

RACQUETBALL

SPECIAL JUNIORS ISSUE



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USA Racquetball is the National Governing Body for the sport of racquetball, recognized by the United States Olympic Committee, and is committed to excellence and service to our members. We provide the infrastructure and organization for racquetball. We also provide competitive opportunities for members and enthusiasts through our coordination of racquetball organizations, development and administration of rules and programs, sanctioning of events and development of teams for international competition.

VISION STATEMENT

To provide racquetball opportunities in the sport of racquetball for all levels of participation through:

Strategies:

- **MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT** - USAR values its members and will strive to provide the best possible member services at all levels.
- **MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT** - USAR believes that racquetball is a lifetime endeavor and the benefits of health, recreation, and competition should be available to everyone. USAR will strive to expand its membership in order to share these benefits with as many players and supporters as possible.
- **PROMOTION OF THE SPORT** - in order to sustain a strong player base USAR will promote the numerous benefits of participation through mass marketing efforts.
- **COMPETITIVE SUCCESS** - USAR strives to maintain America's position as the number one racquetball nation in the world. Success at the elite levels has a positive influence on every other facet of our sport.
- **SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS** - USAR values its relationship with sponsors and will continue to maximize benefits and exposure.

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By James Hiser, Ph.D.
USA Racquetball Executive Director

JUNIOR RACQUETBALL

Racquetball's Future Rests In Youth

This issue of *Racquetball* magazine is aimed at promoting junior racquetball. The promotion of junior racquetball is an ongoing challenge. Without question, junior participation has decreased and the reasons for the decline are many:

- Parents abandoned the sport for other club activities
- Many health clubs do not allow younger players to have memberships
- Competition with other youth activities
- The technical age of computers accompanied by the popularity of finger-tip exercise
- The reduction of courts and the absence of qualified racquetball programming
- The elimination of physical education classes in school and the decline of overall youth fitness

Even in considering these reasons, this fact remains: **Racquetball is a great sport for young people, and if given an opportunity to play, they love the sport!** Witness the successful high school programs in St. Louis and Oregon. Both programs continue to increase in participation for numerous reasons:

- Dedicated and qualified instructors and coaches
- Club and school administrative support
- The inclusion of both boys and girls, making the sport both social and competitive
- The concept of team competition, emphasizing loyalty and school spirit
- The acceptance of racquetball as a "REAL" sport and physical fitness activity

There are many great junior programs in pockets around the country (like those of Kim Roy in Florida and Don Schopieray in Michigan), but these types of programs are more localized and limited in scope than the organized high school programs. That's not to say that the local programs don't make a difference (they do!), but the development and promotion of high school programs in more cities will be particularly vital to the future of our sport. Dan Whitley (St. Louis) and Bruce Reid (Oregon) are great resources for those of you who consider high school racquetball your forte.

So whether you're involved in teaching high school students or grade school age players, whether you're a parent starting your child out very young (like Jack or Rhonda), this issue is for you. Get ready to be inspired by some of the most dedicated junior players in any sport, anywhere.

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The **BIGGEST WIN** of all

By Cheryl Kirk,
USAR Board President



The Junior Committee... "will determine policy and procedures to promote junior racquetball within state associations for all youths of high school age and below. The committee will also assist in the policy development and operation of junior national events. The committee is responsible for furthering the growth of and participation in racquetball programs for players 18 years of age and under at the local, state, regional, and national levels." – USAR Constitution

Gotta love governance and structure, right? But please read on, this is not what this article, indeed this entire issue of *Racquetball* is all about! It's about the people within: the junior players, the parents, the people who aren't parents but just love the sport and want to make sure it stays strong and healthy long after this generation leaves the courts forever.

So let's take a look...and the disclaimer up front is that so very many are doing so much that this space in this publication could never recognize you all...but know that you are so very much appreciated!

The new Junior Committee, which has evolved from the Junior Council of the past several years, includes Malia Bailey, Junior National Team Coach Kelley Beane, Brian Dixon, Lance Gilliam, USAR Executive Director Jim Hiser, Cheryl Kirk, Kelley Lavelly, Victor and Nancy Manilla, Jody Nance, Bruce Reid, Kim Roy, Don Schopieray, Frank Taddonio, Assistant Coach Shane Wood, and pro players Jack Huczek, Kim Russell-Waselenchuk, and Mike Guidry. These hard-working folks have gathered for two conference call meetings to date, and believe me, there are enough worthwhile objectives and discussion topics to fuel these calls well into the future!

Fundraising is vital to virtually all aspects of our sport. What a concept – we need financial resources to do the work and achieve the results. My favorite quote is, "None of us is as good as all of us" (Ray Kroc). You all personify those simple words. Junior Team contributions (as well as those for the Adult Team, Collegiate and General Development) via R2 Sports have raised thousands – one \$5 click at a time. Ryan Rodgers gives his wife and business partner Tish full credit for this wonderful idea...and thanks to the many who have been so generous with those clicks when entering events on R2 Sports. People do what they can – Coach Kelley Beane related a story from Houston when a woman pressed a \$20 bill into her hand and said simply, "Please make sure this is used for the kids." Referees donate their ref fees for juniors...and the kids themselves are out there raising money for the sport they love. Few among us can look one of these kids in the face and say "no." This demonstrates the heart of our wonderful community.

And what does junior racquetball mean to parents, to families? Jody Nance responded, "I would say that because of racquetball I have done some amazing traveling with my children. We have traveled across the US and into Mexico, and we have been to some of the best

amusement parks and have seen breathtaking scenery. We have been able to travel for weeks through various cities in Mexico and created some lifetime memory moments together. Amongst the travel we have developed some lifetime friendships along the way. What more could I want than to share special moments like these with my precious children!"

(Note: I had asked the Junior Committee parents to give me their perspectives for this article, then realized in receiving their inspired answers that this subject deserves a lot more attention than a paragraph could provide. Look for a feature in a future issue of Racquetball.)

We all have junior players in our lives who are special to us. I'd like to mention several of mine over Illinois way...like Krystal Csuk who started playing when she was 9 years old, back in 1991. Her mom, Pam Hepp, and I would "let her" come on the court with us when we were just about finished playing for the day. What a joke – these days we'd be lucky if she would let us come onto the court with her! Krystal, now 26, has become a fine young woman, a 2008 graduate of Northern Illinois University with a Master's of Physical Therapy, working for Dr. George Pappas and engaged to pro player Juan Herrera. With her education accomplished, her career underway, and a 2009 wedding in the planning, Krystal also intends to return to the WPRO Tour and pick up where she left off. Trevor Snyders, 17, son of proud parents Chuck and Pam Snyders, started playing when he was 5 years old. He's excelled in many sports, including his favorite, racquetball. We in Illinois, including his long-time coach TJ Ferro, have watched him grow to be an articulate, self-assured young man who is exploring a career as a fireman. In the coming generation, Tristan Bush, 10, son of Jim and Robyn Bush, is as tenacious and self-possessed as they come. Earlier this year, he struck up a conversation with Julie Lennert, a woman at his club who expressed a desire to learn to play. Tristan said, "I'll teach you!" then walked over to the desk and booked a court for the following week. Eight months later, he's still coaching Julie on a weekly basis.

What a blessing to have this in our lives: the benefit juniors get from interacting with adults, and the benefit we adults get from hanging out with the kids – it keeps us young! This generation is growing up in fine fashion and we hope they will remain playing and involved in their adult years. Some will meet friends, spouses and partners for life, as so many of us have before. The next generation is right behind them...and we hope they will scoop up the baton and lead the way to keep it going for them and for the ones who are just learning to walk. And so it will go...

Junior players, enjoy this issue for the information and instruction it provides. Adults young and older, this is your handbook for creating our legacy. Don't throw it aside as "not for you"...embrace it for the inspiring ideas you will use to put your personal brand upon this sport that indeed has made such a difference to us all.



Junior Racquetball **SPECIAL SECTION**

- *12 must-have programs*
- *programs that work*
- *the junior syndrome*
- *instruction especially for juniors*
- *the junior experience - past junior team members and current professionals*
- *meet junior team usa*
- *racquetball assemblies*
- *manufacturers highlight their juniors*
- *physical fitness benefits of racquetball for children*

12 MUST-HAVE Junior Programs



• by **Connie Martin**



In this special Junior issue of *Racquetball*, I'm listing what I feel are very important programs that your club should have for junior players. If you own or work in a club, challenge yourself to run some of these programs or improve upon the existing programs you already have. If you are a person looking for a club, check to see if they have some or all of these programs in place.

INTRODUCTORY PROGRAMS

It's important to offer programs that can get the kids introduced to ball sports, namely racquetball. This can be done a number of ways through the club. What is important to remember on Introductory Programs is that you want the kids to learn about the game, have fun playing the game and want to come back for more!

1 DAY CARE (NURSERY)

While mom or dad is in the club working out, why not take some of the kids (4 & up) who are in the day care onto a racquetball court and play some games? You can let

parents know ahead of time that on Tuesdays from 10-10:30am if the kids are in there they will be going with one of the day care workers and your racquetball director to the courts for some ball handling skills. The kids can run, throw, catch and eventually start hitting the balls with racquets (make sure everyone wears eyeguards). One way to promote this: give the parents a coloring sheet with the information right on it.

2 FAMILY TIME

Set up a few times throughout the year, perhaps even once a month on a Friday night, where families can come learn the game together and/or learn drills they can do with their kids on the racquetball court. You can even have a Family Racquetball/Pizza Night and charge accordingly for racquetball, a swim and then a pizza party.

3 KIDS PROGRAMS

During your Summer Kids Day Camps or Holiday Sports Days (i.e., during school holidays) or a Friday Kids Night Out Program, make sure to include racquetball. Show the kids how to play, let them rally the

ball on the court. Remember, safety is always first: eyeguards are a must for the instructors and the kids.

4 TRYRACQUETBALL

Offer a program such as TryRACQUETBALL to all your new members or potential members on a weekly or monthly basis – a one-hour lesson for kids (or adults or families) to come see what the game is all about.

5 LESSONS

Offer fee-based programs for kids to learn the game in a group setting. Most racquetball companies have Starter Packages with racquets, eyeguards and a ball that you could include in the lesson (price accordingly). Be sure to offer ongoing retention programs to your members to keep them 'active' in the sport. You can't just show them how to play, you'll need to offer programs that keep their interest as well.

6 WEEKLY ROUND ROBIN PLAYS

This one's for kids who know how to play. Offer a fee-based drop-in program or a free program once a week. Your racquetball director, pro

or another interested party will be there to play in with the kids or arrange for them to play each other during that hour. It can be split up by age group and/or skill level. This is a great time for their mom or dad to be off playing on another court, lifting weights or in an exercise class.

7 INSTRUCTION

Offer group lessons for kids to continue to learn the game (and to give them something to do while mom/dad is using the club). This can be in the form of racquetball lessons or a combined program such as Racquetball/Swim so they meet for an hour on the courts and then go swimming.

8 LEAGUES

Offer kids leagues to keep them playing. This can be in the form of a League Only Program (your typical league) or a Lesson/League (3 weeks of lessons, 7 weeks of league play) or something less competitive like Lesson/Play (30 minutes of lessons each week and 30 minutes of round robin play).

9 COMPETITION

Many states have an excellent junior tournament program in their state. Check www.usaracquetball.org and look for the link to state associations. You can offer a full junior tournament at your club or even periodic one-day shootout type events if you only have a couple of courts. Check the different state websites for ideas.

10 LOCAL DAYCARES

Invite the local daycares (most have buses) to bring their older kids for racquetball lessons after school or in the summers during the day. Working parents who have kids at the daycares love the different programs they offer because they can't always get off work to take kids to ballet or tennis or racquetball lessons. (At the end of the lesson, remember to give a guest pass for their whole family to come visit your club.)

11 SCHOOLS

Many public and private schools offer life-sports-type programs where they bus the kids to an athletic club,

a bowling alley, ski hill, etc., during their PE classes. This is a fee-based program where the kids pay a fee to the school, then the school pays us. These classes are great because they use your courts during the day when they're usually empty. (Check into Home School Programs in your area too...they are always looking for day program ideas.)

12 HIGH SCHOOL RACQUETBALL LEAGUE

The High School Racquetball League program is big in many areas of the country. Oregon has 500+ kids and the St. Louis area alone has the same number. Both of these programs started out with small

numbers and with the use of volunteers, along with the clubs making their courts available for Saturday matches, they grew into large initiatives. Note that many of the kids are not members of the club, but once they start playing, their families often become members. For information on the Oregon Program, go to: www.OregonRacquetball.org.

Connie Martin, Director of Programs at Cascade Athletic Clubs in Gresham, OR and National Racquetball Hall of Fame member. Connie@CascadeAthleticClubs.com.

Play Time for Kids on Racquetball Court

Wednesdays 10-10:30am



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JUNIOR RACQUETBALL *Alabama Style*

by Ann Hemphill

The Alabama Junior program (ages 5 through high school) evolves around one word – FUN! Everyone involved in the sport of racquetball plays because it is just so much fun. Add speed, fitness, strategy and throw in some competition...and racquetball becomes an awesome package. Alabama has offered junior classes for over 15 years at a local club in the Tuscaloosa area. Over time, Fitness One's manager has graciously allowed non-members to join the junior racquetball classes offered. What started as one class meeting after school for members only has evolved to three classes involving a home school group as well as a class for a private school.

With only two courts, the key we have found to continuing the program is flexibility in times and finding someone who is enthusiastic about junior racquetball. All equipment is provided or information given to make purchases. We have discovered that Wednesdays and Fridays after school work the best for most kids; the home schoolers' class works well after lunch. In sticking with the theme, "Kids Just Wanna Have Fun," classes involve conditioning, individual warm-up time, a lot of playing time (they love doubles), handicapped play (adding bounces depending upon ability—from one up to five – or

having a more experienced player play opposite handed), refereeing instructions (to make sure they know the rules, can handle their peers, and keep themselves involved during class), local competition/tournaments and their all time favorite – pizza parties!

We are extremely fortunate to have the University of Alabama Racquetball Team here to help with the kids and include them in their two tournaments they hold on campus. The Juniors play on Friday nights of the tournaments and have a round robin format, food and use of the Rec Center's basketball courts and X Box games. They finish with their finals on Sunday afternoons.

Because we had two players interested in going to Junior Nationals this past year, we began fundraising efforts for the first time to support them. Following the lead of the Florida Junior Program, we had Alabama Junior Racquetball t-shirts made and sold them at all tournaments; then the money earned was divided up evenly. We were also given the opportunity to have ref fees donated to the juniors at one tournament – raising close to \$100 – and we also held a juniors-only tournament. At the recent UA fall tournament, we sold the t-shirts and added raffle items graciously donated from players/sponsors plus held a bake sale (lovingly made by moms of the players). We could have six juniors making the trip to Michigan this next year!

Non-local juniors are "recruited" from tournaments and via players/parents. Any potential/interested junior who is at a tournament is asked to play with the current juniors right then. We are happy to add any junior into the round robin format who wants to play; it's easy to do with the round robin format and the extra equipment kept at all junior events. All juniors are then notified about any junior event that is going to take place.

We are extremely fortunate to have the national junior racquetball camp, The Rumble, held here in June at the University of Alabama. Juniors who are interested in advanced play and competition have the opportunity to find out more about this excellent camp.

Lastly, we are so thankful for all of the great, wonderful and giving Alabama and Auburn racquetball players who support not only their own game, but the future of the game. Thanks to all!



Florida Junior Team by Kim Roy, Coach

HOW I GOT INVOLVED...

My program is relatively young, yet growing exponentially. Three years ago, my club asked me to start a volunteer junior racquetball program, one hour a week. Within weeks, the program grew to 50+ kids and three days a week. Just one year later, I expanded the program to several more racquetball clubs and then created the Florida Junior Team.

BASIC STRUCTURE OF MY PROGRAM

The core roots of my program are **dedication, diversity, support and out of the box thinking**. Dedication to the success of the program will result in a deeply-rooted program. Parents and junior players need to feel that this is a program that is here to stay. More junior players will become involved when you offer a diverse number of programs: private lessons, group clinics, "juniors only" tournaments, Florida Junior Team, and of course the amazingly popular Junior Jamboree. Variety is key. In addition, support of parents and local racquetball players is essential. When in doubt, think outside the box to accomplish your goals.

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Contagious Positive Fun Energy, Structured Safe Environment, Feeling of Success/Accomplishment, Compassion and a Sense of Team ("Florida Junior Team") are my secrets and the essence of my successful junior program. Juniors need these key elements to stay involved:

Contagious Positive Fun Energy –

Attracts them to the program and keeps them coming back.

Structured Safe Environment – Rules are strictly stated and enforced for the purpose of safety on/off the court, self-esteem, and discipline. They know what is expected of them.

Feeling of Success/

Accomplishment – Engage them in a task (based on their skill and personality) that they can accomplish and feel successful doing. Without the feeling of success and accomplishment, the junior players will not return to your program.

Compassion –

Each child's needs are different; be aware of and honor each need. I do this while still maintaining the structured environment of rules. "Tough with a smile" is how parents describe me.

Sense of Team – The Florida Junior Team participated in Junior Nationals 2007 and 2008. Each player received team shirts and support from the results of fundraising activities. While at the events, they were required to watch (and enjoyed watching) the matches of their fellow Florida Junior Team players. The support and encouragement they gave each other was incredible. That sense of togetherness and team is instrumental. Camaraderie amongst the Florida Junior Team members is simply amazing.

A CHALLENGE

I challenge you. Are you up to the challenge?

Donate: Give your old racquet and eyeguards to the kid at the gym who always watches racquetball but never plays. If he is watching, he is interested and wants to play. He might be intimidated or maybe not have equipment. I guarantee the next time you go to the club, he will be on the court.



Eliminate Obstacles: List the obstacles preventing you from having a junior program – then figure out how to eliminate EVERY obstacle and GET STARTED. Most obstacles will disappear before your eyes.

Recruit Volunteers/Support: Ask all top racquetball players at your club to help the junior program once a year. How can they say no to one hour per year? Encourage parents to stay and help out with the program.

Inspire: Find one or two junior players who want to commit to racquetball (above and beyond the others) and encourage them. Suggest practice drills. Play against them once or twice a week.

Start small. Dream big. Eliminate obstacles. Persevere.

Good luck with tackling the challenges and developing your new junior racquetball program! Please feel free to contact me anytime via email at kimberly_roy@hotmail.com to ask questions and share your success.

