

Racquetball Reporter

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WEST MICHIGAN OPEN BRINGS PROFESSIONAL RACQUETBALL BACK TO MICHIGAN

- Twayne M. Howard

For the first time in over a decade, Professional Racquetball graced the courts of a Michigan tournament. And what a show it was. Huge crowds came out to play in the tournament and watch the best of the best show their stuff in this Tier 4 International Racquetball Tour event. Over 100 spectators were on hand to watch Saturday morning's first Pro match and the crowds only got bigger throughout the day.

In the Pro Division, five touring Pros faced off against eight local players looking to prove their stuff. The round of sixteen saw only one upset as Michigan's State Open Champion **Brandon Cortese** took out the 5th seeded Pro, Joey Logan. Brandon safely advanced in three games. The other matches had **Mike Anderson** advancing past Jason Gorski, Andy Hawthorne advancing past **Dale Graham**, **Jim Floyd** advancing past **Brent Zimmerman**, and **Scott Graves** advancing past **Shannon Kohl** in a classic five game match that took nearly two hours to complete.

The quarterfinals kicked off with another "upset" as Michigander and past State Champion Jim Floyd dispatched 3rd Seed Eric Desrochers. Going in, this was the keynote match of this round and many felt that Jim could get past Eric. Jim did not disappoint as he beat the 33rd ranked Pro in three games. The rest of the round went according to seed. **Jack Huczek**, currently #1 on the tour easily defeated tour veteran Mike Anderson in three games. Ruben Gonzalez, currently #19 on the tour, dropped one game to Scott Graves, and then allowed Scott only one point in the next three games. "Double donut...ouch". Sorry about that Scott. That's why they call this 52 year old Hall of Famer "Superman". Brandon Cortese's run ended when he ran into Andy Hawthorne. Brandon took a game from the #43 Pro, but it wasn't enough as Andy cruised into the semis.

The semis kicked off Sunday morning with the Huczek / Hawthorne match first up. Andy's

game style is his tremendous getting ability and amazing power. Jack is Mr. Consistency, and is also one of the best "getters" on the Tour. Andy fought hard, but the disparity in talent was too much to overcome as he lost 11-6, 11-1, 11-6. Jack's awesome shot-making ability kept Andy on the run, and on the fly, and on the dive the entire match, and it proved too much in the end.

The second semifinal pitted Jim Floyd against Ruben Gonzalez. This match was a thrilling display of high-speed racquetball as both players flew around the court with reckless abandon. The first two games went to "overtime" 12-10, 12-10. Then Ruben found the answer and switched away from a lob serve to his classic "slicey-dicey" drive serve. This seemed to keep Jim off balance and Ruben rolled to an 11-0 win to advance to the Finals. "Donut in the Semis... Ouch".

The finals featured a classic confrontation between the young kid, on top of his game, his whole future ahead of him and the veteran, still dangerous after all these years on the tour. What a great show! It was the first time most of the spectators had gotten to see racquetball at this level and the crowd was loud and supportive all day, interspersed with comments of shock at the awesome talent they were seeing. There were rallies where both players covered every corner of the court, each diving to retrieve a great shot from his opponent, each get and each shot better than the last. It was a tremendous display of racquetball as the game should be played. After an 11-2 blow-out in game one, Ruben decided to get more aggressive in two and three. Both games were close with both players holding small leads with no room for any mistakes. Ruben's aggressive play, kept Jack scrambling, but in the end, it was not enough. Jack won games two and three 11-8, 11-8.

All of the Pros took time out to talk to the spectators, answer questions, sign autographs and just chat throughout the weekend. The Pros put on a tremendous show and provided a great start to a

(cont. on page 3)



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THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wow what a great way to kick off the racquetball season! As you read this we will have completed seven or eight sanctioned tournaments with more adding all the time. It's good to be back in the heart of the season with plenty more to look forward to.

In this edition of the Racquetball Reporter you'll find the entry form for State Doubles. Total Sports will host the event again this year and we look forward to another full weekend of great doubles fun.

