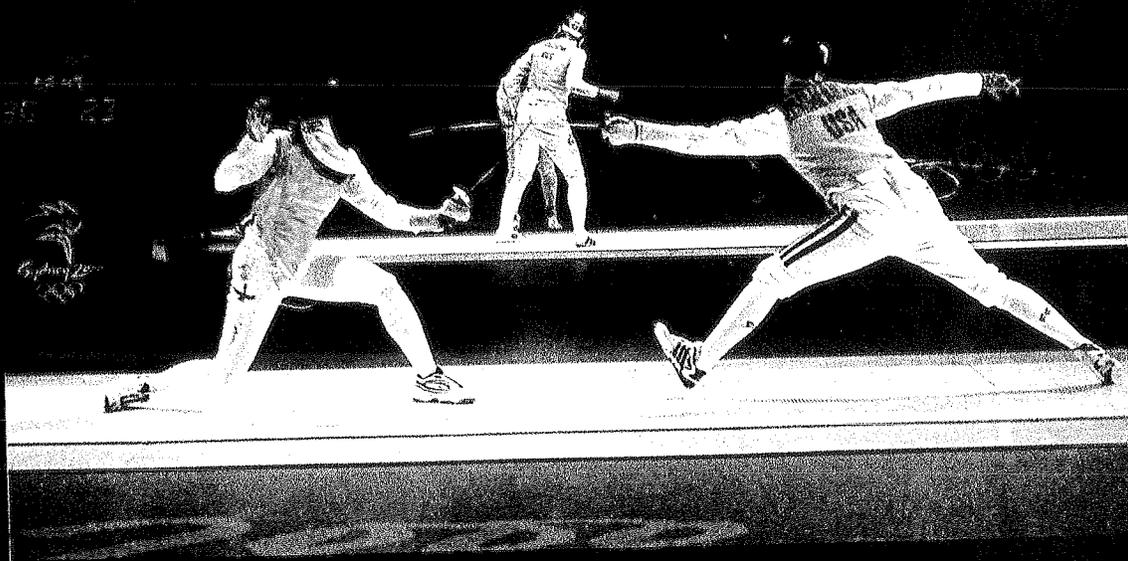


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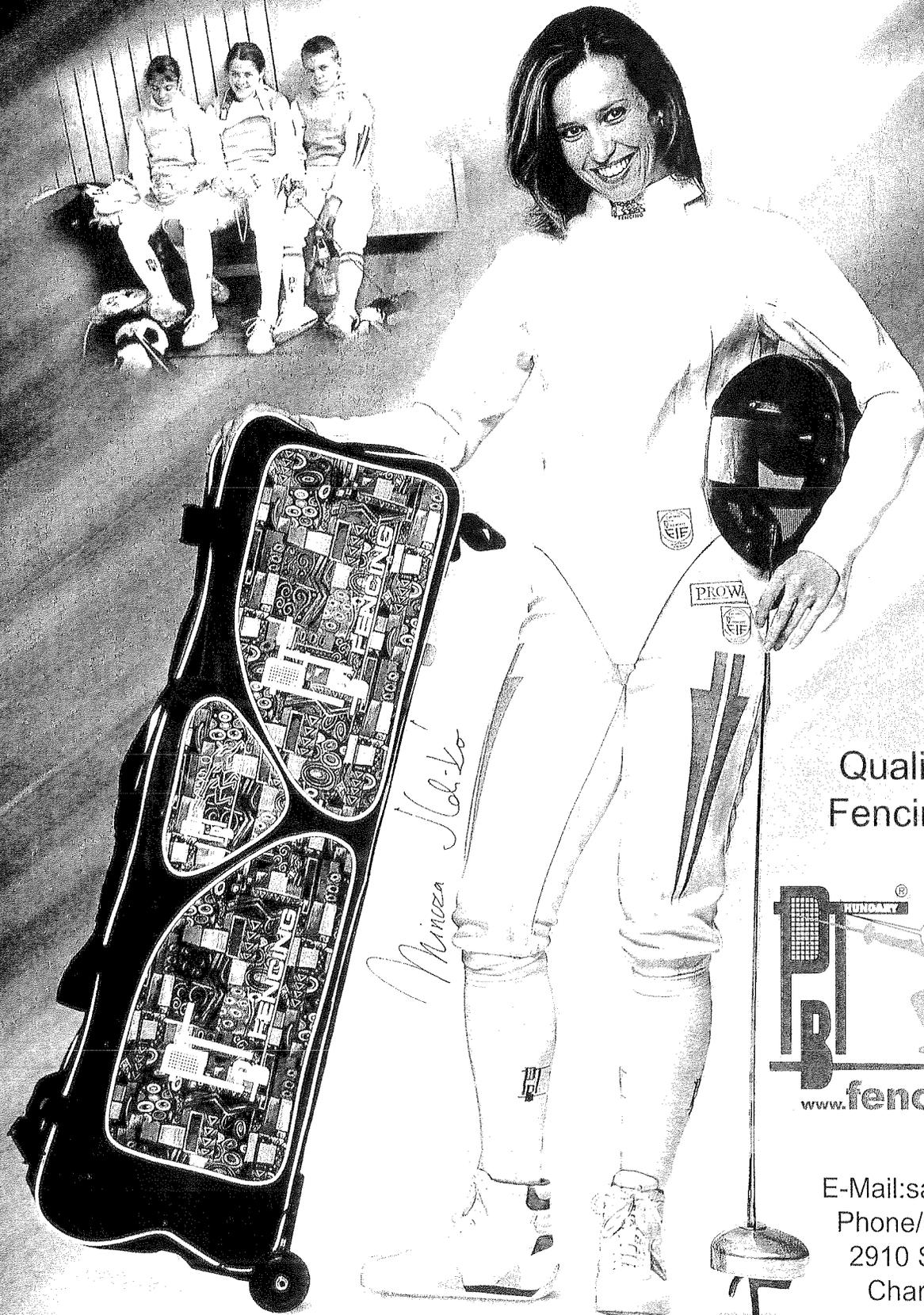
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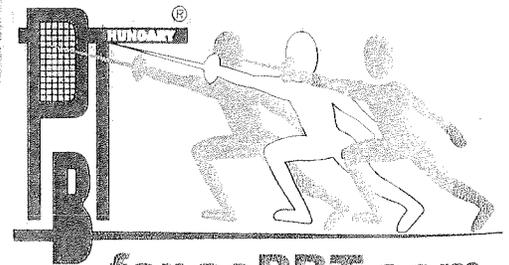
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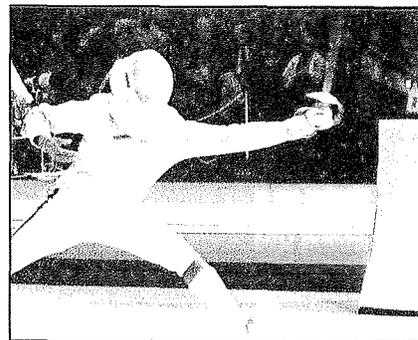
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American Daniel Boles offers this look at fencing with the best

On the cover:

Olympian Iris Zimmermann (right) fencing in the preliminary Women's Foil team event at Sydney. Photo: Carla Mae Richards.



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The United States Fencing Association Member Services Directory

The United States Fencing Association is the national governing body for the sport of fencing in the United States. The USFA is affiliated with the Federation Internationale d'Escrime, the international federation for fencing. The mission of the United States Fencing Association is to develop fencers to achieve international success and to administer and promote the sport in the United States.

The United States Fencing Association

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American Fencing

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STACEY JOHNSON

President, United States Fencing Association

In October, the first Board of Directors meeting of the new quadrennium was held in Colorado Springs. In addition to the board meeting, a special strategic planning session was conducted to review the USFA's Four-Year Strategic Plan. The plan outlines the USFA's mission and goals for the next four years and identifies specific key objectives under each goal area. The board worked in an all-day session providing review and revision to a document that will be presented again for approval at its February board meeting in Sacramento. The USFA board, comprised of representatives from all of the organization's sections—members elected by the Congress, athletes, coaches and officers—provides the policy direction for the USFA. It is important for me to note that, after the call to action for a new non-combative, cooperative model of communication to be the standard for dialogue, the board responded elegantly, demonstrating a willingness to negotiate and resolve differences without resorting to fixed, polarizing positions. I believe the board meeting expeditiously accomplished much business because of the open communication that was practiced. We were able to reach consensus on the strategic direction for the organization's resources, manpower, and skills in the next four years.

The 2000-2004 Strategic Plan is a large document with numerous action steps and performance measures, but in consideration of space and time, I will focus on the mission and goals, and highlight key objectives, especially those that represent a new focus for the USFA. The complete document will be placed on the USFA web site after its approval in February.

The Mission of the USFA is to:

- Direct, administer and promote the sport of fencing in the United States
- Develop programs, services and opportunities that enable members, from recreational to Olympian, to reach their maximum potential.
- Select athletes and cadre for international competition, including the Olympic, Pan American and FIE World Championships.

GOALS:

assist Divisions in achieving basic administrative standards.

1. To Expand Membership

Objectives:

1. To grow current club base by 50 new clubs by July 2002 through incentives, recognition, services and benefits provided.
2. To maintain current level of USFA membership programs.
3. To develop a plan to manage rapid membership growth and provide needed infrastructure (staff/equipment, etc.) to support current and new membership.
4. To increase membership to 20,000 members by July 2002.

2. To Increase USFA Revenues

Objectives:

1. To develop and implement plans for corporate, private, or grant solicitation, and value in-kind contributions.
2. To increase Life Memberships

3. To Increase Public Interest in Fencing

Objectives:

1. To develop a public relations and media campaign.
2. To integrate plans for PR needs into overall staffing/office plans
3. To ensure our national circuit events and key international world cups are audience- and media-friendly in terms of the "look" and "feel" of the competitions.

4. To Enhance the Efficiency and Organizational Effectiveness of the USFA

Objectives:

1. To create a consensus organizational four-year strategic plan, communicate the operational requirements to reach the goals, and implement and evaluate the plan annually.
2. To review and amend the Operations Manual on an annual basis.
3. To provide better membership service: Ensure limited number of fixed or rotating sites for Summer Nationals.
4. To provide better membership service through automated tournament entry processing.
5. To provide better membership service, and to

5. To Develop a Coherent Coaching Structure

Objectives:

1. To raise the proficiency level of coaching.
2. To identify and recruit coaches for competitive level of coaching.
3. To create new educational opportunities for coaches.

6. To Establish the USA as a Recognized International Force in the World Fencing Community

Objectives:

1. To achieve success in qualification and medal performance for individuals and team at the World and Olympic level. [Three teams and one to two fencers in each of the non-team weapons.]
2. To enhance political influence in the FIE and Pan American Fencing Confederation.
3. To train, qualify and ensure utilization of referees at international competitions.

With this plan, our future now rests in the hands of each one of us who will take up a piece of this puzzle, working in support of accomplishing our mission, goals and objectives. Committee Chairs throughout the USFA will develop their own plans, which will support these goals and objectives in the next few years. It is important to note that the goal area of "To Increase Public Interest in Fencing" was embraced by many at the retreat as being a key area in which the organization should focus its efforts in order to catapult fencing to higher levels of awareness in the United States.

In Colorado Springs, we held a reception after the planning retreat at the beautiful Penrose House, which is owned and operated by the El Pomar Foundation. The historic home was a warm and stately backdrop for all of us to relax, share food and drink, and get to know one another further. USOC President Bill Hybl and a number of other Olympic Committee staff and volunteers attended to show their support of fencing. It is my contention that the better we come to know each other as people, understanding our inevitable strengths and weaknesses, we will fortify our ability to build a stronger USFA for all members. We now have a blueprint of where we are going—let's work together and get it done!

Meg Galipault

Editor

Dear Readers:

In my short tenure as editor so far, I've discovered just how passionate fencers are about their sport. Passion has its ups and downs. It can drive you crazy and make you do stupid things. Ever been in a relationship with someone whose bad behavior raised red flags at every turn and yet you ignored those red flags? Oh, I don't know, maybe she was a pathological liar and you kept telling yourself, "She's just *creative*." Or maybe he was a cad who kept standing you up, but you convinced yourself that "he's a powerful man with important things to do." Passion has a funny way of turning reality upside down.

I've discovered it's no different in the fencing community. It's a highly opinionated group, and each person has his/her own agenda. The downside of this passion in fencing is that sometimes we're not as quick to listen to the other person's side, to keep as objective and open-minded as we should be. Everyone seems to acknowledge that there is tension in the ranks at every level—from the divisions up through the sections, between the officials and the organizers, among the athletes and the coaches, from the collegiate sector to the amateurs. Believe me, I've heard it from everyone about every issue—from whether or not women should be permitted to compete against men in local tournaments, to the commitments divisions make, to this coach saying that about this official. It's a regular Peyton Place, I think.

But that's a minor inconvenience when you think of the benefits afforded to having a passion for what you do: passion translates into energy, into creativity, into getting things done. Just look at how far fencing has come in the United States. The women's foil team came ridiculously close to a medal at Sydney! This would not have happened without the passion of our athletes, coaches, USFA staff, referees, members, fencing schools, college programs, divisions, and on and on.

The USFA is largely run on the good works of volunteers at the local level. The divisions and sections are organized by regular folks who have real day jobs (or kids—or both!) that keep them busy. They set up the strips on Friday night, work all day Saturday and Sunday—handling registration, refereeing, tracking results, testing equipment; then they pull the strips up and go home. They serve on boards and make decisions on investing in equipment, or helping start school programs, or trying to promote the sport. They plan the schedule of meets and book the facilities and order tro-

phies. Oftentimes, they also coach. Maybe they don't do it for free, but you can bet they're not making much more than what is needed to rent the training facility. Some of them have been doing all of this for years—decades—without so much as a thank-you or a pat on the back. But that's not why they're doing it. It's their passion. And it may make them cranky and overzealous at times. That's what passion is about.

