

Racquetball®

Official Publication of the International Racquetball Association
\$1.50 • Vol. 8 No. 8 • September, 1979

FALL
FASHION
ISSUE

THE BUSINESS
OF FASHION

FASHION INTERVIEW

THE LOOK OF FASHION

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REALLY NECESSARY?

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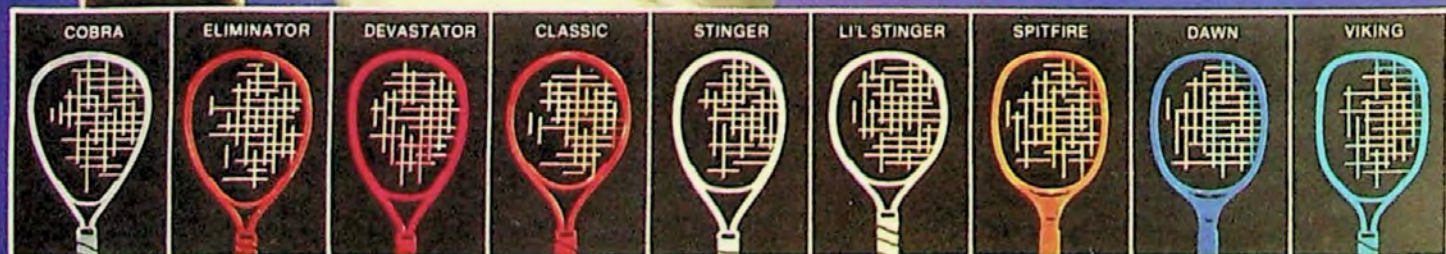
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Racquetball

Features

- 15 Special Issue:**
Racquetball Fashions
- 16 The Business of Fashion**
There's Money In Those Fancy Duds—Maybe • Tom Carlson
- 21 Fashion Foolery**
The Latest In Unnecessary Necessities • Mark Holland
- 28 The Look of Fashion**
A Photo Survey
- 32 Fashion Interview**
Ektelon's Lenny K • Mike Hogan
- 35 A New Day In Illinois**
The IRA / RAI Championships • Dennis Dorner

Departments

- 6 Receiving Line**
Letters to the Editor
- 9 New Directions**
A Message From the Executive Director
- 10 First Service**
Court Club Openings
- 12 National Doubles Application Blank**
- 13 Industry News**
People and Equipment
- 24 Calendar**
Upcoming Tournaments
- 39 Winning Points**
Backhand for Beginners • Mike Yellen
- 42 Winning Points**
The Art of Practicing: Part I • Charlie Garfinkel
- 46 Scorecard**
Tournament Results

COVER: Photograph by Larry Kuzniewski

At left, a wash and wear shirt from Top Seed. Made of 60 per cent cotton and 40 per cent polyester, it comes with matching shorts and the entire outfit retails for \$26. The V-neck style shirt at right is from Ektelon. It is made of 50 per cent Fortrel polyester and 50 per cent cotton stretch interlock and also comes with matching shorts. Retail, \$26 for the outfit.

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RACQUETBALL Magazine is printed and published by Towery Publishing Company, Inc., 1535 E. Brooks Road, Memphis, TN 38116 (901-345-8000) under the auspices of the I.R.A.

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All editorial communication should be addressed to RACQUETBALL, 1535 E. Brooks Rd., P.O. Box 16566, Memphis, TN 38116. Manuscripts must be typewritten and double spaced. Color and black and white photographs are welcome. Copy is required 45 days prior to the month of publication. Materials submitted for publication cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Membership dues for the IRA include cost of subscription to RACQUETBALL Magazine. Single, \$10 for one year, \$18 for two years; Family, \$15 for one year, \$20 for two years. Rates are for U.S. possessions, military, Canada and Mexico. All other foreign countries add \$1.00 per year for mailing costs. Memberships are for 12 months regardless of date issued. Application to mail at second class postage rate is pending at Memphis, Tennessee.

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NEW DIRECTIONS

Dear Members,

Last month we announced the instrumentation of the Talbot amateur ranking system. This system goes into effect this month and is applicable to IRA-sanctioned tournaments only. When sufficient data has been collected, the rankings will be published in *Racquetball* magazine and will be available for all IRA-sanctioned tournaments for seeding purposes. We recognize that this is only a beginning, and as the system's flaws are discovered additional refinements will be made.

A great benefit to be derived from this system will be the reasonable, objective method of determining who is an Open, B, C or D player. Presently we have a very serious problem facing our sport, with no set standards for determining these classifications. Because of this situation and the proliferation of B, C and novice divisions, we have witnessed the development of the "trophy hunter." Other names can be applied to this type of player, but in essence he is one who plays in a lower level tournament classification than his skill level just to get a trophy. The novice, C, and B divisions were established as fun divisions for players to test their skills with players of similar abilities on their way to the Open divisions. Granted, some players may never reach the Open level, but we are not talking about them. We are talking about players who knowingly "play down," embarrassing other players by 21-2, 21-2 scores—or worse—and actually ruining tournament play for the vast majority of players who entered these divisions honestly.

Many solutions have been offered to correct this situation. But because of the vast differences in playing skill across the country, no one system could be applied fairly. The national ranking system, then, will allow us to formulate data in all divisions and apply it to already existing formulas for competitive levels. It is extremely important for you, the average player, to be a part of this system, and we encourage you to support those tournaments that carry IRA-sanction to help alleviate this serious problem.

