

The foiled sport

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It's rumoured to be Dalhousie's oldest sports club, and the sport itself is one of the oldest forms of combat: Duelling, or fencing, as it is more commonly known.

Watching the small but mighty group of Dal fencers hone their skills, they hardly look anything like century old saber yielding, street fighting Dukedoms, but more like spry modern day foil-swinging Tigers.

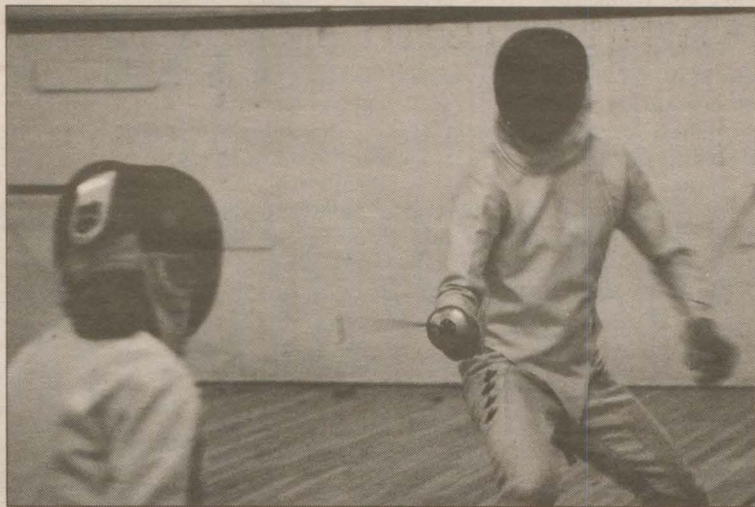
Like all clubs at Dal the Fencing club is open to all students, but unlike most other clubs, there is no membership fee, says club President Devin Monajem.

"We provide all the necessary gear and equipment so you don't have to worry about much except for showing up," says Monajem, who has been president for a year and has been fencing since he was 10.

For a sport that is based around the use of what was considered the deadliest weapon of its time, the fate of Dal's fencing club hangs in the air. With president Devin Monajem already graduated and no new president yet in the works, members aren't sure where club will be in the future. For now, the club lives for its seven or eight regulars.

Monajem says it all started after he saw a fencing presentation in Toronto, which then sparked his passion to become a "Knight of the Round Table."

He says when he was 16 the fencing in Toronto was quite strong, but feels that Nova Scotia and the Maritimes now have a stronger scene and



NICK KHATTAR/DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

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that fencing here at Dal helped him get to know himself a little better.

Marc Lelacheur isn't a Dal student, but that doesn't mean he isn't into "epic duelling," which he says is his favorite part about fencing.

Andrey Kostylev, a third-year engineering student at Dal agrees that "epic duelling- learning to duel and throw down a glove," is what attracted him to the sport.

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Just ask 16-year-old Penelope Buote, who is currently ranked 19th in the country in the under 20 division, and 13th in the under 17 division. She's been yielding a foil since she was 11, and has her sights set on

making the national team when she turns 19.

The smooth-handed athlete says the sport is very physical, but that she likes the mental aspect of the sport.

"It's kind of like chess," she says.

The only other competitive fencer in the club, a sparing mate of Buote's, is Eric Dilcher, a Grade 12 high school student.

Dripping in sweat after a back and forth match against the barely five-foot-tall Buote, Dilcher says he got into the sport after his best friend's father introduced him to it. Now, six years later, Eric is ranked first in the country in the under 17 division.