We will again be hosting a "State of the State" meeting on Saturday at 7pm. This will be an "open board meeting" where we will have the opportunity to discuss with you some of the things we're working on, and you'll have the opportunity to discuss your ideas with the Board. Last year's event led to some good discussion and we hope this edition will as well. Always remember that we are here to work for you. Use this opportunity to give us your feedback on how we're doing.

Now, we're not above bribing you to come to the meeting. At approximately 8:00 pm, we're going to host another fundraising auction of racquetball gear, and just about anything else we can get our hands on. This auction will benefit the Michigan Juniors Program and we hope to top last year's total of \$1,200. Anyone who was there last year knows that this was fun-filled event with several items garnering heated bidding until the final winner was determined. And don't worry, there is something for just about everyone included. The flip side to that is that if you have any items that you feel would be popular and are willing to donate them to the cause, please contact me at (616) 771-0312. Last year we auctioned off clothing, massages, body care gift baskets, meals, and many other items, not just

racquetball gear. Feel free to donate any new item you feel of value, and come prepared to bid high or go home. Remember, it's for a good cause.

In other exciting news, we have added several tournaments since the last edition. November 5-7 Karen Green is hosting the Franklin Turkey Shootout. November 12-14 Jeff Connell is hosting a Benefit Tournament at the Lansing MAC. January 7-9 Jeff Tloczynski is hosting a tournament at the OMNI Fitness Club in Muskegon. January 14-16 Stephanie Winfrey is hosting a tournament is Genesys Athletic Club in Grand Blanc. Finally Don Schopieray is hosting a tournament at the Davison Athletic Club in January or February. As always the best way to keep up on the schedule is to check out our website, www.michiganracquetball.net. Feel free to add it to you "Favorites" and check it every few days.

In my last letter, I mentioned our current Board and how exciting it is to be involved with this group. As a natural evolution, several committees have sprung up working on dedicated projects. The Hall of Fame, Web Site, Newsletter, Advertising, Juniors, Women, Sanctioning and State Tournaments are just some of the committees. This is in addition to undertaking the re-write of our Constitution and By-Laws. We have changed considerably since the current editions were created, and they are in need of updating. If any of these interest you, keep in mind you do not have to be on the Board to contribute, or to come to the meetings.

Even if you are just curious, you are welcome to attend Board meetings. The next one will be the week of November 29 to work on the State Doubles Draws and will be held at Franklin Athletic Club. If you would like to attend, please contact me for details.

As always, please feel free to contact me. Or any of the other Board members with an questions, comment, concern and complaint. We are here to work for you.

I wish you all a continued great season! See you on the courts at the State Doubles!

-- Twayne M. Howard, President
RAM



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GRAPHICS EAST in Chesterfield, Twp., Michigan.*

West Michigan Open -- (cont. from page one)

new tradition of professional racquetball in Michigan.

Three multi-bouncers came out to try their skill in front of the big crowds. **Stone Antisdale** got past **Jessica Reidt** and **Kayla Reidt** for his first WMO Championship.

A huge Juniors 12- Division went to **Brad Schopieray** after six rounds of play. **Eric Sporer** took second, **Matt Barbuscak** took third, **Kevin White** finished fourth. **Trevor Sporer**, **Brandon Quinn** and **Jeremy Stevens** also competed.

After the round robin play in the Juniors 14- Division, **Andrew Price** rolled to an easy win over the field. **Frank Antonelli** finished second. **Jarred Antisdale** and **Eric Sporer** also competed.

The Junior 16- Division had the closest finish of the weekend. **Andrew Price** took this division as well, with **Mike Krieger** taking second. **Mark Servais**, **Justin Bess**, and **Brad Servais** also competed.

Paula Saad won the Womens Open Division over **Melody Gorno** in round

robin fashion. Also a round robin, the Womens A went to **Maureen Price** over **Wendy Ford**.

Any of the Pros that did not advance to the semis, dropped into the Open Division. After re-seeding, **Brandon Cortese** defeated **Mike Anderson** in a tough three game match.

Steve Clark won the Mens A Division defeating **Jason Gorski**. The Mens B Division went to **Bob Reou** as he defeated **Al Kohl**.