"Kim's programs are so much fun! Her energy is contagious and the kids become truly excited about the sport. She is playful, caring and knows how to help the kids feel successful, no matter what their level."

- Wendy Widoff

THE JUNIOR SYNDROME

by Don Schopieray

Mention junior racquetball at any tournament and you will get the usual warm reaction, how cute the multi-bouncers are and how amazing some of the better players are. A lot of them are even competing in the adult A and Open divisions and doing very well. They are proclaimed "the future of racquetball."

Junior tournament players are divided into two groups: those who have parents who play and understand the tournament process, and those who come from a club's in-house program with parents who do not understand the tournament process.

Tournament directors are faced with a couple of challenges in these areas. First, they have to keep the core group of adult players happy. On-time matches, low cost, and good hospitality are all keys to a successful event. Junior divisions bring some specific issues that need to be addressed if the program is expected to grow, and when it does begin to catch on and grow, additional problems begin to arise, and you get "the junior syndrome."

The junior syndrome is a phenomenon that occurs when an organization begins to realize success with its junior program. They have found committed volunteers who have a passion for the game and a diverse group of

junior players that meet the requirements in both age and skill to play in the events. Both of these feed off each other and junior tournament numbers begin to rise at a rapid rate. Then the fun begins.

Tournament directors go very quickly from wanting more kids to having too many. They begin to struggle with the tasks that come from the two distinct groups of junior players that I described earlier, from the beginners trying to understand the draw sheets and how they work, to the player parents trying to get their match to play at a time that allows them to watch their kids play. Not to mention the juniors themselves asking the usual "When am I up?" and "Am I going to play so and so." I could go on and on. Funny, as it seems these are all good things. The bad part comes when tournament directors become overwhelmed and suddenly decide that the juniors are too big of a burden and start to shy away from having them at an event. This is Part Two of the junior syndrome.

Here are a few helpful things we have discovered over the past few years to lessen the impact of rapidly growing junior programs:

First, you must know that a large junior event will need more volunteers per player – get as many

willing people as you can and meet with them before the tournament so everyone is on the same page. Designate a Q&A person that will deal primarily with the adults. The questions from the kids will naturally spread out and can usually provide some needed entertainment value, to say the least.

Second, you should try to set up the event in a way that lessens the impact on court time. In some cases, skill-based draws may make for a more manageable day of matches; in other cases, maybe an age-based draw would suit your needs. Either way, kids should expect to play at least two times and maybe a third if you can fit it in. The key here is to be flexible on the day of the matches.

Make sure to have people available to manage the courts, maybe one person per two courts during the matches. This will keep things moving. Settling small disputes in score or resolving rules discussions quickly is important. Remember, they're just kids, so for them to stop play and go get a bite to eat together is not so out of the ordinary!

Being involved with growing junior programs is one of the most fun and rewarding things you can do; it can also test your patience to the maximum if you're not prepared. Always remember that it only takes one bad experience to turn a young player off to the whole thing, so try your best to be understanding when you are hosting one of these events. Relax, after all, it's a game...it's supposed to be fun!

DARA CONDUCTS JUNIORS SUMMER CAMP AT WILMINGTON YMCA by Jeff Zegna

The DARA (Delaware) Juniors Program got off to an early start for the 2008/09 season by conducting four days of instruction at its Juniors summer camp. On July 2nd and 3rd, seventeen kids from the Western YMCA on Kirkwood Highway traveled to the Wilmington YMCA to try their hand at racquetball. DARA Juniors Program Director Stuart Hemming was able to secure the use of the Wilmington YMCA courts for the camp. When asked how he achieved the YMCA's commitment, Mr. Hemming said, "I approached the director at Wilmington's YMCA, introduced myself and told him about the DARA and the Junior Program

that was begun in 2007. It was an easy sell to get them to allow us use of their courts since the primary beneficiaries were kids already signed up for the summer camps at both YMCAs." Camp Director Jamil Roberts was also instrumental in gaining access to the racquetball courts at the Central YMCA.

Director Stuart Hemming and DARA Junior Program assistants Brian Ahern, Kyle Meyers and Ron Calloway taught the children swing mechanics of the forehand and backhand as well as basic rules of the game. "It's important to provide the kids a basis for the proper swing technique," said Brian.

On July 9th and 10th, another 24

juniors from the Wilmington YMCA participated in the program. "As a start to the Juniors Program for this year, it's great to expose almost 50 kids to the sport of racquetball," commented Mr. Hemming.

Several young players asked if this program would be offered again in the future. Stuart and his assistants offered camp counselors their business cards to hand out to interested children and parents regarding future programs. "We discussed the next logical step forward and decided to try to have a couple more Juniors Days at the same venue in September," said Stuart.

Contact Stuart Hemming at the DARA.org website for information and questions about this successful Delaware junior racquetball initiative.

RACQUETBALL PROGRAMS — *a Commentary*

by Elaine Dexter

Most players agree that junior racquetball is the key to preserving this great sport, but how many clubs have successful junior programs in place? Not only is junior racquetball the most important factor in keeping racquetball alive and popular, but it will help ensure that clubs don't remove courts. The biggest problem facing racquetball is finding facilities with enough courts to run programs for the members and tournaments for the public. Who puts the most pressure on cities to improve fields and build sports facilities? Parents do! If a club has an active racquetball program and a skilled person to direct it, then kids will play racquetball. If kids play racquetball, then clubs will not remove courts. Sound simple? Well, in theory it is simple, but how do we find people to run quality racquetball programs? More importantly, how do we convince facilities that have racquetball courts to hire someone to fill these courts with members?

I run the racquetball program at ClubSport of Pleasanton as a part-time undertaking, along with a part-time assistant and two additional

racquetball instructors. The addition of the assistant and the subsequent instructors came as the program grew and the racquetball playing membership increased to over 200 players. Someone who can put in 10+ hours per week can at least begin a racquetball program. And, two people each working that many hours can run both adult and junior programs. So, once you have people who are willing and able to do this, it's easier to convince a club to hire part-time employees than a full-time racquetball director. Naturally, if these programs become successful, the club receives profit from leagues and lessons, but member retention is the ultimate prize. Racquetball players must belong to a club with racquetball courts. If a racquetball program offers something for every player, those players will never leave that club.

As for the junior portion of a racquetball program, it is important to offer something for the younger kids as well as for the tweens and high school age players. This also gives the younger players a group to look up to and emulate. Eventually the more serious high school players will help teach the younger group

and new recruits. Since racquetball is essentially a solo sport, it is vital to create a "community" among the junior players. We have a large case in our racquetball hallway dedicated to our junior players, with pictures, results from tournaments and simple biographies of each player. We run at least one junior-only tournament per year, which also emphasizes the importance that our kids play in the racquetball program at the club. This type of attraction draws more notice from our adult players than one might imagine. Kids like to play and associate with other kids. Not that they don't improve by playing against adults, but they will stick with the sport more seriously if they have other kids to hang with. In addition to the camaraderie, the best junior players in the world became so because they had rivalries that pushed them. Jose Rojas had Ismael Aldana, and Markie Rojas and Jose Diaz had each other. These four young players from Stockton, California have grown to be the best players in their respective age divisions in the country and much of the reason was that they had each other to compete against!

How can we improve junior participation?

Junior athletes usually participate in sports their parents (or other significant adults) play, used to play, or enjoy watching. Parents who play tennis want their kids to play tennis. Parents who golf love to get their kids out on the golf course. Parents who played or love watching baseball want their kids to play baseball. If parents can't relate to the sport at any level, the odds diminish they will encourage their kids to

participate. Therefore, one of the primary strategies to help increase junior participation should actually be to continue to increase adult participation. Once the adults are hooked, the next step is to make sure it is easy and inexpensive for them to enroll their kids in a program at the club.

Another dimension that should be addressed is club, city, state, school, or park district competitions. Forming leagues within a community

Wilson Sporting Goods

allows for a tremendous amount of advertising and exposure that can't happen if programming is only confined to the local club. National recognition of these competitions would help showcase the sport, the athletes and the teams.

Just having the courts will not increase adult or junior participation. Strong programming continues to be the difference between active clubs and clubs that have vacant courts!

JUNIORS: BUILDING YOUR PERFECT GAME

By Fran Davis



Q: I am a Junior player and I know in the past you've trained Junior Champions like Jason Mannino and Sudy Monchik, and now you train Taylor Knoth, Devon Pimentelli and Sharon Jackson, just to name a few. I know these guys are "Really Fast, Quick and Consistent," so can you share some drills you do with them?

A: Yes I would love to share with you the secrets I teach these players – Taylor Knoth (Boys 16 & Under Champion), Devon Pimentelli (Girls 14 & Under Champion) and Sharon Jackson (Girls 18 & Under Champion) – about footwork and consistency drills, key components in making them champions.

They all work very hard at making time for drilling since they know "perfect practice makes perfect" and drilling builds muscle memory.

I will break down the drills into different categories and give you a few examples in each:

A-Agility

1-Slalom: Put racquetball cans about two feet apart lengthwise on the court and run in and out and up and back. Do three sets at first and then work your way up to five to six sets, trying to shave off seconds from your time each set.

2-Star Drill: Put a total of 4 racquetball cans on the court, one in each corner of the court. Then start at the dotted line in the middle and have a container that can hold 4 balls.

-Set 1:

Start your stop watch and see how long it takes you to go to each corner individually and put a ball in the can, always going back to the middle to get another ball. Then reverse it and go to each corner individually and then take out a ball from the can, always going back to the middle to drop the ball off.

-Set 2: Repeat, trying to shave some time off.

B-Speed

1-Line Drill: 4 different lines

-Start at the back wall in a down and ready position

-Say go and take off to touch the dotted line and then back to the back wall, then run to the short line and back, then to the service line and back and finally to the front wall and back....and time it trying to shave seconds off your original time.

-Start with one set, then build yourself up to three sets.

2-Sidewall Drill: Shuffle side to side with a racquet in your hand

-Start at the dotted line in the middle

-Shuffle to the right sidewall, then turn, set up and shadow hit.

-Immediately shuffle to the left sidewall, then turn, set up and shadow hit.

-Then go back to the right sidewall, etc....5X in a row.

-Start with one set, working your way up to three sets.

C-Balance

1-Hop Drill: Using the short line, the 3 foot drive line and the service line.

-Start facing either sidewall, on one side of the short line and on the right foot.

-On the right foot, hop to the other side of the short line making sure you are balanced and *stick the landing*.

-On the same right foot now hop back to the other side of the short line making sure you are balanced and stick the landing.

-On the same right foot, continue the whole length of the short line and when you get good you go up the 3 foot drive line then across the service line then down the other 3 foot drive line....making a rectangle.

-Now do the same thing with the left foot.

2-Aerobic Step Drill: Get one of those aerobic steps and put it right on the floor.

-Stand on the side of it, get on one leg, now hop onto the step on one leg and make sure you are balanced and stick the landing.

-Build up to 5 times on each leg and 3 sets.

D-Power

1-Step Up Drill: Find a flat bench about 12 inches high and stand in front of it.

-Use one leg at a time and step up on the bench with full range of motion then down...5 times on each leg and 3 sets.

2-Lunge Drill: You can do this on the racquetball court, the aerobics room or a basketball court.

-Get into a down and ready position.

-Lunge forward as you if you are taking a shot then push back to get into the down and ready position...do each leg 5 times and work your way up to 3 sets.

E-Consistency

1-Ceiling Ball Drill: Put a 5 gallon garbage can in each of the back corners.

-Hit 10 ceiling balls and you receive a point for each ball that bounces in the garbage can on its second bounce.

2-Stroke Mechanic Drills: Put 3 cans of empty Penn Ball cans stacked on the front wall.

-Hit 10 forehands and backhands and you will receive a point if you hit the cans on the fly.

The above drills are just a sampling of the many drills you can use to zero in on all the facets needed to be a champion. Most people find drilling boring, but not *my* juniors. I try to add an element of fun as well as competition all at the same time, which seems to work and keeps them interested.

You can make it fun and competitive by keeping track of your times and trying to beat them each and every time you step onto the court, or by keeping track of how many ceiling balls you can get into the garbage can and trying to beat that number next time, or how many racquetball cans you can hit and trying to beat that next time.

I know these drills that I shared with you today can also make you "Fast, Quick and Consistent," so give them a try and maybe you, too, can become a champion in your own right.

PAST U.S. JUNIOR TEAM MEMBERS SPEAK UP



Jen Meyer ('91-'92)
Teacher in Colorado:

Junior Racquetball has allowed me to meet a variety of people all over the world, given me many

opportunities, and influenced my success in life. Through the hard work and dedication I put into racquetball I was able to see that anything is possible at an early age. To this day, I may not be the best player on the court or the best teacher in a building, but I know that I have the passion, dedication, and heart to achieve and inspire. That alone has made a positive difference in my life and I hope to pass that on to the athletes I coach and the kids I teach.

in terms of being a father and how to handle my own children during their competitions. I watched how coaches interacted with their teams and how coaches tried to teach me how to improve my game. This helped me learn the do's, and more importantly the don'ts, about coaching at every level. How to get the best out of kids...how to use positive reinforcement during my critique.

Junior racquetball has made a tremendous impact on my career, my life, and my future. I could not have asked for a better experience!

eventually became involved in other activities separately and together. Being coached by my dad as a child and young adult was and still is a great experience. It's connected us over the years as best friends. My mother has always been my soundboard for those frustrating moments in racquetball and certainly has been supportive of our lives as racquetball people.

Racquetball also taught me to deal with individual moments with courage and self focus. Junior racquetball was a great counter to the team sports of soccer and basketball. Most importantly junior racquetball introduced me to great friends in other players my age and to adults who governed the sports. I have lifelong friends in Muller, Engle, Mannino, Monchik, Karp (my next door neighbor!) and many others. The bottom line is that when I'm an older man and I talk with some of those guys, we'll always go back to the junior days. There's nothing like being a kid and playing competitive sports with and against friends. It's what life is all about. I love racquetball!



Jeff Conine
(Junior champ 1985)
Professional baseball,
Florida):

I think that without my experience in junior racquetball I would not have had

the baseball career that I did. Racquetball developed all of my athletic skills from hand/eye coordination to foot and hand speed that allowed me to play baseball at the major league level.



Erica Obrist
(Daniels)
Teacher in
California:

Being part of the Junior Olympic Racquetball Team taught me honor and responsibility.

By representing my country as an ambassador, I felt a need to perform at my best and wear our flag in a manner that positively reflected my country and my sport. These traits have helped me later in life to always remember that I am representing something greater than myself. I am part of a family, a profession and a country that I do my best to represent daily.



Eric Muller

Racquetball gave me many of the essential building blocks in life. The lessons of hard work, organization, determination, and

self confidence stand out, and without question helped me in my academic career and now in business. Competing as an elite athlete taught me how to win, how to lose and how to manage pressure. Racquetball also taught me that winning comes easier when I focus on the fundamentals and the process rather than the end result. If you can consistently execute on the little things, the goals take care of themselves.



Jason Mannino
('92 team)
Professional
racquetball player:

Junior racquetball has influenced me in many ways. I learned a lot about competition, not only from the kids, but

from parents and coaches as well. I watched parents become unraveled while watching their kids compete, while my father was always composed and poised. This has taught me a lot



John Ellis,
California:

Growing up with junior racquetball in my life was a very special experience for me.

Junior racquetball definitely developed a strong family connection since both of my parents were racquetball players when I was a young child. As an only child, racquetball became our family identity even though we all

WATCHING THE BALL!

by Sudsy Monchik

Hey, Juniors...this article is for YOU!

I came through the Junior ranks winning every Junior National age division in Boy's singles and doubles (with Jason Mannino) from 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, & 18 & under. I know what it takes to be a champion, and one of the most critical parts of the game, but the simplest, is "Watching the Ball" at all times.

I have played sports all my life from basketball to baseball to stick ball to football to etc., and you never take your eye off the ball or moving object. Racquetball is no different....you want to Watch the Ball, as well as your opponents' body positioning and footwork, as often as you can and as intently as you can, whether they are in front of you or behind you. This information will give you a more educated guess as to what they are going to do with the ball:

- If the ball is up and above their shoulders, then they are probably going to hit a ceiling ball.
- If the ball is knee high or lower, they are probably going to hit a pass or pass-kill or kill.
- If the ball is knee high and lower, but way out in front of them, they are probably going to go cross court.
- If the ball is knee high and lower, but way behind them, then they will probably pinch the ball into the corner.

By watching the ball and your opponent, you have doubled your reaction time...you see the ball come off their racquet, into the front wall and then out again. If you do not watch the ball and your opponent you have decreased your reaction by half...you only see it come off the front wall, you don't see it leave your opponent's racquet and go into the front wall.

With today's game, the ball travels at a faster pace because of the oversized racquets...so increased reaction time is a must.

Juniors, please heed my advice as I did when Ruben Gonzalez told me always to "Watch the Ball" (that was truly the best advice I received as a Junior). Ruben told me to "Watch the Ball" no matter what, whether you are setting up for the ball (Trick #1), or you are stroking the ball (Trick # 2a/2b), or during the rally (Trick # 3a/3b), or during the serve (Trick #4), or returning serve (Trick #5)...always.

TRICK 1 (Setting up for the Ball)

Eyes are on the ball when the ball is leaving the front wall and you are setting up to hit it.

TRICK 2a (Stroking the Ball-Contact Point)

Eyes are on the ball the entire time, especially when the racquet strikes the ball.

TRICK 2b (Stroking the Ball- Follow Through)

Eyes are on the ball the entire time especially once you follow through and the ball leaves your racquet.

TRICK 3a (During the Rally- Opponent is in Back of You)

Eyes are on the ball ...your body is square to the front wall and then your upper body is slightly rotated and your head is turned, looking over your shoulder at your opponent and the ball.

TRICK 3b (During the Rally- Opponent is in Front of You)

Eyes are on the ball...your body is square to the front wall and your head is forward watching your opponent and the ball.

TRICK 4 (During the Serve)

Eyes are on the ball...when setting up to serve as well as when the racquet strikes the ball.

TRICK 5 (Returning the Serve)

Eyes are on the ball the entire time... when your opponent is bouncing the ball getting ready to serve, when the racquet strikes the ball, when the ball leaves your opponent's racquet and travels toward the front wall as well as coming off the front wall.

I can attest that by watching the ball and my opponent I get a much better jump on the ball and even appear faster than I really am. Anyway, my advice as a 15-time Junior National Champion and the five-time #1 Professional Player in the World is to WATCH the BALL morning, noon and night, anytime, and your reaction to the ball will improve dramatically.

