

'Why was I not picked?'

I would appreciate it if you would kindly bring to the notice of the public through your columns the following facts. I am the fencer, who, though qualified to go to Mexico, according to the rules of the Irish Amateur Fencing Federation am not included on the Team. I wish to appeal to you, the public, regarding the selection of the Irish Olympic Fencing Team as it is your money that is being spent.

I have appealed to the Olympic Council of Ireland and they according to their Charter, can do nothing, they cannot interfere in the internal affairs of national sports bodies. I also appealed to the I.A.F.F. publicly to hold Olympic trials. My appeal was ignored.

The I.A.F.F. has selected four fencers, two of them were selectors and one of them the son of an I.A.F.F. Olympic Council delegate. All



● Lawrence Gough

the selectors are Salle Duffy members, the other two are Vincent Duffy (brother of the proprietor of Salle Duffy) and Miss S. Armstrong. Of those selected three are members of Salle Duffy and the fourth has been a member for eight years.

Circular No. 7 of the I.A.F.F. dated April 17 laid down the following conditions for qualification to go to Mexico. I quote it in full as it is being stated by the I.A.F.F. that there is a third part of this rule and that I have been quoting it to suit myself.

Selection of Ireland Teams;
The selection of future Irish Fencing Teams with particular reference to the Olympic Games, Mexico, 1968. The selection panel wish all fencers to understand that home form alone will not be sufficient basis for their selection of teams to represent Ireland internationally.

Those to be considered should fulfill the following conditions: (a) Take part in at least three competitions abroad (One of which may be in

Britain) (b) Obtain a placing in a competition abroad.

I understand from this circular that one had to qualify after it was issued, that is, after April 17, 1967, but last Saturday I was informed by the chairman of the I.A.F.F. that one could have qualified as far back as 1964. This to me is absolutely ridiculous, I thought that I was going too far back when I was taking into consideration my success in Istanbul at a senior international competition on November 23, 1967.

Perhaps the Federation is making allowances for those fencers who are captives of past successes.

Since this circular was issued the four selected fencers competed at some foreign competitions where only one of them was placed, not an international competition. I have asked the chairman of the I.A.F.F. to let me see the official reports from Paris of any foreign competition in which Irish fencers have been placed, this request was refused. I now demand that the records of the candidates selected be verified and be made available to any interested parties.

Because I informed the Olympic Council of Ireland of certain irregularities in Irish fencing I was expelled, having been charged, tried and sentenced without my knowledge and without my presence.

I SEEK JUSTICE! NOTHING MORE BUT CERTAINLY NOTHING LESS. Once again to you the people, demand a public enquiry, as it is your money which is financing the Olympic team.

Laurence M. Gough,
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Dublin.

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