

Princeton fencing coach Michel Sebastiani to step down.

Contributed by Evelina Cutburn
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PRINCETON, N.J. -- Princeton fencing coach Michel Sebastiani will retire at the conclusion of the 2005-06 season, his 25th at the Ivy League school, the university announced Thursday.

Sebastiani, who will be 68 when he steps down, has guided the men's program to a 199-84 record and the women's program to a 126-82 mark.

Under his guidance, the teams have combined to win nine Ivy League championships and six IFA national championships. He has coached three NCAA individual men's champions and one NCAA individual women's champion. Sebastiani's men's teams have finished in the top four of the NCAA or IFA 16 different times.

The men's team has had 19 straight winning seasons, while the women have had a winning record 11 of the last 12 years.

"Michel has left an impressive legacy through his work with Princeton's fencing program," athletic director Gary Walters said.

A native of France, Sebastiani holds two master's degrees from the National Institute of Sports in Paris. Before becoming a fencing coach, he was a member of the French national modern pentathlon team for the 1960 Olympic Games and an officer in the French Foreign Legion paratroopers.

He formerly headed the top fencing academy in the country in Houston, and in November of 2001 Sebastiani opened a fencing center in Princeton, the Cercle D'Esclime de Princeton-Sebastiani.

Sebastiani plans to devote his time to his own fencing school which boasts 120 members.