

National Racquetball

November 1986

Vol. 15

No. 11

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The Most Archaic, Complicated,
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**Harnett Overcomes Hogan,
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Off The Wall

by Joe Massarelli



Mission Impossible

The stage is set. The scene is not new, nor is it unique. Even the players are a familiar part of the scenario. But what ultimately unfolds is unique - almost paradoxical.

We're at Crystal Racquet and Health Club in Crystal City, VA. This posh facility in suburban D.C. is host to the RMA Men's Pro Tour stop that boasts a roster of 32 of the best that racquetball has to offer.

And, we're intently monitoring what must be termed a most emotional and controversial quarter final match between Marty Hogan and Gregg Peck. The best of five series pits four-time national champion, Hogan against up and coming #5 seed Gregg Peck. To say the competition is intense is putting it mildly. And, ultimately, Gregg prevails in the seesaw, hard fought contest. But the players and their performances are not at issue here.

What is at issue is what I call "Mission Impossible." The *mission* is to fairly and accurately referee a professional match upon which rides substantial prize money. The *impossible* is the task imposed upon a young, up and coming pro who is officiating this match. His name is unimportant, since this is the procedure to be followed in RMA sanctioned tournaments — namely that those players who are eliminated assume the role of referee for finals matches.

In the semi's and in the final match, referees are in fact paid for their services, but this doesn't alter the fact that these are players and not professionally trained referees.

Thus, we have a serious dilemma.

Back to Hogan and Peck. We were seated near the front along the glassed side wall. The referee and the two linesmen were located along the back glass wall. Next to us was Paul Farnsworth of WTTG (Channel 5) who was in charge of obtaining some live action footage for the 11 o'clock sports news, to be aired throughout the D.C. area on this popular local network.

As the match progressed, Farnsworth explained with some frustration that the game was so fast-paced it was impossible to follow play with any tight shots. He simply had to shoot wide angle and hope for the best.

Peck grabbed the first game. Marty snagged the second. Tensions rose and the pace quickened. Tempers flared at missed shots. Close judgment calls by the referee became more and more punctuated by the complaints from the participants. Hogan lost his cool and warned about his conduct. But by whom? Another player? Then Gregg got into the act as tensions built between two fierce competitors. And again the player-turned-referee became the bad guy.

Time and again calls were appealed and the two linesmen gave thumbs up or thumbs down — though in most cases they concurred with the referee.

Finally, during the fourth game a series of calls were vigorously challenged by both players, though I believe most were made fairly and accurately.

Marty requested that the referee be removed. Peck con-

curred. Jim Hiser, RMA commissioner, was called in to finish the match. Ironically, there were no further incidents between the referee and the players.

Let's analyze the scenario as it relates to other professional sports. Do football or baseball
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National Racquetball

Publisher: Joe Massarelli

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Production: Sharon Seabert

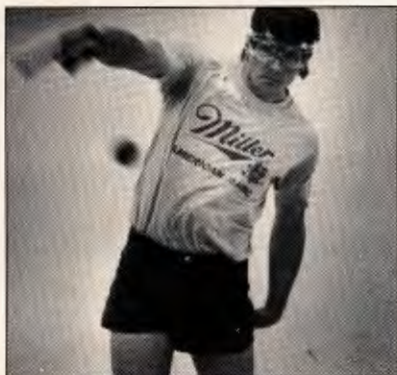
Typography: Sheila Waymire

Advertising: Ed Kaplan

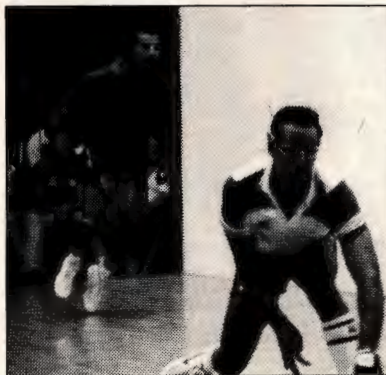
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Subscriptions are \$18 for one (1) year. Rates are for U.S. possessions and military. Canadian subscriptions are \$24 per year. All subscriptions payable in U.S. funds only. Foreign subscriptions are \$65 per year (sent via air mail). Please allow 6-8 weeks for receipt of your first issue. Send subscription information or problems to Marge Patino, National Racquetball Magazine, 5616 W. Cermak Road, Cicero, IL 60650, or call (312) 762-2193.



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National Racquetball (ISSN -0161-7966) is published monthly by Florida Trade Publications, Inc., 416 Douglas Avenue, Dunedin, FL 33528. Second class postage paid at Dunedin, FL and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions are: one year \$18 for U.S. possessions and military; \$24 for Canada and \$65 (U.S. funds only) for foreign sent via airmail. Copyright 1986. Reproduction of this magazine, in whole or in part, without the express permission of the publisher is prohibited. Postmaster: Send change of address to *National Racquetball*, P.O. Drawer 6126, Clearwater, FL 33518-6126.



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First Serve

by Chuck Leve



Time Travel

With the great success of recent movies like "Back To The Future" and "Peggy Sue Gets Married" the subject of time travel is much on everybody's mind. So I guess it wasn't all that unusual when an oddly-dressed man in his early thirties walked into the locker room and announced that he was looking for a game.

Since it was about 10 minutes to the hour and I had just received a call from my would-be opponent cancelling on me, I told the newcomer I'd be happy to play him. He said, "fine", and proceeded to get undressed.

I couldn't help but notice his shabby outfit — cut-off jeans, unmatched socks, high-topped basketball shoes and a smelly, tattered T-shirt.

"Whew!" I gasped. "You're dressed right out of late '60s racquetball fashions. Times have changed, man. Don't you know that nowadays we all wear matching racquetball outfits with collared shirts, special racquetball shoes and \$200 racquets?"

The stranger looked a bit puzzled, but finished dressing nevertheless. Then he pulled out his racquet — a relic if I ever saw one! Wooden framed, gut strung and as heavy as an old paddleball paddle.

"They still using these?" he asked, somewhat sarcastically.

"Not in the last 15 years," I said. "Hey man, where you been? In a coma?"

It was then that I got the shock of my life.

"You look like a decent guy," he said. "And I've just got to tell somebody. Do you believe in time travel?"

I pinched myself to be sure I was still in 1986. It hurt.

Before I could answer we were walking down the corridor to Court 6 and, as anticipated, the court was still occupied even though the time bell had already rung. Some things never change.

The stranger had indeed been thrust upon us directly from the year 1966. And while he wouldn't talk much about the obvious ("You mean we lost in Vietnam?" — he did convey that racquetball was the one element of society that he was sure hadn't changed since that fateful day when he awoke 20 years into the future.

"Let's play," he said. "I'll tell you more later, after I've cleared some cobwebs with a good workout."

We knocked on the door and the two time-poachers reluctantly emerged, giving us the usual "why don't you get here on time" scowl reserved for such occasions. We proceeded to hit the ball around, loosening up and giving each other the typical peeks to see what we each were up against.

It was then that I noticed his racquetballs were black.

"Uh, we don't use black balls anymore," I said. "Haven't seen one since about 1973. In fact, most clubs outlawed them and the demand dried up. Here, we play with these."

I tossed him one of my brand name blues and he took one swat,

blasted it off the front wall and watched with near awe (as did I) as the ball caromed to the back wall, front wall and half-way to the back wall again without hitting the floor.

"Oh wow!" he exclaimed. "Where's your syringe? I once heard that some crazies were injecting air into balls to give them life."

"Well, actually, all the balls are made like this now," I said. "Somebody back in 1974 decided the game needed to be faster, so they sped up the ball."

He gave me a look of disdain, sort of "why would they want to mess up a good game?" stare.

"Let's play," he said. "At least the game's the same."

I chose my words carefully. "I think you should know before we start that games are now played to 11."

"What!" His irritation was obvious. "How do they expect you to get a workout with fast balls and games to 11?"

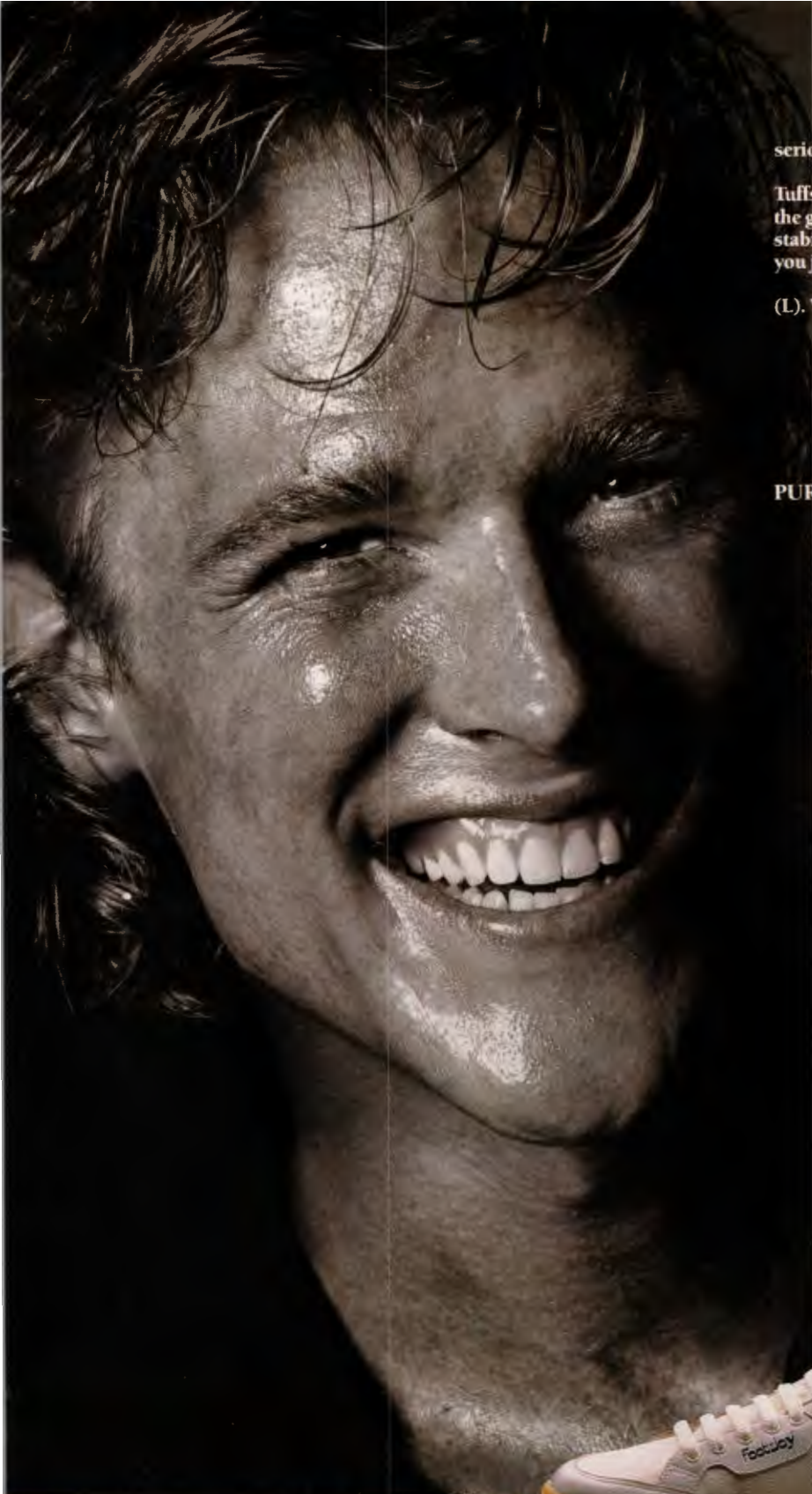
"You play more games," I said.

The stranger stepped up to serve, looked back at me and decided to try a serve I hadn't seen in years. He backed his butt up against the left wall took two steps toward the opposite side wall and ripped a drive serve behind his back toward the left side wall crack.

Instead of returning the serve, I caught it as it bounded toward me. "That's an illegal serve," I said. "The latest rules say you've got to stand more toward the center."

The stranger was clearly fuming.

(continued on page 39)



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Vancouver Fan

For the first time in Vancouver's racquetball history the top pros were in town recently for the Expro Pro-Am. For many Vancouverites, it is their first chance to see the top pros in action.

Congratulations to Ami May,

who hosted the tournament, and many thanks to the RMA for making Vancouver one of the pro stops. It is going to be a big boost of interest in racquetball for Vancouver and Canada.

I am particularly impressed by the on-court behavior of Reuben Gonzalez. Despite a tough loss to Cliff Swain in the semifinal. Mr. Gonzalez demonstrated his composure throughout the tournament. He never yelled or intimidated the referee and linesmen on disputable calls. This is something that all the pros and amateurs alike should look up to. Reuben Gonzalez is a classy player.

Vincent Mui
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada

Editor: We're glad to see your enthusiasm. Hope to hear from more of our Canadian readers.

Cut-throat Variation

You have a marvelous magazine and I am an avid reader of it. I seem to remember a few years back that the *National Racquetball* magazine had a section called "What's the Call, Ref." Is it possible to have more of this type of article again?

I really enjoyed Elizabeth Meil's article on "cut-throat" in the September issue. At the club where I play cut-throat, we use a slightly different way to rotate the serve than the clockwise method. I prefer the "IN and OUT" method. At the start of our games we lag for #1, #2, #3 serve, then when #1 loses the serve he/she replaces #2, then when #2 loses the serve he/she replaces #3 and so on. With this method you not only serve to a different opponent on the right and left side every other time up but you get to receive on your strong and weak side.

