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The **RIPOSTE**

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AMERICA'S OLDEST MAGAZINE OF FENCING, PUBLISHED SIX TIMES YEARLY AT
114 WASHINGTON PLACE, NEW YORK, N. Y., BY AND FOR FENCERS IN AMERICA

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Status of the Nationals

CHAMPIONSHIPS STILL "ON SCHEDULE"

Cancellation of national championships in some sports has led to some speculation as to whether fencing would carry on its full schedule during the remainder of 1942. This article outlines some of the most important thoughts discussed by the A.F.L.A.'s board of governors on the matter.

THE National Championships were cancelled in 1918 because of World War I. In that year practically all of the more experienced fencers were in active service and it was impossible to hold a true championship. It is within the realm of possibility that similar causes in World War II may make it necessary for A.F.L.A. to cancel the championships again. Although such action does not appear necessary at the present time, the Championships are scheduled for June and many things can happen in four months within a nation at war.

The Board of Governors of the Amateur Fencers League of America has considered this problem. It has declared its earnest desire to conduct such championships unless conditions are so adverse that their cancellation is necessary. As one of the few remaining national fencing organizations, the A.F.L.A. realizes its international responsibility to carry on with fencing championships and maintain at least this American branch of the International Fencing Federation active as long as possible. It also realizes its responsibility in providing these championships for the competitive fencers of the nation. It believes that to cancel the Championships during World War II merely because of the precedent of World War I would be an idle gesture of a debilitating rather than patriotic nature. At the same time it realizes that such cancellation may become necessary and has outlined those causes which would make it vote against holding a championship in any year in which the United States was at war.

National Representation

If restrictions upon civilian transportation are such that the Pacific Coast, Midwest and any other sectional champions are not permitted to come to the National Championships those championships would not be truly representative of the country's best

fencers. Under such conditions the championships would have to be cancelled.

Quality

If so many of our best fencers enter the services or assume work in defense industries and temporarily discontinue their fencing that the Board of Governors cannot consider the remaining fencers truly representative of the strongest American fencing, the championships will have to be cancelled.

Available Organization

If so many of our approved directors and judges enter the services or assume work in defense industries that the National Bout Committee cannot provide adequate officiating at its championships, the Board of Governors will cancel such championships. The Board of Governors cannot approve the results of any National Championship inefficiently conducted. If the government authorities are opposed to evening gatherings of competitors and spectators the Board of Governors must comply with such regulations and cancel such assemblies.

Expense

If the expense to the A.F.L.A. of transporting its defending and sectional champions to the championships and the expense to the visiting individual competitors for food and lodging during the championships should increase to an amount out of reason with the spirit of the Gala Week, the championships would have to be cancelled until a return to more normal conditions again made the conduct of such championships attractive to all.

These are the conditions which the Board of Governors intends to weigh periodically in the coming months. It admits that some of these conditions appear quite remote at the present time. No one can tell, however, the changes which may result quickly from various emergency measures which may be ordered as the war proceeds. It has taken the precaution to outline these considerations as a guide to its future decisions.

Even should the National Championships have to be cancelled it is the desire of the Board of Governors to preserve the Gala Week, if possible. It would substitute local or sectional titles for the national titles and conduct as strong a series of competitions as then-existing conditions would permit.

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EDITORIAL

WITHIN a few short months we have seen many changes in our daily lives. These changes will increase as 1942 grows older. Only a year ago the talk was **Business as Usual**. Six months ago it was **Guns and Butter**. Today it is **Total War**. We have all been called to arms.

Where does this call leave the fencer? Many of us have already joined the fighting forces of the country. Others are working in the increasing number of war industries. For those who are still classed as civilians it need not change our will to fence one bit. We owe it to our country to keep sound bodies and thinking minds. Fencing provides an excellent means toward these ends.

Daily problems drive some men to drink. Fencing is the fencer's drink. It stands ready to soothe our nerves, making it possible to meet the next day's problems with clear eye and steady spirit. As the daily test of nerves increases and we find normal tasks burdened with unusual worries, we should turn gladly to our fencing hobby as a sure method of relaxation and tonic.

The Americas are now the last stronghold of the fencer. We fencers of North and South America have a duty to perform for our sport. We must keep fencing alive until there is a return to peace. In keeping our sport active we likewise keep ourselves employed in healthy recreation and in better physical condition to meet any warlike tasks that our attacked democracy may assign to us.

The Remise

One does not sit down and write a magazine from page one to the end in one chronological order. A magazine is fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle. For that reason it sometimes happens that one page may contradict another. That is what happened in our last issue and what is worse it happened in bold face type.

Our writeup of the domestic manufacture of blades was set in type before we received the last-minute copy for the advertisement for the Vince Forging and Manufacturing Company. In all innocence we said, "As far as we know, no satisfactory epee has yet been developed by an American manufacturer." Mr. Vince announced his development of just such a blade. He telephoned us later and asked us to visit his plant. It was agreed that we would eat our words or he would eat foreign epee blades. We are eating our words.

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In the same issue we reproduced a clipping from Philadelphia concerning the fencing record of the late Valentino Argento. It stated that he had held the world's professional championship in 1930. Mr. Argento was a member of the Italian foil team that year and the Italians did win the foil team championship in 1930. The only world's professional individual championship held in 1930 was in epee which was won by Nedo Nadi whose unexpected death we reported early in 1940. We owe these two fine swordsmen this clarification of the record.

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The Riposte didn't mind too much last issue being referred to as a brat, but when our founder stated, "Some people think it takes itself a little too seriously," we were all burned up. Otherwise we enjoyed the article. How well we remember the furor in the locker rooms after Aldo Nadi finished dissecting the recent local fencing. The magazine was never more *serious* than when Mr. Nadi was flaying the fencers, the writer included. Whether Mr. Nadi came to the conclusion that he was casting pearls or became tired of the column after having worked over every fencer or near-fencer at least once, we do not know. But we do know Aldo Nadi and he never "finally decided to bow to his critics." We should live so long. He retired from the column unbloodied and unbowed and if you wish to test this you need only write to us. We will pass it along, duck for the nearest shelter, and listen for the steel-snap of his reply.

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Occasionally a statement made to me in all seriousness about fencing strikes a funny note that more than repays the many headaches that also accompany an editorship. One such was part of a most serious article recently received. Its final refusal was the result of a close decision and I hope that its

(Continued on page 16)

BULLETINS FROM THE A. F. L. A.

Electrical Epee To Be One-Touch

The contraction in the market of epee blades has caused the board of governors to rule that all competitions scheduled for electric epees for the remainder of the season are to be fenced for one touch. This includes both individual and team competitions, national and divisional.

This will be the first year since 1931 that the national open epee championship will have been fenced for one touch. Although the metropolitan open championship was one-touch last year, it was at that time looked upon in the nature of an experiment, the shortage of blades not having been too seriously felt.

The national epee championship was always fenced for one touch until 1932, when the three-touch form was introduced. Early in 1940 there was much discussion of the possibility of returning to one touch, but it was not until the blade situation became acute that it was decided to shift the nationals back to the old form.

Team Qualification Rules Changed

No qualifying rounds for the 1942 national team championships will be held, it is announced by the board of governors of the A. F. L. A. Instead of having preliminary divisional qualifying tests, all teams will be admitted to the finals of the championship

A. F. L. A. Membership Up

Up to December 1, 1941, active membership in the A. F. L. A. totaled 434 as compared with 374 at the same time the previous year. Junior membership on December 1, 1941, was 132 as compared with 112 the year before. Interest in fencing has increased despite the loss of many men to the Services.

during the gala week. The only limitation is that no club may enter more than one team.

