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Vol. 10 No. 10
November 1981
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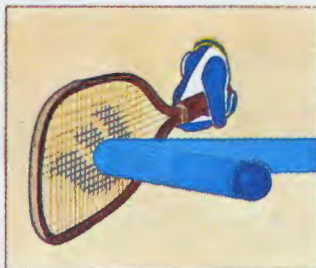
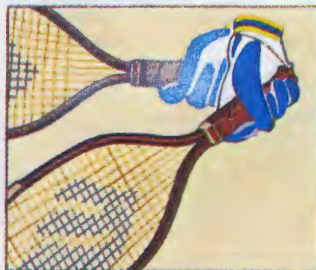
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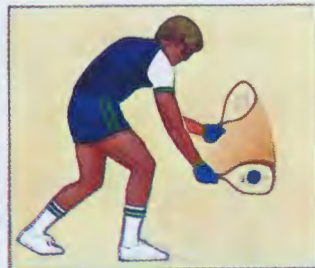
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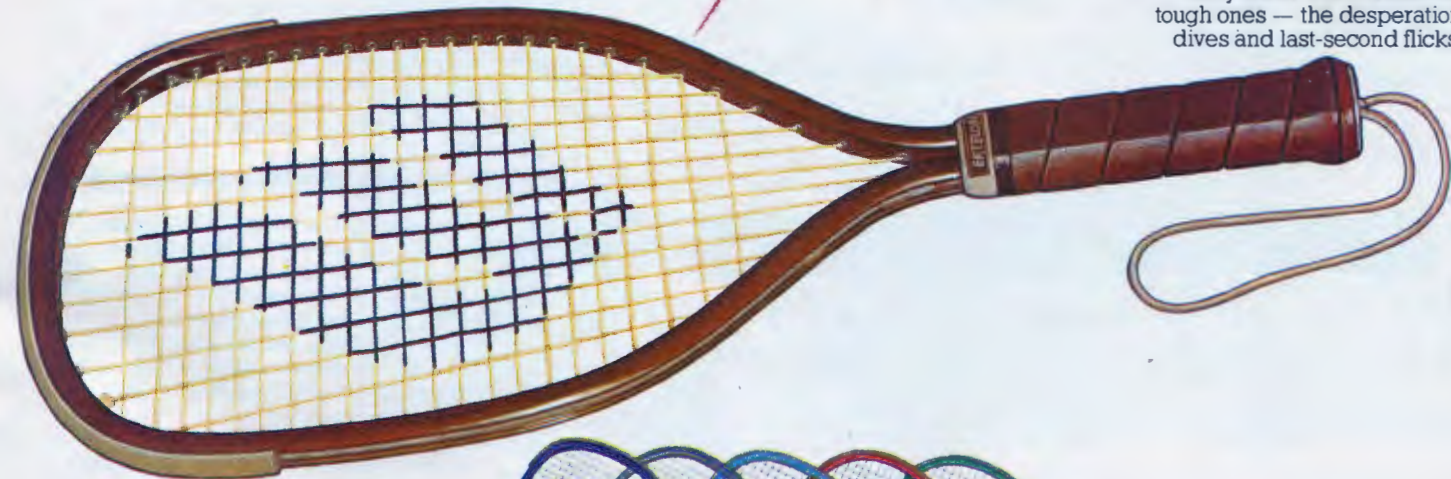


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Contents

Editorial

From Bob Kendler	4
From the Publisher	6
From the Editor	8

Letters

	10
--	----

Features

Court Club Survey: The Readers Speak	12
Want Glamour in Your Club? Sports Connection Has It by Kris Gilmore	15
Racquetball for Your Business Trip by Mike Hogan	20

Instructional

Add-Ons for Your Forehand Stroke by Shannon Wright with Steve Keeley	24
Ask the Champ by Marty Hogan	29
Beginning Doubles by Jack Kramer	30
Bounce off the Plateau by Dave Belka	32

Tournament Results

USRA National Juniors by Nick Schmitz	34
Newman & Alvarado Win 17 and Under	35
Navarro & Wojcik Take 15 and Under	37
Simonette & Upson Reign in 12 and Under	38
Nelson & Fuentes Top 10 and Under	39
Peck Wins Catalina's Minneapolis Pro Stop by Tom Morrow	40
Hilecher Captures CBC by Tony Leighton	42

Health

Seeing Your Way to a Better Game by N. James Carlson, O.D.	44
--	----

Who's Playing Racquetball?

Two Self-Made Players from Pennsylvania by Dick Jones	48
---	----

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On The Cover . . .

*Are you greeted with a friendly smile when
you enter your racquetball club? Sports
Connection members can answer yes,
especially when pretty Michelle Battori is on
the desk. For a special report on National
Racquetball's Court Club Survey and the
Sports Connection, see page 12.*

—Peter Borsari photo

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From Bob Kendler



MY LAST VERSE . . .

It hardly seems like 12 years ago that I started the first racquetball association, much to the consternation of handball players. And it's more like yesterday that I organized the first series of tournaments. For better or for worse, I did many things in this brief decade, and I look back with pardonable pride on the "giant of my genesis."

And giant it has become. Thousands of court clubs, millions of players, billions of balls. Certainly it added a new dimension to many restless youngsters, and for all the good that resulted, I am very proud.

I think the most powerful asset in this success story has been *National Racquetball* magazine. Through it we were able to preach the gospel and, Lord knows, I preached. I felt the magazine had two principal objectives . . . teach intensity; teach integrity.

Good instructional articles have given our tournaments the intensity that makes great players. Integrity gives the players control on the court and authors much of the character building that has always been the joy of my life.

If you are wondering why I remind you of this, it's because this is my Last Hurrah. I have come to the conclusion that publishing a magazine as important as *National Racquetball* belongs in professional hands. It has become a mighty influence for good, and everyone knows it was only a hobby for me.

My task was to find a publisher who would carry on the legend, maintain our high principles, and be the players' voice in racquetball. It should not surprise you that half a dozen immediate buyers suddenly appeared. One of them, Hugh Morgan, president of Publication Management, Inc., was an outstanding candidate with a background in managing magazines that spelled pure quality. What's more, he had a secret weapon . . . Chuck Leve. And that settled it. Despite the other offers and the competitive bidding, no one could match that winning combination of Morgan and Leve.

Without intending to sound sentimental, Chuck has always been like a son to me. He is going to do the publishing, and Morgan, the banking. They seem to be ideal for each other, and I am looking forward to a bigger, better, and brighter magazine . . . if such a thing is possible! It has always been an eye-opener.

Just to set the record straight, Joe Ardito will still direct the United States Racquetball Association and the National Racquetball Club. We intend to hold major amateur tournaments, and maybe we will even put together another group of touring pros. Our National Championships, both in racquetball and handball, will still be the showcases for both sports, and policy will be decided by people who want to expand the game, not exploit it.

We have some exciting new ideas about painting racquetball with the Wimbledon or Forest Hills brush. This involves a whole new approach which cannot come from part time publishing. Nor can it come while there is so much trash being published in the name of racquetball, none of which promotes racquetball but only promotes the promoter.

Joe Ardito and I will faithfully counsel court builders, promote clinics and tournaments, and continue to be the caretakers for a service to youth that certainly is our destiny. For us, we are going on to a greater challenge, and you can bet that Hugh Morgan and Chuck Leve will be doing the same. I not only wish them Godspeed, but intend to do everything in my power to guarantee their success.

My real regret is that I have not been more helpful to the ladies. I suppose that's because I am very much in love with my wife and am always willing to fight for the gals. Some of you know Evie helped me at the racquetball office for years, and was a wonderful worker . . . a really wonderful worker. Like me, she will miss the closing dates, the mailing schedules, the week-ends of proofreading and writing when all our neighbors were out enjoying the clubs I helped to build. If you ever think about us again, let it be with this last verse:

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is all kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all."

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Evie & Bob Kendler

Evie and Bob Kendler

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From The Publisher . . .

A New Beginning . . .



Four years ago I walked into the offices of *National Racquetball* magazine and met with Joe Ardito and Bob Kendler, offering the services of our publication management firm. Little did I suspect that I would some day grace the pages of *National Racquetball* as its new publisher.

It is with great enthusiasm and optimism that Publication Management, Inc. enters the racquetball industry, as publishers of *National Racquetball*. We have amassed a staff of experienced, knowledgeable and hard-working professionals who bring publishing expertise and a vast racquetball background to this industry.

Our desire is to continue to serve you, the loyal readers of *National Racquetball*, be you amateur player, professional player, manufacturer, supplier, club owner, or fan. It is our belief that we all share a common bond—a love of racquetball—and we view our role as the cement that binds that bond.

As the months and issues unfold, I am sure you will begin to see things within our pages that you were not used to seeing; and probably you won't see things you used to see. Yet we promise you will always see bonafide news items; helpful instructional material; interesting features, and top quality coverage of major events.

Running publications as a business is our profession. Writing and editing by calling upon an unsurpassed knowledge of the racquetball industry is Chuck Leve's profession. Together we believe that the ingredients are in place to offer you the most professional, exciting and timely magazine in the racquetball industry.

There are issues within the racquetball industry to be dealt with, to be sure, and

we will deal with them. Each segment of the marketplace has a different view of that market, and we will address each segment. The bulk of our readers represent the view of the average player and it is to those players that we dedicate our efforts.

For when it is all said and done, without the average player, there are no equipment sales; there are no court club members; there are no readers.

Equally, the professional portion of racquetball commands our attention for the pros are our most visible segment, the epitome of the athletic skills that racquetball represents. Major events deserve, and will receive, major coverage.

I am both pleased and honored to have rather instantaneously become a member of the racquetball community. I pretend no vast knowledge about this community. That knowledge I do possess (and much that I will soon obtain) comes from those with whom I work.

Bob Kendler, my most esteemed predecessor, deserves a great deal of credit for putting racquetball on the face of the sports map. My pledge to the industry is to continue to work to make *National Racquetball* the finest, most entertaining, and helpful publication in its field.

This is a new beginning, for me, for my company and for *National Racquetball*. But beginnings are only that. It is the evolution of the product that will stand the test of time. At the conclusion of that test, I assure you, *National Racquetball* will be standing strong and tall. ●

Hugh Morgan



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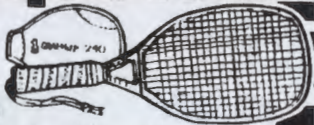
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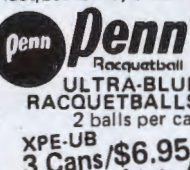


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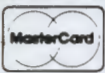
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From The Editor . . .

Back In The Saddle...

Has it really been two years since I last confronted this typewriter? In some ways it seems like an eternity; in other ways, like yesterday. One thing is certain—I'm thrilled to be back.

For those of you who weren't racquetball fanatics a few years back, this issue marks my second term as editor of *National Racquetball*. I was its inaugural editor back in September, 1973 and continued through September, 1979.

As with everybody and everything, two years leaves its mark. Some things are similar, if not identical, others radically changed. Racquetball has not gone the way of the hoola-hoop, as the disaster predictors predicted; nor has racquetball become the guiding force in the lives of every man, woman and child, as the optimists opined.

What we have here is a sport that is as basically sound as it was the day it was founded. It's fun, easy to learn, a great workout in a short period of time, tremendous tension reliever, superb competition and offers the many other benefits that compel you and I into the 20 x 40 box. In this sense racquetball has not changed, nor will it ever.

It still takes kill shots, passes, a good serve, an ability to play the ceiling, conditioning and a myriad of other skills to be a racquetball player. The degree to which you master those and other skills becomes your degree of proficiency.

National Racquetball's place in the scheme of things will continue to be the largest, most effective communications vehicle the racquetball industry has to offer. In previous years I often said "this is your magazine." I meant it then and I mean it now.

You, the reader, control this publication. If you like what you see, you subscribe, or renew your subscription. If you don't like what you see, you don't plunk down your 12 bucks. The more vocal of you tell us what you like or don't like and I hope that you will continue to do so.

Our responsiveness to your racquetball needs and desires is coupled with our desire to keep you informed. What are the latest developments within the industry that could affect you? What are the latest instructional developments? Is power out? Control in?



Instructional material will continue to be a significant segment of *National Racquetball*. We have re-established our relationship with National Champion Marty Hogan for his monthly column *Ask The Champ* which appears in this issue. We have reached agreement with top touring pro and instructor Steve Strandemo for an ongoing series of instructional material for 1982. And we continue to believe that by helping you with your game, we are contributing to your enjoyment of racquetball. The better you play, the more fun it is.

Early in this column I indicated that there have been radical changes in the racquetball industry in recent years. The professional tour has taken on a decidedly different structure; politically, there is uncertainty; and the court club business continues to move ever closer to a complete health and recreational activity business.

We feel that these issues and others are genuine news items and they will be reported. Not only who wins what and by how much, but also who's doing what and why. Any action or non-action that affects how you play, where you play or how much you pay when you play deserves space in this magazine.

We will continue to supply you with features stressing health and diet, for your over-all physical fitness improvement is truly the bottom line in racquetball. If through our pages you can play safer, become healthier and enjoy your time on the court more, then we will have done our job.

Most of all, we want to know what you want to know. Do you want more of this or less of that? Are we stressing too much here, not enough there? Send me a letter. Give me a call. Together let's continue to make racquetball the best physical fitness activity known to man. ●

Chuck Leve



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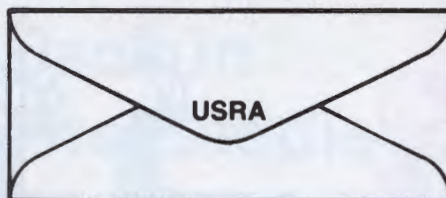
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From Our Readers



Thanks From a Junior

Dear Editor:

I'm just writing to thank everybody concerned for the well run USRA National Juniors Championships. It was the first time I ever competed in the Nationals, and I enjoyed it very much. The staff at the Charlie Club was just great and I was very pleased with the facilities.

I met new friends and became better acquainted with old friends. The tournament was certainly a job well done.

Tammy Woods
St. Louis, MO

Another RB Plate

Dear Editor:

After seeing "Mrs. Brum's" license plate I thought you would be interested in mine! I've enclosed a photo to share with your readers. Nobody has guessed what it means but any good racquetballer should. Racquetball Anyone?

Scott K. Jenson
Napa, CA



Junior Nationals

Dear Junior National Participants:

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who participated in the 1981 Junior Nationals, for making the week of August 10-15 the most enjoyable five days I've ever had. The Junior Nationals is a tournament unlike any other that I have yet experienced, and it is because of each and every one of you who competed that made it a truly memorable week for me. I only hope that you also had as an enjoyable a time at the Charlie Club during your visit to Chicago, as we did in hosting this most prestigious event.

After having the opportunity to be a part of the Junior Nationals and witnessing the talent, dedication, and determination that each of you displayed throughout the tournament, I cannot help but believe that racquetball will continue to grow and prosper in years to come.

In closing I want to wish each of you continued success with your racquetball game and everything else you do in the future. If you're ever in the Chicago area make it a point to stop by and say hello!!!

Rennie Turek
Charlie Club
Palatine, IL

Oops!

Dear Editor:

Oh, just a note about your August issue, particularly page 22. I am an entomologist or, if you will, a person who studies insects. Etymology (as used in the headline of that particular issue) is the study of word origins.

Just for your information, from another racquetball bug!

Dr. Ronald G. Baer
Department of Entomology
Mississippi State University

This is the kind of thing that bugs an editor—ED.

Self/Spalding Schedule

Dear Editor:

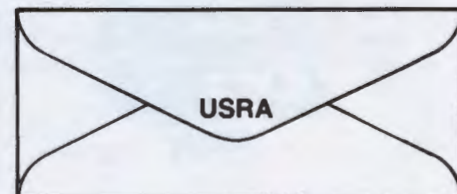
Please print the following schedule of Self/Spalding Racquetball Tournaments in your publication:

January	1-3	Franklin Racquet Club, Southfield, MI
January	15-17	Bay Club, San Francisco, CA
February	1982	Los Caballeros Racquet Club, Fountain Valley, CA (Finals)

Thank you.

For further information, please call me at the number listed below.

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Court Club Survey: The Readers Speak

Wow! We asked your opinion and did you ever give it to us! Over 1,000 readers submitted answers to *National Racquetball's Court Club Opinion Survey*. We appreciate your overwhelming participation and thank you for making this project such a rousing success.

Your responses varied from the proverbial A to Z, touching every letter in between. Some of you absolutely love the club to which you belong, and others of you really ripped yours apart. Also of interest was the representation of the huge spectrum of amenities that court clubs offer their members.

One thing was apparent from the survey, you know what you like and what you don't. And now, on to the results.

Clean Up Your Act

By a wide margin, the single, most important item related to your club is cleanliness. It appears that racquetballers can put up with almost anything except a

dirty club. Readers indicated that cleanliness was a major factor in why they like their club, while fewer readers (we like that) indicated that their club could do a better job in the cleanliness department.

It was difficult to differentiate between locker room area cleanliness and court cleanliness, but suffice it to say, we want it clean. So, if any of you club owners and managers are listening, your members are telling it like it is: keep your club clean.

To illustrate the point, 99.2% of the respondents to the survey rated club cleanliness as "very" or "quite" important. That's an amazing statistic which truly bears out the feelings of the readers.

Comments from those readers who were dissatisfied with the cleanliness of their club ranged from court problems to locker room, toilet area and general club problems. Wet locker room carpets, dirty carpets in other places in the club, dusty

courts, etc. were the most common negative responses.

Those clubs that rated high in cleanliness from their members, usually received glowing reports in other areas as well. It seems the clubs that take care of themselves also take care of their members.

Friendly Staff

The second most important aspect to a court club is the staff and their personality. When a club staffer is friendly, courteous, helpful and pleasant, people do notice. When the desk person is pre-occupied, rude, or disorganized, people do notice.

Most racquetball club members who play at clubs where the staff rated well, responded with a variety of positive comments. *"They make me feel important," "they remember my first name," "they seem to care about me,"* were typical answers to that question.

