

# RACQUETBALL



**TITLES  
SUCCESSFULLY  
DEFENDED**

**UNITEDHEALTHCARE US OPEN RECAP**

IN THIS ISSUE:

**IRF  
WORLD JUNIOR  
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

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# IN THIS ISSUE



Jake Bredenbeck in doubles action at the UnitedHealthcare US Open Championships  
Photo By: KSphotography

## ON THE COVER

Paola Longoria and Kane Waselenchuk successfully defended their Pro Singles titles at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Championships. Photos by KSphotography.

## SUBMISSIONS

Racquetball Magazine welcomes submissions from our members and readers. Propose article ideas by email to: magazine@usaracquetball.com. All submissions are subject to editing.

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Colorado Springs, CO 80904-2444  
(719) 635-5396 | USARacquetball.com

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## Quarterly Production Schedule

Issue	Copy DUE	Ads DUE	Approx. Release
Spring	JAN 1	FEB 1	MAR 30
Summer	APR 1	MAY 1	JUN 30
Fall	JUL 1	AUG 1	SEP 30
Winter	OCT 1	NOV 1	DEC 30

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## USA RACQUETBALL MISSION STATEMENT

*USA Racquetball, recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport, is committed to our members and the growth of racquetball from recreational play to international competition.*

## USA RACQUETBALL CORE VALUES

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## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS & TEAM QUALIFYING

All future National Championship details remain tentative until entries are published.

### U.S. NATIONAL TEAM QUALIFYING

In an effort to help ensure that the top American racquetball players have an equal and fair opportunity to qualify for the U.S. National Team, USA Racquetball adopted changes to the qualification process which began with the 2017-2018 U.S. National Team.

While the process for qualifying for doubles on the US Team is the same, the singles qualification procedure is determined by performance on a weighted scale at three qualifying events:

- UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Pro Division
- U.S. Team Singles Qualifying Division at USA Racquetball National Doubles Championships
- U.S. Team Qualifying Division at USA Racquetball National Singles Championships

To learn more and for complete details, please visit: <http://www.teamusa.org/usa-racquetball/programs/team-usa>.

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BE CONSIDERED FOR A FUTURE ISSUE.



FROM THE  
Executive Director

By Mike Wedel

## National Headquarters

# MOVING FORWARD IN 2019

I want to start by thanking everyone who has reached out to congratulate me on becoming the new Executive Director of USA Racquetball. It has been fantastic to see the huge amount of support you all have demonstrated, because that means that there is still a great deal of passion and excitement for our sport. I am excited about the future of racquetball because of all of the great work currently taking place and all of the work that still needs to be done.

I created a timeline of objectives and goals when I accepted the position of Executive Director. Since starting this position on November 1st, I have been able to spend a lot of time meeting with leaders in our sport. There are still many conversations to be had, but I am encouraged by all of the good ideas and insights being presented across USA Racquetball. I am working with our staff to reorganize to better utilize our resources for maximum benefit to our members. I very much want all of our members to be proud of our organization, and I will work to improve the awareness of all the great things we do.

We sent out the first of several surveys to learn what our members want to see from USA Racquetball at our national championships and how we can enhance the benefits of our membership. The feedback from this first survey was so valuable. The entire Board of Directors, the National Events Committee, and the USAR staff have studied the results, and we will be using the feedback to help improve future events. It is great that so many people took the time to offer their thoughts and input on what they would like to see going forward. Please continue to respond as additional surveys show up in your email inbox. We want and need your input!

While we hear there are declines in participation in our sport, there are also a lot of great things happening. To share a few highlights...

- Recently there was a local high school tournament in St. Louis with over 400 entries.
- A favorite tournament in Texas has had to create a cap on the number of entries, and it sold out in under ten minutes with a waiting list this year.
- The UnitedHealthcare US OPEN this past October boasted over 700 entries.

I am excited to be a part of the team that is working to understand how to replicate this kind of success for increased excitement, participation, and growth.

We all know that building a strong future for our sport must focus on attracting Junior players. The high school programs developed by Dan Whitley and his colleagues in St. Louis have had amazing results. These programs are currently being “packaged up” so we can take those best practices and offer them to other cities and states. Along with this, the USA Racquetball office is currently staffing positions that will be tasked with helping state associations implement programs and facilitate improvements in junior, high school, and collegiate initiatives. Our goal is to help provide support to the many volunteers across the country who are looking to help grow racquetball through the youth programs in their areas. This will require a great deal of commitment from the volunteers and the clubs to make programs grow. One thing I know about racquetball players – we are a passionate bunch, not afraid of work! It would be a great reward for all that work to have the sport growing with excited new players.

We are entering our national championship season, and I want to personally invite you to come out and compete and enjoy all that our national championships have to offer. It is a great getaway for a few days and an opportunity to see old friends and make new ones.

Hope to see you soon, and we wish you a wonderful and blessed Holiday Season and a very Happy New Year!



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Dan Whitley

# 4th Quarter Update!

A lot has been happening with USA Racquetball over the last couple of months. There is so much to be excited about! First, I want to take a moment to congratulate Mike Wedel on his selection as USA Racquetball's newest executive director. If you recall from last issue's article, this was an intense and thorough process with over 60 applicants. Guided by an outside Senior Talent Acquisition consultant, the top applicants went through email surveys and phone screen interviews, then participated in an in-person panel interview. After this entire process was completed, Mike Wedel was the choice of the Search Committee to become the new executive director.

Mike is a great hire. He has worn almost every hat possible in racquetball and brings great experience to the executive director role. Mike has worked in racquetball clubs, run nearly 100 tournaments, served on the USAR Board of Directors and Executive Committee, was a State Association President for Kansas, and possesses great working relationships with the IRT & LPRT. His 25+ years of professional experience in business and non-profit management will serve our association well. Welcome aboard, Mike!

Congratulations to USA Racquetball Board member Scott Fish. With Mike Wedel leaving the board to lead the staff, Scott was recently appointed the new board vice president. Scott has been a great board member for the past four years. As the chair of the Membership Committee, combined with his passion and expertise for junior racquetball and social media, he has been a great asset to our team. We are excited to have Scott as our new VP!

The 23rd Annual UnitedHealthcare US OPEN in October was incredible! Kudos to Doug Ganim and his staff on another amazing event. Few have any idea how much time and energy goes into this...it's a year-round job for Doug. The event wouldn't be possible without sponsors and volunteer support, and Doug coordinates it all. We are so fortunate to have this one-of-a-kind grand slam every year in Minneapolis at the Life Time Target Center location and several other venues in the area. Thank you to Doug and to everyone who helped with, played in, and/or supported this event.

In September, I had the pleasure of attending the 9th Annual 3WallBall Sports Festival in Las Vegas. Mike Coulter and his team put on a really unique and fun event. Mike and his crew annually build 10+ courts on the parking lot of the Stratosphere Hotel & Casino in order to host this tournament. A lot of time goes into the construction that begins a couple of weeks before the event. The WOR community is so inclusive and really made this event special. We are proud to have WOR as a part of USA Racquetball, and we will be working to provide more support for outdoor championships in 2019. Thanks to Mike for creating an outstanding outdoor championship event.

All of the items I have mentioned share one thing in common...*volunteer support*. USA Racquetball is always appreciative of and needs volunteer support to grow and sustain our initiatives. As we enter 2019, please consider becoming more involved in racquetball. There are a number of ways you can contribute:

- Join a USAR committee
- Apply for your state board
- Get involved in the USA Racquetball Instructor Program (USAR-IP)
- Volunteer at or host a local tournament
- Offer support at a national championship
- Help start a junior, high school, or collegiate program

Please consider finding a way to give time and donate back to racquetball!

As an example, it would be easy to host an open house at your racquetball club. This is the single best way to get new players into the sport. The best reach would be if you geared your open house to junior players. If you can get a junior player interested in racquetball, their friends will usually follow. Kids will tend to join sports alongside of their buddies. Once a kid is "hooked," racquetball is a unique lifetime sport that parents can play with their kids. Once the parents are engaged, other siblings may choose to join in. Typically, one new junior player can draw more people into racquetball than one new adult player.

Hosting an open house for juniors could consist of inviting kids via physical education programs at their schools or through Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, church youth groups, other sports teams (for winter cross-training), or as part of a "bring a friend" day for active junior racquetball programs.

Please consider hosting a junior racquetball open house at your club in 2019. It's easy and it's fun!

Happy New Year to everyone from USA Racquetball!



Dan Whitley & Mike Coulter at the 2018 3WB Sports Festival



# ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE CAN RAISE MORE THAN **\$30,000 FOR THE TEAMS!**

**S**upport the U.S. Adult and Junior National Teams with a tax-deductible contribution today. Your support is vital to the players and coaches as they prepare to represent the United States in international competition. Funds are primarily used for travel expenses, entry fees, and training.

Donations of \$100 or more, made in 2018 to the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, *will be matched* by the group of generous Team Benefactors at right, who have each pledged up to \$2,500 to support the cause. With your support, the USA Racquetball family can raise more than \$30,000 for your U.S. National Teams!

## TEAM USA CHALLENGE BENEFACTORS

*Usher Barnoff · Rick Betts · Cheryl Kirk ·  
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*Under the TEAM USA CHALLENGE,  
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# XXX IRF World Junior Racquetball Championships



San Luis Potosí, Mexico

November 1-11, 2018

By Cheryl Kirk, Team Leader

Photos By Rich Carver & Cheryl Kirk

The US Junior Team Delegation was comprised of 27 players (14 boys and 13 girls), 7 staff members, and 40 parents/grandparents/siblings/private coaches. Hailing from 10 U.S. states -- California, Florida, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington -- the U.S. Junior Team players earned their spots on the team in June at the USAR National Juniors competition in Des Moines. Coaches Charlie Pratt, Robbie Collins, and Jody Nance took the World Cup team through their paces at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs in August, and then individual training was intense until it was time to make the trip to Mexico.

Twelve countries (198 players) participated: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Mexico, and the USA.

## TEAM USA WORLD CUP (15)

### Boys Singles

18 & Under -- Ricardo Diaz (CA), Dane Elkins (CA)

16 & Under -- Sahil Thakur (CA), Cayden Akins (TX)

14 & Under -- Timmy Hansen (FL), Andrew Gleason (IA)

### Boys Doubles

18 & Under -- Ricardo Diaz (CA)/Dane Elkins (CA)

16 & Under -- Sahil Thakur (CA)/Krish Thakur (CA)

14 & Under -- Timmy Hansen (FL)/Andrew Gleason (IA)

### Girls Singles

18 & Under -- Elyse Duffié (MO), Graciana Wargo (FL)

16 & Under -- Annie Roberts (OR), Erin Slutsky (MO)

14 & Under -- Heather Mahoney (CA), Julia Stein (PA)

### Girls Doubles

18 & Under -- Hannah Carver (WA)/Megan Carver (WA)

16 & Under -- Annie Roberts (OR)/Erin Slutsky (MO)

14 & Under -- Heather Mahoney (CA)/Julia Stein (PA)



Andrew Gleason & Timmy Hansen celebrate on match point to win the gold medal in Boys 14 & Under Doubles



Parents, Relatives, and Coaches supporting Team USA

**TEAM USA ESPRIT CUP (11)****Boys Singles**

12 & Under -- Nikhil Prasad (CA)\*, Benjamin Horner (IA)\*, Gatlin Sutherland (MT), Brandon Ausucua (TX)  
10 & Under -- Eshan Ali (CA)\*, Ace Akins (TX)\*

**Boys Doubles**

12 & Under -- Nikhil Prasad (CA)/Gatlin Sutherland (MT)\*, Brandon Ausucua (TX)/Benjamin Horner (IA)  
10 & Under -- Eshan Ali (CA)/Ace Akins (TX)\*

**Girls Singles**

12 & Under -- Ava Kaiser (MN)\*, Kareena Mathew (OR)\*, Sonya Shetty (CA)  
10 & Under -- Lillian Ford-Crimi (MN)\*, Elizabeth Denler (MN)\*

**Girls Doubles**

12 & Under -- Ava Kaiser (MN)/Kareena Mathew (OR)\*  
10 & Under -- Lillian Ford-Crimi (MN)/Elizabeth Denler (MN)\*

**TEAM USA CHALLENGER CUP**

12 & Under -- Ashton Akins (TX)

\* Denotes Point Earners -- For the Esprit Cup category, each country is allowed to enter up to six players/teams in the 12's and 10's for singles and doubles. However, two singles players and one doubles team must be designated as point earners toward the overall Esprit Cup championship.