Finally, in the July issue of *Racquetball* we apparently caused a lot of confusion by printing a rule change, number 1.2, which stated: "Only one racquet may be used by each player during the play of a match." This has been mistakenly interpreted by some players to mean that you can not change racquets during the course of a match. This is not true and essentially the rule has not changed. This particular language was added simply to clarify a situation that has arisen more than once, whereby a player actually uses two racquets at one time during a match—one in each hand. The one positive thing about this misunderstanding is that it shows that you, the membership, do read *Racquetball* magazine and that you care about the future of our game. It's great to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Luke St. Onge
Executive Director

FIRST SERVICE

New Court Club Openings

West Springfield, Mass.

The Supreme Court, Inc., believed to be the first racquetball and handball center in western Massachusetts, will be opening soon in West Springfield.

The club will feature 16 courts (all official IRA size), individual saunas, whirlpool baths and exercise machines. It will also have a lunch bar, pre-school children's nursery, viewing gallery and mezzanine lounge.

The club will utilize an energy-saving heat pump system to help heat and cool the building.

Louisville, Kentucky

The Okolona Racquetball Club is scheduled to open in October at 5609 Fern Valley Road in Louisville's Poplar

Park subdivision.

The club will offer 10 air-conditioned racquetball/handball courts, a health bar, lounge and viewing area, whirlpools, saunas, an exercise room and nursery.

Various types of memberships are available including family, single, junior (age 18 and under) and corporate. The club is managed by J.T. Sims, one of the general partners.

Austin, Texas

The Western Trails Racquet Club will open in October at 2302 Western Trails Boulevard in Austin.

The club will feature eight air-conditioned courts, whirlpools, saunas, a supervised nursery, carpeted locker rooms and a laundry service.

Membership applications are now being accepted. Charter initiation fees range from \$50 to \$175, depending upon the type of membership you desire and when you apply. Dues will vary from a \$480 annual fee for an executive family option to a \$60 annual fee for a regular

single option. Membership will be limited to 800. For further information call (512) 282-0789.

Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey

The Knoll Tennis and Racquetball Club has opened at 1130 Knoll Road in Lake Hiawatha.

The 50,000 square-foot sports complex features 4 indoor tennis courts and 12 racquetball courts. For more information call (201) 335-9800.

Colma, California

What A Racquet, a new racquetball facility, is scheduled to open soon at 2945 Junipero Serra Boulevard in Colma, one mile south of San Francisco.

The club will have 17 courts, three of them glass-walled and another with window cutouts on the front wall for television cameras.

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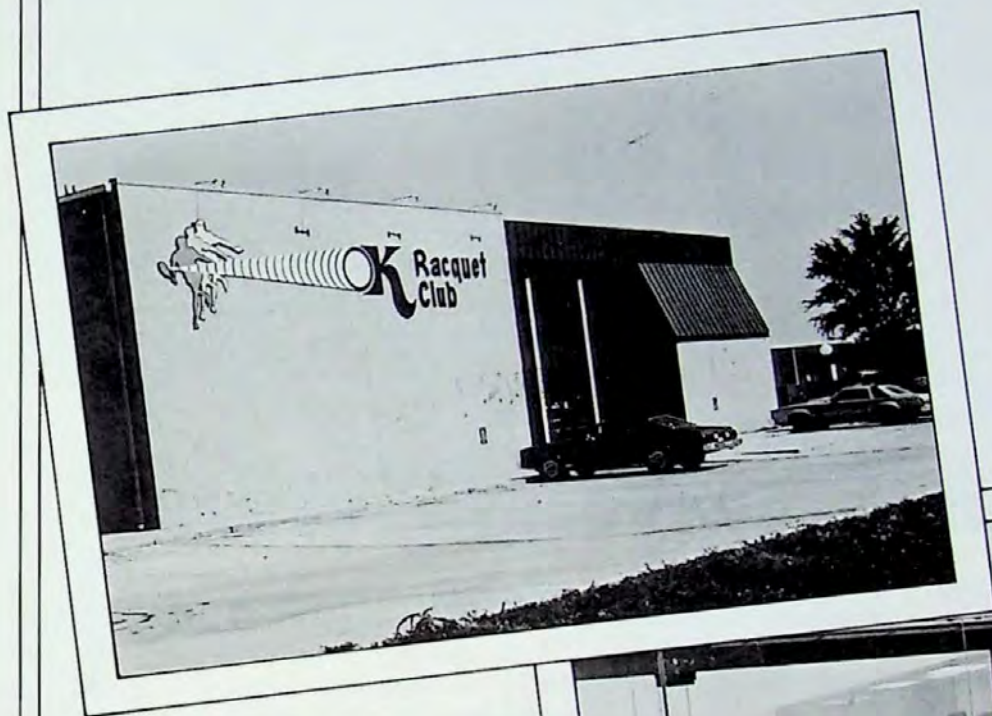
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RULES

I.R.A. Official rules will apply. Only amateurs may participate. I.R.A. rules state the definition of an amateur racquetball player as anyone who has not received money (any amount) in a professional NRC or IPRO sanctioned tournament for one year. New I.R.A. Doubles Ruling: there is no screen serve in doubles. This rule will be in effect at this tournament. ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SHOW CURRENT I.R.A. MEMBERSHIP CARD or PURCHASE MEMBERSHIP AT TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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() Senior 35-39
() Senior 40-44
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() Golden Masters 65 and over

WOMEN'S

- () Open
() B
() Senior 30-34
() Senior 35-39
() Senior 40-44
() Masters 45-49
() Masters 50-54
() Golden Masters 55 and over
() Golden Masters 60 and over
() Golden Masters 65 and over

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INDUSTRY NEWS



New Shoes From Foot-Joy

Foot-Joy, Inc., of Brockton, Mass., is now marketing a new line of racquetball shoes for men and women.

