

UPEI Fencing: Our Hidden Sport



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When asked to list all the sports that U.P.E.I. is ranked well in, fencing never crosses the minds of most people. Fencing, at least here at U.P.E.I., is one of the least known sports, and yet, our fencers regularly place well in many of the tournaments that they have attended.

What is fencing some might ask? Well, to be brief, fencing is a sport which has been described by most as "Playing chess while running the hundred meter dash". It combines agility, speed, and endurance with strategy. Basically, the object of any fencing match is to score more points or hits on your opponent than he can score on you, up to a maximum score and a maximum time limit. Fencing is broken down into three categories, foil, epee, and sabre, the most popular being foil and epee.

The UPEI fencing club was started c.1968 when Lothar Zimmerman came to the Island to teach here at what was then Prince of

Wales College. He had been one of the founding members of a club at McMaster University in 1960. When he came here, he wanted to continue fencing. However, after checking at both the YMCA and the College, he found that there were no clubs on the Island. The College was quite willing to help, in fact they donated enough equipment for fifteen members under the provision that the members were from the College. Eventually, though, through word of mouth, people from outside the University community became interested in the sport.

From there the club grew to forty registered members that gather every Saturday morning in the gym to improve their fencing skills, which makes this club the largest fencing club per capita anywhere in Canada. These members are made up of men and women, some mature fencers, some young people from the surrounding area. There are competitive fencers hoping to achieve a top ranking nationally, and many recreational fencers just doing it for the fun of it.

This is a sport that is open to all people because fencing requires skill and endurance more than speed and strength. It is for this reason that women and men can, at least at the recreational level, fence on even terms. But, it has only been within the last ten years that women's foil fencing has become recognized, and more recently women's epee has finally come to be included in competitions. Women's sabre fencing still has to be officially recognized as a competitive sport.

One might think that as a small club they would not be able to fair all that well against some of the larger centers such as Fredericton, Halifax, and St. Johns, but a look at our past record for this year alone should be enough to convince a person that we have some talented people here. Jim Kyathfield, a student here at UPEI is ranked in the top 20 Sabre fencers and will, in fact be going to the national tournament in Montreal this weekend.

In fact, in the last two tournaments that the club has participated in this year, they came back with a total of fifteen medals. As well, for the first time in the club's history, the UPEI club was able to take home two of the Governor General's plates. The year started with the Lt-Governor's challenge in Halifax on the weekend before the February break. Jim Kyathfield came away with a bronze in both the epee and the Sabre, but got it all together during the gala when he came away with the plate in epee. His brother Steve kept up the family tradition and placed first in both the regular sabre event, and once again in the gala. Both fencers have been fencing for a few years now and will be going to the nationals this weekend.

But the Kyathfield brothers were not the only ones to take home medals. Johanna Eloit placed second in women's epee, and Chuck MacPherson, a newcomer to the sport of fencing after having started only three months ago, came away with a silver in epee.

The team returned to Halifax two weeks ago and

came away with a total of ten medals. Steve Kyathfield didn't disappoint the club by returning with a gold in both foil and sabre, and a silver in epee. His brother Jim returned with a bronze in both foil and epee, and a silver in sabre. The women's team made an excellent showing there as well when Johanna Eloit placed first in both foil and epee, while Coralee Desroches, also a student here at UPEI, placed first in sabre and third in foil.

But even after all this, the club still has problems being recognized locally. Many Students here have no idea what this club

has accomplished and will accomplish in the future. The biggest problem is the cost. Just this year, the University funded the club five hundred dollars plus a small amount to help send an elite fencer away to compete. The government added another one thousand dollars to that, even with all that, there is very little money left over. Expenditures for this year alone total twelve hundred dollars and more equipment still needs to be bought. Presently, the Fencing club

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Attention all ballplayers

By Matthew Beardsley

Anyone interested in getting in shape and preparing for the upcoming season is asked to contact myself at 894-9769 or anytime on campus. Or if you wish, you may call Joe Picia at 566-2627.

The workouts will take place at Colonel Gray gym

starting the week of March 28. The workouts will be twice weekly and may increase from there.

All faults will be worked on: general conditioning, stretching, running, arm strength, hitting, etc. Baseball season is not far away, so let's get in shape!

This week in intramurals

By Barb Mullally

As the semester draws to a close, most intra-mural sports are finishing up or all into playoffs. This is the time to get out and cheer your teams on.

Although women's basketball was come to a halt, men's basketball has a couple more games scheduled. On March 28th at 10:30, Blanchard plays Mayflower, while

the Vets face Business at the same time on the 30th.

Intramural

Hockey is into its most exciting week of the season. The championship round begins on Monday at 7:15. The second game of the best-of-three series is on Tuesday at the same time. If necessary, the third game will be played on Wednesday at 8:30.

For the last time this semester, co-ed volleyball will finish off the week with one game on March 31st. At 9:30 PM, a combined Bernardine-Marian squad will face the West-erners. End the semester on a successful note. Get out and support your intramural team!

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