

in the class if you go to the club practice," she says. "Then they go and decide they really enjoy the competition."

Fencing is divided into foil, epee and saber divisions. Foil and epee are classified as finesse sports because they rely less on force but more on dexterity. Sabers, which rely less on the deft twist of the wrist, are almost a full-contact sport.

"It's one of the manlier of the weapons," she says. "You can use the side of the blade, and a couple of whacks across the side of the head can really rattle you around for a while."

Valkavich says the first thing the club teaches is safety, which reduces the danger from saber-swinging swashbucklers.

"People join and want to be Zorro," she says. "You put a saber in their hand and you've satisfied their urge."

Valkavich says A&M's major competition in the fencing field comes from Southwest Texas State University, who floods the field with a quantity of fencers at every tournament. Even so, she says, A&M fencers capture a few places at each meet. Since fencing tournaments are generally divided by sort of sword, not age groups, she says the competition is very varied.

"You have a wide range of people," she says. "You could fence a six-year-old and a 40-year-old in the same day."

Valkavich says the fencing club furnishes all masks, protective gear and weapons to club members. It can be an expensive sport, she says, so students should take advantage

of the equipment provided here to learn the sport.

FIELD HOCKEY — Muhammad Shaw, president of the field hockey club, has seen the organization go through several changes since he joined the club in 1983. When he joined, Shaw says he was the only male on A&M's traditionally female team. He says he was able to recruit enough members to make up complete men's and women's teams. Because some members graduated, the club is back to one co-ed team, with ten men and four women participating.

Shaw says the team competes against local high school teams, as well as club teams from Houston and Dallas. It also travels regularly to Tulane University to participate in tournaments for trophies and ribbons. Shaw says field hockey is not a traditional American sport, so most of the men on the team are foreign students, and many are from Pakistan.

"Just like football is to Americans, field hockey is to Pakistanis," he says.

GYMNASTICS — The Gymnastics Club was organized in 1928, making it one of A&M's oldest club teams. Today it has 20-25 active members and a team of 10 women and 15 men. Monique Cox, spokeswoman for the group, says they would like to promote the growth of gymnastics with beginners as well as experts. Gymnastics is a sport anyone can do, she says, and experience definitely isn't required.

"There are guys on the team who

couldn't even do a forward roll when they first showed up," she says.

Some of these same men captured the state men's title last year and hope to defend it against main rival Texas Tech on April 5, when the state meet will be held here.

HANDBALL — The Texas A&M Handball Club holds the national title. Last spring, the club beat Lake Forest College in Chicago for the title, ending the Illinois school's 11-year reign as national champions.

Tim Sutton, club president, says 42 of the club's 100 members participated in the national tournament, fortuitously held in Austin last year. He credits the growth of the club and team to the influence of its coach Lance Lowy, who played handball at the University of Texas. See related story page 6.



ICE HOCKEY — "I doubt we'll play this semester," says Neil Stronach, club president. The main reason is because of a lack of money.

"Ice hockey is an expensive sport — it always has been," Stronach says.

Stonach says the club last year was about 15 members strong, which is a good amount.

"Because it costs over \$100 per player to play, it just wasn't feasible at this point in time," Stronach says. It's also rough on the team members because their home rink is in Houston. Often, they practice from 11 p.m. to midnight and then drive back to College Station.

Some members of the club will play this semester, but not formally representing A&M.

JUDO — Judo is the Japanese style of wrestling, and Bobby Perez, the club president, will tell you it's different from other martial arts. But it's not hard to learn, he says.

"The matches last five minutes, but it seems like forever," Perez says.

To build up endurance, many of the 20 club members run and lift weights. Let's hope all their hard work pays off when the judo club competes in the Dallas Team Championships, Nov. 30.

LACROSSE — "Basically, lacrosse is a sport of sticks catching a solid rubber ball the size of a tennis ball, played on a field the size of a football field with two six-foot goals," Jon Turton, club president explains. It's a full contact sport that involves speed, endurance, quickness, and hand-eye coordination, Turton says.

The lacrosse team is responsible for yet another Aggie tradition. The Fifth Annual Texas A&M Fall Lacrosse Classic. On Nov. 9 and 10,

SEE A&M PAGE 10

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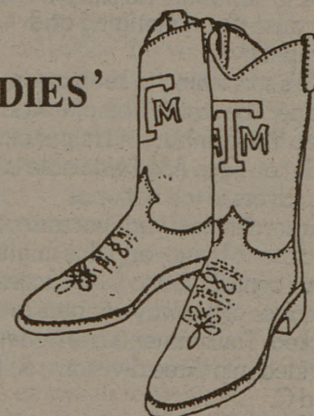
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