Were it not for these individuals at the grassroots level, there would be no fertile ground for the champions we so desperately want to raise up. What was accomplished at Sydney, what has been accomplished at the World Cups during the last few years—the credit for these achievements rests solely on the shoulders of the remarkable athletes and coaches who earned them. But we should also look deeper and recognize how each USFA member—by paying dues, by volunteering at events, and by talking up the sport—contributes to the health and success of our national fencing program.

And at the end of the meet, we need to thank those volunteers whose passion kept the rest of us on the strip.

(In the spirit of thanking volunteers, I'd like to thank Barbara Anderson for her help in copy editing this issue.)

your letters

The Zen Thing

I just wanted to send you a note letting you know how much I enjoyed your Editor's Letter in the current issue [Fall 2000] of *American Fencing*. I read it and was thinking, "yes, yes, yes." I started fencing two years ago at the age of 36 and began competing last year (my first nationals!). As hard as you try you just can't explain to some folks how at 38 you finally feel like a true athlete. I was always active in sports (swimming and cross country) and I'm sure it's something very Zen—"It comes to you only when your ready" kind of thing. Thanks for a breath of fresh air in a sometimes stuffy quarterly. Keep it coming, Girl!

Julie Taylor
Stratford, NJ

American Fencing welcomes letters from readers. Please send your letter to: Attn: American Fencing Editor; United States Fencing Association; One Olympic Plaza; Colorado Springs CO 80909 or email to magoo@iwaynet.net. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and/or space. Letters must be signed (except those emailed, of course) and include a phone number and address.

DICK BERRY INDUCTED INTO MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. HALL OF FAME

On September 8, 2000, Michigan State University inducted Dick Berry, a veteran fencer, into the school's Sports Hall of Fame. He is the first fencer of the 65 currently recognized hall of fame members.

Berry, 69, competed for Michigan State University in 1952 and 1953 when he transferred there from Highland Park Community College as a junior. In 1952 he won the Big Ten Championships in epee and was voted "Outstanding Collegiate Fencer in the United States." In 1953 he again won the Big Ten Championship, this time in foil. In addition, he took second in what was then the AFLA (USFA) national epee tournament.

After college, in 1957, Berry was the first from Michigan to win a USFA Nationals tournament in men's epee. He took first at the national level again in epee the following year.

Berry plans on competing again in the 2001 USFA Summer Nationals,

this time in the veterans division, age category 68-69. He has already started training for July. Berry currently resides in Davis, Calif., just outside of Sacramento.

PASSINGS ANTHONY J. ORSI (1913-2000)

Anthony J. Orsi, former secretary of the AFLA and a longtime coach and administrator in New Jersey, died on May 14. He was 86.

Tony Orsi was elected AFLA secretary during the administration of Dr. Paul Makler (1961-65). In 1965, he was an unsuccessful candidate for AFLA president in a four-man race, losing to Norman Lewis. His run set the stage for other national candidates to emerge from New Jersey.

Orsi was chairman of the New Jersey Division several times in the 1950s and 1960s. Other responsibilities included chairmanship of the Organizing Committee for the 1964 AFLA Nationals in Atlantic City, N.J., and membership on the Organizing

Committee for the 1958 World Championships in Philadelphia, which was only the second occasion that the event was held outside of Europe. He was an active epeeist in New Jersey and New York from 1937 until the 1960s, and officiated extensively during the same era. As a professional, he coached at Dartmouth and Middlebury Colleges.

During World War II, Orsi was a sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Force. Following the war, he worked in the engineering department of Curtis-Wright Aeronautical and then entered the construction industry. He also resumed his interest in competitive fencing and was reinstated as an amateur in 1946.

In 1968, Orsi was selected by George Santelli to be the first proprietor of the Santelli Fencing Academy in Rutherford, N.J., when the Santelli firm first tested the waters outside of New York.

He is survived by his wife, Gladys Orsi, the former chairperson of the N.J. Division; their daughter Sabina; and a sister.

TOURNAMENT highlights

19th PENN STATE JUNIOR OPEN | Penn State University Campus, State College, PA, September 23

WOMEN'S FOIL

1. Lindsay , Lavinia (Penn State FC)
2. Svengsouk, Jocelyn (Rochester FC)
3. Goldfeder, Misha (Rochester FC)
4. Nott, Adi (Rochester FC)
5. Collins, Kelly (Three Rivers FC)
6. Pilnick, Lauren (Penn State FC)
7. Sinkin, Ilana (Rochester FC)
8. O'Connor, Erin (FC of Long Island)

MEN'S FOIL

1. Panchan, Nontapat (Penn State FC)
2. Polonsky, Ian (FAP)
3. Dickson, Chris (Penn State FC)
4. Brown, Joe (Penn State FC)
5. Schibilia, Jesse (Clinton FC)
6. Dewey, Colin (Fencing Inst. of America)
7. Rostoker, Benji (FAP)
8. Bhutta, Daniel (Penn State FC)

WOMEN'S EPEE

1. Korb, Erica (FAP)
2. Viviani, Kristina (Penn State FC/NYAC)
3. Wangner, Lauren (Penn State FC)
4. Salvatore, Christina (DCFC)
5. Akca, Ruth (DCFC)
6. Nicholson, Rachel (DCFC)
7. Duncan, Jennifer (DCFC)

MEN'S EPEE

1. Bralow, Robert (FAP)
2. Verigan , Bill (NYAC)
3. Wangner, Ryan (FC of Long Island)
4. Muri, Ethan (Altoona Area HS)
5. Bouloubasis, Matt (Unattached)
6. Aycock, Chris (Penn State FC)
7. King, Nevin (Penn State FC)
8. Wieronski, Wojciech (Lilov FA)

WOMEN'S SABRE

1. Brosnan, Heather (Penn State FC)
2. Wieronski, Katarzyna (Lilov FA)
3. Padula, Veronica (Lilov FA)
4. Bartoszewicz, Ania (Lilov FA)
5. Van Gieson, Lauren (Lilov FA)
6. Wozniak, Dagmara (NFA)
7. Clark, Jessica (Penn State FC)
8. Sitek, Zuzanna (NFA)

MEN'S SABRE

1. Kasserman, Wyatt (Penn State FC)
2. Jacobson, Noah (Penn State FC)
3. Dorsky, Dan (Lilov FA)
4. Korytny, Vadim (Fairlawn HS/Medeo)
5. Barnes, Matthew (UNA)
6. Hansen, Justin (FCCI)
7. Steuck, Bryce (Lilov FA)
8. Herbert, Ken (Lilov FA)

TOURNAMENT highlights

NAC DIVISION II/III/CADET | Greensboro, NC, October 13-16

DIVISION II

MEN'S FOIL 90 Competitors

1. Perry, Cameron D (COLORADO)
2. Taylor, Jesse E (CENTRAL CA)
- 3.T Anderson, Meade H (SO. CALIF.)
- 3.T Bruno, Randy M (WESTERN PA)
5. Habermann, Blake J (COLORADO)
6. Schibilia, Jesse A (NEW JERSEY)
7. Burriesci, Matthew S (CENTRAL CA)
8. Mitchell, John-Paul (TENNESSEE)

DIVISION II

WOMEN'S FOIL 42 Competitors

1. Foldi, Julia (KANSAS)
2. Sachs, Elif Z (NEWENGLAND)
- 3.T DeFabio, Monica N (NEW JERSEY)
- 3.T Rush, Aly (COLORADO)
5. Wang, Natalie (CENTRAL CA)
6. Mendelsohn, Alisa R (LONG ISLAND)
7. Fagan, Margaret (NORTH CA)
8. Menaldino, Janeane R (PHILADELPH)

DIVISION III

MEN'S FOIL 131 Competitors

1. Berkowsky, Ronald W (S. JERSEY)
2. Kircheis, Thomas (NEWENGLAND)
- 3.T Bowden, Eric D (NEW JERSEY)
- 3.T Wunderlich, Sam R (KENTUCKY)
5. Crowder, Andrew E (VIRGINIA)
6. Brooks, Ronald B (S. JERSEY)
7. Hartman, Colin R (MINNESOTA)
8. Gaseor, David J (COLORADO)

DIVISION III

WOMEN'S FOIL 52 Competitors

1. Foldi, Julia (KANSAS)
2. Mendelsohn, Alisa R (LONG ISLAND)
- 3.T Fagan, Margaret (NORTH CA)
- 3.T Menaldino, Janeane R (PHILADELPH)
5. Bell-Greer, Lisa D (OREGON)
6. Aw, Justine M (SO. CALIF.)
7. Ferrer, Ivana R (N.CAROLINA)
8. Gresham, Carolyn N (OKLAHOMA)

CADET

MEN'S FOIL 87 Competitors

1. Perry, Cameron D (COLORADO)
2. Polonsky, Ian S (S. JERSEY)
- 3.T Carter, Jonathan H (WEST-ROCK)
- 3.T Sohn, Brian (METRO NYC)
5. Landreville, Alexis (CANADA)
6. Woodhouse III, Enoch (NEWENGLAND)
7. Bras, Alejandro (NEWENGLAND)
8. Taylor, Jesse E (CENTRAL CA)

CADET

WOMEN'S FOIL 63 Competitors

1. Cross, Emily R (METRO NYC)
2. Stinetorf, Chloe L (NORTH CA)
- 3.T Austin, Anne E (MICHIGAN)
- 3.T Voigt*, Leigh C (CANADA)
5. Leahy, Jacqueline (WESTERN NY)
6. Florendo, Jessica S (METRO NYC)
7. Hiss, Sophia C (OKLAHOMA)
8. Jew-Lim, Sara E (CENTRAL CA)

DIVISION II

MEN'S EPEE 95 Competitors

1. Bruno, Carlos (GEORGIA)
2. Howard, Greg E (INDIANA)
- 3.T Gettys Jr., Wilbert L (COLORADO)
- 3.T Henderson, Jason V (NEW JERSEY)
5. Jones, Gregory A (WESTERN WA)
6. Muri, Ethan M (CENTRAL PA)
7. Zhurkin, Alexander (CENTRAL FL)
8. Stockdale, Jason T (PHILADELPH)

DIVISION II

WOMEN'S EPEE 66 Competitors

1. Campi, Lisa M (PHILADELPH)
2. Schneider, Ruth B (WESTERN NY)
- 3.T Orlando, Amy E (WESTERN NY)
- 3.T Schirtz, Alli M (WESTERN NY)
5. Byerts, Keri L (WESTERN NY)
6. Kercksmar, Anne B (NORTH OHIO)
7. Goto, Jean M (METRO NYC)
8. Szasz, Nora (NEWENGLAND)

DIVISION III

MEN'S EPEE 62 Competitors

1. Zhurkin, Alexander (CENTRAL FL)
2. Gettys Jr., Wilbert L (COLORADO)
- 3.T Cutler, Matt C (CAPITOL)
- 3.T Evert, Todd H (ILLINOIS)
5. McIntyre, Gregory R (CENTRAL PA)
6. MacFarlane, William F (MARYLAND)
7. Robinson, John L (CENTRAL PA)
8. Rubin, Paul S (NEWENGLAND)

DIVISION III

WOMEN'S EPEE 48 Competitors

1. Szasz, Nora (NEWENGLAND)
2. Willock, Lauren W (KENTUCKY)
- 3.T Burrill, Elia S (COLORADO)
- 3.T Rose, Alexa D (NEW JERSEY)
5. Remaly, Jessica L (NEW JERSEY)
6. Byerts, Keri L (WESTERN NY)
7. Fox, Paige (COLORADO)
8. Ahmad, Sameen I (NEW JERSEY)

CADET

MEN'S EPEE 55 Competitors

1. Rose, Julian M (METRO NYC)
2. Lee, Martin J (CENTRAL CA)
- 3.T Beski, Johnny J (COLORADO)
- 3.T Testerman, Nicolas M (OREGON)
5. Cavan, James E (METRO NYC)
6. Ranes, Jackson M (NEVADA)
7. Kline, Jared M (SO. TEXAS)
8. Bratton, Benjamin E (METRO NYC)

CADET

WOMEN'S EPEE 47 Competitors

1. Szarwark, Case (TENNESSEE)
2. Harris, Caitlin E (SO. TEXAS)
- 3.T Leighton, Eleanor T (INDIANA)
- 3.T McGlade, Jasmine A (COLORADO)
5. Phair, Meghan D (LONG ISLAND)
6. McGarry, Erin Laine (SO. TEXAS)
7. Byerts, Keri L (WESTERN NY)
8. Schneider, Ruth B (WESTERN NY)

DIVISION II

MEN'S SABRE 76 Competitors

1. Friend, John F (KANSAS)
2. Boorstin, Adam S (SO. CALIF.)
- 3.T Cooper, Charles B (KANSAS)
- 3.T Paul, Jason (SO. CALIF.)
5. Sachs, Daniel S (HUDS-BERKS)
6. Vashro, Layne J (MINNESOTA)
7. Manning, Joshua W (COLORADO)
8. Diacou, Alexander (METRO NYC)

DIVISION II

WOMEN'S SABRE 43 Competitors

1. Padula, Veronica M (NEW JERSEY)
2. Parker, Sarah J (GEORGIA)
- 3.T Deming, Clare L (GATEWAY FL)
- 3.T Liebing, Rachel (UTAH/S.IDA)
5. Wieronski, Katarzyna (NEW JERSEY)
6. Block, Caroline M (CONNECTICUT)
7. Szklarska, Joanna (NEW JERSEY)
8. Eyre, Jane E (S. JERSEY)

DIVISION III

MEN'S SABRE 67 Competitors

1. Paul, Jason (SO. CALIF.)
2. Vashro, Layne J (MINNESOTA)
- 3.T Kragh, Sam E (MINNESOTA)
- 3.T Sachs, Daniel S (HUDS-BERKS)
5. Peterson, Christophe (SO. CALIF.)
6. Bush, Joshua C (NEBR-S.DAK)
7. Held, Jason M (COLORADO)
8. Reyfman, Paul A (METRO NYC)

DIVISION III

WOMEN'S SABRE 35 Competitors

1. Noble, Hollie M (VIRGINIA)
2. Leong, Zonnica R (GATEWAY FL)
- 3.T Peakes, Jessica M (NEWENGLAND)
- 3.T Taylor, Tamara M (VIRGINIA)
5. King, Robin E (WESTERN WA)
6. Riley, Amanda J (NORTH TEX)
7. Ordway, Holly E (MARYLAND)
8. Berardi, Gladys B (NEW JERSEY)

CADET

MEN'S SABRE 63 Competitors

1. Hagamen, Timothy H (METRO NYC)
2. Krul, Alexander (SO. CALIF.)
- 3.T Clement, Luther C (KANSAS)
- 3.T Douville, David A (GEORGIA)
5. Boorstin, Adam S (SO. CALIF.)
6. Jakus, David J (METRO NYC)
7. Andrus, Curtis A (MT. VALLEY)
8. Chernov, Ilan L (SO. CALIF.)

