Bouts Committee survives the season, the idea should be continued in the future.

This whole problem of building up fencing within a given territory is the same in all parts of the country. New York City has failed in the past to encourage its younger fencers. The higher the classification, the larger the number of competitions provided. This was fine for the Seniors, but it forced a beginner to pay good money to enter these competitions which were admittedly so strong that his chance of lasting beyond the first round was almost none at all. That is apparently all changed now. The beginners are now being given many opportunities to compete with their equals and therefrom should develop a new group of fencers ready to take the places of the present leaders when they falter. It has been stated that one objective of the Metropolitan Committee is to build from the bottom. This is excellent and any other part of the country that notices that it is not exactly suffering from growing pains may well take a hint from this action.

### RHODE ISLAND

The Rhode Island Division of the A.F.L.A. has issued a Schedule containing 17 competitions for the current season. Copies may be obtained by writing Mr. Almon T. White, 74 Mawney Street, Providence, R. I. Competitions are provided for both boys and girls from Novice Class up through Senior Class. One Interscholastic Tournament is also included. An unusual feature of the schedule is the fact that five Novice competitions are provided at entry fees of only 10c. This is possible through the awarding of certificates instead of medals and is an excellent idea wherever it is felt that larger entry fees will prove a deterrent to the younger competitors.

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pleased to replace your copy for you.*

**A. F. L. A. COMPETITIONS HELD IN NEW YORK CITY****Individual Prep Foil Competition—13 Entries  
October 3rd**

Walter Vignini of the Greco Fencing Academy won the first of the competitions of the new fencing season. Both he and James Strauch of C. C. N. Y. completed the six-man finals with four wins and one loss apiece, necessitating a fence-off. Vignini won the fence-off 5-3, thereby winning a mask and glove, the prizes awarded annually for this competition by Dr. Graeme M. Hammond.

**Individual Novice Foil Competition—41 Entries  
October 10th**

Albert Axelrod of the Salle Santelli captured first place in this competition which entitled him to a pair of foils as prizes from Dr. Graeme M. Hammond. Axelrod accomplished this not without difficulty for at the end of the six-man finals there was a triple tie for first place between him, Arthur Tauber of N. Y. U. and Harry Boutsikaris of Seton Hall College, all of whom had three wins and two losses. In the fence-off Axelrod defeated Tauber 5-2, and Boutsikaris defeated Axelrod 5-4. In the Tauber-Boutsikaris bout the score stood at 4-4 when Boutsikaris stepped off the end of the strip for an automatic touch which created a second triple tie. In the second fence-off Axelrod defeated Tauber 5-0 and Boutsikaris 5-3.

**Individual Novice Sabre Competition—21 Entries  
October 15th**

Peter O'Connor of the Greco Fencing Academy won the sabre annually awarded by Dr. Graeme M. Hammond as the first prize for this competition. Again

we saw a triple tie for first place with O'Connor, Joseph Rabb, also of the Greco Fencing Academy, and Nathaniel Lubell of the Salle d'Armes Vince tied with three wins and two losses apiece at the end of the six-man final round. O'Connor, the best technician of the field, won both of his bouts in the fence-off.

**Individual Junior Foil Competition—13 Entries  
October 19th**

Nathaniel Lubell of the Salle d'Armes Vince won this competition which was restricted to Junior foils-men only. The outstanding favorite at the beginning of the competition, he went through the entire evening winning all of his eleven bouts without apparently being forced to extend himself at any time. For his evening's achievement he was awarded a pair of foils by Dr. Graeme M. Hammond, patron of the competition.

**Women's Prep Foil Competition—11 Entries  
October 4th**

Miss Kathleen Cerra of the Salle d'Armes Vince, following in the footsteps of her sister, won this first women's competition without a defeat and was awarded the Evelyn Van Buskirk gold medal for her victory. Miss Aida Condosta, also of the Salle d'Armes Vince, won the silver Van Buskirk medal and Miss Lela Joggi of Hofstra College won the Van Buskirk bronze medal.

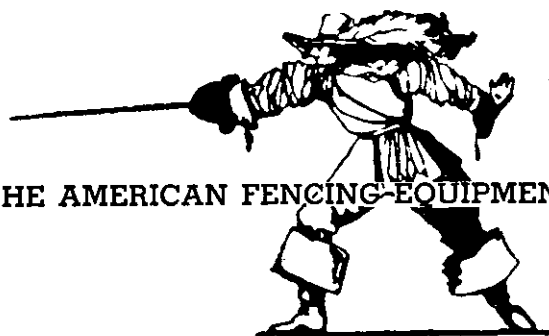
**Women's Novice Foil Competition—21 Entries  
October 15th**

Miss Grace Giratano of the Foils Club won the gold Manrique medal by winning first place in the

(Continued on page 11)

ROBERT H. E. GRASSON, *Pres.*  
Head fencing Master, Yale Univ.  
U. S. Olympic Coach

ALBERT J. GRASSON, *Sec.-Treas.*  
Fencing Master, Yale Univ.



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## SAN FRANCISCO

On September 23rd, after a week of the hottest weather San Francisco had experienced in many years, the fencing season opened in this city. This competition, the Men's Intermediate Epee Competition, qualified its three highest men directly into the Pacific Coast Championships to be held in Los Angeles in April.

Because of his newly-won National Ranking, Harry Mortimer of the Olympic Club was the target of all eyes and epees, but he proved better than the threat against him and won the competition with Salvatore Giambra of the Young Italian Club, second, and Walter Westman of the Olympic Club, third. There were nine entries.

