

Fencing: A real contact sport

by Marc MacKenzie

Fencing. You've no doubt seen it somewhere before. I'm a bit more sensitive to it, so I notice whenever it's shown or mentioned, but I've seen it on the news and sports shows, the evening dramas and the daytime soaps. I've heard about it on the radio and seen it in the papers. I should also mention for those who didn't know that you can find it right here on campus.

Some people seem a bit surprised to find a fencing club here at UNB. The fact is that there are few universities our size without a fencing club. In the Atlantic region, fencing can be found at Dalhousie, Saint Mary's, UPEI, Memorial and at UNB (here in Fredericton and on the Saint John campus). In Ontario there is a very busy inter-collegiate circuit for just the Ontario universities.

UNB has had a fencing club since sometime in the late sixties. The club has long been a major force on the provincial fencing scene and we've produced a number of first rate fencers over the years. In the past we've even hosted the National Fencing championships.

Fencing was "born" around the 1500's with the establishment of the fencing

academies in Europe. The deadly art of swordsmanship slowly evolved into a sport around the time of Louis XIV in France, sometime after dueling had been outlawed. Fencing in Canada goes back to 1816, when a fencing academy was established in Montreal.

Fencing also has the historic distinction of being an Olympic sport since the first modern Olympic Games of Athens in 1896.

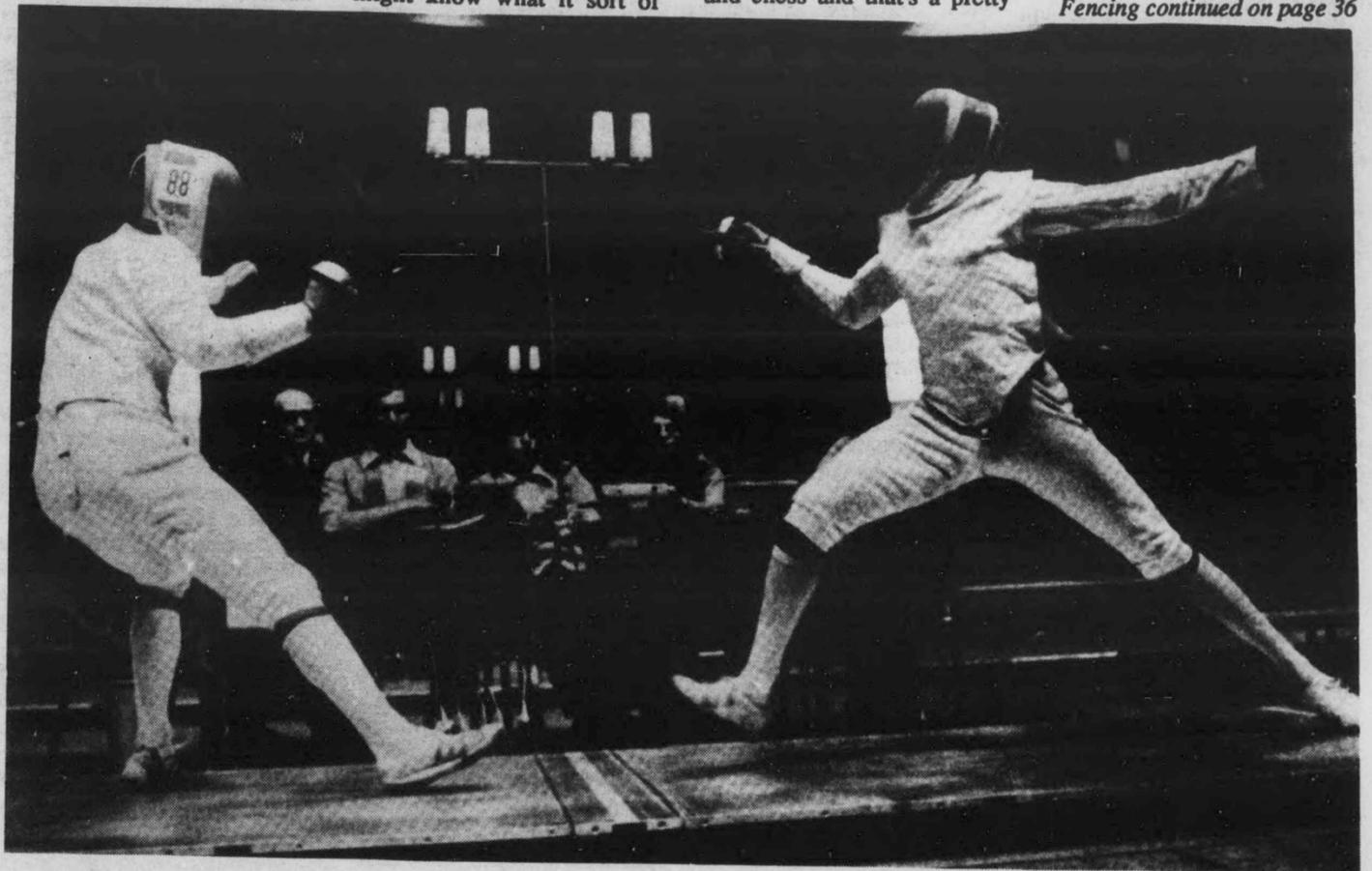
The sport of fencing is a bit hard to describe to people who've never tried it. You might know what it sort of

looks like from the movies (the fencing in *The Princess Bride* isn't a bad example, minus the aerial acrobatics, Zorro and Errol Flynn are not really good examples). It's been described as a cross between the hundred yard dash and chess and that's a pretty

good description for good fencing (bad fencing looks like a cross between speed walking and Othello - kind of goofy and not too much in the way of strategy).

Fencing is a very safe sport practiced by men and women

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Kevin G. Porter photo

Take that you swine!

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