I really enjoy the magazine, keep up the good work.

G.W. Chatelain
Oklahoma City, OK

(continued on page 39)

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Canadian Report

by Sigmund Brouwer



Hey Crystal, You're Great!

Of course it is ironic that *National Racquetball*, an American publication, is the best vehicle for Canadian stars to receive recognition back home. But then, Americans have a wonderful ability to laud achievement without worrying about background.

So here is a story about a 19-year-old athlete who moved to California from Canada to pursue excellence.

A little over three years ago, CBC, Canada's national television network, needed interesting coverage on a racquetball phenomenon named Crystal Fried. She let them down.

The place was Chicoutimi, Quebec, at the site of the 1983 Canada Winter Games. Crystal had walked through her first seven of 11 round robin matches, not allowing any opponent close to double digit scores.

Her eighth match, the one CBC wanted for provincial and national television exposure, placed her against an equally undefeated opponent with seven wins, no losses. Despite the remaining matches for each girl, everyone knew this was the one for the gold medal. CBC was there, cameras and lights ready to roll.

And Crystal let them down.

She let them down because after eight or nine straight points she had not even been forced to break into a trot. It was almost like watching her practice at leisure. CBC packed up early . . . and Crystal packed up the prestigious gold medal.

This blowout was not a poor reflection on her opponent. Crystal is good.

A year earlier, she had taken the championship in her age division at the American Amateur Racquetball Association Junior Nationals, singles and doubles. Not bad for a girl coming from a small town on the treeless prairies of southern Alberta.

1983 and 1984 were not bad years for her, but 1985 dusted them. First in open singles at the California State Championship to end the season ranked number one in California amateur standings. Bronze medal, world games. And U.S. Intercollegiate Champion, singles and doubles. The girl did not even reach the age of 18 until the end of the year!

This year she continued where 1985 left off, maintaining her ranking in California, reaching the number two spot in the American Amateur Racquetball Association. She won the U.S. Intercollegiate Championship and took the California State Championship . . . again. Oh yes, she also became the Canadian National Champion.

Sometimes Canadians have a tendency to wait until their own are accepted elsewhere to claim them with pride, a variation on the prophet and home town theme. Now would be a good time for us not to make that mistake.

Read Miss Fried?

This is from the northern cheering section: Hey Crystal! We're rooting for ya!

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New Directions

by Luke St. Onge



The Forgotten Players

There is a large group of players in our sport that have been forgotten and misplaced.

Where do the Juniors go when they come of age? Where do the open players go when they can no longer be competitive? What do we read about day after day: The top junior players, the latest woman to make the U.S. National Team, the big upset in the pro ranks, and who's favored in the open in the U.S. National Championships.

It's time that we begin to focus on those veteran players who have adopted racquetball as a lifetime sport and contribute their dedication and personal support to racquetball day in and day out. The upper age group players are the most loyal and dedicated members any sport could wish for. How are they treated? Eighty percent of the tournaments run in this country cater only to the open and skill level players (A, B, C, D and Novice) and neglect the upper age groups especially the Golden Masters (50, 55, 60, 65, 70).

Over 33,000 players are ranked in the United States and less than 600 are in these age groups. Tournament directors respond that it's economics, that it

costs too much to run these divisions, not enough enter these divisions, and so on. None of these explanations are acceptable. What it really comes down to is laziness and lack of concern for a large portion of players in racquetball that is getting larger each year.

If the divisions are not offered and run, how will they ever develop. Is it fair to banish all of these players to three of four tournaments per year run by the Masters Council? Ivan Bruner and his active group have done a great job in developing competition for the Masters but they can only do so much. Is it fair to take high caliber players and force them into the A, B and C division only because of age? Of course not. How fair is it to have them compete against 19 or 20 year olds? How many players have left our sport to take up other sports that cater to them, such as running or tennis?

It's time our sport woke up and treated age group players in the same way as the open and skill level divisions. Remember you might not be there today, but tomorrow comes awfully fast.

Off Court Fitness

by Jean Sauser



My Favorite Club Member of All Time

In the 16 years I spent working in athletic facilities across the country, I had the honor of meeting many memorable people. However, of all the members I've ever known, Chicago Bear Walter Payton was the most unforgettable club member I've ever met.

Keep in mind throughout this story that Walter Payton does not remember me, but I don't care and that's not the point. The point is that his brief presence is my life changed my attitudes about health, fitness and racquetball for the better, forever.

It was the spring of 1984. I had just gained employment with a club located on the far north side of Chicago. My job was to train their managers on special promotions and membership. Upon reporting to work on the first day, I found myself engaged in a whimsical conversation about membership retention with the owner of the club.

"If all my members were like Walter Payton, I'd be a rich man," he sighed.

"Like who?" I asked, thinking that waxy buildup in my ears was getting out of hand.

"Walter Payton," he repeated. "You know, Chicago Bears' Walter Payton. He's a member here."

"You're kidding," I reacted surprised. "What kind of offer did you have to make to him?"

"He paid to belong," the owner said, emphasizing the word "paid".

"That's class," I said. "Most sports celebrities I've dealt with in the club business have always

wanted me to pay them to belong."

"Not Payton," defended my owner, "And he's nice to the members to boot!"

"Another first," I added sarcastically. "The last famous football player I saw in a club out west dropped free weights through a fitness center wall and practically killed the manager when he politely pointed it out to him."

"Well, you'll enjoy Walter," said the owner. "He's different."

Soon after that, I met Walter Payton, and I found out how "different" he is. What a pleasant surprise. He was standing in line one evening, patiently waiting to show us his card in order to gain access to the club. Two men in front of him were complaining about our check-in procedure with comments like, "Nice friendly club, you don't even remember our names."

Payton just smiled from behind them as we hurried to get them into the club and out of our hair. Once they left, Payton showed us his card, made small talk with the desk staff, who obviously knew his name, signed in and disappeared quietly into the club.

"Those guys were so busy with their own egos they didn't even realize who was behind them," one of my desk staff laughed.

"It's a good thing they didn't," I said. "They probably would have started telling him how to play football, and the Bears have enough trouble with that on their own."

Payton's personal conduct in

our club was similar to his conduct on the football field. He was humble, but obviously special. He was friendly, but a no-nonsense type guy. Our members respected him and didn't bother him for the most part, but their observations were interesting to hear.

One night, in the fitness center, I overheard three members discussing Payton's extraordinary strength.

"He puts the pin in the bottom of the rack of this machine here and does with one hand what I do with two," said the first member.

"Yeah," kidded his buddy, "and you only can lift two plates with two hands on that machine."

While they were laughing, the third member chimed in: "You know the difference between him and us, besides just raw talent?"

"What?" came the reply.

"He's consistent. He works out hard and he's here every other day."

"That's true," the first member said. "If we worked out for racquetball the way he does for football, I bet we'd be 10 points better."

"And if he played racquetball seriously, we'd all be in trouble," one of them said, and they fell apart laughing.

It was indeed obvious to everyone at the club that Walter Payton was a dedicated man. Dedicated to health, fitness and his sport. In one of the only conversations I had with him, I remember asking if he thought he would ever see a Superbowl ring

(continued on page 40)

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by Tom Roberts

When 22-year-old Bobby Hillin, Jr. won the CBS nationally televised Talladega 500 NASCAR race last July, he became the youngest winner in the history of big-league professional stock car racing.

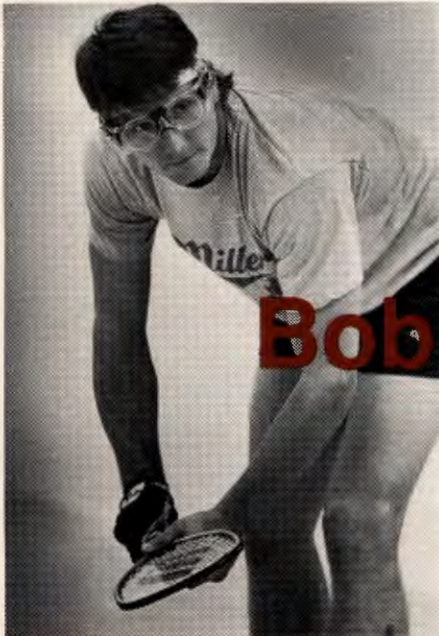
Hillin, a former West Texas 4-5A High School football star, who stands 5 ft., 11 in. tall and weighs in at 175 lbs., credits much of his success in his racing career to his love for the sport of racquetball.

"I think if I hadn't decided on a career in racing, becoming a professional racquetball player would have been a legitimate alternative," said Hillin. "I just wish I would have started playing the game earlier and had more time to devote to it."

Training Program

Hillin, a physical fitness devotee, mixes into his annual schedule of more than 50 races and numerous public appearances for his racing sponsor, Miller High Life Beer, a training program alternating racquetball and weight-lifting.

"I try to play racquetball three times a week and do Nautilus at least twice a week," said Hillin. "That's about



OFF TRACK: Bobby Hillin, Jr. drives a hard racquetball!

all I can fit in during racing season and it's an adequate fitness maintenance program.

"Racquetball is the best physical activity I've found to help me prepare for competing in the race car," said Hillin. "Everything moves so fast. It's a game of hand and eye coordination and is super for cardiovascular exercise.

"Racing, on the other hand, is like a hard continuous volley at the peak of competing with someone," Hillin said. "You get the adrenalin pumping and your concentration is the highest possible.

"The two sports just seem to go hand-in-hand for me. I love them both."

Hillin did not start his serious racquetball playing until he moved to the Charlotte, NC, area in 1983. He joined the Sports Center in Concord, NC, and that is "home" court today.

"I owe a lot of my affection for the game to Ron Johnson, the manager of the Sports Center," said Hillin. "He has brought me along up the ladder in the game and was responsible for getting me into organized competition."

Stock Car Racing

Hillin set out to conquer the major league of

professional stock car racing in 1982.

"I was only 17 years old," he said. "Because I was successful back in Texas on the short tracks, I thought the transition to the NASCAR scene would be a lot easier. I also thought success would come fast.

"I was running at the finish in the first race I started," he said, "but running all day and still finishing 21st tells you how competitive this kind of racing is.

"I soon grew to look at my racing realistically," he said.

Hillin's racing strategy is based on competitive consistency and achieving goals. It is a never-ending process for the affable young driver. He believes an achievement is only an introduction to another challenge.

"My team is still learning, just as I am continuously learning as a driver," Hillin said. "When you're in the process of building something, it's a lot easier to have someone making sure you're doing it right. You have an example."

With a few more wins like the Talladega 500, Bobby himself will become the example for younger drivers. He has already got the confidence, a confidence that spills over into his second love, racquetball, with a touch of humility . . .

"I guess you could say I'm a C-class (racquetball) player now and, if I just had the time, could work up to the B-class," Hillin said. "I think Marty Hogan and the superstars of racquetball are safe for now. To be that good just about requires daily play. I just don't have the time.

"Now if Hogan wants to meet me on the front straightaway at Daytona . . .," Hillin said, laughing.



Swain Wins Michelob Light Opener in California

by Jim Hiser

Once again the Westlane Racquet Club in Stockton, CA was the site of the first RMA professional stop for 1986-87. The absence of National Champion Mike Yellen moved Bret Harnett (winner of last season's final two stops) into the number one seed for the first time in his career.

The round of 32's once again produced the unexpected. For only the second time in his career, Jerry Hilecher was defeated in the first round by tenacious Dolwayne Greene of California. Aaron Katz of Texas survived the qualifying rounds to upset Dan Obremski of Pennsylvania. Dan had reached the semifinals in both the Boulder and DP Nationals tournaments last season to finish 1985-86 ranked #16. Aaron's right angle passes and flawless forehand pinches proved too much for Dan.

Although most spectators agreed the level of play had increased dramatically over last year's Stockton tournament, it was obvious some players still were not in mid-season form. The 16's went much as expected, with the only matches going five games being that of hometown favorites Gerry Price and Scott Oliver. These long-time friends found themselves deadlocked in a battle royal before a packed house of supportive spectators. Scott blasted himself to an 11-0 first game victory and it looked as if Gerry would be in for a long afternoon. Scott continued his onslaught by winning the second game and going out to a 10-8 lead in the third game. Although Scott still seemed to be dictating the matches rhythm, Gerry struggled past two match-point attempts by Scott squeaking out an 11-10 victory. The loss seemed to defeat Scott's enthusiasm, and Gerry controlled the rest of the match winning the last two games, 5 and 4.

The quarters once again sprouted some of the tournaments best matches. Three out of the

four matches went to tiebreakers.

In the first match Ed Andrews faced Cliff Swain. Ed's new training regime was evident in his slimmed down physical appearance. Andrews had defeated Swain in their previous two meetings and as everyone expected this match went the distance. Cliff started out serving well forcing weak returns which he easily killed. Cliff won the first game 11-0. The second game was an exact opposite of the first with Ed serving well and hitting deep court splats off Cliff's ceiling returns. Ed won the second game 11-0. Even more surprising than the score was Cliff's persistence in going for the ace on second serves. In the first two games Cliff double faulted twice on second serves.

In the third game Cliff dominated with strong forehand serves winning early, 11-4. The fourth game began ominously for Cliff with a double faulting on his first service attempt. Cliff would repeat this error two more times before losing 11-7. The new professional rule of designated line judges from the quarters on definitely affected Cliff's serve. On two occasions in the fourth game along, Cliff's ace serves were negated by foot fault calls, two of these on second serves.

