

## Swimmers Set School Record, Student-led fencing team succeeds

BY VLAD KROKHMAL

This year's swim team has accomplished unprecedented achievements. Overall the men's team achieved a 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the conference, trailing just barely behind Carboro. The women's team got 3<sup>rd</sup> place, and was only 5 points short of the second place spot. Aside from the impressive performance during the regular season, many of the swimmers have qualified for the NCHSAA 1A/2A Eastern Swimming & Diving State Meet.

These results, however, were not achieved without extraordinary hard work. Junior Kyle Delehanty said, "It's quite the commitment, especially balancing school work with practices."

The importance of balance holds especially true for swimming. In the middle of the season the swim team had trouble with their original pool where they practiced. Due to renovations, the team had to relocate to the Campus Hills pool. Consequently, the practice time switched from right after school to 7:30 P.M. — and the swim team only gets back to school just before the

start of Happy Half at 10 P.M.

Although some might attribute the success of the swim team to the fact that Cardinal Gibbons is now competing in a different conference, there is more than just one contributing factor. This year, juniors Tony Fang, Kyle Finn, Garrick Gan and Nick

Senior Tony Botros said that "having done cross country, track, soccer and even some football, I believe that swimming is the most demanding sport, both physically and mentally." No doubt a part of the team's success comes from the coaches, Darcie Smith,



The swim team poses for a post-meet photo. • Photo courtesy of Ben Gellman

Woodcock broke the school's record for the 200 freestyle relay, thus demonstrating the team's dedication and ability. Senior Kirby Varnadoe-Russ was named the 2010 1A/2A Women's Conference Swimmer of the Year, thus showing the team as strong competition toward the other conference teams.

Michael Newbauer, and Lex Alvord. Although the coaching team was newly assembled last year, it has a wealth of combined swimming and coaching knowledge. With a successful season completed, and bright possibilities in the State Meet, the NCSSM swim team has proven its excellence.

BY BEN GELLMAN

Sword fighting is a staple of adventure novels like *The Count of Monte Cristo* or *The Mask of Zorro*. Exciting scenes involving battles to the death can be found throughout these works.

To those in the NCSSM Fencing Club though, sword fighting is something done after school for fun and for the thrill of competition.

Fencing is not a varsity sport at Science and Math, but those who compete with the club team are dedicated to the art of fencing.

"The team is very young; hardly anyone had fenced before this year," said team captain Peter McNeary.

The inexperience of the team has not stopped it from doing well this year, though. The team placed third at a tournament hosted by Bishop McGuinness High School in Kernersville, North Carolina, in early January and placed fourth at a tournament hosted by the Cape Fear Fencing Club in Wilmington on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

McNeary has been very impressed by how well his young team has done this

year. "Everyone has been very committed and gotten very excited. We've done well, so it's paid off," he said.

There are no more fencing competitions this year, but Team NCSSM continues to practice and to improve. McNeary is confident that fencing will do well next year. McNeary is the only senior on the seven person team, and those on the team show interest in continuing the club next year.

"I'm really very pleased with how they're doing," he said of his young team. He hopes that the club can gain attention going into the next school year.

McNeary said he would like to see fencing become a varsity sport, which would entitle it to many benefits, including the ability to practice in the PEC on a regular basis or to host a tournament on campus.

McNeary encouraged anyone who is interested in swordplay to join the club. He talked about all the things he likes about fencing in our interview, ending with "Fencing is just one of those sports that you know you're going to love."

## Women Advance to Basketball State Playoffs, Men's Team Improves

BY GARY LI

### Women's Basketball

Women's basketball has progressively become one of the hotspots of NCSSM students' attention. Two factors might be the cause of such positive growth, one being the 3 year coach David Ritchie, whose faith and confidence in his team has had nothing but a positive influence. "This year's team is the first in many, many years to have a winning record in the conference and they should be recognized for that," said Ritchie. The team



Senior Aisha Venugopal tries to outmaneuver a defender. •Photo courtesy of Britt Brown

currently has an 11-10 record overall and a 7-6 record in the conference.

Another reason which has greatly contributed to the overall success of the team is the hard work and determination shown by many seniors and juniors on the women's basketball team. According to junior player Molly Kuo, "We are very dedicated and are aiming for a winning season. We have already accomplished one of our goals set earlier in the year — (we) qualified for states!" Ritchie certainly praised the girls for their performances this school year in memorable games against Raleigh Charter and South Granville, "Both games the girls came from behind and showed amazing intensity, resolve, and togetherness."

The future of women's basketball at NCSSM looks good. As Ritchie put it, if the team continues to exhibit a strong sense of motivation and determination, next year's season should be very exciting. That means in the upcoming years, women's basketball will be competing with many of the popular sports at Science & Math,

if it has not already been doing so. In fact, with such confidence and diligence, it's hard not to feed off the energy of the players.

Kuo specifically mentioned that, "Having a crowd really helps us in the game." The increasing popularity and skill of the women's team has not gone unnoticed by students either. Senior Mohammad Kodaimati reflected on one of their games, "Their guard game has improved a lot, and they seem to be much better contenders than they did last year." Certainly, as time progresses it soon may not be a question of whether the team can best past performances, but whether the team can achieve state titles.

### Men's Basketball

"...I feel like this year we're a closer team and our record is definitely better than last year's record," said senior player Joshua Quinnett about the current team. "We really appreciate everyone coming out to our games and supporting us." His positive outlook is not to go unaccounted for. Last year, the team's record was 2-20.

"We did beat Raleigh Charter, who has a pretty good team," said Ying-Ao Zhang, a captain of the Unicorn

basketball team, "and we beat Trinity School at the beginning of the year." Trinity School currently holds an impressive record of 12-4.

Many have their doubts about the team. However it cannot be overlooked that the team does have many gifted players such as Zhang and junior Travis Morton, just to name a few. As it is well implied, a team sport requires a lot of talent from many, if not all, of its players, and a good coach to lead it. Without such qualities, it is difficult to be successful.

The outlooks of the team may not look the best, and certainly many may have

ambiguous feelings about the upcoming seasons. However, the uncertainty of the basketball team's future success is not to be confused with indifferent feelings. Yet, the team still has three or four games left to play, which might be a big factor in rousing not only team morale but also student support as well. If the team can rally and pull off these last few games, they will be able to end the season on a high note.

It comes as no surprise that despite the 4-15 record of NCSSM's men's basketball team, the Unis still have enough school spirit to surge forward and face the roar of enemy crowds.



Juniors Jordan Finn, Andrew McDonald, and Jake Emerson stop for a huddle. •Photo courtesy of Britt Brown