Undoubtedly the reason for this action is that last year no more than three clubs were represented in any men's weapon, and it was agreed to use four-man teams in each weapon. Other teams that might have filled the field were eliminated in the divisional trials. The new ruling will assure larger fields and give many fencers who have never had an opportunity to fence in a national championship a chance to do so.

Exemptions for Nationals Increased

The list of those exempt from qualifying from the divisions for the national individual championships in all weapons was increased to include all previous national champions, and the medal winners of the preceding year, by the A. F. L. A. board of governors at a recent meeting.

The question of qualifiers has been under study by the A. F. L. A. rules committee for more than six months, and it is as a result of their recommendations that the new plan was adopted. It was discussed in an article in the June 1941 *Riposte* by Miguel A. de Capriles, chairman of the rules committee.

The new plan, by automatically qualifying the proven leaders, will allow more fencers to have a place in the championships and will permit divisions which have shown superior strength in one weapon to enter a correspondingly large number of fencers in that weapon in the championship finals.

Board of Governors Nominees

Nominees for non-divisional governors of the A. F. L. A., as selected by the group's nominating committee, headed by Leo G. Nunes, have been announced as follows:

Norman C. Armitage, Marcel Brammerel, Miguel A. de Capriles, Madeline Dalton, Robert Driscoll, Pieter Mijer, and William S. Price.

The slate of 1942-43 officers of the A. F. L. A., as announced by the nominating committee, is as follows:

President, John M. Huffman; first vice-president, Ferard Leicester; second vice-president, Richard F. Warren; third vice-president, Royall H. Snow; secretary, Warren Dow; treasurer, George Cochrane.

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LT. GEORGE CHARLES CALNAN, U. S. N.

With the coming of war, many of our fencers are serving in the armed forces of the United States. The memory of Lt. Calnan, probably the greatest figure in American fencing history, who lost his life in the dirigible "Akron" disaster in 1933, is treasured by our older colleagues. But many of the younger fencers are only vaguely acquainted with Calnan's name, and know little of the man or his achievements. The *Riposte* is fortunate to be able to present Calnan's story largely in his own words. In the fall of 1932, at the request of one of our editors, he wrote a short fencing autobiography. This is the first time that this material is made available for publication. This is the first of two articles.

AT the opening ceremonies of the 1932 Olympic Games, before an audience of 105,000, an American naval officer ascended the rostrum, and on behalf of the assembled athletes of the world, recited the traditional oath of amateurism and sportsmanship. That officer was the Captain of the American Olympic Fencing Team, Lt. George C. Calnan. It was the first time that a fencer had been so honored in the Olympic Games.

During the succeeding two weeks, the American fencing team, led by Lt. Calnan, made its highest score in Olympic history. Early in the new year of 1933, Calnan's nomination for the presidency of the Amateur Fencers League of America was universally acclaimed. Then, one night in early April, the great airship "Akron" left its Lakehurst base, Lt. Calnan at his post as ballast officer, never to return. A year later, the Amateur Fencers League of America dedicated a new trophy, emblematic of the National Three-Weapon Team Championship, to be known as the Calnan Memorial Trophy. President O'Connor said at the time: "Calnan . . . belongs to a period in American fencing which marks the transfer of emphasis from technical perfection to competitive excellence, without detriment, strange as it may seem, to fencing technique. When Calnan started his fencing, the emphasis in all schools was on form, and he became a perfect stylist. . . . Calnan was a leader in this transition and fencing history still to be written will give him credit for the part he has played."

Calnan was the first American fencer to convince the skeptical Europeans that American swordsmanship had come of age. His greatest international triumph, third place in the individual epee championship at the 1928 Olympic Games, behind the immortal Lucien Gaudin and the redoubtable European champion Georges Buchard, was the first individual Olympic medal ever won by an American fencer. His national

championship record in the United States was phenomenal: In ten years, he won the foil championship six times, once taking second and once taking third place. He won the epee championship once, besides two seconds and two thirds. He won the three-weapon championship, the outdoor epee title, and a host of other events.

Yet, when he was asked to summarize his fencing life, he wrote: "In writing a personal biography I find it very difficult to be anything but quite impersonal. It is rather difficult to be dramatic about one's self unless one is an actor or an actress. You have my permission to change any of the material that I am forwarding you and to dramatize as you see fit. . . . Although this has been a lot of work to write, I would still feel quite happy, and in fact would appreciate it, if you decided not to use it, but decided to use the biography of Breckinridge, Levis, or Huffman. . . ."

* * *

George Charles Calnan was born in Boston in 1900, where he attended English High School. At Annapolis he was an honor student, besides serving as a midshipman during the war aboard the U. S. S. Rhode Island and the U. S. S. Pennsylvania. He was foil champion of the Academy and captain of the fencing team. How he came to start fencing may best be told in his own words:

"In June, 1916, I went to the Naval Academy, a gangling youngster of sixteen years of age and of such an imposing stature that when I walked down the corridor in my military uniform, my classmates were constantly afraid that I was going to suddenly fall apart. I was six feet tall and weighed a little over one hundred and thirty pounds.

"When the call for football candidates came out in August of that summer, I reported for football practice with a great deal of enthusiasm, but with, as it was afterwards proved, absolutely no ability. When the football suits were handed out in September at the beginning of the academic year, my ability was recognized and I was given no suit.

"Very much depressed, I walked back from football practice that September evening with a desire to go out for some sport other than football. I met a friend in my class who had been to the fencing room, taking fencing lessons for the previous month. After a great deal of persuasion on his part, I volunteered to go to the fencing room with him just to look on, but with a mental reservation not to become interested under any circumstances.

"Mr. Darriault, the present Fencing Coach at Cornell [Ed. note: now deceased], was then at the Naval Academy and was having his usual difficult time

in convincing the midshipmen to take more interest in the sport of fencing. Anybody who entered the fencing room looked good to him. He came over to greet me and persuaded me to put on a mask and a glove and to take a foil in my hand. He even bribed me by giving me a lesson. So I received in fifteen minutes more attention than I had received in one month on the football field. From then on, I hardly missed a day of fencing for the whole three years that I was at the Naval Academy. I am quite sure that I averaged five days a week for those three academic years."

The story continues in a tone that will be familiar to all fencers who are or have been members of a college team:

"During that time the outstanding memory is that of being Captain of the fencing team and going to New York with the team my senior year without the services of a coach. That was in April 1919 when there were only six colleges in the Intercollegiate Fencing Association. I remember distinctly being so nervous during the night before the competition, that I did not sleep a single wink the whole night. The competition was run off in those days so that every member of each team fenced every member of every other team, and then the total number of bouts won and lost was added up and the team which had the highest number of wins was declared the winner; thus, on this occasion the team which won the greatest number out of forty-five bouts was declared the winner. Although my team was a heavy favorite to win, due to a number of causes Columbia carried away first place and we got second. Through all the sixteen years of college, national, international and Olympic competition in which I have been, that defeat crushed me more and had more of a lasting effect on me than anything else that ever happened."