The tiebreaker had Ed taking a quick 5-1 lead. Cliff battled back to 6-4 before once again double faulting in an attempted second serve ace. It looked like this error may cost him the match as Ed regained the serve and momentum to go ahead 9-4 before Cliff returned to the service box. Although Ed had trained hard to get ready for the season's opener, the next few rallies would emphasize the importance of conditioning. Ed skipped four of Cliff's next five points, all on relatively easy stationary shots. The serve was now 10-9 Ed, Ed's 10th point coming on an ace serve. But once again Ed skipped the

game winner and also Swain's 10th point. Cliff eventually won the match on a forehand kill.

In the Peck/Price quarter final match, both players started sluggishly, with Price winning the first game 11-3. The second game started with Price pressuring Peck with forehand drive serves and overhead kills. Gerry went out to a quick 8-2 lead. At this point Peck returned a short ceiling ball with his patented backhand splat. Peck switched his serve to forehand lobs which Gerry had problems returning. Peck capitalized on Price's weak returns and eventually tied the score at 10-10. Peck won the match on a forehand splat.

The third game found the players trading serves and points as the score seasawed until Gerry had an 8-6 lead. Gerry's next two points came on cross court passes with price finally winning the game 11-7.

Greg started the fourth game with six straight points and it looked as if a tiebreaker was inevitable. Gerry looked fatigued but Greg changed his game plan and returned again to Price's backhand. Gerry immediately splatted three backhands and eventually fought his way back to a 7-7 tie. Gerry continued to roll out all backhand shots and went ahead 10-7. Gerry eventually won the game and match on a roll-out return of what Greg and many of the spectators thought was a short serve.

Hogan began his quarter final match totally controlling Ruben and winning the first two games 11-6 and 11-5. The third game started much the same way with Marty going out to a 4-0 lead. Hogan's concentration seemed to wander as he continually made short first serves and weak lobs for second serves. Ruben jumped on Marty's short lobs and won the game 11-7. Ruben continued to pressure Marty by cutting off lob serves.

(continued on page 23)

Harnett Overcomes Hogan, Andrews in Bud Light Open

by Sigmund Brower

Okay, Virginia. By now you have stopped believing in Santa Claus. But there is something else you should know. Marty Hogan can lose.

It is the Hogan mystique. He can be losing, even badly, but he need only step from the court during a timeout, and everyone will know deep inside that if he tries, really tries, he will go back in there, turn it on and win as he rightfully should.

Not this time.

Maybe Hogan didn't really turn it on at Davison, Michigan's Bud Light Open, because it was so early in the season, or maybe he plain lost, Virginia, but there is this other professional you could keep in mind. He's getting to be good at making comebacks, and heck, has never lost in the finals of any pro event. Try this name for your Christmas list, Virginia . . . Bret Harnett.

The story of Harnett's September weekend might be Mike Yellen, four-time national champion, losing one round into the tournament. It might be Egan Inoue in his first pro appearance as 1986 World Champion, displaying such absolute might-is-right racquetball that even seasoned spectators buzzed. Or it could be ninth ranked Ed Andrews in his first professional finals, having the foot fault horn blare during his setup at match point — then losing 11-10 and the next two games.

But Harnett was the story. He won.

He really began by defeating Marty Hogan in the semifinals. It let him face Ed Andrews in a finals match which started badly for Harnett.

There, Andrews dominated. Harnett later said he "could not stop Andrews from scoring". And score Andrews did. Ahead after winning 11-3, 11-4, he kept the



Marty Hogan (left), made his fans believe he could win it all, but Bret Harnett (right) took the match and the prize money in Davison's Bud Light Open.

throttle wide open on powerful drive serves to reach a 10-5 match point lead in the third.

Only then did Harnett put on enough pressure to regain the serve and three points. Still, the brawny Andrews did not fold. He calmly killed the ball to have another match point chance at 10-8. Then two things happened.

Andrews hit another crunch drive serve to the dark glass on left-hander Harnett's back hand side and forced yet another weak return. Andrews waited, racquet poised, at the service line for the setup off the back wall and his first



Ed Andrews came close, but lost to Harnett in a finals tiebreaker.

pro victory. And the second thing, the foot fault buzzer sounded for the first time all match. It was Andrews' last real chance. His next serve was a lob six inches too hard, which Harnett killed down the line.

Harnett aced a forehand drive, Andrews skipped in the next forehand serve, and for point 11, Harnett forced Andrews into two dives before hitting a routine winning pass.

Game four showed that Harnett is not a quitter. It also showed that Andrews is not a quitter; he refused to let the previous game's momentum swing bother him and watched unfazed as Harnett hit a never-to-be-repeated fly-kill-reverse-pinch-roll-out into the right corner to start game four. Andrews simply stepped into the next ball and regained the serve immediately.

Andrews pumped hard, found a few kills, an avoidable against Harnett, and a wall-paper ceiling ball to lead 5-1. He looked unstoppable until a staredown feud with a linesman over a crucial call cooled the steam.

Later Andrews said, "Yeah, it bothered me. Instead of my serve with a good lead, Harnett's got a reserve and I can't shake the call." To show where the favors were going in game four, Andrews then hit an

(continued on page 41)

The Athlete's Knee — The Most Archaic, Complicated Joint in the Body

by Stuart I. Springer, M.D.

It is hard to fathom what Mother Nature had in mind when she designed the human knee, but one thing is for certain, it wasn't a rousing game of tennis, squash or racquetball. It's even questionable whether these knobby protrusions can really withstand the simple task of carrying one's considerable weight around all day.

The countless, endless movements of everyday life — walking, standing, sitting, bending, turning, stooping, running, kneeling, leaping over puddles, stretching, ascending and descending stairs — can easily tax the knee beyond its basic design, to say nothing of the demands put upon them by the games we insist on playing. Imperfect, archaic, and aesthetically lacking, the lowly knee is particularly vulnerable to abuse.

The lengthy roster of injuries to which a knee is susceptible ranges from the nagging discomfort of a sore muscle to the excruciating pain of a torn ligament or cartilage. Weak link that the knee is, however, it is not a foregone conclusion that active people will inevitably suffer knee problems — at least not if some basic, common sense principles are followed.

Primary among these is to choose a game to which you are suited and then learn how to play it properly. The demands of racquet sports — speed, force, coordination, agility — are not for everyone. But if you're understandably addicted to the court, then take the time to learn the proper techniques, preferably, from a professional. The correct distribution of weight in your stance, the right footwork involved in sudden starts and stops, and the proper swing are important elements for the well-being of your knees.

Just as important as learning the proper technique is using the right equipment. Not only will your

knees benefit, but so will your shoulders, elbows, wrists and ankles. Once again, a professional opinion should be sought. Athletic shoes matched to the shape of your foot can make all the difference in the world when it comes to avoiding ankle, heel and knee injuries. Similarly, an expert should check to see that the racquet is properly sized to your hand.

The last and probably the most important preventive measure a recreational athlete can take to protect his or her vulnerable knees (and all other vital joints in the body) is to get into shape before playing the game instead of counting on the game to put you into shape. Translation: Serious twenty minute workouts two to three times a week; attention to diet and body weight and twenty minute warmups before each and every game. If the time commitment bothers you, think of it as an investment in your future, a critical piece of the portfolio with a guaranteed big payoff.

For midweek workouts, swimming gets my vote as it puts minimal stress on the knees. If a pool is not available, a stationary bicycle is your next best bet. Be certain your seat is positioned at a height where you can peddle without over-flexing the knees. Ideally, your knees shouldn't rise much above your waist — 90 degrees of flexion is ample.

For pre-game warmups, it's advisable to start out with a series of gentle stretches to loosen up the ankle and calf area — especially important for women who often wear high heels. Then move on to more active exercises which encompass a full range of motion to get the blood flowing and to increase your heartbeat. Once you are feeling more limber, end the warmup with five minutes of "shadow play" which is mock run-through of the motions of the

game — forehands, backhands, serves and lots of footwork.

Though it may not look like anything special from the outside, in actual fact, the knee is one of the most complex joints in the body. Its basic mechanical design, flawed from an engineering standpoint, hasn't changed appreciably over the course of man's evolution and consists of an intricate assembly of bone, cartilage, ligaments, lubricating fluids and muscle. When functioning properly, the knees control movement forward, backward, and from side to side, rotate externally and internally, serve as hinges, bear the load of our torso, and act as all-important shock absorbers. That's a lot to ask of a single joint. It's no wonder that just about anything — a quick stop or start, a wobble midair, a sharp twist or blow — can put the knees out of business.

The first clue to knee injury is pain — nature's unmistakable signal that all is not well. Whether you experience a cumulative dull ache, an intermittent twang or brutal agony, the correct first response to pain is to stop. This is not the time for stoicism — the old "I'll be tough and play through it" routine — nor is it advisable to follow the once common practice of applying heating pads to keep you going between games. The current wisdom for sports injuries calls for 24 to 48 hours of the RICE treatment. RICE is an acronym for rest, ice, compression by means of an ace bandage or wrap and elevation . . . In other words, the "grandmother treatment". Rest is to prevent further aggravation. The other three remedies are to cut down on bruising, promote circulation and help with the drainage of fluids.

One of the advantages to the RICE treatment is that it buys a little time to have the problem properly diagnosed without further injury. With luck, it may be just a mild

inflammation or a momentary displacement of the joint. If you're not so lucky, it's possible that you've damaged something internally which will worsen in time unless corrected.

Fortunately, the practice of sports medicine — a specialty largely populated by orthopedists — has advanced considerably over the last decade. The diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of knee injuries have received particular attention since damage to this part of one's anatomy is statistically far more frequent than the problems with shoulders, elbows, heels and ankles. As a result of an increasing number of sports injuries, (attributable to the fact that more and more health-conscious Americans are pursuing recreational sports) doctors have amassed an impressive store of knowledge as well as an array of sophisticated equipment.

Consider, for example, the arthroscope, a name derived from the Greek words, "arthro" for joint and "scope" for viewing. Though technically the arthroscope has been around the halls of medicine for close to a hundred years, in its earlier incarnation it served strictly as a diagnostic tool. Analogous to peeping through a keyhole, it was the first instrument which allowed for a direct view of the inside of a joint and, as such, was welcomed as an important supplement to more conventional diagnostic methods, such as the X-ray and dye tests.

In the early 1930s, Dr. Michael Burman, Attending Orthopedic Surgeon at the Hospital for Joint Diseases, began to expand the possibilities of the arthroscope by exploring its application to knee surgery. His pioneering work was all but forgotten, however, until fiber optics gained recognition in the early 1970s. A short while later, the arthroscope was redesigned to become one of the most essential tools of microsurgery.

Simply put, the arthroscope resembles a straw which holds three systems within its slender cavity: Magnifying lenses, fiber optic cables and a tube which will pass fluid on air. At one end of the straw rests an attachment for a fiber optic light source and an eye piece, at which can be placed, at

the discretion of the attending physician, a solid state, lightweight camera. Attached to the camera is a TV monitor which allows the patient to view just what the physician sees.

With serious knee injuries, the first thing an orthopedist will do is to take a diagnostic look around the interior of the joint. This is done by making three or four small nicks in the skin, each no more than one-fifth of an inch wide and inserting the arthroscope. Once positioned, there are essentially four structures to be examined: The meniscus cartilage (C-shaped pads resembling washers cut in half which sit between the thigh bone and the leg bone), the articular cartilage also called gristle (the white substance which covers the surface of the bone), the lining of the knee and the ligaments.

Where the injury is substantial — say, for example, a torn cartilage, loose fragments of bone, damaged ligaments, or a painful inflammation of the joint lining — surgery is performed with miniaturized tools used in conjunction with the arthroscope.

Mention knee surgery to a zealous racquetball fan and he immediately panics about how long he'll be kept from the court. The good news is that with arthroscopy he's likely to be back on his feet much sooner than he can imagine. For openers, most arthroscopic surgery can be done in one day on an outpatient basis. Conventional surgery requires a hospital stay of a week or more. Secondly, with arthroscopic surgery the wounds are very small, fractions of an inch to be precise, as opposed to the six to twelve inch gashes required to open the knee during conventional surgery. With such tiny incisions, stitches are rarely required and the knee heals neatly with few, if any, unsightly scars. There is also less post operative pain associated with arthroscopy and less chance of infection since the joint has never been exposed to the air. Finally, while rehabilitation can take anywhere from six weeks to six or more months, this period is far shorter than the time required for therapy following open-knee surgery.

Arthroscopic surgery, though not the panacea for every ill, has

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The Athlete's Knee

been used with considerable success for many different types of knee injuries. It is effective, for example, in removing fragments of damaged cartilage or splinters of bone. Another common injury sustained by athletes which can be redressed through arthroscopy is the traumatic detachment of the anterior cruciate ligament (or ACL) from the thighbone or leg bone. In selected patients with arthroscopic techniques, the ACL can be reattached in 1/3 to 1/4th the time required with traditional open-knee surgery.

In recent years, arthroscopy is also used in more complicated surgical procedures, among them, the reconstruction of damaged ligaments. Reconstruction of a ligament means that the tissue requires more than a simple repair and must be replaced in whole or in part with a substitute material. Traditional medicine has long

avored the use of tissue taken from some other part of the patient's body, such as a hamstring tendon, a kneecap tendon or the ilio-tibial band located on the outer side of the knee. This approach, called autogenous reconstruction, is essentially a harvesting of one's own anatomy, a borrowing from Peter to pay Paul.