**STAFF**

Charlie Pratt (OR) – Head Coach  
Jennifer Meyer (CO) – Esprit Coach  
Jody Nance (CA) – Trainer/Assistant Coach  
Robbie Collins (CA) -- Assistant Coach  
Bobby Horn (CA) -- Assistant Coach  
Cheryl Kirk (IL) – Team Leader/USAR Board of Directors  
Scott Fish (WA) -- Staff Member/USAR Board of Directors

**CHEERLEADERS**

The 27 U.S. Junior Team players brought along plenty of support! Besides the coaching staff of five plus two more staff members, 40 family members and friends (bringing the delegation number to 74) were in the stands cheering enthusiastically for our young competitors. Joining us in San Luis Potosí were Donnie Akins, Wendy Akins, Anwar Ali, Brian Ancheta, Juan José and Imelda Ausucua and family, Kads Beelwar, Bill Bray, Margaret Bray, Rich Carver, Ron Denler, Carolina Diaz, Jose Diaz, Sr., Susan Duffié, Dave Ellis, Pat Ellis, Becky Gleason, Michael Gleason, Tim Hansen, Sarah Hansen, Katie Hansen, Kellie Hansen, Dan Horner, Melissa Horner, Zane Horner, Rhonda Kimler, Gina Lecy, Skip Lecy, John Mahoney, Melodese Mahoney, Prem Mathew, Pendem Prasad, Bryan Roberts, Ethan Slutsky, Steve Slutsky, Adam Stein, Scott Sutherland, Rajesh Thakur, Gary Wargo, and Kathleen Wargo. Thanks to each of you for your enthusiastic presence for Team USA!

I can't say enough about the parents and grandparents who contributed their time and resources to bring the kids to another country to compete. They lived and died by every point or skip, made sure their players were hydrated and well fed, and gave them their space when needed. From my vantage point, they were heroes; from theirs, they were just doing what they do every day. In addition to supporting their own players, these fine people offered help and support to the staff as well. If a request was made for something on the Whatsapp chat, responses were immediate!

**US JUNIOR TEAM MEDALS****TEAM USA Overall Results -- Individual -- WORLD CUP**

Girls 14 Singles -- Heather Mahoney -- SILVER  
Boys 14 Singles -- Andrew Gleason -- SILVER  
Boys 14 Singles -- Timmy Hansen -- BRONZE  
Girls 14 Doubles -- Julia Stein/Heather Mahoney -- GOLD  
Boys 14 Doubles -- Andrew Gleason/Timmy Hansen -- GOLD  
Girls 18 Doubles -- Hannah Carver/Megan Carver -- BRONZE  
Boys 18 Doubles -- Dane Elkins/Ricardo Diaz -- BRONZE

**TEAM USA Overall Results -- Individual -- ESPRIT CUP**

Girls 10 Doubles -- Elizabeth Denler/Lillian Ford-Crimi -- SILVER  
Girls 12 Singles -- Ava Kaiser -- BRONZE  
Girls 12 Singles -- Kareena Mathew -- BRONZE  
Girls 12 Singles Red -- Sonya Shetty -- GOLD  
Boys 12 Singles -- Nikhil Prasad -- GOLD  
Boys 12 Singles Blue -- Gatlin Sutherland -- SILVER  
Girls 12 Doubles -- Kareena Mathew/Ava Kaiser -- BRONZE  
Boys 12 Doubles -- Nikhil Prasad/Gatlin Sutherland -- BRONZE

**TEAM USA Overall Results -- Individual -- CHALLENGER CUP**

Boys 12 Singles Challenger -- Ashton Akins -- SILVER

**OVERALL RESULTS -- COUNTRY STANDINGS****World Cup -- Girls**

1. Mexico
2. USA
3. Bolivia
4. Canada

**Esprit Cup -- Girls**

1. Mexico
2. USA
3. Bolivia
4. Guatemala

**World Cup -- Boys**

1. Bolivia
2. Mexico
3. USA
4. Costa Rica

**Esprit Cup -- Boys**

1. Mexico
2. Bolivia
3. USA
4. Colombia

**World Cup -- Combined**

1. Mexico
2. Bolivia
3. USA
4. Canada

**Esprit Cup -- Combined**

1. Mexico
2. Bolivia
3. USA
4. Costa Rica



World Cup & Esprit Cup Teammates pose together after practice

## Americans at World Juniors -- Not Just the US Delegation

In addition to those from other countries, thanks to the following Americans who traveled from the USA to perform various services such as event management, refereeing, live color commentary, streaming, social media coverage, and rules clarifications. Our gratitude goes to Tim Baghurst, Gustavo Farell, Gary Mazaroff, and Dean Schear for their dedication to the IRF and to racquetball.

## World Juniors Timeline

The walk between the hotel and the club was about seven minutes, if that. La Loma Centro Deportivo features eight courts, all glass backs, including two stadium courts with an additional glass sidewall each. Photos that accompany the Daily Blogs at [www.usaracquetball.com](http://www.usaracquetball.com) illustrate the beauty of this world-class facility.

To give a flavor of how the week unfolded, here's a rundown:

**Thursday/Friday (November 1/2)** -- Arrivals and practice

**Saturday (November 3)** -- Coaches' meeting at 12:00 pm, team photos at 4:00 pm, and Opening Ceremonies at 5:00 pm. Morning and afternoon courts were reserved for Team USA players who hadn't had the chance to practice yet or who wanted to get in a little more time.

**Sunday through Tuesday (November 4-6)** -- Round robin pools in most divisions to determine seeding in main draws beginning Wednesday\*

**Wednesday through Saturday (November 7-10)** -- Main draws and continuations of round robins and Olympic format divisions

**Saturday (November 10)** -- Finals and Awards Ceremony

**Sunday (November 11)** -- Departures back to the States

### \* More Detail on Division Formats

Most divisions began with round robin pools except for Girls 18 Doubles and Girls 14 Doubles that were straight round robins. The following Esprit divisions were Olympic format: Boys 12 Singles, Boys 10 Singles, and Girls 12 Singles. This means that a first-round loss in the gold division places the player into the red division and a second-round loss in the gold division places the player into the blue division. The Challenger 12S division was a straight round robin.

The week was a veritable roller coaster -- some days successful, some days not as much. In an early blog, coaches Jen and Jody weighted in on the overall atmosphere: "From a coaches' perspective, this team is determined, united, has heart, and exudes camaraderie. You can hear cowbells (thank you, Julia!) and USA chants at the club throughout the day as parents and players supported each other."

## Speaking of Coaches...

In addition to the coaching staff identified above, there were a number of parents and private coaches who provided coaching support to the players. Required was completion of USAR-IP certification, SafeSport and CPR training, and a background check. These coaches were Anwar Ali (CA), Brian Ancheta (OR), Rich Carver (WA), Dave Ellis (CA), Tim Hansen (FL), Skip Lecy (MN), Pendem Prasad (CA), and Ethan Slutsky (MO/OH). Their presence contributed significantly to the delegation, and the US Junior Team Coaches were grateful for their support and familiarity with players' capabilities and strengths. Read more about all of the coaches in Daily Blog #7 on [www.usaracquetball.com](http://www.usaracquetball.com).

## Racquetball -- A Sport for Life

When you're at an event like World Juniors, the days go on (and on) with lots and lots of racquetball, but that's not at all the total experience our young players gain while being part of the US Junior National Team.

Parents agree that while it can be challenging for the players to miss



Top: Coaches Bobby Horn, Robbie Collins, and Charlie Pratt

Center: A packed house to watch the championship matches

Above: Girls 14 & Under World Doubles Champions Julia Stein & Heather Mahoney

seven days of school (although homework being done was evident there), the experience of visiting another country, learning about differences in culture, making friends even when you don't speak the same language, creates a different kind of educational experience that's impossible to replicate in a classroom.

Coaches like Charlie Pratt and his team who emphasize sportsmanship, fair play, and teamwork as key in this very special World Juniors experience are standing for something that will serve our players well in their coming years, both in sports competition and in their personal and professional lives.

#### **Winding Down...**

After the last match concluded on Saturday afternoon, the Awards and Closing Ceremonies were held in the same basketball court area where the Opening Ceremonies were held on the first Saturday. Every US Junior Team player had the chance to be on the medals stand either due to individual results or team achievements. Proud parents and coaches took photos to capture these special moments. GREAT JOB, TEAM USA!

Well before dawn on Sunday morning, families began heading home to resume normal life (school, jobs, errands) and this XXX IRF World Juniors became a fond memory. Speaking for the coaches and staff members, we had a great time with this delegation of 74 -- certainly one of the most considerate and enthusiastic we have experienced!

#### **Exciting News**

The XXXI IRF World Junior Championships will be hosted in San José, Costa Rica, in November 2019. Press conferences and newspaper articles in San José the week after this year's event demonstrated how excited the City of San José and the Federation Costarricense de Racquetball (FECORA) are to be planning a very special event for the junior racquetball players of the world one year from now.

For a closer look at results of the XXX IRF World Junior Championships, full draws can be viewed on [www.internationalracquetball.com](http://www.internationalracquetball.com).

Visit [www.usaracquetball.com](http://www.usaracquetball.com), Daily Blogs 1-10, for a full account of the week's activities including closing comments from Coaches Charlie Pratt and Jen Meyer.

# THANK YOU

The US Junior Team Delegation wishes to deliver our gratitude to those who made this event so truly memorable:

All the individuals who made contributions large and small...every bit counts! The Team USA Challenge on [www.usaracquetball.com](http://www.usaracquetball.com) provides the opportunity for racquetball players to support the US Teams with their participation at international competitions. Please remember us when making your year-end charitable donations!

The tournament staff and referees who came in from several countries to provide a quality experience for the players, including the significant gift that no player had to ref the next match!

Pablo Fajre, Tim Baghurst, Paula Mansilla, Raphael Gatica, Diego Gatica, Alex David Cocco Hayes, Gary Mazaroff, and Gustavo Farell for live streaming quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals action to viewers.

The staff of the Ankara Hotel who were friendly, efficient, and responsive to all requests.

The owners, management, and staff of La Loma Centro Deportivo for providing a first-class facility for this World Juniors competition.

The parents and cheerleaders who were there for every match, living every point as if they were out there playing themselves, and pitching in to provide/arrange meals and snacks and multitudes of small favors that were hugely helpful to the coaches and staff. We felt the love!

The associations who made contributions for team meals -- Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Texas, and the Reaching Your Dream Foundation. You guys are the best! And to Becky and Mike Gleason and all the parents who arranged for the meals, awesome job!