First Olympics

It is obvious that this disappointment became only an incentive to greater effort, for the story continues:

"In 1920 the call came out from the Amateur Fencers League of America for candidates for the Olympic Fencing Team. Although I had been out of training for nine months, I decided to go back to the Naval Academy and try out for the team. After months of training and a series of tryouts at Washington, Philadelphia and New York, the Olympic Team was selected and I was named as a substitute on the foils team. So, I journeyed to Antwerp and got my first taste of Olympic competition. That year I believe there was gathered together at Antwerp the greatest group of fencers that I have ever seen in my whole experience. Aldo Nadi, Nedo Nadi, Pulitti and Terlizzi were there from Italy; Gaudin, Cattiau and Ducret were there from France; Thom and Anspach were there from Belgium; Osier was there from Denmark; and the only people missing were the Germans, the Austrians and the Hungarians. I never imagined that fencing could be so magnificent as what I saw there, and I resolved to continue fencing with

the hope of attaining some close approximation to that perfection. At those games I fenced only five bouts, winning two and losing three. At any rate, I never survived the preliminaries of the individual championships."

Amateur Coaching

Upon returning from Europe, Calnan went for one year to the Naval Academy for post-graduate work, and then was sent to Massachusetts Institute of Technology for additional training in construction engineering. As to his fencing during these years, he says: "At each of these places, I was an amateur coach with the teams, helping out the undergraduates as best I could." This was an interest that Calnan actively retained throughout his career, and many a midshipman who later became a strong national and international competitor owes much to Calnan's effort. However, it was not a midshipman but a young student of engineering at M. I. T., Joseph L. Levis, that became most famous among Calnan's proteges. Although their relative competitive record from 1926 to 1932 heavily favored Calnan in the foil, he always regarded Levis as the best American foilsmen. He used to say, prior to the 1932 Olympics, "I am only a big, strong ox, but Levis . . . there's a foilsmen for you." It is a matter of record, of course, that Levis' second place in the 1932 Olympics is the highest honor ever won by an American foilsmen.

First Victory in Epee

Let us continue with Calnan's story:

"In May of 1923, after winning the New England Foils Championship, I went to New York to take part in the National Championships. In New York I found the going too rough in foil and was eliminated, so rather than go home that evening, I decided to

Old Tricks

Helene Mayer, having re-proved her dominance over the country's women fencers with her overwhelming victory in the nationals last June, kept up her remarkable Pacific Coast record by going through a recent competition involving 15 bouts with but three touches scored against her, no more than one by any single contestant. That's par for any course.

wait over until the next day and get some experience in the National Epee Championship. Up to this time, I had never entered a competition in the epee. Much to my surprise and to the surprise of everybody else, I won the National Epee Championship. For the last nine years I have each year without exception endeavored to capture that Epee Championship again and the best I have been able to do is two second places and one third place."

This is the first of two articles about Lt. Calnan. The second, telling in his own words about his later national, international and Olympic successes—and disappointments—will appear in the next issue.

468 TAKE PART IN 21 COMPETITIONS

FIELDS totaling 468 competitors entered the 21 meets held in the metropolitan district during December and January, not including the inter-divisional finals of the all-eastern championships. These fields were broken down as follows: men's foil, 142; epee, 64; sabre, 69; three-weapon, 12, and women's foil, 181. For the season thus far in the metropolitan section, 37 competitions have attracted 978 fencers: 306 in men's foil, 168 in epee, 162 in sabre, 12 in three-weapon and 330 in women's foil.

Men's Foil

A. F. L. A. Novice Foil—It took two nights of fencing to find a winner among the 48 entries in the second novice foil of the metropolitan season, held on December 9 and 11 at the Salle Santelli. Andre Deladrier of St. John's University finally captured the gold medal, defeating Neil Lazar of the home club, 5-2 in a fence-off after each had won four of his five final round bouts. Peter Tishman of the Salle Santelli was third.

Metropolitan Junior Foil Championship—Austin Prokop of the Salle Santelli outfenced an unusually large field of 34 to win the metropolitan junior foil championship on his home strips on December 13. Prokop did not drop a bout in the nine-man finals until after he had clinched first place, when Wallace H. Goldsmith, Jr., of the New York A. C., defeated him and made certain of second. Arthur Tauber, New York University, was third, having the same number of wins as Goldsmith, six, but receiving three more touches. No one but Goldsmith managed to score more than three touches against the winner.

Open Foil Team, Cartier Trophy—A New York Athletic Club trio of Warren A. Dow, Dernel Every and John R. Huffman that lost only three bouts through the entire competition retired the Cartier trophy in open team foils at the Saltus Club on December 15 and 18. In the preliminary rounds the A. C. foilsmen defeated the Saltus Club, 9-0 and a composite team 5-1, and in the finals trounced their own "B" team 5-1, the Salle Santelli "B" team 5-0, and the Santelli "A" trio 5-0. The final match, between the A. C. and the undefeated Santelli "A" squad of Jose de Capriles, Dean Cetrulo and Norman Lewis, wasn't even close, with only one bout reaching the full nine points. Seven other teams were on hand to challenge the national championship squad.

Greco Senior Foil—Nathaniel Lubell of the Salle d'Armes Vince won the Greco senior foil at the Greco Fencing Academy on December 28. Lubell took the gold medal only after a fence-off with Albert Axelrod of the Foils Club, which he won, 5-3. Ralph Goldstein of the Salle Santelli took third on touches over Kurt Ettinger, unattached. The latter was the only senior among the twelve entries in the com-

petition, which was fortunately also open to intermediates and juniors.

All-Eastern Intermediate Foil Championship, Qualifying Round—Six foilsmen out of a field of 20 survived the metropolitan qualifying rounds for the all-eastern intermediate championship, held at the Salle Santelli on January 4. They included Ralph Goldstein, Austin Prokop and Evan Quinn of the Salle Santelli, Nathaniel Lubell of the Salle d'Armes Vince, Wallace H. Goldsmith, Jr., of the New York A. C., and Arthur D. Tauber of New York University. Ralph Leiderman of the Greco Fencing Academy and Henrique Santos of the N. Y. A. C., were alternates.

Epee

Metropolitan Junior Epee Championship—Wallace H. Goldsmith, Jr., of the New York A. C., won the metropolitan junior epee championship from a field of 37 at the Salle Santelli on December 7. Goldsmith took the title after a fence-off with Archie Ignatow of the Salle Santelli, winning 3-2. Ralph Goldstein, also of the Salle Santelli, took third on touches over his teammate, Peter Tishman. Goldsmith and Ignatow both won six of their eight bouts on the nine-man final strip.

All-Eastern Intermediate Epee Championship, Qualifying Round—The Salle Santelli, the New York A. C. and Columbia University each qualified two men among the six metropolitan qualifiers for the all-eastern intermediate epee championship at the Salle Santelli on January 10. Advancing to the finals were Ralph Goldstein and Evan Quinn of Santelli, Henrique Santos and Wallace Goldsmith of the A. C. and Andrew Pickens and Mortimer Bader of Columbia. Nineteen competed for the six places. William Meyer of the Salle Santelli and Ralph Leiderman of the Greco Fencing Academy qualified as alternates.

A. F. L. A. Senior Epee—Pieter Mijer of the Salle Santelli, with a record of six wins and one loss, won the A. F. L. A. senior epee at the Saltus Club on January 15. Robert Driscoll of the Fencers Club, with a record of five and two, was second, while Henrique Santos of the New York A. C. defeated August von Munchhausen of the Saltus Club, 3-1, in a fence-off for third after a complete tie in bouts and touches. Seven senior and ranking epeeists took part in the competition.