As might be imagined, this is not a procedure that can be performed too many times as there are a finite number of tissues one can call upon to do service in the knee. What's more, the success rate for this type of surgery hovers around 75 percent — a figure which hasn't appreciably changed in the last seventy years. Despite these drawbacks, however, autogenous surgery is still the preferred method of treatment by many physicians largely because it is a known quantity with a long track record.

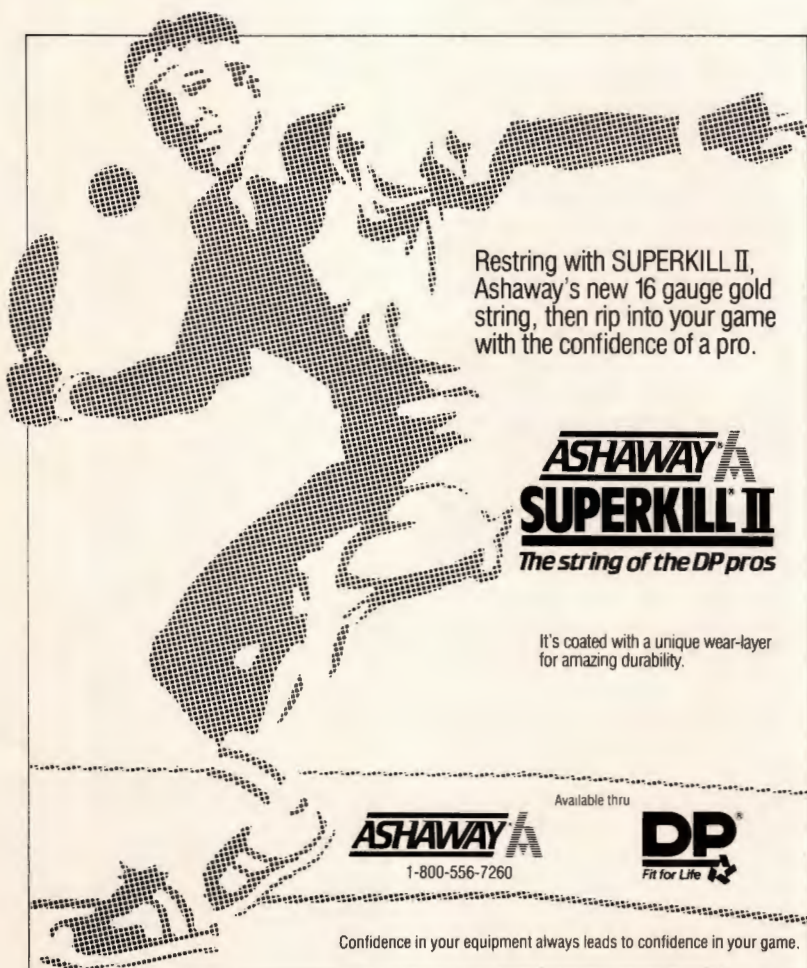
Nonetheless, taking a cue from work in progress in Europe, a growing number of physicians

have begun to turn to alternative methods of ligament reconstruction. One successful approach has been to use tissue from a cadaver donor (called an allograft) but such material is not readily available. Orthopedists have also been experimenting with synthetic materials such as carbon fiber, dacron and Gore-tex fibers, as well as a more reliable substance, namely, a tendon taken from the foreleg of a cow.

The "bovine xenograft," as the operation has been called ("bovine" for cow, "xenograft" meaning transplant from a species different from our own), has been used with encouraging success in Europe for the last five years. Not only is the procedure available for knees, but it can be used for shoulders, ankles and hands as well. Inspired by Europe's strong example, 50 centers in the U.S. have been approved to use the ligament in various forms while only seven are authorized to use it arthroscopically. Happily, we are finding good results. Indeed, in my practice alone, I have done 50 bovine xenograft operations within the last four years with a success rate of 90 percent in maintaining stability. (In the last ten percent of the cases, where this procedure was not effective, the patient still retains the option of autogenous surgery as a fallback position.) Certainly one factor contributing to such a high success rate is the fact that the cow tendon is collagen, a substance naturally found in our bodies and therefore not likely to be rejected as a foreign element.

As one might gather from this brief foray into the marvels of RICE treatments, arthroscopy and bovine xenografts, sports medicine has progressed to a point where it can offer some relief to people whose active life is hampered by "bad" knees.

Accidents happen, our bodies do wear out with time and the games we play are tough on our knees. Rather than suffer the aches and pains, the thing to do is to make sure you are really ready to play by exercising and using proper equipment in the first place, and if an injury does occur, see a competent orthopedist so that you can get back out onto the court where you belong.



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Swain

(continued from page 16)

Although Marty had plenty of opportunities, he skipped numerous forehand setups to give Ruben the fourth game, 11-7. In the tiebreaker Marty regained his concentration and once again dominated Ruben to win 11-3.

In the Harnett/Ray quarter final Bret started by drive serving the Mike's backhand and went out to a rapid 4-0 lead. Bret's serve proved the difference, as he won the game 11-5. The second game had both players exchanging serves and points until the game was 10-10. Mike's strategy of using lob serves to keep Bret in deep court seemed to be working. At game point Bret made a short ceiling ball return of Ray's high Z lob and Mike made no mistake with his forehand pinch. Mike continued the same game plan in the third game and won 11-7. In the fourth game Bret copied Mike's strategy of Z-lob serves. Both players seemed to struggle with service returns, but Bret took control at 7-7 and served out to win 11-7. In the tiebreaker Mike seemed to fatigue and skipped two short backhands and one forehand early in the match. This allowed Bret to take a 5-2 lead which he never relinquished. Harnett won the game and match 11-6.

The Hogan/Price semifinal match was definitely one of the tournament's most uneventful matches. Gerry looked sluggish and slow while Marty exhibited a definite determination to finish the match as quick as possible. Marty uncharacteristically got his first serves in and Gerry struggled to even return the serve. Marty won in three straight, 4, 2 and 7.

Cliff Swain began his semifinal match with his serves of the weekend. His cross court serves to Harnett's backhand were picture perfect. Cliff capitalized on every Harnett error and easily won the first game 11-4. The second game continued with Cliff serving cross court drives, but Bret seemed to

anticipate better, returning good ceiling balls. The two fought back and forth until at 10-8 Cliff hit a long backwall shot that hit the corner crack and died. Swain took a 2-0 lead. Harnett lobbed the third game and continued to battle Cliff, making almost impossible gets and great defensive ceiling balls. Bret won this game 11-10.

Harnett began the fourth game skipping three easy forehand shots. Bret's style of go-for-broke kills either results in dramatic splats and roll-outs or, if slightly off, embarrassing shovel-like skips. The fourth game found Bret's kills driving splinters out of the floor. Cliff won 11-5.

The finals match was a contrast of Swain's intensity and driving ability with Hogan's fluctuating concentration. Hogan's last shot of the second game demonstrated his frustration. Marty returned Cliff's forehand lob with an all-out, as-hard-as-he-could-hit ceiling ball which Cliff easily put away for the game and a 2-0 advantage. The importance of crowd participation was no more evident than in this match. With Marty trailing 7-5 in the third game, the crowd started cheering loudly for him. The support seemed to stimulate Hogan as he fought back to win 11-7. The fourth game followed the same scenario as Cliff went ahead 5-0. Marty responded to the crowd's support and came back to win 11-10. In the fifth Cliff's serves proved too much. With his drive serve on, Cliff aced Marty twice and forced Hogan to make weak returns. Marty received an avoidable hinder on Cliff's backswing at 5-3 and from here on it was all Swain. Swain won the season's first pro stop and match 11-3.

The Stockton tournament is traditionally the season's first tour stop. Rob Farrens, tournament director, offers some of the best hospitality on the West Coast. The tournament's title of "vacation party weekend" certainly is supported by major sponsor Michelob Light. The numerous tournament activities guarantee an enjoyable weekend for all participants.

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How to Improve Your Game

by Charlie Garfinkel

Players at all levels of racquetball, practice, practice, practice. Often, during practice sessions, it is difficult for the casual observer to tell which player is advanced and which one is the C player. However, the advanced player wins 90 percent of the time. Why? Advanced players know that having good strokes is important. But they also know that a player must be equally prepared mentally. That is, a winning racquetball player knows what he is going to do both before a match and during the match. The following is a primer of helpful tips which will improve your overall game.

Preparing for the Match

How many times have you rushed to your local club or YMCA to play a match? Because you were a few minutes late, instead of warming up properly, you probably ran onto the court, hit a few forehands and backhands, then announced to your opponent that you were ready to play. Dumb! Dumb! Dumb!

Before you stepped on the court you should have warmed up sufficiently to have broken a sweat. Stretching, jogging or riding the lifecycle for a few minutes are excellent choices to get your body warmed up. Even if your court time is reduced from 60 to 50 minutes, you're still wise to warm up properly each and every time, before commencing play. A 10 minute loss of play is far better than losing two or three weeks of play due to a torn muscle from insufficient warmup.

Once on the court, you should practice the shots you normally use in a match. Be sure to hit from both the forehand and backhand sides. Practice a few serves from different

areas of the service box. When play commences you'll be ready.

Using Fitness

There is no excuse for not being in top physical shape. If you are, you'll win many close matches. If you aren't, you'll lose most of your close matches. It's that simple.

People who play everyday, but don't do any extra physical conditioning, are only fooling themselves. You're far better off playing for an hour, doing some exercises and stretching for a half hour, than playing for two hours straight.

I personally feel that a two-hour workout is physically and mentally fatiguing. Once the actual match is over, it is often hard to psych yourself up to play another two or three games. You'll find that you're really playing at only 70-80 percent of your potential. Also, you could hurt yourself, as you won't be going all out on every shot.

As for myself, by changing my workout from riding the bicycle, to using the rowing machine or doing some light jogging after I play, I constantly keep my level of enthusiasm high. In fact, if I have a choice of only playing or working out for a short time, I'll work on my physical conditioning.

Regardless of the type of physical conditioning you select, you'll find that being physically fit will give you an extra edge against your opponent. Often, while he is dragging his feet late in the match, you'll completely frustrate him with your stamina and seemingly impossible gets.

Your Opponent's Weaknesses

Many players know what their opponent's weaknesses are. Unfortunately, they are not sure



which strokes and strategies they should use to exploit those weaknesses. The following information will help you to formulate a game plan which will help you win.

The Weak Backhand

Most players, regardless of their level of play, have a stronger forehand than backhand. Therefore, it is imperative to work on your opponent's backhand until he cracks. However, don't make the mistake that most players make, by trying to hit each and every serve and shot to your opponent's backhand.

You must realize that a player with a weak backhand has learned to compensate remarkably well. That is, he will do anything within his power to run around his backhand and take the shot on his forehand.

When serving, most of your serves should go to your opponent's backhand. Drive serves are excellent. However, you must be careful on your second serve. High lobs and high Z's should be used carefully. Because the player with the weak backhand is so accustomed to running around his backhand, he will often quickly move in and take the high lob or high Z with an overhead stroke. He could score a point outright or put you in a poor court position, due to the severity of his shot.

A far wiser second serve would be to hit a medium Z-serve that crosses the short line at a lower point. (About 3-4 feet high is suggested.)

Also, an occasional serve to the forehand is intelligent, as it will keep your opponent from constantly attempting to move around his backhand.

When the ball is in play, hit three or four ceiling balls to the forehand side of your opponent. By doing this you'll be opening up the whole left side of the court. Then, on the third or fourth rally, you should hit the ball sharply to your opponent's backhand side of the court. He will have an extremely difficult shot to hit. And you will continually attack his backhand, rally after rally.

The Weak Second Serve

Too many players play too defensively when they receive a weak second serve. Instead of hitting a hard cross court shot or passing their opponent straight down the line, they'll hit a ceiling ball or a weak lob.

In addition to hitting hard passing shots, an occasional kill shot attempt will really go a long way to frustrate your opponent. Of course, if you're skipping the kill shot returns, stick mostly with hard drives and passes.

The Out of Shape Opponent

When playing against a someone who is 30-40 pounds overweight (unless he's Mike Luciw, former National Doubles Champion), you should be chomping at the bit with anticipation. Your choice of strategy is simple. Run, run, run, your opponent to exhaustion.

Even if you get some kill shot opportunities, you'd be wise to hit passing shots and hard drives. Although your out of shape opponent may return some of these shots, a series of cross court shots will win you many easy points.

In a short period of time you'll find that many of your cross court shots aren't being returned at all, due to the physical condition of your opponent.

The Roadrunner

A player who is in great shape can usually run all day. However, his shooting ability is often suspect. In addition, I really think that some of these roadrunners get more thrills out of returning shot after shot than actually putting

the ball away.

The key is to be patient. Sooner or later, they will give you a shot you can put away. Although some pressure is taken off you, due to your opponent's inability to kill many shots, you must hit your killshots as low as possible. In addition, your passing shots must not hit any side walls, which would give the roadrunner a chance to run them down.

If your killshots and passing game are working, you'll completely frustrate the opponent who likes to run continually.

The Power Player

We've all played against the player who hits the ball at three different speeds: Hard, harder and hardest. His serves come at us like bullets and every shot he hits comes thundering towards us. But if you observe the power hitter closely you will notice he also makes many errors because the power player is like the home run hitter. The home run hitter may hit 30 homeruns in a season, but his batting average is barely .250. We know that if a racquetball player makes only one out of four serves or shots he attempts, he isn't going to win many matches.

Therefore, you must strive to slow your game down completely. High lob serves and continual ceiling balls will frustrate the power hitter. Often, he will start attempting low percentage shots. This will only result in frequent errors and miss hits.

A word of caution: Don't be upset if the power hitter rolls out two or three shots in a row. He'll most likely skip the next two or three shots in.