Renée Gundolff, USA Racquetball staff member, who assisted the team with multiple duties behind the scenes such as US Junior Team contracts, timeline communication, insurance set-up, and parent and private coach certifications.

USAR Official Apparel Sponsor Rollout Racquetball (Jonathan Clay) -- thanks for making the US Junior Team look great!

Last but not least, Leo Vasquez who stopped whatever else he might have been doing as soon as a blog and photos were ready for posting!

### "OVERHEARD"

This blog feature provided a lot of fun throughout the week.  
Here are some of the highlights:

Overheard (at practice outside of court 5)  
Bryan Roberts (Annie's dad): How you doin'?  
Annie: Not good, did you see my backhand??  
Bryan: I asked how YOU were doing, not your backhand.  
Annie: I AM my backhand!

Overheard (Monday night at 8:20 pm)  
Melodese Mahoney: Is this the last match today?  
Jen and Cheryl: Yes!  
Bobby (after 12 hours in the club): Kinda wish there was more...  
(Note: He didn't mean it.)

Overheard (watching a Boys 10 Singles match)  
Charlie: "This kid would probably take Robbie to a tiebreaker."  
Robbie: "And he probably bench presses more than Charlie."

Overheard (while coaching Cayden)  
Charlie: "Hit a lob Z to his forehand."  
Cayden: "I don't feel comfortable hitting that."  
Charlie: "Okay, no worries."  
Next timeout:  
Cayden: "I'm going for the back court crack ace."  
Charlie and Bobby: "Okay..."  
Cayden walks back onto the court.  
Charlie to Bobby: "He can hit a back court crack ace but not a lob Z???"

Overheard (as Scott Fish rang the cowbell near her ear for the 575th time)  
Cheryl: I could use a little less cowbell.

Overheard (The Robbie and Bobby Show)  
Jody: So, how long have you guys been friends?  
Bobby: Not very long.  
Robbie: Too long, I'm waiting for it to be over.

Bobby (after a long day at the club): I'm going to go to sleep and never wake up.  
Robbie: I can only hope.



Ace Akins winds up on a backhand



Boys 14 & Under Silver Medalist Andrew Gleason

### "QUESTION OF THE DAY"

This blog feature gave readers the chance to get to know the players better. Here's one that especially demonstrates the remarkable diversity and heartwarming accomplishments of the USA Junior Team.

What is the most rewarding or fulfilling thing you have ever done?

Eshan Ali: Finish reading the holy Quran in Arabic.  
Lillian Ford-Crimi: Making it to Mexico.  
Andrew Gleason: I made the US Junior Team!  
Erin Slutsky: Volunteer at my elementary school to help kids who struggle with reading and writing.  
Ava Kaiser: Being a volunteer swim instructor for the American Red Cross Swim Program.  
Elyse Duffié: Traveling to France and meeting lots of different people.  
Gatlin Sutherland: Made this team.  
Timmy Hansen: Training and winning a division at the US OPEN.  
Cayden Akins: Staying true to myself.  
Ace Akins: Won the school spelling bee.  
Benjamin Horner: Going to Worlds two years ago.  
Kareena Mathew: My friend and I raised about \$400 for a refugee camp for a school project.  
Elizabeth Denler: I found a cow skull in the middle of Montana.  
Heather Mahoney: After Northern California Fires of 2017, I volunteered at several housing agencies that helped people that lost their homes.  
Annie Roberts: Picked up a racquet.  
Dane Elkins: Traveling all across the country.  
Hannah Carver: Winning Nationals this summer.  
Krish Thakur: Helping with a charity drive every December.  
Sahil Thakur: Volunteering at Brighter Christmas.  
Ashton Akins: Helped my baseball team win the championship.  
Nikhil Prasad: Working hard for Nationals this year and qualifying for Worlds is very rewarding.  
Julia Stein: Community service for my church at summer camp.  
Graciana Wargo: Competing for my country on Team USA has been very fulfilling. Completing the Colorado Springs Incline hike and run was great, too.

# The Race for the 2019-2020 U.S. National Team



Champion	100 Points
Runner-Up	80 Points
Semifinalist	60 Points
Quarterfinalist	30 Points
Round of 16	10 Points
Round of 32	5 Points



The UnitedHealthcare US OPEN comprises 20 percent of the Team Qualification process, with a Team Qualifying Singles Division held at National Doubles contributing 30 percent and the National Singles Team Qualifying Division comprising the remaining 50 percent.

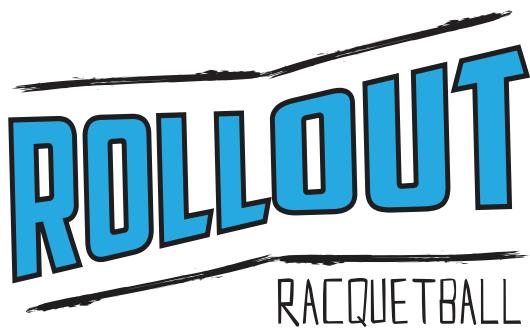
## Final U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings

STANDING	PLAYER	US OPEN IRT DIVISION POINTS	SINGLES DIVISION			NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	TOTAL POINTS
			WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%			
1	Rocky Carson	60	12					12
2	Jose Diaz	30	6					6
T3	Jake Bredenbeck	10	2					2
T3	Charlie Pratt	10	2					2

## Final U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings

STANDING	PLAYER	US OPEN LPRT DIVISION POINTS	SINGLES DIVISION			NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	TOTAL POINTS
			WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%			
1	Rhonda Rajsich	6						6
T2	Michelle De La Rosa	1						1
T2	Adrienne Haynes	1						1
T2	Kelani Lawrence	1						1
T2	Cassi Lee	1						1
T2	Sheryl Lotts	1						1
T2	Erika Manilla	1						1
T2	Hollie Scott	1						1

The qualification process for doubles teams continues to be based on the Team Qualifying Doubles Division at USAR National Doubles.



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## NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

FEBRUARY 6-10 | TEMPE, ARIZONA

## NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIP

FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 3 | ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

## NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIP

APRIL 3-6 | TEMPE, ARIZONA

## NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP

MAY 22-26 | DENVER, COLORADO

## NATIONAL JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIP

JUNE 19-23 | PORTLAND, OREGON

## US OPEN

OCT 2-6 | MINNEAPOLIS, MN





By Jim Hiser

# USAR-IP

## OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Please Welcome Our Newest Members to the USA Racquetball Instructor Program:

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David Boyovich - WA	Teresa Moss - SC
Pat Buttermore - MI	David Moyle - OR
Michael Bunce - NY	Karl Myers - MD
Spencer Colden - NY	Peter Nehr - FL
Fabian Cuesta - Ecuador	Andrew Pawlowski - FL
Tim Doucette - VA	John Reyes - NY
Thomas Evans - WA	Sam Sorokin - CA
Davis Graves - MS	Leon Thomas - MD
Fleurette King - CO	Eddie Vann - TX
Steve Kowkabany - FL	Rocco Vega - WA
Cassi Lee - NY	Chuck Wilson - CO
Jason Mannino - CA	Carolyn Watkins-Vazquez - IL

The USAR-IP provides all members the opportunity to stay up-to date with the most recent information on racquetball instruction. Besides the online courses listed below, also included online are numerous articles and videos on all aspects of racquetball instruction.

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- Rules and Officiating Test for Juniors
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- Rules and Officiating: Doubles
- High School Officiating Test
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- Risk Management & Safety Procedures: Physical & Sexual Abuse
- Racquetball Injuries
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## SINGLES TITLES DEFENDED AT THE UNITEDHEALTHCARE US OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Jeff Oliver  
Photos By KSphotography

The 2018 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships showed the sport yet again why it is racquetball's premier event of the season! More than 700 players from 19 different countries rendezvoused in Minneapolis during the first week in October. The professional players on the International Racquetball Tour (IRT) and the Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT) battled it out for the largest prize purse of the year: nearly \$70,000! The action is just as intense for amateurs with more than 1,000 matches played among four venues across the Twin Cities region over five days.

In the Professional Singles Divisions, Paola Longoria (Mexico) and Kane Waselenchuk (Canada) demonstrated they still have a firm grasp on their respective titles of the "Best Racquetball Player in the World." The glistening all-Lucite stadium court provided a glimpse into racquetball's future with Andree Parrilla (Mexico) and Ana Gabriela Martinez (Guatemala) making impressive semifinal runs to suggest they might be the ones to eventually dethrone

the longtime champions. Longoria and Samantha Salas (Mexico) reclaimed their title in the Women's Professional Doubles division. A new team made the record books of the US OPEN Men's Professional Doubles, with Alvaro Beltran (Mexico) and Daniel De La Rosa (Mexico) winning a US OPEN title for the first time.

The UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is hosted in the Twin Cities by Life Time Fitness and the University of Minnesota. The three Life Time clubs and the collegiate courts are all centrally located and can be accessed through the US OPEN's quick and reliable (and free!) shuttle system or by local light rail. That same light rail system provides easy transportation to and from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport to the downtown core for just \$2.00 each way. When attending the US OPEN, there is no need to spend money for a rental car!

The LIFE TIME – Target Center club served as the hub for the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships. Located

in Downtown Minneapolis, the facility is in the same building where the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves and WNBA's Minnesota Lynx play. The Target Center recently underwent a \$145 million renovation including a new two-story all-glass atrium that serves as the stunning entrance to the LIFE TIME facility underneath the arena. Over one million guests visit the Target Center each year, making it one of the busiest arenas in the world.

Under the arena floor where 35 members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame have played – including Minnesota music legends Prince and Bob Dylan – the all-Lucite portable racquetball court is assembled each year. Set up in a stadium seating configuration, the crown jewel of racquetball courts allows viewing through all four walls for more than 1,200 spectators. From the early rounds through the finals, all the top professional players in the world played on the Stadium Court after being introduced to the raucous crowd with booming music, a laser light show, and spotlights. Racquetball fans purchased bleacher tickets to individual matches or experienced top-notch VIP service by reserving a Courtside Gold Box. Gold Box holders had the best views in the house and rubbed elbows with racquetball's best players and legends. Those in a Gold Box enjoyed meals all week from Minneapolis' top restaurants as well as courtside beverage service.

Since 2012, UnitedHealthcare has served as the Title Sponsor for the US OPEN Racquetball Championships. The sponsorship agreement partners racquetball's largest and most prestigious annual tournament with one of the nation's largest health and well-being companies. During the award ceremony at the conclusion of the tournament, Andrew Mackenzie, UnitedHealthcare's Chief Marketing Officer, announced a two-year extension to continue the company's generous sponsorship of racquetball's original grand slam. Sports Minneapolis, a local organization devoted to bringing top sporting events to the region, also committed their support to the US OPEN through 2020.

The US OPEN is appreciative of the following national co-sponsors who help make the event possible: Lewis Drug, KWM Gutterman, Life Time, and Sports Minneapolis.

#### **PAOLA LONGORIA WINS EIGHTH US OPEN TITLE**

Longoria continued her dominance of the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships and the LPRT by defeating her doubles partner Samantha Salas in the Women's Professional Singles final, 11-9, 11-2, 11-5. The appearance in the final for Paola was her 11th consecutive and the win was her eight consecutive US OPEN Championship.

Salas reached the US OPEN final for the second time in three years. She missed most of last season due to shoulder surgery and now appears fully recovered. Salas now sits at No. 3 on the LPRT rankings list. With a full return to the LPRT, expect Samantha and Paola to face off in many tournament finals in the seasons to come.

