

JUDO

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Danin placed 5th in the 71-kilo-gram division.

While Danin has had the opportunity to travel and compete on

"My brother would compete in the U.S. and would tell me about the A&M Judo Team and how good it was."

— ROBERT DANIN
A&M Judo Team Member

half of his home country, he will not be able to qualify to compete for Ecuador in Atlanta this summer.

"I was not able to go home and

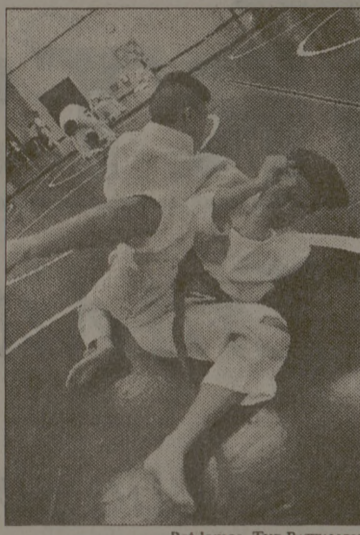
enter the qualifying matches, nor the Pan-American Games, because of the school calendar," Danin said. "It just kept me from going home."

The success Danin and the Judo Team has enjoyed can be attributed to the help of A&M Recreational Sports and the team's fund-raising efforts.

The team competes annually in approximately 20 tournaments across the state. The money needed to travel to the competitions comes mostly from Recreational Sports and University funding.

"If it weren't for the help of Rec Sports and the school in funding, I don't think we would have as good a team as we have right now," Danin said.

"You can see our success in the number of competitors we have invited to the U.S. Open (judo tournament) and other competitions outside the United States, such as the Mexico City Invitational."



Pat James, THE BATTALION
Freshman Adian Aguirre and junior John Nguyen practice their technique.

New Olympic events have become ridiculous

Have you heard about the newest sport to be added to the Olympic roster? Armchair frisbee.

This might seem ridiculous, but the recent trend in adding new Olympic events suggests that anything requiring movement will become an official event.

While certain sports such as baseball and tennis have recently been approved as official sports, other posier sports have attempted to fool the Olympic Committee into thinking they are real sports too.

For example, ballroom dancing was petitioning to become a sanctioned sport. Please.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines a sport as "a specific diversion, usually involving physical exercise and having a set form and body of rules; a game."

Since when is dancing a game? Sure you compete against other teams, but there is no game involved. Tennis and baseball are games. Whether or not you can dip your partner is not.

Dancing does not involve serious training like what a track athlete or basketball player must go through.

While ballroom dancing is an acquired skill, I'm sure the ancient Greeks were not thinking, "Hey, I hope ballroom dancing becomes a sport in the 20th century."

While some events have been denied the privilege of becoming an official part of the games, others actually qualify in the Olympic Committee's eyes.

Rhythmic gymnastics is the latest travesty. Now I know gymnastics has been an event since the beginning, but why add the rhythmic part? What is so great about throwing a ball up in

the air, turning a cartwheel and then catching the ball between your legs.

Sure you have to be talented, but why have props? This isn't a beauty contest with a talented portion.

Synchronized swimming — the only skill involved is holding your breath underwater for a long period of time. This is perhaps the greatest example of how things are getting out of control.

Just because something requires physical exertion does not mean it is an Olympic sport.

With all the new events, we might as well let breakdancing be the new event of the 2000 Olympics. It requires energy, skill, and all that spinning sure can knock the wind out of someone.

The Olympic Committee needs to put its foot down and stop the flood of new events.

The Olympics symbolize the camaraderie and unity between the nations of the world. This is what the ancient Greeks wanted when the games began.

The intention was to not let differences in religion, creed or color interfere.

Everyone is equal and everyone is there to be joined in the spirit of competition.

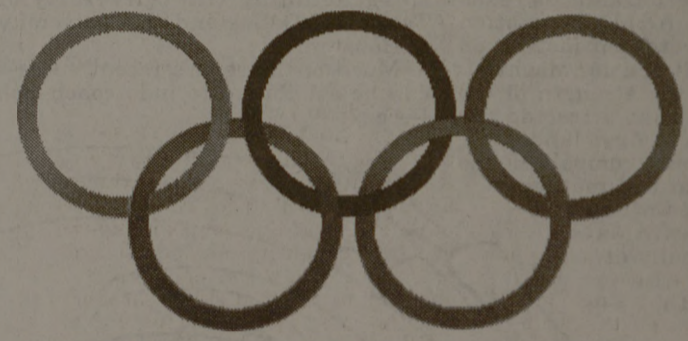
Instead, the Olympics have become a spectacle of how many sports we can cram into a month-long festival.

The Olympics have become overburdened by events that no one attends nor cares about. Who gets excited about tickets to team handball?

The International Olympic Committee needs to rethink the standards it uses to evaluate which sports should be incorporated into the world's biggest sporting event.

The IOC has already taken the right step by banning exhibition sports, but it needs to go one step further.

Don't allow events which are not traditional sports. If they really need another one, my suggestion is football — at least it's a sport.



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