The shoes, called Tufts, have a number of wear-resistant features such as a gum rubber sole with high traction, 2-ply nylon mesh uppers, and uppers and lowers that are both cemented and stitched in order to prevent sole separation. Three rows of additional stitching provide extra strength in the toe area.

For further details, write Foot-Joy, Inc., 144 Field Street, Brockton, Mass. 02403, or call (617) 586-2233.

'Courtside' Convenience

Every racquetball player has probably had this experience at some time or another. You hit a roll-out that puts you one up on your opponent. When you retrieve the ball, however, you find that it has split into two pieces, and you don't have a spare. So what do you do?

Well, it used to be that you'd either pack up your equipment and go home or buy a whole new can of balls. But now, thanks to Courtside Ltd., of Santa Ana, Calif., you can walk over to their new Ball Dispensing Machine, insert a coin or two, and get another ball—just like that.

The Ball Dispensing Machine is designed to make racquetballs available at all times right on the court. According to the company's promotional brochure, it's easy to install, but at the same time

its rugged construction renders it both weather and vandal proof.

The manufacturers also suggest that the machine is likely to increase the revenues of both private and public facilities. Those interested can contact Courtside Ltd., a division of Court Technology, Inc., 2030 East Fourth St., Santa Ana, Calif. 92705.



Would You Believe— A Footsie Roller?

A Michigan firm, Natural Energies, has introduced a device designed to alleviate one of the most common complaints among racquetballers—sore feet. It's called, appropriately enough, the Footsie Roller.

Carved of solid cherry, the Footsie Roller uses a deep groove design to provide a stimulating massage both before and after a match. The roller is finished with tung oil, a time-honored

preservative, and sports two rubber rings—one on each end—in order to prevent slippage when the roller is in use.

The Footsie Roller comes with an eight-page brochure (shaped like a foot, naturally) that includes directions, a short bibliography on foot care and a rather curious diagram that shows the numerous reflex zones of the body believed by many to be located in the soles of the foot. What the diagram suggests is that certain areas of the body, such as the knee, the stomach and the back of the head, can be soothed by massaging particular portions of the feet.

For further information write Natural Energies, P. O. Box 8010, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48107 or call (313) 665-6229.



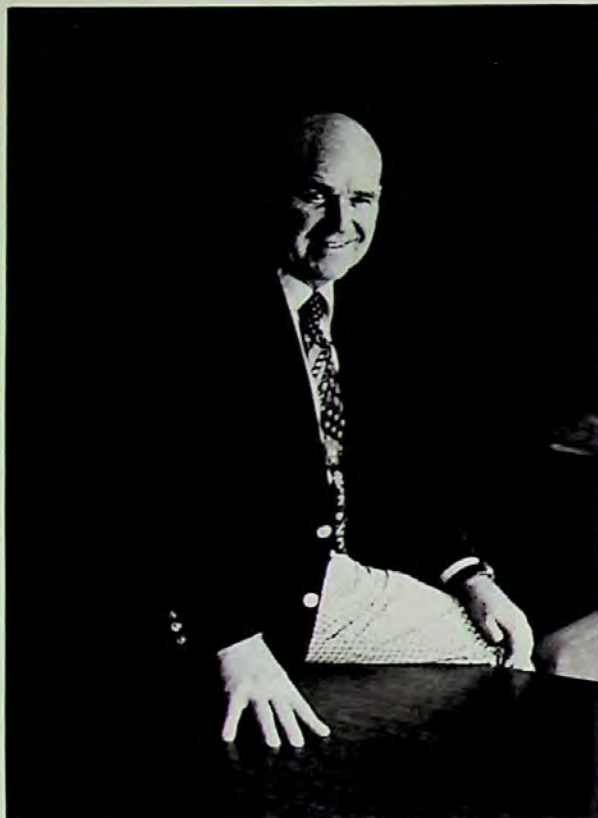
Moving Up

Clayton P. Fisher, III, has recently been appointed the general merchandise manager of AMF Head Sports Wear, Inc., a subsidiary of AMF, Inc.

Fisher previously was executive vice-president of Kimberly Knitwear, a division of General Mills, Inc. He has held various merchandising, marketing and general management positions over the past 14 years with the Rosanna and SW1 sportswear divisions of Warnaco and with E. I. Du Pont de Nemours and Company.

A member of the National Knitted Outerwear Association, Fisher will be based at the firm's headquarters in Columbia, Md. ■

Descriptions of new products are as according to information provided by the manufacturer; products have not been tested by Racquetball magazine.