Fran Davis taught me a clever trick which I use with my students all the time...use typewriter white out and paint two lines around the ball ... this helps you learn how to track the ball a little bit better and longer so you can react to the ball quicker.

I invite you to attend one of the camps with Fran Davis to learn this first hand or in the meantime pick up one of our videos, "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" with Fran, Jason and myself. Go to www.FranDavisRacquetball.com for details.



ONE



TWO(a)



TWO(b)



THREE(a)



FOUR



THREE(b)



FIVE

INTERVIEWS WITH THE PROFESSIONALS

CONDUCTED AND WRITTEN BY CURRENT U.S. JUNIOR TEAM MEMBERS



INTERVIEW WITH JACK HUCZEK BY NICK MONTALBANO

Nick: What age were you when you started playing racquetball?

Jack: I started playing racquetball when I was two years old!

Nick: In what divisions did you qualify for the Junior National team?

Jack: I qualified for the Junior National team 6 years in a row: two years in the 14's, two years in the 16's and two years in the 18's.

Nick: What was your favorite place to play?

Jack: My favorite place to play in a tournament was in Jacksonville, FL.

Nick: What is the difference between playing for your country in a tournament and playing for individual recognition only?

Jack: Playing for your country is the greatest honor an athlete can have. There is such a feeling of team pride and unification.

Nick: What advice do you have for junior players like me – how do we take our games to the next level and be successful?

Jack: It's about "willingness to learn." You have to be open to learn as much as you can from as many people as you can. Players have to be able to implement and recognize and decipher what will benefit them and what will not.



INTERVIEW WITH SHANE VANDERSON BY JOSE DIAZ

Jose: How many National and World titles did you win?

Shane: For both Nationals and Worlds, I won 6 singles and 5 doubles titles. I won my "up year" in every division.

Jose: What was your favorite place that Junior Nationals was held?

Shane: Hmm...that would have to be Orange County. I remember going to the beach and seeing Hollywood and all the sites of Los Angeles. It was very exciting.

Jose: Who was the biggest influence during your junior career?

Shane: My dad was my main coach and my motivator throughout my matches. He made possible many opportunities that allowed me to be successful!

Jose: What was your favorite thing about going to National events?

Shane: The competition! It was great to see how other people improved throughout the year.

Jose: What was your most memorable junior moment?

Shane: At my last Junior Nationals event when I was 18 years old. I had a victory over Jack Huczek!

Jose: What was your biggest accomplishment as a junior player?

Shane: I was proud to receive the Player of the Year award my last year in juniors.

Jose: Did you develop any friendships then that are still friendships today?

Shane: Absolutely! Today I am still friends with Mitch Williams, Josh Tucker, Steven Lewis and many others. The bonds that were made with people on the U.S. Team are still there and are evident on the occasions when I get to see them.



INTERVIEW WITH MITCH WILLIAMS BY DANNY LAVELY

Danny: What years were you on the team and in what divisions?

Mitch: I was on the team in 1999. It was the first year I was eligible for the 18 & Under division, and I was one of four boys chosen for the team. I lost in the quarterfinals but was then selected to play for the team at the U.S. Junior Camp. The team had been dominant every year and we won again that year.

Danny: What was your best finish at the Junior Worlds?

Mitch: I lost in the quarters again at Worlds that year and that was my best finish at the tournament. I won the doubles one year with Brent Walters, but I can't remember what year.

Danny: What was the best thing about being on the Junior Team?

Mitch: Getting to know all of the teammates and playing for my country. At Worlds, I played with a sense of national pride, because I was privileged to wear USA on my back.

Danny: Who were some of the players you competed with and against who now play professionally?

Mitch: Shane Vanderson, Jeff Garner, and Josh Tucker were the three other guys who played the 18's with me.

Danny: What is the biggest difference between when you played in juniors and junior competition now?

Mitch: The process for playing on the team was a lot different. Instead of the Nationals being the actual qualifier, those who advanced far at Nationals were invited to the camp and were chosen from there.

Danny: How did playing in juniors help you develop into a Top Ten pro?

Mitch: By playing junior racquetball at a high level, I got very motivated to work hard. I was able to analyze my competition and use it as my benchmark for training. Juniors gave me the opportunity to develop my game while I was still young.

Danny: What is your favorite memory about being a junior player?

Mitch: I made some of the best friends of my life, including Mike Harmon and Sanjay Laforest. I didn't take juniors as seriously because I was busy playing soccer more than racquetball. I don't regret not being as serious, because I was playing racquetball for fun and enjoying myself thoroughly. Sharing experiences with my friends was priceless.

Danny: Do you have any advice for junior players?

Mitch: Play adult racquetball and pick their brains. Juniors is a different game than the adult game, and junior players must adjust. Also, with two serves, I would never hit a lob serve. Finally, get your education. Nothing is more important than being educated and having a fallback plan if racquetball doesn't end up becoming your career.

Danny: I am a junior player and I really look up to a lot of the pros, including you. Who were some of your role models when you played in juniors?

Mitch: I really loved watching John Ellis and Cliff Swain because they hit the ball hard. I especially like watching John because he has

battled through a lot of adversity and changed his game. He gives back to the sport and plays a very high level of racquetball.

Danny: What is the best part about being Top Ten Pro Mitch Williams?

Mitch: I love what I do. I get to travel and meet new people all across the country. I get to hit a racquetball for a living while many other adults my age have 9-5 jobs. Being a pro gives me so much freedom and allows me to have fun. I have my college degrees and I play a sport for a living.



INTERVIEW WITH KERRI WACHTEL BY COURTNEY CHISHOLM

Courtney: At what age did you first start swinging a racquet and what were the circumstances that encouraged you to engage in this sport?

Kerri: I started playing when I was 16 years old. I had been a tennis player all my life and was getting burned out. My mom has always played racquetball, and I went to a tournament with her. I took an interest, and we started playing racquetball every day after school. After about a year of playing, she

took me to my first Junior Nationals in Salt Lake City.

Courtney: When you were growing up, did you have a high school racquetball team, or did you just play at a local athletic club?

Kerri: I didn't have a high school team, but Ohio had a strong Junior Team Ohio and very popular tournaments run by Doug Ganim. I played all adults.

Courtney: During high school, did you participate in any other sports while playing competitive racquetball?

Kerri: Yes, I played varsity tennis all four years. We won the Division 1 State Championships a couple of times.

Courtney: Did you have a mentor or a coach who developed you to be who you are today?

Kerri: My mom and Shelley Ogden. Mom taught me everything I needed to know on the court, and she still coaches me at tournaments today.

Courtney: What year(s) did you participate on the Junior National Team and do you have a memorable experience you could share with me in regards to being a participant of the Junior Team?

Kerri: I was on the Junior Team 1992-1994. I loved going to Colorado Springs each summer and I traveled once to Panama to teach other juniors. Part of what I loved about it was that no one at my school really knew this whole other part of my life, who my "racquetball friends" were, etc. I made lifelong friends playing junior racquetball.

Courtney: Throughout your entire racquetball career who have you been sponsored by?

Kerri: I have been sponsored by Ektelon and Wilson. I was sponsored by Wilson when I was a junior, and I am happy to be back with them as a pro player.

Courtney: As an adult with twin daughters, how do you manage to keep up with training?

Kerri: It is a good break for me to drop the girls off at the nursery and know I have two hours to go play for myself. I also include the girls in my training. I push them running in the jogging stroller. It is an incredible workout trying to run and push 65 lbs. When I go to tournaments, knowing that my family is at home rooting me on is extra motivation. I don't want to be gone and lose. The only reason I am gone is to do the best I can and hopefully win!

Courtney: Does racquetball run in the family or are you the only one who plays?

Kerri: Besides my mom, my husband and mother-in-law play. In fact, my mother-in-law was the 1st woman to be inducted into the Ohio Hall of Fame. My mom was the 2nd. And this was before I even met Chris!

Courtney: Seeing how you are a pro, in what ways have you "given back" to the game of racquetball?

Kerri: I organize several Wilson Tour for Hope events across the country to raise money for breast cancer research. What is so neat about it is so many women come out to support these events and have a great time. I feel like these tournaments are reintroducing women to our sport.

Courtney: Now that you are a mother, do you intend to teach your kids how to play racquetball?

Kerri: Yes, I think racquetball teaches very good hand/eye coordination. It is a great cross training sport for many other sports like tennis, basketball, golf, softball, etc. Racquetball has given me so much that I can't imagine them not playing. I met my husband through it. I have a job because of it. It is so much a part of my life.

Courtney: Is there any advice that you could share with me that would make my experience on the Junior Team a more productive one?

Kerri: I would advise you to keep a journal. This is such an amazing time in your life that you aren't going to want to forget about it. I would really listen to what your coaches say and get as much use out of the training camps as you can. You are working with some of the best instructors ever. Make sure you stay away from anything negative. It doesn't do you any good on or off the court. But most importantly, I would say don't take yourself too seriously and HAVE FUN!



INTERVIEW WITH KRISTEN BELLOWES BY AUBREY O'BRIEN

Aubrey: What is your favorite memory of being a junior player?

Kristen: Wow, there are way too many to count! Being a member of the USA Junior Team, winning the World championships, and wearing USA on my back has to be in the top ten!

Aubrey: How did you learn and improve against the older, more mature players (professionals) in the game?

Kristen: I think it all came down to getting the experience. I had to get my butt kicked before I could improve!

Aubrey: What is the difference now, mentally, when you play that's different from the way it was for you when you were a junior?

Kristen: When I was a junior, I was fearless. Now that I'm older, I'm not so naïve! I have to be much more mentally focused, because I realize how tough the women are on the tour.

Aubrey: How do you feel now as a woman professional about your game...everybody talks about you as the "killer" of the tour. You're known as never backing down once you step on the court, but what brings you to that state of mind?

Kristen: I love the competition. I push myself, and especially, I hate to lose! I'll do whatever it takes to win.

Aubrey: If there was any piece of advice you could give to me and all the other Junior players out there who admire you and your game style, what would it be?

Kristen: Work ethic is key. I know it's hard sometimes because of school and different activities, but it's so important to practice and stay at the top of your game. Especially staying physically fit! But wait, that's second most important. Number one is making sure that it stays fun. You have to enjoy what you do.



INTERVIEW WITH RHONDA RAJSICH BY SHARON JACKSON

Sharon: When did you start playing racquetball?

Rhonda: I first picked up a racquet when I was two years old. My parents joined a health club and stuck me in the nursery, but I found a way to sneak out, and I would steal my dad's racquet between his games and go run around on the court for as long as I could.

Sharon: How many years were you on the US Team?

Rhonda: As a junior, I think I was on for about four or five years; as an adult, I think it has been eight or nine years.

Sharon: How many national titles did you win as a junior? As an adult?

Rhonda: Just counting Junior Nationals, seven (singles and doubles). Adult National singles, three.

Sharon: Did you win any World titles? If so, how many?

Rhonda: Several as a junior; I can't find those in the record books though. I think probably six or seven, singles and doubles, and as an adult, Ireland was my first individual!

Sharon: What is your most memorable experience when you were on the U.S. Team?

Rhonda: Junior Team had to be the trip to Amsterdam; Adult Team had to be Ireland last month.

Sharon: Where is the favorite place you've been for a racquetball tournament?

Rhonda: That's a hard one, because I love a few different places for different reasons. Korea was really cool, Ireland was a blast, can't go wrong in Hawaii, Chile was amazing... this could go on and on for such different reasons - it's too tough to call!

Sharon: Thanks again for being so supportive of the junior team and helping us out!

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MEET THE



JOSE ROJAS, CAPTAIN

Boys 18
 Birthday: April 27, 1990
 Hometown: Stockton, California
 Titles: 2008 Athlete of the Year; 2006 Athlete of the Year; Sports Illustrated Athlete of the Month; 16 National titles, 8 World titles. Youngest player (at 17) to be on the Adult National Team.



DANNY LAVELLY, CO-CAPTAIN

Boys 18
 Birthday: July 19, 1990
 Hometown: Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
 Titles: 2005, 2007 National Champion; 2005 World Champion; 2007 USA Junior National Team Captain



JANSEN ALLEN

Boys 18
 Birthday: July 24, 1989
 Hometown: Rice, Texas
 Titles: 2 National titles, 1 World title



TAYLOR KNOTH

Boys 16
 Birthday: January 18, 1991
 Hometown: Milwaukie, Oregon
 Titles: 14 National titles; 3 World titles
 2 High School titles



BRADLEY KIRCH

Boys 16
 Birthday: July 16, 1991
 Hometown: Syracuse, New York
 Titles: 2 National titles



NICK MONTALBANO

Boys 16
 Birthday: April 17, 1992
 Hometown: West Islip, New York
 Titles: 2008 Junior National 16 and under doubles champion; 2008 Junior National 16 and under singles: 3rd place; 2008 All American Junior racquetball player; 2008 Junior National Team Member

TEAM



Boys 14
 Birthday: July 16, 1993
 Hometown: Stockton, California
 Titles: 3 National titles, 2 World titles



Boys 14
 Birthday: April 11, 1993
 Hometown: Stockton, California
 Titles: 3 National titles; 3 World titles



Girls 18
 Birthday: September 21, 1989
 Titles: 14 National titles, 1 World title; Female
 Player of the year 2008; 2008 Junior National
 Champion - Singles and Doubles



Girls 18
 Birthday: May 1, 1989
 Hometown: Portland, Oregon
 Titles: 26 National and World titles
 Co-Captain 2008 Junior National Team



Girls 18
 Birthday: May 6, 1990
 Hometown: Bedford, Ohio
 Titles: 8 National titles



Girls 16
 Birthday: April 17, 1992
 Titles: 2 National titles



Girls 16
 Birthday: January 14, 1991
 Hometown: Gilbert, Arizona
 Titles: 8 National titles, GCSG female athlete
 of the year



Girls 14
 Birthday: March 4, 1993
 Hometown: Marlborough, Massachusetts
 Titles: Four-time National Champion; 1 World title



Girls 14
 Birthday: December 6, 1993
 Hometown: San Bruno, California
 Titles: 3 National titles

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RACQUETBALL ASSEMBLIES

by John Ellis

presented by



Back in the late 70's and early 80's, junior racquetball was at an all-time high in terms of participation. New racquetball clubs were opening across the nation, and most of these facilities encouraged full family participation. This meant racquetball leagues, challenge ladders and clinics for not only the adults but the kids who were getting into the sport as well. Tournaments began to sprout up everywhere and junior divisions were included in nearly every event. I recall playing Junior State Championships here in California with 200+ junior players no matter where the tournament was held. Likewise, Junior Nationals was bringing in over 1,000 junior players and their families to some of the nation's hotbeds of racquetball.

We all know what happened next. Racquetball clubs began to change into athletic clubs as new forms of working out began to develop and interest the public more than racquetball. Club owners had no choice but to renovate court space into various workout rooms and the downward spiral was in affect. Naturally this affected not only adult racquetball but also the junior participation since a focus on teaching racquetball was no longer present in most facilities.

So the question is: What can be done to reverse this trend and get

more kids to give racquetball a serious try? Obviously there are a lot of possible answers, and they all involve volunteers or club pros taking many hours to dedicate themselves to the task. A few areas of the country have done a good job with this, like the St. Louis region and the state of Oregon. Both have developed consistent high school racquetball leagues. This is awesome, and the rest of the country needs to apply this kind of dedication.

An answer to the question presented at the opening of the last paragraph is development of "Racquetball Assemblies" to be delivered during Physical Education classes. There is no doubt in my mind that kids think racquetball is a cool sport when they are subjected to it in a manner they can understand. This means mixing professional and junior racquetball footage with music and putting it on short DVDs that can easily be played in front of a class of students at any level of school. There is enough recent racquetball footage on film to make this happen, especially with the style of filming that Royster Productions has developed and displayed over the past five years. When presenting racquetball in front of kids, less talking and more "cool" video is what will grab their

attention. Believe me, kids love to take a break from regular school activities to have an assembly, no matter what the topic. Racquetball Assemblies could be an introduction to racquetball through this means of video followed by a simple invitation to the local club to take part in free play. The after school 3:00 pm-5:00 pm non-peak hours are the best times for most facilities. Of course, you'll first have to get your club on board with this type of program. They should want to because non-members who are trying racquetball based on these assemblies could feasibly become the club's future racquetball members. The assemblies are the easy part, so sell the concept to the club first. If this type of program is a success, then other types of junior racquetball programs will undoubtedly be needed as some kids begin to develop their games.

All sponsored players in our game should be thinking about how they can accomplish hosting these assemblies. The 4,000 or so sponsored players in the sport of racquetball have to be the people who will make this type of programming a reality – we're the die hard racquetball players! It's time to lead by example. More to report on Racquetball Assemblies in the near future...



STRANDEMO'S STRATEGIES

I want to commend all the Juniors for their participation in our great sport. Having the luxury of being able to compete locally, statewide and nationally is a true privilege and I am sure you all realize that. I wanted to present some ideas on what I feel are your strengths, but also point out some improvement areas that you should consider when you start to personally critique your own game. Good luck to all of you!

5 STRENGTHS of the Junior Game

- 1 Young flexible bodies that can go get the ball.
- 2 Virtually all the Juniors turn really well to watch their opponents hit their shots. (Way better than their adult counterparts!)
- 3 Most Juniors have pretty good strokes on both the forehand and backhand sides.
 - Forehand: bending and extending of the elbow
 - Backhand: coiling and uncoiling of the shoulders and hips
- 4 Young and hopefully receptive minds, so the complete strategy and stroke plan can be shown to them and they can start to emulate and incorporate this information into their games.
- 5 Hopefully in their daily and weekly schedules they have ample time to practice and play, so they can start to close the gap between their current level of play and their potential.

