

Two Olympians Lead the U.S. Fencing Team into Action at the 2007 Pan American Games

Contributed by Julie Goldsticker - USA Boxing
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(RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL) – The United States Fencing Team arrived at the 2007 Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil with high medal hopes following a record-setting five medal gold performance at the 2003 Pan American Games in Santo Domingo.

2004 Olympians Cody Mattern (Colorado Springs, Colo.) and Seth Kelsey (Colorado Springs, Colo.) lead a talented team of fencers into competition at the Pan American Games. Mattern and Kelsey, roommates at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., are both competing in the Men's Epee Individual and Team competition in Rio de Janeiro. The United States' men's epee competitors did not win a medal in 2003, but Mattern and Kelsey in addition to NCAA National Champion and men's epee team member Benjamin Ungar (New York, N.Y.) will look to turn the tide in Rio de Janeiro. Kelsey was a member of the 2003 Pan American Games gold medal-winning men's saber team, and will look to add an epee medal to his collection.

Two sisters will step on to the strip in women's epee competition. 2003 Pan American Games women's team epee silver medallist Kelley Hurley (San Antonio, Texas) and younger sister, Courtney Hurley (San Antonio, Texas) will vie for Pan Am titles in Rio de Janeiro. Both Hurley sisters boast Cadet World Championships titles, winning gold medals in back-to-back years with Kelley grabbing the title in 2005 and Courtney following with a 2006 win.

2007 NCAA individual foil national champion Andras Horanyi (Columbus, Ohio) will open fencing action for the United States with men's individual foil competition on Saturday, July 14. Horanyi, one of three Ohio State buckeyes on the U.S. fencing roster, is the lone men's foil athlete on the U.S. team. A four-time All-American at Ohio State, Hanna Thompson (Rochester, N.Y.), is the sole U.S. women's foil competitor fencing at the 2007 Pan American Games. Thompson will be the first female athlete to take the strip, competing in Sunday's women's individual foil action.

In saber, 2007 NCAA National Champion Timothy Hagamen (New York, N.Y.); 2006 World Championships team member James Williams (Sacramento, Calif.) and 2007 NCAA National Championships bronze medalist Ben Igoe (Staten Island, N.Y.) will represent the United States at the Pan American Games. They will look to duplicate the success of the 2003 Pan American Games championship team, which won gold. In addition to the team success, the United States' Ivan Lee, took home an individual saber gold medal from the 2003 Pan Am Games.

In women's saber, a trio of accomplished fencers will represent the United States in Rio de Janeiro. A four-time All-American at Columbia University, Emma Baratta (Somerville, N.J.), will join 2003 NCAA champion Alexis Jamal (Westfield, N.J.) and Ohio State fencer Eileen Grench (Columbus, Ohio) on the strip at the 2007 Pan American Games.

Fencing has been contested at the Pan American Games since the 1951 event in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The United States won 11 medals at the 2003 Pan Am Games, earning five gold, three silver and three bronze medals.