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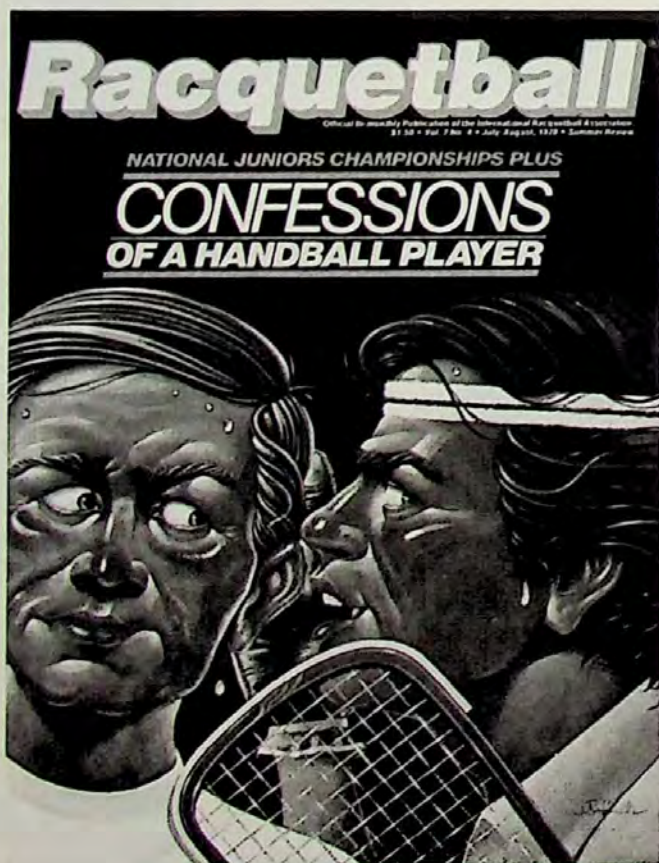
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Racquetball Magazine is currently gathering data about virtually every aspect of the booming racquetball industry—from racquets to wristlets, from construction materials to club openings. We invite anyone wishing information to call or write to
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Research Dept.
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Memphis, Tn. 38116
901-345-8000

70 FASHION

This issue marks a departure for *Racquetball*. Instead of our usual mix of stories on a variety of topics, most of this special issue is concerned with one subject: racquetball fashions.

Now, there was a time when talking about racquetball and fashion in the same breath would have been considered, at best, laughable. Because during much of the game's early development, racquetball players were about as unfashionable a lot as you could find. The basics—a T-shirt, a pair of white gym shorts, basketball sneakers—that was the outfit of choice for most early racquetball players.

But in recent years, much has happened to change this situation. Racquetball has become increasingly popular among a wide spectrum of people, women have been attracted to the game in record numbers, professional tours have created the first racquetball stars and the game has been treated more and more of late to television exposure on both a national and local level.

The result of these developments, at least according to many observers, is that racquetball players nowadays seem to care more about how they look. And thus, an estimated multi-billion dollar fashion industry is gearing up to meet the needs of what it hopes will be an increasingly fashion conscious racquetball market.

Some people see this as a good thing; they feel it adds a measure of class and respectability to racquetball, and that it is a positive sign of growth in the game. Others worry that increased emphasis on clothing and appearance in racquetball threatens the free-wheeling, unpretentious spirit that first attracted many people to the game.

We take no side in this dispute. In fact, there may not even be a dispute to decide. But because it is a matter of legitimate concern for many players, and because it undoubtedly represents one of the most interesting developments in our game today, we devote this issue of *Racquetball* to an examination of racquetball fashions: the business, the look, the people—and yes—even the foolishness of fashion. Then, you can judge for yourself.

THE BUSINESS OF FASHION

FANCY DUDS MAY MAKE A PRETTY PENNY FOR SOME FIRMS, BUT OTHERS STAND TO LOSE THEIR SHIRTS

If you've bothered to look up from the service box lately, you may have noticed a few changes around your local court club. Take, for instance, that woman over on court number one wearing the Solarpink mesh-action terry shorts with side vents, tunnel tie waist and matching cap sleeve shirt with open placket collar, accent striping and interlocking side insets. And how about that guy on court three with the Electric Blue fly-front contour waist shorts with shirred back pocket and Currant Red shirt with notched collar and contrast cuffs? So there you have it, the new look in racquetball: fewer cut-offs and smelly T-shirts and a good deal more *haute couture*. (That's French for "fancy dressing.")

If you haven't noticed this trend at your club yet, then look again. They're there, or they will be shortly. That's because over the past two years the multi-billion dollar sportswear industry has been gearing up to change the aesthetics of the nation's fastest-growing sport. And racquetball may never be the same.

The revolution began a little over two years ago when Catalina, the Los Angeles based swimwear company, came out with what was probably the first line of actionwear specifically for racquetballers. The line sold well, and other clothiers came running in a way that would make the Oklahoma land rush look like a wedding march.

Today the secret war continues with fierce intensity behind the scenes of the growing racquetball industry. A free enterprise free-for-all. At stake is control of the racquetball "software" trade—that is, racquetball clothing from trunks and tops to warm-ups, sweats, rompers—the whole bolt of cloth. Forget footwear for a moment. That's an industry by itself (around \$2.4 billion in annual sales). According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA), sales last year of active sportswear for all sports reached \$3.5 billion. That kitty was divided among the almost 2,000 manufacturers of active sportswear. And a growing percentage of the gross take over the

past two years has been going to a steadily increasing number of companies producing racquetball wear.