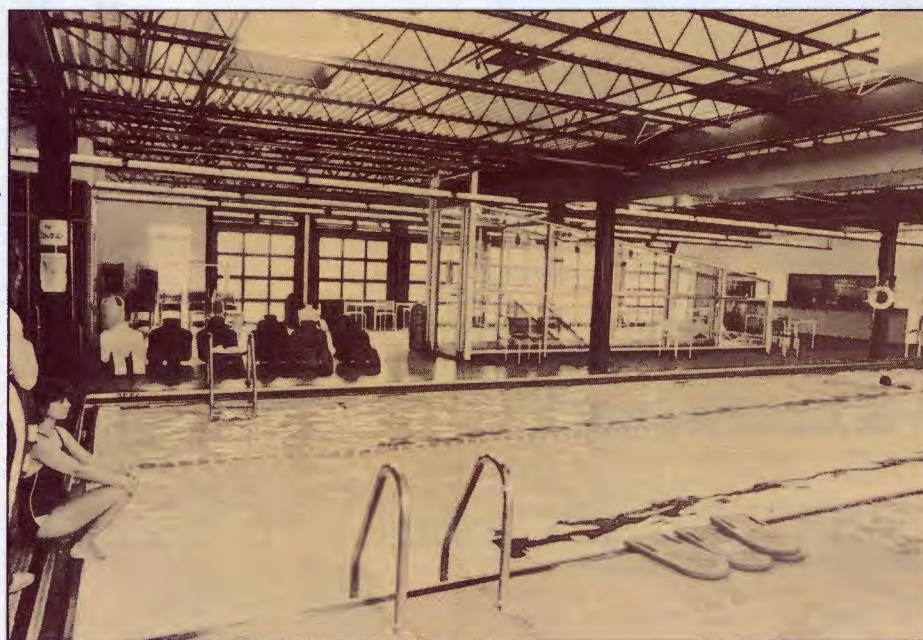
On the negative side, those clubs where friendly desk people were not the norm received a real blasting from the readers. *"If there was another club in my area, I'd switch for sure," "just a few seconds with me would make all the difference in the world," "they're too worried about making a buck, they couldn't care less about me,"* were all typical answers.

Fortunately, the clubs with good staffs easily outnumbered the poor ones, yet there were still too many clubs named that could do a better job in this area. Club personnel are the club's greeting arm, and if that arm is not extended, the club has a major problem.

Congenial, accommodating, helpful, willing to go out of their way—these are the credits to good club management. It's importance cannot be over emphasized.

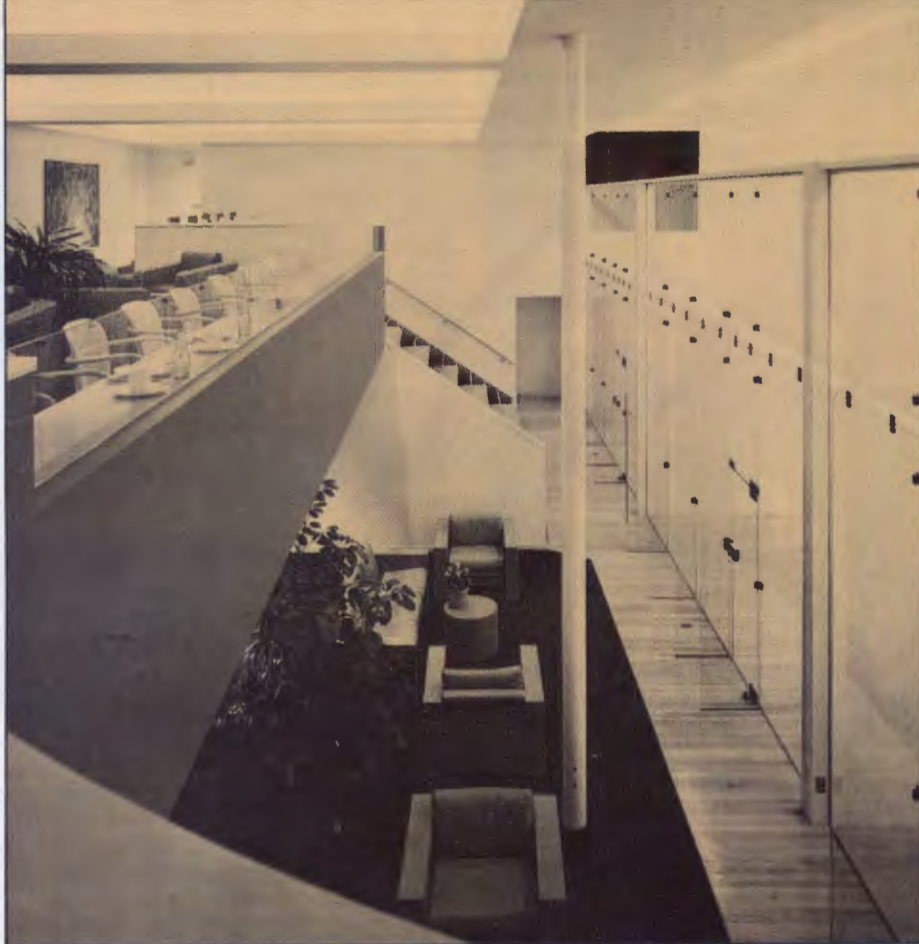
Location

Although a club owner can do a great deal to improve his club's cleanliness and to a certain degree, the friendliness of his staff, he can't do much with the third most important ingredient to your club—it's location.



Many readers indicated they'd love it if their clubs offered the luxury of swimming pools. Wouldn't we all.

—Photo courtesy Lakeshore Centre



Glass walls were another favorite of those surveyed. "They give our club the feeling of openness," one said.

Social events bring members together and they like it. Parties, mixers, etc. have their place.



—Photo courtesy Chalet Sports Core

In this category 82.7% of the respondents indicated that location of the club was very or quite important. Many of these people chose a club closer to home or work over a "better" club, because of location.

For years, consultants in the court club business have preached that owners spend the necessary time and money to research their club in terms of location. You can have the best club, best amenities and best staff, and you still might not be a profitable club because of location.

With women representing over one-third of all racquetball players, the comments from females were nearly unanimous in their desire for a good club location. "Five minutes from home," "can stop there on my way home from work," "easy to reach," were all typical comments.

Not surprisingly men feel much the same way, although they seem more likely to go out of their way for additional amenities in a club, if the choice is there. "A great place to unwind," "two blocks from my office," "the bar/lounge is roomy," were common male comments.

Getting A Court

The biggest paradox in opinion comes from players rating the availability of court time at their club. A large segment (85.9%) indicated that court time

availability was very important to them. Players responded with consistent comments such as "there are always open courts, and that's why I like my club," "the club is too crowded and I can never get a court when I want it," or "the club needs more courts."

The paradox is that club owners with an abundance of open court time are probably unhappy with that situation, where owners with little available court time are most likely smiling on the way to the bank. Therefore, the players will never enjoy the best of both worlds, for the owner with open courts will be doing everything he can to fill them, while the owner with tight court time, won't do much to alleviate the "problem," short of expansion. And at today's interest rates, that is unlikely in most areas.

So those of you who have no trouble getting courts, count your blessings. Those of you who have trouble doing the same, it looks like you'll have to grin and bear it.

In fact, more courts was the leader when it came to what improvements could be made in clubs (10.9% of the respondents), indicating that if economic conditions ever take a positive turn, there could be a new wave of court building.

Where Do I Put My Car?

A surprisingly high percentage of readers (72.4%) indicated that the convenience of

parking was very or quite important to them. This seems to be reflected primarily in the downtown or highly dense population areas as opposed to suburban or rural clubs.

Yet the figures on parking convenience were consistent all the way through the survey, varying from 70.5% (of those people who didn't like the club's staff) to 76.3% (of those people who didn't think the court fees at their club were reasonable).

Unless the owner is already crammed into his total space, or his club is in a high-rise with similar parking, it would seem that additional parking spaces would be an easy problem to correct. And most owners know if parking is a problem. Just try and get a parking space.

So Where's The Whirlpool?

Besides the universal truth that whirlpools are not often in proper working condition, many players would be happy with just that—a whirlpool with problems as opposed to no whirlpool at all. A significant 70.4% of the survey respondents felt that the inclusion of a whirlpool was a major factor in determining the degree of enjoyment they derived from their club.

Conversely, only 8.4% rated whirlpools "not important," indicating that if we could ever get the jacuzzi in working order, it would be filled with relaxing and happy bodies.

Those whirlpool maintenance problems were a different category entirely and players voiced universal irritation at hot tubs that were out of order or not the proper temperature. Comments like "I



Availability of sophisticated exercise equipment is a growing trend in the club business.

wanted a whirlpool, not a cold plunge," and "I doubt if my club really has one. They probably took a storage room and put a sign on the door reading, 'Whirlpool—Out of Order' on it," give you an idea of the intensity of the opinions.

And those clubs whose whirlpools miraculously were in working condition received super high ratings. "The whirlpool is always hot, real hot, just the way I like it," and "If it weren't for the jacuzzi, I don't think I'd play here," were typical.

Programming

Generating and sustaining a well rounded series of in-club programs is an area which receives a great deal of attention in most clubs. Being able to provide members with variety of activities, both on and off the court will keep members happy—at least theoretically.

Yet *National Racquetball's* survey indicated that programming is not as

important a feature as most clubs think. Only 58.2% of the survey respondents rated "variety of programs" as very or quite important.

However, it's important to understand that the bulk of our respondents are avid racquetball players, feeling that court time and competition are extremely important aspects of their club. These are players first, and socializers second. Perhaps more of the "hard core" players make up our respondents, which would explain this surprisingly low figure.

Those who criticized their club's programming did so in terms of both court related programming (leagues, ladders, challenge courts, etc.) and off court activities (parties, mixers, social events, etc.). And many indicated that the social aspect of their club is where improvement could be made.

"I'd like to be able to meet more people," was a common comment, along with "I'd like to meet more people in the same skill level as mine." Again, those who play at clubs with good programming, were quick to make the point. "There's always something going on," and "It's a great place to meet and make new friends," were typical answers.

How important is programming? If you're a club owner, poor programming may not hurt you, but good programming can do nothing but help.

Can Your Instructor Hit the Wall?

The American Professional Racquetball Association (APRO), the association of teaching pros in racquetball, would be happy with the statistical tabulation in this category. APRO has long been lobbying for greater instruction for instructors along with standardization and accreditation of instructors. According to our readers, they can use it.

Many respondents voiced displeasure

about their instructors. Clubs whose lesson programs are not generating the interest and excitement for which they were designed, should take another look at those programs.

Lessons are important, no matter what you might have heard about how easy it is to play racquetball. Our survey indicates that of those players who have played less than one year, 62.4% of them felt quality instruction was very important to them.

To drive the point home even further, a whopping 76.3% of our survey respondents who have taken lessons rated quality lessons as very important.

Club owners should not and cannot underestimate lessons as a source of member satisfaction as well as a source of income. But finding that right instructor can be a painful trial and error experience. "My teaching pro may be a great player, but he should take lessons on how to give lessons," said one survey respondent. "Give us a teacher who teaches all year 'round, not one who leaves in the summer to go teach tennis," said another.

Body Heat

Like whirlpools, saunas are approaching mandatory equipment status in many markets. Perhaps because they're so taken for granted, the degree of importance of saunas was relatively low in our survey (54.6% felt saunas to be very important).

Yet, as with almost every category, if it ain't workin', we heard about it. "Our courts are hotter than our sauna," said one. "You could fit more people in a Volkswagen," said another.

The fact that whirlpools were rated more important than saunas (70.4% versus 54.6%) may not be a fair comparison of figures since we all dream about what we don't have while to a certain degree taking what we do have somewhat for granted.

In addition, since our people visit their racquetball club to play racquetball, and in so doing burn their calories, get their workout and sweat off their fat, it's likely that they need not visit the sauna for many similar benefits.

And so ends our report on *National Racquetball's Court Club Opinion Survey*. For those of you who took the time to answer the questions, we thank you. And for all your readers/players/club members/club owners out there, we hope you've seen your club in the positive comments and the other guy's club in the negative. ●

Over 1,000 Respond To Survey

Over 1,000 subscribers to *National Racquetball* participated in the *Court Club Opinion Survey*. These racquetballers represented 49 states, the District of Columbia and seven provinces of Canada.

California was the leading state in responsiveness, which came as no surprise since it is also the state with the largest number of players. Californians returned 101 questionnaires.

Illinois was second with 64, followed by Ohio (59) and New York (49). New Jersey and Minnesota (surprisingly) tied for fifth with 46.

Want Glamour In Your Club? Sports Connection Has Plenty

—Photos by Roman Sal

by Kris Gilmore

There's a lot of hard work, time and effort that goes on behind the scenes of glamorous Hollywood.

Leading ladies must keep a close eye on the scale to stay leading ladies. Stars of prime time television series know that a few extra inches will lower their chances of contract renewal. And macho heroes of the silver screen must continually stretch and develop their macho muscles or consider trading their fan mail for checks from the unemployment office.

There's a secret to staying in shape shared by many California celebs. They head for the Sports Connection Racquetball and Health Club, neatly tucked away in Santa Monica, not far from CBS Studios, Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Bel Air and the "beautiful people."

Each day at the Sports Connection celebrities can be spotted among the faces of lesser-knowns sweating, pumping, huffing and groaning away inches and pounds.

The club has a reputation among the entertainment industries for assuring top results in a luxury environment. Witness:

- A vice president from NBC recently delivered a young woman who was to star in an upcoming series to Sports Connection staffers. Their assignment: Get her in shape—filming begins in two weeks.
- After making the movie *Fatso*, Dom De Luise was a Sports Connection regular, struggling to shed the extra pounds he gained for his part.
- Jane Fonda, owner and director of her own exercise club, The Workout in Los Angeles, spent several days at the Sports Connection. Fonda had injured her leg during filming of a recent movie and used the club's Nautilus equipment to recuperate from the injury.



James Sikking (left), one of the stars of NBC-TV's highly acclaimed *Hill Street Blues*, on the court with the show's producer, Steven Bochco.

Tailored exercise programs are a feature of the Sports Connection, but most members return to the club for fun and relaxation.

"It's like a game of weekend golf," says Mike Talla, Sports Connection President. "Sure, you'll stay in shape by playing racquetball here, but the main incentive is the fun. Our members are not health nuts, they're just recreational enthusiasts."

Talla opened his multi-million dollar Sports Connection chain in 1980 after a successful career of building racquetball clubs in Oregon, California and Kentucky. In addition to the Santa Monica club, other Sports Connections are located in Beverly Hills (one for women, another for men) and Encino.

Racquetball is the featured activity at each club. They also have expanded programs that include complete Nautilus equipped gyms, continuous exercise

programs from slimnastics to yoga, saunas, steams, jacuzzis and massages.

Each club has a smattering of stars such as Nastassia Kinski, star of *Tess*, who exercises at the Beverly Hills club for women, Gene Hackmen and Parker Stevenson, who work out with weights at the men's facility in Beverly Hills, and Robert Shields of the mime duo Shields and Yarnell, who plays racquetball at the Encino club.

But the Santa Monica Sports Connection, with a membership of 35,000, is the favorite destination of local celebrities.

Nanette Pattee, vice president of the company and general manager of the Santa Monica location, said that both the club's location and marketing plan encourages celebrity membership.

"Celebrities do make up a significant portion of our membership," Pattee said. "I think we positioned ourselves toward this market when we selected a celebrity

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Bruce Weitz, nominated for an Emmy award for his performance as Detective Belker on Hill Street Blues, greets actress Melinda Fee, star of the popular NBC soap-opera, Days of Our Lives, at the Sports Connection.

racquetball tournament for our Grand Opening event."

The Santa Monica Sports Connection opened in 1979 with a well-publicized star-studded tournament hosted by Carroll O'Connor to benefit cancer research at UCLA. O'Connor continues to host the event annually at the club and is helped out by his friends Patrick Duffy (*Dallas*), Ed Asner (*Lou Grant*), Michele Lee (*Knot's Landing*), Tom Howatt (*The Young and the Restless*), Ed Marinaro (*Laverne and Shirley*) and Judy Norton-Taylor (*The Waltons*).

"The tournaments brought stars into the club," Pattee said. "They liked what they saw and many joined. Many of the celebrities told their friends about the club and, as a result, we now have

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Dyn-O-mite! Jimmy "J.J." Walker, whose team won the first place trophy at a recent Sports Connection celebrity tournament.

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actors, producers and production crew members playing here. It's been a snowball effect."

Pattee said sometimes entire television crews take a break at the Sports Connection. *The Hill Street Blues* and the *Young and the Restless*, cast and crew, are frequent visitors to the club.

Stars of the daytime soaps are often found working out on the courts and *General Hospital* recently filmed an episode at the club, referring to the Sports Connection by name in the script.

The club has also been a production site for major motion pictures including *The Last Married Couple in America* with Natalie Wood and George Segal and *Starmaker* with Ed McMahon and Rock Hudson.

"Word of mouth is probably the reason most celebrities turn to our club when they think of joining a health club," Pattee said. "A personal recommendation is probably our best form of advertising."

Nanette herself is one of the club's top promoters. A vivacious blond, Pattee is a former model and actress ("I wasn't well-known but I did star in several television commercials and a couple smaller parts in movies."). Pattee actively recruited several of her celebrity friends and associates for the club's opening.

Patrick Wayne trades friendly conversation with actress Persis Khambatta (the exotic beauty from Star Trek and Nighthawks).

But Pattee is quick to point out that celebrities aren't the only people who belong to the Sports connection.

"Heavens, No!" she said. "We could never survive if we depended on celebrities for the bulk of our business. Many of our members work in fields other than entertainment. Corporate presidents and business executives make up a large segment of our membership.

"Women executives are also attracted to the club," she said. "In fact, we offer several seminars for women on beauty, health and nutrition.

"We really aren't more expensive than other clubs in the area but we require our members to pay a substantial fee upfront when they join," Pattee explained. "As a result, our membership is more select and affluent.

"Our members who aren't celebrities are the type of people who are used to associating with celebrities," she added. "Our celebrity members aren't hounded by autograph seekers.

"Several of our members live in Beverly Hills or travel from Downtown. Others reside in the Colony at Malibu, just a few minutes away."

The Sports Connection is discretely located at the rear of one of Los Angeles' most expensive commercial office parks. Many members work in the business park and simply walk over to the club on lunch hours, early mornings and after hours.

Playgirl magazine, Harper's magazine west coast bureau, the Los Angeles Times west side section and several large corporations share space in the office park and their staffs frequently visit the club.

The appeal of the club to celebrities as well as business people is summed up by Pattee.

"We try to make everybody who comes to our club feel good about themselves," she said. "We offer encouragement and provide a friendly, healthy atmosphere. Our members can come here and exercise or just socialize. You know, it's hard to find places to meet the opposite sex anymore. None of our members feel they have to drag themselves over here for a sweat session.

