

Touché

Sir,—Your article on "Gough's last round" consists of half truths and total inaccuracies. The most serious being the allegation that I misappropriated College funds. In May '67 I was elected Captain, practically unanimously, of the U.C.D. fencing club and with the aid of a hard-working committee built the club up to a membership of over 70 (67 active members).

If we in U.C.D. had insisted on our members affiliating to the Irish Amateur Fencing Federation (I.A.F.F.) we could have had the majority on the Council and we would have been a grave threat to the status quo. Yes, the history of Irish fencing might have been different. Seamus Gilhooly was treasurer of the club and handled all the cash. The A.U.C. gave a special grant of £60—£30 each to one other and I, to travel to Turkey. The President of the Turkish Federation whom I met in Heidenheim gave me a special invitation. The trip cost my parents well over £100 in 1967. The I.A.F.F. did their damndest to prevent us accepting my invitation to Turkey where I was placed 6th in an International competition in Istanbul (after a six month suspension). No other Irish fencer achieved this distinction.

Re suspensions and expulsions: I was suspended once and expelled once, or I was expelled twice, I don't know which. Take your pick. Mr. Kevin Kelleher (rugby referee) is President of the I.A.F.F. and Principal of St. Conleth's School where Prof. Duffy gives lessons. Mr. Wilkes is Chairman of the I.A.F.F. "Suspension meant Gough was barred from competing at the European Championships in Germany for which his club was selected." The only club selected for anything is Salle Duffy! We won the right to go to the European Team Epee Championships, the suspension was lifted for one day to allow me to take part

in the Team event where I won four of my fights, the other three won four between them. I was not allowed to compete in the Individual Pokal. Slightly incomprehensible to a seventeen-year-old! My parents paid in full for this trip also.

I was quite justified in writing to the O.C.I. because of the "doctoring" of Miss S. Armstrong's results in '60 Olympics. Some members of the O.C.I. discussed it with me, but it was discovered too late to take any action.

Re the '63 Games: All the selectors were members of Salle Duffy—Messrs. V. Duffy, J. Bouchier-Hayes and F. Farrell (the latter two selected themselves), and Miss S. Armstrong. I was the only person to qualify according to the regulations set down by the I.A.F.F. Instead of being selected I was expelled for life. It could only happen in Ireland. I have not been allowed to fence or train in Ireland since 1963.

When leaving Ireland to take up a position in Germany *The Irish Times* promised to publish any results I might achieve. About October '75 they stopped publishing for no apparent reason. When I was home at Christmas I called to see Mr. Noone (IT) who told me that Prof. Duffy had been in and told them that the results were faked (like those of Miss Armstrong in '60!). Mr. Donal Foley reiterated these allegations. Having shown proof of my achievements the only strategy left was to attempt to diminish the importance of the events in which I had done well. The German fencing fraternity were amused, they had never heard of an Irish fencer!

Mr. Wilkes promised to enter me for a Class A Tournament in Milan but when I arrived there, having travelled over snow-covered rails overnight, I discovered he had not done so. I

was clubless and stateless and was treated as a shaggy dog, was allowed to compete after a consultation behind closed doors. I did not have a current F.I.E. licence which made matters worse. (I applied for it on January 2nd). When millions of pounds are being spent to ensure that athletes are prepared psychologically and physically this was a disaster for me.

At the Birmingham International Tournament I was placed fifth despite the efforts of my countrymen who made it their business to "referee" by bouts even though there were 100 fencers present. They clapped and urged the foreigner against their own, as Prof. Duffy stated in *The Irish Times* when speaking of the British judges: "Any luck that was going was enjoyed by opponents."

Copper mats are obligatory for all competitions in Continental Europe. A raised mat (about 1 foot above floor level) is obligatory for all finals. There are two copper mats thrown in the corner of Dublin University Gym which have not been used for nearly a decade. There is no raised mat in Ireland. Irish fencers cannot be expected to do well in International events when they have not had the opportunity to use standard equipment.

What happened to the £1,000 grant from the O.C.I.? I suggest that it was never intended to send anyone as they only entered one "A" epee event in '76, that was the Martini Tournament in London. I can only judge that the £1,000 was taken under false pretences and has lined someone's pocket. I understand that there was a further grant of £800 made to the I.A.F.F. All fencers pay for any lessons received and buy their own equipment. Prof. Duffy attends some select schools giving lessons for which, I presume, he is paid. What is the subsidisation for?—Yours, etc.,

LAWRENCE GOUGH.

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