Market analysts will tell you that when a new line of goods, like racquetball apparel, appears, the market evolves in four distinct stages. First, there's the rapid growth phase when all kinds of companies jump into the fray with their version of the product. Next comes a leveling off due to a glutted marketplace. Then, because the economic slices of the pie have gotten too small, the bottom drops out, and many companies beat a retreat from the competition (that's when all those good 50 per cent off sales appear). Finally, there's the stabilization period, when the companies that are the strongest financially remain to preside over a predictable market.

While tennis appears to have entered the orderly final phase of market development, racquetball is still in that initial period of rapid growth. This early stage is by far the most dramatic and interesting to watch. It's at this point that you see the marketplace equivalent of Darwin's survival of the fittest theory—companies locking horns, increasing capital expenditures, scrapping tooth and nail for that competitive edge.

The automobile industry went through this exciting rough-and-tumble phase right after World War I. All over the country manufacturers sprang up overnight, giving hurried birth to more types of cars than you could shake a brake shoe at. The economic struggle lasted for more than 10 years. And when the smoke finally cleared in 1929—thanks to the Depression—the field lay strewn with extinct species—Pierce Arrow, Apperson, Ruxton, Hispano-Suiza, Wills St. Claire and many more. The fittest—Ford, Chevrolet, Chrysler and kin—had survived, and over the next 30 years would consolidate into the giant automakers we have today.

The racquetball sportswear market is now at the point the

BY TOM CARLSON

automobile industry had reached in the 1920s. Which companies are going to survive and which are going to fall by the wayside is yet to be determined. One thing is certain, though—there isn't room enough for everyone.

For a number of reasons, predicting what will happen in the racquetball apparel industry, or in the sportswear market in general, has become exceedingly risky business. First of all, there has been a dramatic shift in the last year or so in the way in which sports apparel is packaged and sold to the public. Gene Tease, a merchandising manager at Catalina, explains: "The recent trend is for many companies, including ours, to move away from specific lines of clothing for specific sports, and to offer instead a general line of sportswear—clothing that can be used for tennis, racquetball, jogging, even casual wear." The principle involved here is called "fashion cross-over."

Certainly there are some companies like Ektelon and Leach that market clothing specifically for racquetball, but the majority of the companies in the racquetball marketplace—Jantzen, Jockey, Catalina, Robert Bruce, Head, Top Seed—rely on a line of versatile, all-purpose garments.

Sometimes the cross-over principle appears unexpectedly. Ask Ellen Wessel, co-owner of a relatively small company in Arlington, Virginia, specializing in women's running apparel. "It wasn't too long after we began distribution," recalls Wessel, "that we found racquetballers interested in our clothing. It's no wonder. Our clothes are lightweight, durable, minimal in design and quick-drying—just what the racquetball players need." Wessel and partner Elizabeth Goeke took the hint. "Our company used to be called Running Comfort," Wessel says, "but we changed it to Moving Comfort because our clothes were being bought for other sports."

Such a movement towards general lines of all-purpose sportswear makes it difficult to develop sales statistics. It's almost impossible to know whether a person buying an activewear outfit intends to use it for jogging, tennis or racquetball.

To add to the confusion, over the last year or so, many department stores have added active sportswear boutiques which are separate and distinct from their sporting goods departments. At the same time, many of these stores are going a step further and getting rid of their sporting goods departments altogether. "They're losing money on hardgoods—racquets, skis, etc.," says Leonard Kanarvogel, merchandising manager for the clothing line at Ektelon. (See page 32.) "In fact, I'd guess that of the top 100 department stores, only 15 or 20 have any extensive line of hardgoods anymore."

The result of these changes is that a great deal of sports attire is no longer being sold in a sports context. It's found in flashy boutique-like settings, its new high fashion look appealing as often to the casual loungeur or beach goer as to the active athlete. In short, the distinction between designer fashion and athletic wear is simply disappearing.

If such changes in marketing strategy have made hard statistics hard to come by, most companies seem to agree that in racquetball the best is yet to come. Lenny Kanarvogel, for instance, is bursting with enthusiasm. "I don't think we've even scratched the surface of the market yet," he says.

Stuart Keeler, executive vice president at AMF Head Sports Wear, shares Kanarvogel's enthusiasm. "It's a matter of



All-purpose sportswear, such as the outfit shown here, is the latest trend among many companies in the racquetball marketplace. Rather than being designed specifically for racquetball, these outfits can be used for a variety of sports and even as casual wear.

evolution," he explains. "The fashion or dress-up syndrome always follows the growth and development of facilities and hardgoods sales. At Head we've seen it in tennis and skiing; the equipment boom came first and then the avalanche of fashion interest. Racquetball is still in the hardgoods phase," Keeler continues, "but we feel that interest in fashion is right around the corner."

It's hard to argue against such experience and market perspective. Yet not all experts agree with Keeler's prediction. Bob Klass, field director for Omega Sports, is one of them. "Our feeling is that racquetball is still too young a sport to spawn a big apparel industry," Klass says. "A good number of seasoned players are still wearing gym clothes, cut-offs and so on. It takes a long time to develop a taste for fashion in a sport." Klass suspects that a lot of clothing companies could end up losing their shirts. Omega's policy, he explains, is to direct resources and technology towards racquet-making. "After all," he says, "that's where our reputation is and that's what made us a profitable company."