Rick Foster defeated pseudo-lefty **Glen Williams** for the Mens C Championship. Local **Drew Campanelli** made it through a tough Mens D draw to win the Championship over **George Parobek**, who came up from Indiana to compete.

Capping off a great weekend, **Brandon Cortese** took first in the Mens 20+ Open Division over **Greg Lewerenz**.

Burkhard Kloesener won the round robin Mens 25+C Division over **Joshua Thomas**.

The Mens 35+ Open Championship went to **Jack White** as he got past **Jeff Connell**. **John Torres** "tore" through the

Mens 35+A Division, defeating **Randy Pagels** in the final. **Al Kohl** took home his second runner up plaque after falling to **Art Murphy** in the tie-breaker of the Mens 35+B Division. **George Parobek** added a First to his Second after winning the Mens 35+D final over **Richard Wroten**.

Dale Graham cruised through the Men's 55+Open Division defeating **Tom Sharum** in the finals.

As always Saturday night belongs to doubles. **Scott Graves** and **Brent Zimmerman** defeated **John** and **Rich Torres** in the Mens Open Doubles Division. The Men's B Division went to **Dan Mullin** and **Jay Marcotullio** as they defeated **Melody Gorno** and **Stephanie Cobb** in the finals. **Mike Krieger** and **Greg Fenner** won the Mens C Doubles over **JB Thomas** and **Joe Reidt** and **Matt** and **Matthew Barbuscak**. **Maureen Price** and **Chris Barrigar** defeated **Thelma Howard** and **Twayne Howard** to win the Mixed B Doubles Division.

As always, kids are the focus for WMO. This tournament was held to benefit Children's Miracle Network and raised

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JUNIOR'S CORNER . .

Top Junior Player Taken in Baseball Draft

-- Twayne M. Howard

"In the sixth round, the Seattle Mariners select **Jermaine Brock**, Ottawa Hills High School, Grand Rapids, Michigan." That's what it might have sounded like had any of us been paying attention to the Major League Baseball draft this Summer.

Jermaine was most recently seen competing in the State Singles Championship this Spring where he was a Semi-Finalist in the Mens C Division after hardly playing this season.

We've seen him grow up on our racquetball courts, having begun with the Grand Rapids Juniors Clinic at its inception. What most of us did not see was that on the baseball diamond,

Jermaine was reaching even greater heights and eventually catching the attention of baseball scouts from several teams. In his senior season, he pitched and played the outfield, batted .505 and stroked 5 home runs in a fourteen game season. His blazing speed and strong arm has the Mariners projecting him as an outfielder and a solid prospect.

If he advances, we may get to see him play for the Mariners single A affiliate, the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, in the Midwest League. It will be good to see him take his next steps toward success here at home.

No one knows what the future holds for Jermaine. There are incredibly long odds against any Major League draftee. With his incredible athleticism and determination to succeed, I certainly wouldn't count him out. **WAY TO GO JERMAINE!!!!!!!**

2004 IRT 12th WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

-- Sharon Huczek

The United States swept the individual competition at the 12th International Racquetball World Championships in Seoul, Korea in August earning four gold medals. It was the fourth time that his feat was accomplished (1981, 1992, 1996, and 2004). Jack Huczek never allowed an opponent to reach double digits, outscoring Alvaro Beltran (Mexico) 15-3, 15-2 in the finals. The Men's Doubles team of Mike Dennison (OH)/Shane Vanderson (OH) defeated Polo Gutierrez (Mexico)/Javier Moreno (Mexico) 15-8, 11-15, 11-9.

In the Women's Singles, Cheryl Gudinas (IL) out-powered Angela Grisar (Chile) 15-3, 15-7 to win the gold. The Women's Doubles Team of Jackie Rice (CA)/Kim Russell (TX) was also victorious. They overcame Susan Acosta (Mexico)/Rosy Torres (Mexico) 10-15, 15-10, 11-10 in a close fought tie-breaker.

The United States also captured the gold in the Team competition. Canada finished second, followed by Mexico in third and Chile in fourth place. **WAY TO GO TEAM USA!!!**

2004 NMRA INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

-- Sharon Huczek

The National Masters Racquetball Association International Championships were held at the Wisconsin Athletic Club in West Allis from July 21-24. The Embassy Suites Hotel was beautiful and the hospitality superb, complete with daily grand buffet. The club facilities were also excellent.