10 Areas for Juniors to Work on TO IMPROVE THEIR GAME

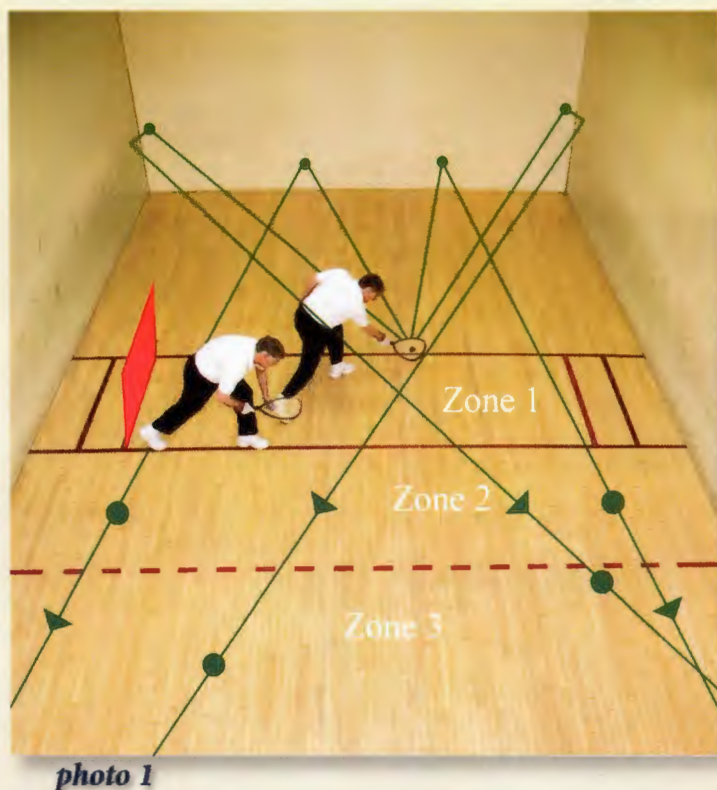


photo 1

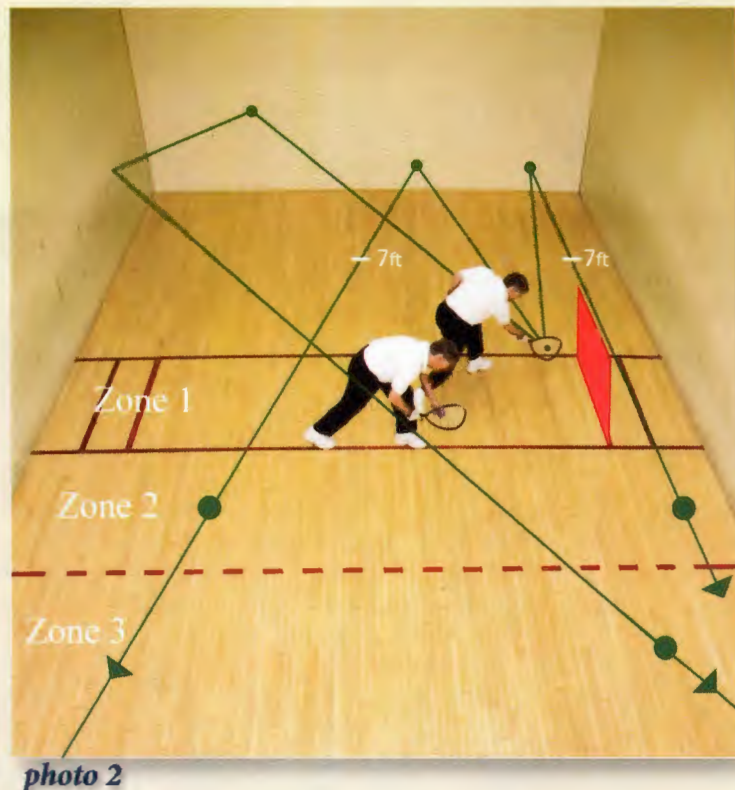


photo 2

These observations were made after watching matches at the 2008 Junior Nationals in Concord, California.

These are in no particular order...

- 1 When Juniors serve hard serves (low drives and hard Z's), they are ineffective in camouflaging these serves. They should always be able to serve 3 hard serves off the same exact motion from 2 different locations in the service box. (See photos 1 & 2). Make your serve really hard for the receiver to read. Also, many of the Juniors have the tendency to make ball contact too high in the service box. They should be striving to contact the low drive and hard Z about six inches off the floor and their low drive front wall target should be about 12 to 13 inches up from the floor. Therefore, this serve will have a slight upward arc into the front wall.

- 2 A high percentage of Juniors have good racquetball strokes (strokes that are functional to play really solid racquetball). Unfortunately, they also have too many extra motions in these strokes (for example, on their forehands, there is way too much touching of the off hand to the racquet just before they set up (an unnecessary habit that hurries up their stroke). On their backhands, again, way too much off hand touching just before the set-up and also too much looping of the racquet during the set-up.

10 Areas for Juniors to Work on TO IMPROVE THEIR GAME

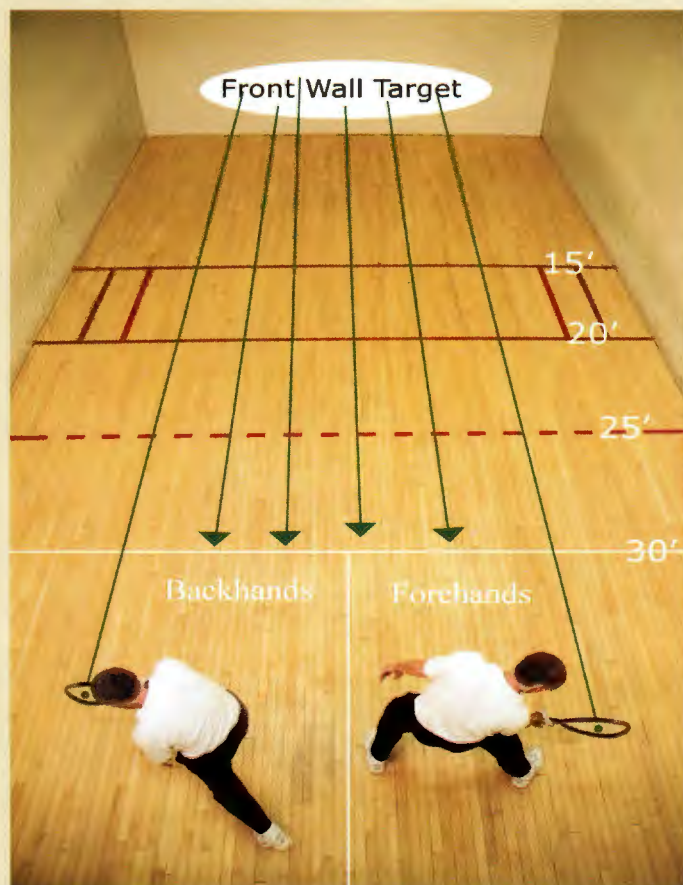


photo 3

In many rallies when Juniors are pushed into off-balance scoring positions, they quickly opt to go defensive in their shot selection and kick the ball up to the ceiling. My suggestion is Juniors need to understand they can be very effective offensively when they are hitting from a less than perfect set-up position. As Juniors accept this thought and get more competent in this area, they will find they can also learn to be effectively offensive when they are sometimes completely off-balance (hitting off one leg, falling back and can still score with a winning pitch, down the line or cross court pass. Juniors need to learn to expand their offensive skills! A good way to start getting used to these left-up type shots is by doing the 30-second drill. No junior or adult can ever do too many 30 second drills!

30-SECOND DRILL

The 30 second drill is the best drill I can recommend for Junior players. Learn to rally back and forth with yourself, prepping your body and mind for your opponent's left-up shots.

Do the drill behind 30'. (Stay in the back 10 feet of the court.) Divide the court in half: half forehands and half backhands. Let the ball bounce once or twice before it gets back to you. Make ball contact on the front wall between 2' and 6'. Try not to let the ball come off the back wall.

(See Photo 3)

4

On forehand set-ups off the back wall, a lot of Juniors have a bad habit of touching the back wall with their racquet just before they set up for their shot. This is an unnecessary move; you already know how close you are to the back wall, you know you have enough room to execute the shot; so therefore you don't need to touch the back wall to verify everything is just right. I understand who you're emulating. The men and women pros don't need to do this either!

5

Many of the Juniors use this as their first or second serve — a high lob that glances off the side wall and hopefully stays deep in the corner for a tough return. Unfortunately, many of these lob serves rebound off the side wall to the back middle of the court for an excellent offensive opportunity. The problem in this situation occurs when the server does not relocate far enough to the side to give the receiver an appropriate cross court passing angle. If the server gets hit with the receiver's cross court return, the correct call is a Penalty ("avoidable") on the server.

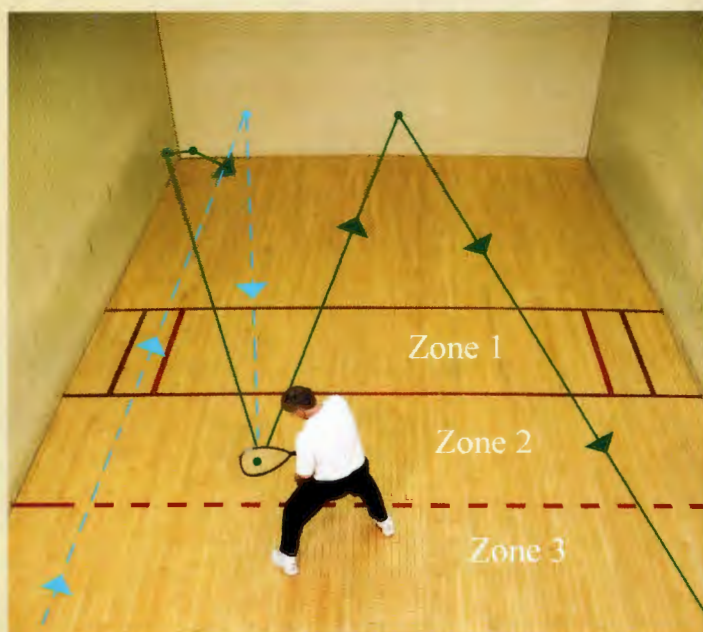


photo 4

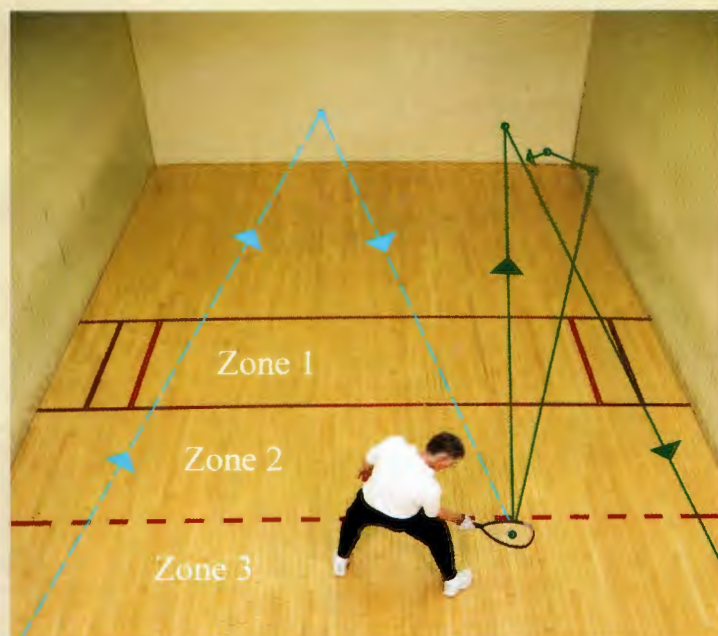


photo 5

- 6 When you're returning an excellent low drive serve, first start to read the height of the ball coming off the front wall and then start to read where the serve takes its first bounce. If the server is effectively camouflaging his hard serves and his low drive serve takes its first bounce in Zone 2, (see photo 1 or 2 for Zone 2 area) a realistic return is to pop this excellent serve to the ceiling. If his serve takes its first bounce in Zone 3 or deeper, always let it come off the back wall and attempt to score either with a down-the-line kill-pass, a cross court kill-pass or a pinch.
- 7 When Juniors are playing defense against their opponent's low offensive shots, they are often positioned too far forward (in Zone 2) and are either getting jammed off their opponent's left-up shots or are getting too easily passed. Learn to play defense in Zone 3: get your mind and body ready for your opponent's left-up shots and attempt to re-score off these offensive opportunities. See Photos 4 & 5 to view common and fundamentally correct hitting positions in Zone 3.
- 8 This one closely follows #7: when you are cutting balls off in an open stance in Zone 2 or 3, use a shorter set-up on your forehand and backhand strokes. Do not take the racquet up as high on this set-up, as you would with your deep court offensive shots.
- 9 Juniors do way too much diving for shots. Learn to play on your feet! For example, when you're at 27' in Zone 3 and you need to quickly get to a ball 7 to 8 feet away, cover that shot with a quick shuffle of both feet and a good stride in the direction of the ball. Hopefully, staying on your feet will produce an offensive shot rather than being at 27' and taking a 7 to 8 foot horizontal dive to get to this same ball. (This dive usually ends up being a defensive flick to the ceiling and now unfortunately, you're in a neutral ceiling ball rally rather than a low offensive rally.)
- 10 A very high percentage of the Juniors have never had the entire concept of racquetball strategy and strokes explained to them. It would be an invaluable experience for them to be part of such a discussion.

I hope you enjoyed this article!
If you have questions, please contact me at 760-445-4444 or email
stevestrandemo@hotmail.com
You can also visit me at www.StrandemoSports.com

JUNIOR ELITE SPOTLIGHT

sponsored athletes



JOSH HUNGERFORD
MILWAUKIE, OREGON



HOLLEE HUNGERFORD
MILWAUKIE, OREGON

With the encouragement of his father, Josh Hungerford, 16, began playing racquetball at five years of age. Ever since then Josh Hungerford has been turning heads. A shy character off the court, on the court he is anything but reserved, showing the highest levels of intensity and determination.

Josh started making his mark by winning multiple local tournaments and elevating his level of play each

and every year. While attending the Gearbox Camp, he was able to further elevate his game and learn from some of the best players in world. Josh is currently ranked #1 in the Elite division in the state of Oregon.

Josh, a lefty, plans to start playing the Open division this upcoming season. He is also planning to play in the pro qualifiers at the Seattle and the U.S. Open IRT Pro Tour stops.

With the encouragement of her father, Hollee Hungerford started playing at the age of 6. Hollee is a young up and coming star on the US Junior National Team. Being the sole US hope in the girls 12 and under, Hollee had a good showing at the Junior Nationals with a semifinal appearance in the singles to go along with a National Title in the doubles.

Hollie is all heart on the court and pushes her ability level higher and higher with every year. Training regularly at the Eastside Athletic Club, Hollee continues to improve her game. Holly says, "I am so excited to be a part of the Gearbox team and to continue to play such a fun sport."



ADAM MANILLA
CENTENNIAL, COLORADO

Adam Manilla is a name you're going to become quite familiar with as time goes on. He's a natural lefty that reminds me a lot of Cliff Swain when he was a junior player. Adam's form is impeccable for his age and as he grows in stature, so will his game. However, Adam's smaller size is one of the attributes that makes him so much fun to watch.



AUBREY O'BRIEN
AUBURN, CALIFORNIA

The Manilla family is a dedicated racquetball family since both parents, Victor and Nancy, play racquetball as does Adam's sister Erika. Adam is currently playing Men's A Division in Colorado tournaments and at Open level in his local club's leagues. My prediction for Adam's future is another three or four Junior Olympic Championships, a Junior World Championship or two,

and a Top Ten professional ranking ten years from now. No pressure on you, Adam, but we all believe in you!

On the Girl's side of the Ektelon Junior Elite Team, we're loaded with talent, boasting the National Champions in the 18's, 16's and 12's. Aubrey O'Brien is no stranger to National Championships; she has captured at least three national singles titles in her four years of playing the sport. She was a natural at racquetball from the beginning, mixing great athletic ability, power and serious determination into her game immediately. She has proven to be a threat at a few WPRO events, and I feel confident she will make a good living as a professional racquetball player in the future. She's now a 16-year-old college student and ready to take on the world's best players.

Wilson. Mercedes Arias



MERCEDES ARIAS, 14,
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Club: One on One Athletic Club

Career Highlights: 2006 USAR Gold medalist - 12+ girls doubles Junior Nationals; 2006 Junior National Team member; competed in the 2006 World Championships; 2006 World Ranking #4 in 12 & Under Girls doubles; 2007 #3 12+ girls; 2006-2007 Michigan Junior Player of the Year.

Who introduced you to racquetball?

My dad introduced me when I was three or four years old. I started competing in tournaments when I was ten.

What are your racquetball goals?

My immediate goal is to win my first Women's Open tournament this year. My long-term goal is to become a professional racquetball player.

Who are your favorite pro players?

Jack Huczek and Christie Van Hees

What racquet do you use?

Wilson KBoom

What is your playing style?

I am mainly a shooter and I am quick. So you could say I am a "power rabbit!" I am working on better positioning, playing smarter and hitting percentage shots.

What is your favorite subject, other sports you play, and your hobbies?

My favorite subject is Algebra. I love to read, especially Harry Potter books. Other sports I participate in are field hockey, swimming, track and cross country.

What is your favorite food?

Empanadas. This is a common Argentinean food with ground beef and vegetables in a baked tortilla.

If you could have an ice cream with anyone in the world, who would you choose and why?

Antonio Banderas, because he is an amazing actor, is in great movies, seems like a really nice guy and I love his accent.

William Craig



WILLIAM CRAIG, 16,
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Club: Triton Sports Center

Career Highlights: 2006 (14 yrs old) 1st place Christmas shootout at San Antonio College; 2007 Regionals Men's D Gold medal; 2007 Regionals Junior 18 and under Gold medal. (I won the Regionals with a broken thumb from football. I didn't know it was broken until after the tournament); 2007 Texas State Championships Gold medal 18 and under; 2007 Junior Nationals red division 14 & under; 2008 Texas State Championships Gold medal Men's C Division.

Who introduced you to racquetball?

My parents. My dad was stationed at Biloxi AFB in Mississippi, and I was home schooled by my mom. Every day we would go to the gym and play racquetball. I started begging some of the adults to let me play with them and I learned a lot. I was ten years old when I started playing.

What are your racquetball goals?

I want to get a college racquetball scholarship. Then I want to become

a professional racquetball player and play on the IRT.

Who is your favorite pro player?

Kane Waselenchuk

What racquet do you use?

Wilson KBoom

What is your playing style?

My style is a combination of power, finesse and good shot selection.

What is your favorite subject, other sports you play, and your hobbies?

My favorite subject is Math. I also play football, basketball, baseball, track and golf. I also enjoy playing the piano and guitar and hero on my Wii. I like going on family vacations and hanging out with my friends.

What is your favorite food?

My mom's homemade pizza.

If you could have an ice cream with anyone in the world, who would you choose and why?