"Of course, if they want to huff and puff it's more fun to do it in the company of Lou Ferrigno (The Incredible Hulk) or former Playmate of the Year Debra Jo Fondren." ●



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Racquetball for Your Business Trip

Here Are Hotels Where You Can Relax on Court

by Mike Hogan

Business travel is tough by any account. You usually try to squeeze in that last half hour of work on departure day, then have to run to catch your plane. You spend hours in the air, maybe unscheduled hours at airports; you fight changes in time zones and worry about the work piling up on your desk.

You eat too much, drink too much and try to cram too many meetings into too few hours. At some point you usually find yourself alone in a hotel room with nothing between you and boredom but a television set. If only you had brought your racquet and tennies, but where would you play even if you had?

Increasingly hoteliers are coming up with the answer to that one. Dozens of hotels across the country are smoothing over the rough spots of business travel with in-house health spas which usually include racquetball courts. Many more have reciprocal arrangements with court clubs or are part of ultramodern commercial complexes which include health spas. Mort Leve, head of Court Club Enterprises and racquetball's premier court counter figures that about 90 of America's 1,800 court clubs are situated in or associated with hotel complexes.

"A lot of new clubs are going in for the total service concept," says Leve, "with a bar and restaurant, even a disco. Being associated with a hotel is just another step and, in today's market, it makes sense to put your eggs into more than one basket."

A Way of Life

The same is true for hotels. The Marriott Inn of Cincinnati advertises itself as *"more than a hotel. It's a way of life for the traveling business person."*

"Enjoy indoor and outdoor tennis as well as racquetball," suggests the hotel's ad literature.

What better way to shake off the stress and tensions of a business trip and stay sharp for important meetings? You may even make a courtside acquaintance or two.

"Racquetball relaxes me, it helps me sleep and it saves me money," says medical supply salesman Jim Berge of Milwaukee, WI. "I find that I go through less money when I'm exercising because I tend to do less eating and drinking at a restaurant and bar, which is where I would be if I wasn't on the court."

Out-of-town *"60-to-70 percent of the time,"* the road is a way of life for the 32-year-old bachelor who has found that racquetball is one way to get around being a stranger in a strange town.

"It's a very comfortable way to meet ladies," he adds. *"It's very low key, very sociable. You just go out on the court and play a little friendly game and it breaks the ice much better than, say, going to a singles bar."*

Berge's favorite stop on the road is the Charlie Club Best Western Sports Hotel in Palatine, IL. The site of several racquetball tour stops and, most recently, the Junior Nationals the Charlie Club combines a 181 room hotel with a four million dollar sports complex. The centerpiece is its 17 racquetball courts.

"The nice thing about the Charlie Club," says Berge, *"is that the people are so very accommodating as far as fitting you into a lesson or matching you up with a playing partner. They're just wonderful about that."*

Well that was the whole idea when the club was built, says hotel General Manager Jim Harris. About 40 percent of the hotel's business is generated by the club, says Harris, because *"in this day and age, business people are so health minded."* Companies too, he adds, would rather see their employees working out the kinks on the court than at a cocktail lounge.

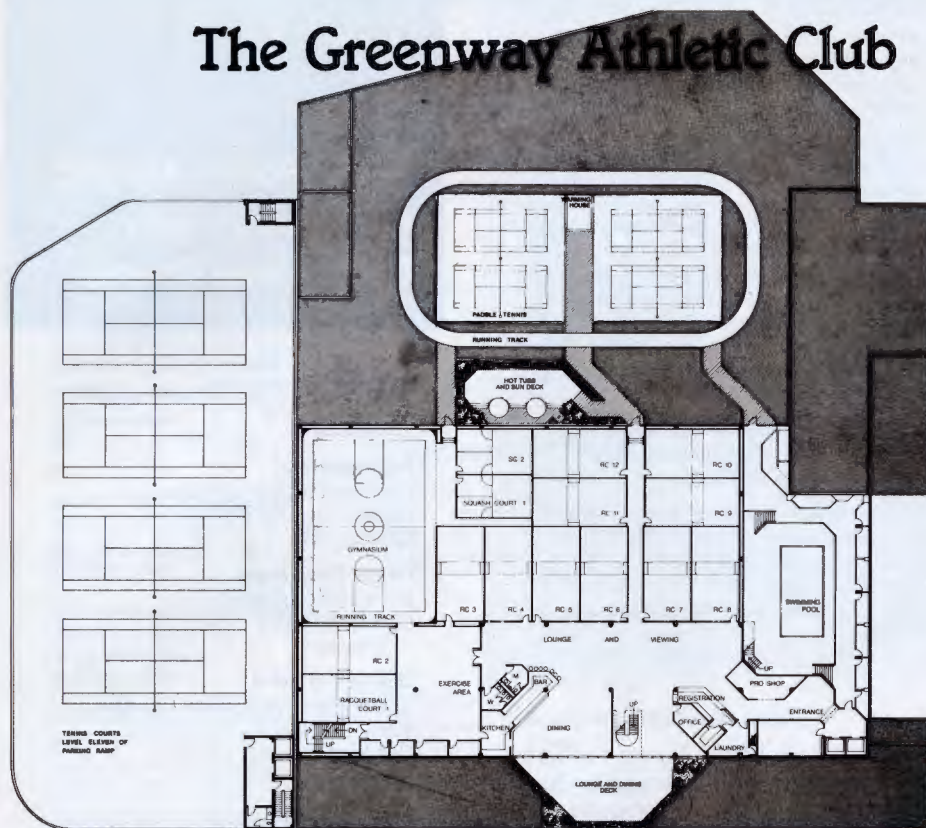
"When you talk about relief from the pressure and mental stress of doing business, this is it," says Terry Geer, managing director of Ramada's El Rancho Resort in Sacramento.

Open only a year after a two year, \$14 million renovation, the 43-year-old resort hotel boasts a two million dollar first class health facility which caters to the sports enthusiast's every whim. The club is supported by 500 corporate memberships purchased by local firms, so hotel



The Sheraton-Tara in Framingham, MA

The Greenway Athletic Club



Courts in the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis



The Greenway Athletic Club in the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis is open to hotel guests. Five of the 12 racquetball courts have glass walls.

guests— about 80 percent of whom are business travellers—enjoy all the facilities at no extra charge.

Well Used Courts

During three months of monitoring Geer found that more than 2,600 hotel guests used the health club, 710 of them opting for a workout on one of its six racquetball courts.

"There is no question but that the health club has given us a significant edge in our market," says Geer.

"When you join a hotel to a court club, the economic whole is greater than the sum of its parts," agrees Leve. *"You have a double barrel approach to the market, getting both local and out-of-town trade which really helps in today's tight economy."*

One of the first hotel chains to catch on to that formula was Atlas Hotels, Inc. in San Diego. The Atlas Health Club, the central focus for the company's five Mission Valley Hotels, enjoys the business of 4,000 to 5,000 hotel guests a year in addition to that of its 600 mostly corporate local members. For \$7.50 a day hotel



Racquetball Courts and Dictating Machines

Since 57 percent of their weekday guests are traveling on business, the new Vista International New York provides dictating machines, offices with a desk and seating, Telex services, a reference library—and racquetball courts.

The courts are part of the Executive Fitness Center on the 23rd floor which tops the first hotel that the Hilton International chain is building in the continental United States.

Guests reach the two-story Fitness Center by private elevator from the 21st floor. The racquetball courts adjoin the 20 by 50 foot pool on the lower level and the running track above.

International Fitness Associates, which runs the Center, also develops health programs for Manhattan corporations. Executives in these programs, International Fitness suggests, *"make better business managers; they feel better, look better and are able to keep abreast of the hectic pace of today's business environment."*



David Solomon, M.D.

Advice from a Psychiatrist

Getting into the familiar setting of a racquetball court can ease the tension of business travel, especially for people with rigid personalities—those who like routine.

So says David Solomon, M.D., psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who is an attending physician at Chicago's Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center.

Solomon, who plays racquetball four times a week at the Riviera Club in his office

building, says "anxieties go back to the personality of the traveler. But for the guy who can be discomforted in a new setting—the guy who doesn't like to venture out—going to a place that's familiar has a settling effect."

Racquetball has advantages over individual sports, such as running or swimming, Solomon notes.

"In those open ended sports everything is available, so there can be fantasizing. They can't help but think of problems. For people who are sensitive to their environment, racquetball gives them focus. They don't think of how they're swinging, they're just aware of the angles and the opponent."

To make sure the hotel game is an ego booster Solomon outlines the right approach to the match.

"If you're playing with a stranger, lighten up—test yourself. If you're traveling, be grateful that you have a game. Judge each other's level and create a game around them. You don't even have to score points."

guests can take advantage of seven racquetball courts, seven tennis courts, an outdoor swimming pool, an indoor spa, even a barber shop.

"We can provide just about any sport anyone is interested in," says club Manager Dennis Alexander, *"or guests can recoup from travel by just lying in the sun."*

The site of the 1977 and '78 NRC Nationals and the 1978 and '79 World Racquet Championships, Atlas also is a place to socialize with a snack bar and clubroom usually crowded during major televised sporting events.

"We not only get individuals, but groups of 20 to 50 conventioners, for whom we set up racquetball or tennis tournament, barbecues and parties," says Alexander. *"We'll give them a package where we run the tournament and provide the food and beverages."*

Credit for coming up with the health club idea belongs to Atlas Senior Vice President Jerry Sandstrom. An inveterate handball player, Jerry had a tough time finding a court when out of San Diego on business. That was 10 years ago when not only health club-hotel marriages were uncommon, but also court clubs of any kind.

"The idea was to make Atlas a full service facility so that any traveler could take advantage of it regardless of his or her sport," explains Sandstrom. *"The club was really put there to serve as a marketing*

vehicle for our hotels, but we also use it as a carrot to attract business for our convention center. We take convention planners through the facility, tell them it's part of the package and it's just icing on the cake."

Whatever the perspective the merger of hotel and court club looks like a corporate marriage made in heaven. ●

Dennis Alexander, manager of the Atlas Health Club, programs relaxation for San Diego business travelers.



Some Hotels Around the Country with Racquetball Courts

Best Western Charlie Club

1550 East Dundee Rd.
Palatine, IL 60067
312-934-4910

Brighton Hotel

Brighton Place and Indiana Ave.
Atlantic City, NH 08401
609-441-4444

Detroit Plaza Hotel

Renaissance Center
Detroit, MI 48243
313-568-8441

Doubletree Hotel

Corporate Woods Office Complex
10950 Grandview
Overland Park, KS
913-649-4500

Franklin Plaza

Two Franklin Plaza
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-448-2008

The Hamilton

400 Park Blvd.
Itasca, IL 60143
312-773-4000

Houston Oaks Hotel

5011 Westheimer at The Galleria
Houston, TX 77056
713-623-4300

The Houstonian

111 North Post Oak Ln.
Houston, TX 77024
713-680-2626

Hyatt Hotel Los Angeles Airport

6225 West Century Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90045
213-670-9000

Hyatt Regency

1300 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-370-1234

Joliet Quality Inn

19747 Frontage Rd.
Joliet, IL 60435
815-725-2180

Louisville Marriott Inn

505 Marriott Dr.
Clarksville, IN 47130
812-283-4411

Atlanta Marriott

Courtland and International Blvd.
Atlanta, GA 30043
404-659-6500 ext. 7849

Marriott's Lincolnshire Resort

Milwaukee Ave.
Lincolnshire, IL 60015
312-634-0100

Cincinnati Marriott Inn
11320 Chester Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45246
513-772-1720

Cleveland Marriott Inn East
3663 Park East Dr.
Beachwood, OH 44122
216-464-5950

Pittsburgh Marriott Inn Greentree
101 Marriott Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
412-922-8400

Pittsburgh Marriott Hotel Monroeville
101 Mall Blvd.
Monroeville, PA 15146
412-373-7300

Quality Inn Cocoa Beach
1275 North Atlantic Ave.
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931
305-783-2252

Ramada Aqua Marine Lodge
216 Miller Rd.
Avon Lake, OH
216-933-2000

Ramada Sault Ste. Marie (Ontario)
229 Grant Northern Rd.
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada
705-942-2500

Ramada Inn El Rancho Racquet Resort
1029 West Capitol Ave.
West Sacramento, CA 95691
916-371-6731

Red Carpet Hotel
4747 South Howell Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53207
414-481-8000

Sheraton Mansfield Inn
31 Hampshire St.
Mansfield, MA 02048
617-339-9571

Sheraton Motor Inn
888 East Dublin-Granville Rd.
Columbus, OH 43229
614-888-8230

Sheraton Motor Inn
1-74 at East Main St.
Galesburg, IL 61401
309-343-7151

Sheraton Waukegan Motor Inn
200 North Greenbay Rd.
Waukegan, IL 60085
312-244-2400

Sheraton Denver Tech Center
4900 D.T.C. Pky.
Denver, CO 80237
303-779-1100

Sheraton Tara Hotel
Exit 12W - Mass. Turnpike
Framingham, MA 01701
617-879-7200

Sheraton Inn Skyline East
6333 East Skelly Dr.
Tulsa, OK 74135
918-627-1000

Sheraton Santa Barbara
1111 East Cabrillo Blvd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805-963-0744

Sheraton Laval
2440 Autoroute des Laurentides
Laval, Quebec
514-687-2440

Sheraton Inn
363 Maine Mall Rd.
South Portland, ME 04106
207-775-6161

Sheraton Highwoods
2805 Highwoods Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27625
919-872-3500

Sheraton Altoona
RD 2
Altoona, PA 16601
814-946-1631

Sheraton Inn Greensburg
Route 3 East
100 Sheraton Dr.
Greensburg, PA 15601
412-836-6060

Sheraton Naperville Hotel
1801 North Naper Blvd.
Naperville, IL 60540
312-369-1900

Sheraton Valley Forge Hotel
Route 363
King of Prussia, PA 19406
215-337-2000

Sheraton Motor Inn—Warwick
Post Road, U.S. Route 1
Warwick, RI 02886
401-738-4000

Royal Biscayne Hotel
555 Ocean Dr.
Key Biscayne, FL 33149
305-361-5775

Sheraton Tobacco Valley Inn
450 Bloomfield Ave.
Windsor, CT 06095
203-688-5221

Sheraton Wayfarer Inn
Bedford Interchange Route 3
Manchester, NH 03102
603-622-3766

Sheraton Poste Inn
Route 70 and I-295
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
609-428-2300

Sheraton Inn
11810 Sunrise Valley Dr.
Reston, VA 22091
703-620-90000

Sheraton Spindletop Inn
2525 North 11th St.
Beaumont, TX 77703
713-898-8570

Stapleton Plaza Hotel
3333 Quebec
Denver, CO 80207
303-321-3500

Stockton Hilton
2323 Grand Canal Blvd.
Stockton, CA 95207
209-957-9090

Vista International New York
World Trade Center
New York, NY
212-938-9100

... HAT Glass has set up a network of Canadian dealers to represent the Ellis Pearson System of glass walls for racquetball clubs. Ontario dealers are Tony Swift, Richard Armstrong, Dick Herbert and Christer Carlen; Frank Babienko and Merve McDonald serve HAT in Alberta, and Ron Eyben sells the system in British Columbia... The Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, headquartered in North Palm Beach, FL, is celebrating its 75th anniversary year. Managers of park and recreation facilities can learn about the money side of operating leisure centers at the Western Revenue Sources and Management School one week, intensive study course Feb. 14-19 in Boulder, CO. The contact is Debbie Cooke, 303-492-5151... New shoes on the market include the KangaROO with pockets; Foot-Joy's model for hardwood court sports featuring an air channeled sponge cushion innersole, padded tongue and gum rubber outersole, and Tretorn's "Pro Select" for women, "Supra" for men and "Nylite" for children... Racquetball players who want to support the cause of women in sports can make a tax deductible contribution to WEAL, the Women's Equity Action League Education & Legal Fund, at 805 15th St. N.W., Suite 882, Washington, DC 20005...

Tom Collentine became the one-thousandth member of the Lake Geneva Fitness and Racquet Centre at the Playboy Country Club and Resort. The travel agency owner who lives in the Wisconsin town received a free lesson, court time and Playboy special—a "champagne massage"... Pro Shannon Wright, two time NRC Champion, is hoping to win \$50,000 playing racquetball. That's the price of a Cessna 172, four seater, single engine plane which she wants to fly with her new pilot's license... When Norbert Klauens, industrialist and part owner of the Chicago White Sox, blamed a three game loss to Arthur Shay on "lack of concentration," the *National Racquetball* photographer quipped "That's the first time I ever played anybody who worried in seven figures." ●

Add-Ons for Your Forehand Stroke

by Shannon Wright with Steve Keeley

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I expect you now have a basic grasp of the forehand grip that is fairly close to the model grip presented in the previous chapter. Again, I don't demand exact imitation of every technique this book offers, since each of us has anatomical idiosyncrasies that make such exact conformity impractical. However at least with the grips, adhere closely to the models. Otherwise the instruction in this and the backhand stroke chapter will be useless.

I require less strict imitation of the models with the strokes than with the grips. Therefore take the model forehand that I'm about to unveil as a general guide. Merge it into what feels comfortable and right for you. Otherwise you'll end up with the unnatural jerky swing of a programmed robot.

The following presentation of the forehand is similar to the trampoline game called *add-on*. In *add-on* there are two people each bouncing on a trampoline. One person does an easy trick such as a seat drop, which is a simple bounce on the hind end. The other person then does the seat drop, perhaps followed by a stomach, in which she bounces on her tummy. Then the first person might do a seat drop, a stomach drop and then a backflip. The two gymnasts continue in this manner—

adding on one trick at a time—until one person cannot execute the sequence of movements. Back in my high school gymnastic days, we might get up to 20 *add-on* tricks in a row before somebody goofed.

Get ready for racquetball *add-on*. My *add-on* learning method for the stroke is easier and requires fewer tricks than in gymnastics. You will not goof, though you may get temporarily bogged down on one particular *add-on* within the string of movements. No problem—just work on that trouble spot until you get it down pat, then go on to the next *add-on*. I emphasize that each movement is a building block upon which the ensuing ones build. Get each *add-on* right before continuing. Also don't skip over any *add-on* because it seems too simple or worthless. One link in this chain of movements may be less significant than another, but all the links are required if a stroke chain is to exist in the end.