CADET

WOMEN'S SABRE 25 Competitors

1. Gaillard, Amelia F (GEORGIA)
2. Jacobson, Emily P (GEORGIA)
- 3.T Parker, Sarah J (GEORGIA)
- 3.T Wieronski, Katarzyna (NEW JERSEY)
5. Padula, Veronica M (NEW JERSEY)
6. Liebing, Rachel (UTAH/S.IDA)
7. Plekhanov, Marguerite (NEW JERSEY)
8. Siebert, Syvanna B (KANSAS)

NAC YOUTH/CADET/JUNIOR | Denver, CO, November 3-6

JUNIOR

MEN'S FOIL 137 Competitors

1. McGuire*, Joshua J (CANADA)
2. Panchan, Nontapat (WESTERN NY)
- 3.T Dunn, Ryan M (KANSAS)
- 3.T Snyder, Derek (SO. CALIF.)
5. Fisher, Joseph E (METRO NYC)
6. Allen*, Nicolas J (CANADA)
7. Sinkin, Jeremy C (WESTERN NY)
8. Khaled*, Husham (CANADA)

JUNIOR

WOMEN'S FOIL 69 Competitors

1. Cross, Emily R (METRO NYC)
2. Leahy, Jacqueline (WESTERN NY)
- 3.T Foldi, Julia (KANSAS)
- 3.T Thompson, Hannah M (WESTERN NY)
5. Stinetorf, Chloe L (NORTH CA)
6. Thompson, Metta K (WESTERN NY)
7. Luitjen, Cassidy C (SO. TEXAS)
8. Voigt *, Leigh C (CANADA)

CADET

MEN'S FOIL 106 Competitors

1. Perry, Cameron D (COLORADO)
2. Habermann, Blake J (COLORADO)
- 3.T Galligan, Michael J (GULFCST TX)
- 3.T Woodhouse III, Enoch (NEWENGLAND)
5. Polonsky, Ian S (S. JERSEY)
6. Kirk-Gordon, Dimitri (CENTRAL CA)
7. Bras, Alejandro (NEWENGLAND)
8. Meyers, Brendan J (METRO NYC)

CADET

WOMEN'S FOIL 60 Competitors

1. Cross, Emily R (METRO NYC)
2. Leahy, Jacqueline (WESTERN NY)
- 3.T McGlade, Jasmine A (COLORADO)
- 3.T Stinetorf, Chloe L (NORTH CA)
5. Austin, Anne E (MICHIGAN)
6. Voigt *, Leigh C (CANADA)
7. Luitjen, Cassidy C (SO. TEXAS)
8. Rush, Aly (COLORADO)

YOUTH-14

MEN'S FOIL 91 Competitors

1. Meyers, Brendan J (METRO NYC)
2. Horanyi, Andras M (COLORADO)
- 3.T Kershaw, Clinton E (MT. VALLEY)
- 3.T Stauble, Andrew Co* (KENTUCKY)
5. Chinman, Nicholas S (COLORADO)
- 6.T Hohensee, Douglas G (NORTHEAST)
- 6.T Kantor, Michael S (CONNECTICUT)
8. Miner, Parker J (UTAH/S.IDA)

YOUTH-14

WOMEN'S FOIL 41 Competitors

1. Rush, Aly (COLORADO)
2. Willette, Doris E (NORTH CA)
- 3.T Glasser, Allison D (NORTH CA)
- 3.T Svengsouk, Jocelyn L (WESTERN NY)
5. Emerson, Abigail C (NORTHEAST)
- 6.T Finkel, Kelsey J (METRO NYC)
- 6.T Rubin, Alexie A (SO. CALIF.)
8. Yang, Maggie L (CENTRAL CA)

JUNIOR

MEN'S EPEE 104 Competitors

1. Kelsey, Cadet West (COLORADO)
2. Mattern, Cody M (OREGON)
- 3.T O'Malley*, Darragh P. (CANADA)
- 3.T Viviani, Jansson J (METRO NYC)
5. Solomon, Benjamin J (NORTH OHIO)
6. Banks, Michael S (COLORADO)
7. Ranes, Jackson M (NEVADA)
8. Chilen, Luke P (COLORADO)

JUNIOR

WOMEN'S EPEE 69 Competitors

1. Rudkin, Kate A (ILLINOIS)
2. Szarwark, Catherine (TENNESSEE)
- 3.T James, Kamara L (METRO NYC)
- 3.T Martinez *, Gabriela (VENEZUELA)
5. Walton, Kerry E (NORTHEAST)
6. Schirtz, Alli M (WESTERN NY)
7. Brendler, Kaela J (SO. TEXAS)
8. McGlade, Jasmine A (COLORADO)

CADET

MEN'S EPEE 65 Competitors

1. Ungar, Benjamin N (METRO NYC)
2. Verigan, William R (NEW JERSEY)
- 3.T Cavan, James E (METRO NYC)
- 3.T Perry, Cameron D (COLORADO)
5. Rose, Julian M (METRO NYC)
6. Lee, Martin J (CENTRAL CA)
7. Lindblom, Ian P (WEST-ROCK)
8. Seguin*, Jean-Pierr (CANADA)

CADET

WOMEN'S EPEE 53 Competitors

1. Schirtz, Alli M (WESTERN NY)
2. James, Kamara L (METRO NYC)
- 3.T Harris, Caitlin E (SO. TEXAS)
- 3.T McGlade, Jasmine A (COLORADO)
5. Goto, Jean M (METRO NYC)
6. Schneider, Ruth B (WESTERN NY)
7. Byerts, Keri L (WESTERN NY)
8. Leighton, Eleanor T (INDIANA)

YOUTH-14

MEN'S EPEE 52 Competitors

1. Ferrer, Alex R (N.CAROLINA)
2. Pearce, Michael A (NORTH CA)
- 3.T Ebert, Matthew F (PHILADELPH)
- 3.T Moss, Zachary G (NORTHEAST)
5. Wright, Neal P (COLORADO)
6. Weiner, Matthew G (SO. CALIF.)
7. Kenney, Clayton K (COLORADO)
8. Holbrook, Andrew L (CAPITOL)

YOUTH-14

WOMEN'S EPEE 27 Competitors

1. Byerts, Keri L (WESTERN NY)
2. Schirtz, Alli M (WESTERN NY)
- 3.T Hughes, Kristen M (NEWENGLAND)
- 3.T Rubin, Alexie A (SO. CALIF.)
5. Kantor, Rachel M (NEWENGLAND)
6. Caven, Elaina M (WESTERN NY)
7. Park, Rachael A (KENTUCKY)
8. Montoya, Kimberlee (NEVADA)

JUNIOR

MEN'S SABRE 103 Competitors

1. Lee, Ivan J (METRO NYC)
2. Ghattas, Patrick E (OREGON)
- 3.T Douville, David A (GEORGIA)
- 3.T Whitmer, Darrin S (METRO NYC)
5. Momtselidze, Mike (COLUMBUSOH)
6. Parker, G. Colin (GEORGIA)
7. Boorstin, Adam S (SO. CALIF.)
8. Chernov, Ilan L (SO. CALIF.)

JUNIOR

WOMEN'S SABRE 51 Competitors

1. Zagunis, Mariel L (OREGON)
2. Jacobson, Sada M (GEORGIA)
- 3.T Bronsan, Heather J (OREGON)
- 3.T Gaillard, Amelia F (GEORGIA)
5. Gelman, Julia (METRO NYC)
6. Siebert, Syvenna B (KANSAS)
7. Crane, Christina (GEORGIA)
8. Jacobson, Emily P (GEORGIA)

CADET

MEN'S SABRE 93 Competitors

1. Clement, Luther C (KANSAS)
2. Jakus, David J (METRO NYC)
- 3.T Ghattas, Patrick E (OREGON)
- 3.T Krul, Alexander (SO. CALIF.)
5. Momtselidze, Mike (COLUMBUSOH)
6. Douville, David A (GEORGIA)
7. Hagamen, Timothy H (METRO NYC)
8. Boorstin, Adam S (SO. CALIF.)

CADET

WOMEN'S SABRE 38 Competitors

1. Zagunis, Mariel L (OREGON)
2. Providenza, Valerie C (OREGON)
- 3.T Gaillard, Amelia F (GEORGIA)
- 3.T Jacobson, Emily P (GEORGIA)
5. Macarow, Amy K (MT. VALLEY)
6. Wieronski, Katarzyna (NEW JERSEY)
7. Parker, Sarah J (GEORGIA)
8. Rake, Madeline O (KANSAS)

YOUTH-14

MEN'S SABRE 60 Competitors

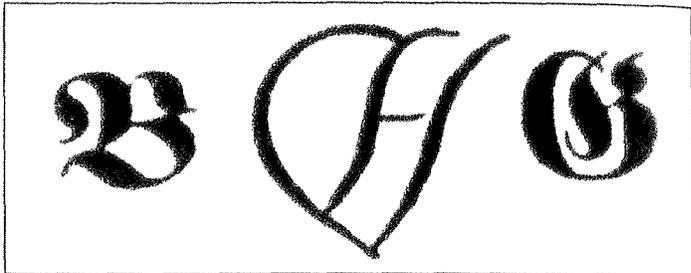
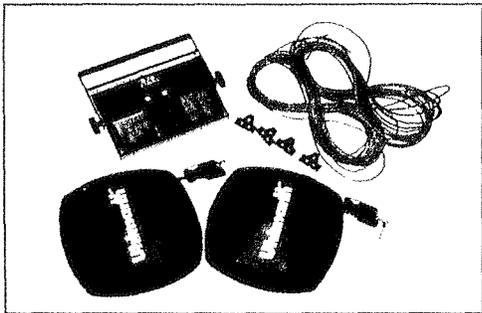
1. Thanhouser, William (B (OREGON)
2. Zich, Matthew D (METRO NYC)
- 3.T Baum, Jeff D (KANSAS)
- 3.T Berkowsky, Jonathan E (S. JERSEY)
5. Rake, Marshall C (KANSAS)
6. Williams, Maximilian (MT. VALLEY)
7. Eiremo, Anders E (MT. VALLEY)
8. Ahn, Steve J (NORTH TEX)

YOUTH-14

WOMEN'S SABRE 22 Competitors

1. Parker, Sarah J (GEORGIA)
2. Wieronski, Anna (NEW JERSEY)
- 3.T Landau, Kathryn I (MT. VALLEY)
- 3.T Lupien *, Katy O.M. (CANADA)
5. Thompson, Caitlin A (OREGON)
6. Davis, Anika L (MT. VALLEY)
7. Jellison, Eva (NEWENGLAND)
8. Schuepp, Tiga K (NEWENGLAND)

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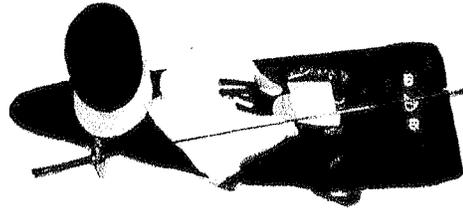


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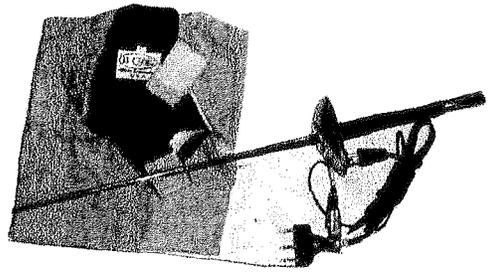
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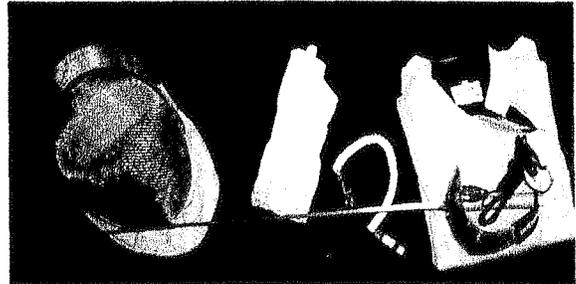
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LESSONS FROM SYDNEY

by Joe Byrnes

I have been talking with Americans who have returned from Sydney—not with the official U.S. Olympic team members, but with members of another American team who were there as the core of the technical crew operating the fencing armory. You didn't know about that, did you? Well, the techies of the United States can collectively pat themselves on the back, inasmuch as they were deemed worthy to furnish personnel to guide the Australian volunteer armory staff. Our sport can take some satisfaction that things did go right—without the fencing equivalent of a mis-adjusted vaulting horse. (Salute to Americans abroad: Ted Li, Dan Gustafson, Bill Murphy, Jeff Rosen, the Dunlaps.)

It seems, however, that in reporting the view from backstage in Sydney, I might just as well go back to my old files and pull out what I wrote after Atlanta. Certain national characteristics showed up again in preferences for blade rigidity. The rule book has precise details on how to measure blades to eliminate from competition those too “whippy”—and, conversely, those too stiff. At domestic competitions, we rarely see these tests performed, as I am sure you are well aware. The usual logistic problems get in the way: it takes special equipment, of which there is not much; it takes people to run them; and, most serious of all, it takes *time*, of which there is never enough. Only if the competition is set up with a large crew and with the requirement that all gear be submitted a day in advance, could full tests be performed. Even at the Olympics and World Championships, where entries are restricted, the numbers are still such that the staff can barely cope, even with submission in advance required.