Kane Waselenchuk, because he is the best racquetball player ever.

JUNIOR ELITE SPOTLIGHT *sponsored athletes*

HEAD *Penn*

• *by Fran Davis*

Taylor Knoth, of Milwaukie, Oregon, won the 21st National High School Championships in Portland, Oregon, in March. He also won a gold medal in boys doubles and silver in mixed doubles.

Taylor began playing racquetball when he was seven years old and just ten years later at the age of 17 has earned a spot in the record books for winning back-to-back High School National Championships, first in 2007 as a sophomore and again in 2008 as a junior.

Not only has he won this title twice, but over his ten-year span of

playing tournaments, from 1998-2008, Taylor has won 19 National and World Championships at Jr. Nationals and Jr. Worlds, as well as five High School National Championships...a total of 24 Championships. This doesn't even count all the local tournaments he has won. Taylor knows what it takes to win and he continually gets the job done.

What impresses me most about this young man is he is a very well-rounded individual and not only plays other sports such as basketball and baseball and excels in them, but

has a G.P.A. of 3.95. He is a very gifted individual.

There are many colleges I have spoken with about the possibility of Taylor playing for their racquetball teams and they are very

interested. Taylor has a great head on his shoulders and with his academic achievement and his talent in racquetball, he will have many options in the future.



On March 2nd Sharon Jackson won the 2008 21st National High School Championships in Portland, OR.

Sharon began playing racquetball when she was five years old and just thirteen years later at the age of 18, she owns the coveted title of 2008

High School National Champion... what a tremendous feat! Not only has she won this title, but over her ten-year span of tournaments, from 1998-2008, Sharon has won eleven National and World Titles at Jr. Nationals, Jr. Worlds and the US Open. This does not even include all the local tournaments she has won.

What impresses me most about this young lady is when I read over her resume, I learned about all of her accomplishments, not only as an athlete but as an academic student. She was even Homecoming Queen!

Let me share with you just a few of Sharon's accomplishments:

Academic: GPA 3.94; Salutatorian of Graduating Class; Student Council President; Shelby County Academic Achievement Award (all "A's") 2005, 2006; Leadership and Science awards-Who's Who Among American High School Students 2005-07; Member of National Society of High School Scholars; National Honor Society

Athletic: Varsity letters in soccer, volleyball, basketball, tennis and track; MVP Tennis 2007; All-Conference & All-County for volleyball, basketball, and tennis; Basketball awards: Most Assists Award, four-year letter winner, and

the Mohawk Leadership Award. She was also named to the Shelby County All-Star team that plays to earn money for special education students.

Extracurricular Activities: Student Council 9-12th grade; Student Council Office – President, Representative, Secretary; Marching, Pep, and Concert Band; Latin Club; High School Musical "Wizard of Oz"...second lead; 4-H Club – President and nine-year member; Sunshine Society 9-12th grade; 2008 Shelby County "Hospice" Queen Contest

Racquetball: Member of the USA Racquetball Team 2006 & 2007; Won 11 National and World titles; 5-time All-American Athlete Award; won 8+ state titles; seven-time Indiana Female Junior Player of the Year; 2006 & 2007; Indiana Female Player of the Year

Sharon is attending the University of Alabama on a partial alumni leadership scholarship and will be a member of their racquetball team that just finished #2 at the 2008 National Intercollegiate Championships held in Overland Park, KS, in March. Who knows...maybe Sharon will be the player who helps Alabama finish #1 next year...only time will tell!

racquetball lessons

Following are a series of outlines that can be used by any teacher, parent or certified instructor interested in promoting junior racquetball,, using a gradual progression from one wall (gymnasium or outdoor) racquetball to a more advanced junior league program. Developed for players aged 6 through 18, these levels may be applied and used in any participating club or school.

LEVEL ONE

Recreational In-School Program (1 wall)

Skill level – None to moderate racquet skills

Facilities – One Wall, 20' x 40'

Floor Space – gymnasium is ideal

Equipment – Racquet, ball, eye guards, athletic shoes

Instructor Guidelines

Cover the basics rules of one-wall racquetball, basic safety and court etiquette, basics of grips and stroke.

Lesson Plan

Week 1: Explain equipment, safety, basic rules, show basic grip, allow students to “just play” (45 minutes)

Week 2: Show basic forehand stroke; show basic serve (go over service line) to right side of court; show basic return to front wall; allow students to play

Week 3: Show basic serve to left side of court; show lob serve that hits high on front wall and is hit just hard enough to go over the service line; show basic return strategy/moving to center strategy/moving to center; allow students to play

Week 4: Tell students about 4-wall racquetball; explain that there are games that can be played with three and four persons; allow students to play 7-point games utilizing basic rules of racquetball; give students information about clubs, the professional side of the sport and USA Racquetball

LEVEL TWO

Recreational Club Program (2 or 4 wall)

Skill Level – None to moderate/advanced racquet skills

Facilities – Outdoor (2 wall) or indoor (4 wall) courts

Equipment – Racquet, ball, eye guards, athletic shoes

Lesson Plan

Week 1: Basics of equipment, safety, (45 minutes); basic grip and forehand stroke; rules (one bounce for 10 and over, two bounces for 8 and under); don't worry about the floor lines; allow the students play/run around the court

Week 2: Instructor sets up the ball for students to hit after the first bounce; instructor “rallies” with student (either one or two bounces); teach basics of forehand; allow students play and run around the court

Week 3: Teach basic rules of service; show forehand drive serve (any serve that goes over the line to the right side); show basics of return; let students “rally” serve and return

Week 4: Show basics of backhand; instructor sets up ball for students to hit after one bounce; show return of serve on backhand side; allow students to “rally”

Instructor Guidelines

Cover the basics rules of one-wall racquetball, basic safety and court etiquette, basics of grips and stroke.

LEVEL THREE

Inter-school / Club, PE Class Option

Skill Level – None to moderate racquet skills

Facilities – Court or club near the school

Equipment – Racquet, balls, eye guards, athletic shoes

Developmental Plan

A. Contact club regarding non-prime time use of courts

B. Contact school (Athletic

Dept./Administration) to arrange off-campus Physical Education racquetball class

C. Facilitate development of an educational (teaching) plan with qualified instructors

D. If the Physical Education teacher is qualified, develop a plan with them. If there is no qualified club or PE teacher, recruit a certified instructor to teach classes

E. Develop curriculum by consulting with an AmPRO certified instructor

F. Verify transportation requirements to the club with all parties (school, club, instructors)

LEVEL FOUR

Inter-school / Club, Competitive Leagues

Skill Level – Moderate to advanced racquet skills – Primary or Secondary School

Facilities – Club donating non-prime time hours

Equipment – Students should have their own equipment (racquet, balls, gloves, eye guards, athletic shoes, workout wear)

Assumption – Students have established skill level/knowledge, allowing them to participate in a competitive setting

Development Plan

A. Contact clubs to verify usage

B. Contact schools to obtain administrative approval

C. Organize volunteer group to assist with organization/events

D. Recruit “key” individuals in each school as liaisons

E. Distribute information

F. Recruit students

Recommended References

- Programming for Racquetball
- Coaching Racquetball Level One
- Winning Edge Series - Racquetball

NEW GOM

FOR INFO HIT OUR WEB

**“CRUSHES THE BALL.
THAT SIMPLE”**

- “A” Player, Dallas

**“TOTALLY SMOOTH.
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MORE CONFIDENCE
TO TAKE THE SHOT”**

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**"EXTRA POWER THAT TURNS SKIPS
INTO ROLLOUTS"**

- Doubles Champion, Arizona

**"I CAN SWING EASIER AND STILL HAVE
BURNING POWER"**

- Top Ten Pro

"DRIVES SERVES - GOT MY OPPONENT LEANING"

- "A" Player, Kansas City

"MORE WHIP!"

- Former National Team Coach

**"BUY IT, BORROW IT, DEMO IT - JUST GET
YOUR HANDS ON IT!"**

- Club Pro



E-FORCE

YOU WANNA WIN OR WHAT?

TIPS FOR PARENTS

By Charlie Garfinkle,
"HOF Class of '89"



*"Always use
positive gestures
and expressions
that convey
support."*

Having taught racquetball for almost 30 years, I have come across parents who have been very supportive of their children whether or not they have won a match. I have also witnessed parents who have interfered during a match, yelling at the child's opponent and even at their own child. Often, they were warned by the tournament director that such behavior would not be tolerated. But can you imagine the chagrin and embarrassment that these youngsters felt when they saw their parents acting in such a manner?

Unfortunately, many parents aren't even aware they're exhibiting negative behavior. When their son or daughter suddenly quits playing racquetball, the parents are mystified as to why their youngster doesn't want to play any more. Coaches are also guilty of putting too much pressure on their students.

I'll never forget a tournament I was playing in about twenty five years ago – the New York State Singles Championships in Poughkeepsie – where one of the tournament favorites in the junior division was coached by a top local racquetball player.

At 9-9 in the tiebreaker, the young man returned a shot obviously on the second bounce. The referee missed the call, but you could see by the look on the player's face that he knew he hadn't gotten the shot on the first bounce. He reluctantly raised his hand with two fingers signifying he had indeed gotten the ball on two bounces.

You would have thought his dad would have been so proud of him for making the correct call, especially at such a crucial juncture in the match. The father quickly signaled to his son to take a time out; was it to congratulate his son on such a fine call? No, the father had signaled the time out to berate his son for being so stupid as to make such a call. I'll never forget his words to his son. He said, "How could you be so dumb? Coach Smith told you to never call second bounces on yourself, even if you knew you didn't get the shot."

Sadly, this was a case of a parent wanting his son to win at all costs, even if it meant cheating to do it. As for the coach, what more can be said? He never should have been coaching anyone, let alone junior players.

It wasn't surprising to me or anyone else when this youngster suddenly quit racquetball the next year.

There are still many cases of parents being too overbearing with their youngsters in racquetball. Two of my own youngsters played racquetball and I tried to always be upbeat. Having had that experience, I think some of the following tips could be helpful to parents when interacting with their youngsters in racquetball (and in life).

Be Supportive at All Times

Whether your children win or lose, constantly encourage them. If your child wins, say, "Nice match. You played well and I'm proud of you." If your daughter or son lost the match, you should still say, "I'm proud of you. Even though you lost, I know



you tried as hard as you could.” Children who have parents who encourage and motivate them will find their youngsters will benefit in many other aspects of their lives.

Demand Good Sportsmanship

In a recent league match at a local club, a 15-year-old girl known for

tell them some jokes. It was amazing how quickly they shaped up on the court.

Use Positive Body Language

A youngster in the New York City area was playing in the Long Island Open (one of the largest tournaments in the country) a few

only serve to turn them away from the game. If they are really serious about the game, they'll know how much time they have to put in to improve.

Leave the Coaching to the Coach

If you have a coach or teaching pro working with your child, please let him or her do the job. You could create a great amount of tension between the coach, your youngster and yourself by trying to impose your own advice.

Be Sure Your Child Eats Properly

Parents often don't realize how much energy and calories their youngsters expend when playing the sport. Eating junk food can greatly affect a youngster's playing performance. It is the parents' responsibility to provide and prepare healthy meals and to set a good example by eating proper foods themselves.

Be a Role Model

If you're a parent who competes in racquetball tournaments, be very aware of the impact of being a positive role model for the children in your household. Getting mad on the court, shouting obscenities and arguing with the referee all set terrible examples for your kids. You must display good sportsmanship at all times during the match to show that this is the way the game should be played.

A few years ago I was heavily favored to win the New York State Singles Open Championships held at my home club in Buffalo. Unbelievably, I lost in a monumental upset in the finals. In fact, the last time something of that magnitude occurred, Three Wise Men appeared in the East.

My two kids had witnessed my loss, and driving home from the match, my son asked, “Dad, aren't you mad that you lost? You never really got angry on the court.” I replied, “Of course I was upset. However, my opponent played better than I did and deserved to win.” Truthfully, I was furious about losing. But I wasn't going to demonstrate to my kids how terrible I felt.

You would be wise to do the same.

having a bad temper was involved in a very close match. She was constantly mumbling to herself, stalling between points and screaming at herself every time she lost a point. When she lost the match, she stormed off the court and threw her racquet down the length of the hallway. The worst part of the whole scenario was that her mother was sitting behind the glass throughout the whole match. And yet, when her daughter took a timeout or passed by her between games, the mother never uttered a word.

If you have a youngster who is a poor sport, it is your responsibility to do something about it. This could mean taking away privileges or not allowing him or her to practice or play in league matches or tournaments for two or three weeks. I never had to worry. If my son or daughter acted up, I'd threaten to

years ago. She won the first game 15-11 and was leading 10-8 in the second game when her mother showed up. Playing on a glass-back court, it was obvious that the youngster was continually glancing toward her mother after points. When her daughter lost a point, her mother would roll her eyes or throw her hands up in the air.

The girl wound up losing the match. I overheard her talking to a friend after the match. “I couldn't help but watch what my mom was doing every time I lost a point. I got so nervous I couldn't concentrate.”

If you're watching your youngster's match, always use positive gestures and expressions that convey support.

Don't Push Your Child Into Playing Racquetball

Forcing your child into unwanted playing situations or arranging matches they don't want to play will



RACQUETBALL: *Great Exercise for Children*

SPORTS LIKE RACQUETBALL HELP KEEP KIDS FIT :

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JOINTS

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COORDINATION

• IMPROVES MENTAL
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• IMPROVES FLEXIBILITY

• RACQUETBALL BURNS
600-700 CALORIES
PER HOUR

• HELPS TONE MUSCLES



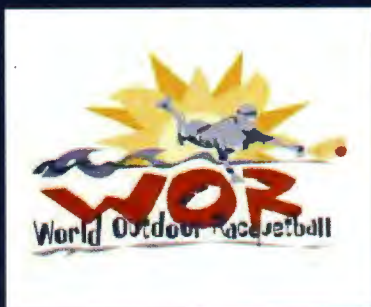
Most children need at least an hour of physical activity every day!

Regular exercise helps children:

- feel less stressed
- feel better about themselves
- feel more ready to learn in school
- keeps a healthy weight
- build and keep healthy bones, muscle, and joints
- sleep better at night



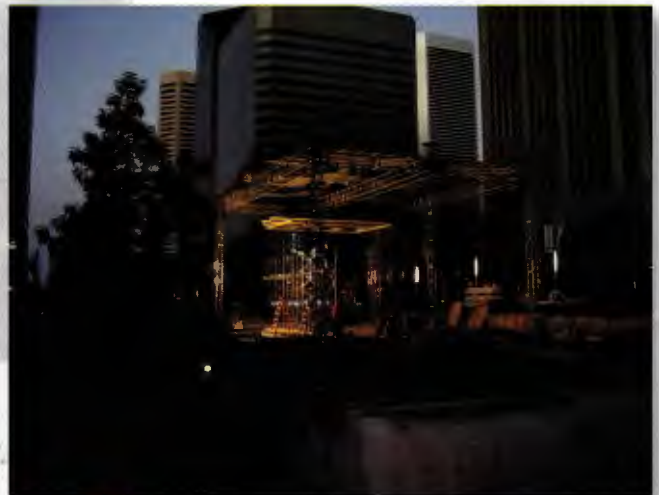
TOURS AND ASSOCIATIONS





IRT MAKES HISTORY IN DENVER

by Dave Negrete
IRT Commissioner



The IRT embarked on a new venture when they showcased their athletic skills in an outdoor venue. Lower downtown Denver, Colorado hosted the 2008 Motorola World Championship, presented by Verizon Wireless on September 17-21.

Rocky Carson hoped to retain his Motorola World Championship title at the 2008 event, but fate in the form of Kane Waselenchuk intervened. Standing room only crowds watched as the contenders earned their spots in the big show on the exhibition court in Skyline

Park. Qualifiers who made it into the round of 16 included Jason Thoerner (9), Kane Waselenchuk (10), Anthony Carson (11), Keith Minor (12), Hiroshi Shimizu (13), Jose Rojas (14), Andres Herrera (15), and Polo Gutierrez (16).

The battle lines were drawn early when Waselenchuk beat Ben Croft (7) in three straight games 2, 5 and 4. Jack Huczek (2) put up more of a fight, but lost in four games 5, (9), 8 and 2 in the quarter finals. The triple game threat resumed when Kane defeated number 3 seed Alvaro Beltran 6, 7 and 2. The finals on

Sunday pitted the number 1 seed, Rocky Carson against Waselenchuk. Carson lost the first two games, came back in the third and fourth game as he put up a respectable fight, but lost in the fifth game. The final score of 6, 6, (8), (8), 1 may indicate that Kane is committed to winning which should provide some entertaining matches in the future.

The 16th Street Mall in Denver is a favorite spot for locals and tourists alike with restaurants, specialty shops, high rise residences, businesses, Coors Field (home of the Colorado Rockies), and Skyline Park. Tens of thousands of people travel the mile-long mall daily on foot or via the free trolley that runs the length of the mall.

Eddie Meredith from USA Racquetball supervised the ten-man crew responsible for building the 47,000 pound court in Skyline Park. While the construction of the court



is typically a monumental feat in itself, the difficulty was compounded by the outdoor venue's uneven ground, coupled with torrential rainfall during the first two days of construction. Main streets in downtown Denver were blocked to accommodate the 40-ton motor crane used to lower the concrete weights for the stage roof and the shipping crates containing the court components lighting, sound and seating components into the park.

As the structure rose from the ground, passersby remarked, "What the heck is that!?" Some asked if magician David Blaine would be performing or if it was a giant aquarium.

The venue set up was completed in five and half days and play began on Wednesday afternoon. A few close calls were avoided when the court had to be covered with tarps to prevent rain damage. And when an emergency door hinge had to be manufactured, machinist and Colorado racquetball enthusiast Lee Beckwith saved the day by making the door hinge at the eleventh hour.

Sunshine prevailed throughout the tournament and people of all ages from all walks of life stopped to watch the best professional racquetball players in the world for five days in downtown Denver. IRT players signed autographs and posters for crowds like rock stars. People who haven't played racquetball for years said they couldn't wait to get back on a court after watching a pro match, and those who had never seen a racquetball match in their lives asked how to get started playing.

Thanks to all who worked so hard to make it happen: Leo and Susan Klimaitis, Dan Aderhold and Motorola, Verizon Wireless, Keith Minor of KWM Gutterman, Inc., Jo Shattuck, the Denver Athletic Club, Cindy Tilbury, the Colorado Racquetball Association, and Jim Hiser and the staff of USA Racquetball.