The Superior Opponent

All of us have our favorite shots and strategies. Fortunately, they work well against most of our opponents. However, we've all had the experience of playing against a player who is definitely superior to us. This is due to the superior player's consistency, shotmaking and court coverage. In addition, seeing our best shots returned makes us apprehensive and tentative. This results in our missing serves and shots that we usually make.

Instead of rushing your serve, (continued on page 42)

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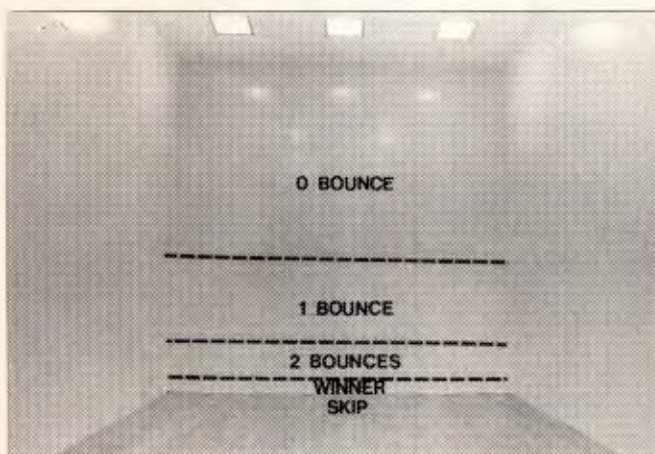
The Strategic Game

Part Seven: Court Coverage

by Steve Strandemo
with Bill Bruns

Good racquetball play demands that you continually make the transitions between low-zone action and high-zone exchanges, hitting and covering as efficiently as possible. Let's now focus on ways to be a savvy defender in offensive situations.

When defending in a low-zone rally, this should be your thinking process as your opponent prepares to shoot: "I'm watching the ball and studying my opponent, trying to anticipate the shot he's going to hit, but my main concern is to be ready to cover his leftup shot." This in turn should dictate a basic, desired



When covering your opponent's offensive shot attempt, remember that your coverage will depend upon how high he hits the ball into the front wall. The skip is a gift, and you can't cover the winner. Of the three options left, "two bounces" is the hardest to cover, so you must condition yourself to play off the shot that will take two bounces before the back wall.



When covering your opponent's low-zone attempts, keep reminding yourself to play off his leftup shots.

coverage position starting at about 24 to 27 feet against nearly all the players you'll encounter at any level of play. Here's my logic.

First of all, one of five things must happen when your opponent shoots the ball low-zone:

- (1) Skip.
- (2) A kill that dies in front of you (but a shot you try to contest with one good step forward if possible).
- (3) Two bounces before the back wall.
- (4) One bounce before the back wall.
- (5) No bounces before the back wall.

Before you read on, ask yourself, "Which one of these five options do I play off when my opponent shoots the ball?" Realistically, you'd better be playing off possibility number three since this type of shot can hurt you more quickly than the other *playable* shots. You can't control the destiny of the first two options — skips and kills — and you'll have time to hit the last two options as they come off the back wall.

You should always play off your opponent's leftup shots. And since most players hit with reasonable velocity, this means the ball is going to be traveling deeper far more frequently than you might imagine. As a result, you should concentrate on playing as efficiently as you can in the *back half* of the court, while conceding the front 15 feet. Virtually every playable shot will funnel back here in the course of a typical match — at the novice level right on through the pro level. If you're skeptical, carefully watch a match at your club and count how many shots are taken from behind the service zone as opposed to the front half of the court during the rally (not counting the serve and the return).

My emphasis on a deep coverage position may challenge your conviction that racquetball is a "kill shot" game, but deep coverage should form the bedrock of your defensive thinking.

The Virtues of a Deeper Position

By positioning yourself at about 24 to 27 feet, you concede your opponent the kill up in front, but meanwhile you're in excellent position to play off his many leftup shots, and with a strong step forward from 26 feet, you can still possibly get your racquet on a ball at 20 feet. If he puts the ball down too far in front of you, then he hit a good shot and deserves the point or side out. You can acknowledge his good shot, but silently tell him, "You better keep doing this because when you start missing, you're going to pay."

Another benefit of the deep coverage position is the psychological pressure you place on your opponent, for you're basically telling him, "If you kill the ball, you're going to get your points, but if you leave it up even slightly, I'm ready to re-kill."

When you're confident about staying back and playing off the leftup shots, you can adjust objectively

to different players. For example, instead of panicking when an opponent you've never played before starts pinching a couple of winners you should have the patience to make him prove this skill repeatedly as the first game progresses. Then if he shows a consistent pattern of well-executed pinches, creep up into a closer coverage zone and see if he has complementary shots that can blow the ball by you. If he doesn't, simply camp up there and take away his trusted scoring — the pinch.

You will also want to "cheat" closer up, at a strong level of play, when you've given your opponent a relatively easy, off-the-side-wall setup at around 25 feet and he has been scoring consistently with this type of shot during the match. You should respect his ability here by moving up to about 21 or 22 feet.

Once a match begins, try to sense where most of your opponent's low-zone shots are taking a first bounce. He may be an aggressive player who impressively rips the ball, but is he putting it down? He could be taking tough, low-percentage shots that will continually kick back to you — *if you lag deep*. Club players are amazed when they watch videotape of the pros and can see for themselves just how far a hard, low shot (8 to 10 inches up on the front wall) will travel before taking its first bounce. Even more of a revelation is where the second bounce occurs — at 30 feet!

The Limitations of Positioning Too Close to the Front Wall

When you play too far forward you're preoccupied with kill shots and you stifle your playing potential in several ways.

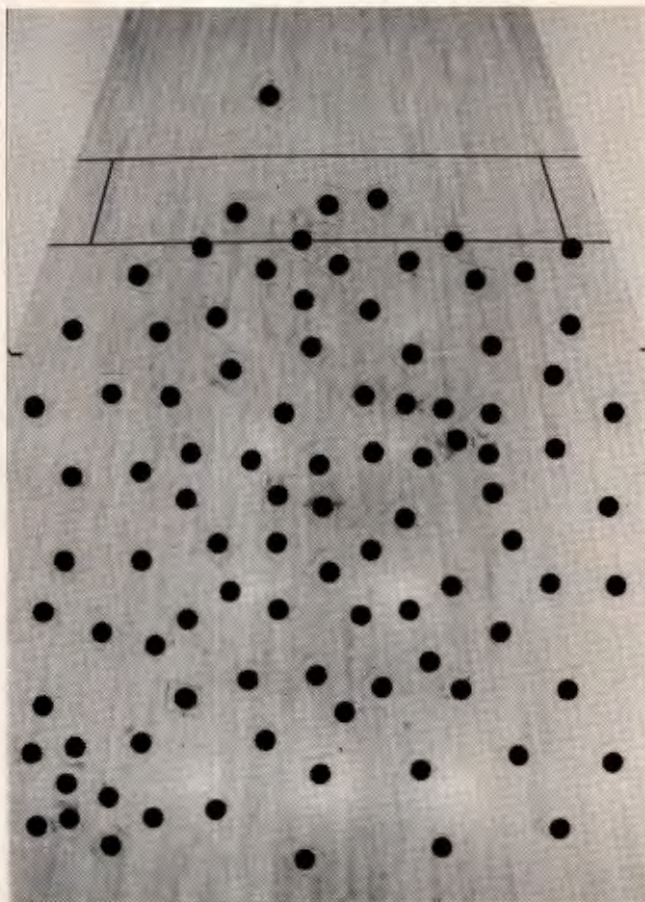
First you may dig up an occasional kill attempt that is slightly too high (around the 15-foot area), but the best you can usually hope to do with the ball is flick it somewhere to the front wall or the ceiling. And if your opponent does leave his shot up, the ball can easily jam you in center-court and force a weak return.

A Practice Suggestion

Have a friend watch or videotape one of your matches so that you can determine where most of your opponent's low-zone shots are taking a first bounce. If you're currently playing too far up and your opponent's scoring shots are hitting two or three feet high on the front wall, then the ball is taking its first bounce at around 21 or 22 feet — right near where you're standing. Move back closer to 27-30 feet and you'll be positioned where these same shots bounce to you at knee-to-waist height, in the best possible arc to hit low again.

Second, playing close like this forces you to react faster, often simply by instinct, and this makes it tougher to execute an accurate low-zone shot. You're in no man's land too often, and the ball will be continually bouncing near your feet and forcing you to half-volley shots — a difficult skill for anybody, including the pros.

Third, while playing up near 20 feet may intimidate certain opponents, an experienced player will pick you apart — without having to kill one ball to do it. He'll exploit you with accurate wide-angled passing shots and down-the-line passes that hug a side wall.



The dots on this court indicate where each shot was hit during part of a match, after the serve and return. Have a friend chart one of your matches and you'll realize why you must concentrate on covering shots in the 20-by-20-foot action area behind the service zone.

Meanwhile, many of his leftup shots will jam you, and some of his real mis-angles will get behind you and go for winners.

Watching the Ball and Your Opponent

At my winter and summer camps, we spend a lot of time encouraging people to follow the ball between shots and to study their opponent's stroke right up until contact — *then* to turn to the front wall and react. Many players are either unaware of just how much information they can gather by doing this, or they're afraid of being hit in the face by the ball, so they square to the front wall too early. As a result, they minimize their chances to anticipate their opponent's shot, and this forces them to continually lunge for low-zone attempt or frantically retreat against a ceiling ball.

How well do you keep your focus on the ball and try to read your opponent's intentions? If you actually watch him set up to hit and start his swing — instead of simply glimpsing him out of the corner of your eye — you'll know if he's shooting or going to the ceiling, and you can quickly move into an appropriate coverage position. Learning to interpret his body motion and racquet action will take away much of the guesswork in your coverage.

When a player begins to watch the ball and his opponent, he is often amazed at the results. The

typical response is reflected by the letter I received from a camper: "You would be pleasantly surprised to see how my game has improved since camp . . . I'm following the ball much better, but must consciously work on it all the time. My floor coverage is much better and my endurance seems to have improved." Actually, his endurance had improved because he was more efficient in his court coverage. By watching the ball, he could anticipate where his opponent's shot was going and thus reach more shots.

A Note of Caution

One caution: While recommending that you look back at your opponent as he goes to hit, I'm also assuming that you wear eyeguards. Playing without eyeguards is not worth the risk, and the fear of getting hit in the eye will cause you to turn away from your opponent too soon.

Etiquette and Coverage

Racquetball players should have a mutual respect for each other as they hit and as they cover. This results in a clean, competitive match that is also safe for both players. Two key issues are involved here.

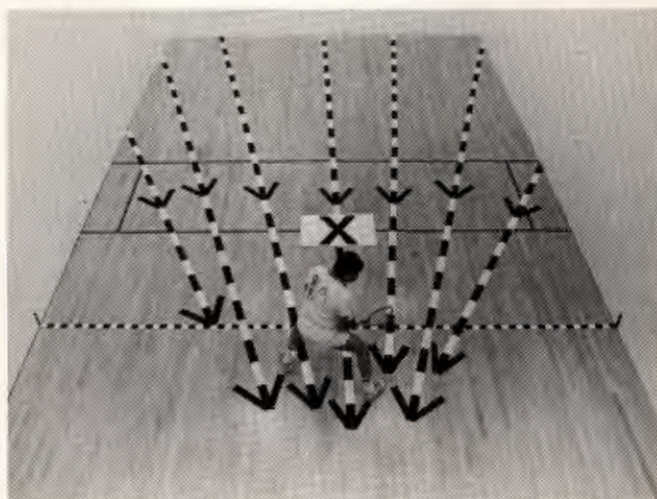
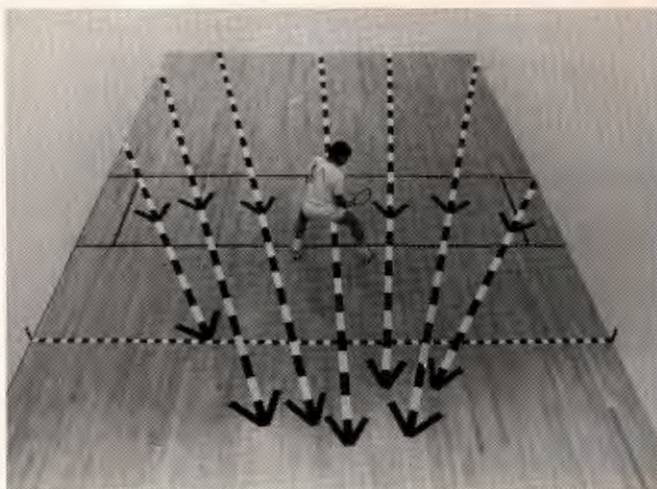
First, *give your opponent room to swing*. I tell all my students, "If you get hit by the racquet, it's your fault." This helps motivate them to stay clear as their opponent swings, especially in center-court action. Also, when you get caught against the wall, stay there long enough to let your opponent swing. If he has to hold up because he sees you moving into his path, that's an avoidable hinder. (The other half of the responsibility is for the hitter to shorten his backhand follow-through in center-court so that he doesn't nail his opponent.)

Second, *give your opponent the proper hitting lanes*. Be assertive in assuming your coverage position, but also be reasonable, for you must give your opponent room to hit a straight-in shot to the front wall, a cross-court pass to your side of the court, and a pinch into the nearest front corner. This is another reason why you should turn and watch the ball and your opponent after you hit, so that you can position yourself accordingly.