The same country (name suppressed to conceal the more or less

innocent) that wanted blades out to the edge of whippiness in Atlanta still likes 'em that way. The other country (really, it is no secret to long-time close observers which countries these are—they are two of the traditional power houses; but I am the soul of discretion) still wants its blades stiff beyond the limit permitted for use in competition. They brought large numbers to both Olympics. They did the same at the World University Games in Buffalo in '93. That creates trouble for them regularly; you would think that they would learn.

Another area where some learning is still needed is the matter of trying to set up your handles and guards, as the case may be, to suit yourself—and let's ignore the inconvenient fact that what you like, and want in the worst way, is flat contrary to the rules. Again, of course, these are specifications that can only be properly checked at big competitions where the specialized test gear is available, and there is time and the staff to use it. Obviously the lessons of Atlanta and a few other major events since then haven't taken. Here one can argue for consistent application of good practice to make rules stick.

At both the last two Olympics, the inspected weapons and other items were returned to their owners in time for them to play games, if they dared. The control at both events was, however, firm, not to say fierce. At the entry point to the competition field, when the competitor's equipment is no longer in his or her charge, it is given a final re-check, for just those obvious physical things that might have been altered: the tilt, or cant-back, of the guard on an epee, the drop of a big orthopedic handle on a foil, and such-like variations. And while this is going on, the referee for the bout, with a black card ready, is observing.

I noted in Atlanta the sick faces on certain competitors who realized, less than half an hour before the march in, that this check was going to be done, and that they would therefore have to undo, or try to undo, their elegant fixes in just the few minutes available to them before black card time. The same thing happened in Sydney. What did I say above: you would think that they would learn.

There is one new—well, not really new, since the rule has been in the book for ages—specification that is being more and more insisted on by the international officiating commission in the last year or so. That is the matter of the permitted amount of bend in a blade (its “fleche” in the French terminology) when you carry it onto the strip. For a foil, it is only *two* centimeters of bow at the middle; for an epee it is only *one*, likewise at the middle; the bend at the tip of a sabre is confined to *four*. At recent international events (and it didn't start in Sydney—it was done, for example, at the Junior World's in South Bend), this was being inspected by using little blocks of metal, wood, or plastic: rectangular pieces, respectively one, two, and four centimeters on a side. With the blade laid flat on an even table top, and not being leaned on, the appropriate dimension must not be able to pass under a foil or epee, and the end of the sabre must also conform. I think we will be seeing more of these inspections and of these little one-two-four blocks. Of course, as we all know, the blade will probably go back to its nice big (*illegal*) bend after the first or second touch, but then you can straighten it, can't you? Enforcing this rule is a matter for the referees, really, not the armory. Incidentally, in Sydney, all referees were equipped with souvenir-marked one-two-four blocks (U.S.-produced, by the way).



VOX POPULI

by Robert Block

The individual voice of the veteran fencer doesn't receive a lot of exposure in the fencing world, and when it does get a hearing in this publication it usually emerges through the filtered opinions and personal biases of one associate editor (guilty on all counts!). So I thought it might be a good idea to occasionally turn "The Grayblade" column over to other wiser, sometimes even grayer heads in the interest of providing different perspectives and some fresher thoughts on the state of veteran fencing. In what I see as sort of a point/counter-point relationship—which I think is appropriate since, albeit for those pesky sabre cuts, this business is pretty much all about "points" anyway—most of this column is devoted to a couple of veteran voices who have long been participants and keen observers of the sport.

In the first piece that follows, Bill Goering gives us some insight into his personal experience as a participant in the 2000 Veteran World Championships, the highest level of veteran competition. Then Dave Micahnik contemplates the veterans movement and offers some other reasons, in addition to international competition, that cause people over the age of 40 to derive pleasure from wielding the sword.

And so, fellow readers, let's curl up in our favorite easy chairs on what I presume may be a wintry night in your part of the country, with a log on the fire and a cup of hot cider in hand, as Bill gives us a firsthand report on his recent fencing adventures in the land of the Magyars:

BILL GOERING

The Veterans World Fencing Championship was held in Gödöllő, Hungary on August 24-26. Gödöllő is a small suburb about 18 kilometers outside of Budapest. Since it has few accommodations, most of the fencers stayed in Budapest and took the organizer-supplied bus to the venue each

day. It was a slow ride; the buses went through city traffic rather than pay on the toll road.

The venue was at a small university with five strips and spectator seats for the finals in one building, and five strips in another close by for the preliminaries. Organization was good, as was the refereeing. Peter Erdei, the Olympic finals referee in Atlanta, was among them. The entry in all events was smaller than last year for reasons no one could explain. The equipment check was perfunctory, except they checked sabre flexibility and failed all that were not S2000. Most had to buy new blades from pBt, the Hungarian vendor, but I had brought my S2000 blades and only had to mount them.

I fenced on Saturday. I was 4-1 in the pool, with one 5-4 loss, and was seeded fourth. With only 18 entries in the over-60 category, I was byed to the 16 and fenced Raveling from Germany, a fencer I had defeated 5-2 in the pool. I was leading 8-5 when I must have decided the bout was over. It wasn't, and I lost 10-9 and placed ninth. It was the best U.S. result in this category, but obviously not satisfactory for me. The event was won by Peter Bakonyi, a former Hungarian World Team fencer.

The weather was very warm, 104 F. on Monday; but it cooled down for the tournament and we were comfortable. There was a party in the Gödöllő Castle on Saturday, which the sabre fencers did not attend, and a garden party on Sunday, which we did. The latter was excellent, and left a fine impression on the closing day of the event.

In spite of my own disappointment, the tournament was very worthwhile. It should serve as a goal for all veteran fencers. The FIE is solidly behind it, and it should grow in participation if properly managed. The U.S. team noticed the lack of a team leader, and should consider funding one for future events.

There we have it: the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. At the very highest level one can obviously be motivated by the opportunity to win a spot on a national team, travel to a foreign country and compete with the best in a world championship. But, as Dave explains in the following piece, there are a number of other reasons why one should become involved in veteran fencing:

DAVE MICAHNIK

Why should I fence in veterans' events? Well, for one thing, it's fun! As a former National Team fencer, decades ago, I could say I don't want to dilute my record by fencing less well than I used to. But, after all, I am a has-been! I've come to terms with not being in my twenties anymore. Why should I deny myself the pleasure of the game I have loved for so many years?

I'll admit it wouldn't be fun to fence badly and be embarrassed, but a modicum of training has managed to prevent that. It wouldn't be fun to get hurt, but a soupçon of training and some adjustments to repertoire have kept that at bay so far. (Sore muscles are not really injuries, just a reminder to train more than a soupçon.) It wouldn't be fun to have a medical crisis in mid-tournament, but a periodic check-up, telling the doctor what I want to do, has kept that risk minimal.

So, all the downsides to fun are accounted for. The fun is in the game itself, just as it always was. The challenge of an opponent and his abilities, the strategy, tactics, psychology, execution of technique...that's all there. It just doesn't take place as rapidly as it used to.

The fellowship of veterans' meets is great, too. Sure, we try to win, but it's not a personal disaster if we don't. We (most of us) win graciously and give

respect to our opponents. We (most of us) lose graciously and congratulate our conquerors, too. After all, we (most of us) have sources of self-esteem beyond the fencing strip. We can afford to take risks because (as our financial planners have advised us) we are diversified.

Who fences in veterans' meets? Without having done studies, I've observed the growth of the field with pleasure. Some are new fencers; some are used-to-be fencers; some are people who have fenced continuously for many years; some are coaches; some are very talented athletes; some are people of modest athletic talent. All are pleased to be able to play the game without being run over by the not-yet-mature. And some of us are doing our best to recapture, if only for a moment, what we used to be.

Why aren't there more women in veterans' meets? Vanity? By the time you're 50, we know you're over 40, so forget that! (Joking!) The fact is that

you stay younger longer if you engage in physical exertion. It's good for you. Everything I said above applies equally to women and men. It's fun to fence!

The field in women's veteran events will grow naturally as today's younger fencers mature and become eligible. This is especially true in sabre and epee, where the opportunities for women have come into being more recently than in foil.

Meanwhile, the opportunities in women's veteran events in all weapons are great. You get to compete on a level playing field with opponents of similar vintage. There are medals to be won, finals to be made, and teams to fence on internationally. There are also new friends to be made and good times to share. C'mon in! There's lots of room.

Different men with different perspectives, writing about personal aspects of veteran fencing. I hope

you've found these essays to be as interesting as I have. And, perhaps best of all, we didn't have to listen to the same old predictable views of that hide-bound associate editor. But it seems to me that the gauntlet has been thrown down! Why are we hearing only from male veterans on these issues? Lady veterans, where are you? Your voices need to be heard as part of the vox populi. So ladies, if you'll please send in your thoughts on veteran fencing, I'll grab that associate editor by the scruff of his neck and make sure that he gives you an equal forum in his column...Now it's time to refill that cup of cider and enjoy reading the rest of this issue of *American Fencing*. Gee, I can't seem to find my name anywhere in the tournament results—that has to be a mistake...What's wrong with that associate editor?

Bob Block, aka The Grayblade, competes in all three weapons and coaches fencing in Denver.

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LOOKING FIT ON THE STRIP

In future issues, trainer David Statt will answer questions you have about the best methods to integrate weight lifting, aerobics, diet, and other fitness elements to build your fencing abilities. You can email David with your questions at fitstatt@frontiernet.net. Please note: questions will only be addressed in the magazine. David regrets that he cannot respond to each question personally.

By David B. Statt, M.S., C.S.C.S.

It's the last 30 seconds of the bout. You're tired and can't retreat as fast as you need to from your opponent's fierce attack. Your parrying is weak and your shoulder starts to ache and fatigue. Suddenly you just get scored upon and lose 15 to 1. Sound familiar? Although it is likely you were just out-fenced, it may also be that you just are not strong enough, physically, to com-

pete at that level. However, you could be—with proper and specific strength training for the sport of fencing.

Strength training improves the athlete's ability to generate force and also provides the foundation for other aspects of conditioning—power, quickness, and muscle endurance. Lifting weights will also increase muscle mass, which increases metabolism and decreases body fat. The bottom line is that strength training specific to fencing will make you more competitive. In this article, a fencing-specific strength program is presented, one that was used with some members of the U.S. Women's Olympic Foil Team.

The program outlined below should be preceded with a proper warmup that includes some continuous exercise (for example, use a stationary bike) until you break a light sweat. This usually takes about five minutes. A complete stretching regimen should then be completed. The outlined pro-

gram should be done two to three times per week with at least 48 hours of recovery time between workouts. All exercises should be completed for three sets of 10 repetitions with approximately 45- to 60-second rest intervals between sets. The intensity level, which is most important, can be evaluated this way: Each set should be completed to exhaustion, while maintaining proper and safe technique. If you are just starting out, scale back to two sets, 60-second rest intervals, and stop before exhaustion. Progressively increase intensity over the course of a few weeks.

This sample program was used done by Iris and Felicia Zimmermann in preparation for the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. Each exercise and how it positively impacts fencing is listed.

As you become accustomed to the workout, a "balance" component may be added. Often the fencer is off-balance when attacking or defending. It is

EXERCISE

INFLUENCE ON FENCING MOTION/SKILL

Lunge (in slow/out fast)	powerful lunges, retreats, and evasions
One leg squat/shoulder press	en garde stability, coordination, muscle balance
One arm dumbbell (db) row	improved posture, muscle balance, parrying, pullback
Box step with weighted weapon	leg power, parrying, muscle balance
Single arm chest press (db)	attack power, parrying, strong defense
Single arm tricep extension	attack quickness, weapon flick, parrying
Situps	transmits force from lower to upper body, low back stability
Oblique crunch	same as above
Lower back extension	same as above
Forearm extension/flexion and rotation	weapon quickness

important to train on unstable surfaces so that you will be strong in an unbalanced position and still produce a strong attack or parry. For example, the following substitutions may be added to your exercise routine: do lunges on a beam; bench presses on a Resistaball; and/or do one-legged squat/shoulder presses on a small piece of foam.

The program is designed to prevent fencing-related injuries. Strength training has been shown to increase not only muscle strength, but tendon and ligament strength as well.

Please note, though, that this program should be administered by a qualified trainer. Select an individual who is certified nationally—by such organizations as ACSM, NSCA, ACE,

AFAA, etc.—to teach these exercises to you. It is beyond the scope of this and future articles to teach these moves. Take this exercise program to a gym and most qualified trainers will know what to do. It is equally important to note that the program should be individualized. For example, Iris Zimmermann was very strong in her upper body so we focused less on upper-body strength exercises and more on high-intensity endurance training. Also, Iris had injuries to her knee and ankle joints, so strength exercises that would help recondition those injuries were implemented.

There's no doubt that a properly executed and safe strength program will help make you a better fencer. More powerful fencing, fewer injuries,

and greater confidence are just a few of the benefits. Bring this program to the gym, get qualified instruction, train hard, and—above all—have fun. In the next article, I will discuss how strength training can be converted to power and quickness, fencing's most important components.

Dave Statt is the exercise physiologist/certified strength coach for Mid-Town Athletic Club in Rochester, NY. Fitness and training questions can be sent to Fitstatt@frontiernet.net and will be answered as part of this regular column in American Fencing.



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from novice to Olympian in six short years

by Sybil Hunter

Arlene Stevens embodies the best spirit of fencing. In one daring exploit, Stevens walked the Sydney Harbour Bridge before returning home after the Olympics. The bridge spans Port Jackson, connecting north and south Sydney, and sightseers are harnessed before following a guide through an obstacle course across the narrow beams and rails high above the ocean and city below. Just as she has done with her other achievements in life, Stevens simply put one foot before the other, never looking back, and before she knew it, she was suddenly on the other side of the bridge. A fitting metaphor, indeed.

Stevens was first introduced to fencing through her life-long friends Felicia and Iris Zimmermann. “Our moms are best friends,” Stevens explained. “I went with them (Iris and Felicia) to practice and played the games they played at the club. I just didn’t want to fence because I was scared.” Stevens’ sport was gymnastics—at least until she discovered that her lofty height (nearly six feet) made her too tall to compete seriously in the sport.

