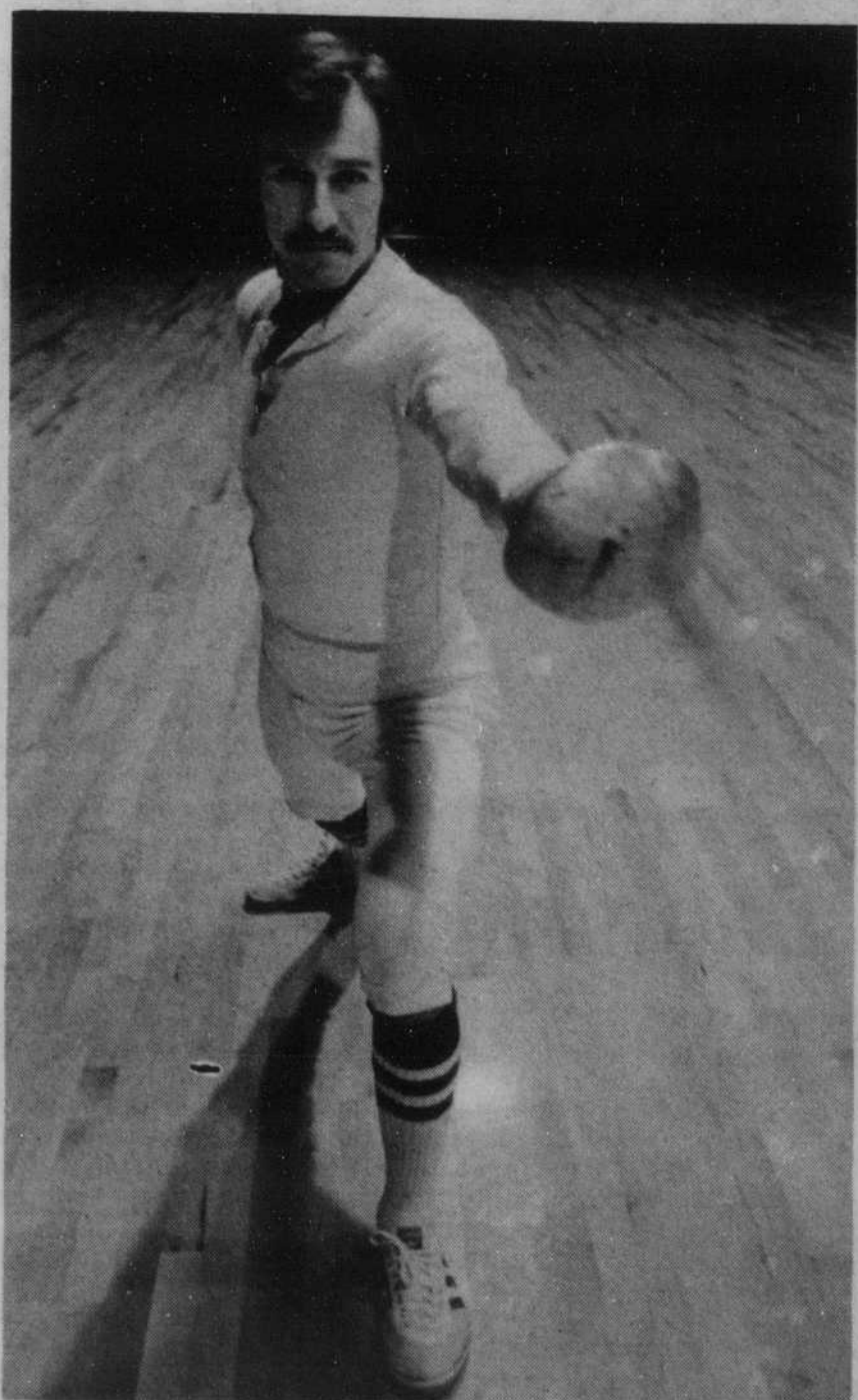


# Coach sparks fencers to prominence



By Paul Danzer  
Of the Emerald

Like many other Club Sports teams, the University of Oregon fencing team lives in the shadows of the so called major sports. But the past couple of years, they have moved into the limelight of the Northwest fencing scene.

Last weekend at the Oregon Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) championships in Portland, the Oregon fencing club qualified three individuals and its men's foil team for the AAU nationals at the Oregon AAU championships.

Prior to the latest success the Oregon squad claimed its second straight overall regional collegiate championship at Clark College in Vancouver, Wash.