#### **KANE WASELENCHUK WINS 14TH US OPEN TITLE**

For the 14th time in the last 16 years, Waselenchuk won the US OPEN Men's Professional Singles division. For an event that has been contested 23 times, Kane now holds more than 60% of all US OPEN titles. Saying Waselenchuk has dominated the US OPEN may be an understatement!

This year's Men's Professional Singles final was a rematch from the 2015 US OPEN that pitted Kane against Daniel De La Rosa (Mexico). That year saw Kane defeat Daniel in a straight sweep and the result was the same

this time around. De La Rosa kept the first game close early, but Kane pulled away to win 15-11. Waselenchuk cruised in the second game and won 15-6 to capture yet another US OPEN title.

With Kane entering the 2018 US OPEN as the No. 3 seed and Daniel as the No. 4 seed, this was the first Men's Professional Singles final since 2003 that didn't include at least one of the tournament's top two seeds.

#### **PRO DOUBLES THRILLS US OPEN FANS YET AGAIN**

Ever since the Professional Doubles divisions were added to the US OPEN lineup by Event Director Doug Ganim in 2014, they have been a smashing success! Friday Night under the Stadium Court lights has become the must-have ticket of the tournament. After the singles action concludes for the day, Friday evening features the Men's & Women's Professional Doubles semifinals. When you put four of the top racquetball players into a court surrounded by a thousand fans, the atmosphere is simply electric!

On the men's side, the two teams making the finals provided a rematch from 2017. However, this year it was Alvaro Beltran (Mexico) and De La Rosa who became the US OPEN Champions, defeating Kane Waselenchuk and Ben Croft. Alvaro and Daniel jumped out to a 8-1 lead early in Game #1. They stretched the lead to 12-3, but Kane and Ben stormed back without giving up serve to get within two points at 12-10. The Mexican pair were able to close out the first game and easily controlled Game #2 to win 15-11, 15-6. Point of interest: those scores happened to be the same ones Kane would defeat Daniel with the following day!

Longtime doubles partners Longoria and Salas paired up again to win the Women's Professional Doubles division. The duo from Mexico defeated Alexandra Herrera and Montserrat Mejia – another team from Mexico – in the final, 15-11, 15-14. Paola has won every US OPEN Women's Professional Doubles title since 2014



**Nancy Enriquez and Samantha Salas in Women's Pro Doubles Action**  
and has partnered with Samantha on three of those occasions.

## BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL UPSETS OF THE TOURNAMENT

As the #10 seed in the Men's Professional Singles draw, Andree Parrilla (Mexico) knocked off #7 seed Samuel Murray (Canada) in the Round of 16 and then went on to defeat #2 seed Alejandro Landa (Mexico) in the quarterfinals.

In the Women's Professional Singles draw, qualifier Jenny Daza Navia (Bolivia) upended #7 seed Maria Jose Vargas (Argentina) in the Round of 32. Gabriela Martinez (Guatemala) was the #12 seed when she defeated the #4 seed Alexandra Herrera (Mexico) in the quarterfinals.

Daza Navia also provided an upset in the Women's Professional Doubles draw when she and her partner Angelica Barrios (Bolivia) defeated 2017 finalists Adriana Riveros (Colombia) and Cristina Amaya (Colombia) in the quarterfinals.

## THE 2018 US OPEN BY THE NUMBERS

720 - Number of players competing in the 2018 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships.

19 - Countries represented at this year's US OPEN - Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Peru, South Korea, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

1,153 - Total matches played at the three Life Time clubs and the University of Minnesota over five days.

## THE AMATEURS CAME TO PLAY, TOO!

More than 600 amateur players came to Minneapolis to play in more than 80 USA Racquetball age and skill divisions.

Winners of the top amateur divisions:

Men's Open Singles - Alejandro Herrera (USA - Florida) def. Andres Acuña (Costa Rica), 15-12, 15-6

Women's Open Singles - Jenny Daza Navia (Bolivia) def. Angelica Barrios (Bolivia), 9-15, 15-4, 11-8. This was a rematch of the 2017 Women's Open Singles final that Jenny also won.

Men's Open Doubles - Diego Garcia (Bolivia)/Conrrado Moscoso (Bolivia) def. Jose Ubilla (Costa Rica)/Sudsy Monchik (USA - New York), 15-11, 15-5

Women's Open/Elite Doubles - Felicia Green (USA - Georgia)/Kanesha Madison (USA - Georgia), won round robin division

Mixed Open Doubles - Daniela Molina (Mexico)/Maurice Miller (USA - Georgia), won round robin division

Complete results for all amateur divisions can be found at <http://www.r2sports.com/website/event-results.asp?TID=24877>.

## RACQUETBALL AFTER DARK

Of course, the reason everyone came to Minneapolis was for the smashing of racquetballs, but just as great as playing against the world's best players is all the off-the-court fun the UnitedHealthcare

US OPEN provides. Downtown Minneapolis is full of top-quality restaurants, nightclubs and other entertainment options that were filled with racquetball players all week long!

The Northern Shores Grille & Bar at the Marriott Hotel hosted the Players Gathering on Thursday. On Friday, the City Works restaurant and bar (with its 90 local and domestic beers on tap) hosted another Players Party.

Capital Grille, Hen House, Ike's, Jimmy John's, Keys at the Foshay, Melting Pot, Murray's, Oceanaire, The Old Spaghetti Factory, Prime 6, Punch Bowl Social, Red Cow, Rock Bottom, Ruth's Chris, Seven, Turtles, Yard House, and many more local restaurants are favorites of tournament goers.

On Saturday, racquetball's biggest bash of the year went down at the Downtown Minneapolis hotspot, The Pourhouse. Racquetball's top players in the world hit the dance floor with all their fans for a free party that went into the early hours of the morning.

## RACQUETBALLERS GIVING BACK

For the entire history of the US OPEN, players and fans have helped support children's charities through playing in the Pro-Am Doubles Event, winning items in the Silent Auction, donating their referee fees back, or making other contributions.

Thanks to everyone's support this year, the US OPEN has now raised more than \$461,000 over the last 23 years. One hundred percent of monies raised this year will go directly to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Rapha House. St. Jude denies no child medical treatment based on their family's ability to pay. The mission of Rapha House is to end the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.



Above: The Silent Auction benefits St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Rapha House  
Top Right: A packed house to watch pro matches on the stadium court!  
Right: Men's Pro Singles Finalist and Pro Doubles Champion Daniel De La Rosa

## PROFESSIONAL TOUR CHAMPIONS

### IRT MEN

2018 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2017 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2016 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2015 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2014 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2013 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2012 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2011 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2010 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2009 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2008 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2007 Rocky Carson (Calif.)  
2006 Jason Mannino (Calif.)  
2005 Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)  
2004 Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)  
2003 Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)  
2002 Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)  
2001 Cliff Swain (Mass.)  
2000 Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)  
1999 Jason Mannino (Calif.)  
1998 Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)  
1997 Cliff Swain (Mass.)  
1996 Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)

### LPRT WOMEN

Paola Longoria (Mex.)  
Rhonda Rajsich (Calif.)  
Rhonda Rajsich (Calif.)  
Paola Longoria (Mex.)  
Rhonda Rajsich (Ariz.)  
Christie Van Hees (Can.)  
Christie Van Hees (Can.)  
Cheryl Gudinas (III.)  
Rhonda Rajsich (Ariz.)  
Cheryl Gudinas (III.)  
Kerri Wachtel (Ohio)  
Christie Van Hees (Canada)  
Jackie Paraiso (Calif.)  
Jackie Paraiso (Calif.)  
Michelle Gould (Idaho)  
Michelle Gould (Idaho)

### IRT Men's Pro Doubles

2018 Alvaro Beltran (Mexico) / Daniel De La Rosa (Mexico)  
2017 Ben Croft (Georgia) / Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2016 José Rojas (Calif.) / Marco Rojas (Calif.)  
2015 Ben Croft (Calif.) / Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2014 Ben Croft (Calif.) / Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)

### LPRT Women's Pro Doubles

2018 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Samantha Salas (Mexico)  
2017 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Gabriela Martinez (Guatemala)  
2016 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Samantha Salas (Mexico)  
2015 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Samantha Salas (Mexico)  
2014 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Veronica Sotomayor (Ecuador)

Thanks to all who made a donation, and an extra special thanks to Sal and Dee Perconti for organizing the US OPEN Silent Auction again this year.

### IT TAKES A TEAM!

More than 100 staff members and volunteers make up the US OPEN team. It is because of their time, energy and efforts that racquetball's grandest event happens each year. Many spend time year 'round preparing for the annual event. We'd like to acknowledge this year's US OPEN Committee: Andrea Hartman, Mitch Hoffman, Tom Kieffer, Terry Kisling, Chad Levis, Matt Miller, Jonn Olson, Vallana Perrault, Paul Ryan, Rod Southwood, Dave Tornell, Bryan Turtle, Andy Wiegand, and John Wilinski.

### JOIN US NEXT YEAR

Start making plans now to join us for the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships, back in Minneapolis, October 2-6, 2019. Come see the best players in the world compete on racquetball's grandest stage!







THANK YOU  
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Colombia	Guatemala	Mexico	Peru
		South Korea	Uruguay
			Venezuela



**KANE WASELENCHUK**

2018 US OPEN TITLE



**PAOLA LONGORIA**

2018 US OPEN TITLE



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# WHERE ARE THEY NOW? -- DEREK ROBINSON

By Aimee Ruiz



**W**here Are They Now? is a column in *Racquetball* magazine that features past pros from both the men's and women's tours throughout the years. What have they been up to since they stepped away from playing professionally? What do they think of today's game and the players who are currently competing?

Let's check in with Derek Robinson former pro player and US National Team Member.

## When was your last year on tour, and what have you been up to since then?

My last year was 2004. Once I retired from the game, I spent a year enjoying family life with my wife and two young children at home, with no travel and training. Then I started a 14-year career in sales at Wilson Sporting Goods & Under Armour, working as a strategic account manager. Currently, I am living in Tri-Cities, Washington (where I grew up) with my wife Tina of over 20 years and my two children (Ethan, a freshman at Washington State University [GO COUGS!] and Emily, a sophomore at Kamiakin High School). I am a Vice President and Mortgage Consultant at Community First Bank.



## Who was a player you looked up to when making your start on the tour?

When I first started on tour there were so many great players winning multiple events every year, but Mike Ray always won by using his strength of being tall with a long reach. It made me realize that at 6'4", I could use these advantages to compete at the highest level, too.

## What do you find different about the game now than when you played?

I enjoy the athleticism the game demands of its athletes with an even more powerful game than when I played. Sometimes I feel the power game allows mistakes in execution and strategy that were more exploited in years past.

## Is there anyone in today's game you are most impressed with or who has a game style that is similar to yours?

I love the tall guys!!

## Your wife Tina was a great racquetball player in her own right. Did you two ever play mixed doubles together?

She was, and we did once! We decided to stay married, have two great children, and spend the rest of our lives together -- just off the court!

## Is there anyone you still communicate with from your days on tour?

I enjoy keeping in touch with a number of friends from my days on tour and during college at Missouri State University. I don't spend a lot of time on social media, but it is great to see so many players still competing, raising families, and having successful careers.

## Was there one thing that sticks out the most to you in your career?

I was very fortunate in my career to win many events as a Junior, Collegiate, and Professional player, however, it was the experience of meeting and teaching so many people while traveling the world as



part of the Big D Roadshow that I remember most. If there is one thing I would love to say to everyone who attended one of my events, it would be a big THANK YOU!