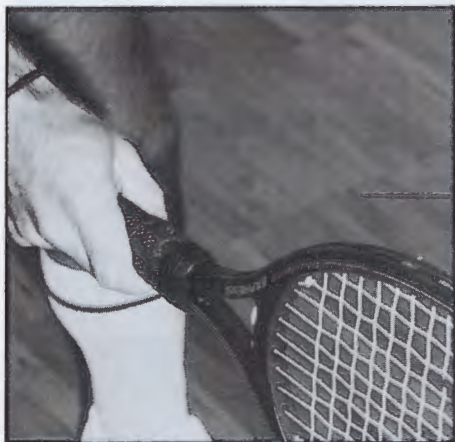
In this *add-on* manner you will quickly accumulate the basic movements that comprise the model forehand stroke. And it's fun, since it is kind of a game.

Forehand Add-Ons

The following steps are intentionally simple and straightforward. They are geared toward the beginning player who has had little swing time on the court, or toward the intermediate whose swing time is perhaps a tad arrhythmic. I'm not apologizing. I'm merely saying that advanced players may find these *add-ons* overly simplistic. These players should stifle their yawns and quickly run through the series of *add-ons* anyway. Even advanced racquetballers must admit to having less than perfect strokes, or they wouldn't be reading this in the first place. And besides this *add-on* series can be used to ferret out the weak link(s) in the chain of movements called the forehand. On with the *add-ons*.

1. Grip your racquet with the correct forehand grip.

Add-on 1. Start with the proper forehand grip.



Add-on 3. Correct closed stance for the forehand has your lead foot about two feet closer to the right side wall than is your rear foot. This proper closed stance provides more stroke power and encourages down-the-line shots.

2. Stand on the court facing the right side wall so that when you reach out your arm and racquet, the end of your racquet is about three feet from the side wall. Your toes therefore point at, and are about six feet from, the side wall. How deep in the court? You should straddle the short line—the second horizontal red line from the front wall.

3. Now close your stance. First let me explain the difference between the closed stance and the open stance. Let's assume you are standing facing the right side wall, as described in step two. As you gradually open your stance, your lead (left) foot moves more toward the center of the court. Simultaneously your left toe points more and more at the front wall until your tennis shoe points rudely at the left front corner. An open stance on the forehand is undesirable, as you will see.

Now let's close the stance, which is what this step is all about. Forget about the open stance and resume your original position, facing the right side wall as described in step two. As you gradually close your stance, your left foot moves more to the right and front. Consequently your left toe points more and more at, and gets closer and closer to, the right side wall. Soon the eyelets of your Buster Browns are looking straight ahead at that side wall. Your right toe is still six feet from the right side wall, but your left toe is now only about four feet away. All this fancy stance stuff boils down to this: a closed stance for the forehand has the lead foot about two feet closer to the right side wall than the rear foot. (This rule of foot will also hold later when we take up stances for the backhand stroke.

Okay, go ahead and close your stance by sliding your left foot about two feet closer to the side wall than your right foot. I say *about* two feet closer because the precise distance that your lead foot moves depends largely on your height. You'll slide a few inches more or less depending on whether you're a giraffe or a dachshund, respectively and respectfully.

Now try a little body awareness. How does it *feel* to be in a closed stance? If you still feel conspicuously upright, then close your stance a few more inches by sliding your left foot closer to the right side wall. However if your legs feel uncomfortably spread like a flamingo doing a split, then close your stance a little less by a few inches by sliding your left foot away from the right side wall. Are you comfortable now? Good—try the body awareness routine again to get the feel of this closed stance. It is important to recognize the feeling of the closed stance because it is the basis of the rest of the forehand stroke.

If you seek instruction elsewhere, you are liable to run into opposition to this concept of using a closed stance on racquetball strokes. I am talking about stepping into the ball in a closed stance (as will be explained) versus the traditional step into the ball, which has been more toward an open stance. That is players have been taught to step forward and at the front wall to initiate the swing. Sorry but this tradition is about to crumble. Why (I can hear tradition asking) must I crumble? Why must I defer to the closed stance? There are many reasons.

First, the step toward the right side wall (and toward a closed stance) on the forehand gives a potentially more powerful stroke than the step toward the front wall (and toward a more open stance). The



rationale behind this can be proven theoretically and in actual play, but it is beyond the scope of this book. I suggest you try both methods to convince yourself that the closed stance generates greater swing power.

Second you get an additional negative effect when you hit the ball from an open stance. The step that opens the hips and shoulders toward the front wall almost forces your body to pull the shot crosscourt. This is similar to the tendency of a baseball batter to pull a ball into left field. You will learn that, strategically speaking, most racquetball shots (especially kills) should go up and down the line rather than crosscourt. The step toward the closed stance encourages the body to hit the ball straight in and up and down the line.

There are also several subtle advantages to hitting the ball from a closed stance. Better ball spin and added deception are just two examples. But these are complex issues, again too deep for this instruction. You'd only get bogged down in confusion and lose sight of the more relevant points if I attempted an explanation of these.

Are you still unconvinced, or does stepping into this closed stance still feel horribly uncomfortable? Then try compromising between my closed stance and the traditional open stance. That is, step somewhere between a direction at the side wall and a direction at the front wall. This means stepping at the right front corner to initiate your forehand swing.

Add-on 4. Extend your arm and racquet toward the right side wall and cock your wrist up and back.



The forehand wrist cock is a laying up and back of the wrist, though the more significant part is the laying back. To lay your wrist back into the cocked position (without the racquet), extend your arm and hand in front of you . . .

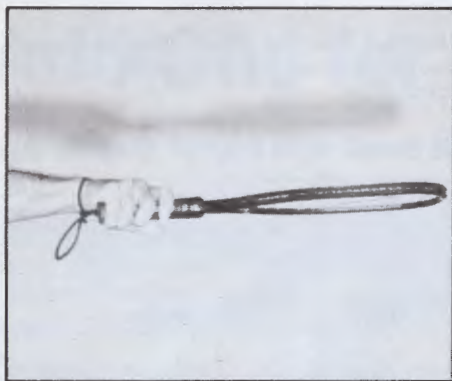


. . . point your fingers at the ceiling as though waving hello, and . . .



. . . now just rotate your hands so the fingers point at the right rear corner (assuming you are facing the right side wall).

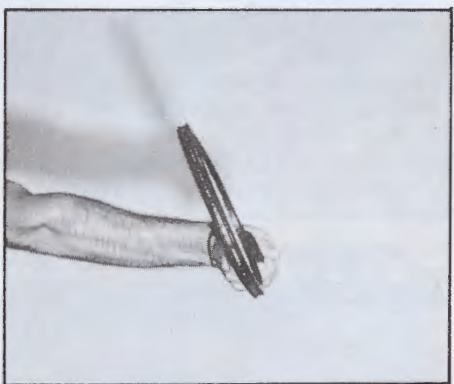
4. You're now in the closed stance, as though you just stepped into the ball. Next extend your arm and racquet toward the right side wall and cock your wrist. That is lay the wrist and the racquet handle up and back. You probably wonder what the directions *up* and *back* mean. Let's try it. First you'll do the up-and-back wrist cock without a racquet, then you'll do the same with a racquet in hand. To cock your wrist without the racquet, follow the steps pictured here.



The laying back of the wrist for the wrist cock on the forehand with the racquet follows the same three step sequence: point the racquet away from you with the strung surface parallel with the ceiling . . .



. . . point the racquet at the ceiling, and . . .



. . . rotate your hand so that the racquet points back. Your wrist and racquet are now cocked back, the more important half of the forehand back-and-up wrist cock.

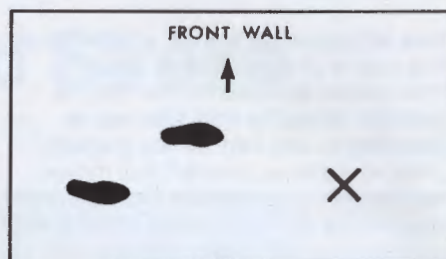
Recall that you have done all this without a racquet in hand. Remember also that your arm has remained stiff as a board and extended straight out from your body toward the right side wall. Only your wrist has angled up and back at its hinged joint. Your fingers, like five fleshy chopsticks, are still unbent. Maintain the final wrist cocked position for 30 seconds to become aware of how it feels.

Now add the racquet and go through the previous illustrated steps. Hold the final wrist cocked position for 30 seconds. (Is your forehand grip still correct?)

5. You are now feeling rather foolish—in a closed stance, your right arm extended toward the right side wall, the racquet in your mitt and your wrist cocked. From this position take your racquet back with a one foot backswing. Got it? No that's too far. Only a one foot backswing, with your wrist still cocked. Got it? No your backswing is going up, instead of back toward the back wall and parallel to the floor.

This, then, is the beginning of the forehand backswing. I know it feels strange, but please bear with the add-ons.

Remember that, besides cocking your wrist back at the top of the forehand backswing, you should also cock it up. Thus, the head of your racquet will point slightly toward the top of your own head instead of pointing directly up at the ceiling.

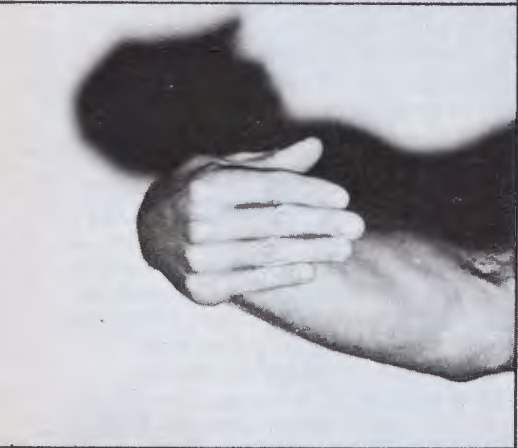


The spot (X) on the floor where you bounce the ball for the drop and hit is important. The ball should bounce about a foot behind and two feet out from your front foot (after you have stepped into the stroke).

6. From the one foot backswing position described in the previous step, now flick your wrist forward toward the front wall so that your wrist snaps in front of you and so you follow through past the wrist snap only by one foot. Do it again, starting with the one foot backswing. I emphasize that this two foot swing (one foot of backswing and one foot of follow through) must be parallel to the floor.

Do you remember Maganolia Morepower who tried to swing with no backswing and no follow through? Well your swing should resemble hers if you're performing this step correctly. However you have a two foot swing, whereas poor Maggie had none. And she wondered why she didn't have more power!





Add-on 6. Use a one-foot backswing and snap your wrist.

The forearm wrist flick (with or without a racquet) is a forceful flexion of the hand at the wrist joint, as though you were slapping someone across the face. Try it. Also try this wrist flick with a racquet in hand.

If you bounce and contact the ball too far forward, you lose power and will likely pull most of your shots cross court.

On the other hand if you bounce and contact the ball too deep in your stance, you'll have trouble snapping your wrist in time for ball contact, and your forehand shots probably will glance feebly into the right side wall.

7. Now add the ball to this abbreviated stroke. Bounce the ball on the floor at a spot about one foot behind (toward the back wall) your lead foot, and about two feet out (toward the right side wall) from your lead foot.

The depth of contact here — one foot behind your lead foot — is somewhat variable. If you are tall and gangly, you may want to add six inches or so to the distance from your body at which you contact the ball. On the other hand, if you're a fire hydrant in gym shorts, you may want to decrease this distance by about six inches.

Before you make any gross adjustments to these two dimensions, I hasten to add that the dimensions pinpointing this spot at which you bounce the ball are not randomly conceived. Look at what happens when you deviate too far from my recommendations: Contact the ball farther forward, and you'll likely pull most of your shots cross court. Contact the ball any deeper in the stance, and you'll probably get only glancing blows that angle the ball into the right side wall. Contact the ball too close to your body and you'll jam your swing, which means that you lose the smooth pendulum swing arc. In addition the ball picks up excess spin and you lose power. Contact the ball too far away from your body, and you may become off balance during your follow through. (These four mistakes relating to the position of ball contact will be covered later in great detail.)

8. You finally get to hit the ball on this step. The previous steps have brought you to a position in which you are in a closed stance, your arm is back in a one foot backswing, your wrist is cocked up and back and the ball is bouncing up to your contact zone.

The contact zone is the area where you normally contact the ball. This is analogous to the strike zone in baseball. The batter belts the baseball when it enters his strike zone. You belt the racquetball when it enters your contact zone. In the previous step I described the very center of your contact zone as a spot that is knee high, about a foot behind the lead foot and about two feet out from the lead foot. Again that is the precise center of the zone. The area or zone in which you may successfully hit the ball with your racquet is larger than this by some inches in all directions from the exact center. The better your stroke, the larger your contact zone. This is why pro players get away with hitting kills at a height and depth of contact that is ridiculous for most players even to consider. In sum, the closer to the

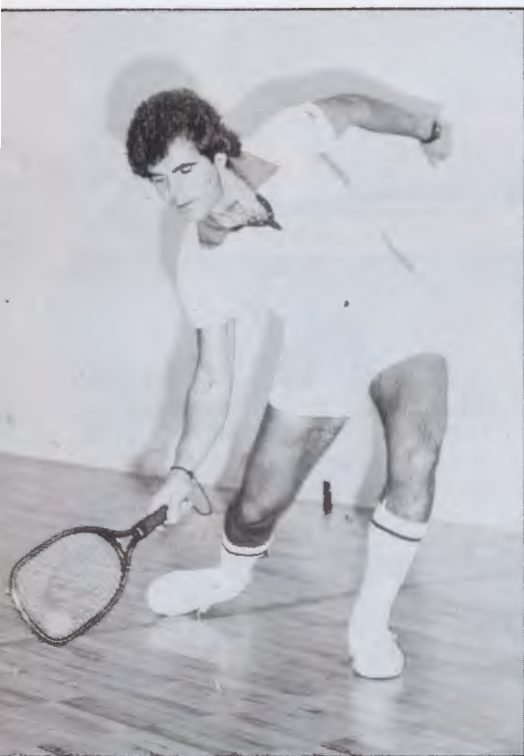


Add-on 7. Bounce the ball about one foot behind and two feet out from your lead foot. Then catch the ball just after it peaks at knee height. The place you catch the ball is your point of contact when you start hitting.

center of the contact zone you hit the ball, the more power and accuracy you will have.

As I said, in this step you hit the ball just after it peaks at the center of your contact zone. Hence this step is exactly the same as step six, in which you took the two foot swing (one foot of back swing and one foot of follow through). Now, however, you hit the ball with a flick of your wrist. Your swing is still horizontal, or parallel to the floor.

Don't fret about your accuracy right now. Just aim for an area on the front wall that is knee- to waist-high and a couple of feet from the right side wall. The ball should rebound off the front wall and right back at you. Catch it. If it doesn't rebound straight back to you, chase it. Repeat until the ball does come back so that you don't have to run all over the place to catch it.



Dan Iwans photos



Add-on 9. The wrist flick in this step starts with a two-foot cocked backswing.

Add-on 8. Bounce and hit the ball in your contact zone just after it peaks at knee height. Use a one foot back swing and a one foot follow through to wrist flick the ball at the front wall.

Aim your forehand shots on these add-ons at an area on the front wall that is knee- to waist-high and two or three feet from the right side wall. Concentrate initially more on stroke form and power than on accuracy. The accuracy will come naturally as you hit more and more shots.

The point of contact has three dimensions: distance from body, depth, and height. In this photo note that the first dimension is alluded to—you should bounce the ball comfortably away from your body.

Are you having trouble limiting your backswing and follow through to one foot each? Try a brick wall. Really just imagine a vertical brick wall one foot behind the point of ball contact. You obviously can draw your backswing back only to this wall. Also envision another vertical brick wall about one foot forward of your point of contact. This limits your follow through. Thus the two brick walls are parallel and two feet apart. If your backswing or follow through exceeds these, you'll no doubt end up with a racquet having an imaginary broken frame.

Don't worry about stroke power yet either, because I'm intentionally limiting you to a short backswing and follow through that allow no more than a wrist flick. This is not to deny the power of the wrist. At clinics I frequently demonstrate the power that is packed solely in the wrist snap with a quick series of hits. I prelude them by saying "I'm going to hit the ball with only about a foot of backswing and a foot of follow through. I'll use no body, no weight transfer, and I won't step into the ball on this hit." Then I drop and wrist flick the ball into the front wall at about 40 miles per hour.

"That shot," I tell them, "is just to demonstrate the power of the wrist. It isn't supposed to be a correct swing just yet. Now look at what happens when I take a full backswing and follow through." Then I add a good backswing and follow through to the wrist flick when I drop and hit. The ball picks up quite a bit of steam, hitting the front wall at, say, 60 miles per hour. Finally I say to the clinic group, "Look at what happens now when I add body rotation, weight transfer and a step forward to the string of stroke movements up to now." Then I knock their eyes out with a hundred mile per hour smasher at the front wall. This demonstration begins with just a simple wrist flick—that nucleus of stroke power.

Perform this step—the bounce and flick drill—20 times or however many it takes for you to get the hang of it

9. This step is a piece of cake. You're going to add a little power by adding an extra foot of backswing and an extra foot of follow through.

Drop and flick the ball at knee height from the closed stance, as in the previous step. But this time start with a two foot backswing and end with a two foot follow through. That gives you a whopping four foot swing. Don't take any more just yet. Mentally construct the parallel brick walls again—one two feet behind the point of ball contact to limit your backswing, and the other two feet ahead of the point of contact to stop your follow through.

Your backswing and follow through must be absolutely level and parallel to the floor for now. No lift or swoop is allowed. Pretend there is a tabletop that runs knee high and parallel to the floor all along the bottom of your horizontal stroke. Your racquet cannot penetrate—go below—this table. Also pretend there is an upper limiting barrier. This is another tabletop (an upside down table) running a foot above and parallel to the lower table. In other words these two tabletops limit the altitude of your swing arc to knee height from the beginning of your two foot backswing to the end of your two foot follow through.

Practice this step 20 times, or until you feel ready to add on.

10. This is the same as the previous step, only you now take a three foot backswing and a three foot follow through. Your wrist should now have room to snap much more forcefully upon ball contact (no longer just a flick). This snap, plus the increased total swing distance (six feet), should greatly increase your power.

Remember that your stance is still closed. There is no step into the ball. Contact is at knee height just after the ball peaks in the center of the contact zone. Your swing is parallel to the floor throughout. Flick-hit the ball and retrieve, flick-hit and retrieve, 20 times or more. Don't break your racquet on the brick walls and don't trip over the tables. ●

Coming Next: Six more add-ons including backswing, follow through and body rotation.

Ask the Champ

by Marty Hogan

Four time and current National Champion Marty Hogan answers questions about improving your game as this exclusive series returns to *National Racquetball*. Readers are encouraged to submit questions about their game to Marty Hogan, c/o *Ask The Champ*, National Racquetball, 1800 Pickwick Ave., Glenview, IL 60025

Question: I'm a three times a week player and all of a sudden my shots don't seem to be going in. I wonder if I'm in a slump. Is there such a thing as a racquetball slump? If so, how can I get out of it? Normally, I can beat my regular opponent, but not lately.