When you and your opponent give each other clearance to hit, the match will run pretty smoothly (even though both of you may be quite subtle at closing off one of the passing lanes). Unfortunately, as we all know, many players are stubborn about moving aside, or they don't understand that the defender is guilty of an avoidable hinder when he fails to give the hitter the proper hitting lanes. As a result, we have to learn to live with all these avoidable hinders until many more players are willing to abide by the spirit of the rules. Until then, the problem — at all levels — is spoiling a lot of good racquetball play.

A Checklist: Defensive Play

- Understand the areas on the court that you can cover with reasonable efficiency.
- Understand your opponent's scoring areas.
- Be ready to play off your opponent's leftup shots, rather than trying to play off his kills.
- If your opponent becomes too predictable in his shot selection, "cheat" into his favorite lanes/zones/ areas until he makes the proper adjustments.



When players cover too far forward, they get jammed by shots coming straight off the front wall. Many shots also get around and behind them (photo 1). So learn to cover at about 24 to 27 feet, for this is where most center-court action occurs. (The dotted line is 25 feet from the front wall.)

- When you are in a low-zone rally, your coverage position should fluctuate between 23 and 30 feet, depending on the type of shot your opponent is hitting and his ability to execute that shot.
- Watching the ball at all times will greatly increase your readiness to cover your opponent's next shot.
- Wear eyeguards for your protection and confidence.
- Give your opponent the proper hitting alleys, but don't give up too much court trying to avoid getting hit by his shot or racquet.
- Keep adjusting your feet up until the last moment so that you're in the best possible position to hit.

Improving Your Movement and Coverage Abilities

Racquetball doesn't require you to have a sprinter's speed as you cover the court, but it does emphasize having reasonably strong legs and quickness, as well as the endurance to weather long rallies. "Court sense" is also needed to pull together your coverage skills and allow you to play efficiently. So here are some drills and tactics that can help

strengthen your body and improve your overall coverage ability.

(1) Learn to use my 30-second drill in which you rally by yourself into the front wall, keeping the ball in play and your feet moving. This is excellent practice for your strokes, footwork, and reactions — and for pulling them all together.

(2) Do some "shadow movements" without a ball, such as a cross-over step from center-court to both walls (ending with an actual stroke) or moving diagonally to the back corners. Also practice thrusting forward with one strong step, pretending you're moving up to cover a missed kill attempt.

(3) A weight-training program, jumping rope, and running wind sprints will all increase your leg strength.

(4) One reason many players lack racquetball endurance is that they are not forced into long rallies by their regular opponents or their particular style of play.

Therefore, make sure your matches include opponents who understand the subtleties of a good racquetball game. A player like this will move you around the court and inspire long rallies because he doesn't skip the ball in.

(5) Learn to keep adjusting your feet as you prepare for the approaching ball so that you're in the best possible position to hit. In most low-zone rallies, there's enough time to at least take a couple of steps to get into a better hitting position.

(6) Keep your feet moving between shots, but remember to get into a set coverage position in or around center-court as your opponent makes contact.

(7) After you hit, watch the ball and study your opponent's intentions as he goes to hit. Remember, good anticipation is going to help you cover the court more efficiently, with less frantic, scrambling effort as the match progresses.

(8) Fight for every point, and when you hit a crummy shot, don't assume your opponent is going to hit a sure winner. If you concede the rally and fail to relocate to an appropriate coverage position, then you won't be prepared should your opponent indeed miss his "plum" setup. Other players make the opposite mistake here. After hitting a weak shot, they rush up to the back service line to cover the kill attempt. As a result, if their opponent leaves his kill attempt up, they are jammed or the ball goes easily past as an irretrievable pass.

(9) While it's important to contest every retrievable shot, *stay on your feet*. Diving for the ball is a bad habit to develop, because it's too hard on your body and you waste valuable time getting to your feet when you should already be adjusting your position. I've seen several pros who are great divers, but after watching them on videotape, I feel they could have more efficient coverage if they learned to stay on their feet. Better watch pro Mike Yellen, who probably covers better than anybody who has ever played the game. He doesn't dive for anything except as a last-resort effort. He simply relies on strong cross-over steps, quick shuffle steps, and anticipation.

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"Wow! There's Two of You!"

Joy and Jackie Paraiso

by Carole George

Joy and Jackie Paraiso are the top-ranked twins on the WPRA tour. In fact, they're probably the only twins on the pro tour. In some ways it's an advantage, such as twin contracts with Ektelon, but in other ways it's a disadvantage, such as paying double entry fees and travel expenses.

But being a twin is nothing new for either Joy or Jackie Paraiso. They've been doing it for 19 years now and have no plans to change their status. They'll even be getting married together (although not to each other) because their parents have already stated that they'll only finance one wedding for the twins. With nine children it's easy to understand why they have to budget.

The Paraiso clan lives in El Cajon, CA, not far from San Diego, which was the Mecca of racquetball when the whole family got into the sport six or seven years ago. Although all 11 Paraisos play racquetball, only the twins and little brother Joey are serious tournament players. Joey won the 14-and-under title in the Junior Nationals two years ago.

Even though Jackie and Joy are identical, their pro rankings are not. Joy, at number 22 in the nation, no longer has to qualify, but of course Jackie credits that to the difference in their draws. After all, it's impossible for two players to get identical draws, even if they are identical twins.

But they're not doing badly at all, considering that they've only been able to compete in four pro stops. For the WPRA Nationals in Fort Worth, TX, the twins boarded a plane for the first time since they were one year old and the family moved from North Carolina to California. They hope to travel to many more tournaments this season, especially if they can get more than just clothing and equipment from their sponsor. Working childcare at the Star Fitness Center doesn't exactly foot the bill for a touring pro, let alone a pair of touring pros.

While some sets of twins fight for their individuality, Joy and Jackie still wear their hair the same, dress identically at times, enjoy all the same hobbies and interests, and consider the other their best friend. In school, even though both had lots of friends, they spent most of their time together. Naturally, many people get the two confused. For that reason, next to their senior pictures in the Class of 1984 yearbook, Joy listed her nickname as "Jackie" and Jackie listed her nickname as "Joy."

At tournaments they're constantly being congratulated for a great match they didn't play. Or people jokingly accuse them of switching between games. Quite often at an away game where they're not already known, someone will get to know one or the other, and then when they're seen together you'll always hear "Wow! There's two of you."

One thing the Paraiso pair refuse to do is compete against each other. They insist on being seeded in opposite brackets, but in San Diego they still often end up together in the finals. Usually the tournament director will be understanding and just split the check for them or put both their names on the trophy. But on the rare occasion that someone insists they play off for first, they'll either play left-handed with old broken racquets, or dressed so identically that the referee doesn't know who won the rally and finally gives up trying to keep score. So much for sibling rivalry. These two refuse to fall for it.

The only time that they do compete is also the only time they regret being twins. And that's when it comes to boys. Unfortunately, they have identical taste in boys. Since twin boyfriends are hard to find, they're still trying to figure out how to duplicate their favorites. Jackie is normally a little more outgoing, but when it comes to guys, Joy gets the award. Luckily, Joy's current boyfriend doesn't interest Jackie. But if Joy



The only way to tell Joy from Jackie (or Jackie from Joy) Paraiso is to be one of them. "The Twins" are racquetball pros who avoid each other on the court.

has any plans of getting married, then Jackie better get busy finding her own boyfriend.

One time the twins played a joke on Joy's boyfriend. In the darkened movie theater they sat down first, leaving a space for him in the middle. They had purposely worn their hair and clothing the same. When he sat down between them, the first thing he said was "uh oh." Jackie succeeded in convincing him that she was Joy, so he put his arm around her, but quickly realized his mistake when he heard identical giggles on either side of him.

Of course, Jackie and Joy aren't identically identical. They never get confused. Because they know the secrets. One has two moles on her face and the other has only one, but I've forgotten which is which. For sure, Jackie is the one with a chip between her two front teeth. Or is it Joy?

When asked if they ever get mixed up when they see photographs of themselves, they answered no, "except on our baby pictures." Their mother and other family members play it safe by just calling them The Twins.

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Still one of the modern wonders of the world is the 50-mile-long Panama Canal — built over a 10 year span at a cost of \$387 million. It generally takes from eight to 10 hours for a ship to cross the canal, which runs in a northwest direction. The system of three sets of locks raise and lower vessels 85 feet from sea level to sea level. Shown making the transit is "The Love Boat" — The Royal Princess.

Experiencing Panama . . . And a Little Bit of Racquetball

by Victor Block

The morning was taken up with a short flight from teeming Panama City to nearby islands where Indian dwellers live much as they have since pre-Columbian days. After a tour of their thatched roof villages and a refreshing dip in the Caribbean, there was another prop-plane ride, followed by an afternoon spent snorkeling in the Pacific.

The next day brought an equally dramatic change of settings, as white sand beaches gave way to towering mountains with peaks disappearing into the clouds, and bathing suits were shed in favor of sweaters and jackets.

These diversities, in a West Virginia-size country about a 2-1/2 hour flight from the U.S., are the

major attractions of Panama. Add the friendliness of the people toward Americans, an opportunity to see the Panama Canal — and even a bit of racquetball — and one can find a number of reasons to head for this Central American destination (Eastern Airlines and Pan Am from Miami).

Actually, Panama is more closely associated with South than Central America. It joined Columbia in 1815, splitting off in 1903 to seek U.S. help in building the Canal. Geographically, Panama actually lies further south than the northern most parts of South America. This near-equatorial location accounts for the hot, humid year-round climate near sea level. By contrast, days are comfortable and nights cool in the mountains.

For sightseers, the Panama Canal itself is the major draw. The 50-mile-long waterway remains an engineering marvel nearly three-quarters of a century after its completion (in 1914). The most convenient way to view it is from the observation booth at the Miraflores Locks just outside Panama City. Entrance is free; a guide describes the passage of ships as they are raised and lowered, and a film presentation traces the canal's history and operation. A delightful sight to me was tiny sailboats entering the locks with giant ocean-going tankers, some of which clear the sides with scant inches to spare.

Panama City — with its surprising highrise skyline and Manhattan-like rush of traffic — has

attractions enough to fill several days. The remnants of Old Panama (*Panama Viejo*) mark the spot where Panama was founded in 1519. The original city stood at this location — now an area of old walls and towers interspersed by small parks — until 1671. Then, during raids by the pirate Henry Morgan, the governor set Panama City on fire to thwart Morgan's efforts to steal Incan treasures stored within its gates.

After Morgan's attack, the city was moved to a more secure spot. Colonial Panama (*Casco Viejo*) still is surrounded by the walls raised to offset further incursions. The narrow cobblestone streets are lined with balconied stone houses built in both Spanish and French colonial styles. Among points of interest are the busy open-air market; San Jose Church with its golden altar, which was once painted black to camouflage it from plunders, and several museums specializing in history in the Municipal Palace; Colonial Religious Art and Archaeology.

The major hotels in Panama City are the very nice Holiday Inn, Marriott (whose manager told me of indefinite plans to add racquetball) and El Panama Hilton International, which has one court. This well-located hotel, built around an oversize free-form swimming pool, has a new health spa and three lighted rooftop tennis courts, two squash and one racquetball court. There's no charge for guests of the hotel, and loaner equipment is available. Room rates begin at \$91 for a single and \$102 for a double and reservations may be made by calling the Hilton toll-free (800) 445-8667.

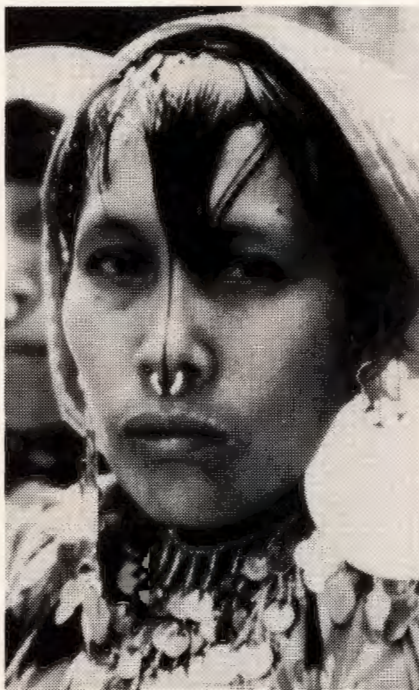
The Panama Racquet Club, located at La Loceria, has one racquetball court and two squash courts. The price for visitors is \$7.50 for 45 minutes. You may book court time on the day you wish to play by calling 60-6884.

Visitors who venture outside Panama's capital city find that the country's small size — 31 miles across at its narrowest neck — provides easy access by car or plane to its diverse attractions. The Kuna Indians inhabited the San Blas Archipelago in the Caribbean when present-day Panama was discovered and captured for the

Spanish Crown in 1501.

Dwelling on 51 of the more than 350 islands (many more specks of sand in the sea), today's residents have made few changes in the way of life led by their ancestors. The men tend palm trees, raise fruit, and fish in dugout log canoes. Women — finely turned out in appliqued *mola* blouses, colorful skirts, gold nose rings and bead or gold ornaments at the neck, wrists and ankles — fabricate *molos* for their own use and for sale as an art form. Small thatch-roof hotels on several of the islands offer very basic accommodations for those willing to rough it.

Off the Pacific coast, less than an hour's flight from Panama City, is Contadora Island. Known as the site of conferences among leaders of the area's nations, and temporary home in 1979 for the Shah of Iran (Phillipines ex-President Ferdinand Marcos also asked to retire there), Contadora is



A face from history: When present-day Panama was discovered in 1501, the San Blas Archipelago was already home of the Kuna Indians. Inhabitants of about 50 islands and self-administration.

lined with beaches (one reserved for nude sunning) and luxurious estates. The Contadora Resort offers golf, tennis, fine beaches and — like most hotels throughout Panama — a casino. Rooms cost \$80 single, \$95 double.