The event was terrific fun for everyone who played and watched. Make sure you don't miss it next year!



The IRT was back at the Overland Park Athletic Club in late September for the third straight year and the Kansas racquetball community welcomed the tour and its players with open arms. NASCAR was in town that same weekend which brought extra fans out to watch some fast-paced racquetball. ESPN was also in town broadcasting the semifinals and final matches on ESPN360.com live. There was high energy in Kansas City with the players' recent attendance at a big history-making event in Denver the weekend before.

There were no real upsets in the qualifying rounds as the event boasted the largest pro draw ever; however, Kane Waselenchuk had an early rematch of the Denver finals with Rocky Carson in the round of sixteen. Kane overtook Rocky in three straight to move on to meet Jason Thoerner in the quarters. He then advanced to the semis and met Alvaro Beltran, while Jack Huczek met Jason Mannino on the other half of the

draw. Kane eventually won the battle against Beltran and Huczek took out Mannino to set the stage for these two to meet in the finals for the first time since the 2006 Pro Nationals in Chicago. Kane came out on top in four games in front of a packed house and a live broadcast on ESPN360.com. This was Kane's second title in a row, and it gave him some extra momentum going into the Kentucky Open scheduled for the following week.

Hats off once again to the Overland Park Athletic Club, which is one of the finest full-service racquetball facilities in the U.S. The staff was great and the hospitality was overwhelming. Mike and Debbie Wedel did a tremendous job this year at putting on the event. Their ongoing support of the sport, not only with the IRT but with the rest of the racquetball world, must not go unnoticed. Thanks also to the event volunteers at the desk – Gary Beeman, Deb Herr, and Joe Williams – and to all the sponsors of the event and the support you provided.



OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE **BLAST IT!** CHAMPIONSHIPS

by Lynn Stephens

The ladies of the WPRO returned to The Sports Center in Fayetteville, September 12th-14th, for the third year in a row to open their season. There were 22 women competing in the WPRO draw plus 140 amateurs in this year's event.

Last year's tournament saw three major upsets when #10 Paola Longoria from Mexico took out second seed Kerri Wachtel, and #6 Kristen Bellows defeated third seed Cheryl Gudinas Holmes. Longoria then beat #1 ranked player Rhonda Rajsich for the first and only pro stop victory of her career.

This year, Bellows and Longoria were unable to attend the event, and there were no surprises with #1 Rajsich defeating #2 Gudinas Holmes in a decisive three-game match. Rajsich was really on her game and kept Gudinas Holmes on the defensive most of the match with good serving and great re-kills. You could tell that Rajsich had no intention of losing this tournament two years in a row.

One of the treats for the fans this year was to watch the up-and-coming 16-year-old from Ecuador, Veronica Sotomayor. She blew through the first round with a strong win and then gave #3 Kerri Wachtel all she wanted in a tight four-game match in the Round of 16. Veronica went on to win a strong Women's Open draw of 13 in the amateur division. It's good to see young women getting involved in the sport and doing well.

RacquetballOnline provides live video streaming for all WPRO Tier 1 and Grand Slam events. This tournament will be archived on their site as soon as the video can be edited.

The Outback Blast It! is a TMT-produced event and we would like to thank our title sponsor Outback Steakhouse as well as our many other sponsors, including the NCRA, for making this event possible.

A special thanks to Lee Tart for welcoming us into his club once again and for providing top-notch hospitality for the WPRO. Our photographer extraordinaire for the event was Jeff West, who did a great job capturing the moments for us throughout the weekend.

DJ Panama did a great job with the music and introductions for this event and the ladies felt like the stars that they are. Without the hard work and dedication of Lynn Moffitt, Mike "Bush Hog" Bourgeois, and the lady that always pulls off miracles, JoAnn Chertoff, this event could not have happened.



WPRO CURRENT RANKINGS

Rank	Name	Residence	Points
1	Rhonda Rajsich	Los Angeles, CA	1807.30
2	Cheryl Gudinas Holmes	Naperville, IL	1416.20
3	Kerri Wachtel	Cincinnati, OH	806.90
4	Angela Grisar	Santiago, Chile	774.50
5	Kristen Bellows	Salt Lake City, UT	591.00
6	Paola Longoria	San Luis Potosi, Mexico	465.50
7	Adrienne Fisher	Centerville, OH	412.94
8	Brenda Kyzer	Leesville, SC	393.00
9	Doreen Fowler	Silver Spring, MD	313.16
10	Christie Van Hees	Calgary, AB, Canada	276.50
11	Jo Shattuck	Denver, CO	269.25
12	Diane Moore	Griffith, IN	227.00
13	Samantha Salas	Leon, Mexico	201.00
14	Vivian Gomez	Miami, FL	199.50
15	Kimi Ferina	Long Island, NY	185.70
16	Keely Franks	Euless, TX	168.00
17	T.J. Baumbaugh	Reston, VA	153.33
18	Jennifer Saunders	Winnipeg, MB, Canada	150.25
19	Candi Hostovich	Falls Church, VA	139.44
20	Veronica Sotomayor	Ecuador	125.75

WPRO Current Rankings (as of October 1, 2008)



2008-09 CPRT SEASON OPENER IN CONCORD

The Big C Doubles Championships was the kickoff event for the 2008-09 Classic Professional Racquetball Tour schedule and an exciting way to begin the new season as some of the greatest players in the history of our sport played a rare pro doubles event.

Leading the way was the top-seeded team of Ruben Gonzalez and Woody Clouse – seeded number one based on their year-end #2 and #3 (respectively) finishes last season. Second seeds were the local favorite Gerry Price and last year's #1 CPRT pro Cliff Swain. Third seeded were CPRT regular Steve Wattz and Lance O'Connor, while Ken Stone and Mark Nomura rounded out the Top 4. Five other teams took their shot at the Big C Doubles title with all matches broadcast live on RacquetballOnLine.tv.

The top four seeds all advanced on Friday night. Steve Wattz and Lance O'Connor outlasted Ramiro Hernandez and Ali Hirsu while Cliff Swain and Gerry Price moved past Jody Garcia and Steve Cook in straight games. Ken Stone and Mark Nomura took out Danny Newman and Gene Pare. The evening ended with top seeds Woody Clouse and Ruben Gonzalez advancing over Isabelo Elisan, Jr. and Ivan Matsui in three games.

The semis opened with Swain and Price making quick work of Wattz and O'Connor. Clouse and Gonzalez also took a straight game win over Stone and Nomura.

The finals were everything the big crowd could have asked for as the top two seeded teams battled to a five-game thriller ultimately won by the local favorites Swain and Price over Clouse and Gonzalez. The long match was greatly appreciated as every player and fan left in the club packed around the championship court.

The CPRT appreciated the hospitality of the Big C Athletic Club as well as the great event run by John Ellis, Steve Cook and their tournament staff. The CPRT also thanks sponsors Mike Lippitt, Harold Jagoda, Pro-Am Sports, Bad Ass BBQ, and others who made this event possible. We'll be back in January for the Concord Classic.



CPRT TO SUPPORT MILITARY RACQUETBALL

The Classic Professional Racquetball Tour is proud to be the first industry organization to step forward and support new initiatives in military racquetball, including the newly-formed Military Racquetball Foundation (MRF), with a significant financial contribution.

The MRF has been created to organize, promote, serve, and grow racquetball and fitness throughout all branches of the United States military worldwide. It is dedicated to the men and women who are currently serving or have served our country here and abroad. The MRF will support the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Divisions of the U.S. Military that administer a varied program of recreation, social and community support activities in U.S. Military facilities around the globe.

Along with the CPRT, Ektelon has also led the way with support of Military Racquetball as the Official Ball (the Ektelon Classic, also the Official Ball of the CPRT) at the first two MRF events in November. An exhibition using a portable outdoor court set-up (on the flight deck of a naval multi-purpose amphibious assault ship, the USS Bonhomme Richard in San Diego Harbor!), as

well as the All-Military National Championships in San Diego, are in their final stages as of this writing.

More information on Military Racquetball can be found at militaryracquetball.com or through links on classicproracquetball.com.

2008-09 SEASON SCHEDULE

Cliff Swain returns for his first full season on the CPRT along with tour veterans Ruben Gonzalez, Woody Clouse, Mike Ceresia, Bret Harnett, Mike Ray, and Gerry Price. Watch for the emergence of new tour players as the pros of the last generation return to compete as they turn 40 and look for new challenges in continuing their pro racquetball endeavors!

The CPRT returns to Concord for a singles event in January before heading to Rochester, NY. Following its farthest venture to the eastern US, the CPRT will make its inaugural visit to Hawaii before completing the season with the annual Pro Nationals in Las Vegas. The CPRT continues to work with additional venues and tournament directors to add to the season schedule – watch classicproracquetball.com for updates and the latest CPRT information.

- January 22-25, 2009 Concord, CA
 - March 6-8, 2009 Rochester, NY
 - April 17-19, 2009 Kauai, Hawaii
 - April 30 – May 3, 2009 Las Vegas, NV
- Pro Nationals

2008 MICHIGAN AND OHIO OUTDOOR RACQUETBALL SEASON RECAP

by "Big Daddy" Greg Lewerenz

What an incredible season of outdoor racquetball for Michigan and Ohio! Over 350 participants across five incredible events – the sport of outdoor racquetball continues to grow in the Midwest thanks to WOR, Ektelon, and the Belle Isle team.

The season kicked off for the 28th year of Belle Isle racquetball on June 21st and 22nd with the Belle Isle Fun Doubles. This event signals the official "opening day" of outdoor racquetball in Michigan and Ohio. It is as much a social event as it is a racquetball tournament. That is not to say the competition isn't fierce, because it certainly is, but people come out just to see and be seen. The family atmosphere and beautiful scenery on the island is a draw for competitors and spectators alike. The competitors in this event are not fighting just for a trophy, or just for bragging rights, but the biggest motivation is entry into the Belle Isle Pro/Am Championship.

The second tournament of the season was the Belle Isle Summer Classic on July 19th and 20th. The Belle Isle Summer Classic welcomed back many of the Northwest Ohio - Toledo players as well as some heavy hitters from Cleveland; Ontario, Canada, and Orlando, Florida. This event is no different than the other Belle Isle events when it comes to the party. The music, the barbecue feast, and the crowd of spectators last all day and into the night.

"Can You Stand The Heat" Doubles Tournament in St. Claire Shores, Michigan was put on by Tom Blakeslee and Twayne Howard, two of Michigan's finest tournament directors. The event (62 strong this year), hospitality, and competition is always first class.

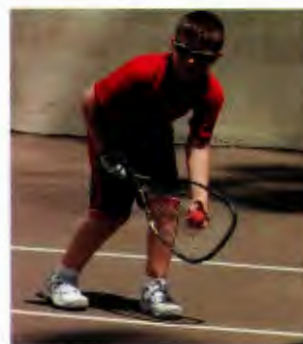
Then came the "Big Show"... the tournament that everybody wants to win, the Belle Isle Pro/Am Championships on August 16th and 17th. These champions are the best outdoor racquetball players in the Midwest. This WOR Super Series Event welcomed two of the best outdoor pros in the world – Craig "Clubber" Lane and Greg Solis – to battle for the title of Belle Isle Champion. In addition to the "Dream Team" from SoCal, Belle Isle also welcomed back #10 ranked IRT Pro Andy Hawthorne. This was only Andy's second outdoor tournament and he's now hooked on outdoor racquetball via the Belle Isle vibe. All the trimmings were at this event...there was the DJ spinning R&B, the open bar (barrel), and the usual feast. This tournament continues to be a showpiece for the growing sport of outdoor racquetball.

Toledo Outdoor Racquetball Doubles Tournament on September 20th, run by Jim Witherspoon and Dan Tabor, was the final tournament of the year. The tournament venue is the Lucas County Recreation Center in Maumee, Ohio. This venue hosts the US National Outdoor Handball Championship and boasts eight spectacular courts with bleachers. Again, outdoor racquetball in the Midwest saw another record set for entries at the Toledo tournament. There were at least 10 outdoor first timers, who had a great time at this fun event. Congratulations to Jim "Fork" Witherspoon, Dan Tabor, Jim Bronson, and team for continuing to grow the sport of outdoor racquetball.



Huge thanks to WOR, Ektelon, Hank Marcus, Vic Leibofsky, Allan Kazem, Tom Blakeslee, Twayne Howard, Veronica "Ronnie" Brown, Marcos "Mr. Belle Isle" Rivera, Scott "Born of the Earth" Boswell, Felicia Mann, Russell Baker, Sheri, John, Anthony, "Clubber", Greg Solis, Andy Hawthorne, Team Big Daddy (Ron & Greg), and a big thank you to all our participants! Without all of this support, these fantastic events would not be possible.

To view the results of these events, please visit www.belleisleracquetball.com/results.



WOR JUNIOR PROFILE

Evan Wargo of Clearwater, Florida is 9 years old and has already become a seasoned racquetball competitor. Evan began playing racquetball just two years ago and has played in 27 sanctioned events over the past 16 months. Evan and his

sister Graciana traveled to California last July for Junior Nationals and didn't come home empty-handed. This could be a team to be reckoned with for years to come!

Evan recently played in his first WOR event and handled himself admirably in the Open Doubles with his dad Gary Wargo as a partner. He impressed everyone with his fearlessness and nerves of steel competing with the big dogs in his first venture outdoors. Evan was not the least bit intimidated on the court against national champions Ken Grandy and Dave Smith. He plays with a focus and intensity that belies his young age.

When not playing racquetball, Evan enjoys playing basketball and video games.

WOR RANKINGS

MEN

Greg	Solis	865	CA
Rocky	Carson	700	CA
Alvaro	Beltran	575	CA
Andy	Hawthorne	500	OH
Cliff	Swain	490	CA
Dawoud	Garfarshod	375	CA
Matt	Robinson	375	HI
Josh	Tucker	375	CA
Chris	Crowther	375	CA
Craig	Lane	290	CA
Greg	Lewerenz	290	MI

WOMEN

Angela	Grisar	700
Keely	Franks	575
Anthnita	Dickerson	500
Janel	Tisinger	490
Veronica	Sotomayor	490
Felicia	Mann	375
Rhonda	Rajsich	375
Kris	Kaskawal	375
Michelle	Key	375
Kristen	Bellows	375

20TH IRF WORLD SENIOR RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

AUGUST 26-30, 2008 • ALBUQUERQUE, NM by Cheryl Kirk



WSRC COUNCIL, L TO R: PAULA SPERLING, JANE BENTLEY, LUKE ST. ONGE, JOE GELLMAN, EDWINA WADDINGTON, GARY MAZAROFF, CAROL GELLMAN (NOT PICTURED, FELICIA A. DURAN)



FRANCIS FLOREY, JERRY HOLLY, ART HURLEY

Ah, New Mexico, the Land of Enchantment! WSRC President Paula Sperling and WSRC Executive Director Gary Mazaroff led their Council to a stellar event, their 20th! Though this was my first time attending, I'm told it's fantastic every year. Thanks to Paula, Gary, the entire WSRC Council – Joe Gellman, Carol Gellman, Edwina Waddington, Jane Bentley, Felicia A. Duran, Luke St. Onge – and a slew of volunteers always at the ready.

Talk about organized! I was especially taken with the tournament information book... what a professionally done marvel; it included the full player roster with contact information,

advertisements from sponsors, IRF rules, schedule of events, map, last year's results and a complete history of division champions since 1989. Tournament directors (including myself) take note: the more information, the less confusion...

Keith Calkins, IRF President and Luke St. Onge, IRF Executive Director, were on hand at the Saturday banquet to congratulate the players who earned medals at the event. The Al Wetherill Award, a tradition in Albuquerque, was presented by former recipient Lola Markus to Mildred Gwinn of North Carolina for her demonstration of sportsmanship on the racquetball court.

Paula and Gary wish to thank their event sponsors: Gold Patrons were

New Mexico Sports Authority (first title sponsor for the WSRC), MCM Elegante Hotel and Head Penn Racquet Sports. Silver Patrons were E-Force, Ektelon, Gearbox, Sombra Cosmetics, Inc., and the New Mexico Department of Tourism, while Bronze Patrons who stepped up were Casa Auto Dealerships (Mark Wiggins), ProKennex, and Wilson Racquet Sports. And let us not forget the impressive list of 34 additional sponsors and contributors who helped make this event so enjoyable and memorable.

Complete tournament results are available online at <http://www.internationalracquetball.com/uploads/2008WSRCResults.pdf>.



NATIONAL MASTERS RACQUETBALL

by Bruce Adams,
NMRA Secretary

The Board of Directors and members of the National Masters Racquetball Association (NMRA; www.NMRA.info) wish all juniors everywhere a joyous Christmas and we hope that they get all of the racquetball items they desire!

The NMRA is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization of men and women racquetball players from ages 45 to 90 years young. We strive for excellence in self-refereed play, and promoting the sport of racquetball in other areas.

One area we pride ourselves in is assisting the Junior players of the sport of racquetball. Over the past year, we have financially supported the IRF Junior Worlds in Phoenix with a \$1,000 donation; we have partnered with the Classic Pro Racquetball Tour (CPRT) in support of juniors, where we donated over \$700; and we have supported the Junior Nationals and the High Performance Camp at Colorado Springs with \$1,500. Locally, we strive to have juniors and their

parents staff the tournament desks at our two annual events. As a sign of our gratitude for their services, we contribute goods and financial donations to their state's junior fund.

We believe Junior Racquetball is the key to our sport's future and we will continue to look for opportunities to grow our sport by encouraging young people to learn to play and compete in events across the country. We hope you'll join us in that goal!



TEXAS WOMEN AND RACQUETBALL

by JoAnna Reyes

We are Texas Women and Racquetball....hear us roar! Fifty women gathered in San Antonio recently to attend the Women and Racquetball clinic/fundraiser and tournament. They came from as far south as Corpus Christi to as far north as Colleyville to gather with other women who share their passion for racquetball.

Tournament co-directors JoAnna Reyes and Venita Mitchell wanted to draw these women out to compete again by offering them an all-female setting with social time, fellowship, learning and competition. The amazing thing is that all but two participants were already USA Racquetball members!

Special thanks goes to Spectrum Clubs of San Antonio (event host), Omni Bayfront Tower Hotel of Corpus Christi, and Hyatt Hill Country Resort of San Antonio for their generous contributions to our event.