Hogan: You are not in a slump. Your game has stagnated. This usually comes about when you continue to play the same person or on the same level of competition for long periods. What you need is a change of pace.

Your ability is not being tested to the fullest and probably you have become temporarily lazy on the court, creating concentration lapses. What you need to do is play some players who are better than yourself. It might hurt the ego a bit, but it will do a lot more for your game than continually playing the same players all the time.

I think it's better to lose badly once in a while than to continually play the same people. I suggest that if you are playing three times a week that you seek out one opponent who you can beat easily, one opponent with whom you are evenly matched, and one opponent who you cannot beat. To me, that's a perfect balance. You're playing three different game plans; probably three different styles; and more importantly, three different thinking games.

It's good to have a variety of opponents. You must have variety to improve, or as in your case, to avoid stagnation. This variety will teach you to think through different situations and therefore, improve your game. Eventually, the player with whom you are evenly matched will become the player you can beat easily; the player who you cannot beat becomes the player with whom you're evenly matched; and you'll be looking for a new player you cannot beat.

Question: When I lose the first game of a match it seems to devastate me. Invariably, I lose the second game even worse. After a first game loss I just seem to lose all my confidence. What can I do between games so I don't get so psyched out?

Hogan: You should develop a mental checklist. And the first question on that checklist should be, "*how did he beat me?*" That of course, is the toughest question of them all, so it might as well be first. If you answer that one, you shouldn't need the rest.

Although it might be difficult to self-analyze and self-criticize, it is a mandatory exercise if you are going to be able to rebound after a first game loss. What did he do better than me to beat me? Did his backhand overpower my backhand? Is he covering the passing lanes? Is he beating me on the ceiling? Are his serve returns forcing me to return defensively?

You should have a general game plan visualized prior to any match. Have an idea of what you are going to attempt to accomplish with each rally. Are you going to try to get a certain return on your serves? Do you want to play his backhand, or the ceiling, or perhaps keep the ball down the walls?

By knowing what you are trying to accomplish, you will be able to better dissect what it is that is going wrong. I always have a game plan prepared for my opponent. Sometimes I am forced to change that plan, particularly if I'm missing my anticipated shots, or if I'm not even getting the shots I had hoped to set up, because of my plan.

When this occurs, I change. I would change anyhow, just to keep my opponent guessing. After a few points, I'll then go back to my original game plan, but I always change strategies during the course of a match.

Question: When my opponent reaches 16 or 17 points, I sense an urgency within me, perhaps it's a fear of losing. If I'm not within one or two points of him, well the game is as good as lost. Is there a point in the match that is a turning point, when you must change your game or give up?

Hogan: I've never considered the score important. What is important is that the game is never over until it's over. I've come back from 18-2 to win and I accomplish this by never worrying about how many points my opponent has. All I concern myself with is how I can get to 21.

For example, if the score is 16-7 in favor of my opponent, I do not start thinking about how I'm going to stop him from scoring those last five points. Rather, I concentrate on the fact that I'm only 14 points from victory, and he's not that far ahead, because 16-7 is only a nine point spread.

In addition, most players have a concentration lapse when they reach a big lead. It happens at every level of play, and it happens plenty on the pro tour, believe me. On every rally you should be concentrating as if it's 20-20.

The only time you're out of a match is when you think you're out of it. Probably you were out of it at 0-0: I believe that 80 percent of competition is thinking. There are some players who will never be champions because they don't possess the mental control it takes to be a winner.

Never be concerned with what your opponent has. Always be concerned with your getting to 21. And be careful about the "*I caught him*" concentration letdown that your dramatic comeback might cause you. If you come back from 18-5 to tie the match, you cannot be satisfied. You must look past your opponent's score and zero in on 21. I've seen hundreds of matches where great comebacks occurred yet the player lost because he became satisfied with getting close rather than winning. ●

Beginners' Doubles

by Jack Kramer

This excerpt is another in *National Racquetball's* exclusive series from *Beginner's Racquetball* by Jack Kramer © 1979, reprinted with permission of World Publications, Inc., Mountain View, CA.

Many people do not like doubles racquetball, but actually this is as exciting (with a proper partner) as singles play. A combined effort usually entails less physical exertion than singles play and for older people this might be desirable. And although it is true that the court seems crowded (actually, it is) with four players, I do not think this adds any hazard in doubles play.

Doubles play is, of course, somewhat different than singles play; one of the important aspects is picking a partner you can *play with*. Because doubles is a team game, it requires partners who coordinate well so they can both act quickly on the court without undue discussion. And the secret to good doubles play is to gain some experience playing with your partner. After a short time you will be able to determine if your partner is for you and vice versa.

Formations

The usual way to play doubles is the side-by-side or half-and-half court formation. Here each player is responsible for his side of the court with an imaginary line drawn down the center. Generally the player with the stronger backhand (assuming both are right handed) takes the left side of the court.

A shot carrying down the middle of the court is the left side player's responsibility because he is able to make a forehand shot on this. With a right and left team the half-and-half works even better, for both players are able to use their stronger forehand strokes the majority of the time.

Although there is an imaginary line down the center of the court, this is not a rigid barrier. For example if the ball is coming down the center, the left side player would take it on the forehand (again, if both players are right handed). But if the player on the left side is out of position, and this happens frequently, then the closer player makes the shot. As in singles, but more emphatically in doubles, control of the center court position is essential to successful games.

Another kind of doubles play is the I-formation sometimes called the front-and-back method. Here the imaginary line is drawn from side wall to side wall at about midcourt. The front player is responsible for shots in front of the short line and the other player covers the back court. The ideal setup here is for the back court player to have a good defensive game and the front player to be able to shoot well from a deep-court position.

Serving

In doubles the server takes a position in the service area in his half of the court. The partner stands in his service box in his half of the court. It is important to remember that neither player can move until the served ball has crossed the short line. If the first player serves and the team loses, service is then passed to the

opposing team. If, however, the opposing team fails to win the point, the serve passes to the second member of that team. If the team loses a second point, the serve goes back to the first team. After that both players on each team continue to serve until the team loses.

To receive in doubles both players stand about five feet from the back wall and after the serve is returned both players advance to take center court positions a few feet behind the short line. The objective in doubles is to get the ball in play deep to the back court so that the receivers are forced back. Then you and your partner get center court position behind the short line. You can use a lob serve, a Z serve or a drive serve.

The drive serve is probably riskier than the other serves because a hard hit ball can be returned offensively with more force.

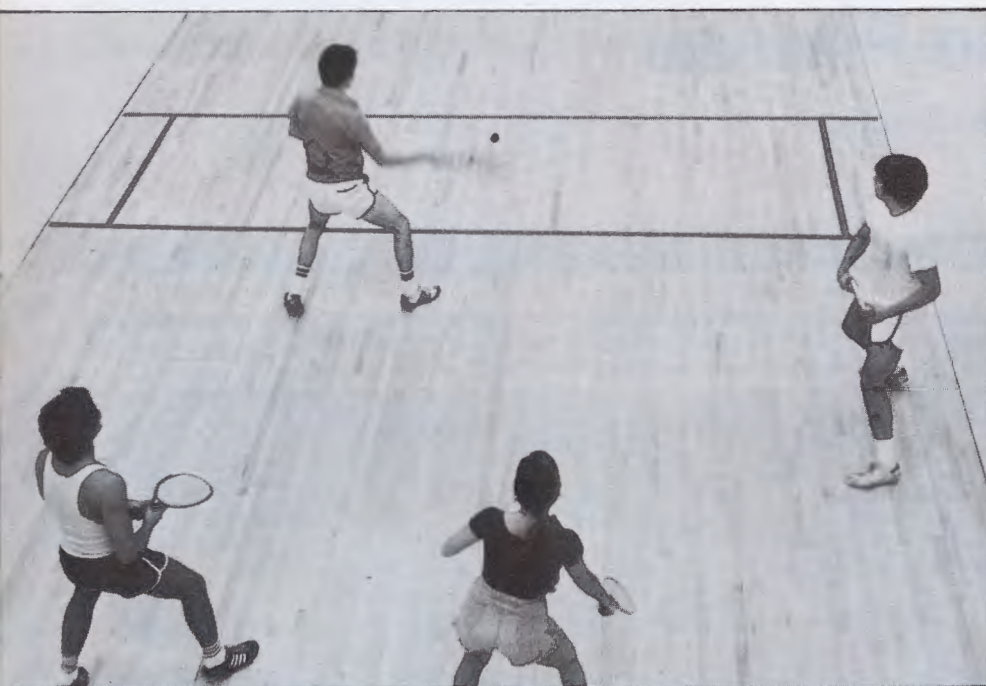
Modus Operandi

No matter what formation is used and what serve is made, the essential success of doubles is in getting center court position.

With four players on the court be sure to watch the ball carefully and to know just where your partner is. Sounds difficult and it is. However you must watch the ball to return it properly, and you must be alert to move if the ball is coming at you. You must also keep out of the way of your partner—bumping and clashing when you both run for the same ball is very possible. If necessary state your claim to the ball or, on the other hand, yell for your partner to get the shot if you see you are having trouble.

A good doubles game very much resembles a tightly staged ballet; once the teams have achieved mastery, it can make a beautiful bit of playing, especially if the partners have played together a bit and understand each other's techniques.





Basic Shots

Service Return

If the serve is weak, realize that you can win the point by hitting a killshot or a cross court drive. Aim for a wide angle on the cross court pass so that the ball cannot be touched by the opponents.

If the serve looks like it is going to be a strong one, it is best to go for the ceiling—then the return shot will be a tough one for your opponent to make. If you opt to hit the front wall, the ball may float up weakly to the wall and be easily reached on its rebound.

Pinch Shot

Passing shots are difficult in doubles because there is dual coverage. You really have to "power pack" the ball to get the points in doubles. Thus the pinch ball rebounding into the open court area is good strategy. Generally your opponents are lagging back, playing defensively, so the pinch shot is tough to return.

The pinch shot is basically a killshot: The ball angles low off the front wall and one side wall in either sequence. It is best hit within a two-foot range of the front corner.

The Volley

The volley will allow your team to hold a center court position. In center court position (in front of your opponents), you will have a greater chance to use an effective shot selection. With your opponents out of optimum coverage position, a killshot has a better chance of scoring and a cross court shot makes for a difficult return.

Overhead Drive

The overhead drive and kill are just as effective in doubles as in singles. If the shot does not end the rally, at least it will force your opponents forward out of position. If the opponent is a little forward, try an overhead drive to force the ball to bounce high so it returns at his chest and makes for a difficult hit.

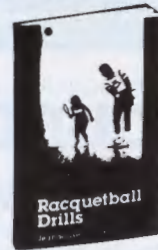
Ceiling Ball

Any time that your opponents' ceiling ball comes up short or goes long off the back wall, try to use a kill attempt or a passing shot. If the doubles game is becoming a ceiling ball rally, try an overhead kill or an overhead drive to change the game. Remember: the ceiling ball shot's basic purpose is to get your opponents out of the favorable center court positions, and you do not want to risk a kill or pass attempt.

Center Court

Center court position in singles is important—and in doubles vital. If you occupy center court, you can be in a better position for returns. You are also closer to the front wall and thus can be more accurate and powerful with your hits. Also it is much easier to see the ball if you are standing in front of your opponent. ●

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT



Prof racquetball player/instructor Jean Sausser and the U.S. Racquetball Assn's official photographer Arthur Shay have teamed up to outline a series for the beginning and intermediate players. The step-by-step format allows players to improve use of court time while practicing alone or with an opponent.

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Bounce off the Plateau

A Better Way for Beginners to Practice

by Dave Belka

If racquetball isn't exhilarating, something's wrong. If racquetball isn't fun, something's wrong.

Your problem might be that of many beginners. You have difficulty predicting where the ball will bounce and deciding how to successfully move into a hitting position. Most players gradually overcome this problem with playing experience. Some players, usually with limited experiences in striking moving objects or perceiving rebounds, remain frustrated forever, it seems. If you are one of these players, or you know one, this article is for you.

Hilecher's Method Modified

Jerry Hilecher, in the July 1978 issue of *National Racquetball*, described an excellent technique for beginners. The ball is thrown underhand and softly to the front wall. The player moves and CATCHES the ball below knee height just prior to the second floor bounce. (Later this will become the recommended contact height when possible.) This technique allows you to focus on a moving ball while positioning yourself into proper hitting position WITHOUT having to think about the racquet swing. Jerry emphasizes that beginners should think about only one important aspect at a time. This task requires a knee bend which most players do naturally. Lo and behold many also position their bodies so that they are facing a side wall. Many also utilize an arm swing from the shoulder; this produces a forward swing approaching a 90 degree arc prior to catching the ball. Wow! Jerry Hilecher's method produces many essential swing aspects in a simple, yet beautiful way.

I have modified Jerry's idea so that it applies to various ability levels. The procedure described above is followed in a step-by-step fashion. When you successfully contact the ball below the knee four out of five attempts, you add the knee bend. When four successes occur, you add the side body position, then the 90 degree arm swing. If you don't take the swing almost automatically, then you may be thinking of too many things at once. This is an important point to emphasize; only one point should be the focus.

It is not necessary, particularly on the backhand, to catch the ball. The object is to touch or contact the ball at a low height. Accuracy is the objective. Next repeat this step-by-step procedure using the racquet. Then start with the throw before you use the racquet for balls off the back wall. The throw-followed-by-racquet procedure also applies to the front-wall-to-one-side-wall balls.

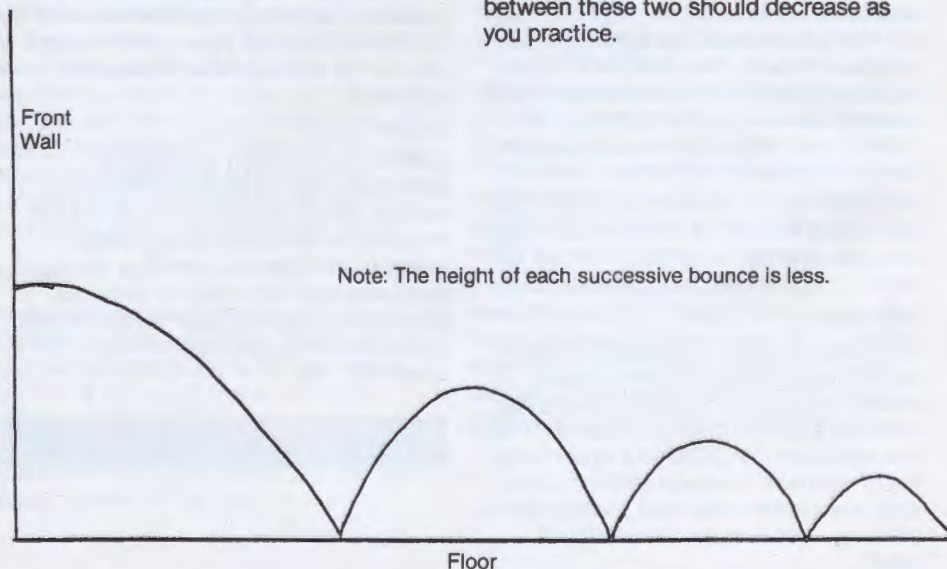
Most of you will progress through this sequence rapidly. Many of you will combine several steps naturally and, in essence, skip some steps. Many of you will eliminate the catching phase, especially when the procedure is repeated for the back and front-side walls. But some of you will still have little success and make very slow progress.

Permit Multiple-Bounce Hits

Only one legal bounce prior to contact may not give you enough time to adequately perceive and predict the ball flight. Even for a one wall soft rebounding ball you may have difficulty placing your body in position to successfully contact the ball in the allotted time. If you also try to contact the ball low, chances of contact are even slimmer. You must have more time to think, decide and execute.

The answer is multiple ball bounces in this initial learning phase (See diagram).

Multiple Bounces



Play awhile with no limit, then tell yourself (or have a partner tell you) how many bounces may occur before a catch (or hit) attempt. Using this method you will more easily predict the exact direction that the ball will go. You'll have more time to decide how far to move and where to position yourself.

It may be helpful to use a "copy cat" method if you still have difficulty. Face a partner with each having the back to a side wall (See photo). Move in the same direction at the same time to simultaneously catch the ball after a specified bounce and prior to the next floor contact. You have mirrored the movement of the partner, who may say "Now" prior to the catch attempt. Start the catch prior to the sixth bounce, then fifth, etc. This "mirror copying" action may reinforce your prediction of ball flight, moving and form. Few of you will need mirror copying. You may, however, benefit from this technique when you're learning a new stroke, such as the killshot.

Try to change the vertical height of the planned catch (or hit). This will enable you to understand why the low ball contact is preferred. Notice that your weight shift prior to contact is most obvious when you contact the ball at low heights. Perhaps even more important is what you'll learn about the difference between your *planned* contact height and the *actual* contact height. The vertical difference between these two should decrease as you practice.

IMPROVE YOUR GAME!

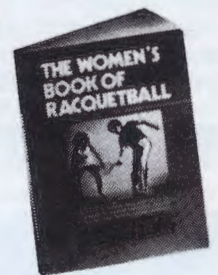
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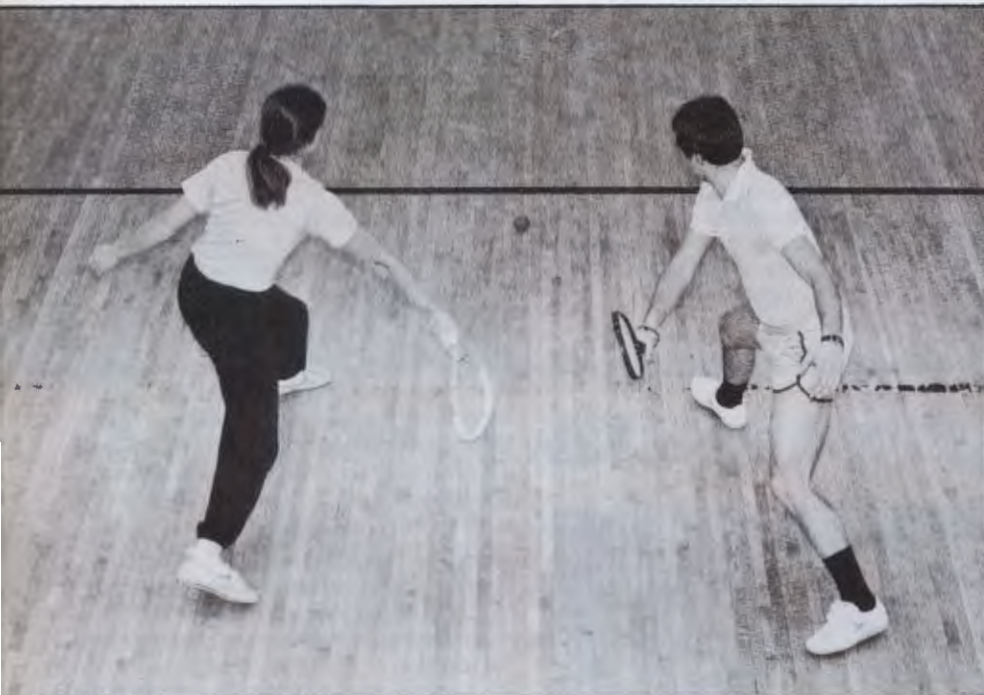
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During her first time in a court Nancy Hatfield hits a forehand on the ball's third bounce, after a soft toss off the back wall. Instructor Dave Belka uses "mirror copying" to position Nancy away from and behind the ball.



