

FENCERS CLUB

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Fencers Club Athletes Return from 2008 Beijing Olympics with Three Silver Medals

Siblings Erinn & Keith Smart Third Olympic Team
Marks a New Beginning in a Tumultuous Year of Loss

Emily Cross Rises to the Occasion After Putting Harvard on Hold

New York, September 2, 2008 – Three New Yorkers have now changed US fencing forever as a result of their silver medal experiences in the Beijing Olympics. Three-time US Olympian siblings Erinn and Keith Smart, and Emily Cross – competing on her first Olympic team – earned silver medals in their respective women's foil and men's sabre team events. The trailblazing results for all three athletes are historical, in that it marks the first time their respective US teams (Women's Foil Team and Men's Sabre Team) have ever medaled in the Olympics.

Keeth Smart (ranked 5th in the men's sabre world rankings) and sister Erinn (ranked 31st in the women's foil world rankings) had one goal in mind entering their third Olympic games - "Win a medal for Mom and Dad!" Having lost their mother a few months earlier to cancer and their father the previous year to a sudden heart attack, both athletes immersed themselves into grueling training routines to move forward in their lives and prepare themselves for a chance to medal - at an Olympics that for the first time their parents would not attend to see them.

For Emily Cross (ranked 9th in the women's foil world rankings) the Olympics were to be a coming out party for the former junior world champion, with the goal of blossoming as a medal contender amongst the top women foilists in the world. A returning Harvard senior after the Olympics, Emily gave up a year of school to pursue her dream of making the Olympic team

"Ladies first," noted Keeth Smart about the chances of his sister and Emily Cross to bring home medals. After missing out in the individual women's foil event where both were eliminated in the quarterfinals, Erinn and Emily regrouped with their teammate, Hannah Thompson, as the #7 seeded team and won a silver medal by upsetting the #2 seed Polish team and then the #3 Hungarian team before falling to the #1 ranked Russian team for the gold.

For Keeth Smart, the former #1 ranked fencer in the world, fighting for a medal was the last thing on his mind prior to these games. In addition to losing his parents, Keeth also had a fight this year with ITP – a rare form of Leukemia which he contracted while in Algiers at a world cup competition. He was given a limited time to live, but miraculously recovered from his ailment to compete in the Olympics. Like his sister, Keeth missed his opportunity at an individual medal in the men's sabre competition by finishing fifth. But with his teammates Jason Rogers, Tim Morehouse and James Williams, the #7 seeded US team proceeded to knock out the #2 2007 World Champion Hungarian team, and then the #3 2005 World Champion Russian team before losing to the #1 seed, France.

"I am delighted but not surprised at the results of our athletes," noted James Melcher, Fencers Club Chairman. Our three medalists at the Beijing Olympics rank among the best in the world. The results attest to the hard work of the athletes and their coaches, and to a 125-year tradition of the Fencers Club producing more Olympic fencers than any other club in America."

Fencers Club (FC) - Established in 1883, the FC is a not-for-profit organization that is the oldest club in the Western Hemisphere dedicated to teaching the sport of fencing.

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