Leach Industries in San Diego has a similar policy, though

“High fashion supporters argue that the trend toward a more tailored look is due mainly to the fact that racquetball is becoming a more social sport. It has emerged from the musty YMCAs.... Under these circumstances, people are going to care more about how they look.”

they haven't completely ruled out an aggressive entrance into the fashion market. "We offer a very limited line of racquetball clothing right now," observes David Armstrong, vice president of sales and marketing. "But we don't see ourselves as a softgoods peddler. It's mainly a promotional item for us. We give away a lot at tournaments." Armstrong acknowledges, however, that Leach is doing some test marketing right now, and that they're watching Ektelon's ambitious clothing pitch very closely.

"The real problems for Leach and other hardgoods companies," notes Armstrong, "is that we aren't structured to compete with the Jockeys, Catalinas and so on. Our salesmen and manufacturers' representatives naturally specialize in selling our hardgoods. They know where the buyers are, and they're good at what they do. Selling softgoods—clothing—is a completely different ball game. We'd have to hire a large number of additional personnel or do some pretty massive retraining."

Lenny K over at Ektelon knows all about such measures. "I just spent the last two days educating 75 hardgoods salesmen on how to sell softgoods," he says. "I'm giving them the skills so we can compete." Lenny's probably a good teacher. Last spring, Ektelon stole him away from Jockey where he had built up their tennis line from nothing to a five million dollar a year business.

Ektelon is clearly putting up the money, taking the risks. But not all in the business think it's good timing or even a good idea. That includes Catalina, the veteran outfit of the racquetball clothing wars. According to Gene Tease of

Catalina, the jury's still out on whether or not the peak in the racquetball apparel market has been reached. He suspects it has. "I know one thing," Tease says. "If I were starting up a company, I'd enter the market in some other area. Right now, our racquetball business is not growing at the rate our tennis business is."

Tennis. It's always tennis, it seems, that is used as a benchmark for racquetball. It happened in tennis, the reasoning goes, so it will happen soon in racquetball. Most people in the sportswear field, however, don't buy the analogy. There seems to be general agreement among sportswear experts that racquetball will never grow as wildly as the tennis market did over the last six or seven years. The tennis player and the racquetball player may be the same genus, but they are an entirely different species. As one SGMA official put it, "You have to remember that tennis started as an elitist sport and racquetball as a gym sport. It makes sense, then, that the tennis market would attract more money." It's certainly true that we haven't seen Pierre Cardin or Diane von Furstenberg racquetball togs, or Pucci accessories or Gucci shoes. Is that because racquetballers don't have blue blood tastes? Or is it simply too early in the evolution of the sport for such extravagances to appear? According to Oren Clanton at National Gym Wear, it's a matter of taste. "Unlike tennis," Clanton explains, "racquetball doesn't put you on display. So there's no need for high fashion. Racquetballers just aren't interested." Of course, Clanton's response may be understandably self-serving since National Gym Wear does very well marketing a basic meat-and-potatoes line of gym trunks and T-shirts.

The opposite opinion may be equally self-serving, but it provides a different perspective. Companies like Catalina and Top Seed are at the other end of the fashion spectrum from National Gym Wear, and they believe they're where the action is going to be. Alex Canaan, president of the New York-based Top Seed company, tells a favorite anecdote: "I used to think racquetball was just a sweat sport. But last winter at the National Sporting Goods Association convention in Chicago, we had a lot of racquetball players, especially pros, asking us for our tennis clothing because there were no really sharp racquetball clothes around." Since then Top Seed has introduced a line of designer racquetball wear in vibrant colors and elegant detail. Price? Around \$26 for shirt and shorts. (By way of comparison, National Gym Wear offers a no-frills T-shirt and shorts combo for 12 bucks.)

Top Seed, Catalina and other high fashion outfits argue that the trend towards a more tailored look is due mainly to the fact that racquetball is becoming a more social sport. It has emerged from the musty YMCAs, they say, and is now played on clean, well-lighted courts in elegant court club complexes. Many clubs also have health bars, lounges and family recreation areas. Under these more gregarious and glass-walled circumstances, the high fashion proponents conclude, people are going to care more about how they look.

That's all quite true, says Ektelon's Lenny Kanarvogel, but what these high fashion companies seem to forget, he complains, is function. "For instance, some of these outfits with splotches of really bright colors end up being a distraction to the opponent and to the person wearing them," Kanarvogel says. "With that getup on a glass court, it is very easy to lose a ball in your own reflection." As a result, Ektelon, AMF Head, Leach and others offer a more subdued, middle-of-the-market line of clothes (some style, prices in the \$20 to \$30 range for shorts and a shirt).

It remains to be seen which level of clothing fashion will eventually capture the imagination and the dollars of the majority of racquetball players. One thing does seem certain, though; in sports, clothing tastes are tied directly to exposure. The more public a sport becomes the higher the athletic fashion. And because racquetball has evolved in the last few years into a spectator sport with wide tournament play and see-through courts, fashion interest has increased significantly.

If racquetball ever comes to television, Top Seed, Catalina and the other high style companies will come out smelling like roses. After all, the great shift away from basic white in tennis not too long ago was related directly to the arrival of big television contracts. And that meant megabucks for everybody—the manufacturers, the retailers and, of course, the players acting as clotheshorses on the tube for 20 or 30 million people.