Sabre

Novice Sabre Team, Castello Trophy—Eight teams entered the competition for the Castello novice sabre trophy at the Salle Santelli on November 29. The N. Y. U. trio of Arthur Frank, Seymour Cantor and Arthur D. Tauber came through undefeated to emerge as winners. In the final round they disposed of the Seton Hall College squad of Fred Gillen, Al Sully and John Ciccone, 5-1, having defeated the Columbia "B" team 5-1, C. C. N. Y. 5-3, and Columbia "A" 5-2.

A.F.L.A. Senior Sabre—Tibor Nyilas of the Salle Santelli, going through the ten-man competition with but one loss, won the A.F.L.A. senior sabre competition on his home strips on December 2. Deadlocked for second with three wins and two losses were Norman Armitage of the Fencers Club, national champion, and Nickolas Muray of the N.Y.A.C. Armitage was awarded second on touches.

Metropolitan Junior Sabre Championship—Emerging from his preliminary and the nine-man final without the loss of a bout, Peter Tishman of the Salle Santelli won the metropolitan junior sabre championship from a field of 15 at his home club on December 20. Only one opponent managed to take four points from Tishman during the course of the championship. Neil Lazar of the Salle Santelli won second place on touches over Sol Gorlin of New York University.

All-Eastern Intermediate Sabre Championship, Qualifying Round—The Salle Santelli and New York University each qualified two men for the finals of the all-eastern intermediate sabre championship in the metropolitan preliminaries at the Salle Santelli on January 11. Peter Tishman and Joseph Goldzieher of Santelli and Sol Gorlin and Arthur Frank of N.Y.U. were top men in the field of 11. Harold Newton of the Greco Fencing Academy was first alternate.

A.F.L.A. Senior Sabre—George V. Worth of the Salle Santelli won the second A.F.L.A. senior sabre competition of the season, held at the Salle Santelli on January 22. He went through the single nine-man strip with but one loss. Three men deadlocked for second with six wins and two defeats: Norman Armitage of the Fencers Club, Tibor Nyilas of the Salle Santelli and Miguel A. de Capriles of the Salle Santelli. They finished in that order on a count of touches.

Three-Weapon

Honeycutt Memorial Open Three-Weapon Team—A New York Athletic Club trio of Warren A. Dow, Nickolas Muray and Henrique Santos, fencing foil, sabre and epee in that order, won the first leg on the new Honeycutt Memorial Trophy in open three-weapon team competition at the N.Y.A.C. on January 18. Fenced under the same rules as the former Allair Trophy competition, the meet attracted four three-man squads. Each touch received and each bout lost counted a point against the team, and the squad with the lowest score took the trophy.

The Salle Santelli, with Jose R. de Capriles fencing foil, Tibor Nyilas, sabre and Pieter Mijer, epee, was second, with the Fencers Club squad of Kurt Ettinger, Norman Armitage and Tracy Jaekel third and the Saltus Club team of Stephen Stevens, Wilfred Ritayik and August von Munchhausen fourth.

The totals in each weapon were as follows:

Team	Foil	Sabre	Epee	Total
New York A. C.	12	8	10	30
Salle Santelli	7	12	15	34
Fencers Club	13	14	10	37
Saltus Club	18	18	16	52

FEBRUARY, 1942

Women's Foil

Women's Novice Foil Team, Santelli Trophy—A Greco Fencing Academy composite team of Zelda Atkins, Mary Hoffman and Florence Mode won the Santelli trophy for women's novice foil teams from a field of 13 trios at the Salle Santelli on November 30. In the final round they defeated the Salle Santelli, 5-2, New York University 5-4, and a Cooper Union composite squad, 5-1.

Vince Open Women's Foil—Helena Mroczkowska of the Fencers Club overpowered a field of 33 to win the Vince open women's foil competition at the Salle Santelli on December 6. Fencing in top form, Miss Mroczkowska allowed only three fencers to score more than a single touch against her, two of these coming in her only losses in the nine-woman finals. Madeline Dalton of the Salle Santelli took second over Dolly Funke of the Greco Fencing Academy on a count of touches. Tied for fourth were Marion Lloyd Vince of the Salle d'Armes Vince, Mildred Stewart of the Fencers Club, Ruth Maxwell of the Fencers Club, Elizabeth Bruskin of the Salle Santelli and Maria Cerra of Vince. They finished in that order on a recapitulation of touches.

Locke Junior Women's Foil—Bessie Aboulafia of the Foils Club won six of her eight final-round bouts to take first place in the annual Dorothy Brown Locke women's junior fencing competition at the Greco Fencing Academy. Tied for second with five wins were Kathleen Cerra, Salle d'Armes Vince, and Ethel Iskowitz and Gloria Watson, both of the Salle Santelli. They finished in that order on a count of touches. There were 33 competitors.

Metropolitan Junior Women's Foil Championship—Triumphing over a field of 21, Grace Unthoff of the Salle Santelli won the women's metropolitan junior foil championship at the Fencers Club on December 21. Second in the field was Ethel Iskowitz of the Salle Santelli, and third Bessie Aboulafia of the Foils Club. Miss Unthoff had a clear margin over the rest of the field throughout the championship.

Voorhees Senior Women's Foil—Maria Cerra of the Salle d'Armes Vince, fencing at her strongest, won the Voorhees senior women's foil from an entry list of 17 at the Fencers Club on January 3. Tied for second place were Helena Mroczkowska of the Fencers Club and Madeline Dalton of the Salle Santelli, but Miss Mroczkowska was awarded the silver medal on a count of touches.

Greco Open Women's Foil—Twenty-five entries took part in the Greco open women's foil at the new Greco Fencing Academy on January 25. Helena Mroczkowska, with an unblemished record in the preliminaries and eight straight triumphs in the final, took the gold medal. Second was Elizabeth Bruskin of the Salle Santelli and third Ruth Maxwell of the Fencers Club. In the deciding bout between Miss Mroczkowska and Miss Bruskin, both with spotless records, Miss Bruskin ran up a 3-1 lead but finally succumbed by a 4-3 score to Miss Mroczkowska's aggressive attacks.

18 CHARACTERISTICS OF FENCERS

By Dernell Every

This is the second of two articles that deal with the physical and mental makeup of the fencer. The first part, in the previous issue of *The Riposte*, dealt primarily with eight physical qualities which help to make up the "perfect fencer." In this issue, the author goes on to examine the ten mental qualities of most importance.

The Mental Qualities

CONCENTRATION—When you really fence, the room, the spectators, the officials, even the score blurs into oblivion. All you can see is the weapon, the target, the entirety of your opponent. In a few short minutes you must undertake a mental and physical analysis of your adversary in order to match your strongest qualities against his weaknesses, if any. Fencing requires that such concentration likewise be alert; alert to opportunities to attack, to defend against the unexpected, to change plans instantly, yes, even alert to disrupt the opponent's concentration. Fencing might facetiously be called a chess game on wheels except that the chess player is given an unmolested opportunity to concentrate while the opponent is compelled to remain immobile. A photographer's flash bulb has scored many a touch through breaking the concentration of a fencer. The weak-willed and slap-happy win no medals.