A silent auction fundraiser was held and donations were solicited for the special needs park in San Antonio and also for the Corpus Christi American Diabetes Association. Donations were made on behalf of Texas Women and Racquetball who got together to Rally for a Reason.

Anita King of Plugerville; Gennie Salinas of Corpus Christi; Rhonda Ragsdale of North Richland Hills; and Sandy Rios of Kerrville held clinics in different courts tailored to the participants' skill levels. A stretching session was led by San Antonio local Lupe Martinez followed by cardio line dancing. Rhonda Ragsdale led the cheering segment with Sally Sawyer and Elizabeth Harrell the cheerleaders on each side.

Soon after that, the fierce competition began!

The women were divided into divisions: The Divas (Open), Drama Queens (A), Superstars (B), Princesses (C) and Spoileds (D). Sandy Rios defeated Melissa Young for 1st place in the Divas; Hela Ahmed defeated Rhonda Ragsdale for 1st place in the Drama Queens; Evy Grace defeated Katherine Burson for 1st place in the Superstars; Sarah Kovel defeated Beatriz Gonzalez for 1st place in the Princesses; and Gloria Ybarra defeated Rachel Smith for 1st place in the Spoileds.

The day ended with the new friendships, exchanged phone numbers / email addresses, and promises to travel to play others in their cities. Some gathered at Willie's Grill to end the day with a meal spent among new and old racquetball friends, while others loaded up their bags in their cars and took off for home!



NJAR LADIES DAY A SUCCESS!

by Aimee Ruiz

New Jersey Amateur Racquetball held its first ever Ladies Day on Saturday, September 6th, at The Club at Woodbridge, put together by the ladies of the NJAR board. With over 25 women attending from New Jersey and New York, the women were greeted with a goody bag that included a Ladies Day shirt and other items donated from the NJAR, Ektelon and HEAD. They then had a morning of instruction where they learned tips on the game, basic forehands and backhands, and practice drills. The ladies also had the chance to win prizes in the Radar Gun and "Hit the Can/Pop the Balloon" contest. After instruction and games, everyone was treated to lunch during which the NJAR hosted a roundtable discussion and the topic was "What Women Want" out of racquetball. We also had a drawing where 20+ prizes were given out to the attendees. No one went home empty-handed!

This caps off a great success for the NJAR in Ladies Racquetball and we hope to continue having these get-togethers to get more women involved. The NJAR would like to thank The Club at Woodbridge, Ektelon, HEAD, Wilson, E-Force, and Rollout Racquetball for all of their donations. Also a special thank you goes out to Diane Chappel for donating her time to help with the instruction.



LEADING THE CHARGE: ECRC

By Darrin Schenck
ASU Racquetball Head Coach and
Ektelon's Collegiate Racquetball Director

Anyone who has been associated with College Racquetball knows the name Shane Wood. Shane was the driving force behind College Racquetball for many years and has held the distinction of College Commissioner for quite some time now. Shane was the recipient of the Joe Sobek Outstanding Contributor Award in 2004 and again in 2008 for all his hard work. He has helped grow this conference into the largest in the country, with four Inter-Conference Meets scheduled again for this season. The ECRC is home to a host of dedicated volunteers, including Robert "Smokey" Van Schalkwyk, who was honored with the 2008 Volunteer Coach of the Year Award.

In February 2009, the ECRC will host the Northeast Collegiate Regional Championships, the longest running Collegiate Regional Championship in the nation. Schools like Penn State, Army, Bryant University, Ohio State, and many others will be testing their skills for local bragging rights as well as preparation for the 2009 Intercollegiate Championships in Tempe, AZ. With 17 schools and counting, the East Coast Racquetball Conference is currently the largest conference in the college racquetball ranks.

Over the past few years there has been interest within the Alumni of the ECRC to organize a group to coordinate events for ECRC alumni and to develop methods by which the alumni can give back to the ECRC. As a result of this interest, the ECRC Alumni Foundation has been formed. The five board members have set a goal of gathering 100 alumni participants at the Northeast Regional Championships. During this event, the Foundation plans to hold the first annual ECRC Alumni meeting. All alumni are welcome, regardless of whether they are playing in the event. For more information, contact ecrcalumni@yahoo.com or call Rob VanSchalkwyk at (978) 273-3110. Or, visit the ECRC web link: <http://www.ecrcracquetball.org/alumni.html>.

I look forward to playing host at the 2009 Intercollegiate Racquetball Championships at the Student Rec Center at Arizona State University in early April. For more information, log onto www.rbguru.com and check out the College Racquetball page.

Holiday Specialif you visit the www.rbguru.com website and enter the code "College RB" you will save 10% off of the purchase of one of my books, either Percentage Racquetball or Racquetball 101....your choice!

PROMOTING RACQUETBALL IN COLLEGE

by Jeffrey Weiss

Racquetball is a wonderful sport. However, without engaging more young people in racquetball, the sport could very well languish after the passing of the Baby Boomer generation. It is crucial that the younger generation, primarily collegiate students, are introduced to the sport. The majority of kids in their childhood, whether voluntarily or forced by parents, turn their attention to playing and watching the larger-market sports such as baseball, basketball, football, and soccer. Playing these sports leaves little or no time to become introduced to racquetball. In college, these larger-market sports are primarily found only as competitive varsity sport. Therefore, those who are unable to or unwilling to commit the required time can pursue other activities. Racquetball is a perfect fit for students looking to stay active in athletics and reduce stress.

Last year during my freshman year, I wanted to promote racquetball at my college. I conceived the idea and established the Claremont University Consortium (CUC) Racquetball Team within a four-week period. This club is open to the five undergraduate colleges (Pitzer College, Claremont McKenna College, Pomona College, Scripps College, Harvey Mudd College) and two graduate universities (Claremont Graduate University and Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences) located in the CUC. I was successful in obtaining a total of \$1,350 in sponsorships and school funding within three weeks of starting the club. To further help the players on the team play with their own top-of-the-line racquetball equipment,

I obtained ProKennex sponsorships for my teammates. Lastly, with help from Jon Varona (CSU Fullerton), I planned, organized, and functioned as the tournament director for the USAR-sanctioned collegiate racquetball tournament – the WCRC One-Day Shootout in Claremont, CA, with the objective of introducing my teammates to competitive racquetball. The participating schools included UCLA, California State Fullerton, Long Beach State, and the Claremont University Consortium.

This year there is still more work to be done to increase racquetball participation at my school. Creating a consortium-wide racquetball ladder (i.e., intramurals) and participating in more collegiate tournaments and scrimmages will provide many more opportunities for college students to experience competitive racquetball and to become more-skilled players. Finally, through my position as the National Collegiate Director for ProKennex USA and via my working relationship with Michael Martinez, President for ProKennex North America, I am planning clinics for my team and for colleges in Southern California with ProKennex professionals Jason Mannino and Kane Waselenchuk. These programs will serve to improve the skill of the collegiate students and boost collegiate interest and participation.

While playing racquetball is important, expanding the sport is even more critical. A sport can only be successful if there is a constant influx of new participants. For these reasons, I have devoted countless hours promoting racquetball at the collegiate level.

Investing in **RACQUETBALL'S FUTURE**



We all know we need courts in order for racquetball to exist. Although our sport has shown a small increase in participation over the past four years, there are still clubs removing courts. In fact, some large fitness chains still believe that racquetball is not a sport or a fitness program that needs to be included in their clubs.

Unfortunately, the racquetball community has not provided adequate leadership to club owners and recreational players regarding the numerous benefits of playing our sport. Most clubs do not program racquetball; most schools do not include racquetball as part of their physical education curriculum; and other than the portable court, there are few national initiatives to reach out and encourage the general public to play racquetball. For the past five years, USA Racquetball has worked to eliminate debt, develop a secure financial basis and improve programs for competitive players. Frankly, the marketing aspects of the sport to the general public have taken a back seat. Although it would be a benefit

(such as tennis enjoys) to have outside sponsors and/or manufacturers direct marketing initiatives, this is not what happens in racquetball. Therefore, the major responsibility for promoting our sport is entrusted to USA Racquetball, the national governing body, in conjunction with its associates such as the pro tours and state organizations.

To do this, we must invest funds and time. **THE FUTURE OF OUR SPORT DEPENDS UPON THIS INITIATIVE.** If you doubt this, consider the fact that one of the largest fitness chains in the U.S. just announced they will build 90 clubs across the country next year; none planned with racquetball courts but all with squash courts! It is critical that we develop an aggressive program to market our sport.

USA Racquetball will continue to fulfill its numerous responsibilities to the sport (see chart), and we hope you consider this increase in membership rates not as a one-time license to play a tournament but rather as a long-term investment in the future of our sport!

The Role of the National Governing Body:

USA RACQUETBALL

Clubs and Grassroots Level

Responsible for:

- Consulting to venues (clubs, universities, YMCAs, etc.) relative to maintaining courts and offering racquetball as a viable fitness choice.
- Creating and maintaining the rules and regulations of the sport.
- Developing standards for racquetball products (e.g. eye guards, racquets and balls) and enforcing the standards.
- Collecting and disseminating information (e.g. demographics, fitness facts, fitness norms research).
- Providing certification and continuing education for instructors.
- The protection of sponsors, event directors, and club owners by providing liability and participant insurance accompanied by risk management information and guidelines.
- Providing leadership and guidance to assist state associations with local development and promotion.
- Tracking and monitoring records, and archiving the history of the sport.
- Developing processes and mechanisms to ensure current and future financial stability (e.g. USAR Foundation).
- Providing mechanisms (e.g. portable court, TV, on-line broadcast, website) to bring the sport to the masses.

Elite and National Level

Responsible for:

- Providing competitive opportunities for all levels of play (e.g. junior, collegiate, seniors, masters).
- Formation and promotion of national teams (junior and adult).
- Guaranteeing participation at international events (e.g. World Games, World Championships, Pan American Games, Pan American Championships).
- Developing and maintaining a pipeline of development from junior to elite player.
- Creating scholarship opportunities to encourage and assist athletes with higher education.
- Maintaining a drug-free environment for competitive play.
- Recognizing outstanding achievement within the sport (Hall of Fame, Age group and Elite athlete recognition).
- Maintaining a leadership position within the international community.



New Rates For 2009

Membership Type	2008	2009
Adult (1 year)	\$35	\$50
Adult (3 year)	\$100	\$125
Junior (1 year) 21 & Under	\$20	\$25
Limited Event	\$15	\$20
Lifetime	\$1,000	\$1,250

(A portion of each membership is forwarded to the state associations for local development.)



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Sponsorships are business arrangements, and most manufacturers have specific application processes and require signed contracts which entail obligations on both sides—like showing the company logo on your equipment.

SPONSORSHIPS PART 2

By Steve Crandall
Vice President,
Sales & Marketing
Ashaway Racket Strings

In my last column, we talked about the subject of sponsorships from a player's point of view with Racquetball legend and long-time Ashaway sponsored player Jack Huczek. This month, I'd like to look at the same topic from the manufacturer's point of view: as they say, it takes two to tango. Actually, it can take more than that, which is one of my main points.

Sponsorships are a kind of tide that floats all boats. Sponsorships are good for players; they're good for manufacturers; they're good for state associations, tournament organizers and local clubs; they're good for the entire sport.

But understand that manufacturers do not sponsor players solely out of charity or as an act of philanthropy or kindness. Those attitudes may be there, to be sure, but at base, sponsorships are part of our marketing programs, and like any other business activity, they must be accounted for and meet specific objectives. But in doing so—when done well—they create synergy which can be defined as: A mutually advantageous conjunction where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

So manufacturers like sponsorship programs, and we generally benefit from them, but they are not just about giving away free (or discounted) string, or racquets, or other equipment. Sponsorships are business arrangements, and most manufacturers have specific application processes and require signed contracts which entail obligations on both sides.

Most manufacturers also have many more applicants than they can possibly sponsor, and in our case at least, it's not just the best players we're looking for. The criteria we look for are people who are involved in racquetball at all levels, who actively promote racquetball in their area, especially stringing, and are active in the racquetball

community. Jack used the term "ambassador" to describe the role of sponsored players; we look for people who are ambassadors for the whole sport: if they are good ambassadors for the game, we know they will also be good ambassadors for Ashaway.

So it's not just the best players. Obviously, the better a player is, the more often they're on the court and the more exposure to Ashaway we'll get. But what's more important from our perspective is how involved are they with stringing in their area, and how are they active in their state association and that type of thing. We're looking for the best ambassadors, and they come in all different skill levels, all different ages. Our slant is stringing, so somebody who is involved in stringing in their community, and can demonstrate that, will be important to Ashaway even if they're not that great a player.

Nor do we only sponsor players. We also sponsor people who do the stringing, people who are racquetball directors at their clubs or their YMCA, people who are organizers, promoters of the sport. We know if they are going to promote the sport they are going to promote our brand as well. We also sponsor tournaments, but that may be a subject for a column in itself.

In terms of give and take—or our "return" on our sponsorship investment—there is a sliding scale. With a player like Jack who is one of the top players in the world, visibility for our brand is tremendous. His endorsement of our string has great impact and of course, the terms of his sponsorship deal reflect that. At the other end of the scale, many of our applicants are junior players. These young folk are often more in need of the modest cost benefits sponsorships can provide, but the value of their endorsement is considerably less. However, the fact of being sponsored often gives these juniors a boost of confidence and enthusiasm which is worth more than money. They become the leaders of tomorrow.

So our advice to juniors—or to anyone seeking sponsorship—is to be the best player you can, by all means. But more than that, be willing to give back and be a good ambassador for the sport. Work with your state association, your league, club or team, and help grow the game. That way, you'll help bring others to the sport and help generate that synergy that will also help grow our stringing business. It's a win-win.



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April - TBA (women's only)	Seattle, WA
May 29-31	San Diego, CA
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TWO YEAR PROCESS RESULTS IN ENHANCED EKTELON BALL LINE

Fast, Faster, Fastest Campaign Makes Finding the Right Ball Easy

Big changes are happening to Ektelon racquetballs. The Company is proud to have recently completed an extensive two-year process, in partnership with the sport's top consultant, to completely re-engineer each ball in its line. In the end, the balls achieved a substantial upgrade that incorporated state-of-the-art production processes and various material introductions to develop a longer lasting, more consistent product while delivering three distinct balls with varying levels of bounce and speed.

In conjunction with the upgrade, Ektelon launched a new campaign which makes it simple to understand which ball type is best suited for different levels of play, court environments and overall preference. Three different balls comprise the current Ektelon line – Classic, Premium Select and Fireball. By attaching speed designations - Fast, Faster, Fastest - to each product, players quickly and clearly understand what they are getting from each.

Fast = Classic: A lighter, softer compound is used to reduce arm shock and offers lower bounce for maximum control. Classic balls are black in color for high visibility on indoor court walls and perfect for players looking for a slightly slower-moving, easy-to-see, low-bouncing ball. The Classic allows players more time to set up on shots and is the official ball of the National Masters Racquetball Association (NMRA) and Classic Professional Racquetball Tour (CPRT).

Faster = Premium Select: The #1 seller in the Ektelon line, Premium Select balls come in the popular blue color and deliver a traditional speed and lightweight, crisp feel ideal for a wide population of players.



Fastest = Fireball: The fastest ball in the sport, Fireballs are easily identified by their unique, highly visible hot red color. Made of a reinforced compound for maximum durability, Fireballs provide optimum visibility on glass courts, are ideal for outdoor play and are best suited for players who want the hottest ball in the sport. The Fireball is the official ball of the WPRO and WOR.