A sure measure of the level of fashion in any sport is the amount of money clothing companies are willing to pay top athletes to wear their goods. Fila, a stylish Italian company, recently paid Bjorn Borg guarantees in excess of \$100,000 to wear its merchandise. And that's just the beginning. Add to that a royalty of about five per cent of the international sales, and Borg doesn't have to worry too much about tournament prize money. Indeed, one might understand it if Borg's main reason for wanting to make the finals at Wimbledon was to keep Fila shirts on camera as long as possible. It's simply a matter of knowing who butters your bread.

Alex Canaan of Top Seed recalls trying to get John McEnroe under contract. "He hadn't even turned pro yet and was ranked about fifteenth. McEnroe's father wouldn't talk to anybody offering less than a guarantee of \$50,000 a year for three years, plus an elaborate system of bonuses for reaching the semifinals or finals of televised tournaments. We took a walk. It was crazy."

Today McEnroe is under contract with Tacchini, another high powered Italian clothier, for around a hundred grand. Tacchini has over 45 players under contract, including Vitas Gerulaitis, Brian Gottfried, Roscoe Tanner and Bob Lutz.

Will this extreme fashion and money madness come to racquetball? Probably not in the near future. First of all, you need television, and like it or not, racquetball has problems as a video sport. The size of the ball and the speed of the game make it difficult to follow the action unless you're right there. Some sophisticated camera work might save the day, but right now the problems remain.

Then there's the problem of mass marketing. To pay top money to athletes for endorsements, it helps to have an international market for your product. Fila, Tacchini, Adidas and others can afford it, but American companies can't because their products simply don't sell well outside the United States. AMF Head may have Arthur Ashe under contract, but they can't compete with the Italians.

Most of the top racquetball pros are under contract to one or another of the racquet or clothing manufacturers, but they certainly don't command the kind of salaries that the tennis players do. Just what they do make remains top secret information. Educated guesses fall in the \$12,000 to \$15,000 range with the really big names—the Hogans and Brumfields—getting a good deal more. Ektelon seems the most ambitious in the endorsement field, having signed on almost half of the top 20 seeded players on the tour along with about 800 club pros across the country.



Madison Avenue comes to racquetball, as—fraught with sex appeal and high fashion sophistication—promotional photographs such as this one reveal the game's "new look."

Whether or not the phenomenal growth of the fashion industry is good for racquetball remains to be seen. On the one hand, you could argue that such growth merely represents the normal and healthy evolution of the sport. After all, if manufacturers are committing big money to racquetball, it must mean that the sport is here to stay. On the other hand, some might argue that the proliferation of dandyish clothes and garish bric-a-brac is the result of commercial exploitation in its rankest and most cynical form.

No need to take sides immediately. The racquetball clothing and accessories industry will be around for quite awhile—even if our economy should go to hell in a handbasket. There's an axiom in the business that sports activewear and cosmetics are recession-proof. People will buy them no matter what.

So, there's plenty of time to discover what this marketing madness will lead to. Five years from now, look up again from your service box; check out that woman over on court number one, the guy on number three. What do they look like? ■

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FASHION FOOLERY

THE LATEST IN UNNECESSARY NECESSITIES

Racquetball players are changing. No longer are they considered the bums of the sports world. Instead, they've become respectable, chic even, accepted among their peers in the sports community. Gone are the days when players hung their heads in shame and whispered guiltily, "I play racquetball." Yes, all that's changed now. Because at long last, after years of being perfectly happy in scruffy cut-off jeans, plain white T-shirts and worn-out tennis shoes, racquetball players have discovered FASHION.

This change did not come about overnight. For years, fashion industry moguls have had their sights fixed on racquetball, looking for some sign of sustained life, some indication that the sport was more than just a passing fad. And now, faced with million-dollar celebrity tournaments, hundreds of new court facilities and even honest-to-goodness racquetball magazines, the fashion giants have decided that racquetball is here to stay.

So—with tape measures, doodads and statistics in hand—the fashion experts have descended upon the racquetball world, proclaiming in all-knowing terms what's "in," "now" and the "latest" for the racquetball player. Their message is simple: "You play as well as you look." With this sentiment as their guiding light, and armed with the

knowledge that the American consumer needs and even wants to be separated from his hard earned money, the fashion industry has begun to change the face of racquetball.

Color coordination is the most prominent evidence of the invasion of the



fashion industry. Indeed, "color coordination" is the battle cry of the fashion vanguard. These fashion experts have taken on the task of trying to color coordinate every racquetball player in America. They have embraced this cause with a religious fervor, and they speak in sympathetic tones about those players who are not yet color coordinated, as if

not being color coordinated were like having some dread and incurable disease: "Poor John. He's a good player, but he's just not color coordinated." The result of this trend is that many players who had been wearing uncoordinated outfits on the racquetball court, and who thought they were having a good time, have suddenly discovered that they weren't really enjoying themselves after all. Without colors, how can it be fun?

Of course, there are some people who might question spending 30 or 40 bucks on a color coordinated racquetball outfit, when you could serve the same purpose with a simple pair of shorts and a T-shirt that cost \$10. Such people are immediately branded as heretics by the fashion moguls, and shouted down with cries of "Philistine," "Oh, ye of no taste" and "No fair using logic." After a while, they learn to keep their logic and their \$20 savings to themselves.