Her mom got tired of her “loafing around the house” and encouraged her to try fencing. Stevens, like many fencers, hit the first year lull and tried to quit. “My mom wouldn’t let me! She said give it another few months.” She did and it paid off.

In Stevens’ first year of competition, she took sixth in an Under-15 junior’s tournament. She then went on to fence on the Cadet team, then the Junior and Senior teams, eventually passing out of Cadets because of her Senior team standings. In 1999, Stevens took first in individual epee at the 1999 U.S. Nationals, and placed 68th in individual epee and 18th in team epee at the World Championships. This year she walked home with three medals from the Junior World Cup competition, ranking her fourth in the Junior World Cup standings. To top it all off, she accumulated enough World Cup points from her competitions to qualify for the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

An amazing feat when you realize Stevens started fencing just six years ago.

Though she started out fencing foil, Stevens quickly moved to epee, feeling an immediate connection with the weapon. “There are different personalities for every weapon...Epee felt more natural and instinctive for me,” Stevens said. “Besides right of way confuses me!”

“I like the variety,” Stevens added. “No two bouts will ever be the same.”

It is the mental challenge that she most appreciates about fencing. “I like the idea that there’s more than one answer to any problem.”

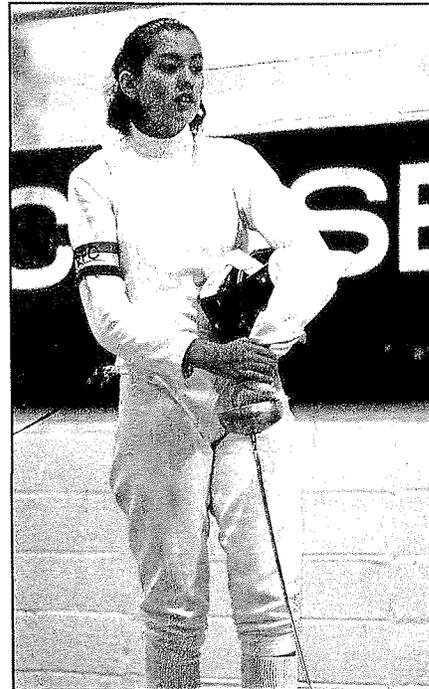
She admitted that her biggest challenge was not the actual fencing but “more the challenge of having the patience to stay with it...putting all your effort into it. It all sneaks up on you. Suddenly you look back and see how far you’ve gone or how close you are to something and then you just can’t give it up.”

This tenacity got Stevens through the stress of Olympic training. “I was too busy to think. I was always doing something.” She practiced six days a week and traveled every weekend. “Between all that, I really didn’t have any time to go crazy. It’s a job you have to do. You realize you’re the one who wants to

*Opposite:
Arlene Stevens fencing at
the 1998 USFA Nationals.*

*Right:
Arlene on strip at the 1998
USFA Nationals.*

Photos: Lisa Slater.



*When I'm
on the
strip
all I think
about
is fencing*

do this...so you do it.”

When asked what gives her the push to go the extra mile, Stevens said, “I don’t really know how I did it. I really like to be good at things. Most of the time I don’t realize how much work I’m doing.”

“When I’m on the strip all I think about is fencing,” she explained. “It’s simply a puzzle I’m trying to figure out.”

Coached by Aladar Koglar, Stevens trains with the St. John’s University fencing team and often takes lessons in Manhattan. Though she’s a serious fencer, she still sports a fun side. “I like having fun with the team; everyone acts stupid at some time.”

She admitted with a giggle, “I know I’m not suave and cool enough to not mess up.” Once, when suiting up beside the strip at a team event, Stevens forgot her breast protector. “I realized it on the strip and told my teammate”—who, of course, told her to keep quiet—“I won the bout 5-0. I did not let her hear me at all!”

Even so, winning isn’t everything in Stevens’ life. When asked how she beats the blues of a defeat, she explained, “I just can’t think of myself as being that good. I get frustrated and I like to know what I was doing wrong, but you can’t always win. It doesn’t matter who you are.

"I can't imagine anyone not having to work on their game. There is always room for improvement in fencing."

The key to Stevens' game is her patience to "wait out a person"—"to a point," she interjected. "I use what I feel good at. I don't want to rely on it though. If you rely on one thing too much then it's bad." Although, she added with a laugh, "I know what coaches are saying to their fencers when they fence me!"

trust. That makes it much easier."

At the Olympics, Stevens won her first bout 5-2 against Algeria's Zahra Gamir, advancing her to the round of 32. She lost 11-8 to Hungary's Ildiko Mincza, who in turn lost to Swiss fencer Gianna Hablvetzel-Buerki. Hablvetzel-Buerki went on to win the silver medal.

Being a high-level fencer certainly has its frustrations.

If you're mentally "on" you increase your chance of winning.

As a student at St. John's University in New York who finished out her freshman year with a 4.0 grade point average, Stevens works hard juggling the many facets of her life—fencing, family, friends, not to mention her schoolwork. She currently holds both an academic and fencing scholarship, and, now a sophomore, is considering a major in criminal justice or design and photography. "Education is really important."

As is family. Unable to go home enough last year, Stevens hoped to be in Rochester, New York, with her mother and sister for Thanksgiving this year. Her mother is her driving force. "Mom is a really big factor—she knows who I am and what I am. Mom trusts me. I hardly ever have to explain things to her."

Even her mother's boyfriend plays a part in her fencing. "About three years ago he said he was saving up money for the Olympics, so when I go they could come watch. I didn't know what to say to that. Then I was really glad I made the team!"

So what was the best part of the Olympic experience for Stevens? "It's great to walk out when they announce your name and hear everyone cheer. The emails and letters of support feel pretty good, too. It's overwhelming; there are so many people there for you."

Including her teammates. "I know them and we're all close," she said. "They are people I'm comfortable with and

"There's so much pressure. It's really a mental sport. If you're mentally 'on' you increase your chance of winning. It's not all who's 'supposed' to win. Everyone looks like something is wrong with you if you don't win every time. They don't know how it affects us."

Fortunately, Stevens has friends she can rely on for support. She shares an apartment with fellow Olympic fencer Keeth Smart. Smart, a sabrist who also attends St. Johns, and Stevens' other apartment-mate, epeeist Eric Dalmedo, provide a sounding board for Stevens. "We understand each other. Being able to talk to someone really helps."

After Sydney, Stevens cut back her training schedule. "I'm getting back into it slowly so I enjoy it," fencing three or four times a week with St. John's fencing team. "I've gotten to hang out, see my friends and have fun."

When asked for advice to give to a struggling fencer, Stevens offered this: "Have patience. Everybody moves at their own pace. In fencing, there are so many areas to develop. Just stick with it."

Sybil Hunter is an avid writer, artist, and fencer. Sybil, her husband Chris, and their two poodles, Mozart and Stanzie, reside in Michigan where Sybil is pursuing a second degree in secondary education.

down



under and back

by Carla Mae Richards

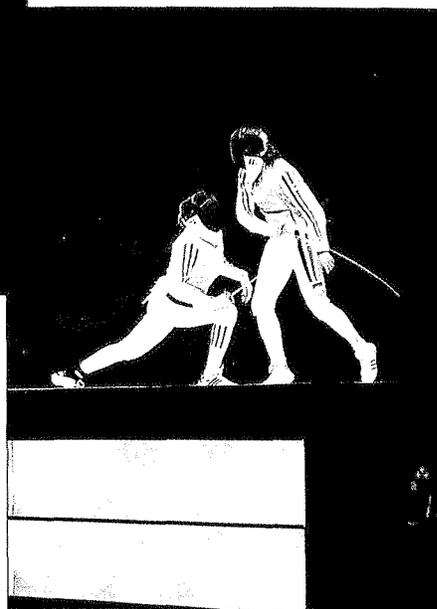
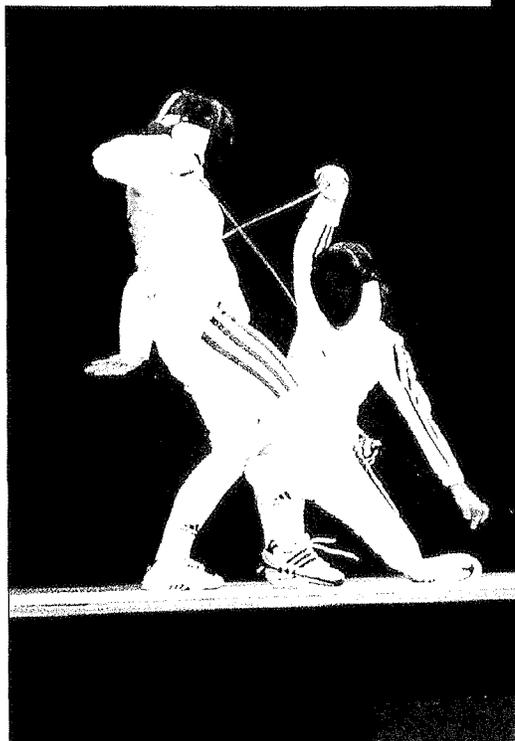
Left: from left, Iris Zimmermann, Felicia Zimmermann, and Ann Marsh prepare for next round of the Women's Team Foil event. Photo: Carla Mae Richards.

Above: The Olympic rings on the Sydney Bridge. Photo: Carla Mae Richards.

Carla Mae Richards, director of technical programs for the United States Fencing Association (USFA), started what we hope will be a tradition for future Olympic Games—an email journal that kept some U.S. fencing fans out of the dark and up to date throughout the competition. Interspersing her journal with tidbits on the Olympic life, these emails gave us a behind-the-scenes glimpse of what it's like to be in the thick of it all. Here Carla talks about her experiences, and includes some excerpts from her journal entries.

During the Olympic Games I wrote a regular commentary on the happenings for the U.S. team in the fencing arena. It was spontaneous; it was not planned prior to leaving the States, yet I knew that too many times our constituency back home struggled to find out what was happening at an Olympic Games, at a World Championships. Today's electronic advancements have allowed us to communicate, cost free, to many people simultaneously. It is a far-reaching mode and one that I discovered by accident in writing the journal from Sydney. Since my return I have been overwhelmed by the endless stream of kudos from so many members of our community throughout the country. It was as if we had quenched, at least partially, a long-standing thirst.

This was my first time as a member of our U.S. Olympic team, hard to believe as it may be for many. The job of your full-time personnel is to work behind the scenes to ensure that all the pieces come together at the right time, in the right place, with the right people. Rarely do we get out in the limelight and that is our preference. Still, there is a sense of magic in being a member of one of our Olympic teams. We all strive for four, eight, 12 years, for that moment in time when the best of the best meet and test their training, skill, courage, one against the other. The Olympic movement, no matter how professional many aspects are, still has a very special aura and it envelopes all of those who become directly involved.



Left: Ann Marsh (I.) vs. Monika Weber, Germany. Photo: William Murphy.

Above: Felicia Zimmermann. Photo: William Murphy.

Right: Marsh (I.) vs. Weber. Photo: Carla Mae Richards.

Olympic Journal: Email #1

On Thursday, the FIE held all of its meetings relative to the Games along with the Fencing Commissioner of the Games. The most notable feature was the walk-through of the procedures, which athletes, et al., have to follow. First, let me tell you that the setup is very impressive. There are two halls being used. The first hall is for all the bouts except the final four fencers. There are four strips and stadium seating on the two long sides of the rectangular area. Each strip has the scoring machine above the strip, visible to all, as well as an electronic DE [direct elimination] table posted on the opposite end of the rectangle so that no matter where you are seated you will know the status of the fencers.

The control of the fencers competing each day is amazing. There is an athlete lounge, a warm-up area with eight strips; there is a "ready" room, and then there is the competition area. These areas are "one way." Once you enter one area you cannot retreat back! If a fencer needs to use the facilities there is a portable one in the ready room!!! Each fencer is allowed three persons in the warm-up area. The ready room is where the four pairs of fencers sit just prior to going to their strip to fence. Their equipment is taken in the warm-up area for checking before going to the

strip and they don't get it back until they get to the strip. At the strip there can only be one person with the athlete and that person must remain seated at all times or will receive a red or black card!!! There is an assesseur seated at each end of the strip who "controls" the athlete's "second."

All rules will be strictly enforced, including Rule 61 of the IOC that governs manufacturers' logos. If a fencer has a water bottle with a logo, the logo must be covered. The logos on the uniforms will be measured to ensure they meet the rules; the fencing bag cannot have any company's logo or else the contents of the bag will be moved to a non-descript blue bag!!! The fencer cannot have a towel with a logo, and thus a towel will be available for the fencer to use.

The entire setup is focused on the appearance of the competition and much less regard for the athlete. It is becoming a production and less of an athletic event. It is disappointing and of serious concern. Some of the persons involved in this production seem to think that how this goes will affect the future consideration of the sport on the Olympic program. It is hard to know how real that is, but it is enough of a scare that it might keep everyone in line. But then we all know what happens in the heat of the competition and what is at stake for so many of these athletes and their coaches.

Our team was no different. Each person involved with the team in Sydney was willing and anxious to go that extra mile for the dedicated athletes who had paved their way to the Games. Each athlete on the team had a unique story on reaching this pinnacle of success—striving for even more, for the elusive medal. The world of fencing has looked at Americans as neophytes, playing at it but never truly serious enough to become a threat. In the last few years, many heads turned warily when Americans were on the scene. We have become a threat, and with the energy of this “young” country we can easily upset the balance of power.

We saw this in each of the fencers—in epeeist Tamir Bloom, for example, who trained hard in spite of a debilitating knee injury that required surgery but that was postponed until the Games were over. Tamir was close enough in matching his skills, experience, and shrewdness to be treated carefully and skillfully by Schmidt of Germany, one of the top fencers in the world. Though Tamir lost, he showed all of us how one overcomes, ignores, continues in spite of an injury that would test the best of us.

