

GREAT LAKES SECTION
UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 25, 2005

EDITOR'S NOTE: In light of the coverage of the sport of fencing provided by the national office of USFA through newsletters and *American Fencing Magazine*, the GLS Newsletter will attempt not to repeat matters. However, in an effort to provide members of the Great Lakes Section with information sometimes not otherwise available, this publication will be issued shortly after meetings of the USFA national board. The most recent USFA Board Meeting was held on Saturday, February 19, 2005 at the Junior Olympic event in Arlington, Texas. PLEASE PASS THIS PUBLICATION ON TO OTHER MEMBERS.

GREAT LAKES SECTION OFFICERS

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**GLS CHAMPIONSHIP TO BE HELD AT
GRAND RAPIDS MICHIGAN ON APRIL
APRIL 30 & MAY 1, 2005**

The Great Lakes Sectional Championships will be held on April 30 & May 1, 2005 at Cornerstone College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dr. David G. Beighley of Grand Rapids is heading the local organizing committee with the assistance of many officers and fencers of the Michigan Division. The organizers are very excited about the excellent venue they have arranged. Fiona Williams has designed a custom medal as an award for the top fencers.



The organizers have also arranged for Olympic Fencing Official, Derek Cotton to be present at the GLS Championships and to provide his excellent referee clinic and practical referee examinations for those interested in obtaining USFA fencing officials ratings or testing for increased ratings. As of this publication, it appears Mr. Cotton's seminar will be held in two parts, the first on Friday evening and the second on Saturday evening with observations held on Sunday. Contact: doc@smoke-jumper.com

REMAINING REGIONAL YOUTH CIRCUIT EVENTS IN GLS:

MARCH 19 & 20, 2005 at Louisville, KY. All weapons. Contact Pat Kelly at logician@hyrusa.com

MARCH 20, 2005 at Dublin Sport Fencing in Columbus, Ohio. Contact Doug Bliss at webmaster@columbusfencing.org

For the NAC Y12 and Y10 tournaments, athletes must compete in at least one RYC or one SYC competition in the current season in the age category and the weapon in which the athlete intends to enter. NAC Y14 tournaments are open.

For the Youth 10 and Youth 12 competitions at Summer Nationals youth fencers must have competed in one RYC or one SYC or NAC Youth in the current season in the age category and weapon in which the athlete plans to enter. For the Y14 National Championships at the Summer Nationals, Y14 fencers MUST either be on the Y14 National point standings on May 1, 2005 or place in the top 25% of their Division's Y14 qualifying competition. See Chapter 2 of the USFA [Athletes Handbook](#) for more details on qualifying paths to the Summer National Championships.



SELECTED ITEMS FROM USFA BOARD MEETING OF FEBRUARY 19, 2005

The USFA Board Of Directors took the following actions, among others deemed less notable by the editor hereof:

A. Adoption of Executive Committee (EC) Action on Chest Plates: The Board adopted the EC action stating, "No fencer may wear any rigid covering outside the jacket or knickers." The FIE rule requires men to wear rigid chest protectors against the skin, and women may wear the such protection over a T-shirt but under the jacket. These provisions are an attempt to ameliorate the phenomenon known as "bounce-off". The new timing changes for scoring machines often result in the foil tip bouncing-off the opponent's chest without a touch being registered. This phenomenon can be amplified by wearing a rigid plastic chest protector, especially directly under a lame. Some fencers consider this a form of cheating; others consider it an exploitable by-product of FIE rule changes. The penalty for violation of the new rule was not specified.

B. Motion To Restructure USFA Withdrawn: The day before the Board meeting, the EC adopted a resolution to make restructuring of USFA a goal of the organization, along with increasing revenue and international performance.

Upon objection by the GLS representative to adoption of such a sweeping goal without so much as one document to describe the perceived necessary changes, the EC action was withdrawn by President Anderson. Apparently, the restructuring goal is a hold-over from the administration of Stacy Johnson who remains the USFA representative to the USOC. Some members of USFA view the organization as too democratic and desire to have it reformed to provide more national control.

C. Sweeping Code of Conduct Adopted: Over objections by some board members, including the GLS representative, the Board adopted the EC action implementing a sweeping Code Of Conduct for Athletes and Non-Athletes. Apparently, the need for such a broad Code Of Conduct and Penalties arose from unspecified incidents overseas. However, in the opinion of this writer, the new Code Of Conduct was hastily adopted considering certain poor wording and ambiguity contained therein. For example, the Code states, "Failure to **respect** all laws, customs and traditions of the countries in which athletes are traveling or competing" [*emphasis added*], as an offense. Yet, in some countries, beheadings are law and custom for minor crimes and for matters involving consensual conduct. While there may be a need for a broad Code Of Conduct, it needs further consideration and amendment.