—James Neuman photo

Speeding Up Prediction Time

You don't want to stay with multiple bounces. Gradually reduce the number of bounces allowed when you achieve four or five tries at a given task. Reducing the number of bounces prior to ball contact forces you to process information and predict faster, but still allows more time than a legal return (single bounce) can provide.

Another way to speed the processing time is to throw or hit the ball, wait until the ball touches the floor the first time and then have a partner call the number of bounces allowed before you execute the stroke. This forces you to watch the ball, but postpones movement decisions until the ball actually touches the floor the first time. Gradually reduce the execution bounces (from five to four, etc.) as skill

permits and then reduce the height of the bounces, as this also reduces decision time. When you increase the force and speed of the ball, you may increase the height of the multiple bounces and bring other walls into the action. So be careful to keep each new challenge at your ability level.

When you've hit an impasse in learning—when racquetball isn't fun—try bypassing official rules and traditional methods. Modify usual procedures to facilitate learning. Multiple bounces allow more time to predict and to move, and they are good for some novices. Multiple bounces also are a way to correct weaknesses during warm-up and practice and to help develop new shots. As your skill increases, your only problem is to remember that this practice return is NOT legal in a game. ●

The USRA Junior Nationals: A Fun Mixture Of Hard Work And Play

by Nick Schmitz

CHICAGO—they came from all over the United States, from Alaska, Florida and 28 other states.

They came with a dream, to win at the USRA Junior Nationals. They knew they must win to follow in the footsteps of such former top juniors as Scott Hawkins, John Egerman, Laura Martino, Stacey Fletcher, Greg Peck and Mike Yellen, all of whom now are carving out spots for themselves on the pro racquetball tours.

So many came that the 1981 Leach/Seamco Junior National Racquetball Championships, August 10-15, at the beautiful Charlie Club II in suburban Chicago became the biggest Junior

Nationals ever held.

Some came with their families, while others came alone. Some financed the trip out of their personal savings, while others received money toward travel expenses that Leach Industries and Seamco provided to regional winners.

In all, 270 juniors, 199 of them boys, competed in eight age divisions for championships that are the culmination of top-flight junior competition that began in July with 14 regional tournaments involving more than 2,800 players.

The 270 competitors are the best young racquetball players in the world. And,

although they realistically fancied themselves as the future of competitive racquetball, they also came to enjoy some good, clean, off-court fun.

The fun began the very first day with the young racquetballers both renewing acquaintances with past competitors and making new friendships, some of which will last a lifetime.

The scene at the Charlie Club was similar to that of a school yard at recess—youths running all over the place, up and down, shouting, cheering, hooting and hollering. The enthusiasm and energy level was unbelievable.

With the exception of a few well-aimed water balloons, an activity to which USRA National Commissioner Joe Ardito quickly put an end, the juniors were well behaved. They eagerly took advantage of the swimming, running and other athletic facilities the Charlie Club had to offer.

A row of well-used electronic games turned the large hospitality suite into the most used room at the tournament next to the stadium court. The combination of Pac-Man games and food was one that the juniors found hard to resist.

Tournament play was interrupted on Wednesday so the juniors and their families could spend the day at Marriott's exciting Great America theme park in Gurnee, IL. The combination of rides and shows made a most enjoyable day of family fun.

The day's excitement was capped that evening by an outdoor weenie roast in the Charlie Club parking lot. It featured more of that popular combination of food and fun.

Despite all the laughs and fun off court, the juniors experienced the highest of highs and the lowest of lows while struggling on court to pick up a point here and avoid losing a point there. That, after all, is what the joy of victory and the agony of defeat is all about. That, after all, is the reason for coming to Chicago. And that is where the real story of the 1981 Leach/Seamco Junior Nationals lies. ●



Young Fans

Connie and Tom Young, in the back row, who own Tom Young's Racquetball Club and Spa in Las Cruces, NM, are regular followers of junior racquetball competition. Four of their 10

children took part in the 1981 Junior Nationals. They are, back row, Glenn, 13, and front row, left to right, Brenda, 15; Kurt, 11, and Glenda, 17.



Kid from Kelowna

Mark Van Hees, who turned nine on Oct. 31, had two financial backers for his trip from Kelowna, British Columbia, to the Junior Nationals in Chicago. One was the USRA, which gave him \$200 for winning the Northwest Regionals 10 and Under division, and the other was the Reflection Shoppe.

The Reflection Shoppe greeting card store happens to be owned by Mark's grandmother, Fay Van Hees, who plays racquetball regularly, as do Mark's other grandparents—John Van Hees 63, and Al Bocking, 65.

Mark's mother, Candy, (pictured here), who also made the trip to Chicago, and Mark's father, Dirk, are coaches for the junior team at the Four Seasons Racquetball Club in Kelowna, just outside Vancouver. Candy termed "beautiful" the fact that Mark had a chance to compete in the Juniors against young players from as far from his home as Florida.

Mark is serious about his game. "I'm working hard at being a professional player," he says. "And he gets all As, his mother adds, with the warning "If his grades drop, he plays one less day of racquetball."

had been a semi-finalist in 1978's 13-and-under division and 1980's 15-and-under division, pushed Newman to the wall in the semis. The scores were 21-20, 20-21 before Newman blitzed him in the tie-breaker, 11-0.

Miller also played some great racquetball to reach the finals. He first attracted attention when he upset fifth-seeded Jim Flannery, Lakewood, CA, in a 16s tie-breaker. The 19-21, 21-16, 11-9 score indicates how hard the match was fought.

That 2½ hour dual set the stage for Miller's next victory, a 21-12, 21-11 quarter-final upset of fourth-seeded Fred Calabrese, Hollywood, FL.

By the time that match was over, Miller had become the focal point of the players from the eastern part of the United States. He received such vocal support that it almost carried him through to the championship.

The fan support definitely was a factor in Miller's exciting semi-final round upset of top-seeded Gerry Price, Castro Valley, CA. The 17-21, 21-16, 11-5 victory put Price in with some pretty good company, Mike Yellen and Brett Harnett, the other USRA 17-and-under top seeds who had lost in past years.

Although Miller had won, Price acknowledged that he only had evened a personal score. Price had beaten Miller badly in the semis of the 1980 AARA Junior Nationals.

"Price had the experience," Miller said of his opponent, "but I wasn't impressed. Price just powered his shots in but he is not as fast as Jack Newman."

After the tournament had ended, Miller admitted that he had peaked for the Price match and the finals were a let down.

The first game of the championship match confirmed that assessment. Newman broke an early 3-3 tie and built a 14-3 lead that Miller never was able to overcome.

Newman, who had greatly improved his on-court consistency and intensity through the use of hypnosis, really came out smoking. Once he had built that 11 point lead, he and Miller essentially just were trading points. Try as he might, Miller never got closer than seven points behind.

Nothing Miller tried was enough to stop a fired-up Newman in game two. Early ties at two, four and five evolved into Newman leads of 11-6 and 14-7 as he scored with an impressive assortment of shots.

Miller, however, was far from giving up. He fought his way back into the game and closed to 13-14 when Newman missed a forehand return and was left sprawled on the floor. Newman took his first time out of the game and, when play resumed, Miller lost serve on a skip ball. It turned out to be a fatal mistake as Newman tallied the next four points.

Newman & Alvarado Win 17-And-Under Titles

The cream in racquetball rises to the top as it does in many other things in life. The 1981 Leach/Seamco Junior National Racquetball Championships were an example of this. In division after division, the proven winners tended to win again.

The 17-and-under divisions, however, both disputed and confirmed this. The boys division was the largest and most competitive, featuring several exciting upsets. But neither of the boys finalists, Jack Newman, 17, Morton Grove, IL, and Ira Miller, 17, Baltimore, MD, ever had been in a position to win a national title before this year. Both girls finalists, Liz Alvarado, 17, Odessa, TX, and Heather Stupp, 17, Montreal, Canada, had previously been at least semi-finalists.

In fact, Alvarado was the USRA's 14-and-under runner-up in 1978, and 17-and-under national champion in 1979. And she was a finalist in the 1980 17-and-under division.

Stupp's credentials include a third-place finish in the USRA's 1978 14-and-under division, a semi-final round showing in the USRA's 1980 17-and-under division, and a big win in the 1981 Canadian Nationals.

So while Newman and Miller could be considered relative late bloomers, both

Alvarado and Stupp had already established themselves as legitimate and consistent contenders.

The big story at this year's Junior Nationals was in the boys' 17-and-under division and it was twofold. Jack Newman, by taking the title, became the first person ever to win both the USRA's and the AARA's 17-and-under national championship. And, more amazingly, he won both titles in the same year.

This is a tremendous feat although almost overshadowed by the fabulous string of upsets unseeded Ira Miller put together on his march out of obscurity to the championship finals. Miller upset three of the division's top five seeds.

Newman seeded third, flicked aside both Jeff Garrison, Adrian, MI, 21-1, 21-1, in the first round and Frank Catone, Rochester, NY, 21-3, 21-8 in the second round. However, he was slow to get things in gear against third-round opponent John Paul Vaccaro, Saddle Brook, NJ, 21-20, 21-8.

Quarter-final round opponent Barry Koran, Miami, FL, put up a fight before Newman eliminated him 21-9, 21-16. But seventh-seeded John Amatulli, Merrillville, IN, who

Miller had one last chance at 19-13 when he regained serve. But Newman quickly ended it with an awesome forehand shot. Newman visibly grew in confidence and intensity as he closed in on the 21 points needed to win the championship and as he put more points between himself and Miller.

The Newman-Miller matches were not the only matches in the boys' 17-and-under division to attract attention. Unseeded Hart Johnson, 17, St. Paul, MN, upset second-seeded Robert Kinney, Sun Prairie, WI, 21-13, 21-5, in the 16s. And unseeded Daniel O'Bremski, Huntington, PA, knocked off two top-10 seeds, ninth-seeded Bill Parodi, San Antonio, TX, 21-17, 21-8, in the 32s and eighth-seeded Lance LaCour, 21-15, 17-21, 11-7, in the 16s. O'Bremski eventually lost eight and three to Price in the quarter-finals.

On the girls' side, there were some great matches in the 17-and-under division. Champion Liz Alvarado, Odessa, TX, was pushed to a tie-breaker in her semi-final round match against fourth-seeded Sheryl Kraus, Appleton, WI. Alvarado won 21-10, 20-21, 11-8.

Kraus knows what it is to pull one out with a tie-breaker. She got into the semis against Alvarado by surviving a slow-starting quarter-final round match against unseeded Coleen Brint, Sylvania, OH. The score of that match was 20-21, 21-6, 11-0.

But overall, the girls' 17-and-under division was not as competitive as the boys'. This is substantiated by the great point differentials in some matches.

Of course, not all matches in the division were cake walks. For example, Laura Merkel, Slinger, WI, gave third-seeded Cheryl Mathieu, Chesterfield, MO, a good fight in the 16s before eventually falling, 21-13, 21-16.

However, with the exception of the Alvarado-Kraus semi-final round tie-breaker, both finalists pretty much steamrolled their way to the championship finals.

Alvarado knocked off Lisa Ecker, Davison, MI, 21-10, 21-1, in the 16s, Mindy Hartstein, 21-2, 21-5, in the quarter-finals, and Kraus in the semis, while Stupp defeated Theresa Laird, 21-4, 21-0, in the 16s, Anne Barneburg, 21-9, 21-3, in the quarters, and Mathieu, 21-12, 21-9, in the semis.

The championship finals, however, were another matter. Alvarado struggled to get past Stupp in the first game, 21-20, and smoked her in the second to win the match and championship, 21-13.

Stupp, the 1981 Canadian Women's National Champion, stretched a three-point advantage at 12-9 in the first game to five points at 16-11 before Alvarado got her game together enough to start the drive that eventually overtook Stupp. "She just outshot me," Stupp said of Alvarado.

But that was not the only reason for Alvarado's comeback. An avoidable hinder called on Alvarado that tied the game at 20 provides a clue.

"She crowded me a lot trying to cut off shots," Alvarado, who questioned the call,

said. "You can do that in Canada."

While Stupp was trying to master her frustration between games, Alvarado was plotting a second-game strategy of trying to get and stay ahead by getting her serves in.

It worked. Alvarado came out smoking. She built up an early 6-2 lead and then stretched it to 12-3. Stupp's frustration continued. She started skipping too many balls and soon found herself down 18-4. That 14-point lead was the biggest of the match.

Stupp tried to pull her game together. She decided to shoot because she "had nothing else to lose." More of her shots went in as she racked up six straight points and narrowed Alvarado's lead to eight at 10-18.

The point spread was brought down to seven at 12-19 on an Alvarado skip, and six at 13-19 on a Stupp ace. But that was all she wrote. Stupp lost serve. Alvarado picked up her 20th point on an ace. And Alvarado won the game, match and championship, her second USRA 17-and-under, when a lunging Stupp missed a backhand return in the left rear corner of the court.

As with the Newman-Miller match, both Alvarado and Stupp played their hearts out. Now that they have completed their junior eligibility, they will go on to bigger and better things. Newman will continue his racquetball career at Memphis State University, while Alvarado has accepted a tennis scholarship from Midland (TX) College and will play on the WPRA 1981-82 pro tour. ●

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Navarro & Wojcik Assert Supremacy In 15-And-Under Division

Some great racquetball was played in the 15-and-under division. But both the boys' and girls' top seeds, Ray Navarro, El Paso, TX, and Lynn Wojcik, Tucson, AZ, showed that pre-tournament expectations of their performances were justified. They respectively captured the boys' and girls' titles.

For Navarro, the boys' 15-and-under title was his second USRA national championship. He was the boys' 13-and-under winner in 1979. This year, Navarro, defeated third-seeded Jeff Conine, Rialto, CA, 21-14, 21-6, in the finals.

Wojcik, who was her division's defending champion, took her third straight USRA national championship when she soundly defeated third-seeded Dina Pritchett, Anderson, IN, 21-0, 21-7. Wojcik had won the girls' 14-and-under titles in 1978 and 1979, and the 15-and-under title last year.

Pritchett had reached the finals by upsetting second-seeded Loretta Ann Peterson, Salt Lake City, UT, in an exciting 16-21, 21-19, 11-10 semi-final round tie-breaker. Peterson had been seeking a rematch to avenge her 1980 championship finals loss to Wojcik. But hope for that rematch died with Pritchett's upset.

A total of 64 boys from 23 states entered the division and competition was fierce. But the division narrowed down pretty much as expected. The top four seeds met in the semi-finals and only the Miranda brothers from El Paso, TX, Carlos and Louis, and Rich Campbell provided upsets on their way to the quarter-finals.

In the top bracket, Navarro easily defeated fourth-seeded John Negrete, Schaumburg, IL, 21-6, 21-11, in the semis, while Conine engineered a magnificent 21-20, 21-20, upset of second-seeded Scott Brechon, Rockford, IL.

So when Navarro and Conine squared-off for the 15-and-under division championship, it was a proven winner against a solid player who was making his closest approach to winning a national championship. Conine had gotten as far as the quarter-finals of the AARA Junior Nationals earlier this year.

The Navarro-Conine match was not as close as spectators had hoped it would be. Conine started out strong, building a 10-5 lead. But some aggressive offensive play by Navarro cut the lead down to one point at 10-9 on a combination of two forehand killshots to the right corner and a serving ace.

Conine then pushed the lead to four points at 13-9. He held it through 14-10, but then he ran into Navarro's buzzsaw game, which all of a sudden had come together. Two aces, a forehand kill and a

missed backhand return later, Navarro tied the first game at 14 and never was headed after that.

Navarro kept on racking up the points, scoring 11 in succession. Conine could not stop him and his frustration became a visible part of his game. Three of the game's last six points were scored on an assortment of Navarro offensive shots. But three points also came on an avoidable hinder call and two skip balls. Navarro won 21-14.

The frustration was evident from the way Conine played the second and ultimately decisive game. Navarro opened up a 6-0 lead. Conine tried to come back, picking up two points on an ace and a forehand kill. But Navarro quickly stretched his lead to 11 at 13-2.

Once again Conine tried to stop the flood of Navarro points. But he only notched two more tallies on a Navarro error and a long-needed backhand kill in the right corner.

Navarro then scored two aces to open a 12-point 16-4 lead. Conine retaliated with a forehand and backhand kill, but that was the end of his scoring. He had one more chance to score at 19-6, but was unable to do anything with it.

Navarro scored his 20th and 21st points on a Conine skip and a deadly forehand passing shot. Conine's agony was over. Navarro won 21-6.

On the girls' side, the division was large, competitive and interesting. Twenty-nine girls from 16 states squared off against each other and provided competition that ranged from mismatches, to exciting tie-breakers, to a championship final that was

so one-sided that the division championship actually was decided in the semi-finals.

Match scores started to tighten up in the 16s. In fact, there were two close tie-breakers and an upset to provide plenty of spectator excitement.

Fourth-seeded Tina Heath, Country Club Hills, IL, survived a 21-5, 20-21, 11-6, tie-breaker to get past unseeded Candy Winter, Jacksonville, FL. Winter was coming off a tough, first-round 21-13, 21-15 win over Stephanie Parel.

Fifth-seeded Brenda Young needed a close, 13-21, 21-13, 11-7, tie-breaker to eliminate unseeded Toni Bevloek, Dunmore, PA.

And Beth Jamison continued to do well as she raced to a 21-4, 21-19 upset win over eighth-seeded Mary Pernacciaro, Rockford, IL.