Cliff Bayer’s ability to focus and channel his energy into the tip of his foil was magnificent the last few seasons, and especially this past season, bringing home the gold from World Cup competitions—not once but twice. He was so close to the finals and a possible medal that we all sat holding our breath. It was there and then it was not. His outcome was possibly the most disappointing of the Games as Cliff is so talented and fought so hard. A millimeter separated the registration of his hit—his touch didn’t register but his opponent’s did—ending the bout at 15-14. How he felt, none of us really knows. All we know is how we feel when we give all we have for something important in our lives and come up short, just close enough to know it was ours but not enough to get it. What lessons we learn from falling short from reaching our goal. With his tenacity and drive, Cliff will certainly succeed in those life adventures awaiting him.

Our sabre fencers have a score to settle—Akhi Spencer-El with himself, and Keeth Smart to show the world what happens when it all comes together. Akhi was overwhelmed by the Olympic experience and it affected his ability to just fence. Keeth fenced superbly and, with just a bit more international exposure and bouting, he can be among the best in the world.

And then there was Arlene Stevens. Can you imagine making the Olympic team after only five years in the sport, let alone a World team! Arlene is one of those rare individuals who took to fencing like a duck to water. Arlene had a good competition and fenced extremely well against the number-one fencer in the world. She has a bright future ahead and we look forward to many more medals.

Of the women’s team, what is left to say, except what a talented group of fencers in one place—Ann Marsh, Felicia Zimmermann, Iris Zimmermann and Erinn Smart. Although Erinn did not get to fence and, as a result is not in the books as a member of this team, she was a member of the team in all other respects. She trained hard with the rest of the team, was

Olympic Journal: Email #2

Greetings from “Down Under” where the day slowly begins around 6:30 in terms of the rising sun. It is Sunday and the streets are quiet, though at midnight last night one would think it was downtown NYC with all the bustle and congestion in the streets.

I had my only little celebration last night when I was able to hop a train to the Accreditation Center near the Village and become “legit.” USOC was finally able to release another “As” credential so that I could roam like a member of the team, including a visit to the Village. This was my first visit to an Olympic Village and it is definitely like walking into another world. It is a small town with thousands of people lodged in a relatively small area...

Well, we have finished the first day of competition—men’s epee. Tamir fenced and won his first bout against a fencer from Belarus. Then about an hour later he fenced Arndt Schmitt. He fell far behind the bout, something like 7-2 and then began to get the rhythm of the bout for himself and scored touches. As he closed the gap it looked like he could have an upset in the making, but Schmitt had just too much of a lead and just enough of an accurate point to win the bout. As it turned out Schmitt was for the taking that day, as he lost his next bout in the round of 16!!! Tamir finished 29th.

...There was an Australian epee fencer who won his first two bouts and brought the house down each time. It was exciting and good for fencing for an Australian fencer to be winning. The press would eat it up and give us invaluable media space. Tamir was interviewed afterward as well as Yefim [Litvan]...You know this is such a difficult tournament in that the field is so small and the number of bouts so few that it seems so odd that one trains so hard, fences so many competitions, for it all to come down to just a few minutes and a few opponents to determine the best of the best.

Olympic Journal: Email #3

All is well from “Down Under.” We are in a lull at the moment, which is good and bad. We had no one fencing Mon. or Tues., days of team events for men’s epee and women’s epee, but there was practice and lessons for the women’s team and the sabre fencers. Cliff came to the hotel where I am staying on Monday and has a room there for two nights preceding his day of competition. This allows him to prepare himself in his own way without outside distractions other than what he might find. The women’s team will move into the hotel late this afternoon, with lessons this morning at the USOC High Performance Center.

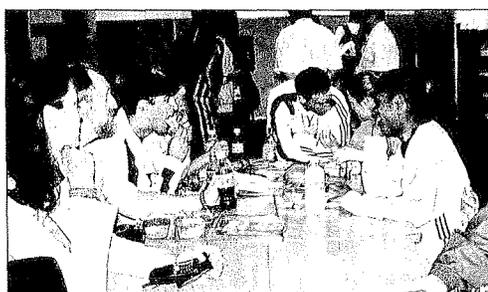
Olympic Journal: Email #4

Yes, Cliff lost but was a whisker away from advancing and achieving the final 8. He fenced his first bout extremely well once the initial nervousness was overcome. In this first bout he met a very strong Polish fencer, Richard Sobczak, who has been one of the top fencers in Poland for the last several years.

In his second bout he met up with Kim of Korea, seeded #5 in the world. Cliff was in control of much of the bout with Kim. In the last part of the bout when Cliff was ahead, Kim changed and bore down, slowly taking control of the bout. Though Cliff lost the bout it could have gone either

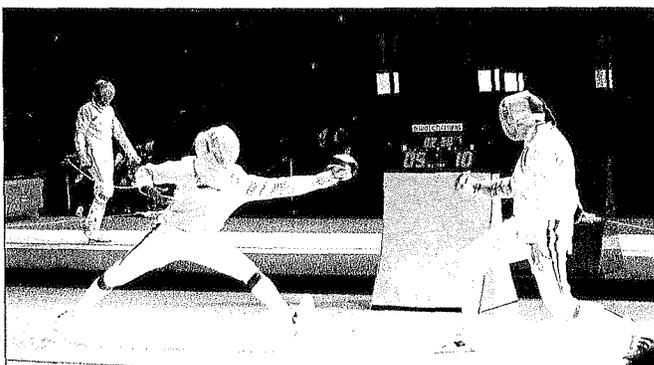
way, with the score 15-14. And how strong is Kim? Kim defeated Golubitsky in his next bout 15-5!! By now you know all the rest of the finalists and probably even the outcome. The finals start in one hour. The women's team will go out for dinner and return for an early evening.

In general, the referees are maintaining tight control of the bouts and the coaches, who are allowed to sit at the end of the strip. Maigro of Italy got up once too often and his fencer got a red card, and when the score was 14-14 with Chevchenko of Russia, the Italian fencer went off the strip and received a red card and lost the bout. A really bad way to lose a bout.



Cliff Bayer (third from left) and Erinn Smart (far right) refueling. Photo: Carla Mae Richards.

Cliff Bayer on the streets of Sydney. Photo: Carla Mae Richards.



Keeth Smart lunges at the Olympics. Photo: Carla Mae Richards.

there supporting, encouraging and praying as hard as any of us. Her day is coming and the world better watch out during the next four years.

It was exciting to watch these athletes in action as they prepared to take on the world—the team matches were breathtaking, literally and figuratively. I have had enough excitement and tension to last until the next Olympic Games!

It was a wonderful Olympics—Sydney was superb, with the organization of fencing flawless. We heard only good things for the other sports as well. Sure, there were hitches and problems along the way but ones that were handled quickly and completely. Our Olympic Committee had a great staff at all the key places, ready to help and solve any prob-

lems right away. None of us can imagine the amount of work that is involved in getting more than 600 athletes to a Games, let alone all the staff accompanying such a team—housing, transporting, making sure all is working right for the athletes to do what they came to do.

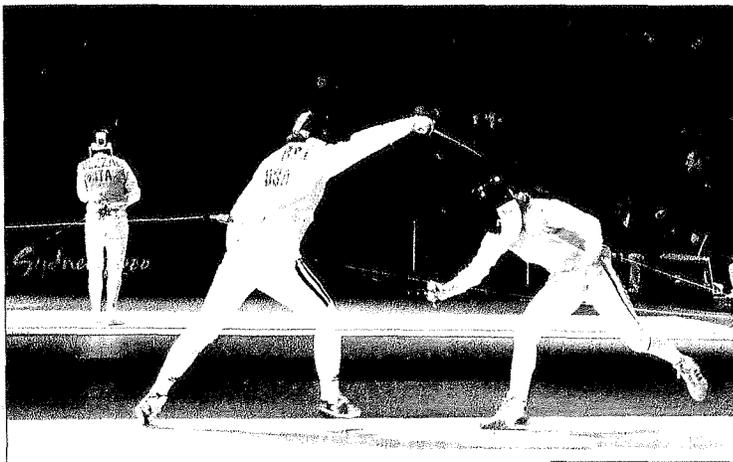
What did I get out of this? I gained a deeper appreciation of the impact the Olympic Games has on our athletes. To compete weekend after weekend, at home and abroad, is still not enough to prepare any of them for the drama of the Olympic Games. One of the most distracting aspects of the Games is the attention of the media, something none of us is truly prepared for. We all want the media to know that our sport exists, but when it happens we stutter, stammer and become flabber-

gasted. It can become all-consuming to the point that the athletes have difficulty in returning to the task at hand—sharpening their psyche for the battle on the strip.

Even so, I saw how great our athletes are and what can and will be in the not-too-distant future. We have potentially great athletes nipping at the heels of this group and ready to surpass all the accomplishments of this 2000 team. All we can say is “Do It”—we will be there to help, support, encourage, and widen the path. To the 2000 Olympic team, all of us say, “Thank You”—for paving the way and for devoting and sacrificing your lives to become such great athletes. Congratulations.

Olympic Journal: Email #5

Today was women's foil individual with some very tough bouts for our women. Ann went first and won the bout against El Gammal, an Egyptian. Iris was next and won a close bout with Charkova of Russia. Iris fenced well and it was a solid win. Felicia then fenced Rita Koenig of Germany and just was never able to find her game. Rita Koenig was on and the referee made it a little difficult in that some actions that appeared to be Felicia's were called the other



way. It was not so much bad refereeing as it was the perception of the referee. Also Felicia was never able to really get control of the bout.

The next bout for our fencers was Iris against Trillini. Remember now that Iris beat Trillini at the World Championships last November so there was a score to be settled for Trillini. And Trillini settled it today, soundly defeating Iris. Trillini fenced very well and would be difficult to beat all day. She lost a tough bout to Koenig in the round of four so this was not a bad bout for Iris as much as it was an excellent bout for Trillini.

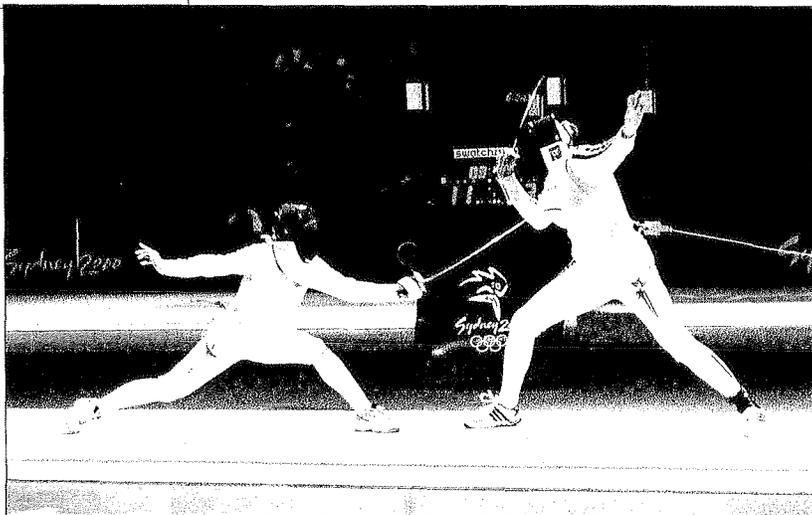
Next, Ann fenced Ioucheva of Russia and won that bout, fencing as we all remember Ann from the last quad—strong, quick and accurate with the point. With that win Ann was in the round of 16 and having to fence Szabo of Romania. Unfortunately, that was a losing battle, with Szabo dominating the bout. For Ann this was an excellent result, not a match for '96 and her 7th place there but good for the time that Ann has been back in training and competition. So the U.S. had two girls in the 16 and one in the 32. We expect that the seed for the team competition will be 4 or 5 and probably draw Poland. We will know in the morning—the seed and the draw—and then the strategy planning will go into high gear.

Olympic Journal: Email #6

Olympic Fencing 2000 has come and gone and U.S. Fencing has seen the glimmer of success broaden to a bright ray. The women's foil team was 4th and two touches away from a medal. Why two, when the final score was 45-42?? We all want to forget that 45th touch in the match with Germany for the bronze medal. No medal should be decided by a questionable penalty call. Ann Marsh fenced the final bout of the match when the team was behind 37-40 and with her fierce determination and concentration kept the U.S. medal hopes alive. The score was 42-43 when Rita Koenig scored a clean touch, but it was still anyone's match. The German's head coach stood up and once more "browbeat" the side judge into claiming that Ann had covered target after the fencer had clearly hit target without any covering involved. The referee acquiesced to the side judge. The replay clearly showed there was no covering yet the red card was issued (a yellow card had been given earlier in the bout) and the bout and match was at an end. How can a fencer be able to score two touches in one action??? Is that right? Should not the rules allow for some discretion? This was the second team event at the Olympics in which the last touch of a medal match was awarded on a penalty.

That we were in a state of shock is simplistic—that the room was momentarily stunned and silenced is weak.

U.S. Fencing, you have every right to be proud of this team. They fenced hard all day and showed the world and the U.S. the proof of their efforts these past 8 years and the extra efforts of the past year. They deserve a medal for their heart and their superb fencing.



Above left:
Ann Marsh (left) in
action.

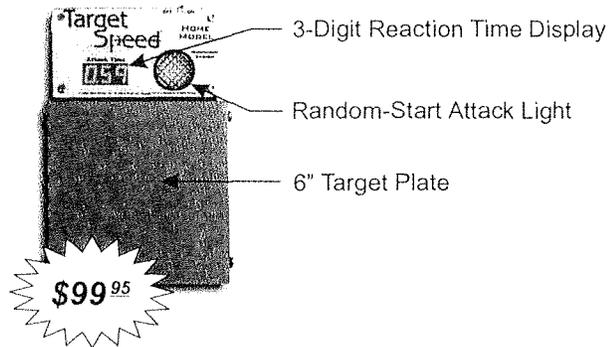
Above:
Italy's Mezza (left)
delivers a touch on
Ann Marsh.

Photo: Carla Mae
Richards.