D. Sweeping Sexual Harassment Policy Adopted: In an attempt to find the right current with which to swim in the unclear legal waters regarding discrimination and harassment, the Board upon the recommendation of its legal counsel, and over the objection of the GLS, adopted as an emergency measure, a sweeping sexual harassment policy allowing members to accuse one another of sexual harassment and be investigated by USFA Officers, apparently with the aid of legal counsel. There is no provision in the policy regarding whether USFA will indemnify members, divisions, or sections for liability or for expenses or attorney's fees

expended in such matters. There can be little doubt that USFA, as an employer, should have a sex discrimination policy since the organization, as an employer, is already subject to Title VII which is 42 U.S. Code Sec. 2000e *et seq.* However, the law appears to be undeveloped and unclear with respect to extending Title VII coverage to non-employee members of voluntary non-profit organizations. It was stated by USFA general counsel Donald Alperstein that he has authored articles predicting the extension of sex harassment laws to members of non-profit organizations, and USFA assistant counsel Steve Sobel, stated that the sexual harassment policy in question was taken almost verbatim from the Long Island University policy. It must be noted that recipients of federal funds, such as schools and universities, are subject to Title IX, 20 U.S. Code Sec. 1681 *et seq.* which prohibits sex discrimination but usually does not allow for suits against individuals. However, there is little or no case law finding Title IX to apply to voluntary non-profit organizations which do not directly receive federal funding. Nevertheless, at least one court has found Title IX may apply to organizations that indirectly receive federal funds. Hence, the concern with adopting an anti-discrimination policy and to attempt to take advantage of the so-called safe harbor for entities subject thereto by providing a reasonable remedy for the situation where the entity knows or should know of discriminatory harassment. The objection to implementing a Title IX sex harassment policy prematurely for members of a voluntary non-profit organization, such as USFA, where there is no absolute duty to have one, is this: Those charged with receiving complaints and those charged with investigating and disciplining alleged miscreants may voluntarily subject themselves and the organization to liability for failure to investigate or for negligent investigation. The policy adopted attempts to make Officers, Tournament Committee Chairs, Section Chairs, Division Chairs, Team Managers, and Chiefs of Delegation, agents of USFA with respect to receiving reports of sexual harassment.

It is the opinion of this writer that the policy adopted is overbroad and needs further consideration and amendment, especially with respect to who can make claims against whom, under what circumstances, and the procedures for handling claims.

NOTABLE 2005 JUNIOR OLYMPIC RESULTS OF GLS FENCERS:*

U20 WF, Samantha Nemecek(Mich), 7 of 174
U20 WS, Lillian Siebert (Cols OH), 17 of 117
U20 WS, Marina Kraujalis,(Cols OH) 27 of 117
U20 ME, Max Dettlinger, (Ky) 31 of 212
U17 MF, Joseph T. Streb, (Cols OH) 17 of 253
U17 WF, Hayley Reese, (Ky) 5 of 185
U17 WF, Dayana Sarkisova, (Mich) 11 of 185
U17 WF, Radmila Sarkisova, (Mich) 21 of 185
U20 WE, Lauren Willock, (Ky) 17 of 159
U20 WE, Simone Barrette,(Ky) 22 of 159
U17 WS, Lillian Siebert (Cols OH), 2 of 116
U17 WS, Marina Kraujalis,(Cols OH) 14 of 116
U17 ME, Jonathan Hoerle(Col OH), 31 of 224
U17 ME, Aaron Dibble(IND), 32 of 224

*Any omissions are unintentional

GLS FENCER/COACH INTERVIEW: A new and continuing feature of the GLS Newsletter is the fencer/coach interview, so we may better know some of the interesting persons involved with fencing within the Great Lakes Section. Suggestions for future interviews are welcome. In this issue, we feature an interview with top GLS foil fencer, Michael Cho:

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL CHO

Q. Mike, you have been a fixture on the Great Lakes fencing scene for quite a long time. Explain how you got involved in the sport of fencing?

A. I took a fencing class at Wayne State University and loved it. Gil Pezza told the class that we could also get more fencing in with the WSU fencing team, so I took him up on the offer. Before then, I always thought it would be neat to hit people with 'swords', I just didn't know how to get involved.