Everybody but Wojcik struggled to win in the quarter-finals. Peterson squeaked by seventh-seeded and upset-minded Elaine Mardas, 21-13, 21-20. Pritchett survived a 21-13, 21-20 match against sixth-seeded Lynda Kuchenreuther, Plantation, FL. And fourth-seeded Tina Heath stopped Young in the second successive tie-breaker for both, 8-21, 21-12, 11-6.

Wojcik, meanwhile, sailed past both unseeded Beth Jamison, 21-3, 21-3, in the quarter-finals and Heath in the first game of the semis, 21-3. However, Heath pulled herself together and gave Wojcik a fight in the second game. The 15 points Heath scored were both the most scored against Wojcik in the entire tournament and the first time anyone in the tourney scored more than three points against the steamroller.

The lower bracket semi-final round match between Pritchett and Peterson was the most important of the many close matches in the division. It was a beauty.



Consolation Cookie

Ev Eiken of Winona, MN, assures his son Brett, nine, that he'll recover from his loss in the 10 and Unders at the Junior Nationals. The

father-son conversation contained the reassurance that "You found out one thing—now you know you can play with the big boys."



Tournament Commute

Each day during the National Juniors Ray Monje left his job at Calumet Steel Co. at 7 a.m. and drove his son, Mark and three friends to the tournament. After spending the day at the Charlie Club watching the boys compete, Monje drove back to the far south side of Chicago to start another night shift.

Pritchett won 16-21, 21-19, 11-10. She broke an early tie at three in the tie-breaker and built a six point, 9-3 lead. Peterson cut it down to four at 9-5 and Pritchett retaliated by adding her 10th point.

Pritchett was one point away from winning the tie-breaker and match, but she struggled for that last match. Peterson chipped point after point from the lead until she tied it at 10. But then Pritchett went on her final offensive drive. A backhand kill to the right corner returned serve to Pritchett. She got the decisive final point when a Peterson return fell harmlessly from the ceiling.

That triumphant effort proved to be Pritchett's peak. In the championship finals she lacked offensive punch and looked both disappointed and bewildered. The first game was a complete blowout. Wojcik won 21-0.

"I was psyched out before the match began and got worse as the match went on," Pritchett said of her reaction to her more-experienced opponent. *"I was tense and had no confidence in myself."*

Wojcik, who did not envision a 21-0 score even though she had bagged the AARA's 15-and-under title earlier this year, entered the championship match intending to play her game—serve, pinch and power. The fact that it was Pritchett's first nationals did not hurt either.

In the second game, Wojcik took an early 6-0 lead and stretched it to 14-3. But then she lost her concentration and Pritchett picked up the next four points. However, they turned out to be her last as Wojcik started her final offensive, adding seven points to her 14-7 lead to rack up the final winning score, 21-7.

"I should have played my game," Pritchett lamented after the match. *"I would have done better. I kept on setting her up."*

And so it ended with both Ray Navarro and Lynn Wojcik well on their way to being top junior contenders next year and pros in the future. ●

Simonette & Upson Reign In 12-And-Under Division

Top-seeded David Simonette, Baltimore, MD, reasserted himself as the class of the field as he successfully defended the USRA boys' 12-and-under national championship he won last year. But top-seeded Tammy Horrocks, Hillsboro, OH, was unable to improve on her 1980 second-place finish as she lost to sixth-seeded Christine Upson, Rochester, NY, in the girls' championship finals.

In a field that was both strong and large, 39 boys from 15 states, Simonette was in total control. In five matches, he ran up a total of 210 points to his opponents' collective total of 55. The point difference in his first three matches were 39, 35 and 35 out of a possible 42. And that includes a 21-4, 21-3, quarter-final round win over eighth-seeded Kiel Koger, Baton Rouge, LA.

Second-seeded Mark Monje, Park Forest, IL, who lost to Simonette last year in the semi-finals, was not as fortunate. He lost a tough 21-18, 21-18 match to unseeded Tim Doyle, Williamsville, NY, in the 16s. And from that point on, it was Doyle who carried the standard of the division's lower bracket. He next knocked off unseeded Nolan Glantz, Crompond, NY, 21-11, 21-11, in the quarter-finals.

Both third-seeded Ed Blaess, Sunrise, FL, and fourth-seeded Jim Floyd, Burton, MI, also were upset in the 16s. Blaess was bumped off 21-13, 20-21, 11-7, by Keith Pritchett, Anderson, IN, whose sister, Dina, was a finalist in the girls' 15-and-under division. And Floyd, who was the USRA 10-and-under winner last year, ran out of gas trying to get past the irrepressible Oscar Gonzales, Miami, FL, 5-21, 21-16, 11-2.

That upset was the first of two by Gonzales. He also eliminated fifth-seeded Alex Weis, Middleton, WI, 21-11, 17-21, 11-4, in the quarter-finals. Weis, like Gonzales, was coming off a grueling tie-breaker win. He had squeaked by Nick Marino, Metairie, LA, 21-19, 20-21, 11-10. But Gonzales was soon to be victimized 21-11, 21-5 by Simonette in the semis.

Sixth-seeded Matt Rudich, Las Vegas, NV, was sailing along having ousted unseeded Eric Conway, Mason City, IA, 21-3, 21-3, unseeded Larry Gnewuch, Oregon, WI, 21-8, 21-10, and Pritchett, 21-7, 21-1. But then he tangled with Doyle in the semis and came up on the short end of a hard-fought tie-breaker, 21-20, 14-21, 11-3.

The championship final match started close, with ties at four, five and eight, but then Simonette ripped off 10 straight points.

"Tim has been hitting hard, so I decided to lob serve to slow the match down," Simonette said. *"He didn't change his strategy. He kept trying to overpower me. And that's one reason why he lost."*

The score ended up 21-12.

The second game was close to five, but then Simonette opened up a 19-5 lead and sailed home 21-10.

"I was surprised the match was so easy," Simonette said. *"I thought Tim would be tougher."*

On the girls' side, the competition was not as tough. The different playing levels of the 12 girls from 10 states who made up the draw was so vast that top-seeded Tammy Horrocks looked like a sure winner.

Of the early-round matches, only the one between Heidi Schmitt, Elgin, IL, and Jennifer Afford, Coral Springs, FL, was not a blowout. Afford defeated Schmitt 21-7, 21-14. But Afford then went up against Horrocks in the quarter-finals and was wiped out, 21-2, 21-0.

None of the matches in the quarters were close, the widest margins of victory going to Leigh Johnson, who won by forfeit, and Horrocks easy win over Afford. In the bottom bracket, sixth seed Christine Upson stopped Kim Pinola 21-2, 21-1 while Cindy Doyle, Williamsville, NY, eliminated Adriana Miranda, El Paso, TX, 21-4, 21-11.

After defeating Pinola, Upson built her contender's reputation by upsetting second-seeded Doyle, 21-7, 21-6, in the semis. Doyle is the sister of boys' 12-and-under finalist Tim Doyle.

That convincing semi-final win put Upson in a much stronger position to stop Horrocks' rush to the title. Horrocks was confident and sitting pretty after she blew by fourth-seeded Leigh Johnson, Hot Springs, AR, in the other semi-finals round match, 21-2, 21-8.

The first game of the championship match was as tough and exciting as can be. Upson went into it with the strategy of playing Horrocks' power game and keeping everything to Horrocks' backhand. Apparently it worked because it was not the one-sided affair Horrocks had hoped for.

Early ties at five, seven and eight seemed to lose their importance as Horrocks built up the first substantial lead of the match, a five pointer at 13-8. But the gangly Upson came right back, tied it at 13 and opened a three-point, 16-13 lead.

Nelson & Fuentes

Top Ten-And-Unders

Familiar names and faces again ended up on top of the 10-and-under divisions. On the boys' side, Brad Nelson, Lincoln, NE, the 1980 10-and-under runner-up, moved up a notch to claim his first USRA national championship. And on the girls' side, Alma Fuentes, El Paso, TX, successfully defended the title she won last year for her second USRA national championship.

The boys' 10-and-under division featured 25 entrants from 16 states and Canada.

The division included several tie-breakers and a few big upsets. Unseeded Jimmy Merk, Rochester, NY, pulled off the biggest upset when he eliminated fourth-seeded Andy Schad, Eglin AFB, FL, 21-15, 21-16, in the quarter-finals.

A modest upset featured the ousting of second-seeded John Gillooly by third-seeded Jason York, Yorktown, IN, 21-14, 21-14, in the semi-finals.

All upset winners, York, Merk and Chad Sanford, had survived tie-breakers to set the stage for their upset wins. York dumped sixth-seeded Mark Van Hees, of Canada, 17-21, 21-5, 11-3, in the quarter-finals after Van Hees had just barely gotten past unseeded Joey Miragliotta, Miami, FL, 21-20, 21-18, in the 16s.

Merk overcame a slow start in his 14-21, 21-4, 11-5, victory over fifth-seeded Todd Farina, Wilmington, DE, in the 16s. And Sanford negated a bad second game to defeat Brett Hentze, Mataire, LA, 21-19, 9-21, 11-7, in a 32s tie-breaker.

Nelson put an end to Merk's drive to the championship with a 21-9, 21-15 victory over the hustling New Yorker in the semi-finals.

In the finals, Nelson met third-seeded York, and the championship match turned out to be a classic struggle.

York took the hard-fought first game, 21-15, and Nelson knew he had his work cut out for him. Nelson took early second game three-point leads at 9-6 and 10-7 on a forehand pinch, but York came right back and tied it at 10 with two aces and a forehand pinch.

York then opened his own three-point lead at 13-10, but Nelson tied it at 13 with a York error and two backhand kills. Nelson then built a two-point lead only to have York again tie at 15. But that last tie was as far as York got in the second game because Nelson knotted the match score at one game apiece by scoring six straight points and winning the second game by an identical 21-15 score.

The tie-breaker could have gone either way. Nelson built an early six-point lead at 8-2, but York came storming back to within one point at 8-7. He picked up five of those points, four in succession, on Nelson errors.

But York made a mistake. A skip ball gave Nelson his ninth point and the 10th and 11th were quick to follow. Nelson won the tie-breaker, 11-7, on a high Z serve to York's backhand.

On the girls' side, a small draw and a couple of forfeits made the division less competitive than the boys. For example, fourth-seeded Shelly Buehrle, St. Charles, MO, got to the semis without playing a match.

However, she was promptly eliminated by Fuentes, 21-11, 21-1. Fuentes also easily dumped Vicki "Bones" Masilionis, Deerfield, IL, in her other early match, 21-1, 21-8.

In the lower bracket, one match was a beauty. Second-seeded Pam Afford, Coral Springs, FL, was pretty well outplayed by unseeded Angie Lee, York, PA, in the first game of their quarter-final round match. The score was 21-12.

But Afford turned things around both in the second game, which she won 21-6, and in the tie-breaker, which she took 11-5. Afford, however, was upset in the semi-finals by Stephanie Pinola, Blue Bell, PA, who had been a 1980 10-and-under semi-finalist. The score of that match was 21-4, 21-6.

Pinola, who had an older sister, Kim, playing in the 12-and-under division, played a couple of good games in the championship match. But her play was not good enough to stop the more experienced Fuentes.

Fuentes broke open a tight first game at 18-16 when she scored the final three points on a passing shot and two high lobs. Before she was in a position to do that, Fuentes had overcome an early 9-1 Pinola lead and then tied it at 11.

Fuentes then built up four-point leads at 15-11 and 18-14 before two Pinola killshots narrowed it to 18-16, the point from which Fuentes launched her final push.

The decisive second game was also exciting. Neither player was able to build a lead larger than two points early in the game. There were ties at two, three, five, six and seven before Pinola built up a five-point lead at 13-8. It was her best offensive surge of the game. It included two passing shots, one killshot and two aces.

But then Fuentes got her offense going, scoring nine straight points, tying the game at 13 on a killshot, and building a four-point lead with an ace at 17-13.

Pinola chipped three points away with a lob ace and two passing shots, but those were the last points she scored. Fuentes regained serve at 17-16 and scored the match's last four points on three passing shots and a final ace.

Both youngsters played a tremendous match. Fuentes had many great gets, Pinola's high lob serves were outstanding, and both displayed good sportsmanship. ●

Upson last held that 3-point lead at 17-14. She and Horrocks then entered the decisive part of the match. They traded points but Horrocks gradually whittled the lead to a tie at 19.

A time out and a Horrocks' side-out later, Upson's strategy change was rewarded with the game's final two points, a backhand kill and a backhand passing shot. At last it was over. Upson had won, 21-19.

The second game was a mismatch. Upson started fast with a 6-0 lead that Horrocks cut to 7-3. But, incredibly, Horrocks' forehand kill to the left corner was the last point she would score in the championship match.

Although Horrocks regained serve three more times in the game, she failed to score a point. Not only was she lacking offensive punch, but her defensive game fell apart as she made too many errors.

Of the final 14 points Upson racked up in succession to win the championship, at least five of them were on Horrocks' errors.

Horrocks' dream of the USRA 12-and-under championship became Upson's reality when Horrocks finally missed a forehand return deep in the right rear corner of the court, giving Upson the 21-3 win. ●



Erica Won One for Her Grandmother

Veteran Tournament Follower Adeline Feldman, left, of Las Vegas, grandmother of Matt Rudich, shares her knowledge with Ruth McElwain, whose granddaughter, Erica, promised "If I win the Regionals and get \$200, I want you to come to the Nationals." Erica won and her grandmother watched her play for the first time in an early round of the 15-and-Under division.



Peck grabs Catalina's Minneapolis Pro Stop

by Thomas J. Morrow

Some said it was the weather, others said it was the new ball, Marty Hogan might have considered a whirlwind four-day tour of Japan then flying directly to Minnesota's Twin Cities as the reason, but it could just be that competition in men's professional racquetball is getting so competitive that no one person can dominate any longer.

For the second straight tournament, four-time and defending national champion Marty Hogan was ousted before the final round, leaving the field clear to the third-ranked Dave Peck, El Paso, TX to take the top prize in the second Catalina Pro-Am Racquetball Classic at the Burnsville Racquet Club near Minneapolis.

Hogan was out of the competition after being upended by eighth-ranked Scott Hawkins, Santa Clara, CA, but the sledding in this northland of snow wasn't easy for the 24-year-old Peck either. He ran into a buzz saw in the finals against number seven-ranked Rich Wagner of San Diego. One of last year's pleasant surprises, Wagner, 25, rebounded from a low point ranking of 21 after recovering from a serious auto accident during the 1979-80 season, to finish in the top seven after the DP Leach Nationals in June.

There were three incredibly outstanding matches at Burnsville that week of Oct.

22-25. Jerry Hilecher, the nation's number four-ranked player, replaced Steve Strandemo in the Catalina lineup. Strandemo, 34, one of the sports most popular players, had to temporarily drop out of the competition due to a death in the family. Adding Hilecher provided the first exciting, down-to-the-wire match against Bret Harnett, the 18-year-old high school senior from Las Vegas, ranked number 10.

Not many Minnesotans had ever seen professional racquetball prior to the Catalina Classic. After Hilecher and Harnett were through on opening day, fans at the Burnsville Racquet Club had a good idea of the excitement the game generates.

For more than two hours, the 27-year-old Hilecher rallied hit-for-hit with the younger Harnett. Hilecher left the youngster in the dust in the first of the four 11-point games, 11-2, but Harnett outscored the veteran four-points in the final three games to advance to the quarterfinal round, ending Hilecher's chances for a repeat tournament victory in the Catalina Series. (Hilecher won Catalina I in Westminster, CA defeating Mike Yellen).

To Hilecher's credit, the lanky pro came back on Harnett six times, from a 10-4 deficit to tie the final game 10-10, before Harnett slammed in the final point. The audience of some 400 spectators gave the two pros a standing ovation.

In the second outstanding match of the Catalina II tournament, Don Thomas, Mesa, AZ, battled with Wagner for two hours in a see-sawing five-game match during the semifinals. Thomas, ranked fifth, and Wagner, ranked seventh, were so evenly matched it looked as if only a coin toss would separate them. From the excellence both players showed, it was a sad thing, indeed, for the loser. Long rallies were the order of the day with at least four going more than 20 exchanges.

Wagner fell short in the first game with

Thomas, who recently married and is living in El Cajon, CA, winning 11-4. Wagner, a native of Paterson, NJ, rebounded with two wins, 11-6, 11-3, but Thomas came blasting right back with an 11-5 win. The fifth and final game lasted as long as games three and four, with fantastic gets, returns and rallies by both players. With the score tied at 8-all, Wagner survived, winning 11-8, and both players received the second standing ovation of the tournament.

Several fans came up to Thomas afterward, congratulating him on his outstanding play. It was the sort of match where no one should have lost. It was a heartbreaker for Thomas, who had gained great respect and confidence earlier in the tournament by eliminating a formidable number two-ranked Mike Yellen 11-10 in a quarterfinal tiebreaker.

In the second semifinal game, the fans expected an exciting shootout between Hawkins, the Hogan-killer, and Peck, one of the game's strongest players. It was not to be, however, as Peck completely dominated the 20-year-old Santa Clara College student 11-2, 11-0 and 11-6.

In the final match, Peck was beginning to show signs of fatigue. He and Hogan flew directly into Minneapolis from their exhibition tour of Japan and the 20+ hours of flying time which took them half way around the world was beginning to show.

"I tried to keep on some kind of schedule when I was over there, but it was impossible," explained Peck.

Peck played his first match one hour after landing at Minneapolis International Airport against the Catalina Midwest Regional Open Champion Paul Bakken, Fergus Falls, MN. He easily defeated the Twin Cities' favorite, 11-2, 11-1, 11-2.

"I was really flying high, I couldn't miss," said Peck. "It was the next day against Cohen that I nearly blew it."

Indeed, the 14th-ranked Doug Cohen was playing excellent ball and it took

Peck five games to take the quarterfinal round from the St. Louis pro. Cohen shut-out Peck in the third game of that match, 11-0.

While the Japan tour nearly caught Peck with jet lag in that quarterfinal round, it did catch Hogan as he fell to a highly competitive Hawkins in three games.

"By the finals, I was really dragging," explained Peck. "I was really tired against Wagner. My legs just wouldn't move."

It took Peck another five games to win against Wagner. He won the first two games with relative ease, but Wagner seemed to get the rhythm of the match and won the third and fourth games 11-9, 11-1.

If the audience had been intrigued with the quality of play displayed by Hilecher-Harnett and Thomas-Wagner in earlier matches, they were certainly impressed with what went on in the finals.