Courage—We restrict this term here, perhaps incorrectly, to its mental manifestations. Natural physical courage has been covered by "competitive heart" in an earlier definition. By courage we mean the mental nullification of fear, the acceptance of defeat without collapsing, the controlled emotional response to a dreaded result. Courage permits the fencer to dare to do what appears to be dangerous to his purpose for the very reason that it so appears and is therefore unexpected. It takes courage to attack a strong defender, invite the attack of a strong attacker, to lunge into an attack, to attack against a point in line in the belief that the opponent will react defensively. There is foolhardy courage and mentally-controlled courage and the second of these is a strong quality of the good fencer.

Experience—This is the long-term result of trial and error in many former bouts and competitions against all types of opponents. To say that a fencer is experienced does not merely mean that he has fenced for a long time. It implies that he has greater adaptability to situations, can analyze an opponent's weaknesses more quickly and knows himself better than does his younger opponent. It is a mental growth, an appreciation of the art of the sport. It is difficult to explain but many a fast, well-taught

fencer has been embarrassed to find a victory slip from his hands purely as a result of the greater experience of his opponent. The less-experienced of two fencers of equal fencing skill and speed, has an equal chance of winning a one-touch bout, has a good chance of winning a three-touch bout, has some chance of winning a five-touch bout but has no chance of winning a ten-touch bout.

Memory—This quality does overlap "experience" but is also distinct in itself in application to individual opponents. The man who can remember what the particularly favored attacks, parries and methods of individual opponents have been in the past has a considerable advantage over the fencer who can only remember past score results. A good memory makes it possible for a fencer to lose at first meeting but win in all subsequent bouts with the same opponent. Experience is a great help in meeting an opponent for the first time; experience plus memory should serve you in all future meetings.

Patience—From two to five minutes are allowed for each required touch, depending upon the weapon used. Given ten minutes for a five-touch foil bout, one need not permit impatience to overthrow the better results to be obtained from coolheadedness. Just because the opponent is leading at the change is no reason to dash in with "all or nothing" attacks; in fact an even break at this sort of thing, making and receiving two touches out of four such attacks, would find you defeated. The impatient fencer makes more touches with his chest than with his foil.

Smartness—There is nothing sure in life but death and taxes. There is nothing sure in fencing but the time limit and entry fee. There is no attack which will penetrate all parries nor any parry which will ward off all attacks. It is a game of skill and wits where the latter often overcomes the former. Foxiness, strategy, the laying of trap and counter-trap, the surprise, the adoption of a type of play unlikely by the particular opponent of the moment; all these go to make the "smart" fencer. Smartness is a self-evident requirement in any sport wherein the feint of every action must be learned as carefully as the actions themselves.

Technique—This is an individual characteristic often and incorrectly considered as synonymous with "form." It is sometimes referred to as style. It is the individual's own way of fencing, away from the guidance of his professional or the consciousness of exhibition. It is the fencer in the raw as guided by his mind and individuality during the concentration of a touch-making requirement. No two techniques are alike. It is the characteristic upon which the caricaturist would call to depict you, despite your

(Continued on page 16)

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A NEW COMPETITIVE PLAN FOR THE I.C.F.A.

By Miguel A. de Capriles

This is the seventh in a series of articles of comment on the new rules book by Mr. de Capriles, chairman of the A.F.L.A. and I.C.F.A. rules committees. While the current article deals with the methods used by one intercollegiate conference to solve its championship problems, it should be of interest to other conferences, both among colleges and in the A.F.L.A., where a plan of competition is needed to decide both individual and team champions without too many hours of overtime fencing.

WHEN the rules book was prepared, the A.F.L.A., the N.C.A.A., and the Intercollegiate Fencing Association collaborated on the technical rules in the interest of uniformity. However, no description of the plan of college competition was included because each college league has a peculiar local problem, rather than one of general national application. I propose in this article to summarize the various plans devised by the Intercollegiate Fencing Association—the oldest college league in the country—since its foundation in 1894, and to evaluate briefly the major features of the new plan to govern the 1942 Championships, which will be held on March 21 and 22.

The Complete Round-Robin

When the I.C.F.A. was founded, competition was limited to the foil, and the number of member colleges was small. It was relatively easy to organize a complete round-robin of all competitors to determine both the team and the individual champions. This, as you know, is the ideal method of running fencing competitions. However, individual and team events in sabre and epee began to make their appearance, until the typical college fencing team consisted of three men in foil, two in epee, and two in sabre. In addition, new colleges began to sponsor fencing teams and to seek admission to membership in the I.C.F.A. The situation became acute shortly after the first World War and a new plan of competition had to be devised.

The Divisional Plan

The next plan was modeled after the "pool" system—a familiar variation of the round-robin. Semi-final rounds were held in each of three "divisions," a week or two before the "finals." The Northern Division met at either Harvard or Yale, the Central Division at West Point, and the Southern Division at Annapolis. The two leading teams and the best individual performers in each weapon were qualified from each division into the championship round-robin—a two-day gala affair at the Hotel Astor in New York, which included the colorful Championship

Ball. As many as 16 teams, mostly from the Atlantic Seaboard, but including Ohio State, took part in the Intercollegiates at this time.

Then came the depression. A number of member colleges abandoned fencing and resigned from the Association. Those who remained sought to cut down on expenses by abolishing the expense of trips to the divisional semi-finals. The I.C.F.A. Constitution was revised late in 1931 to centralize management in the hands of interested alumni, with a Graduate Secretary at the helm. A new plan was devised to hold the entire championship in a single two-day session in New York.

The "Olympic" Plan

Following the general pattern of the Olympics, this "condensed" plan called for a separation of the team events and the individual championships. The colleges were grouped into four preliminary pools, of three or four teams each. The two top teams qualified into the semi-finals (two pools of four teams each) and the final round consisted of the four best teams. The Three-Weapon Trophy was decided on a point basis, 5 for first, 4 for second, and so on, 1 point being allowed to a team eliminated in the semi-final. The individual events were held on the second day. Each college was allowed two individual entries in each weapon, and the competition progressed according to the usual "pool" system: Four preliminaries of 6 men, two semi-finals of 6, and a final of 6 (in 1932) or 4 (in 1933 and 1934).

By this time, the membership of the I.C.F.A. had become stabilized at twelve: Army, C.C.N.Y., Columbia, Cornell, Hamilton, Harvard, M.I.T., Navy, N.Y.U., Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale. But there was increasing interest in equalizing the competitive representation for epee and sabre by raising the number of fencers on the team from two to three. This could not be done if the team events had to be completed on a single day. In addition, there was objection to the "Olympic" plan on the ground that the early elimination of the weaker teams and individuals deprived the weaker colleges of enough competition to justify the expense of the Championships. Further, the complete separation of the team and individual events was not popular: The stars of the team—the real heroes in collegiate eyes—might have sacrificed their individual chances by "all-out" efforts on the first day, so that the individual championships were regarded as anti-climactic. Thus, after three years, the time was ripe for a new experiment.

The "A B C" Plan

The model for the new plan was a form of team competition used in the Washington Square Cup competition of the A.F.L.A., based on a modified round-

robin scheme. Each college nominated its No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 fencer in each weapon. All the No. 1 or "Class A" fencers met in a round-robin, as did the No. 2 ("Class B") and No. 3 ("Class C") men. Each individual victory counted in the team score, both for the separate weapons and for the Three-Weapon Trophy. Each fencer competed in 11 bouts and no one was eliminated. The individual winner in the "Class A" pool was recognized as champion, and was given the only individual gold medal. Silver medals went to the second man of Class A and to the winner of Class B. Bronze medals were awarded for third place in Class A, second in Class B, and first in Class C.

