***IPRO Director’s Message June, 2021***

***‘To be or not to be humbled’***

**Many of us find ourselves at a critical point in our journey when we ask; should I continue to pursue the same lifestyle that I have so endearingly managed over decades? Soul searching and outside forces will likely combine to make the decision.**

**The body and mind take on different sets and patterns; and have unforeseen outcomes based on a variety of stressors. As racquetball and court sport participants, we make projections; yet, we may not be ready for the outcomes. As a college baseball player, a court sport fanatic, and a marathon runner, I never internalized that my joints would break down. When I heard a friend received a hip replacement, I had no clue it was an option on the table. He was in his late 30’s at the time. In the short term I would be wearing his shoes! In the longer term, both knees and one shoulder would be on my surgery block as well. Along with these *‘minor inconveniences’,* skills that were rote started to become more random. Shots, serves, and movements which I took for granted as a highly skilled athlete were no longer commonplace. I had to ‘draw a line;’ to determine if I would pursue the same lifestyle, knowing that my quality of play was slowly moving south. I needed to make the necessary adjustments or call it quits. This process is humbling!**

**Participation in sport and physical activity includes a broad spectrum of assets. Why are we on the playing field in the first place? Aesthetics, competition, fun, health & fitness, skill enhancement, and social engagement come to mind. We can rank order them and decide if trying to sustain this lifestyle makes sense for our own portfolio. I know many friends and former foes who opted out from the arenas and playing fields, because they would not nor could not make adjustments. Racquetball, handball, squash, tennis, paddleball, pickleball, and racketball/squash 57 are all lifetime sports. Can we believe that at 85 we will be the same player we were at 25? Have you not heard, he is an OPEN Player! What does that mean?**

**I played on the pro tour into my mid 30’s and won matches and prize money. Should I expect to play at that elite level at age 70? At this stage of my career, I assess my skill set at level B. I would be fooling myself if I thought otherwise. Furthermore, are others viewing me in the same way as I now view myself? Look at the canvass; on which movement, stroke mechanics, and body language are drawn. The current picture is not at par with days long gone. Draw the line and see where you are. My suggestion is that all should work through the humble pie moments and continue to actively participate. There are so many reasons to do so! The alternative is to become a Monday AM quarterback; one with stiff joints, an oversized paunch, and an attitude unbecoming to others. Play, enjoy, spend dollars, and make yourself and others feel good. Our industry appreciates your proud history and as you are today.**

**Quote of the month…..’great acts are made up of small deeds’ *Lao Tsu***