

# Stanley Bergin



## More about fencer's suspension

**A**LTHOUGH I have no desire to have a sabre, foil or epee plunged through my shoulder blades, I am reviving a fencing topic which I raised last week in this column. The central figure is young Laurence Gough, who was suspended by the I.A.F.F. for a period of six months.

The background to this suspension has already been covered in previous columns but to clear the air still further, I now propose to publish a letter from the honorary secretary of the Irish Amateur Fencing Federation which was sent to Gough on March 25 last. It reads:—

"I am to inform you of the verdict of the committee set up to investigate the charges made against you by the Council of the I.A.F.F. The committee exonerated you from any responsibility for the action of your mentors and from charges of acting in an offensive manner at any time, but found you culpable in that you refused to accept the ruling of the president of the I.A.F.F., thereby being guilty of a breach of discipline.

"It was also considered that your failure to disassociate yourself from the actions committed on your behalf, the performance of which you were aware, showed you to be in agreement. The recommendation of the committee was that the period of suspension be enforced herewith.

"At a meeting of the Council which took place before the above-mentioned committee meeting it was decided that, out of consideration for your club, you should be allowed to fence on its team in the Coupe d'Europe but not in the individual event."

### Some other direction

After publication of that letter, the sabre, foil and epee, which I mentioned outset, may be turned in some other direction!

Two representatives of the U.C.D. club, of which Gough is a member, called to see me on Monday morning last to explain their side of this suspension story. While they retain the proper right to disagree with the Federation's ruling, they are sufficiently democratic to accept that nothing further can be done on behalf of the member concerned.

They also wish it to be known that at all times they conducted their case through the recognised channels, namely at Council level. In regard to the U.C.D.-Trinity match, to which I referred in a previous column, they hold that they would have been quite entitled to pick Gough, on the grounds that the Federation's area of jurisdiction does not include inter-university competition.

There I will disagree with them and would do so in the case of any suspended person. However, the best of relationships continue to exist between U.C.D. and Trinity fencing officials who have agreed that their proposed match should not take place this season.