

For Immediate Release

Local fencers get top results at Prep State Championships

Lambertville, NJ. On February 18, two fencers who train at the Bucks County Academy of Fencing (BCAF) in Lambertville brought home medals from the NJISAA Prep School State Championships held at Princeton Day School (PDS).

Katie Elbert of Ringoes, NJ, claimed the silver in the women's foil individual competition. Elbert started fencing at BCAF three years ago, and trains privately with Maestro Mark Holbrow.

Currently a junior at PDS, Elbert impressed her school coach, Paul Epply-Schmidt, with her perseverance. "She told me earlier in the day she didn't feel on her game," said Epply-Schmidt. "I told her you have to keep fighting because you never know when you'll turn the corner. She did keep fighting the rest of the tournament. That's the kind of person she is." Epply-Schmidt praised Elbert's athleticism, her mental toughness, and the training she receives at BCAF.

"I like fencing because you get that rush when you get a touch and after the bout," said Elbert. "I haven't found that in anything else that I've done." A "touch" is scored when one fencer hits her opponent validly with her weapon.

Spencer Pretecum of Doylestown, PA, took fifth place in the men's sabre individual competition. Pretecum is a Junior at PDS, and has also been under the tutelage of BCAF's Maestro Mark Holbrow for three years.

"He fought tenaciously and added a great deal to the sabre squad total," said Epply-Schmidt, noting how Pretecum helped the PDS sabre team capture its first victory in the team event. "Spencer has the best attitude on the team--always upbeat, always trying, always competitive, no matter what the circumstances."

Fencing is one of only four sports to be included in every modern Olympic Games, since the first in 1896. There are three distinctively different games fenced with three different weapons: foil, sabre, and épée. Some notable fencers include Theodore Roosevelt, Winston Churchill (high school champion of England), Neil Diamond, Jimmy Buffett, Prince Albert of Monaco, General George Patton, Madonna, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Tom Cruise, Boris Karloff, Will Smith, and David Beckham.

The number of U.S. youth fencers has been on the rise throughout the past decade. The sport gained renewed recognition last summer at the Beijing Olympics, when members of the U.S. Women's Sabre Team swept the individuals, claiming gold, silver, and bronze, then captured the bronze in the team competition, as well.

Bucks County Academy of Fencing offers recreational and competition-grade classes and private lessons for youth and adults. They are located at 287 South Main Street in Lambertville, and can be reached at 215-862-6112 or www.bcaf.com.

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