

Fencing in Cluj. Memorial album of the bicentenary in Cluj, 1818-2018

(Scrima din Cluj. Album memorial al bicentenarului din Cluj 1818-2018)

Authors: Collective. *Asociația prietenilor scrimei din Cluj*

Centrul de presă reformat Misztótfalusi Kis Miklós, 2018
219 pages; 221 photos.



The album is structured into 11 chapters, masterfully written by several authors, good connoisseurs of fencing in Cluj, some of them former high performance fencers. We mention Dr. Gurath Bela, Dr. Killyény András, Dr. Geréb Zsolt, Dr. Uray Zoltán, Dr. Habala Péter Pál, László F. Csaba. Professional consultancy was provided by the veteran fencer Dr. Iuliu Ovidiu Marian, which is acknowledged in the preface of the album by Dr. Guráth Béla.

Chapter I, entitled *Cluj fencers and their fencing masters in the period 1818-1971*, a basic chapter of the monograph, is an overview of Cluj fencers and their masters in the period 1818-1971. The first épée instructor was an Italian, Gaetano Biazini, who settled in Cluj and opened in 1918 the first fencing salle within the precincts of the Bastion (the current Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania), where only the aristocrats of the time trained, which became a public institution in 1824. Initially, the instructors were outstanding members of the local aristocracy; later, these could also be military officers. After the university was founded in 1872, in 1885 the KAC club was created, which was a Hungarian sports association mainly attended by Hungarian students. Fencing in Cluj developed until 1914, when World War I broke out. The four years of war made impossible the sports movement revival immediately after the war, starting with 1918. Sport in Cluj was subjected to a number of restrictions in the immediate post-war period, including the shut down of the KAC club. Only in 1920, under the direction of Dr. István Somody (winner of the silver medal in the London OG, 1908), was the Athletic University Club in Cluj (KAC) reopened, which also had a fencing section. Transylvanian fencing came to a new life only in the 1920's, in several centers (Sibiu, Oradea, Satu Mare, Arad, Cluj). In the 20's, three clubs in Cluj had a fencing section: Kolozsvari/Cluj Athletic Club (KAC) - a Hungarian sports association, University Club - a sports association for all students in Cluj University, and Haggibor Club - a Jewish sports association. In 1933, the first official national fencing competition was organized.

After 1940, as a result of a change in the administration, fencing in Cluj experienced a quieter period. After 1944, the life of fencers in Cluj was again reorganized. The Bolyai University Athletic Club (BEAC) was created, as well as Dermata and Progresul associations. The first facility exclusively dedicated to fencing was built in the 60's at *Nicolae Bălcescu* High School. The best national and international results of Cluj fencing were obtained in the women's foil event in the period 1953-1969, by the Știința Cluj team or individually by Olga Orban-Szabo. In the 1956 Melbourne OG, 18-year-old Olga Orban won the silver medal. She participated four more times in the OG, winning bronze medals in the last two editions (Mexico City - 1968 and Munich - 1972).

Chapter II, entitled *The education of future generations in the period 1950-1962*, addresses the requirements of modern fencing in Cluj, in the four sports clubs having a fencing section (Progresul, Dinamo, Școala Sportivă, Știința), where about 100 athletes practiced this sport. The generations of the 50's benefited from advantages such as using sports equipment free of charge (a considerable advantage in the case of fencing), free travelling, accommodation and meals when participating in away competitions. Also, meal vouchers and paid training camps were provided for the best fencers. In the late 50's, the CFR Sports Association opened a pentathlon section, after that created in Bucharest, from which fencers benefited in the first place.

Chapter III, entitled *International results and decorations awarded to Cluj fencers in the first period of glory (1845-1975)*, presents the most valuable international results obtained by Cluj fencers in this period. The chapter includes multiple rankings synthesized in the form of tables, while the athletes are presented in Chapter I.

Chapter IV, entitled *History of fencing in Cluj in the period 1972-2018*, is structured into 4 periods according to the main objectives: 1972-1990; 1990-2001; 2001-2010; 2010-2018 which involves several special actions in the field of fencing in Cluj, such as founding the *Friends of Cluj Fencing Association* in 2011, reopening the fencing section of the Cluj University Sports Club in 2013, with Habala Péter as a voluntary trainer, naming the fencing salle after Orbán Olga. The main national and international results obtained by the Cluj fencers are presented. This chapter also presents the fencing trainers in Cluj in the period 1972-2018.

Chapter V comprises the *List of Cluj fencers who won medals in the period 1920-1973 – 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in National Senior and Junior Championships, World Championships and OG*. Of the multitude of winners, two fencers who were and still are great scientific personalities stand out: *Dr. Uray Zoltán* and *Prof. Dr. Nicolae Ghilezan*. Zoltan Uray was born in Cluj in 1931; he is a biologist, a researcher, a foreign member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 1948 and 1949, he was a national junior foil champion. In 1949 and 1952, he ranked second in the National Senior Championship. In 1952, he participated in the Helsinki OG. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Ghilezan was born

in Cluj in 1938; he is a specialist in oncology-radiology, a titular member of the Romanian Academy. He won the title of national junior sabre champion three times, in 1952, 1956 and 1958, and he ranked second in the same junior sabre competition two times, in 1954 and 1955.

The following two chapters, **Chapter VI** *Guráth Béla memorial competitions* and **Chapter VII** *Memories, pleasant and unpleasant events of the past years*, reveal memories of the sports life of important fencers in Cluj.

Chapter VIII provides a list of Cluj fencers between 1818-2018, in the form of multiple nominal tables.

Chapter IX presents the training and competition facilities used by Cluj fencers over the two centuries, with their previous and current addresses, as well as their location on the street map of Cluj.

Chapters X and XI describe aspects related to the fencing competition rules, under the titles *What we should know about fencing and competitions* and *Fencing specific terminology*.

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