Q. What are your career best accomplishments in fencing?

A. When I started competitive fencing, my ultimate

goal was to go to U.S. Olympic Festival Games and get an 'A' ranking. Now, as I'm getting much older, I really think that my best accomplishment is having friends all around the world.

Q. What fencing club do you attend and how often do you practice?

A. I used to belong to Fencing Academy of Michigan (FAM), since the death of Yuri Rabinovich, I belong to Renaissance Fencing Club. I practice at least twice a week, but I would prefer to practice more.

Q. Who are your regular practice partners?

A. The people who I'm fortunate to practice with on a regular basis are: Ann Marsh, Keeley Stanley-Bohn, Inga Wallrabenstein, Tess Woehrlen, Nathan Bass, Gary Hayenga, Simon Jouan, Justin Purcell, Igor Schrott, Anatolie Senic, Patrick Webster, and more club members [I could list them all if you want]. On a somewhat regular basis: Sam Nemecek, Dayana Sarkisova, Rada Sarkisova, Craig Budzynski, Andy Tuelleners, and Joe Williams.

Q. Did you do other sports before becoming involved with fencing?

A. I do a little skiing. I'm horrible with anything that requires a ball. catching, throwing, hitting, etc. are the hardest thing for me, but I can block really well!

Q. Do you currently participate in sports other than fencing?

A. I go skiing every winter in Germany now. With the influence of Ann, I did some 5k runs. We (Ann Marsh, Inga Wallrabenstein, Anatolie Senic, and Justin Purcell) were kicking the idea around to do a mini triathlon -- we still haven't committed.

Q. When you are not participating in sports, what do you do for fun?

A. I enjoy being with friends, I truly believe I've been blessed (lucky) with the friends I have. Watching football (go Lions!). Complain that I

never have enough time to read.

Q. What do you do for a living?

A. I used to work for a couple large financial companies analyzing assets, portfolios, investment policies, and asset allocation analysis. Now, I help manage stock and bond portfolios for private clients, foundations, and institutions.

Q. Do you have any career changes you would like to tell us about?

A. I just started this job, and cannot see myself leaving here or this industry. I love the analytical part to this career as well as talking and getting to know people.

Q. Where did you go to high school, and how would you characterize yourself as a high school student?

A. I went to Athens High School in Troy, Michigan (a northern suburb of Detroit). I wasn't too motivated, but I fortunately hung around smart, hard working, nice kids who kept me out of trouble (positive peer pressure).

Q. Where did you go to college, and did you fence for your college?

A. I went to Wayne State University. Since I started fencing there, they were nice enough to let me be a walk on for the team.

Q. Who was the most influential person to coach you in fencing?

A. Hands down, Yuri Rabinovich. Almost everyday I think of how great he was and how much I miss him. I wanted him to teach my kids....

Q. Who was the most influential person who you have fenced against?

A. Honestly, everyone who I fenced against has had an influence. Some names I'm thinking off hand:

Ann Marsh - the desire to win; Bob Anderson - confidence/knowing your opponent; Stephan Schoeder - being cunning; Larissa Lehmkuhl, Anatolie Senic, & Nate Ritter- technique; Frank MacKenzie - sportsmanship; Nemeceks - do it because you love it and having fun; everyone who I looked in the eyes while shaking hands - honor. Most of these names are from when I started fencing.

Q. Who was the best foil fencer in the Great Lakes Section when you started competing?

A. I was lucky to start fencing with: Ann Marsh, Larissa Lehmkuhl, Rob Conway, Frank Osborn, Nathan Ritter, Stephan Schroeder, Rob Tripp, and Jon Zelkowski. One way or another, they were on the top of the foil list.

Q. Who was your most influential academic instructor?

A. Jon Hunter taught history in my high school. He also taught the meaning of human decency, honor, pushing yourself, and keeping yourself in check. I wanted to send him a letter to thank him, but I was told he passed away. He was a good man.

Q. What are your favorite books?

A. I liked David Eddings, Roger Zelazny [sp?], and Raymond E. Feist because they started my thirst to read. I don't read much Sci-fi/Fantasy now, I read more general fiction, and probably too many financial statements.

Q. It is my understanding that you are engaged to be married soon to Inga Wallrabenstein, an accomplished fencer from Germany. Please tell us where and when the wedding is to occur?

A. The wedding is in Osnabruck, Germany on August 20th. The wedding is only going to take place if I enroll, complete and pass a German class.

Talk about pressure!

Q. How did you meet Inga?

A. We first meet at Wayne State University at a dual meet. We both really didn't like each other, then became friends, and then... really good friends.

