

College Fencers Are Where You Find Them

Masin, N.Y.U. Star, Is Discovered in Student Center

BY NEIL AMDUR

Each afternoon, two national college fencing champions square off for duels on the fifth floor of New York University's School of Education.

The setting is ideal. Across the street at the ANTA Washington Square Theater, "Man of La Mancha," the award-winning musical, portrays the tragic confrontation of Don Quixote and the Knight of the Mirrors.

No swords cross in "La Mancha." They do at N.Y.U., however, as Michael Gaylor and George Masin drill daily for their big challenges Wednesday night and later this year.

Teams Are 'Up' for Meet

On Wednesday night is the annual Columbia-N.Y.U. fencing match, a rivalry as much a part of the college athletic scene as Army-Navy football or Oxford-Cambridge rowing.

"Neither Lou Bankuti, the Columbia coach, nor I has to get our teams psychologically prepared for this meet," said Hugo Castello, the N.Y.U. coach. "The boys do it themselves."

Masin, 21 years old, looks more like a basketball forward than the Intercollegiate Fencing Association epee champion. He is a stringy 6-foot-4-inch southpaw who tried out for fencing after



George Masin of N.Y.U., at the left, the National Collegiate and Eastern épée champion, and Michael Gaylor of N.Y.U., who is defending Eastern and N.C.A.A. foil title-holder.

being recruited in the freshman student center one afternoon.

"This guy came up to me one day and said the fencing coach was looking for tall guys," Masin recalls. "The only thing I really knew about fencing was what I had seen at the World's Fair pavilion. But I figured, 'What have I got to lose?' So I tried out."

Until late last season, Masin was not on N.Y.U.'s start-

ing team. Then he began asserting his size and stance. Right-handers have been flinching ever since.

Gaylor, also 21, is seven inches shorter than Masin but has been fencing foil twice as long. His father is a tennis professional who assists the fencing program at the United States Naval Academy.

Both seniors could win berths on the United States Olympic team this year.

He and Gaylor Lead the Violets Against Lions Wednesday

Gaylor is ranked 12th among Americans and has competed with United States teams in Hungary and Belgium. Masin's rapid improvement is his strongest credential.

Gaylor's opponent Wednesday night, will be his rival of many years, Jeff Kestler. Kestler returned to Columbia after a year of study in London where he won the English three-weapon championship.

Violets Lead in Series

Fencing is hardly the spectator draw of Army-Navy Nor do its American roots rival Oxford-Cambridge. But the N.Y.U.-Columbia match will be the 44th in the series. The Violets lead, 25-13.

Aside from recruiting tall students in hallways, most college fencers must be recruited in bunches, preferably at a high school where a healthy program can at least familiarize the youngsters with fundamentals.

"The first few months of our season is strictly designed for teaching," Castello said. One-third of the Violets' 18-man squad was culled from Essex Catholic High School in Newark.

Columbia has beaten N.Y.U. in four straight dual meets, the last two by 14-13 scores. N.Y.U. is the defending N.C.A.A. champion and has won seven college titles, four since 1960.