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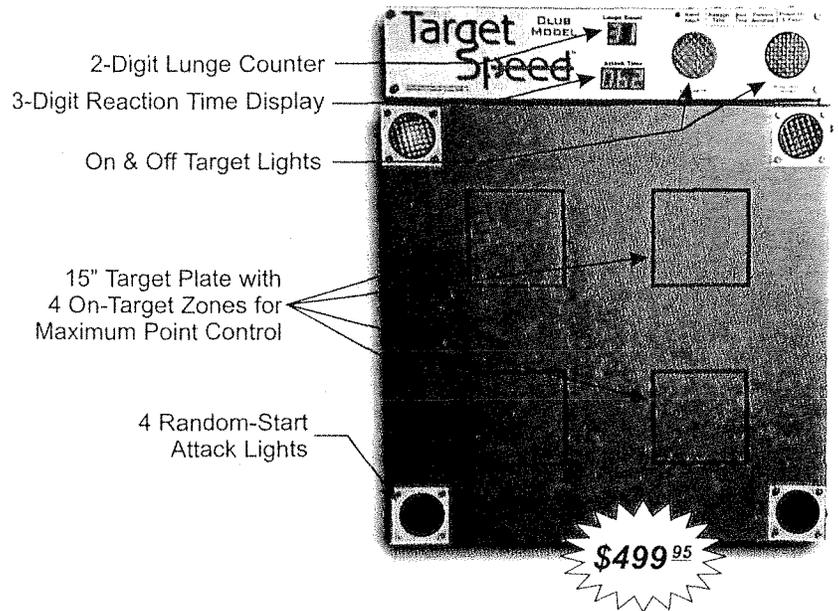
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The Biomechanics of Fencing

Results of a United States Olympic Committee Research Project

Mark D. Geil, Ph.D.
 Department of Health and Performance Sciences
 Center for Human Movement Studies
 Georgia Institute of Technology
 Atlanta, Georgia

On the following pages, you'll find graphs and illustrations of the biomechanics of fencing. To understand the implications of this study, however, an overview is presented here.

In biomechanical analysis, researchers measure several aspects of movement, including kinematics, kinetics, electromyography, and pedobarography.

Kinematics is the geometry of movement. Measurement of kinematics involves taking a video image and identifying relevant body segments for analysis. The goal is the independent measurement of coordinate systems for each body segment, from which joint angles, angular velocities, and other data can be calculated.

Kinetics introduces force into the geometric scenario, and can be measured through a force platform embedded in the ground or by using pedobarography, the measurement of distributed pressures beneath the feet. As this investigation considered the role of fencing shoes, we used insole pressure transducers. Finally electromyography (EMG) reveals the activity of muscles in the body, telling when they're firing and, for certain muscles, with what strength.

The first part of this investigation into the biomechanics of fencing considered shoe design. Subjects (recreational and elite fencers) wore

fencing shoes and standard, off-the-shelf court shoes and repeated lunges, advance-lunges, and fleches in the laboratory at Georgia Tech. Subjects noted problems with sole delamination on the rear foot of the court shoe, and cited a decreased ability to feel the floor while fencing. However, the court shoes were able to reduce pressures beneath the feet by as much as 42%. For the fencing shoes, subjects complained of heel bruises, proximal joint injuries, and arch pain, but noted improved feel of the floor, and uninhibited drag of the rear foot during lunges.

Data did reveal slightly altered fencing technique with the court shoes versus the fencing shoes. For most fencers, actions of the weapon hand were slightly larger with the court shoes, and usually slightly slower. Although fencers were required to use the shoes for one month prior to testing, the altered technique could have resulted from unfamiliarity of the court shoes during practiced motion. Despite the acute injuries encountered with the fencing shoes and the higher peak plantar pressures, almost all subjects preferred the fencing shoe for fencing.

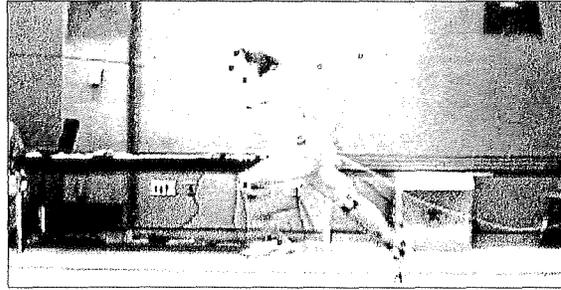
The second part of the investigation considered improvement of fencing technique and injury prevention. A technique was revealed in elite fencers in which effective lunge distance is increased. Fencers with

shorter leg lengths compensated to achieve longer lunges by increasing knee flexion in the forward leg and utilizing a forward trunk lean. Elite fencers showed more consistency in repeated motion, more fluid motion, and higher impulse forces than did recreational fencers. Very large pressures were noted at the front heel of elite fencers at the instant of landing from a lunge; in fact, some elite fencers demonstrated a "flight phase" during the lunge in which both feet were off the ground simultaneously. However, the higher impulse forces and larger peak pressures associated with rapid onset and cessation of motion in fencing attacks might play a role in common acute fencing injuries. Pedobarographic analysis noted that as the center-of-pressure propagates from the foot to the big toe, certain areas of the feet experience very large peak pressures: the rear medial forefoot, the front heel, and the front first metatarsal head (the "ball" of the front foot). Orthotic insoles and heel cups were found to significantly reduce plantar pressure, and might be recommended to prevent the possible risk of injury.

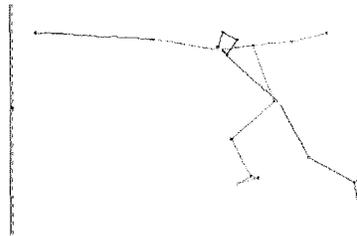
Complete detailed technical reports from the study will be available soon through the USFA and the USOC. Future research will consider the role of an asymmetric shoe design (different left and right shoes) on fencing mechanics.

What is Biomechanics?

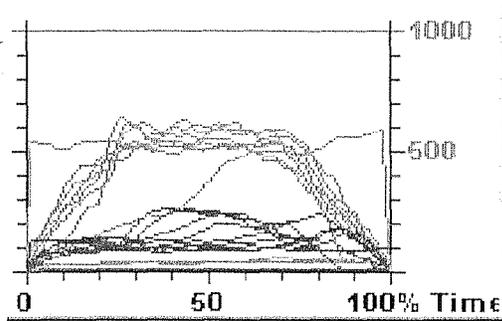
- Kinematics
- Kinetics
- Electromyography
- Pedobarography



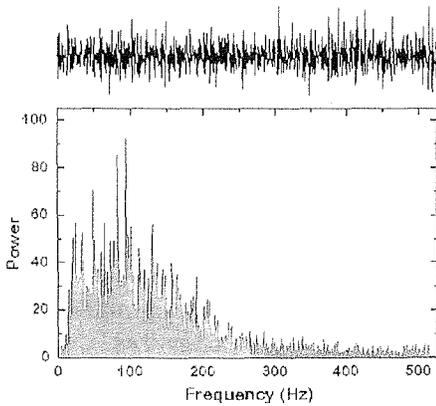
Digitization of markers and landmarks allows 3-D tracking of body segments.



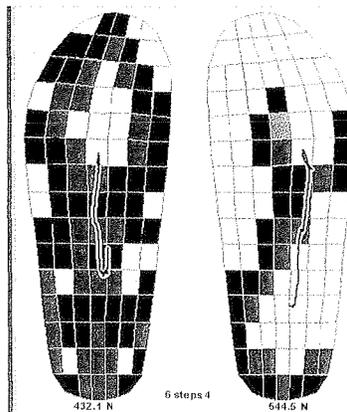
Ground Reaction Force



Electrical Activity of Muscles



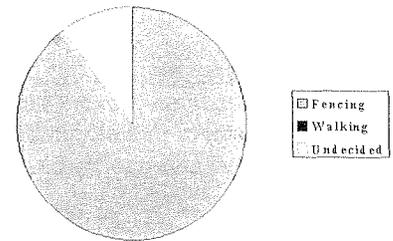
Plantar Pressure



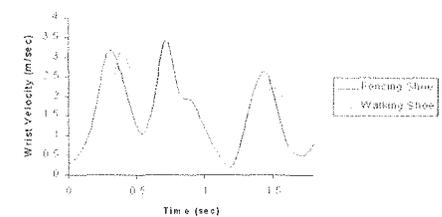
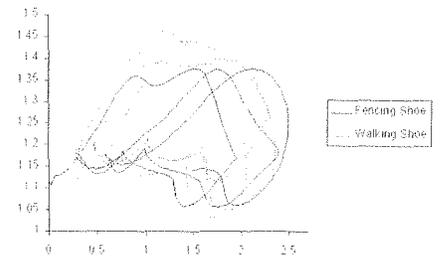
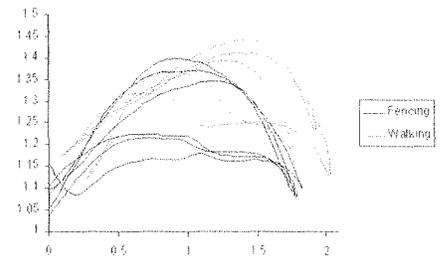
Shoe Design



Subjective Feedback
Preferred shoe from study:



Sagittal Plane Weapon Hand Motion during advance-lunge (m)



Shoe Design

Fencing Shoes

Complaints:

- heel bruises
- proximal joint injuries
- arch pain

Advantages:

- "feel" of floor
- uninhibited drag

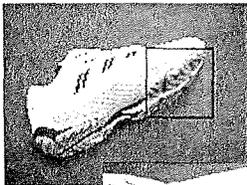
Walking/Court Shoes

Complaints:

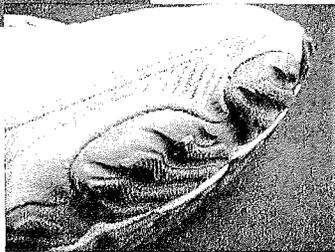
- delamination of sole on right foot
- less feeling of floor

Advantages:

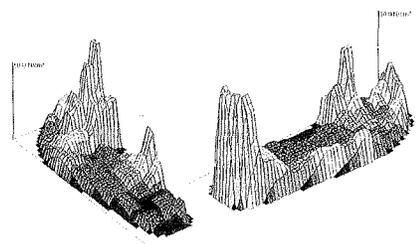
- reduced plantar pressure
- reduced proximal joint moments



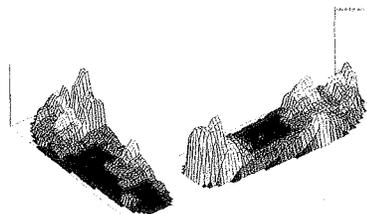
Delamination



Plantar Pressure Reduction:
Advance-Lunge



Fencing Shoes

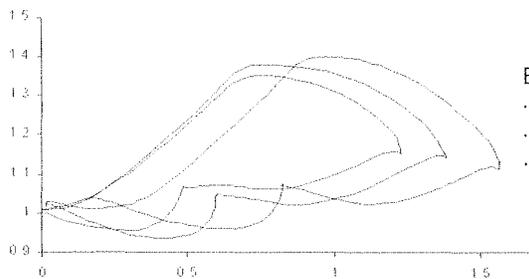
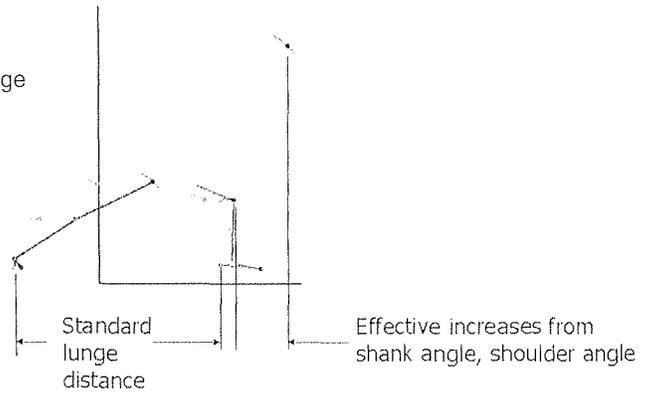


Walking/Court Shoes

42% reduction in Peak Pressure

Technique/Injury Prevention

"Effective" Lunge Distance



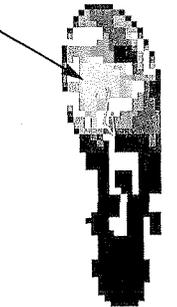
Elite Fencers Show:

- Consistency in repetitions
- Fluid motion
- Higher impulse forces

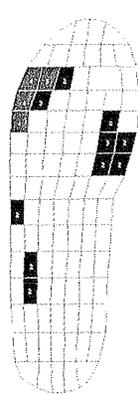
Injury Prevention — Feet

- Orthotic insoles significantly reduce plantar pressure
- Center-of-pressure propagates from front heel to hallux (big toe)
- Danger areas for tissue breakdown:
 - rear medial forefoot
 - front heel
 - front 1st metatarsal head

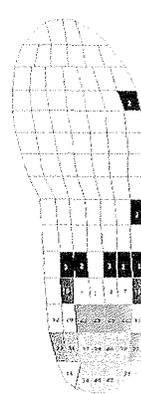
Metatarsal Pressure, fleche



Landing from Lunge



Elite fencer, Explosive lunge, "flight" phase



Average fencer, slow lunge, no flight phase

Implications:

- Lunge distance
- Lunge speed
- Ability to recover / change directions

To Coach or Not to Coach...

referee Jeff Bukantz takes a look at a recent USFA decision from the FOC perspective and offers an opinion

At the last USFA board meeting, a precedent-setting and controversial decision was made. It was decided by the board, which is comprised of a representative cross-section of the USFA, to change a rule in the USFA Rulebook. By the time you receive this issue, many of you will be aware of the fact that the part of Rule t.82, which states that “during the fencing, nobody is allowed to ‘give advice’ to the fencers,” has become obsolete. In simple English, “coaching” is now allowed.

The Fencing Officials Commission’s (FOC) opinion, after much heated and balanced discussion, was to continue to properly enforce the “no coaching” rule. This opinion was reached by consensus in three consecutive FOC meetings. The FOC is comprised of experts who are aware of the international scene, yet its opinion was dismissed by the USFA board.