**What would you say was one of your biggest strengths on the court?**

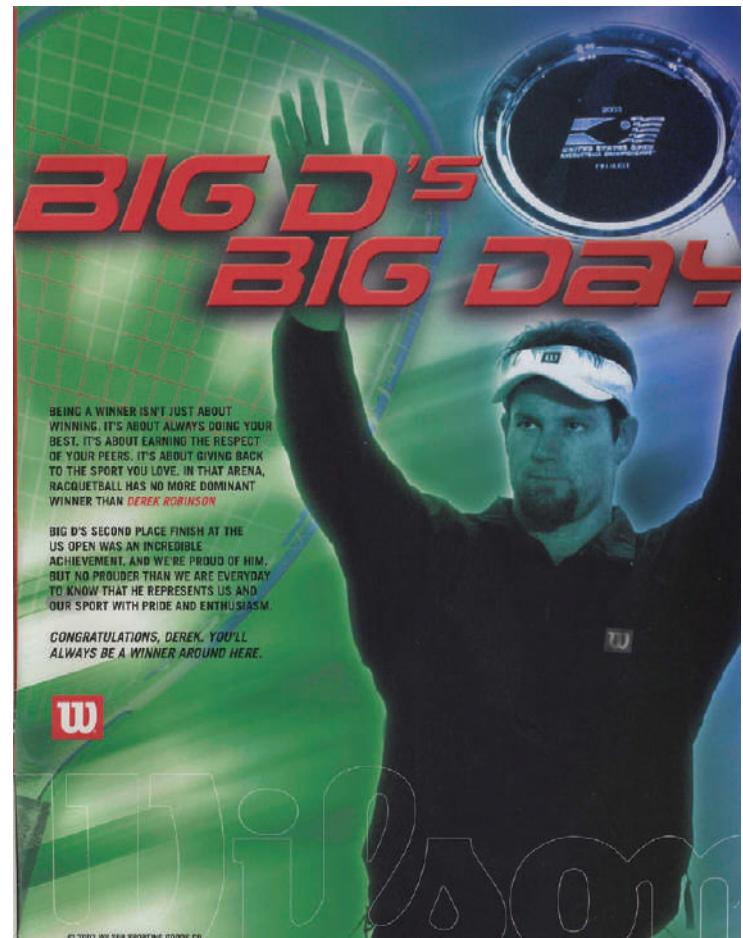
I think my opponents were challenged by my height, reach, and BACK HAND SPLAT!

**Which of your many accomplishments meant the most to you?**

I loved being part of a team! Missouri State University Collegiate Champions, United States National Team Member Olympic Festival, World/Pan American Champion, and playing doubles with Todd O'Neil!

**What would you say to someone who wants to break into that next level and begin playing the pro tour full time?**

Go for it and never look back! No matter the length of time or your level of success, do something you love.



## **BIG D WEARS EYEGUARDS, DO YOU?**

check out [www.bigdracquetball.com](http://www.bigdracquetball.com) for the latest in cool eyeguards!



Above: Ethan, Tina, Emily, and Derek Robinson

Right: 2003 US OPEN Sponsor Doubles Winners Twayne Howard and Jason Mannino, with Runners Up Derek Robinson, and partner Landon Pilant

## ".... you can't distract yourselves."

By Otto Dietrich, USA Racquetball National Rules Commissioner

Where are all the questions these days? It seems like the number of questions I receive has slowed to a virtual trickle! Don't be shy -- I won't bite! Please fire away! Regardless of how simple or complex, I take them all on and love to do it!

Recently, I have received a few questions about hinder situations. The issue usually goes something like this: "My opponent was located behind me, and when I simply let the ball he just hit go by me to the back wall, the ball hit him. He called it a replay hinder saying that I screened him. Is that right?"

Whoa, let's break this down. A "hinder" of any kind is generally about the impairment of the person(s) whose turn it is to hit the ball. So, for the most part, the person on defense (who just hit the ball) cannot be hindered. Rule 3.13(c)5 makes it clear – it's a "failure to return" if "a ball struck by a player hits that player or that player's partner." Of course, you rule aficionados may be quick to point out that if the person on defense is pushed by the offensive player (as in his trying to get leverage for his own movement or to purposely throw you off balance) then sure that is a penalty hinder on the "pusher" who in this case is on offense. Yea, that's one exception – maybe the only one. The rest of the hinder conditions are about disruption of the person whose turn it is to hit the ball.

Now on to some questions and answers on rules and refereeing:

**James B. wrote:** Is there a deadline each year for submitting proposals and suggestions to the National Rules Committee? What are the "official" procedures? When and where does the committee meet? There are some grammatical errors that could use some tweaking, and I have been discussing several of these rules with a friend of mine who is an excellent player with academic skills. We would

like a forum with the committee to present some of our ideas.

**I responded, saying:** The annual deadline for proposed rule changes is June 1st of each calendar year. The details on handling rule changes proposals are listed at the back of the rulebook. The committee meets via email and sometimes by conference call. If you or your friends have rule change proposals,

please email them to me in Word format, three paragraphs listed for each: 1) the current rule wording, 2) the reason why you think it needs to be changed, and 3) proposed wording of the new rule. If it is simply a grammatical suggestion, then point it out, and if it is something that is vague or needs further clarity, then please list/describe that, too. I do look forward to hearing back from you and your friend soon.

**Rich M. asked:** A ball has been served and the receiver has missed the return, has no chance of return, but it hits the server's partner! What is the ruling? Point or side out or lose the serve!

**I answered Rich:** In either singles or doubles, once a player hits the ball, it becomes the other player's/team's turn

to hit the ball until they do or else the ball touches the floor twice. If that ball touches the player who hit it or his partner while it is still in play and before the other team hits it, then they (the team that hit the ball) lose that rally. Rule 3.13(c)5 of the USAR Official Rules & Regulations of Racquetball says that if the ball touches that player or that player's partner before then, they lose that rally immediately -- even if the ball



Girls 18 & Under Doubles at IRF World Juniors Megan Carver/Hannah Carver (USA) versus Ana Lucia Sarmiento/Maria Jose Munoz Albornoz (Ecuador)

Photo By Rich Carver

could never have been reached by the opposing team.

**Perry emailed:** Is there any situation where the defensive player is in front of an offensive player and gets hit with the ball that it is not an avoidable hinder?

## DO YOU HAVE A RULES/REFEREEING QUESTION?

Be sure to email it to me at [ODietrich@usaracquetball.com](mailto:ODietrich@usaracquetball.com) and you might find it featured in an upcoming issue of *Racquetball Magazine*. I will personally answer every question I get, no matter how simple or complex it may be!

## Always Play by the Rules

... I encourage you to go online where you can find, review, and/or download them at: [teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules](http://teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules).

**I responded to Perry:** Sure! When the defensive player is in front of the player hitting the ball, he can be just about anywhere he wants to be as long as the offensive player has been allowed a rather clean view of the ball to be hit. That's if the defensive player isn't close enough to be contacted by the offensive player's swing at the ball, and if the defensive player is not in either of those two specific paths from the ball to the front wall that are described in Rule 3.15(a) of the Rulebook. Incidentally, several years ago, the term "avoidable" was been replaced with the term "penalty" as it concerns those types of hinders.

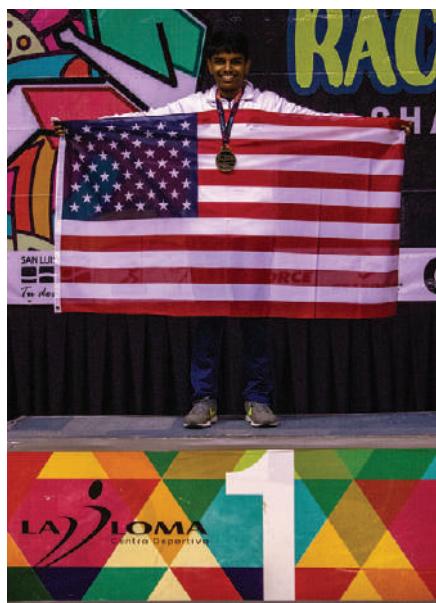
**Martin K. questioned:** Can a left-handed player stand on the far right (facing front wall) of the service zone (not standing in and minding the 3' zone) and drive serve behind him without it being a screen serve? My claim is yes, because the server can serve from anywhere in the 17-foot service zone box. And it is the responsibility of the receiver to place himself in a good court position (usually "near center court". Rule 3.9). My receivers' claim is NO because it will ALWAYS be a screen serve claiming if they are positioned in center court the ball will always pass "so closely to the server, or server's partner in doubles, that it prevents the receiver from having a clear view of the ball." Rule 3.9. Additionally, if the receiver's claim is correct, doesn't that further restrict the server's opportunity to place a drive serve at certain locations? I also understand the server needs to be diligent to be out of the way and prevent a "safety hold up," or "failure to move" for down-the-line and cross courts shots. But again, the server still should be allowed to serve the drive serve behind himself while observing the 17-foot rule. Lastly, to disagree with the receiver, the receiver placing themselves in the center court can clearly view a left-handed player begin the service motion, strike the ball, observe the ball hitting the front wall, and tracking from the front wall, glimpsing behind the server without losing track of the ball.

**I replied:** First, with respect to the drive serve rule, the serve you described is not a violation of that rule since you have begun, stayed, and completed the entire serve outside of the three-foot area the whole time. Thus, you can serve the ball

in just about any direction or to whichever side you want. However, irrespective of a server's full compliance with the drive serve rule, the serve may yet be declared a screen serve if the specific criteria for that rule are met.

**Tony P. wondered:** I encountered an interpretation I hadn't run into anywhere yet, but figured it was best to have you clarify. Rule 3.15 (f) Intentional Distractions. Deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, waving of racquet, or any other manner of disrupting one's opponent. This group of people believe in doubles the waving of the racquet clause should be invoked if player #1 on the hitting team pretends to swing, but lets it go for his partner. The group of rules, section 3.15, seem to always protect the offensive player with the possible exception of (e) Pushing and (i) Apparel or Equipment Loss. Can you please help settle this disagreement? Can the offensive team be penalized for pretending to hit the ball?

**I told Tony:** Such faking of a shot is legal -- even in singles -- because the rule is basically about distraction of the person trying to hit the ball and in this case that is your own team. So, you can't distract yourselves. Just don't let it carry over to when it's your opponent's turn to hit the ball.



IRF World Juniors Boys 12 & Under Gold Medalist Nikhil Prasad  
Photo By Rich Carver

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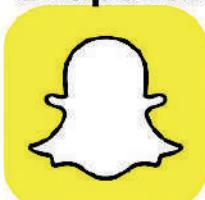
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# CONTINUING THE Making of a Champion



■ **By Fran Davis** (The Coach) • **Diana McNab** (Sports Psychologist) • **Dan Obremski** (Fitness Expert)

**L**et's continue "Making You a Champion" using the core principles of "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" as you build your championship racquetball game one assessment at a time.

In this issue I am going to discuss "Bouncing Back After a Loss."

## Bouncing Back

Bouncing back after losing a match is not easy to do, but it is a MUST if you want to be successful and build your championship game.

It's inevitable that we ALL win and lose matches, but it is what we do when we lose a match that counts the most. Losing should be a learning experience, NOT a "beating yourself up" experience.