Leading the Oregon crew into the national competition June 4-12 in San Francisco is coach Norm Campbell. In addition to his duties as mentor for the group, Campbell managed to qualify for nationals with a first-place finish in the men's foil event at the state championships.

Also going to nationals will be Tom Cassidy, Don Freed, Rod Ray and David Wichner, Peter Harmer, and Lynne Botelho qualified in the women's foil event.

Fencing success is nothing new to Campbell, but he has spread the wealth to Oregon by leading the program to two straight overall crowns at the Northwest Collegiate championships.

Campbell learned his fencing prowess from the most respected fencing coach in the nation — Mistro Csiszar. That was in Philadelphia in 1969 after Csiszar had coached a pair of European fencers to gold medals in the Olympics.

The experienced guidance of Csiszar paid off for Campbell, who fenced at Temple University, then went on to earn the 1969 national gold medal championship, and competed with the U.S. Olympic squad.

"We often think of the weapon a fencer chooses as being reflective of his or her personality," says Campbell. "A successful foil fencer has to be subtle and indirect. There's lots of deception involved in foil fencing," he says of the national sport of France, which is also the most popular form of the sport in

Oregon, according to Campbell.

There are three different types of fencing, and three different weapons: the foil, the epee and the saber. The foil and epee are both thrusting weapons, which means that points are scored by touching the opponent with the point of the weapon only.

Saber fencing is the event most people would associate with sword fighting. It is a slashing weapon that is used to hit anywhere above the waist with either the point or the cutting edge. For that reason, Campbell calls the saber fencers "the most aggressive."

"People were congratulating me for hostility that had been getting me in trouble elsewhere," says Campbell of his beginnings in the sport as a high school student. "It was nice to have the illusion of aggressiveness without violence."

The highlight of Campbell's fencing career came as a finalist of the Martini and Rossi Foil Challenge in New York City in 1971. Campbell was one of two Americans in a field that included two former world champions, a former Olympic champion, the man who became Olympic champion in 1972, and one holder of the World Cup.

Olympic champion-to-be Woyda of Poland was Campbell's opponent and although he came out on the short end, Campbell enjoyed his moment in the spotlight and the support of the American audience. "It was nice to be in the bout and to give him a fight. Ultimately he defeated me, but he didn't do it easily, and that was why I was most proud of that result."

More recently, Campbell says he is proud of this year's team.

"Last year we won and I didn't expect it. I had no idea what the competition would be like. I really have to give more credit to the talent of my fencers last year," he says of the first Northwest collegiate crown.

The big difference this year, according to Campbell, is the cohesiveness of the team. "This year we trained together real, real hard, with lots of spirit. I was proud of our team even before the event started, because they had professionally, athletically and seriously prepared to give it their shot," he says of their collegiate success.

Photo by Bob Baker  
Norm Campbell, who learned fencing from the most respected coach in the nation — Mistro Csiszar, will represent Oregon at the Northwest Collegiate championships.

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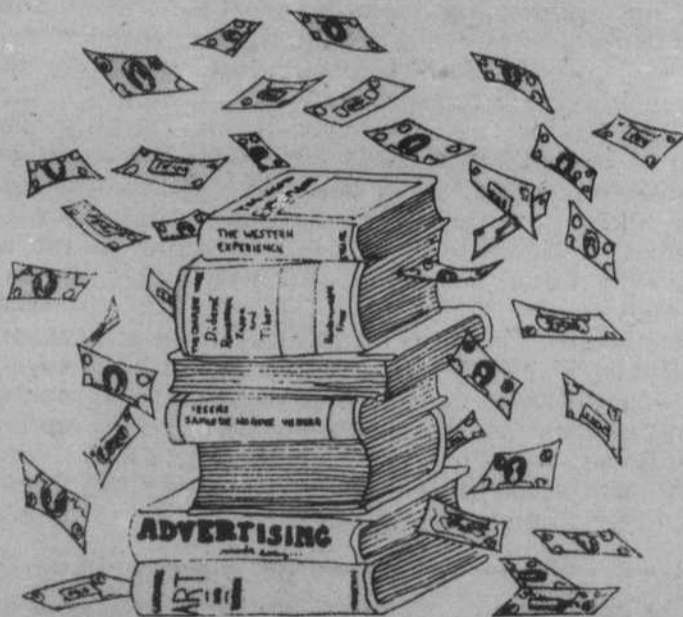
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