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FENCING | Fencers grab easy wins in N.Y.

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Both the men's and women's **fencing** teams easily trumped their opponents in this past weekend's tri-meet against Vassar and the University of Detroit in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. The men posted a 21-6 victory over Vassar and a 25-2 win over Detroit, while the women won 23-4 and 26-1, respectively.

"We basically dominated everything," captain Michael Pierce '09 said.

On foil, John Gurrieri '10, Andrew Holbrook '10 and Shiv Kachru '12 swept Vassar 9-0, but mastered Detroit in only seven of nine bouts. However, Gurrieri and Kachru went undefeated throughout the competition. The women's foil squad of Lidia Gocheva '09, Samantha Attwood '12 and Jillian Liu '12 swept both opponents.

"Everyone fenced well, with the proper mix of relaxation and intensity," Pierce said.

Because the competition was weaker than the Eli fencers are accustomed to, the tournament forced the Bulldogs (6-0) to strike a balance between their usual attention and the more laid-back atmosphere.

Kachru's 6-0 sweep confirmed the team's hopes for the freshman's future on the team, Pierce said. Kachru has been recovering from a serious knee injury, and his wins show that he is on his way to recovery.

The women epeeists faltered a little against Vassar as winning by a margin of 6-3, but swept pass Detroit in nine straight bouts. The men's epee squad experienced similar success and won all but a single bout against Vassar out of the 18 total.

The women's saber squad finished 8-1 against each of the schools. Katherine Arden '10 went 6-0 for the day. Vassar's saber trio managed to top the men in their only loss of the day in a close 4-5 match, but the Elis struck back against the Titans, defeating them 9-0. Matt Lee '12 came in as an alternate, and fenced a perfect round. He is the second alternate to sweep his competition this season.

"Everyone fenced well," Pierce explained. "Nobody fenced outstandingly — but nobody needed to."

Gocheva was particularly proud of her team's underclassmen — Tasha Garcia '11, Liu and Attwood.

"They proved that they can achieve much as Yale fencers," she added.

This weekend's meet was the first-ever against Detroit. The combination of opponents, according to Pierce, proved to be an easy warm-up before tougher competition at NYU next weekend. Gocheva agrees that this weekend's field was weak and that neither team could surprise the Elis.

"It counts for the season," Pierce said. "It was a good way to transition between winter practice and the rest of the season."

"We will be working hard this week in preparation for this coming weekend's tournament at NYU, which will be much more challenging," Holbrook said in an e-mail.

Next weekend, NYU will host some of the top collegiate fencers at the NYU Invitational in New York. The Bulldogs' competition will include fencers from Ohio State University, Wayne State University and Notre Dame. Play begins at 8 a.m. Ohio State is the defending national champion, and Notre Dame the defending runner-up.

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