As the job of the FOC is to enforce the rules and not to make them, the only

concern is to determine how to best deal with this “hot potato” thrown into our laps—not to argue whether it was a correct decision.

In the near future, many of the uncertainties surrounding the enforcement of the “new rule” will be ironed out. But, for now, the FOC must proceed in a manner that honors the board’s ruling, while at the same time maintains a level playing field for fencers, and most importantly, does not allow for a circus-like atmosphere to become pervasive, especially during the actual fencing action.

Whether the coach will be in a coach’s box, simply behind a specified mark, or suspended above the strip in a steel cage, there must be decorum during the phrases. Whatever goes on in Europe, for the most part, stops during the actions. Of course, the Italians always say, “Meter!” and the French often say, “Allez!” but that’s a far cry from whatever specific, strategic, and often

disruptive instructions are given in between actions.

Inevitably, some coaching that goes on during the actions will fall into the category of “disturbing order.” Without a doubt, American referees will have different thresholds for determining “disturbing order,” just as the European referees had for “giving advice.”

Please understand that the FOC is not going to utilize the “disturbing order” rule as some catchall penalty to negate the board’s decision to allow coaching. However, the referee must enforce this rule, or run the risk of being distracted, which could lead to penalizing the fencers in the form of bad calls. Of course, any coach giving instructions during the actual fencing, regardless of the decibel level, could certainly be extremely distracting to the fencers too.

The bottom line is that the FOC will enforce the “coaching” rule, as per the USFA board’s mandate.

The following represents the opinion of the author, and not necessarily the opinion of the FOC, nor any of its members.

While the fact remains that the USFA has the right to accept or reject FIE Rules, it has set a precedent that could lead to problems in the future. Hold on tight, because we might be going down the dreaded slippery slope.

The mantra of those who persuaded the board to make its ruling was: *That’s the way they do it in Europe, and it’s in our best interests to do it the same way.*

OK, so now coaching is allowed. But why should it stop there? In Germany, the referees are particularly lenient with enforcing both the “covering target” rule, and the much more heinous “utilization of the back arm” rule. In fact, German Olympians have admitted that they actually train to break these rules. Since this falls into the category of “That’s the way they do it in Europe,” can we expect the board to be lobbied to eliminate these rules, too?

In my 19 years as an international

referee, I’ve seen instances in Europe where certain referees didn’t properly enforce “corps-a-corps,” “turning,” or even the allowable amount of bend in the weapons. As for the latter, that’s why the bend in many German fencers’ foils could pass for a fishhook. Does this mean that we, in order not to disadvantage our fencers, start throwing all sorts of rules out the window? Well, *any* rule could be plugged into the same argument, so the board’s precedent certainly gives plenty of reason to be concerned.

What happens if the discussion goes from whether or not to accept certain rules, to actually suggesting how referees should interpret the rules of right-of-way? Before anyone laughs, please be aware that this has already happened. In the last two quadrennials, one of our national coaches persistently lobbied certain members of the FOC—as well as other high level referees—to call an improperly executed action in favor of one of our Olympians because “that’s the way they do it in Europe, and it’s in our best interests to call it the same way.”

What’s to stop a board of intelligent fencing minds from determining that the FOC must instruct its referees to call attacks in a manner that directly contradicts proper execution according to the rules because “it’s in the best interests of American fencing”?

Though there is no doubt that the board’s intentions are honest and well meaning, the current lack of separation of powers can lead to much bigger problems down the road. The FOC was specifically formed in 1972 as an independent commission of the then-AFLA in order to insulate fencing referees from political pressure. In my opinion, this is not the case today. The board’s decision to allow coaching essentially ignores the FIE rules and was voted on by many members who are professional coaches, constituting a conflict of interest.

While the FOC is clear on its role and has every intention of heeding the mandate of the board, the question remains: Is the current state of affairs, where there is no separation of powers, in the best interests of American fencing?

A: When I was 9, my father took me to a gymnasium where I took a foil in my hand for the first time. I had a bout with a novice and won, and when I returned home I told my parents I would go in for fencing.

Q: What fascinates you most about fencing?

A: In my childhood it was the romanticism, grandeur, and the beauty of proper movement. Then I became genuinely interested in the sport.

Q: At the world class level, is it more a competition of skill or psychological tenacity?

A: I think both. For example, in the 1998 World Championships I fought for first place against the Cuban, Elvis Gregory. According to the world rating a year before, he was first and I was second. But in the struggle for the title of World Champion, I won. The bout was a struggle of nerves, and psychological readiness decided its fate. Luck also played a part. Often one or two millimeters may become decisive, and this is when luck becomes the deciding factor. In the final of the 1998 World Championship, when Gregory and I proceeded as equals, fortune helped me. In such a case I say, "It was my day."

Q: In fencing, how important are quick reactions and the ability to anticipate what the opponent will do?

A: We have a proverb: "Feet feed a fencer, just like paws feed a wolf." Strong feet, stamina, and quick reaction are all important, but the main thing is mentality. You must be more sly and clever than your rival. One has to out-smart with one's head, not with one's hand. Besides physical training, intuition is also necessary. From my own experience I know that skills alone are not enough; one needs confidence but not arrogance. I am stronger than other fencers are in that I can analyze the situation better.

Q: What do you think of American foil fencers?

A: I'd say Buckie Leach's pupils achieved really good results. Like Iris Zimmermann—she won a couple of times the World Championship in the Cadets or Juniors, and was third at the Seoul World Championships. And the U.S. women's team was fourth in the Olympic Games. They lost to Germany for third place, but

Student and author Daniel Boles (left) with Sergei Golubitsky, 2000. Photo: Boaz Aronson.



it was pretty close. So the women's foil is doing pretty well I'd say. And the men's foil, Cliff Bayer, he's in the top 16 and won last season at the Bonn World Cup...I would say it's because a lot of trainers immigrated from the former Soviet Union, especially the Ukraine. And Buckie Leach, I don't know where he got his vision for fencing, but he's really doing pretty well.

Q: What should developing fencers focus on?

A: I'd say a lot of it has to do more with what coaches should do. The coaches need to continually fill in the gaps to make competitive fencers. They need to make sure fencers are trained on physical conditioning, coordination, games to develop (the) will to win, and also not skip steps when developing the fencer's technique or tactics. It's not just the coach though, fencers must analyze and should all the time correct their own mistakes.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: I would say I'm quite a successful fencer, so I want to have the same success as a trainer. That's why I've started the Golubitsky Fencing Center, to help people from different parts of the world who want to come over and do training camps with me and spar with people from other countries. I hope their skills can grow and I believe I can help make fencers stronger and give ideas and techniques to add to their fencing training...Training and practice is a process and it's important that each fencer is not

trying to try new things, but doing things to stretch their ability and making their own mistakes. You have to go through those mistakes to get better. Otherwise if you're just sparring to spar without working out some new things, then you won't progress...You have to come to the salle every day and practice, practice, practice, and know what you need to focus on and keep building. That's how you get better.

Q: What do you do to prepare for the world cup season?

A: Each person is different and will work on different things. But, at the beginning of the season I start with physical preparation, footwork and targets. Then lessons and sparring and I'm ready for the season.

Q: What is your routine the morning of a tournament?

A: Nothing special, I just get up, have my breakfast, go to the tournament and fence.

Q: What was your favorite Olympics?

A: (smile) Athens 2004!

Originally from Palo Alto, Calif., Daniel Boles has spent the past few years traveling, fencing, and hanging out on the piazza drinking good wine. For more information about the Golubitsky Fencing Center, check out www.gfc-world.com.

TRAINING WITH THE BEST

One day, American Daniel Boles woke up and found himself in the Netherlands, taking fencing lessons from Sergei Golubitsky...

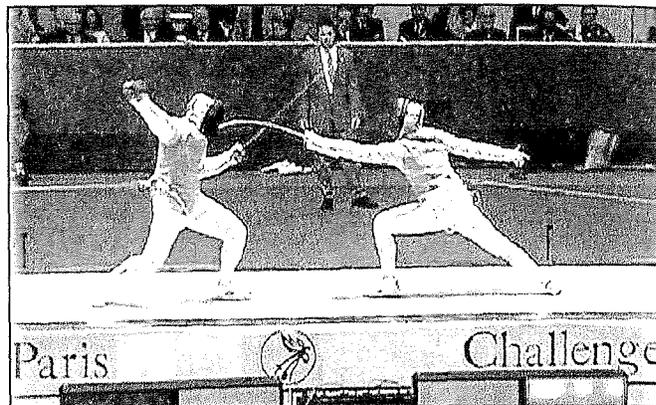
The year was 1997, and I was living in Singapore and fencing at a club called Z Fencing. One of the coaches, James Wong, had just returned from the World Championships in South Africa and was showing a tape of the men's foil final. In the most thrilling final bout I've seen, Sergei Golubitsky from the Ukraine won his first World Championship, 15-14, over Young-Ho Kim of Korea. I watched the bout again and again. Sometimes I would pop the tape in and watch it while warming up before training. Somehow it seemed I would fence slightly better than normal after watching the techniques and style of the best fencers in the world.

Golubitsky has won three consecutive World Championships and a silver and bronze in two others; he's won five World Cup titles, has a record 18 World Cup tournament victories, was the Silver medalist at the Barcelona Olympics, and the list goes on. Never did I imagine that I would be training with and coached by arguably the best men's foil fencer in history. It's funny where life can take you—a couple of years after first seeing that tape in Singapore, I was living in the Netherlands and being coached by none other than Sergei Golubitsky.

The first day I stepped into the salle where he was training, I was slightly anxious. It was the usual mixed bag of being the new guy in the salle and having my fencing ability scrutinized. I was surrounded by world class fencers—in addition to Sergei, there were other world cup level fencers and an accomplished group of junior fencers training there. Having only a few years of experience, I wasn't sure how things would go. But I quickly learned it was all about fencing and improving, and not necessarily the level I was at. The work is intense and the expectation is perfection, but as a coach Sergei gives 100%—maybe more.

The year or so I've spent training with him has been a great experience. Not a day in the salle goes by when I don't find myself thinking of that famous Muhammad Ali phrase, "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee" while watching Sergei's sparring bouts. Perfect balance, impeccable timing, lightning reflexes, and the slyness of a predator are hallmarks of this great fencer. A world cup opponent of Sergei's once said about fencing him, "Sometimes I think I've got him and am ready to land a touch because of his mistake. Then, at the very last moment, when it's too late, I realize that's exactly what he wanted me to think and I'm already in the trap."

Even if it was just to observe, it would be worth the trip to the salle a few times a week just to see the technique and tactics of Golubitsky. As for the training regime, when you arrive at the salle, it is time to work. "We begin at 7:00" means, at 7:00 you are warmed up and ready to fence, do drills, or fitness training. The socializing and joke-telling atmosphere during warm-ups quickly transforms to one of purposeful focus. In lessons or during bout critiques, you are shown what to do and



Sergei Golubitsky in action at the Challenge International de Paris, 2000. Photo: Daniel Boles.

expected to pick up the new technique or form quickly and use it in bouts—it's that simple. If not, you will hear in a very clear manner and tone, "What do you think is going to happen in a tournament when your opponent picks up on that same move you always use?! You think they will just let you keep scoring free points? They are going to kick your ass if all you have is a couple of tricks and you don't fence right!"

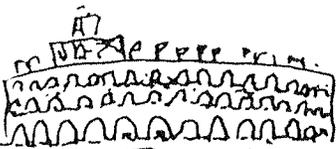
Having lived through it myself (once), I usually turn away, unable to watch when hearing a fencer new to the salle ask Sergei to repeat an instruction they didn't hear because they were not paying attention. For children fencers, the approach is obviously softer and more lenient. But if you're in your late teens or an adult, it can be a verbal massacre that ends in a grim series of questions about why you are in the salle: Is it to train seriously for fencing, or to waste time, disgrace the sport, yourself, your family, and your country? It's an experience best avoided if possible. In fact, I would put it right up there with an industrial strength hangover or good case of food poisoning in terms of enjoyment.

Individual lessons are especially focused. During the best of lessons, you are barraged with specific corrections on seemingly minute details. The philosophy: "There are no small mistakes." During the worst lessons, you will be corrected and drilled to the point of being catatonic. When sparring bouts are taking place, Sergei will often stop fencers just after a mistake or when performing some move that didn't seem to have purpose and ask, "What was your action? What were you trying to do?" He will often repeat the famous phrase "perfect practice makes perfect," and that practice is primarily to learn from, train, and improve, and not always just to win with the same old moves and tricks.

If the training is grueling, it is to the same extent a lot of fun. Sergei is genuinely fascinated by the intensity of fencing and truly has fun doing the sport. This is the backdrop of the atmosphere in the fencing center. It is intense and hard work, but it is fun and a great adrenaline rush when you make improvements! Further, the camaraderie, support and coaching while traveling to tournaments and competing is fantastic.

The time I've spent training with Sergei, I've been exposed to an incredible amount of knowledge, experience and feedback—how best to train, practice, think and excel as a competitive fencer. Recently, I had a chance to talk with Sergei about fencing and his career:

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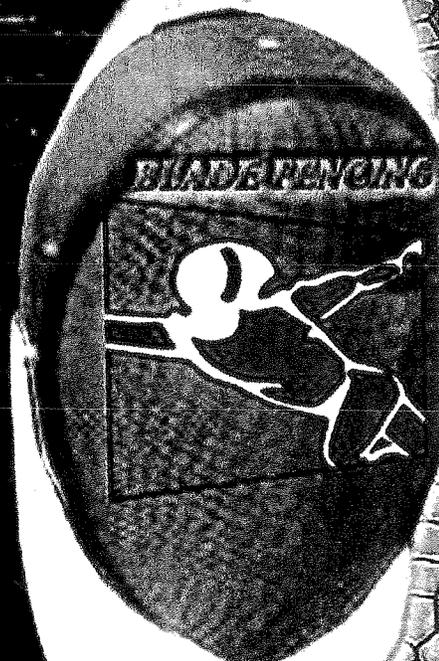
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