**IPRO Director’s Message September, 2022**

***Change is Hard!***

**Many of us are not comfortable with change; oftentimes we are suspicious or afraid of it. On the other hand, good results can be the by-products. In racquetball, we have experienced changes over decades. Examples are: shorter games, faster racquetballs, larger racquets, and mandatory protective eyewear. Meanwhile, the athletic club industry has methodically moved away from domains with many dedicated blocks of courts in favor of multi-use spaces. Club members and non-members have been obliged to adjust their exercise habits. There is competition for court usage as availability has lessened.**

**While all organizations within the sport are not consistent on rules; recent changes may help spark convergence across the board. Currently the IRF rules include: *Rally scoring, games to 11 points, win by two points per game, a match is the best of five games, one time out per game, and two-minute breaks between games.* Many NGBs are adhering tothese changes; and, the pulse is that the USA will do so as well.It has been seven months since these rules were changed; and, a large segment of the playing public has and is adapting. They see: *More efficient play, less down time during matches, and greater drama.***

**Programming objectives have shifted away from ‘power in numbers’ to ‘power in value.’ Court manufacturers building *‘new’* means two courts. Tournaments are operated at venues with a few courts and splintering play across multiple facilities is commonplace. A strong working relationship with club operators is critical for success. We must consider needs for our core participants, non-tournament players, and others who share the same space. Similar to golfers, most racquetball players do not play in tournaments! Yet, the bulk of these consumers pay membership fees, are considered ‘frequent’ players, and pay hard earned dollars for merchandise.**

**Those of us who promote racquetball and other games must be sensitive to the needs of everyone. This new reality is continually changing. Accept it, work within the framework, and help to provide incremental growth.**

**UPCOMING**

***November 4-6 NPA National Paddleball Singles & Doubles (R2sports.com); Albuquerque***

***December 3-10 IRF World Junior Racquetball Championships; Guatemala City, Guatemala***

***2023 Pan Am Championships (Temuco, Chile) Pan Am Games (Santiago de Chile)***