Dear Alumni, Friends and Family,

It’s hard to believe that we are approaching the end of the season, but there is a lot of critical fencing left before we put 2016 in the history books. This year’s Ivy League results show a great deal of promise for the future – with women beating Brown for the first time in many years, and the men showing epic performances from the freshmen. The team will continue to face tough competition as they head first to the NCAA regionals at Vassar, and then the NCAA Championships at Brandeis. As one of the many alumni and supporters of this historic program, I am happy to see our team and coaches giving us a reason to be proud.

This year the annual Dernell Every Invitational will be combined with alumni weekend and end-of-year banquet on April 2nd. It is a wonderful opportunity to visit with Henry, members of the current team, and fellow alumni. I hope you will join us for a great day of fencing! If you haven’t yet registered, please do so using this link.

As you many remember, last year we announced a landmark endowment gift from Carl Knobloch ’51. Although that endowment has provided a tremendous amount of support, annual fundraising remains critical to supporting our athletes with travel, training, and equipment enhancements. I hope that alumni and friends of the program will unite to send a strong message of support for the program with 100% participation in this year’s annual appeal. Any gift of any size will make an impact. Please consider making a gift today to honor the commitment our student-athletes make to represent Yale with pride.

You can make your gift online by going to giving.yale.edu and following the instructions below. Or, mail a check to Yale Fencing Association, PO Box 1844, New Haven, CT 06508-1844.

Thank you for supporting Yale Fencing! Enjoy the remainder of the newsletter.

Salute,

Steve Blum ’74
President, Yale Fencing Association

*To make your gift online:
- Visit giving.yale.edu
- Select ‘Make a Gift Now’
- Select ‘Make a New Gift or Pledge by Credit Card’
- Select ‘Athletics’ from the drop down menu
- Select ‘Fencing’ from the second drop down menu
- Complete the rest of the form
Dear YFA,

The 2015-2016 season has already shown signs of being a turnaround year. Our freshman showed great maturity by really shining at the Penn State Invitational. Freshman saber fencer Walter Musgrave took a fifth-place finish while freshman foilst Sarah Pak was the first Yale fencer to reach the final at the Penn State Open since our legendary Sada Jacobson.

Once our team season got started, our men’s and women’s team both performed better than in years past at the Brandeis Invitational, with some convincing wins and impressive performances against the stronger teams. For the first time, we also participated at the Penn State Dual Meet Invitational, increasing our strength of schedule and measuring ourselves against the best teams in the country. Once again our freshman really led the way. Epeeist Lucy Friedmann and foilist Jenny Zhao had impressive showings throughout the year (Jenny was named to the Second Team All-Ivy), while Skyler Chin and Jonathan Xu also showed the enthusiasm for fencing that can only lead to improvement. We have a very promising class of recruits matriculated for next year and are looking forward to increasing the amount of fencers we qualify for NCAA Championships and reestablishing ourselves as a force to be reckoned with in the Ivy League.

We are very excited about combining the Dernell Every Invitation with our end-of-year banquet for the first time in our history and our hoping for a great turn-out. It will be a great opportunity to celebrate our outgoing seniors with one last friendly competition and welcome them to the Yale Fencing Association family with open arms.

Thank you for your continued support and Go Bulldogs!
Coach Henry Harutunian

What does it mean to be captain of the fencing team?
Being captain of the fencing teams means I have gained the trust and respect of my teammates to lead. It is a tremendous honor, one that I am extremely grateful for. As captain of such an individualized sport, I have sought to help each member find his own strengths and capitalize upon them. In this regard, my role this year has been to plan practices and team workouts so as to empower each individual member. I have greatly enjoyed this journey and am still very thankful that my teammates trusted me with this responsibility.

If you had to describe this year’s team in one word, what would it be?
Persevering. This past year, the team constantly found itself in an underdog position. Yet, we continued to train as hard as we could and competed extremely well against the top schools in the country. Particularly this year, many members of the team faced large personal troubles relating to family and school. Nonetheless, each fencer prioritized practice and putting the team first. We persevered and our season was a success because of it.

What is the biggest thing you’ll take away from your experience as a student athlete at Yale?
From fencing, I have learned how to persevere in the face of adversity. Both on and off the fencing strip, I have been hit with situations that have nearly destroyed me. Fencing has taught me that when you fall, you have to get back up. I have learned to work well under stress and move forward in difficult times. In this regard, being a student athlete at Yale has best trained me to be a true leader in the real world, as stress now fuels me, not debilitates me.
What does it mean to be captain of the fencing team?
Being captain of the fencing team means leading warm up and footwork, organizing and optimizing practice, and bringing together a group of very disparate people. Not only does every fencer come from a unique personal background, they also carry with them the lessons and advice from coaches back home. On top of these dividing factors, fencing is an extremely individual sport, rarely fenced in a team capacity before coming to college. I view my job as that of a facilitator, helping people work together, bond, and get excited for upcoming meets. There’s also an extent to which the captain is the mom of the group -- looking out for athletes in and out of practice, reminding them to be on time, hydrate, and get a full night’s sleep. I can definitely say that being captain has made me proud of every fencer, and glad to know them.

If you had to describe this year’s team in one word, what would it be?
Concentrated. We’re a small (both in number and height) team but we have a LOT of heart! The team works together extremely well and each and every member has enormous fight in them. It always makes the effort of coming to practice, leading or organizing practice, etc. worth it when I find myself working along side them. This year especially we’re very compact. We all feed off of each others’ energy and strong work ethic; I don’t think that this year’s team could work any other way. I’m proud of how well we’ve brought out each others’ strengths this year.

What is the biggest thing you’ll take away from your experience as a student athlete at Yale?
The community. Fencing has provided me a home at Yale, as it has done for many others. I think that while I’ll remember the workouts, wins, and losses, I’ll most remember the countless hours spent on the 7th floor of Payne. Being an athlete here truly brings meaning to the student-athlete title -- while academics come first your sport is always a close second, along side any other serious time commitments you may (and are likely to, as a Yalie) have. I’ve gained tremendously from being an athlete here. My work ethic has improved, my organizational skills and inter-personal skills have improved, but most notably my ability to feel at home so far from home has come part and parcel with the team. I feel very lucky to have been captain of this year’s team, and know that I’ll be in touch with these fencers for many years to come!
DERNELL EVERY INVITATIONAL - FENCING ALUMNI EVENT

This year, for the first time, we will be combining our alumni weekend and our end-of-year banquet into one great day of fencing. Alumni can attend both the tournament and banquet, or either one individually.

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2016
9:00AM - Continental Breakfast on the 7th floor of Payne Whitney Gym
10:00AM - Competition Begins (WS, MF, WE)
12:30PM - Lunch on 7th Floor
2:00PM - Competition Continues (MS, WF, ME)
6:00PM - Alumni Dinner/Fencing Team Banquet, Kiphuth Trophy Room, 2nd Floor, PWG - $40.00 per person.

Please register online: [http://www.cvent.com/d/5fqqz1/4W](http://www.cvent.com/d/5fqqz1/4W)
If you have any questions, please email support.athletics@yale.edu

Use the app to stay connected with Yale Athletics. Fans earn points for a variety of activities including attending events, sharing Yale Athletics social media posts, posting game-day photos, stopping by a concession or merchandise stand and much more!

Points can be redeemed for merchandise and other items.