

## US Men's Sabre Upset Hungary, Fall to France

Contributed by Howard Frasher  
Wednesday, 18 August 2004

Staging one of the grandest upsets at the Games, the US men's saber team beat the third-seeded Hungarians and advanced to the semifinal rounds at the Olympic Games.

It's been a roller-coaster day for US fencing fans:

The US team of Ivan Lee (Brooklyn, N.Y.), Jason Rogers (Los Angeles, Calif.) and Keeth Smart (Brooklyn, N.Y.) has shocked the fencing world, beating a team for whom saber is a national heritage.

The US men dangled just a few touches behind the Hungarians until almost the middle of the match. Ivan Lee took the score from 12-15 to 20-18 for the US. The Hungarians vaulted ahead again in the next encounter, and the match remained in the Hungarian's hands until the final encounter.

Ivan Lee outscored Zsolt Nemcsik, winner of the silver medal in the individual event only days ago, 6-5 to leave anchor Keeth Smart with a score of 38-40 going into the final pairing. Smart closed the match out against Domonkos Ferjancsik with brilliance, outscoring the Hungarian 7-3 for the win, 45-43.

On to the semifinal bout, and the chance for US fencers to make history a second time in this Olympic Games. No US men's saber team has ever won an Olympic silver or gold medal.

But gold or silver was not to be on this day. The US men lost the bid to advance to the gold medal bout by a single touch to France.

Once again, Smart fenced valiantly in the final encounter, outscoring France's Damien Touya 6-5 but it was one touch too few as the score ended at 45-44 for the French team.

The US now face a daunting opponent in the match for the bronze: Russia. The #5-seeded Italian team upset the Russians, the world's strongest saber squad, 45-42 in the semifinals.