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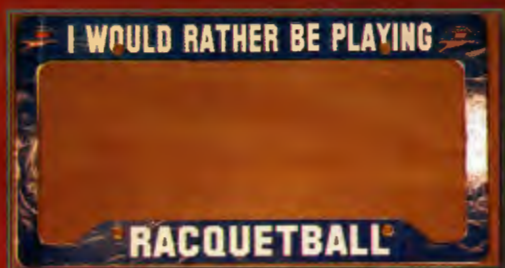
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2008 NMRA DOUBLES DUEL	12/4/2008	12/6/2008	
2008 RAM STATE DOUBLES	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	810-217-8668
2008 NH SEACOAST SHOOTOUT	12/5/2008	12/6/2008	
2008 PA TRI STATE OPEN	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	
2008 TN MOUNTAIN MADNESS RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	865-436-4990
2008 NE 8TH ANNUAL PLF CHAMPIONSHIPS	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	402-691-8546
2008 VA MISTLETOE MATCHUP HOPE TOUR	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	757-515-1269
2008 VA MISTLETOE MATCHUP - HOPE TOUR	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	757-616-1269
2008 AZ HOLIDAY SPLAT CLASSIC	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	
2008 LA TURKEY SHOOT/LOUISIANA STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	225-266-9665
2008 NC COURTS FOR THE CURE	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	
2008 GARDEN CITY, KS YMCA TURKEY SHOOTOUT	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	
2008 IN STATE DOUBLES	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	
2008 NY LONG ISLAND HOLIDAY CLASSIC	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	
2008 MD ST NICK SPLAT	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	410-579-2295
2008 CT STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	860-678-7806
2008 ID HOLIDAY CLASSIC	12/5/2008	12/7/2008	
2008 OR BEAVERTON CLASSIC	12/11/2008	12/14/2008	503-466-1312
2008 VA CHRISTMAS CLASSIC/WPRO	12/11/2008	12/13/2008	703-597-9985
2008 WA KENT DOUBLES CHALLENGE	12/12/2008	12/14/2008	
2008 ND HAPPY JOE'S OPEN	12/12/2008	12/14/2008	701-746-2790
2008 TN MUSIC CITY OPEN	12/12/2008	12/14/2008	615-895-3679
2008 TX MAVERICK HOLIDAY RACQUETBALL SHOOTOUT	12/12/2008	12/13/2008	817-275-3340
2008 TX HOLIDAY CLASSIC	12/13/2008	12/14/2008	281-827-7420
2008 20TH IRF WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS	12/14/2008	12/20/2008	
2009 NH STATE DOUBLES	1/9/2009	1/10/2009	
2009 27TH NY ADIRONDACK OPEN	1/9/2009	1/11/2009	
2009 MN ST. CLOUD TOURNAMENT #1	1/9/2009	1/11/2009	612-616-7009
2009 OR JUNIOR TOUR STOP #3	1/9/2009	1/11/2009	971-242-9872
2009 NC BUILD THE ARC	1/9/2009	1/11/2009	252-633-2221
2009 MICHIGAN MAJIA JUNIOR TEAM BENEFIT	1/10/2009	1/11/2009	810-287-9394
2009 DE 6TH ANNL CARDILE BROTHERS STATE DOUBLES	1/10/2009	1/11/2009	302-886-7530
2009 IN FORT WAYNE OPEN	1/10/2009	1/11/2009	
2009 NE KINCADE SHOOTOUT SERIES #3	1/10/2009	1/10/2009	402-304-8975
2009 MD LAKEFOREST SHOOTOUT	1/10/2009	1/10/2009	301-445-2021
2009 NY CITY PRO AM - IRT EVENT	1/15/2009	1/18/2009	
2009 CO BLIZZARD BASH	1/15/2009	1/18/2009	303-483-7070
2009 WSMA 20TH US WOMEN'S SENIOR MASTER CHAMPIONSHIPS	1/16/2009	1/18/2009	
2009 FL NED GORDON RACQUETBALL CLASSIC	1/16/2009	1/18/2009	863-875-1220
2009 MN HALL OF FAME TOURNAMENT	1/16/2009	1/18/2009	612-616-7009
2009 KY YMCA SPIRIT TOURNEY	1/16/2009	1/18/2009	270-945-9695
2009 MI BAC DOUBLES	1/17/2009	1/17/2009	269-370-2013
2009 MWRA DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	1/17/2009	1/18/2009	410-579-2295
2009 AZ STATE DOUBLES	1/23/2009	1/25/2009	
2009 MN ROCHESTER RAC'N'ROLLOUT	1/23/2009	1/25/2009	612-616-7009
2009 ID BOISE CITY OPEN	1/23/2009	1/25/2009	
2009 MI MAC OPEN	1/24/2009	1/24/2009	669-560-944
2009 NY WESTCHESTER CHAMPIONSHIPS	1/30/2009	2/1/2009	
2009 MN SUPER BOWL SPLAT	1/30/2009	2/1/2009	612-616-7009
2009 WICHITA, KS YMCA OPEN RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT	1/30/2009	2/1/2009	
2009 TN VANDERBILT COMMODORE CLASSIC RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT	1/30/2009	2/1/2009	615-895-3679
2009 CO 10TH ANNUAL RACQUET FOR THE CURE COLORADO	1/30/2009	1/31/2009	303-949-7783
2009 OR STATE DOUBLES	2/4/2009	2/8/2009	503-659-3845
2009 OH 1ST ANNUAL RIVER OAKS BENEFIT	2/6/2009	2/8/2009	440-376-0312
2009 MO PINCHSHOT.COM RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS	2/6/2009	2/8/2009	314-842-3111 EXT. 3
2009 MI MOTOR CITY ROLLOUT	2/7/2009	2/9/2009	248-651-8365
2009 42ND USAR NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	2/11/2009	2/15/2009	719-635-5396
2009 NH SEACOAST SHOOTOUT 2	2/13/2009	2/14/2009	
2009 MN SNOW IS FALLING - LIFETIME FITNESS	2/20/2009	2/22/2009	612-616-7009
2009 NY VALENTINE'S OPEN	2/20/2009	2/22/2009	
2009 ID BALL BUSTER	2/20/2009	2/22/2009	
2009 DE SNOWBALL OPEN	2/21/2009	2/22/2009	302-886-7530
2009 MD EASTERN REGIONAL JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS	2/21/2009	2/22/2009	410-579-2295
2009 CENTRAL NY CHAMPIONSHIPS	2/21/2009	2/21/2009	
2009 22ND USAR NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS	2/25/2009	3/1/2009	
2009 FL GREAT BALLS OF FIRE PROAM	2/27/2009	3/1/2009	305-606-1756
2009 NY FISHKILL WINTER FESTIVAL	2/27/2009	3/1/2009	
2009 MN ST. CLOUD TOURNAMENT #2	2/27/2009	3/1/2009	612-616-7009
2009 COLORADO MADNESS	2/27/2009	3/1/2009	303-467-7157
2009 TENNESSEE STATE SINGLES	2/27/2009	3/1/2009	615-895-3679
2009 MI CAPITAL CHALLENGE	2/28/2009	3/1/2009	517-881-8584
2009 PA ICICLE OPEN	2/28/2009	2/28/2009	610-821-1300
2009 PA STATE SINGLES	3/6/2009	3/8/2009	570-947-1097
2009 AZ STATE SINGLES	3/6/2009	3/8/2009	480-545-1363
2009 NY 4TH ANNUAL CLASSIC PROFESSIONAL RACQUETBALL TOUR TOURNAMENT	3/6/2009	3/8/2009	
2009 OR JUNIOR TOUR STOP #4	3/6/2009	3/8/2009	971-242-9872
2009 MWRA SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	3/6/2009	3/8/2009	410-579-2295
2009 IDAHO STATE SINGLES	3/6/2009	3/8/2009	
2008 NATIONAL MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIP	3/11/2009	3/14/2009	818-884-5034
2009 OR STATE SINGLES	3/11/2009	3/15/2009	503-287-4594
2009 IL THE SHAMROCK SHOOTOUT	3/12/2009	3/16/2009	630-629-3390
2009 SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN SHOOTOUT	3/13/2009	3/15/2009	269-370-2013
2009 KS STATE DOUBLES	3/13/2009	3/15/2009	
2009 NY STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	3/13/2009	3/15/2009	
2009 CO STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	3/19/2009	3/22/2009	720-560-1484
2009 AZ SPRING BREAK OPEN	3/20/2009	3/22/2009	
2009 NY SPRING CLASSIC	3/20/2009	3/22/2009	
2009 MN OPEN - SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	3/20/2009	3/22/2009	612-616-7009
2009 MO MISSOURI STATE SINGLES AND DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	3/20/2009	3/22/2009	314-842-3111 EXT. 3
2009 6TH ANNL DE ORTHOPAEDIC STATE SINGLES	3/21/2009	3/22/2009	302-886-7530
2009 MD TERRAPIN SHOOTOUT	3/26/2009	3/29/2009	301-258-0661
2009 IDAHO STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP	3/27/2009	3/29/2009	
2009 NEBRASKA STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	3/28/2009	3/30/2009	402-304-8975
2009 37TH USAR NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS	4/1/2009	4/4/2009	719-635-5396
2009 PARC 22ND PAN AM RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS	4/5/2009	4/11/2009	
2009 NE DOWNTOWN SHOWDOWN	4/17/2009	4/19/2009	402-304-8975
2009 4TH IRT MOTOROLA PRO NATIONALS	4/22/2009	4/26/2009	
2009 OR JUNIOR STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS	4/23/2009	4/26/2009	503-970-6880
2009 NE KINCADE SHOOTOUT SERIES	4/26/2009	4/26/2009	402-304-8975
2009 WA ONHOLD CONCEPTS SENIORS/MASTERS	5/1/2009	5/3/2009	
2009 MD SPRING SHOOTOUT	5/16/2009	5/16/2009	410-579-2295
2009 42ND USAR NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	5/20/2009	5/25/2009	719-635-5396
2009 36TH USAR JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS	6/24/2009	6/28/2009	719-635-5396
2009 USAR HIGH PERFORMANCE TRAINING CAMP	7/1/2009	7/31/2009	
2009 AZ KEY SPORTS FLAGSTAFF RACQUETBALL CLASSIC	7/17/2009	7/19/2009	
2009 MD COME IN FROM THE SUN	7/18/2009	7/19/2009	410-579-2295
2009 IL 16TH ANNUAL SUMMERFEST OPEN	7/24/2009	7/26/2009	630-629-3390
2009 14TH ANNUAL US OPEN RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS	10/21/2009	10/25/2009	

2008-09 RACQUETBALL CALENDAR

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NEAL	HEGGEN	360-820-3224	BALLY'S TOTAL FITNESS - KENT	KENT WA
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DAN	WHITLEY	314-842-3111	VETTA SPORTS CONCORD	ST. LOUIS MO
CHRIS	VEALE	302-886-7530	KIRKWOOD FITNESS & R/B CLUB	WILMINGTON DE
SHANNON	FEASTER	202-626-5725	LAKEFOREST SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	GAITHERSBURG MD
JAY	LILJENQUIST		FITNESS INC - POCATELLO	POCATELLO ID
LINDA	MOORE	402-423-2511	YMCA - OMAHA	OMAHA NE
EDDIE	MEREDITH	719-591-8756	ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY	TEMPE AZ
JIM	HISER	719-635-5396	COLOMBIA	
LINDA	MOORE	402-423-2511	YMCA - OMAHA	OMAHA NE
DAVE	NEGLETE	630-430-1478	SCHAUMBURG TENNIS PLUS	SCHAUMBURG IL
ANNETTE	KNOTH	503-659-3845	EAST SIDE ATHLETIC CLUB	MILWAUKIE OR
LINDA	MOORE	402-423-2511	LINCOLN RACQUET CLUB	LINCOLN NE
ELLIOT	CROSBY	253-872-7140	BALLY'S OF TACOMA	TACOMA WA
SUSAN	FLAESCH	410-461-0660	SPORT FIT LAUREL RACQUET & HEALTH CLUB	LAUREL MD
EDDIE	MEREDITH	719-591-8756	YMCA - DOWNTOWN HOUSTON	HOUSTON TX
EDDIE	MEREDITH	719-591-8756	MICHIGAN ATHLETIC CLUB-LANSING	EAST LANSING MI
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DOUGLAS	HALVERSON	630-973-6131	GLASS COURT SWIM & FITNESS	LOMBARD IL
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From the **U.S. OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER** in Colorado Springs

By Tia Lecland

What a week! At the High Performance Racquetball Training Camp, I just had the most tremendous experience any racquetball player could dream of, with top pros and the best coaches in the world!

All 33 "campers," ranging in age from age 14 to 63, arrived on Thursday, September 4th from all over the country: Texas, New Jersey, Michigan, Florida, etc. We met with the coaches at 7:00 pm for orientation.

The objective of the meeting, led by Camp Director and Coach Jim Winterton, was to hand out the schedule for the next five days. The team of coaches included Jim Winterton, Dennis Fisher, WPRO's Rhonda Rajsich and Jo Shattuck, IRT Pro Andy Hawthorne and Team USA Coach Dave Ellis. Dr. Jim Hiser, Executive Director of USA Racquetball, led calisthenics every morning and gave presentations in the evenings.

What a great blessing it was to be there in the USOTC where champion athletes train: everything is inspirational! What a great opportunity to be working with top pros and top coaches who were always listening, helping, and offering the same attention to every single camper. Last but not least, it was great to meet all the athletes/campers. Everyone is so dedicated to our sport of racquetball, so enthusiastic! We were pushed to the limit and gave everything we got. It was interesting and fun to interact with a wide variety of individuals in terms of ages, profiles and skill level.

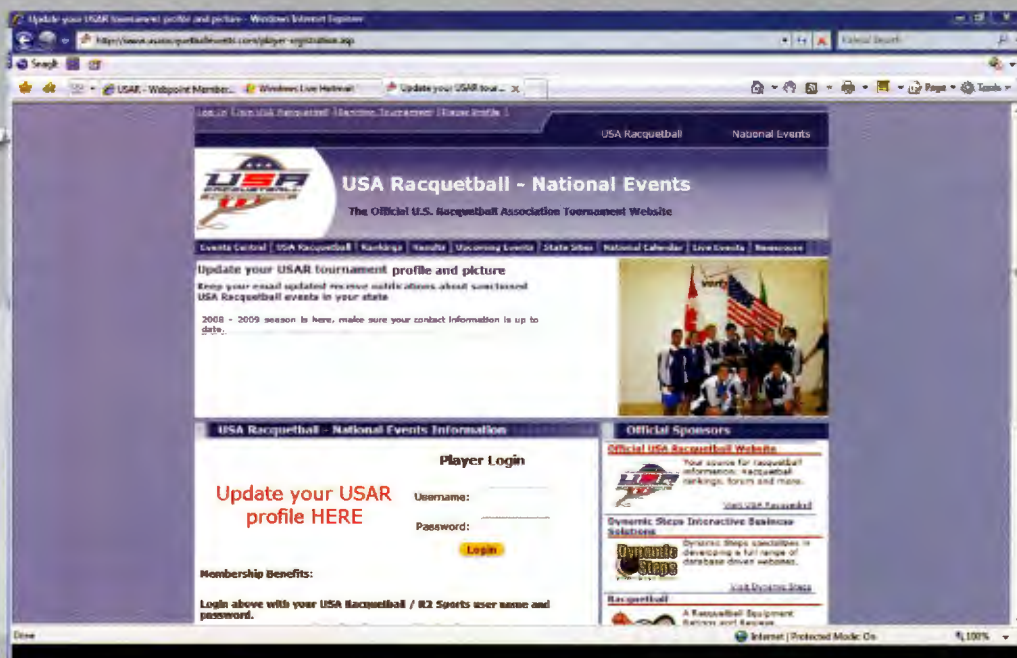
Jeremy, another camper (aka the Runner), said, "I am grateful to have had the opportunity to live as a full-time athlete for a week at the USOTC. I feel like I have been to school and now have the tools to become a high level player. I just need to get out on the court and do my drills!"



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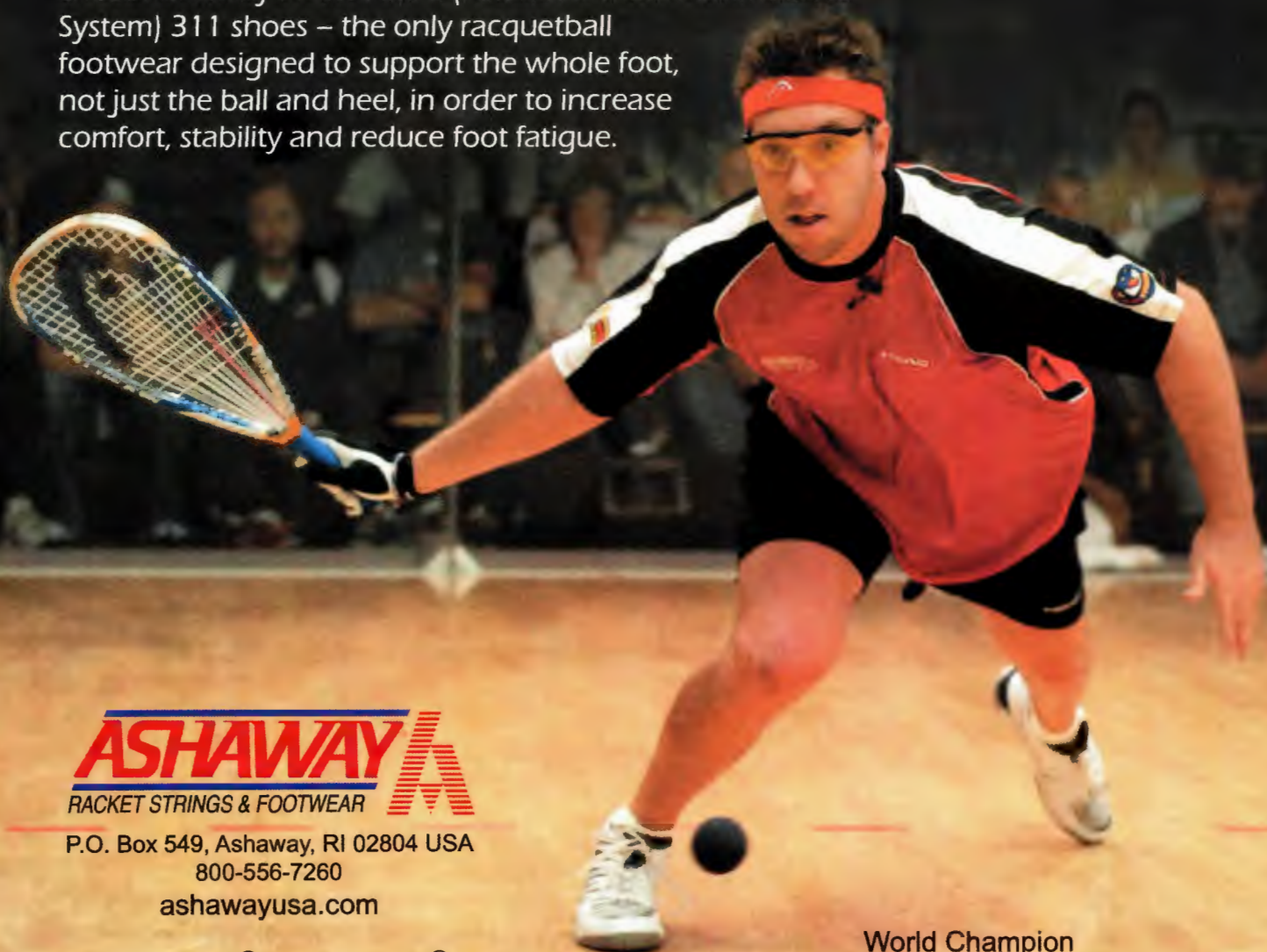
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Supporting Jack Huczek Every Step of the Way

World Champion and IRT Professional, Jack Huczek, demands a lot from his equipment. That's why Jack chose Ashaway's new AMPS (Anatomic Multi-Performance System) 311 shoes – the only racquetball footwear designed to support the whole foot, not just the ball and heel, in order to increase comfort, stability and reduce foot fatigue.



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UP TO 24% FASTER

Ektelon raised the bar on O³ racquets by introducing new Speedport Technology. The rectangular port design creates a stronger and larger string hole, improving frame aerodynamics while allowing the string even more freedom to move.

The result - Ektelon's fastest and most powerful racquet ever!

GET PLUGGED IN

Ektelon's Power Plug technology offers 7 different swing weight configurations. Depending on the location and amount of Plugs added to the frame's O-ports, players now have complete control of the overall weight and balance of the racquet. Adding anywhere from 1.5 up to a fully loaded 16 grams to the frame results in a wide variety of swing weight, stability and power combinations. ***It's like having 7 racquets in one!***

STRING IT UP

Ektelon's DPR (Double Power Ring) string pattern maximizes main string length for greater power. When combined with new Premier Power string, the string bed is on Fire! This new multifilament string is now offered in 3 colors that racquetball players crave.

Finally, a high performance string designed to withstand the demands of extreme racquetball play while providing ultimate power and softer feel.

O³ SPEEDPORT RED OR CAMO

BASE WEIGHT: 170 grams

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MAXIMUM WEIGHT: 186 grams

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POWER LEVEL: 3400-3700

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