Representing Michigan at the Championship were Donna Backus, Kevin Fuqua, Greg Hodges, Sharon Huczek, Charles Kaiser, Bob Miller, Ron Pudduck, Duane Russell, Tom Sharum and Greg Zivov. Sharon Huczek placed first in the 55+ Singles. The doubles team of Duane Russell and Mervin Schinagle (OH) brought home the gold in the 75+. Donna Backus and partner Marquita Molina (CA) also brought home gold in the 60+. Ron Pudduck and his partner Ron Adams (CA) finished fourth in the 65+.

This tournament is always great fun and provides lots of opportunities to form

friendships that last, like the game of racquetball, for a life-time. (see the Michigan contingent in the picture below). **CONGRATS TO ALL!!!**



2004-2005 RAM TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Nov 5-7	Turkey Shoot Franklin Racquet Club, Southfield
Nov 12-14	MAC Benefits Tournament MAC, East Lansing
Dec 3-5	STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS Total Sports, Mt. Clemens
Jan 7-9	Omni Fitness Club Muskegon
Jan 14-16	Genesys Athletic Club Grand Blanc
Jan 21-23	Motor City Rollout Courtland Athletic Club, Utica
Feb 11-13	Game Face Open Total Sports, Mt. Clemens
Feb 18-20	Capital City Challenge Michigan Athletic Club, East Lansing
March 4-5	March Madness Players Athletic Club, Warren
March 11-13	Ladies Only Singles and Doubles Genesys Athletic Club, Grand Blanc
March 18-20	MAC Open Michigan Athletic Club, Grand Rapids
April 8-10	STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP Coliseum II Racquet Club, Taylor

WEST MICHIGAN OPEN -- *(cont. from page 5)*

over \$1,000 for CMN. CMN is an alliance of hospitals nationwide specializing in treating children. These funds will help local member hospital, DeVos Children's Hospital, continue its excellent work. Over \$500 was also raised to benefit the Grand Rapids Juniors Program through the generous donation of Head and ProKennex racquetball gear.

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. Our Golden Sponsors were Jim Hamilton of ING, Michigan Hand Center, Nicholas Plastics, PPKW Racquetball, Head/Penn Racquet Sports, ProKennex Racquetball AD Design and Johnny Advertising. Our Silver Sponsors were Grand Office Supply, Bob ShurLOW, Genesis Salon and Day Spa, Chet Kokot – Agent State Farm Insurance Companies, Richard Wroten – First Horizon Home Loans and Steve Seely – Wachovia Securities. Our Bronze Sponsors were the Swan Inn and Tom Blakeslee.

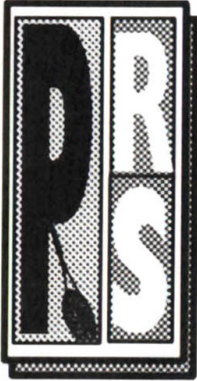
This was a spectacular weekend and we look forward to seeing you there next year.

UPCOMING RAM BOARD MEETINGS

Week of November 29
Franklin Racquet Club
Contact Twayne Howard
616-771-0312

Saturday, December 4
Total Sports
Mt. Clemens
7:00 pm

PS - Don't forget the
auction/party at the State
Doubles Tournament



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ADVERTISING RATES FOR THE RACQUETBALL REPORTER FOR 2004-05

The Racquetball Reporter is published quarterly throughout the year - August, November, February, and May. Items to be included in the Racquetball Reporter for the 2004-05 year must be submitted by the following dates:

August 3, 2004	January 5, 2005
October 4, 2004	April 4, 2005

Advertisement material is subject to approval by the RAM Board of Directors. The prices for advertisement material are:

\$400 - Full page ad to run in all four issues (7" x 9.5")

\$250 - Half page ad to run in all four issues (7" x 4.75")
\$150 - Quarter page ad to run in all four issues (3.5" x 4.75")
\$100 - Club listing for all four issues (3" x 2")

All advertisements must be submitted in camera ready format in the appropriate size. E-mailed graphics can be accepted in either a .TIFF or .JPG format. All advertisements will be in black and white for all issues, except the April issue which will be in full color. Payment must accompany submission of all advertisement material. Information may be mailed to The Racquetball Reporter, 321 Village Dr., Lansing, MI 48911 or sent electronically to djeasterling@earthlink.net.



RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

2004 RAM STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

DECEMBER 3-5, 2004

TOTAL SPORTS CLUB

40501 Production Drive, Harrison Twp., MI

phone (586) 463-2000



ENTRY FEES & DEADLINE

First Event \$30 per person - \$60 per team
Second Event \$15 per person
Juniors \$15 per person - \$30 per team
USA Racquetball Membership \$30 per person

Entries must be received by November 29, 2004. Play is limited to two events per person. Tournament is USA Racquetball sanctioned. A \$5 late fee will be charged for all entries received after the deadline. This includes all phone entries.

RULES AND REFEREES

Single elimination format with matches consisting of two games to fifteen and a tie-breaker to eleven. USA Racquetball rules apply including **mandatory USA Racquetball-approved lensed eyeguards**. Penn blue balls will be used for all matches. Referees will not be used. All players will use the honor system.

STARTING TIMES

Play begins on Friday, December 3, 2004. Call the club Thursday, December 2, 2004 after 6:00 pm for starting times, or check the website at <http://www.michiganracquetball.net>. **Effort will be made to reduce Friday and Sunday play.**

AWARDS

Medals will be given for the first and second place winners in divisions with draws of at least eight teams. Each player will receive a tournament shirt.

ELIGIBILITY

All players must live or work full time in the state of Michigan, and be a member of RAM. Players must be able to provide proof.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

Tom Blakeslee -- (586) 468-2767
Twayne Howard -- (616) 771-0312

SPECIAL TOURNAMENT EVENTS

General Player Meeting - Saturday, December 4 - 7:00 pm

"I Gotta Have That" Auction & Party - December 4 - 8:00 pm

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 29, 2004

Name _____ Partner 1 _____
Address _____ Partner 2 _____
City _____ Club Affiliation _____
Phone (days) _____ (evenings) _____ Date of Birth _____

Make checks payable to **RAM**, and mail to **RAM State Doubles Championships, 38114 Lakeshore, Harrison Twp., MI 48045**

Entry Fee (first event) \$30 _____
2nd Event Fee \$15 _____
Junior Fee \$15 _____
USA Rac. Membership \$30 _____
Late/Phone Fee \$ 5 _____
Total _____

Waiver clause: I hereby for myself, my heirs, executors & administrators, waive & release any & all claims for damages I may have against RAM, the host club, tournament staff, & their agents, for all injuries which may be suffered by me due to participation in said tournament.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(parent/guardian signature if under 18)

DIVISIONS

circle correct choices - limit 2 divisions (1 age, 1 skill)

	MENS		WOMENS	
Open	25B	35C	50A	Mixed A
A	25C	40A	50B	Mixed B
B	30A	40B	55+	Mixed C
C	30B	45A	60+	Mixed D
D	35A	45B	65+	
25A	35B	45C	Mixed Open	

Juniors: (specify age division) _____

All Juniors play will be on Saturday

Alternate division: _____

(Divisions may be combined if fewer than 8 teams)

Mail To: **RAM STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP, 38114 Lakeshore, Harrison Twp., MI 48045**

JOIN THE RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

Membership Includes:

**Membership card, USA Racquetball Official Rule Book, travel and equipment discounts*

**USA Racquetball medical, life, and liability insurance at sanctioned events*

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**Six issues of the USA Racquetball national magazine, RACQUETBALL MAGAZINE*

**RAM sanctioned tournament entry forms mailed to your home*

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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_____ \$30.00 – Adult Competitor

_____ \$20.00 – Junior Competitor (without *Racquetball Magazine* subsc.)

_____ \$20.00 – *Racquetball Magazine* subscription only

MAIL TO: RAM, 111 Pearl St., NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Racquetball Reporter

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