



En garde! The Mt. Hood Community College P.E. department offers foil fencing at the beginning level.

You, too,  
can be a

# Swash buckler

In their masks, jackets and gloves, they look like a cross between the Three Musketeers and Darth Vader.

Between 15 and 25 Mt. Hood Community College students take up the sport each term as part of the college's physical education program.

Taught by Al Manley, the MHCC fencing course is a one-term class that is designed to give the student a grasp of the basics of the sport.

"We try to give them an understanding of the rules of the game and enough technique to take part in it," says Manley, who has a good deal of experience in the sport both as a competitor and instructor.

Fencing, which is an Olympic sport, is divided into three competitive areas — foil, saber and epee. The MHCC course concentrates on foil and offers instruction for both beginning and intermediate students.

"The intermediate students have had some experience in fencing, usually one term," says Manley. "The beginners, of course, are starting from scratch."

Fencing can be an expensive sport to get into. The masks, jackets and gloves can run up to \$75 and more, Manley reports.

"The easiest way to get into it is the community colleges," he says. "All your basic equipment is provided."

Manley says the classes usually start with about 25 students but roughly a third of those students will drop out before the term is over.

A new course will begin at MHCC in January. It is scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9 a.m. An equipment fee is charged.

En garde.

photos by K.J. Snipes



A far cry from simple sweats, fencing uniforms include jackets, gauntlets, and mesh masks.



Fencing, a superb conditioner, strengthens legs and arms.



Much of fencing is fancy footwork, which sometimes is as delicate as ballet.