Ruins of "Old Panama," dating back almost five centuries, are among the sightseeing attractions for visitors exploring Panama City. This first city of Panama, founded in 1519, flourished until 1671 when destroyed by pirate Henry Morgan.

Contrasting sharply with Contadora Island and its resort is another nearby hotel set at 5,000 feet in the mountains of Chiriqui, the province of Panama bordering Costa Rica to the north. Driving there from the provincial capital of David (pronounced Dah-veed), one feels the temperature and humidity drop perceptibly. This is a region of coffee plantations, rushing hillside streams and tiny towns, far different in setting and feeling from the low-lying coastal areas.

Awaiting travelers is a delightful surprise called the Hotel Bambito. Set against mountain cliffs amid a profusion of flowers and streams, this five-star property boasts lighted tennis courts, an indoor-outdoor swimming pool, exercise room, whirlpool and sauna. The excellent dining room features trout from the hotel's own pools prepared 14 ways. Room rates are \$59 a night for one or two persons.

The contrast between the hills of Chiriqui, beaches along two oceans and bustling Panama City are typical of what one finds in this friendly neighbor to the south. Add the opportunity to play a bit of racquetball, and then hope that business or a pleasure trip takes you that way soon.

PRODUCT SHOWCASE



Action Eyes for Fashionable Protection

Action Eyes, which were designed and engineered by Bausch & Lomb, have long been recognized as the leader in fashion eye protection. The new "Limited Edition" Action Eyes continue the tradition with the largest selection of colors on the market today, according to the manufacturer. They are now available in 14 striking colors, including the ever popular clear frames. All frames come with 3 mm polycarbonate lenses, which can, of course, be replaced with prescriptions. Action Eyes meets the impact standards of ASTM F803-86. For more information call Viking Sports (800) 535-3300 or (408) 923-7777 in California.

Racquetball Gifts, Cards

With the Holidays coming on, it's time for racquetballers to stock up on gifts and cards for family, friends and friendly competitors (on the court). CLC Graphics has some suggestions: How about T-shirts? Not just any T-shirts, but quality 50/50, blue on white T-shirts with your choice of "Racqbo" or "Backhand Hanna" lettering. They come in sizes S through XL and are priced at \$9.95 each. And then there's that racquetball Christmas card list to fill. CLC Graphics Christmas cards are red on white, linen finish with a simple Seasons Greeting message inside and red envelopes. A set of 12 is \$9.95, or 25 for \$16.95. Send orders to: CLC Graphics, P.O. Box 9652, Colorado Springs, CO 80932, or phone credit card number 24 hours a day, (303) 520-1560, (800) 334-0854, ext. 412.



New Ektelon Specter Products

Ektelon eyewear takes a new curve with its Specter eyeguard, designed to provide full-field, distortion-free peripheral vision for racquetball court play. The one-piece Specter oversized lenses, made from lightweight, scratch- and pierce-resistant 3mm polycarbonate, feature a molded bridge nose designed for maximum comfort. In addition, the Specter headstrap is adjustable, detachable and washable. Suggested retail is \$10.95. Ektelon's new Thermasport bag contains a special feature: A thermal racquet cover which protects the racquet from extreme temperatures. The detachable racquet cover can stand alone as a racquet carrier and will easily fit two racquets at a time. The oversized top-zipper Thermasport (21 in. long x 8-1/2 in. wide x 12 in. high) comes in navy with wedgewood trim, pewter with navy trim and charcoal with red trim. Suggested retail price is \$34.95. For more information, contact: Ektelon, 8929 Aero Drive, San Diego, CA 92123, or phone (619) 560-0066.

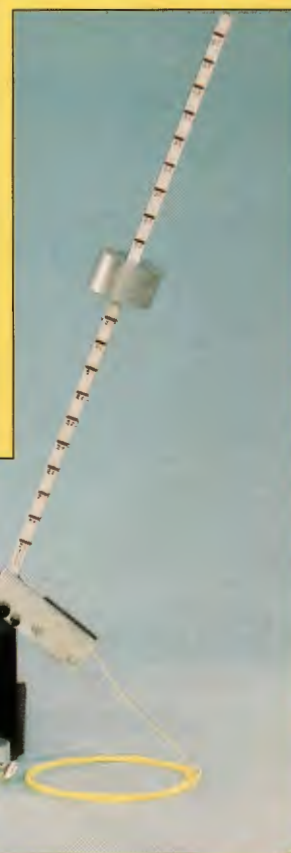
'Custom Grip' Plastic

A new and revolutionary racquetball accessory developed by the Staris Company is available for all racquetball buffs. From the enthusiasm shown by racquetball pros, such as Seattle's own Fielding Redleaf Snow, the Staris Company is confident that Custom Grip is an important innovation for players wanting a racquet that fits their hand. Custom Grip consists of a 6" x 6" x 1/4" sheet of moldable plastic, which fits any racquetball or tennis racquet handle. Once the player has wrapped the grip around the handle, he presses his own hand into the soft plastic, leaving an impression of his individual grip. After about 12 hours, Custom Grip hardens into a solid, customized grip, unique to that player. Having a customized grip allows players to import more power into their shots, as less effort now is needed to hold the racquet. Another advantage of Custom Grip is that its form fitting grip is comfortable, and because it's rubber it serves as a shock absorber for hard hit shots. Perhaps it's best attribute is the additional sense of "feel" a player gets (and needs) for touch shots and shots hit hard. Custom Grip offers a life long guarantee. For more information, contact: Staris Company, P.O. Box 485, Vashon, WA 98070, or phone (206) 567-4933.



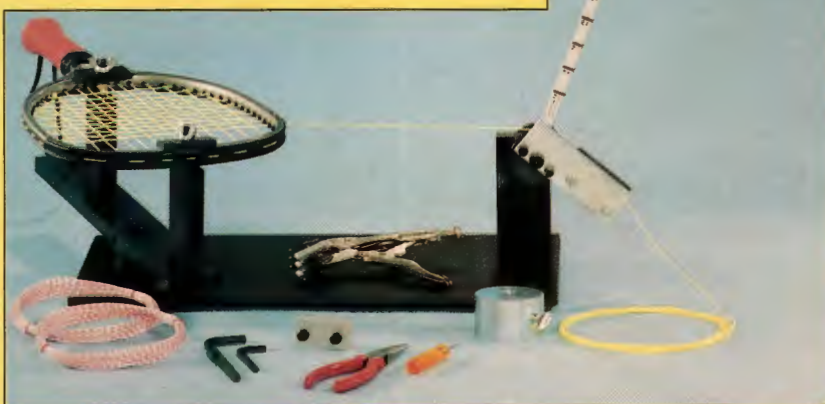
New Mid-Size Racquetball Racquet from RichCraft

RichCraft introduces a super lightweight mid-size racquet. Designed for players who want increased court coverage without sacrificing offensive quickness, finesses or power. The MS 230G mid-size frame is slim in profile and made using structural layers of continuous graphite fibers. The racquet incorporates a technically advanced twin beam cross-sectional configuration that features molded-in contoured string passages, not drilled. It's an innovative design solution, new to the racquetball industry, that eliminates fiber burrs and the grommets that must be used to cover them. It is a design feature that helps to maintain racquet frame integrity — drilling string holes has been found to weaken the racquet by severing the 'continuous' fibers within the frame. The MS 230G, as well as six other advanced racquetball racquets, is now available under the RichCraft name. All RichCraft racquets are manufactured in the U.S. from only the highest quality materials. For more information, contact: RichCraft, 2817 Empire Avenue, Burbank, CA 91504, or phone (800) 331-7143.



RCP Stringing Machine

Does the high cost of restringing your racquet force you to play with "has-been" strings? The RCP Stringing Machine from Racquet Custom Products will allow you to string racquets like a professional, but without the professional expense. The RCP Stringing Machine can add new life to your racquet and help you achieve your full potential on the racquetball court. The RCP Stringing Machine is an American-made precision drop-weight system designed by stringers to handle the full range of tensions required. The RCP Stringing Machine fits all sizes of racquets: racquetball, standard through oversized tennis frames, badminton and squash. Each RCP Stringing Machine is individually calibrated and will not require any future calibration or adjustment. The simple drop-weight system for tensioning is highly accurate. All parts are fabricated from top grade aluminum alloy and zinc-plated stainless steel. The RCP Stringing Machine comes complete with everything you need, including instructions, vise grip speed clamp, start clamp, long nose pliers with cutters, stringer's awl and practice string. The RCP Stringing Machine is perfect for professional stringers, players who travel to tournaments and stringing for fun and profit. For more information, contact: Racquet Custom Products, P.O. Box 472, Whitewater, WI 53190. Customer service is available from 3-6 p.m. (Central Standard Time) Monday through Friday by calling (414) 473-5874.



WPRA Report

by Caryn McKinney



Hosting a Tournament

During the numerous visits the WPRA pros make to clubs throughout the country, we are often asked just what it takes to host a WPRA Tournament. Most people think it's a complex process very different from any other special event they currently offer

their members. Quite the contrary, hosting a WPRA event is just like holding any other tournament, with one exception: Raising the prize money for the pro division.

In black and white, here are the basic requirements:

— Two racquetball courts (more

required if amateurs included, which we encourage),

— Use of facility for a three or four day period,

— Tournament director to coordinate personnel and administrative duties surrounding the event,

— Printing and distribution of applications (WPRA will distribute to its membership),

— Designation of area for working press room,

— Locker room facilities, and

— A guarantee of prize money — \$10,000 minimum.

In return, the WPRA offers complimentary instructional and referee's clinics, 300 Official Tour Programs, WPRA Official Press/Media Kits, and a writer and photographer for the official tournament article. Further, the WPRA works diligently with its sites, sponsors and promoters to coordinate press functions, pro/celebrity events, auctions, quinellas, tournament parties, special events, special functions, etc. In short, we'll provide the resources to make the event unique, give the facility the greatest opportunity to increase traffic for membership, pro shop and restaurant sales, and offer your membership a truly special weekend at the same time.

Clearly, the differences between a WPRA Tour Event and a standard racquetball tournament are the raising of the prize money and the tailoring of promotional activities for the greatest benefit to

(continued on page 40)

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First Serve

(continued from page 4)

"Here," he said, tossing me the ball. "You serve."

I really wasn't sure what to do, so I decided to reach back into my racquetball history, trying to help the guy relax with something familiar. I hit a high, arching lob serve, or rather, I tried to, but the ball didn't carry as far as I planned.

The stranger raced up and blasted a backhand fly return. I was frozen. The ball whistled past one ear while his racquet zipped by the other.

"you can't do that. you've got to stay behind this line until the ball reaches you," I said, pointing to the new, dotted receiver's line."

Oddly, my opponent didn't complain. I offered to replay the point, and he accepted. I served a garbage serve to his backhand and the rally began. A good rally, even great. We took turns with the upper hand until I caught him too far up front and drove a backhand, cross court past his forehand on the right side.

The stranger took off after it, full board, toward the back wall. Nearly there he stumbled, lost his balance and went full speed into the back wall—head first.

I rushed to his aid and found blood streaming from his nose and ears. I raced out of the court, screaming for help and came back second later with the club manager.

When we got to Court 6—it was empty. The stranger and evidence of him was nowhere to be found. We searched the club and found nothing.

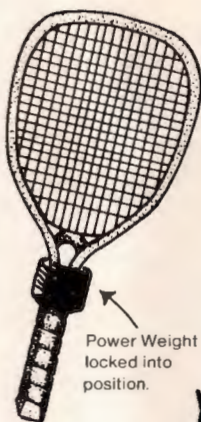
I've often thought of that man since. I've softly prayed that he found his way back to his own time of 21 point games, black balls, smelly cut-offs and lob serves.

And I was secretly glad I never told him about over-sized racquets.

Letters

(continued from page 6)

Editor: We'll try your "IN and OUT" method the next time three of us hit the courts. As for "What's the Call, Ref?", if other readers show interest in its return, we will consider reinstating it on a regular basis.



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Off Court Fitness

(continued from page 12)

on his finger. It was prior to the start of the 1985 football season.

"Oh yeah," he said enthusiastically shifting attention from himself to his teammates. "We've got a great team this year, and we're getting better every season."

The following Sunday, I found myself proudly quoting Payton's statement about an eventual Superbowl win to some of my "I know everything there is to know about football" friends in the club lounge as we watched the Bears on TV.

"What does he know?" one of them cracked.

"Excuse me, you're right," I answered sarcastically, "He only plays on the team."

One year and one Superbowl later, I realized the reasons why Walter Payton was my favorite club member of all time. Where others accepted and even predicted failure, Payton went for and achieved success. He set personal goals and consistently worked hard to achieve them. You could see it when he was in our fitness center, and you could watch it pay off for him on the football field.

Walter Payton taught the

members of my club and me the real meaning of fitness, mentally as well as physically. We were lucky to have him as a member, and he should have charged all of us for it!