Ask yourself, "Did I play well and lose? Or did I play poorly and lose?" The key is to learn from your mistakes and remember your successes. Let go of all the negative thoughts and remember your great shots. Erase your mistakes from your mind and visualize the shot you know you should have hit—see it in your mind with the correction made. Too often athletes do not take the time to relive their mistakes mentally and turn them into positives. We learn from winning, but it is in losing that we feel the pain enough to change.

Here's a quote I read years ago and I share with my students even today,  
**"I never lose. I either win or learn."**  
-- Nelson Mandela

Here's how my Championship Team members utilize this concept:

### Paola Longoria:

At the World Championships in San José, Costa Rica, in August 2018, Paola lost to Ana Gabriela Martinez in the finals in a tiebreaker, someone who she had never lost to before. After the match we talked about what happened, adjusted, and figured out some tweaks we needed to make physically and mentally. So I put together Paola's practice/drill sessions for the next week as she prepared to play in the 1st LPRT pro-stop of the season the following weekend and wanted to work on the things we discussed. Magaly Zeron, her sports psychologist, also gave Paola mental skills to practice. Paola did not dwell on her loss; she learned from it. She came into the next tournament hungry to play and focused; she defeated Martinez in the semifinals in three games; and she went on to win the tournament. Then, a month later at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Championships, Paola played Martinez again in the semifinals. The results were the same as Paola won in three games. She went on to play Samantha Salas in the finals where she won her 9th UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Championship.



Paola Longoria, Samantha Salas, and Fran Davis

Photo by: KSphotography

**Rocky Carson:**

In December 2017 at the IRT Tournament of Champions pro stop in Portland, Oregon, Rocky lost to Charlie Pratt in the semifinals in a grueling five-game match. After the match, we talked about what happened, adjusted, and figured out tweaks we needed to make. I spoke to him again during the weeks to come and made sure Rocky was visualizing what we had talked about so he would make those adjustments to his game for the second half of the season. Rocky did not dwell on his loss; he learned from it. Rocky played Charlie in the finals at the National Doubles Championships in the US Team Qualifying Singles Division in Tempe, Arizona, in February 2018. Rocky came into the tournament hungry to play and totally focused. He not only made it to the finals, he defeated Charlie in a tiebreaker to win the event.

**Bouncing Back** is yet another required skill on the road to championship racquetball. All of the players I coach, from the professionals led by Rocky and Paola to the amateurs, know just how important it is to "Bounce Back from a Loss." Remember Mandela's quote, "I never lose. I either win or learn." Their records speak for themselves: Rocky and Paola are two of the most decorated athletes in racquetball. Paola finished the 2017/18 ranked #1 on the LPRT for the 8th time and was crowned the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Champion for the 9th time. Rocky finished the 2017/2018 season ranked #1 on the IRT, a spot he held 10 years prior in the 2007/2008 season.

**Fran Davis** coaches Paola Longoria (8X #1 LPRT, 5X World Champion, 4X Pan American Champion, 8X US Open Champion), Rocky Carson (#2 IRT, 5X World Champion, 2X Pan American Champion, US OPEN Champion), and juniors Jordan Cooperrider (9X Junior National Champion and USA Junior National Team), Wayne Antone (4X Junior National Champion and USA Junior National Team), and Mitchell Turner (3X Junior National Championship and USA Junior National Team), Fran's other credentials include Hall of Fame 2004, Woman of the Year 2009, former US Team National Coach, and Master Professional (USAR-IP).

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#1 Pro Player 2003

Rocky Carson  
#1 Pro Player 2008 & 2018

### Fran's Credentials

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- 2004 Hall of Fame
- U. S. National Team Coach 1989-1996, 2002
- Coaches Rocky Carson & Paola Longoria.
- USAR-IP Master Professional

### Jason's Credentials

- #1 IRT Professional Player 2003
- 2X U.S. Open Champion
- IRT Most Improved Player 1998
- IRT Rookie of the Year 1996

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## THE "CHEAT SHEET"

By Toni Bevelock Delos Santos

**A**s we are getting ready to enter into a new year, we often reflect on the past year as being a "good year" or a "bad year." We tend to play a highlight reel in our head of both the good and bad events that took place throughout the year and say, "Hopefully, next year will be better!" So, then what comes next? We throw it out there and hope for the best? No! It's time to break the cycle of hoping and create a cheat sheet, based on facts, to make sure that you have a plan to truly improve in all areas in 2019.

The first step to making this year better than ever is to first commit your efforts to improving and **NOT JUDGING. WHAT?** I love to judge myself, then beat myself up, and focus on all of the mistakes that I made, especially after a match! How am I going to get better if I don't punish myself? I suspect you are reading this and saying, "Don't judge myself, sounds great! How do I do that?" You just started the first step to creating your "cheat sheet"! We start out by using one of the most valuable tools we have, the ability to ask questions.

I'll ask the questions, and you fill in the answers.

1. What were my biggest successes this year and what did I do to achieve them? (Examples: I hired a coach, I worked on my mental game...)
2. What were my worst moments and disappointments? If I could go back and play the match again, what would I have done differently?
3. What is holding me back from getting the results that I want?
4. What kind of knowledge do I need to improve? (Examples: training, nutrition, mechanics, strategy...)
5. What books, mentors, or coaches can help me to improve?

After you complete this cheat sheet for yourself, it will give you a sense of control and a solid plan to improve. Every day we want to learn from **EVERY** experience, good or bad, so remember to always ask yourself, "What did I do well and what do I need to improve on?" Once you learn to evaluate your performance with this method and not beat yourself up and negatively judge yourself, you will see great improvements both on and off the court. Our goal is not perfection, it is to *keep improving*.

*"Perfection does not exist — you can always do better and you can always grow."* – Les Brown

*About Toni: Toni Bevelock Delos Santos, former National Racquetball Champion, has an extensive background in sports and fitness. Toni has a unique gift of relating to athletes of all ages and skill levels. She partners with teams, coaches, and facilities across the nation, including Athletic Republic, Matchpoint Tennis Academy, Tony Zuniga Baseball, Winterton Racquetball, Elite Pitching Performance, Tustin Western Little League, and Orange County Nutrition Coaching. Toni is available for coaching thru FaceTime or in-office appointments. For more information on 90% Mental: <http://www.tonidelossantos.com/services/> or contact Toni at [tonimentalgame@gmail.com](mailto:tonimentalgame@gmail.com).*

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## THE MILITARY RACQUETBALL FEDERATION (MRF) BOASTS SEVERAL SUCCESSFUL EVENTS

The All Military Racquetball Championships were held recently at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas. This three-day event under the direction of the MRF's Texas Liaison and Tournament Director JoAnna Reyes was very special -- military players and supporters were treated to a first-class event. It was all about giving back to those who give and have given so much. All were treated to round robin play, a banquet, a variety of raffle items, and the presentation of awards that included having Kane Waselenchuk, Gold Star Parent Wendall Pelham, and MRF Executive Director Steven Harper as presenters. JoAnna was assisted by others too numerous to name here, but their support was much appreciated, and the event could not have happened without them! Plans are already in the works for several MRF Regional events next year with the 2019 Championships returning to Ft. Hood in the August timeframe.

Next up for the MRF was a very successful eight-week Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinic held in Las Vegas. Special thanks go out to the Las Vegas Athletic Club for generously allowing the MRF to host this clinic in conjunction with the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System. The clinic concluded with a graduation ceremony and presentation of graduation certificates and HEAD racquets for all. As a special conclusion to the clinic, five of the graduates were slated to participate for the first time in a special division at the 3WallBall Sports Festival. MRF instructors were Terry Rogers, Jack Hughes, and Jill Horan, and they were joined each week by Nancy DeBello, CTRS.

The 3WallBall event concluded its ninth year in September 2018 and once again invited the MRF to be a partner at this great event. Event Founder Mike Coulter has offered the MRF the ability to fundraise for Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinics via gift baskets, auctions, raffles, and, most importantly, the ProAm Doubles event Wednesday evening that is always a big hit. Also as a part of the event, the MRF offered a Wheelchair Division and an Adaptive Division. There were five wheelchair participants from Florida, Nevada, Kentucky, and Oregon, and there were five adaptive players as well, graduates of the recent Las Vegas VA clinic. All of the players enjoyed watching and playing -- something they never thought they could do. The Nellis Color Guard presented the colors Saturday evening as military, fire, and first responders were recognized and invited to be a part of the ceremony. The MRF could not continue to do what we do for our service men and women without considerable support. We are especially proud to be a part of the 3WallBall event each year. This opportunity has allowed us to raise \$18,000+ so that we can continue to assist others through the sport we love.

<http://www.militaryracquetball.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/Military-Racquetball-Federation>

Above: Mary McGriff and Sharona Young participate in the MRF Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinic  
Photo By: Terry Rogers

Right: Participants and volunteers from the eight-week Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinic in Las Vegas  
Photo By: Nancy DeBello





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ROCKY CARSON

# UNITING Racquetball



By Kelly R. Diesel

When individual efforts come together for a similar goal or purpose, the results can be extraordinary. With the combined powers of 3WallBall Racquetball, World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR), the International Racquetball Tour (IRT), and USA Racquetball (USAR), the IRT was proud to have broadcasted the 2018 3WallBall Sports Festival live from the Las Vegas Strip from September 26-30 for the enjoyment of millions of fans viewing from home. This was all possible thanks to the leadership of Mike Coulter (3WallBall Founder), Hank Marcus (WOR Founder), John Scott (IRT C.E.O.), and Dan Whitley (USAR President).

Event Director Peggie Tellez confirmed that 500 athletes competed at the event for over \$25,000 in cash and prizes. Top-level racquetball stars in attendance included Rocky Carson, Maria Jose Vargas, Daniel and Michelle De La Rosa, Alvaro Beltran, Rhonda Rajsich, and Natalia Mendez.

USA Racquetball purchased World Outdoor Racquetball from Marcus in October 2017. "The sport really needed the organizations to come together and work together," Marcus said. "There were too many different agendas, and I thought it would be good for the outdoor game to be directly affiliated with USAR. I also felt it would send a really good message throughout the sport." Marcus stayed on as a consultant to USAR.

Since the beginning of 2018, Whitley worked alongside Marcus and Coulter to broadcast the Vegas event. Whitley expressed appreciation for the work Coulter has performed to build 3WallBall in recent years and traveled to Las Vegas to witness the event in person, taking the opportunity to speak with other tournament directors around the sport.

"Getting to know other event directors and finding out what they're most interested in will help guide decisions and

the support we can provide for outdoor and even indoor events," Whitley said. "I think it speaks volumes when you have USAR, the IRT, the LPRT (Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour), the MRF (Military Racquetball Federation), WOR, and 3WallBall all at the same event supporting the sport. No politics, no side agendas, just everyone gathered together in the spirit of racquetball."

Mike Coulter, creator of 3WallBall, has always loved the game of racquetball and said he began playing as a teen when he moved to Las Vegas in 1977. Throughout the 1990s, Coulter ran local Las Vegas health clubs and helped the IRT with multiple tournaments each year.

Beginning in 2010 at the Stratosphere Hotel and Casino Tower, Coulter started the 3WallBall World Championships with nine courts and has since doubled the number of courts over the years. With this year's event being just one week before the 2018 US OPEN, Coulter believed it was a great opportunity for all racquetball athletes, especially those from international countries, to participate in the two biggest racquetball tournaments of the year.

"In a perfect world, these two events should be a couple of months apart," Coulter said. "With Vegas having so many events and festivals, it is sometimes hard to find the perfect weekend for 3Wall. We aimed to find a weekend that got us out of the brutal summer heat in August, but then the only available spot we could secure was that last weekend in September."

