



FENCING • ESCRIME  
**CANADA**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **CANADIAN FENCERS WIN ELEVEN MEDALS AT PAN-AM CHAMPIONSHIPS IN QUERETARO, MEXICO, JUST A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES.**

July 12, (Queretaro) - Canada won a total of 11 medals at the 2008 Pan-Am Zone Fencing Championships in Queretaro, Mexico. This competition brought together the best fencers across America and marked the last stop before the Canadian team heads to Beijing, where the Olympic Games are taking place next month.

The single Canadian gold medalist in an individual event was Sherraine Schalm, currently ranked fifth in the world in the Women's Epee. She beat the Panamanian Jesica Jimene Luna in the finals to bring home the gold medal. Four other Canadians also won medals in their individual event. In Women's Foil, Annie-Claude Therrien beat her teammate Monica Kwan, and followed with another victory against Cuban Misleydis Company La O before losing in the semifinals to Mariana Gonzalez from Venezuela, settling for bronze. Igor Tikhomirov (Men's Epee), Marek Wojcik (Men's Foil) and Philippe Beaudry (Men's Sabre) followed Therrien's example and also won bronze medals.

The four Canadians competing in the Women's Sabre event, plagued by illness, were unable to perform to the best of their abilities. The best result was achieved by Olga Ovtchinnikova, who placed sixth.

In the team events, all six Canadian squads left with a medal. After losing to Venezuela in the first round, the Women's Sabre Team, lead by Julie Cloutier, Olga Ovtchinnikova, Wendy Saschenbrecker and Sandra Sassine, came back strong and easily beat Argentina 45 to 26 to win the bronze medal. The Americans proved to be tough opponents as the Men's Sabre, Men's Foil and Women's Foil Teams all lost to the US in the finals, settling for silver medals. The Women's Epee Team delivered a strong performance and fought until the end, losing to Venezuela in overtime, 29-28. The Men's Epee Team (Hughes Boisvert-Simard, Tigran Bajgoric, Igor Gantsevich and Igor Tikhomirov) were awarded the gold after beating Venezuela in the finals.

This Pan-Am Zone Fencing Championships represents the last international competition the Canadian team will take part in before the Olympic Games. Ten fencers qualified for next month's Olympic and Paralympic tournaments: Sherraine Schalm (Women's Epee), Jujie Luan (Women's Foil), Sandra Sassine (Women's Sabre), Julie Cloutier (Women's Sabre), Olga Ovtchinnikova (Women's Sabre), Wendy Saschenbrecker (Women's Sabre), Igor Tikhomirov (Men's Epee), Joshua McGuire (Men's Foil), Philippe Beaudry (Men's Sabre) and Pierre Mainville (Men's Epee and Sabre, cat. B). Canada has never won an Olympic medal in fencing. All of that might change next month since the Canadian team can count on experienced and skilled fencers, such as Luan and Tikhomirov, both former Olympic medallist (Luan won gold for China in 1984, and Tikhomirov was a member of the USSR team who won bronze in Seoul in 1988). Sherraine Schalm is one of Canada's strongest medal contenders with twelve world cup titles in her career. Fencing competitions start August 9, in Beijing, China.

The Canadian medal winners at the championships were:

**Gold (2)**

*Women's Epee:* Sherraine Schalm (Brooks, AB)

*Men's Epee Team :* Igor Tikhomirov (Toronto, ON), Tigran Bajgoric (Vancouver, BC), Hughes Boisvert-Simard (Québec, QC), Igor Gantsevich (Richmond, BC)

**SILVER (4)**

*Women's Epee Team:* Sherraine Schalm (Brooks, AB), Ainsley Switzer (Toronto, ON), Gabrielle Lavoie (Québec, QC), Leslie-Ann Gervais (Caledonia, ON)

*Men's Foil Team:* Marek Wojcik (Longueuil, QC), Nicolas Teisseire (Boucherville, QC), Julien Gaudreau-Pollender (Granby, QC), Etienne Lalonde-Turbide (Verdun, QC)

*Women's Foil Team:* Monica Kwan (Victoria, BC), Élise Daoust (Montréal, QC), Annie-Claude Therrien (Laval, QC), Kelleigh Ryan (Ottawa, ON)

*Men's Sabre Team :* Philippe Beaudry (Montréal, QC), Nicolas Mayer (Mont Royal, QC), Vincent Couturier (Verdun, QC), Kyle Girard (Ottawa, ON)

**BRONZE (5)**

*Men's Epee:* Igor Tikhomirov (Toronto, ON)

*Men's Foil :* Marek Wojcik (Longueuil, QC)

*Women's Foil:* Annie-Claude Therrien (Laval, QC)

*Men's Sabre:* Philippe Beaudry (Montréal, QC)

*Women's Sabre Team :* Sandra Sassine (Laval, QC), Wendy Saschenbrecker (Montréal, QC), Julie Cloutier (Repentigny, QC), Olga Ovtchinnikova (Montréal, QC)

**FINAL MEDAL STANDING**

	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1. USA</b>	9	3	7	19
<b>2. CANADA</b>	2	4	5	11
<b>3. VENEZUELA</b>	1	4	3	8
<b>4. PANAMA</b>		1		1
<b>5. MEXICO</b>			2	2
<b>6. ARGENTINA</b>			1	1

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