

## **A Spectator's Delight**

Dateline December 2003

Too many times we've heard how spectators - unfriendly Fencing in general and Epee in particular are. And Women's Epee... Isn't that the pits? I mean are the women fencing Foil with the wrong weapon in hand?

Well, Neil and I were lucky enough to reach the Katy Blades tournament venue just in time to witness the gold medal bout in Women's Epee. And what a bout it was!

The participants in this bout were Esperanza Madera-Barrera, a right-hander and Narae (I hope this is spelled right) Williams, a left-hander. Espy, of course, hails from San Marcos via Mexico and Narae from FIT in Dallas, and they both HAD to win: Espy to confirm her A and Narae to get hers for the first time.

From the beginning of the bout we could tell that it was going to be a war. If one of the ladies attacked, it was only to face a counter-attack to which she would try to apply a counter-stop-hit (the counter-attack to a counter-attack). There were no parries on either side as somehow both ladies knew that a lateral or circular parry would spell doom for the parrier. They did parry some but always in the form of a Counter-Attack with an Opposition or some other form of quick-developing Prise.

For a while it didn't look as if either warrior would take the prize. The action was fast and the touches came often. Narae's favorite attack was an Opposition in Quarte with a Fleche, Espy's was a Straight Thrust to the forearm and both used their "bread and butter" to a score of 9 to 7, with Narae the leader. We figured then that Narae would slow things down a little, so as to let Espy stew a little in her disadvantage, but Espy's extended arm was too great a temptation for her opponent's Fleche in Quarte; Narae took the blade Espy was offering only to miss by a foot, over Espy's slight duck; 9-8, still Narae.

And Narae must have thought - if she had time to think - that the miss was her fault and not Espy's doing for she took that offer again and missed again! 9-9...

And that was the only mental error of the bout. After that, Espy pretty much had her way what with her hits to Narae's forearm or biceps or thigh. The final score was, I believe, 15-14 and it was a good score with which to end a tremendous bout.

I have no idea how the rest of the ladies in the US are going to do in the upcoming international wars but if they want to win, they should come down to the Southwest Section and see how Epee should be fenced.