In order to retain as much as possible the unique flavor of team competition, the schedule called for "matching" the three fencers of one college against the representatives of another. A carefully worked out time-table, requiring precision in the routing of teams and in the assignment of officials, governed the entire round-robin. A complete schedule was available in the printed program for the benefit of spectators. On the final evening, prior to the Championship Ball, each college was represented by one of its teams.

This plan proved to be generally popular, being used for five years (1935 to 1939 inclusive). It is true that the large number of bouts and the complicated timetable limited its usefulness to an Association of 12 colleges, so that the I.C.F.A. could not increase its membership to meet the growing list of applications. But the question of accommodating the new centers of collegiate fencing was answered by the establishment of other strong college leagues. It is interesting to note that the Eastern Conference adopted the

so-called "A B C Plan" for its championships. The main quarrel during the five-year term of the "A B C Plan" in the I.C.F.A. had to do with the so-called "nine-man rule"—that is, whether or not the Association would permit a fencer to compete in more than one weapon. This, however, had nothing to do with the plan itself.

From the viewpoint of the team events, the major flaw in the plan was the unequal strength of the three pools, since a bout victory in the "A" pool, which was relatively difficult, counted no more than a victory in the "C" pool. Some manipulation was possible in order to reap the highest number of points for the team totals. But the chief objection to the "A B C" system was directed against the individual results. A fencer entered in Class B or Class C was automatically barred from a chance to win the individual gold medal. This was particularly objectionable if two men from the same college were of approximately equal strength, since only one could compete in Class A. In the view of many observers, the plan tended to reduce the individual titles to a meaningless confusion.

These objections crystallized after the breakdown of the "A B C Plan" at the 1939 Championships. During the previous year, amendments to the I.C.F.A. constitution shifted management of the fencing championships from the alumni to the Central Office for Eastern Intercollegiate Athletics. This move antagonized most of the outstanding amateur officials for reasons that need not be discussed. The annual Championship Ball was eliminated, since no parallel was to be found in other branches of intercollegiate sport, and the tournament was moved from its cus-

(Continued on page 14)

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GALLERY OF FENCING PORTRAITS

FENCERS have become used to being asked to exhibit before this or that group to spread interest in the sport. When an artist approaches some score of fencers and asks them to pose for their portraits in oil with the idea that these fencing portraits be exhibited at one of the salles d'armes, that is news.

Early in December Dr. Gil Parche conceived the idea of preparing a private collection of oil portraits of the leading American fencers. He had been a fencer himself while an undergraduate at the University of Edinburgh and had always retained an interest in the sport and the men who participated in it. His idea of preparing such a group of portraits was, therefore, related to both his profession and his sports interest. The idea was expanded as he found the fencers entirely cooperative. More than fifteen of these already have sat for him in his penthouse studio on East 32nd Street. The exhibition will be opened with a banquet and private showing on March 10th. The paintings will remain on exhibition throughout the month of March at the Salle d'Armes Santelli.

Dr. Parche has already painted portraits of Dr. Graeme M. Hammond, John R. Huffman, Norman C. Armitage, Enrique A. Berumen, George Breed, the late Lieut. George C. Calnan, U. S. N., Jose R. de Capriles, Miguel A. de Capriles, Dernel Every, Tracy Jaekel, Pieter Mijer, Helena Mroczkowska, Nickolas Muray, Rene Pinchart, William Price, George Santelli, Joseph Smith, Dorothy B. Locke, F. Barnard O'Connor, and Julio Castello. Other portraits still to be completed for inclusion later in the showing are of James Murray, Col. Samuel T. Shaw, Capt. Gustave M. Heiss, U. S. A., Joseph L. Levis and Marion L. Vince.

The collection is already impressive and is being looked upon as a Fencers Hall of Fame. Dr. Parche is also planning many additions for future years. He hopes to add to the collection as new and promising fencers are developed. He wishes to round out the collection with a fuller set of the contemporary figures in the sport. As out-of-town fencers come to New York, Dr. Parche hopes that they will sit for him and make the collection representative of the entire country.

Perhaps one of the most unusual features of the exhibition is that no picture is to be offered for sale. No fencer has assumed any obligation except to sit for the artist during the painting. If Dr. Parche continues his project, and he does not appear to be a man of short enthusiasm, his future requests for sitting may well be accepted as a mark of fencing honor that cannot well be overlooked.

Through the energy and conception of one man, fencing will soon gain the distinction of being the only sport in the world that has had a portrait collection made up exclusively of its amateur and pro-

fessional leaders. Prominent people in the sport have agreed to lend their names to the showing as sponsors. Here too the same spirit of cooperation has been evident throughout. The private showing of March 10th will be under the sponsorship of such lovers of the sport as: the Hon. Henry C. Breckinridge, Frederick R. Coudert, Sr., Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, Dr. Graeme M. Hammond, Capt. Gustave M. Heiss, U. S. A., Leo G. Nunes, Mrs. Robert Low Pierrepont, George Santelli, Col. Samuel T. Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Van Buskirk, Mrs. Charles Voorhees, Mrs. Junius Spencer Morgan, and Lieut. Col. Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, U. S. M. C. Ret.

The growing enthusiasm for the exhibition already promises an unusual treat for the fencers this coming month. The idea itself, its scope, the quality of its sitters, and excellence of its sponsors promises success in advance. Artists, critics and sportsmen will be attracted to this exhibition, the first of its kind ever to be given.

All-Eastern Championships

Women's Foil Team—The Salle Santelli trio of Elizabeth Bruskin, Barbara Cochrane and Grace Unthoff won the all-eastern intermediate women's foil team championship in the final round of the competition at the Fencers Club on January 30. They defeated the Foils Club combination of Bessie Aboulafia, Rosalind Blumberg and Pearl Perlmutter, 5-2, and then the Fencers Club team of Mrs. Norman Armitage, Ruth Maxwell and Dorothy Wahl, 5-4. The latter squad finished second by outpointing the Foils Club, 5-3. The Santelli squad was the defending champion.

Men's Foil Team—A brilliant Seton Hall College team of Austin Prokop, Peter Milone and Harry Boutsikaris won the all-eastern intermediate men's foil team championship from a field of eight teams at the Salle Santelli on February 1. They defeated the New York Athletic Club combination of Wallace H. Goldsmith, Jr., James Flynn and Henrique Santos in the final match, 5-3, to clinch the title. Other teams which reached the final round were the Salle Santelli—Ralph Goldstein, Neil Lazar, Evan Quinn and Peter Tishman—and the Greco Fencing Academy—Ralph Leiderman, Joseph Rabb and Peter O'Connor.

Epee Team—Going through a field of five squads without defeat, the Salle Santelli team of Ralph Goldstein, Jack Gorlin, Evan Quinn and Peter Tishman won the all-eastern intermediate men's epee team championship on their home strips February 8. In the deciding match they defeated the New York Athletic Club team of James Flynn, Wallace H. Goldsmith, Rudy Ozol and Henrique Santos, 5-3. The Saltus Club, Columbia University and New York University finished in that order behind the leaders.