Coulter believes that the Vegas event, having involved so many different governing bodies in racquetball, was a significant catalyst for unification of the sport.

"It's been a great sport for me, and I just love being able to give back to the game and all the fans who follow it," Coulter said. "The tailgating atmosphere is a little different from most indoor events; it's a lot of fun for people."

Over the years, Coulter said the 3WallBall Sports Festival event has been a uniting factor for not only the overall sport but for the players as well. "We've had proposals, anniversaries, and even marriages celebrated out here, so you know there's got to be something special about this tournament," Coulter said. "You can



Daniel De La Rosa, 3WB Founder Mike Coulter, and Alvaro Beltran  
Photo By Randy Lam

really see the camaraderie between all players and even amongst the fans who pile in to watch. I also think it's great we got to show the fans at home this great action thanks to John Scott and the IRT."

A big fan of oversized crowds and extraordinary racquetball, John Scott bought the IRT one year ago and has elevated the Tour to new heights. From growing generating over \$100,000 in prize money, to increasing the number of Tier 1 events, to getting the Tour onto prime-time television a number of times for highlight plays throughout last season, Scott and the IRT were proud to be involved with the Vegas outdoor event and to be working alongside leaders like Coulter, Whitley, and Marcus.

"One of the IRT's biggest focuses this year is on working together with other organizations in our sport," Scott said. "This event in Vegas was the first time in recent history where the indoor and outdoor worlds united for a positive impact on racquetball overall, and it was incredibly successful for everyone!"

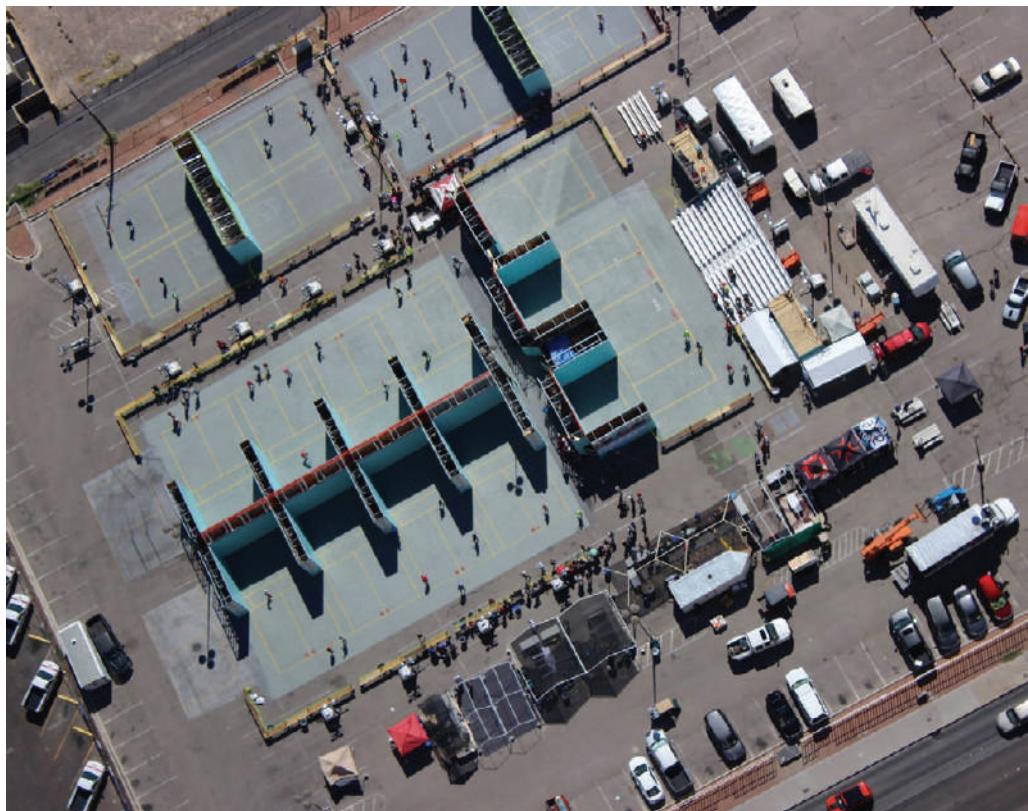


Photo By David C. Vincent, Executive Director of WPH (World Players of Handball)



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# LPRT 2018-2019 Season Starts in Mexico



By LPRT

Photos By Restrung Magazine

The annual Paola Longoria Experience Grand Slam event in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, was a perfect start for the season. The #1 ranked player playing at her namesake event, in her hometown, won her 90th professional career title. Paola certainly had the local fans on her side, especially the youngsters who were trying all weekend to get a picture or autograph from the Mexican superstar.

Samantha Salas, absent for most of last season due to shoulder surgery, came back like a storm and with a new goal in mind. Samantha's best professional ranking so far is the #3 spot, but she has her sights set on #2. Samantha was a finalist in San Luis Potosí, taking out some top players to face Paola in the final.

In the pro doubles draw, Paola and Samantha paired up to win another pro title. They are the highest-ranked doubles players on tour. Their opponents in the final were current Mexican National Doubles champions Alexandra Herrera and Montserrat Mejia.

For more information about the San Luis Potosí event, check out our September update: <http://bit.ly/2C59TGW>



Above: Paola Longoria & Samantha Salas celebrate their victory in San Luis Potosí with Paola's parents Leticia and Jose  
Left: Paola Longoria in her Women's Pro Singles Match



# Player & Coach Spotlight

## Natalia Mendez, #8\* LPRT Player Member of the Argentine National Team

## Carlos Cuadri, Argentine National Team Coach

### NATALIA MENDEZ

#### **When and why did you start playing racquetball?**

I started playing when I was nine years old because my big brothers used to play a lot. I was the youngest, and they had to take me everywhere they went. I wanted to play more and more with them, so I had to take lessons.

#### **Do you play any other sports?**

I love all sports, but I especially like playing soccer. I played for a team called BRANCAS F.C., and we got 2nd place in a tournament last year. I love frontón, too -- it's a very popular Bolivian sport. I just won a tournament here in Santa Cruz. I am the #2 ranked player in Bolivia in this sport in the Open division and also in the 23 and under. I also play ping pong: we have a table here in my house so Sundays it's ping pong day with my family.

#### **What do you do outside of racquetball?**

I am almost finished with college, so soon I will be a lawyer. I am very happy to accomplish this in addition to playing sports at a high level. After this, I want to achieve a specialty or a Masters degree in Customs and International Business.

#### **Do you have a favorite racquetball moment?**

I have three favorite racquetball moments:

1 - Winning the Girls 10- finals against Diana Aguilar. That was my very first World Junior Championship, and my dad was there cheering for me.

2 - I was feeling very unmotivated and wanted to retire from racquetball, but my coach Carlos Cuadri gave me new reasons to keep pushing hard and training. I lost a lot of weight, and he helped me through the process. I won my last World Junior Championship, and he was one of the main reasons. He helped me even before I went to play for Argentina, and for that I'm so grateful to him for everything he has done for me! Thank you, Charli!

3 - Of course, winning a World bronze at the 2018 IRF World Championships. For me, that meant that I was not just a good junior player, but I am one of the best in the world, that I can do this, and I'm hungry for even more!

### CARLOS CUADRI

#### **How long have you been a coach?**

I started in 2008 at the national level. In 2011, I was appointed Head Coach of the Argentine National Team.

#### **What do you like most about coaching?**

I like to see the progress of the players, to see them get better every day. I take the challenge of achieving the best for each of them. I love the link that the player/coach relationship generates.

#### **What is most challenging aspect of coaching?**

The coach must study constantly and update day by day. You must know to perfection each of the possible rivals. A sports coach should have knowledge about WADA regulations, nutrition, physical preparation, psychology, and obviously all aspects related to the game of racquetball. This knowledge allows you to form the best possible team of professionals. In our case, we have support from the Secretary of Sports and the National High-Performance Agency of Argentina.

#### **Do you have a favorite coaching success story?**

Many events have filled me with joy through the years. The most significant, without doubt, is to be able to work with excellent players. I am convinced that the most important thing in sports is the players. They are the successes: their talent, their sacrifice, and their ability to learn.

We have won several medals in games organized by the International Olympic Committee. At the Pan American Games in Toronto 2015, we won two silver medals, and at the South American Games in Cochabamba 2018, we won five gold medals. In addition, on several occasions, we obtained gold, silver, and bronze medals at the Pan American Racquetball Championships and the World Championships organized by the International Racquetball Federation. Maria Jose Vargas and Natalia Mendez are two brilliant players I feel very proud to include on the Argentine National Team.

#### **What suggestions or tips do you have for young players just starting to play racquetball?**

I think that children and young people should enjoy playing

**Do you have a favorite event?**

I do; it's the US OPEN. I love the vibe of the tournament, and I made it to the semis last year (2017). I was so happy because this tournament is so prestigious. I also got to see a lot of people that maybe don't make it onto their national teams, so a lot of racquetball friends were there.

**If you could play a tournament any place in the world, where would it be?**

I would love to play in Europe some day! And obviously in Argentina, hopefully in the near future.

**If you could make one wish for racquetball, what would it be?**

That racquetball becomes an Olympic sport!



and not be burdened with responsibilities. Handle with great care and ability the balance between learning and results; these do not always go together. Unfortunately, I have seen many young people with great talent who abandon racquetball because they cannot withstand the pressure or because they are not getting the results that motivate them. Teach them that to play a sport and stand out, you have to combine physical work, nutrition, and play.

**Do you have any advice for new coaches?**

That they try to educate themselves a lot in all the subjects that surround an athlete. Today the difference is made with small details. The parity in the LPRT reaffirms this concept. You have to be 100% to face each game, and each of the coaches contributes knowledge to form the best approach for their players. It is very important to know all the possible rivals in order to provide the best information to the players.

We -- Maria, Natalia, and I -- are official representatives of Argentine sport. In the IOC, LPRT, and IRF, we have the challenge and the honor of being racquetball ambassadors. We are very proud to have this responsibility.



# 3WallBall Sports Festival

## in Las Vegas

Article & Photos By Randy Lam

The 2018 3WallBall Sports Festival maintained its identity as the only event of its kind in the world. Year Nine is finished, and what a great year it was! During the year, the site is a blank asphalt parking lot across Las Vegas Boulevard from the Stratosphere Hotel. In September each year, courts are constructed and the Sports Festival Village of shade canopies, bleachers, and even restrooms occupy the site.

The festivities began on Wednesday evening with the MRF (Military Racquetball Foundation) Charity Doubles, where funds were raised to help support future events for the rehab of wheelchair players and service veterans.

Regular play began at 7:00 a.m. on Thursday and continued through Sunday afternoon. Over 400 players from 23 states and eight countries played almost 600 matches in 70 divisions. Professional Men & Women and Amateur Men & Women competed in Racquetball, Handball, and Paddleball divisions for over \$20,000 in prize money and awards.

Other special events included the traditional presenting of the colors by the The Nellis Color Guard on Saturday night and the introduction of 2018 WOR Hall of Fame inductees Vic Leibofsky, Hank Marcus, and Greg Solis.

By Tuesday afternoon after the event, the site had been returned to its original state. Year Nine is in the books, and work has already begun on the 10th Anniversary event. For brackets and results, visit <http://bit.ly/2LhIBQG>.