The new AMF Voit Rollout Bleu, the

Catalina Classic official ball, has brought back the rally to the game of professional racquetball. In the final game, Wagner and Peck were tied four times (2-2, 4-4, 6-6, and 8-8). With the game tied at 8-8, the two players exchanged the ball 25 times before Wagner managed a pass shot down the left side to Peck backhand.

It was during this final game that tempers began to flare. With first place paying \$5,500 and second place receiving \$3,500, what it boiled down to was the two pros, who are good friends off the court, were playing for \$2,000.

Both players were called for technical fouls with the score tied at 2-2, after a minor shoving match. The play continued at a feverish pitch for the remainder of the game. It was as if two gladiators were playing for their lives.

After Peck managed to pull away and win the final game and match at 11-8, the audience once again gave the two pros a standing ovation as a tribute to their intense play and quality racquetball

performance.

"I really wasn't myself during any of that tournament and I certainly shouldn't have lost my temper like I did," said Peck afterward. "Rich is a helluva nice guy and a great racquetball player and, if I hadn't have been so tired, I would have really enjoyed playing him more. He was hitting the ball terrific!"

"I felt really good during this whole tournament," said Wagner. "I feel good about my game and I'm back where I was two years ago when I was ranked number two."

Wagner said the match with Peck was a tough one to lose, but he was able to prove to a lot of people that he is definitely back playing the quality of racquetball he used to before his accident.

The third stop on the \$200,000 Catalina Classic Series was the Downtown Racquet Club in New Haven, Conn., Nov. 19-22. ●

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—photo by Tony Leighton

Two Straight For Hilecher at CBC

by Tony Leighton

Contrary to what you might think, in many minds the most important tournament in professional racquetball isn't played in the United States. It takes place in a small club in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where fewer than 40 people can watch a match at one time.

The key to this event is not the immediate audience, however. It's the *eventual* audience. Known as the CBC International Classic for the Catalina World-Cup, it is racquetball's only televised tournament of any note.

Taped by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Winnipeg mobile sports crew, the 13 half-hour match "shows" are seen throughout the year across Canada and on the ESPN 24-hour sports cable network in the United States. The eventual audience is estimated at a whopping 22 million viewers!

Because of that widespread exposure the CBC Classic is pro racquetball's most valuable selling tool. It is by far the greatest chance for players to promote themselves, the game, and any brand of gear they might be using.

That fact is not lost on Catalina, of course. As the overall sponsor of the men's tour, the giant sportswear company gets maximum return on its investment during this special event. Every player—even those not connected with the 12-man Catalina regular tour—is obliged to wear its product.

The value of the tournament (which was played September 29-October 2) was also well understood by its latest winner, Jerry Hilecher. Prior to Winnipeg, Hilecher had been excluded from the Catalina-sponsored National Racquetball Tour, supposedly because of past misbehaviour on court. After the CBC event, Hilecher was invited to join the tour, replacing Steve Strandemo who has been temporarily waylaid from his career by family matters.

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JUST ENOUGH BETTER TO WIN.

It would be ludicrous to suggest that Hilecher's sudden acceptance had little to do with his victory in Winnipeg. It was his second major tournament win in two weeks and included his second straight win over Marty Hogan.

(At the first event of the Catalina tour, in Los Angeles, Hilecher had been allowed in the draw as a "regional qualifier," his home being in San Diego. He defeated Hogan in the finals. In Winnipeg they met in the semis and Hilecher won 14-15, 15-7, 11-10. He then disposed of Mike Yellen for the title.)

Quite simply, on October 2 Jerry Hilecher was the No. One player in the world—twice winner of the Catalina

Cup—and apparently not officially recognized by those who run professional racquetball.

"They made this the most important tournament for me," Hilecher emphasized after the CBC Classic. "For the first time in my career I'm No. One. That's all there is to it."

Whether he wins another tournament or not, Hilecher will be pro racquetball's most visible winner all year long. CBC affiliate stations air the Classic at different times through the year and ESPN recycles its programs constantly. *"In the eyes those viewers," says Hilecher, "this is the big one."* ●

Bertolucci Named To Pro Racquetball Post

Dan Bertolucci, former director of the National Racquetball Club and United States Racquetball Club, has been named commissioner of Men's Professional Racquetball in North America by a newly formed governing board.

Bertolucci, a native of Chicago and one of the most respected racquetball officials in the nation, will become the top executive responsible for officiating and execution of pro tour events sanctioned by the new governing board.

The new board was formed as a result of Kendler's announcement that he had sold *National Racquetball* magazine and had scaled down his staff. Both the NRC and the USRA were wholly-owned organizations by Kendler and the NRC has been the official sanctioning body for men's pro racquetball since 1973.

The new sanctioning body consists of: Ed Murphy, President of Catalina Men's Wear; Norm Peck, player representative of Ektelon Corporation; David Armstrong, Executive Vice President of Organization,

Innovation & Design Inc.; Robert Larsen, Marketing Director of AMF Voit; Mike Skinner, Product Manager of AMF Head and Charles Drake, Vice President and General Manager of DP Leach Industries

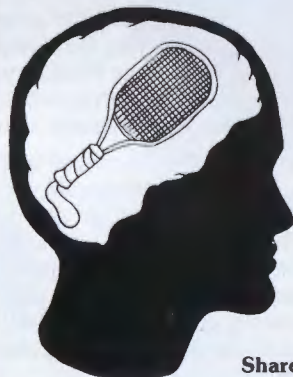
The new governing board will establish criteria for national ranking to replace the NRC, and has already identified four top pro racquetball tournaments for players to accumulate points. They are: The \$40,000 Ektelon-Perrier Championship, the \$70,000 DP Leach Open National Championship, the \$50,000 Catalina Classic Championship and the \$25,000 Catalina Regional Championship held in the respective player's home area.

The 1981-82 tour is the richest in the eight-year history of professional racquetball. ●

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Seeing Your Way To A Better Game

by N. James Carlson, O.D.



"When hitting a ball along the wall the key is to not let the ball get behind you or too far in front of you . . . It's when you let the ball get too far behind you that you strike your racquet on the wall and completely miss the ball."

What National Champion Marty Hogan is talking about here, although he did not spell it out, is keeping your eyes on the ball.

The split-second timing of racquetball puts tremendous demands on your eyes and entire vision system. For each play, you rely on your eyes to feed you the information you need to decide how to handle your return.

You must not only see the ball but also judge where it is going, how fast it is traveling and how much spin it has on it. At the same time, you have to keep track of your opponent's position.

This is not easy but it can certainly be facilitated if your vision is up to par. When it is not, you may consistently swing too early or too late; miss serves; and have difficulty being set when returning balls and serves; have difficulty placing shots where you want them; and hit on the rim of the racquet rather than on the center strings.

According to the American Optometric Association, it takes eight interrelated

vision skills to keep your eyes on the ball. They are 20/20 eyesight; dynamic visual acuity; side vision; depth perception; vision pursuit; eye-and-foot-body coordination; visualization; and visual concentration.

Although some may sound unfamiliar to you, like most people, you probably have these vision skills to one degree or another. Chances are, however, you could improve them and your game, sometimes just by practicing a few vision training tasks at home.

As with any training program, start by assessing your current level of skill. You will need professional help in the form of a thorough vision examination emphasizing the vision skills needed for sports.

Seek an optometrist specializing in sports vision or vision therapy and discuss your racquetball performance prior to the examination. Ask that all eight vision skills covered here be tested. The examination should take from 30 to 60 minutes initially and include an eye health check.

The optometric examination will reveal whether or not you need prescription lenses; whether any of your vision skills are at a level requiring an in-depth vision training program under an optometrist's supervision; and what vision skills you need to work on at home.

The most basic vision skill to any sport is

Sports eyeguards are a must for players who wear contact lenses or do not need a vision correction. Those who wear glasses on the court should choose a face-formed nylon frame that does not block side vision and is equipped with industrial-strength impact-resistant lenses.

20/20 eyesight, the ability to see sharply and clearly at a distance. If nature didn't bless you with it, your doctor of optometry can prescribe eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Many athletes prefer contacts because they provide more natural seeing by moving with the eye; usually allow better teaming between the two eyes; do not restrict side vision; and do not fog up or get wet and dirty from perspiration. For safety, however, you should wear a sports eyeguard, just as you should if you do not need a vision correction. Over 3,200 eye injuries happen every year in racquet sports. Most could have been prevented with proper safety eyewear.

If you wear glasses on the court, choose a face-formed nylon frame that does not block side vision. Equip it with industrial-strength impact-resistance lenses, which are much stronger than ordinary impact resistant lenses.

It is one thing to see the ball sharply and clearly at a distance. It is quite another to do so when both it and you are in motion. The vision skill of dynamic visual acuity makes it possible and you rely on it immensely when playing racquetball.

To improve your dynamic visual acuity at home, try this. Make a cardboard disc to fit a record player. Tear out letters from newspaper headlines and glue them to the disc. Spin the disc at 33 rpm and have someone call out the letters at random. As they are called out, try to mark the letters on the disc with a felt-tip pen. Be sure you move your eyes and not your head. Once you have mastered the 33 rpm speed, try 45 rpm. Do this for 5 to 10 minutes a day.

Depth perception is the vision skill that enables you to quickly and accurately judge the distance, speed, flight and curve of the ball. To have it, both of your eyes must be working together as a team. When practicing alone, try playing with one eye closed or covered and you will quickly realize how important good depth perception is to racquetball.



One way to sharpen your dynamic visual acuity at home is to make a cardboard disc to fit a record player. Cut out letters from newspaper headlines and glue them to the disc. Spin the disc at 33 rpm and have someone call out the letters at random. As they are called out, try to mark the letters on the disc with a felt-tip pen. Be sure to move your eyes and not your head. Do this for 5 to 10 minutes a day. Once you have mastered the 33 rpm speed, try 45 rpm.

Here is a vision training exercise for side (peripheral) vision. In an unfamiliar room, look at one object and try to see how many other objects you can identify without moving your head or eyes. Try it while you are walking down the street, keep your eyes focused ahead and see how much you can tell about approaching pedestrians.

Obviously, the ability to follow the moving ball is essential to racquetball. If you learn to do this by moving your eyes rather than your head, you will expend less energy.

The vision skill that helps you follow the ball with your eyes is vision pursuit. You can sharpen it by taking a flashlight into a dark room or racquetball court. Shine the flashlight on the wall and move it around to make patterns. Keeping your head and body still, track the movement of the light on the wall with your eyes. You might ask a friend to move the flashlight for you. Try this for five to 10 minutes daily.



Here is a vision training exercise for side vision. In an unfamiliar room, look at one object and try to see how many other objects you can identify without moving your head or eyes. Try it while you are walking down the street. Keep your eyes focused ahead and see how much you can tell about approaching pedestrians.

To sharpen your vision pursuit skills, take a flashlight into a dark room or racquetball court. Shine the flashlight on the wall and move it around to make patterns. Keeping your head and body still, track the movement on the light on the wall with your eyes. Try this for 5 to 10 minutes daily.



This is one way to sharpen your depth perception at home. Take two index cards. Draw a racquet on one and a ball on the other. Hang one card on the wall at eye level about three feet from a corner. Place the other at the same level on the adjoining wall. Stand facing the card with the racquet. Hold a small mirror in front of your face so the reflecting surface is turned to the card with the ball. Now angle the mirror to superimpose the image of the ball onto the center of the racquet.

The ability "to see out of the corner of your eye" is the vision skill that helps you keep track of your opponent while looking directly at the ball. It is as important to your safety on the court as it is to your game, since most eye injuries in racquetball are caused by a blow from the opponent's racquet or body.

To improve your depth perception skills, take two index cards. Draw a racquet on one and a ball on the other. Hang one card on the wall at eye level and about three feet from a corner. Place the other at the same level on the adjoining wall. Stand facing the card with the racquet. Hold a small mirror in front of your face so the reflecting surface is turned to the card with ball. Now angle the mirror to superimpose the image of the ball onto the center of the racquet.



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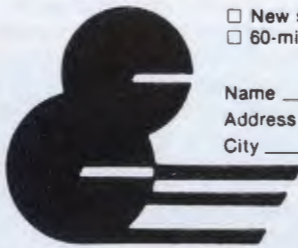
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To improve your eye-hand-foot-body coordination, put three stripes of different colored tape on a rolling pin—one in the center and one at each end. Repeat the same pattern on a wall. Now put a string through an old racquetball and suspend it from the ceiling at eye level and about two feet away from the wall. Practice hitting the ball with the center stripe on the rolling pin, aiming the ball to strike the center tape on the wall, then the right-side-pin to right-side wall, left to left and so on. Five to 10 minutes practice a day will help.



The optometrist uses both subjective and objective tests to determine your ability to see sharply and clearly at a distance. Not all vision examinations will result in a lens prescription but it is a good idea to care for your vision with periodic examinations.



Photo Courtesy of the American Optometric Association.

The vision skills of 20/20 eyesight, dynamic visual acuity, depth perception, side vision and vision pursuit provide the brain with a great deal of information but it is how the brain uses that information to direct the hands, feet and body that makes the difference between playing better or staying in the same old rut.

If your foot and hand movements are not coordinated with what your eyes see, you will not be in the right spot at the right time to return the ball, no matter how clearly your eyes see the ball and judge its position and movement.

Try this vision training task to improve your eye-hand-foot-body coordination. Put three stripes of different colored tape on a rolling pin—one in the center and one at each end. Repeat the same pattern on a wall. Now put a string through an old racquetball and suspend it from the ceiling at eye level and about two feet away from the wall. Practice hitting the ball with the center stripe on the rolling pin, aiming the ball to strike the center tape on the wall, then the right-side-pin to right-side wall, left to left and so on. Five to 10 minutes a day will help.

Visualization is the ability "to see with the mind's eye." It is usually the mark of champions but you can develop this skill with experience and practice.

It involves learning to visualize something in your mind while your eyes are seeing

and concentrating on something else—usually the ball. For example, while you are following the ball, you must visualize in your mind where you want to hit the ball to put your opponent at a disadvantage. If you happen to be thinking about where you don't want to hit the ball, chances are you will hit it there because body movements tend to tune in to that on which you are concentrating.

Visual concentration is the ability to center your attention on one thing at a time. This does not necessarily mean concentrating on what your eyes are seeing centrally. For example, your eyes can be focused on the ball as it approaches but your concentration can be on the target—the spot to which the ball will be hit—that you are visualizing "in your mind's eye."

In a fast game like racquetball, visual concentration must progress rapidly from one thing to another but, at any given moment, you must visually concentrate on one thing only to play well.

Doctors of optometry specializing in sports vision say the shorter the period of time a person visually concentrates on something, the more intense the concentration is. If you miss an "easy shot," it may be that you had too much time to concentrate and were not concentrating intently enough at the right moment.

Optometrists also point out that the smaller the target of visual concentration,

the more accurate the player's performance will be. For example, concentrating on hitting the ball to a small mark on the wall may improve your accuracy.

To sharpen your visual concentration, set up a strobe light in an out-of-the-way spot on a dark racquetball court and practice hitting a ball, using only the illumination provided by the pulsating strobe. This requires you to concentrate on the ball far more than you do in normal play. Keep it up for 30 minutes and you will see results in your next game. This exercise is not recommended for confirmed epileptics, however, because strobe lights have been found to induce seizures.

You should combine your home vision training tasks with regular vision examinations to maintain eye health and detect any changes in your vision. Regularly means annually for most, although the American Optometric Association says once every two years may be sufficient for those in the mid 20s to 30s.

Giving extra attention to your vision can mean better playing, more enjoyment and maybe even coming out a winner more often.

It also can make you a better driver and improve your job performance because some of the vision skills you use on the racquetball court are the same ones you use behind the wheel and on the job. ●

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Who's Playing Racquetball?

Two Self-Made Players From PA

—Carole George photo



Cindy Baxter, left, won the Women's Amateur Open at last season's Columbus, OH stop on the Women's Professional Racquetball Association tour.

The club office is a spot where Blanciak can practice for her court reporting class.



If you've never taken a lesson from a pro or didn't pick up a racquet until your teen years were a memory, you may draw inspiration from two Pennsylvania players who are showing that there's more than one way to reach the top.

Cindy Baxter of Lewistown and Mary Blanciak of North Vandergrift both have taken what some might consider to be the hard route in their racquetball careers. But that hasn't slowed down either of them.

Cindy, 26, generally is considered to be the best amateur woman racquetball player in the world coming off her recent

victory in the World Games. But she didn't begin to play until four years ago.

She began not in a club but on a YMCA court in the small central Pennsylvania steel town of Burnham. She still does all her practicing there. After all court time is only 75 cents per hour.

Cindy must squeeze practice around her job as a hay rake assembler at a local Sperry New Holland farm equipment plant where she works the 4 p.m. to midnight shift.

"That's really the ideal shift for me," she says. "I can play racquetball in the morning when I'm well rested and able to give it my best."

Mary, 25, is a solid club tournament player in western Pennsylvania who "never even heard of racquetball until four years ago." She became so involved with the sport, however, that she and several friends decided to build their own club.

"We renovated an old barn," Mary says. "We did the work ourselves, from laying the floors to putting up the walls."

Now she's part owner of the Hillcrest Health and Racquet Club in Lower Burrell while she studies in nearby Pittsburgh to become a court reporter.

Mary and Cindy are similar in several respects. Neither ever had as much as one formal lesson. Both practice almost exclusively with men. Each was a stand-out in basketball and softball in school and was looking for something to do after

leaving the team sports.

Mary has won numerous first place trophies at club tournaments but readily admits that she's not in Cindy's class as a player. They've met twice and Cindy won each time.

Though both are graduates of the "make-it-by-yourself" school of racquetball, Cindy and Mary are carrying their careers in different directions.

"I don't make long range goals," says Cindy, "but I am sure of one thing. I don't want to get into a job with a club. The teaching aspect of being a club pro does your game no good and I want to polish my game against some of the professionals this year."

Cindy's only losses in the past year have been to professionals such as Lynn Adams and Francine Davis.

"I want to play more pro-ams but I have no plans to turn pro. There's just no money in it as far as I'm concerned."

Mary admits to letting her game slide while she is learning to become a court reporter, but a straight A average through three terms has convinced her that she can handle the classwork and still get in some practice time. She sees her connection with the Hillcrest Club as a potential career booster.

"A lot of lawyers play racquetball, you know. It may come in handy when a lawyer needs a court reporter to take a deposition." ●

—Dick Jones

Mary Blanciak practices with Mike Spagnolo at Hillcrest Health and Racquet Club which was an old barn until she and her friends converted it into a five-court facility.



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