COUNTRYWIDE COMPETITIONS

Five Events Held in Southern California

The 1941 season of the Southern California division wound up with five meets held in November and December, a total of sixty-seven fencers competing. On November 28, Josef Lampl of the Los Angeles Athletic Club, fencing on his home strips, took first place over a field of twenty-one in the intermediate foil competition. His clubmate Simon Carfagno finished second, and Robert Cousineau of the Faulkner School of Fencing was third.

After two three-way ties in the finals Mavis Myre, Faulkner School of Fencing, emerged the victor in the women's junior foil meet, with Polly Craus, Faulkner School, and Camille Bayer, Cavaliers, placing second and third respectively. There were thirteen competitors in the contest, which was held at the Hollywood Athletic Club on December 6.

Edward Carfagno, Los Angeles A. C., captured the men's senior foil title on December 12 at his own club, with five fencers competing. Andrew Boyd, also of the Los Angeles A. C., was the runner-up, and third place went to Herbert Sauke of the Faulkner School.

That same day at the Los Angeles A. C. the men's junior foil team meet was held, with four teams entered. First place went to the home team composed of Josef Lampl, Simon Carfagno and Al Carfagno.

In what was perhaps the most exciting competition of the season, Alfred Snyder of the Olympic Club of San Francisco won the open foil title on December 19 at the Los Angeles A. C. Snyder, Pacific Coast foils champion and ranked fourth nationally, defeated Edward Carfagno in the final bout by a 5 to 4 score. Carfagno, Los Angeles A. C., finished second, and his clubmate Josef Lampl was third out of a field of sixteen.

Heron Trophy Meet in Northern California

The Young Italian Club quintet of Salvatore Giambra, Lawrence Bocci, Frank Giambra, Victor Vari, and Armando Duccini, with Mario Del Chiaro as alternate, was the winner of the Heron Trophy competition for open foil teams in the Northern California division. The Young Italian Club combination emerged undefeated in a series of dual meets with six other clubs of the San Francisco district, including two representing the Olympic Club, the Funke Fencing Academy, the Oakland Fencing Club and the University of California, which finished in that order behind the winners.

In the two deciding matches of the annual competition, the Italian group subdued both Olympic Club teams by a score of 13-12. Top individual scorer of the month-long series of matches was Alfred Snyder of the Olympic seconds, fourth ranked nationally, who won 22 out of 25 bouts. Second with 20 victories was Salvatore Giambra of the winning team.

Mardi Gras Tournament Cancelled

Owing to the cancellation of the traditional Carnival at New Orleans this spring, the planned Mardi Gras fencing tournament will not be held this year, according to the heads of the committee in charge, Howard Hayden of Detroit and Orest Meykar of St. Louis.

N. C. A. A. Championships in St. Louis

The annual fencing championships among the members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, originally scheduled for March 28 at Cleveland, has been shifted to Washington University at St. Louis.

It had been planned originally that an open central intercollegiate fencing meet would be held at Washington University on March 21. The Cleveland arrangements for the N. C. A. A. competition had in the meantime run into difficulties and the Washington University authorities agreed upon short notice to accept the N. C. A. A. championship on March 28 in its stead. That is now the arrangement although technical differences have yet to be decided. The N. C. A. A. championships will probably follow last year's pattern and be limited to individual championships among association members.

Alex Solomon, St. Louis A. F. L. A. chairman, and formerly of Yale, will act as bout committee chairman. Lon Hocker, formerly of Princeton, will serve with him. Orest Meykar, fencing coach at Washington University, will act as technical advisor. For further information write to Mr. Meykar at 5537 Suburban Tracks, St. Louis.

St. Louis Abandons Championships

By a unanimous decision, the executive committee of the St. Louis division has voted to drop all competition for championship grades in all weapons, from junior up, for the remainder of the current fencing year. It was decided to do so, the committee declared, to enable the older fencers to give more time to the needs of national defense. Competitions for prep and novice classes will be carried through as planned, and all team meets will be seeded.

In the men's prep foil individual competition, Winston McClure, unattached, was the winner, with Staff Sergeant James Ford, Scott Field, second, and Cadet Michael Galston, Western Military Academy, third on a count of touches.

The men's novice foil team meet, with three teams competing was won by the White team, composed of Ed Maher of the Salle Vical, Staff Sergeant Herbert Thomas of Scott Field, and Cadet Lawrence Fleishman of Western Military Academy.

Seven girls entered the women's individual prep event, which was won by Pauline Faulkner of the Y. W. C. A., who went through the competition undefeated. Her teammate, Susan Dixon, was second, with Mary Ann Chiles, Salle Meykar, third on touches.

NEW COMPETITIVE PLAN FOR I. C. F. A.

(Continued from page 11)

tomary hotel setting to a Park Avenue armory. The net result was that inadequate facilities and scarcity of competent officials destroyed the delicate synchronization required by the plan of competition, and that there was some demand for the formulation of a new system.

The Mid-West Plan

The new plan was based on a method of team scoring used in the A. F. L. A.'s Mid-West Championship and in the Big Ten. Structurally it was simply an individual championship organized on the pool system according to the best national and international practice. The 36 contestants in each weapon were divided into six preliminary pools of 6 fencers according to a secret seeding plan, so that the strength of the various pools was approximately equal. One-half of the fencers dropped out, and the other half progressed to the semi-finals, where the elimination process was completed. Thus the final round consisted of 9 best men in the field, and the individual champion well merited his title. The team score was computed on the aggregate number of bout victories achieved by each individual through the three rounds of competition, so that the scoring power of the individual star was greater than ever before. For the Three-Weapon Trophy, in 1940, the sum total of the bouts won in all weapons was counted; in 1941, the relative standing in the various weapons was used,

in order to favor the balanced three-weapon team rather than one having overwhelming superiority in one or even two weapons.

One of the major arguments in favor of this plan was its flexibility in accommodating more than 12 colleges. As many as 16 teams could be handled with relatively few additional bouts. But this argument lost force, not only because of the growth of other strong college fencing leagues, but also because the Association decided to invite a non-member college to compete when one of the 12 members chose not to participate in the 1941 Championships.

The major objection to the Mid-West plan was the elimination of the weaker fencers early in the tournament. There were other difficulties: if two or three fencers from the same college reached the finals, the result of their bouts against each other went to swell their team's total; the primary emphasis on the individual championship tended to minimize the element of team competition. But the fundamental desire of the majority of the coaches was to give each fencer an equal opportunity to score for his team, as had been possible under the "A B C Plan." Recognizing the weakness of the ABC system in determining individual champions, the coaches were even willing to withdraw individual championship recognition from the winners of the various pools. Thus the stage was set for still another plan of competition, which would

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seek to embody the best features of the ABC Plan (preferred from the team viewpoint), and of the Midwest Plan (admittedly the best for the individual events), for the 1942 Championships.

The Compromise Plan

As in the ABC system, the new plan requires each college to nominate its No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 fencers in each weapon, and the 36 contestants are divided into three pools of 12 men. Thus each fencer will compete in 11 bouts, regardless of his individual record, and each college will have the same scoring opportunities, as the team score will be the aggregate of bout victories achieved by its representatives. But there is one important difference in the composition of the three pools: Instead of concentrating all the best fencers in pool A, each of the three pools will include four No. 1, four No. 2, and four No. 3 fencers, distributed according to a master seeding plan. This will tend to equalize the strength of the three pools, so that a victory in pool C will be as meritorious as one in pool A. The team competition in each weapon will be over when the three pools are completed, and the Three-Weapon Trophy will be awarded on the total points scored in the three separate team competitions.