Q. Is it true that Inga has always been able to beat you in foil fencing?

A. I'd like to think since now I'm giving her lessons that the lessons are paying off. Seriously, Inga is a great fencer and competitor -- she's winning more in practices than I like to admit. I've had the fortunate experience of meeting her coach, and can conceive how she has gotten so good.

Q. Do you and Inga intend to stay in the U.S. or is a move to Germany in the offing?

A. We are staying in the U.S. until Inga gets her MBA. We'll move to Germany if: Inga can support us, and I can learn German.

Q. What are the career best fencing accomplishments for Inga?

A. Finishing top 8 at a world cup, placing top 3 in her state's championships for the past 13 years, and being the oldest finalist (and third) in last week's NAC in Richmond, VA.

Q. Has Inga been able to teach you anything about foil fencing which you did not already know?

A. We've had some 'in my country' kind of situations, and I respect her fencing and how she learned it. Not only in fencing, but if she has a different idea on a situation, I always listen try to her. (Yes, it took me 34 years to figure that one out.)

Q. You have been known to be one of the most proficient left-handed flick attackers in the GLS. What effect has the new timing of scoring boxes had on your game?

A. A lot. Actually, this might help me with my fencing as I get older -- I feel bad for the quicker and stronger fencer. The game has slowed down dramatically and I feel the boxes are not consistent on when they signal a touch. The obvious effect is what I think: What is the reasonable target area, where's my opponent's point and what is it doing, how far is my point away from the target area, and for the love of God hit ANYTHING and make the blasted machine turn on.

Q. What are your fencing goals for the 2004-2005 season?

A. Stay within top 32 in NAC's -- I've decided that this is all training for my Veteran's career.

Q. What are Inga's fencing goals for the 2004-2005 season?

A. To win. She hates losing, I love that about her. It makes her to try hard in everything, which keeps me on my toes.

Q. What is the biggest change you have seen in the Great Lakes Section during the time you have been fencing?

A. When I started fencing, there were no Sectional Circuits, no electric saber, and woman just started to fence epee. The Sectional Circuits was a great idea and I think we should promote this more. The biggest difference is communication and the number of tournaments. Maybe the result of the internet, but definitely because of the organizers understanding that there's more than their local community at risk.

Q. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

A. To the reader: If you feel that this newsletter came out late, that is because of me. I apologize to everyone.

--End of Interview--

MICELLANEOUS: On behalf of all of the officers and fencers of the Great Lakes Section USFA, we express our sympathy and condolences to the family of Ray Bautista, founder and coach of Dayton Fencing Academy, who passed away unexpectedly since the last publication of this Newsletter. A memorial fencing tournament will be held at Dublin Sport Fencing on March 26, 2005. See: Events schedule and links at columbusfencing.org

RULE CHANGES, effective August 1, 2004:

Article t.72 (saber). A touch which arrives on a non-valid part of the target is not counted as a touch; it does not stop the fencing phrase and does not annul any subsequent touches. If a fencer substitutes a non-valid part of his target for a valid part, either by covering it or by any abnormal movement, the Referee must penalize him/her by applying the penalties specified in Articles t. 114, 116, 120 *and any touch scored by the fencer at fault is annulled.*

Article t.46. DELETED: The language prohibiting advancement of the shoulder of the non-sword arm in front of the shoulder of the sword arm and annulment of any touch scored is deleted. Reversing shoulders is no longer an offense.

Article t.45. In all three weapons, a fencer may not have equipment allowing electronic communication with a person off the strip. This is penalized as per the penalty chart.

Article t.87. PASSIVITY: Where the fencers show manifest passivity or unwillingness to fight, during the first two minutes of a pool bout, the Referee will warn the fencers

(without imposing a yellow card), and if the conduct continues, the Referee will call "halt" and advance to the last minute of the bout. No further penalties if the conduct continues. If the conduct occurs in the first or second period of a direct elimination bout, the Referee shall call "halt," give the fencers one minute rest and proceed to the final 3 minute period. No other penalties for the conduct.

Article t.120. PENALTY CHART: In addition to current penalties, any touches scored while committing the following offenses for the first time result in a yellow card *and annulment of any touch scored:* (Editor's note: Generally any yellow card annuls any touch scored while committing a foul)

- simple corp a corps (foil and saber)
- touching/taking hold of electrical equipment
- covering/substitution of valid target

NEXT GLS MEMBER/BOARD MEETING:
The next GLS Board meeting will be held at the end of competition on Saturday evening, April 30, 2005 at the GLS Championships in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

YOURS IN FENCING,

Dr. Joseph S. Streb, Chairman
Great Lakes Section, USFA
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