Top: Men's Pro Doubles Finals: Jesus Ustarroz, Daniel De La Rosa, Rocky Carson & Alvaro Beltran

Middle: Women's Pro Doubles action featuring: Carla Muñoz, Michelle De La Rosa, Jacqueline Paraiso-Larsson & Janel Tisinger-Ledkins  
Bottom: Charlie Brumfield & Dr. Bud Muehleisen



# What's Your Why?

By Scott Fish

We asked several USA Racquetball members why they play, and we're excited to share with you the stories behind why members play the sport of racquetball. Let's find out Why do you play racquetball? Why do you continue to give back to the racquetball community? What drives you to keep playing and share the sport with a new generation of players?

**T.J. Baumbaugh**  
LPRT President/Commissioner  
Reston, Virginia



PHOTO BY RESTRUNG MAGAZINE

I tried it first because my dad played. It was a fun activity that I would do with him as I tagged along to the YMCA. Several other sports took my interest as a kid and teen though, but I returned to racquetball in college for fitness and because it was an instant group of friends, a community. During my college years is when I played racquetball competitively for the first time. That was it, I was hooked. After college I moved to Virginia and met another community of racquetball friends who welcomed me, including Ed Willis who introduced me to women's professional racquetball. I competed on tour for 10-12 years and then decided it was time to give back to the sport. That's why and how I got to the position I am in now. I love the fitness, athleticism, competition, and friendships that come from racquetball. That's WHY it's the best.

**Kelly Gremley**  
USA Racquetball Member  
Chicago, Illinois



Playing racquetball started as a college hobby that has since woven its way into my identity. What was once simply an addicting stress reliever became the common thread from which some of my closest friendships have been formed. I've always been intrigued by the amount of mental strategy that can be implemented during such a physical sport to keep my mind and body simultaneously engaged. Recovering from shoulder surgery led to competing with a heightened sense of gratitude for my health, and that has also contributed to why I continue to play. I will forever appreciate and be drawn to the unique set of challenges racquetball has to offer over the course of my lifetime.

**Cassi Lee**  
LPRT Player  
Endwell, New York



My dad taught me how to play racquetball when I was a kid, but I didn't start competing until college with the ECRC (Eastern Collegiate Racquetball Conference), which was just an amazing experience. I was absolutely hooked and started playing every tournament I could get to. From there, I made a goal of playing full time on the LPRT. It took several years, a lot of work, and people believing in me more than I believed in myself at times, but I finally realized my goal. This season will be my second playing full-time with the LPRT. I'm incredibly grateful to all of the people who have helped me along the way, and I'm happy now to be able to pass that along to others through giving lessons and assisting with training camps.



**Rocky Carson  
IRT Player | US National Team Member  
Ladera Ranch, CA**

**M**y dad played racquetball and owned several clubs, so I grew up around racquetball. I started playing tournaments at the age of 8 and played in my first national tournament at age 10. It was a good first tournament, as I won the 10 and under division at that Dallas event. My wife and I met through racquetball via her brother David Liakos. David and I were always competing at junior tournaments.

Passion for the sport is what keeps me going, and I love the competition and the athleticism. It's an exciting and explosive game. It's given me an opportunity to make a living doing something that I have always wanted to do. I am always working hard to stay competitive and on top of my game. The next generation of players is important to the sport's growth. As an individual sport, it's a great way to deal with situations that you're not always comfortable with; it allows you to mature in life as you mature on the court.

**Wendall Pelham  
USA Racquetball Member  
Beaverton, Oregon**

**W**hen my son, Specialist John A. Pelham, was killed in Afghanistan on February 12, 2014, my life changed forever. In the days following John's death, I was made aware that his last Facebook post said, "Can't wait to play racquetball again." From that day forward, I have dedicated time and energy to further John's love and legacy of racquetball. We now have the honor of holding the "Specialist John A. Pelham Tournament of Champions," an IRT Tier 1 event competed at the Multnomah Athletic Club in Portland, Oregon. This is all done through the "Live Like John" foundation we established in John's honor. Part of the foundation is the "Give Like John" program designed to support local high school programs and our veteran community.





# CALENDAR of EVENTS

For the latest in USA Racquetball Sanctioned Events, visit [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com)

\*Denotes World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) Sanctioned Event

Date	Event	City	State	Location	Email
Jan 11 - Jan 12	Pinshot.com Racquetball Blizzard	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Jan 11 - Jan 12	Arcserve "MN Junior State Championships"	Bloomington	MN	Life Time Fitness, Bloomington South	john@obups.com
Jan 11 - Jan 13	Blizzard Bash	Centennial	CO	Goodson Rec Center	cjsand03@gmail.com
Jan 11 - Jan 13	Winter Blast Junior Racquetball Tournament	Portland	OR	Sunset Athletic Club	paul@maduellassociates.com
Jan 17 - Jan 20	Beaver Classic	Corvallis	OR	Timberhill Athletic Club	durbin_rob@comcast.net
Jan 17 - Jan 20	41st Lewis Drug Pro/AM IRT & SD State	Sioux Falls	SD	Sioux Falls Family YMCA	lewisproam.director@gmail.com
Jan 18 - Jan 19	MOHSRA Doubles Tournament	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Jan 18 - Jan 20	WSMRA Championships Los Angeles	Canoga Park	CA	Athletic Society West Valley	cindy.tilbury@att.net
Jan 18 - Jan 20	WRA State Doubles Championships	Bellingham	WA	Bellingham Athletic Club	roccovega@washingtonracquetball.org
Jan 18 - Jan 20	New Jersey Open Presented by WearRollout.com	Warren	NJ	Warren Health & Racquet Club	Jonathan@wearrollout.com
Jan 18 - Jan 20	Longhorn Open	Austin	TX	University of Texas: Austin Gregory Gym	utlonghornopen@gmail.com
Jan 19	MERC	Cleveland	OH	Case Western Reserve University	timiller@bw.edu
Jan 25 - Jan 26	Downtown Showdown	Omaha	NE	Downtown YMCA	ysguy65@gmail.com
Jan 25 - Jan 27	Florida State Singles Championships	Sarasota	FL	Sarasota Bath & Racquet Club	jburns@gmail.com
Jan 25 - Jan 27	Kentucky Singles Championships	Louisville	KY	Downtown Louisville YMCA	rscanham4@outlook.com
Jan 25 - Jan 27	Eastern Collegiate Conference - Meet 4	Warren	NJ	Saverna Park Racquet and Health Club	vanschalkwykr@hotmail.com
Jan 25 - Jan 27	Grand Canyon State Games	Tempe	AZ	ASU - Sun Devil Fitness Center	dprattski@cox.net
Jan 25 - Jan 27	ATL Singles & Regional Doubles Champs.	Lilburn/Atlanta	GA	Recreation ATL	info@recreationatl.com
Jan 25 - Jan 27	Sweet Caroline Open LPRT	Greenville	SC	Sportsclub	scrball@hotmail.com
Jan 25 - Jan 27	ISRA State Doubles Championships	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness Club	cherylkirk@aol.com
Jan 26 - Jan 27	CNRA Junior State Championships	Stockton	CA	In-Shape Sports: West Lane	ellistyle@comcast.net
Feb 1 - Feb 2	2019 Pinshot.com Midwest Champs	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Feb 1 - Feb 3	Wintergreen	Laurel	MD	SportFit Total Fitness Racquet Club	peakracquetball@gmail.com
Feb 2	MERC	Berea	OH	Baldwin Wallace University	timiller@bw.edu
Feb 8 - Feb 10	N.Y. State Doubles Championships	Montrose	NY	Premier Athletic Club	bkshea@optonline.net
Feb 9	Michigan Senior Olympics	Warren	MI	Warren Racquet Club	ccvanhoose@comcast.net
Feb 15 - Feb 17	4th Annual Indy Open	Indianapolis	IN	Jordan YMCA	summerracquetball@gmail.com
Feb 15 - Feb 17	Houston Open / Texas State Seniors	Houston	TX	University of Houston	houstonopentournament@gmail.com
Feb 15 - Feb 17	Apex Open	Arvada	CO	Apex Racquetball and Fitness Center	brenta@apexprd.org
Feb 16	2019 Missouri High School League	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Feb 16	MERC Regional Ohio State University	Columbus	OH	Ohio State University	timiller@bw.edu
Feb 21 - Feb 24	ISRA State Singles Championships	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness Club	laurelmDavis@comcast.net

# CALENDAR of EVENTS



Date	Event	City	STATE	Location	Email
Feb 22 - Feb 24	2018-2019 Northeast Collegiate Reg.	Albany	NY	Court Club	vanschalkwykr@hotmail.com
Feb 23	2019 Missouri High School Racquetball	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Feb 23	WCRC Shootout	Berkeley	CA	UC Berkeley Recreational Sport	john.bardos@gmail.com
Feb 24	2019 Missouri High School League	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Mar 1 - Mar 3	Tornado Alley Racquetball Tournament	Wichita Falls	TX	Bill Barley Branch Family YMCA	rballwf@gmail.com
Mar 1 - Mar 3	Team Ocala Classic 7	Ocala	FL	Ocala YMCA - Frank DeLuca YMCA	teamocala@gmail.com
Mar 2 - Mar 3	AZ WOR IV Battle Clash of Chavez	Laveen	AZ	Cesar Chavez Park	azor@azoutdoorracquetball.com
Mar 6 - Mar 9	2019 NMRA National Championships	San Antonio	TX	YMCA Thousand Oaks	cindy.tilbury@att.net
Mar 13 - Mar 17	Oregon State Championships	Portland	OR	Lloyd Athletic Club	brianancheta1@yahoo.com
Mar 14 - Mar 17	Shamrock Shootout/IRT Pro Stop	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness Club	dan@glasscourt.com
Mar 15 - Mar 17	2019 Rally for our Warriors	Peabody	MA	Latitude Sports Clubs	stewartsolomon2@gmail.com
Mar 19 - Mar 23	Last Chance Doubles	South Jordan	UT	Life Time Fitness	ddow2@lt.life
Mar 21 - Mar 24	2019 Beach Bash	Hollywood	FL	Garfield Street Courts	worflorida@gmail.com
Mar 23 - Mar 24	2019 PA State Singles Championship	Chalfont	PA	Philadelphia Sports Club	pastatesingles@pa-racquetball.com



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## NMRA HOF Match of a Lifetime

At the recent July NMRA International Championships in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, we had the distinct pleasure of hosting a tournament match between our two nonagenarians (that's 90-year-olds, if you didn't know), Hall-of-Famers Mike Martin and John Prigmore. Not only did we get to witness that competition, but it was a feature of ESPN's Top 10 Plays about a week later!

Mike Martin, the youngster at 90, from Golden, Colorado, played John Prigmore, 92, of Leon, Kansas. Prigmore won a tight, closely contested affair. Special thanks to Bruce Adams who shot the video and to Kelly Diesel of the IRT for getting it into the hands of ESPN's SportCenter host Neil Everett. Both players remarked how proud of them their grandkids were.

The NMRA avidly supports all of our outstanding players 80 years old and above by providing free entries and free lifetime NMRA memberships. You're never too old to compete!

The next big events for our 40+ group will be the Doubles Only Championships, November 30-December 1, in Tucson, Arizona. Then, on March 6, 2019, our Singles and/or Doubles Championships will commence in San Antonio, Texas.

For NMRA newsletters, tourney schedules and more, please visit our website [www.nmra.info](http://www.nmra.info) or follow us on Twitter @NMRAPrez.



Hank Krausmann, John Prigmore, and Mike Martin

Photo By Cindy Tilbury

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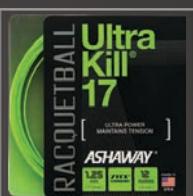
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**Rocky Carson**