Following the team events, the two highest individual scorers in each pool will be eligible for the individual championship round-robin of 6 men in each weapon, which will have absolutely no bearing on the team results. In order to reach the individual final, however, a fencer must have rendered outstanding service to his team, so that the unity of purpose in team and individual competition is preserved. At the same time, every competitor will have an equal opportunity to win the individual title, and the champion will have met the best adversaries in the entire field.

The main difficulty with the Compromise Plan is its technical operation within the two-day limit. It requires 45 more bouts than the ABC Plan. The ideal method of running the competition would be to adopt the "match" schedule for the team events, leaving the individual finals for the evening of the second day. This requires spacious physical facilities and an ample supply of competent officials; otherwise a repetition of the difficulties of 1939 may be expected. On the other hand, the Compromise Plan could be run without attempting to "match" the three representatives of each college, with some saving of space and officials, at the cost of losing the colorful setting of a more or less authentic team rivalry. Thus the question of locale assumes primary importance.

Personally, I have come to the conclusion that the elimination of the Annual Championship Ball has been an intangible but powerful factor in the dissatisfaction of competitors, coaches, and officials, with the plans of competition followed in 1939, 1940, and 1941. I think that the plan is probably secondary, and that the real trouble is the loss of the atmosphere that prevailed at the Hotel Astor and the Hotel Commodore in New York, or at the Penn Athletic Club in 1933. The combination of the championships

Biddle Trophy Retired by Barringer

Barringer High School of Newark, N. J., retired the second Anthony J. Drexell Biddle trophy for high and preparatory school foil teams by downing a field of 22 squads at New York University on January 31. The Barringer squad of Jerry Falcone, Allan DeCicco, Orlando Salvato and Ralph Tedeschi downed Abraham Lincoln High of New York, 5-2, and Stuyvesant High of New York, 5-2, in the final round. Lincoln defeated Stuyvesant, 5-4, for runner-up honors.

Stuyvesant retired the first Biddle trophy in 1938 with its second straight team victory, while Barringer repeated its triumph of 1940 to gain the second and deciding leg on the second trophy.

and the annual ball was a unique and brilliant event for all concerned, and the net cost to the Association, under the financial arrangements that prevailed prior to 1939, was frequently lower than it is now, due to the income from the dance. However, recent investigation of hotel rates indicates that the price of suitable accommodations has doubled or tripled, so that there seems to be no reasonable prospect of early resumption of one of the finest traditions in intercollegiate athletics. Perhaps the war situation will operate further to delay or permanently to eliminate the colorful hotel setting for the I. C. F. A. championships. Let us hope, however, that this will not be the case.

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- Sanctioned by A. F. L. A. Metropolitan Committee
- Entry fee 50c—entries due March 2.

Sunday, March 8, at 2 P. M.

THE SALLE
D'ARMES SANTELLI

24-34 University Place, New York

The Remise

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contributor may skip this reference to it for this paragraph is not intended to be derogatory to the article as a whole. However, in extolling the benefits to be derived from the sport, particularly the mental benefits, the writer became so worked up to the subject that the following sentence popped out, "Comparatively speaking, fencing is like chess in its intellectual aspect, but in practice is much faster."

X X

We have long been a supporter of one touch epee competition. Now come developments which will put this type of competition to extensive trial. It has all come about through the rising cost of epee competition. Blades have become so expensive that few fencers can afford to break them.

The Board of Governors of the Amateur Fencers League has ruled that, due to the emergency which has made epee blades scarce and expensive, all electric epee contests, both team and individual, shall be fought in one-touch bouts. It has also authorized its

various bout committees to be more lenient in their approval of epees for competition. These committees are now permitted to waive the triangular blade specifications as outlined in the Rulesbook (Rule 230) and accept at their discretion epees whose blades are quadrangular. Weight specifications may also be waived although length and non-whippiness are conditions which must be maintained. Heavy foil blades may soon appear in epee contests.

The Board of Governors has taken a definite stand of disapproval of the present scale of prices for standard epee blades. Sharp increases have occurred in prices on imported blades. Until domestic manufacturers are able to meet the demand with a blade whose price is more in line with their former cost, the A.F.L.A. intends to make it possible for the epeeist to compete with substitute blades. The board has stated that it looks with disapproval upon anyone asking more than \$2.00 or \$2.50 for a foreign epee blade.

18 CHARACTERISTICS OF FENCERS

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mask, as clearly as though you had signed the picture. Many fencers take one kind of lesson and fence in competition entirely differently. In other words, their physical "form" and mental "technique" are very different. Good or bad form depends upon appearance or orthodoxy. Good or bad technique depends upon results. You can have good form and faulty technique. You can even have poor form and effective technique. The ideal fencer is the one who has good form and effective technique for in these few do we see physical and mental acceptance of the same traits with beautiful fencing as their result.

Change of Pace—This mentally controlled characteristic could be used to greater advantage by most fencers. To attack, to parry, to riposte always with the same speed, your best, can be a weakness rather than an asset. A "smart" opponent, possessed of "rhythm," should soon gain your tempo and keep step or break step with you as the occasion requires. There is nothing so disconcerting as to have a fast opponent drift in with a slow, innocent attack that touches before you realize that he has fooled you with a change of pace. When you find an opponent's "hand" much faster than yours and it proves physically impossible to speed up your hand to catch his, why not slow your hand to half his speed and let him catch himself. The ability to regulate your speed is not only valuable for deception but can well be the only quality that could save a losing situation.

Choice of Time—This is the quality which is often erroneously referred to as a good sense of timing. It is a mentally controlled quality that is the most valuable characteristic of all eighteen characteristics listed. It can be learned and improved with practice. It is the ability to choose the right instant to start an action. To possess a perfect "choice of time" would make fencing as easy as playing poker with marked cards. It would require only five lunges or ripostes to win any bout. A good choice of time brings success to even poorly executed attacks; a poor choice of

time can cause well-executed attacks to meet repeated failure. This one characteristic might easily be the only difference between a dub and a champion.

Relaxation—Unfortunately, such words as relaxness or relaxability do not appear in our dictionary. Such self-coined words seem to us to carry our meaning better than the word the dictionary ascribes to it. Relaxation is the ability to remain quietly rather than tensely alert. It leaves you in neutral, able to jump into action in any required way in the quickest and most efficient manner. Physical relaxation might be considered a pure physical characteristic but since it is highly variable and can be mentally controlled we have placed it among the essential mental characteristics. Mental relaxation is as important as muscular relaxation. It permits you to throw off anger at self, opponent or officials and concentrate with ease on the direct problem in hand. It dispels fear, it restores confidence and places the thoughts on an open, easy plane above the confusion of mixed emotions.

Conclusion

To choose our set of eighteen we had first to list every conceivable characteristic and then apply each of these carefully to our problem, eliminating those which did not fit and those which were covered under another definition. Some of our readers may insist that we have overlooked "good sportsmanship." We consider this a desirable trait but regret to admit that it is not essential to effective fencing. "Physique" is another characteristic which might be proposed, but, after seeing fencers of all sizes, we believe that height, weight or strength are far from primary essentials and can in fact prove to be hindrances to the best that is in you. "Reaction time" has been considered but did not receive separate listing beyond its inferred possession under "speed", "coordination" and "timing." Many other characteristics were given similar consideration until we finally arrived at what we consider a complete list of eighteen.

THE RIPOSTE