



LAURENCE GOUGH . . . "bitterly disappointed".

BANNED FENCER HITS OUT

By JOHN O'SHEA

LAURENCE GOUGH, the 19-year-old U.C.D. fencer who was recently expelled by the Irish Fencing Federation, feels that he has been done a grave injustice, and is angered that the Olympic Council of Ireland will not come to his aid.

After being passed over by the Federation for the team for the Olympic Games, Laurence appealed to the Olympic Council for a chance of fighting against the four selected fencers in an Olympic trial.

However, the Council has not replied, although one of its members told Gough that there was nothing they could do about the situation. Shortly after appealing to the Council, Gough was expelled from the Federation for life.

When I asked Gough what was expulstion stated that such action was taken because of "conduct detrimental to the interest and character of the Federation."

When I asked Gough what was this conduct referred to, he replied: "All I have done is to appeal to the Council to examine my case. I have gone over the heads of the Federation. This is the only reason I can see for their action."

Appeal useless

Gough has the right to appeal to the Federation within 10 days but, says Gough: "I have no intention of doing this as it would be utterly useless, as the majority of those persons who expelled me would be dealing with my appeal."

The upshot of all this is that Gough can never fence in Ireland again. "I'm bitterly disappointed

as I have put a lot of time, money and effort into improving at the sport. I have gone away to numerous tournaments on the Continent at my own expense and have devoted almost entirely the past two years to the sport.

"Furthermore, besides John Bouchier Hayes, I am the only other Irish fencer who has fulfilled the requirements laid down by the federation for Olympic consideration."

The requirements he speaks of are (A) Take part in at least three competitions abroad, one of which may be in Britain (B) Obtain a placing in a competition abroad.

Gough says, "I fulfilled both of these qualifications. Also I beat Finbar Farrell, a member of the Olympic team, twice in Epee and once in sabre at the National Championships. In view of this I feel I at least merited a trial."

The four fencers picked to represent Ireland at Mexico are John Bouchier Hayes, Michael Finbar Farrell and Colm O'Brien. Farrell and Hayes are members of the selection committee, and also of Salle Duffy, while the other selectors are Vincent Duffy, proprietor of the Salle Duffy Fencing Academy, and Miss Shirley Armstrong, also of Salle Duffy.

Gough was a member of Salle Duffy up until two years ago when he left to join U.C.D. Last season he inspired "College" to victory over his former club in the Irish Epee Team championships. This was the first time that U.C.D. had managed to beat Salle Duffy.