WPRA Report

(continued from page 38)

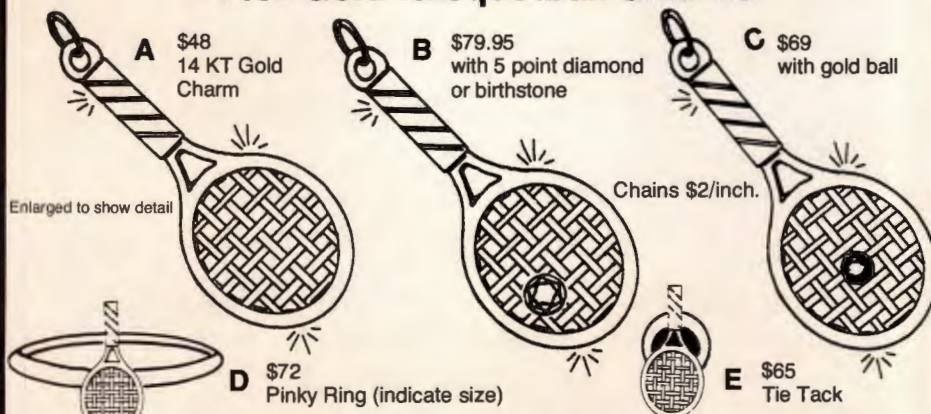
both the club and sponsors. For this reason we encourage facilities to coordinate a WPRA event with one which they have already scheduled.

If the money seems to be a major stumbling block, please realize that with a little ingenuity and steady work, there are many avenues for raising the purse. The obvious example is to approach local or regional sponsors who have supported your tournaments in the past. A typical pro stop is sponsored by two to five "major" sponsors plus any number of associate sponsors. In addition to these sponsors, using the pros as a showcase, many other resources are available to raise funds. For example, selling ad space for an insert in the WPRA Official Program, coordinating your event with a charity, selling tickets to non-tournament players, negotiating with tournament hotels and airlines, etc.

Not every facility is suited for a WPRA Tour Event. However, with a staff that is willing to work together for something new and different, it can be a reality and a great boost to your club's business and to racquetball within your area. If that weren't the case, the WPRA wouldn't be able to boast that 90 percent of the facilities we visit invite us back the following year. Our format and programs are designed to develop ongoing relationships that are beneficial to all parties. Club members will experience renewed enthusiasm for racquetball and your facility will benefit from the media coverage, publicity, and increased court usage.

If you are interested in receiving further information, ideas for your own WPRA Tour Event, or in talking with our other sites, please contact Caryn McKinney at P.O. Box 95563, Atlanta, GA 30347.

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Harnett

(continued from page 19)

overhead splat kill winner and watched with disbelief as the ball broke.

Harnett took over to roll and roll and roll. He dropped a miss hit in for a gravity kill. Everything else worked. And Andrews helped by skipping in the last two shots of that game. Harnett had tied the match.

At 0-2, Andrews serving in the tiebreaker, he tried an overhead kill that hit the service line. Harnett hit his own point four as a falling away backwards splat. Both shots signalled the remainder of the match. Harnett reached, dove and did what it took. Andrews skipped in the final two points again. Game and match to Harnett.

In victory, Harnett had kept his string alive, the one that means he has yet to lose a match in the finals of a professional tournament. The one that means two tournaments in a row (with the DP Nationals). The one that means back to back Bud Light Open wins.

But unlike last year, where in the semifinals he had to come back from being down 2-10, 0-2 in games, nobody pressed him until Andrews in the finals, not even Marty Hogan in this year's semifinals.

Hogan lost the first two games there, and not until the third, did he put on the Hogan surge that is so exciting to watch.

Hogan was down five serving nine to Harnett, took a timeout and turned it on so that everyone had that feeling deep inside. The Hogan-will-win feeling. And he did. Cat-like dives, shoulder-high kills and intensity. Harnett did not score again that game.

But in the fourth, the drive serves which, consistently short, had betrayed Hogan all match, failed again. And Harnett shrugged off the Hogan mystique. Harnett was there to rekill Hogan's pinches, and bite off the serves. Harnett, eleven. Hogan, only four. End of match.

The other semifinal had Andrews against Mike Ray. But how they both got there was the destruction of top seeds along the way.

Egan Inoue faced the "doctor of death serves" himself, Cliff Swain, in the round of 16 and dealt back some bitter medicine. Inoue, fresh from his World Champion title in Florida where he defeated Ed Andrews in the quarter finals, actually aced Swain four points in a row, to end one of the games, and won the match without going tiebreaker. That was one seed gone.

Yellen, a notoriously slow starter at the best of times, had only been back from a tour of Europe for two weeks, and coupled that with the misfortune of running into a hot, hot Jack Newman. Newman seemed to kill every ball Yellen left up, and burned Yellen three straight games. One other seed gone.

Then Newman ran into Andrews and learned a quick lesson about the other end of hot, hot. He did not score a point against Andrews in the quarter finals until the second game, then salvaged enough to lose the match 3-1.

Inoue faced Mike Ray, ranked at number six on the tour, and both found out why the other deserved to be in the quarter finals. In a match of momentum swings, and tied at one game each, it went like this: Inoue ahead 6-0, Ray scoring 11 in a row to win. Then Inoue unstoppable with drive serves and rekills for 11 in a row and game four. Nobody left the stands during the tiebreaker where Mike Ray toughed out three match point serves by Inoue and traded the skin of his teeth for an 11-10 victory into the semifinals.

The top of the draw pitted Hogan against Steve Lerner in the round of eight where both played give away until The Legend slowly swung into operation and won in four games.

In another giveaway match of higher intensity, Harnett fought Greg Peck. Harnett, down 6-3 in the first game, stormed back to 9-6 with three ace serves, then got no farther. Peck, holding a game lead, practiced his dives during the second and lost to Harnett's powerful cross-court passes. In the third, Peck turned his game around to outplay Harnett, and still lost after a 9-6 margin. Then Harnett, having taken it back, held onto it in

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the fourth and shot everything with enough confidence to win 11-2.

That left Harnett against Hogan, Andrews against Ray. And while Harnett proved the crown belongs on more than one head, Andrews exactly showed Ray what it takes to be the top amateur in America. Andrews funnels all prize money winnings through the national amateur governing body, and in three straight games against Ray, had one more round's worth to add to the pot.

In a match of superb mobility and crunching power, Andrews made less mistakes. Andrews played large. He left no doubt who should have won, easily taking the first game, then stopping Ray who led 6-2 in the second, to score nine in a row. In the third, Ray watched a 7-1 lead diminish to 8-3, and finally evaporate in the last game that Andrews let him play at the Bud Light Open.



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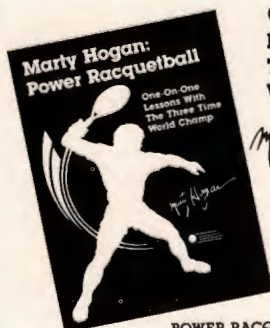
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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1986-87 AARA SEASON SCHEDULE

November 7-9

Fla-State 4-Wall Outdoor Championships
Auburndale Rec. Center
202 West Park Street
Auburndale, FL 33828
Keith Johnson
(813) 967-7265

November 14-16

Leukemia Society
824 Philadelphia Park
Wilmington, DE 19809
Suzanne Roberge (302) 764-7700

November 14-16

7th Annual Kiwanis Tournament
Sarasota Family YMCA
1075 S. Euclid Ave.
Sarasota, FL 33577
Barbara Simmons (813) 957-0770

November 14-16

Quadrangle
2160 University Dr.
Coral Springs, FL 33065
Libby Laney (305) 753-8900

November 21-23

8th Annual TN Turkey Shoot
Supreme Courts
4633 Trousdale Dr.
Nashville, TN 37204

November 21-23

Holland Fall Open
Holland Health & Racquet Club
572 East Eighth
Holland, MI 49423
Lee Frederickson (616) 392-1417

December 5-7

Dave Greise Memorial
Montgomery Athletic Club
5675 Carmichel Park
Montgomery, AL 36177
Jack Sorenson (205) 277-7130

December 5-7

NH State Doubles
23 Cliff Ave., Boars Head
Hampton Beach, NH 03842
Lance/Gayann Bloom
(603) 926-3233

December 5-7

New Hampshire State Doubles
Manchester Court Club
Manchester, NJ
Lance/Gayann Bloom

FOR AARA INFORMATION

Contact: Luke St. Onge
(303) 635-5396

1986-87 RMA SEASON SCHEDULE

November 12-16

Dallas, TX

January 14-18

Boulder, CO

Jan. 28-Feb. 1

Tulsa, OK

Feb. 18-22

Beaverton, OR

March 11-15

Hawaii

March 25-29

Phoenix, AZ

FOR RMA INFORMATION

Contact: Jim Hiser, Commissioner
(313) 653-9602

1986-87 WPRA SEASON SCHEDULE

January 16-18

Mountain Valley, CA

March 13-15

Atlanta, GA

FOR WPRA INFORMATION

Contact Caryn McKinney,
president (404) 636-7575

Improve Your Game

(continued from page 25)

you should attempt to hit well-placed drives and lob serves. When returning serve, don't try foolish kill shots. Return to the ceiling, alternating down the line and cross court ceiling balls. When the ball is in play you should also stay to the ceiling until you are given a shot you have confidence in. Then concentrate and make the shot.

By being patient, taking allotted timeouts, both in practice and in tournaments, and attempting shots that are called for in a given situation, you'll find that you'll be more competitive with the superior player.

RANKINGS

The sources for these national rankings are as follows: Men's — Official RMA Pro Racquetball Tour rankings; Women's — Official WPRA Tour rankings; Amateur — Official AARA national rankings.

AARA NATIONAL RANKINGS MEN'S OPEN October 1986

1	Ed Andrews, CA
2	Andy Roberts, TN
3	Dave Negrete, IL
4	Dan Obremski, PA
5	Charlie Nichols, FL
6	Kelvin Vantrease, IL
7	Doug Ganim, OH
8	Aaron Katz, TX
9	Don Kelly, CO
10	Tom Montalbano, NY
11	Tim Hansen, FL
12	Dennis Aceto, MA
13	Jamie Summer, UT
14	Jack Nolan, AZ
15	Sergio Gonzalez, FL
16	Tony Gabriel, IN
17	Roger Harripersad, CA
18	Scott St. Onge, MA
19	Oscar Gonzalez, FL
20	Mike Spugnardi, ME

RMA PRO RACQUETBALL OFFICIAL RANKINGS September 14, 1986

1	B. Harnett	398.02
2	M. Hogan	332.52
3	M. Yellen	325.39
4	C. Swain	271.21
5	G. Peck	264.27
6	E. Andrews	242.18
7	M. Ray	228.60
8	R. Gonzalez	184.73
9	S. Lerner	179.56
10	D. Peck	164.45
11	G. Price	158.71
12	S. Oliver	149.32
13	E. Inoue	136.67
14	D. Obremski	120.57
15	A. Gross	114.37
16	J. Hilecher	112.99
17	D. Cohen	107.94
18	D. Gross	104.46
19	J. Egerman	90.12
20	M. Griffith	89.39

AARA NATIONAL RANKINGS WOMEN'S OPEN October 1986

1	Cindy Baxter, PA
2	Trina Rasmussen, CA
3	Mona Mook, CA
4	Mirjam Weilheisen, CO
5	Chris Evon, IL
6	Terry Latham, TX
7	Crystal Fried, CA
8	Elaine Mardas, OH
9	Mary Dee, NH
10	Fran Davis, NJ
11	Sandy Robson, IL
12	Cindy Doyle, NY
13	Nan Higgins, NH
14	Kim Despain, UT
15	Kaye Kuhfeld, IN
16	Colleen Shields, IL
17	Claudia McCarthy, FL
18	Linda Diamond, FL
19	Mary Lyons, FL
20	Janet Burke, MA

Off The Wall

(continued from page 1)

players have the option of removing a referee or an umpire over disputed judgment calls? Do tennis players have the same options?

The point is simply this. Professional racquetball requires and deserves professional officiating.

It should not be the responsibility of other players to be judge and jury for their peers. Further, it should not be the option of the players to arbitrarily replace referees (professionally paid ones) if the game ever gets to the point of being able to afford such luxuries.

What happened during the above-mentioned match was not only unfortunate, it was unprofessional.

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Commissioner's Report

by Jim Hiser



Attitude Makes a Difference

Is the attitude of professional racquetball players changing? As I travel the country, this is without a doubt one of the most often asked questions. It is true that in the early years of racquetball, certain professionals were, should we say, less than mature with regard to their "on and off" court etiquette. But as the game matured, so did the player, and today's touring professionals have a changed attitude.

Marty broke into a smile, signed two players souvenir programs and began conversing with his new admirer. Marty then reached into his bag, removed a couple of wrist bands and presented them to the junior fan.

This expression of understanding impressed the mother so much, she was now determined to support her son's racquetball effort, at any cost.

Numerous players contribute

Numerous players contribute both time and money back in the sport. Mike Yellen has funded a \$500.00 Michigan scholarship for the past four years while many other players have contributed hours to clinics, charities and individual training camps, including the AARA Elite Camp.

At a recent pro stop, a junior player's mother approached me with a story regarding one of the professionals. Apparently, Marty Hogan had just lost a close semifinal match and was sitting outside the court, packing his racquets and preparing to leave. The junior player, not realizing or understanding Marty's frustration, approached him for an autograph. Marty looked up from his bent position and stared at the youngster. As the young mother approached to remove her son,

both time and money back in the sport. Mike Yellen has funded a \$500.00 Michigan scholarship for the past four years while many other players have contributed hours to clinics, charities and individual training camps, including the AARA Elite Camp.

The vitality and individuality of the professional tour still exists, but with a different focus. If you haven't seen a professional event lately, make an extra effort to visit the next tour stop in your area. You won't be disappointed.

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