

# Curious situations can arise in sport

A NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD boy is expelled for life from the Irish Amateur Fencing Federation without getting prior notice of the charge against him, or an opportunity to defend himself. If ordinary members of the public are bewildered at times by things that happen in the sporting world, they are not to be blamed. Curious situations are apt to arise all the way from rarefied Olympic councils to the most modest of club meetings.

The case of Laurence M. Gough, of Upper Mount St., Dublin, an arts student at U.C.D., falls into the curious category, on the face of it. Last month he received a letter from the chairman of the I.A.F.F., which stated: "I have been asked to advise you that at a Council meeting held last night you were expelled from the Federation from today's date for 'conduct detrimental to the interest and character of fencing.'"

That, says Mr. Gough, was the first he heard of it, although Article VIII of the Federation's Constitution lays down that notice must be served upon the member against whom action is being taken, setting forth generally the conduct forming the basis for the action.

## DOES NOT KNOW WHY

Young Mr. Gough does not know why he was expelled, but feels it was because of a letter he wrote to the Irish Olympic Council following his exclusion from the Irish fencing team selected to compete in the Mexico games. He considered he had a grievance.

The qualifications for fencers participating in the Olympics, he says, include (1) that they should have taken part in three competitions abroad, and (2) that they should be placed in one of them. He had taken part in three competitions abroad, and he was placed sixth in one of them. That was in Turkey, where he beat both the Bulgarian and Turkish champions. But he claims that of the team of four chosen to go to Mexico, only one has been placed in a competition abroad.

Laurence Gough has had a most impressive list of wins in his relatively short career, and holds several national trophies for schoolboy and junior fencing. I am not, of course, in a position to say whether he should be on the Olympic team, but his expulsion from the I.A.F.F. appears both harsh and arbitrary.

## APPEAL TO COMMITTEE

As he himself has put it in an appeal to the Federation's Appeal Committee: "I was charged, tried and sentenced without my knowledge and without my presence. At no time was I told my expulsion was to be considered. At no time was I invited to come to defend myself against a move to expel me. If I were a member of the G.A.A., or of a gun club, or a social club, or any other form of democratic, open and honest association, I would have been informed . . . and been present at the 'court' at which my case was to be decided.

"I seek justice — nothing more, but certainly nothing less," he added. "If my expulsion is to be considered, let

## CASE OF A FENCER EXPELLED WITHOUT NOTICE

it be done in accordance with the Constitution of the Federation, and according to the tenets of natural justice."

It is a fair request.

## TATLER'S PARADE



Fencer Laurence Gough