Fortunately for the competitors and officials, the Young Italian Club, host to the competition, served cooling liquid refreshments during a recess in the competition. The heat, the season opening and the refreshments all tended to give the evening a pleasant festive tone.

The Intermediate Sabre Competition attracted 17 entries to Treasure Island on September 29th. A large group of spectators attended the event considering that attendance at the Fair itself was light that day.

Torao Mori, unattached, went through the six-man Finals undefeated, while Salvatore Giambra, of the Young Italian Club, was second with only one defeat and Ferard Leicester, of the Olympic Club, was third, losing only to Mori and Giambra. These men qualified for the Pacific Coast Championships.

By middle October two of the five rounds of the Heron Trophy Competition had been completed. This Competition was inaugurated to provide keen foil team competition early in the season without duplicating later season competitions. Mr. Flodden W. Heron donated a beautiful perpetual Trophy for the purpose and made certain stipulations to increase interest in the sport and fairness in results. For instance, each foil team must consist of five members, to encourage clubs into having at least five competitive fencers. To prevent one club from gaining and keeping the Trophy year after year with the same few strong foilsmen representing them repeatedly, Mr. Heron stipulated that should a club (not a university) win the Trophy, no member of the winning team might compete for the Trophy the following year. This encouraged larger squads at the clubs and tended to circulate the Trophy. To date the Olympic Club has been its winner in 1928, 1929, 1930, 1935, and 1938; Stanford University in 1931, 1932 and 1936, and the East Bay Fencers Club in 1934.

Thus far this season the Olympic Club, the Funke Fencing Academy and the Young Italian Club have each won two matches and the University of California, Stanford University and the Berkeley Team have each lost two matches. The Tournament will end on November 3rd and complete details will be presented upon its completion.

## A FOIL FOR YOUR FIGURE

(Continued from page 7)

actor. And good actors are often good fencers, too. Both Katharine Cornell and Eva LeGallienne are excellent fencers. Actresses have found that fencing contributes a lot to their stage presence, not only because it improves their posture and poise, but because it sharpens their wits. Fencing doesn't help them remember their lines, but its training in quick thinking and quick decision does help when the time comes to ad lib in order to save a situation. And fencing builds up stamina, to last through a long-run play, or a strenuous social season, or whatever demands your life may make on you.

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## A. F. L. A. COMPETITIONS IN N. Y. C.

(Continued from page 10)

finals of this competition with four wins and one loss. Her teammate, Miss Lisl Zaduck, a European-trained fencer, took the silver Manrique medal on touches over Miss Addie Bassi of the Aldo Nadi Studio. Each had three wins and two losses.

### Women's Individual Greco Trophy Competition 32 Entries—October 22nd

Miss Barbara Cochrane of the Salle Santelli by careful use of the stop and time thrust came off with four wins and one loss in the six-woman finals of this competition to win the Greco Trophy and Greco gold medal for first place. Mrs. Dolly Funke of the Greco Fencing Academy, Miss Madeline Dalton of the Salle d'Armes Vince and Miss Mildred Stewart of the Salle Santelli were tied for second place on the basis of three wins and two losses apiece. Mrs. Funke received the Greco silver medal and Miss Dalton the bronze Greco medal on the basis of touches.

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## TEXAS

We made mention in our last issue of the Southwestern Fencing League. We have since received inquiries from a few fencers in that region asking for more details. We are pleased to present these for the benefit of all.

The Southwestern Fencing League is composed of 14 clubs, namely, the Dallas Y.M.C.A.; Dallas Women's Fencing Club; Southern Methodist University Men's Club; Southern Methodist University Women's Club; Ft. Worth Y.M.C.A.; El Florete Club, Ft. Worth; Royal Assassin Club, Ft. Worth; North Texas Agricultural College, Arlington, Texas; Baylor University, Waco, Texas; A. & M. College, College Station, Texas; The Anico's Men's Club and The Anico's Women's Club of Galveston. These include a total membership of over 200 fencers. Officers are W. Mort Smith, President; Rois L. Brockman, Vice President; and Ruth Eaves, Secretary-Treasurer.

Its schedule for the coming season begins on November 4th and continues through March. They will operate under a double elimination bracket system this year and the two advanced teams will meet during March for the annual Team Championship. Individual Championships will also be held in March. A membership drive is under way this year with the

objective of doubling the League's present membership, adding new clubs from Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana and making a final connection with the A.F.L.A. for supervision of the entire group.

## UTAH

Professor Neil J. Van Steenberg, who had long been a leader in fencing affairs in this State, has resigned from the Utah University and is now located in Chicago. He had been Chairman of the Utah Division of the A.F.L.A. for several years. His position has now been taken by Mr. E. A. Westlake with Carl Woolsey, Utah Sabre Champion, serving as Secretary-Treasurer. Mr. Guy Di Carlo, formerly of the New Jersey Division, is now a student at Utah University, acting as that University's fencing coach and the Division's Bout Committee Chairman.

Di Carlo is reported as having 78 pupils already interested in the sport at the University and has done considerable work toward increasing activity in the sport throughout Salt Lake City. He intends to open a course at the University, training his pupils in strip etiquette, judging, directing and a thorough groundwork in A.F.L.A. regulations. He is also coaching the Salt Lake fencing group known as "Les Gascognes".

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