So convincing has been the argument for color coordination, that some players have refused to play in tournaments if the color of the sanctioned ball clashes with their outfit. Other players have refused to enter the court because their opponents' outfits clashed with theirs. In one instance, a well-dressed player was preparing for a match and suddenly began screaming as soon as his opponent appeared, declaring vehemently that he wasn't going to play. "You knew I was going to be wearing this dark green ensemble," he screamed, "and you

BY MARK HOLLAND

wore that atrocious purple just to clash with me. I demand a forfeit." Such confrontations have led to the creation of a new position at court clubs across the country, that of fashion coordinator, whose job it is to settle disputes among fashion conscious players.

Some fashion coordinators, however, specialize in creating color conflicts among players. These highly paid experts reportedly act as fashion consultants to a number of players on the pro circuit, actually traveling to tournaments with the players. Some of these consultants have apparently become as indispensable to certain players as their coach. One alleged fashion consultant described his job this way:

"I try to counter whatever psychological effect my player's opponent creates," he explained. "In other words, I'm hired to neutralize the effect of the opponent's clothes. Say, for instance, my player's opponent comes out in a white or beige outfit. I'm certainly not going to let my player go on the court with the same colors, because that would be playing right into his opponent's hands. Obviously, the other player is trying to slow down the tempo

of the game and lull the referee into inattention. So if the other player is in a very soothing color theme like that, I'm

"Some players have refused to play in a tournament if the color of the sanctioned ball clashes with their outfit."

going to send my player out there with some really wild colors, Obnoxious Orange or Scandalous Scarlet—something that will really jolt the referee

and create a feeling of action and excitement on the court.

"Of course, not a lot of people are going to come out on the court in a light colored outfit these days; it's too easy to counter. Most people will come out in bold stripes hoping to really overwhelm their opponents. In a situation like that I have to decide whether to go with horizontal or vertical stripes to counter the effect, and then I have to make a split second decision on the background color of the outfit. Lately, I've started sending my players out in shocking pink outfits which have blood red lightning bolts on the sides. The lightning bolts really throw the other player's fashion consultant off because he doesn't know whether to counter with horizontal or vertical stripes. But whenever I send my player out I'm already thinking a couple of changes ahead. Because as soon as my player walks on the court with his outfit, the other player is going to leave the court and make a change. Sometimes there are as many as 20 outfit changes before the match even begins."

Nobody knows where this clothes conscious trend will lead us, but there are ominous indications that it could lead



Here's Looking At You, Kid

This March we inserted a questionnaire in RACQUETBALL Magazine. With no reward for responding and not even a stamp to cover postage, we realized that those fans who took the time and effort to answer were indeed die-hards. Listed below are a few of the results from that questionnaire.

From time to time we will insert in the magazine or mail out other surveys and would greatly appreciate your response to those tell tale probes of the racquetball player. It is through these exchanges that we can serve you and the sport more efficiently. Look for more results in future issues.

Thank You,
RACQUETBALL Magazine

RM: How long have you been playing Racquetball?

Ans: 18% 1 yr. or less
31% 2-3 years
23% 4-5 years
22% 6-10 years
6% over 10 years
(Joe Sobek - 29 years)

RM: How frequently do you play Racquetball?

Ans: 9% everyday
10% 4-6 times per week
48% 2-4 times per week
24% 1-2 times per week
(Never - Jimmy Connors)

RM: How long do you play each time?

Ans: 38% 1 hr. or less
40% up to 90 minutes
17% up to 2 hours
5% over 2 hours
(All day long - Marty Hogan)

RM: On what days do you usually play?

Ans: Monday - 17%
Tuesday - 15%
Wednesday - 17%
Thursday - 15%
Friday - 13%
Saturday - 13%
Sunday - 10%
(Melina Mercouri - Never on a Sunday)

RM: How far do you travel to play?

Ans: Less than 2 miles - 27%
2-5 miles - 27%
5-10 miles - 26%
Over 10 miles - 19%
(Neil Armstrong - 250,000 miles)

RM: How long does it take to get there?

Ans: Less than 5 minutes - 25%
10-15 minutes - 45%
15-30 minutes - 23%
30 minutes-1 hour - 7%
(Mr. Spock - Instantly)

to a kind of fashion madness in racquetball. Consider, for example, the persistent rumors that some clubs are now holding pre-tournament fashion shows, to determine seeding and handicaps. According to reports from "reliable sources" (namely, my cousin Abner in Hoboken, New Jersey), points are awarded prior to some tournaments based on the style and cut of a player's outfit. Players can begin a match with a 5, 10 or even a 15 point lead depending on how well they are dressed. The players parade back and forth before the gallery to show off their outfits, while a fashion expert judges the attire and an announcer describes it: "Tom will be rolling them out today in a two-piece, wash-and-wear outfit made of 50 per cent polyester and 50 per cent cotton. The blue/black short-sleeved top is trimmed with light blue and is set off nicely by the baby blue monogrammed shorts. The complete outfit sells for \$500, or you can buy the top and shorts separately for \$500 each. Tom's ensemble was provided through the courtesy of Fort Knox of Fort Knox, Kentucky."

A startling example of the effect this

new practice can have on the game is seen in a recent report from Los Angeles, down around Hollywood. There, the Open division of a tournament was won by a novice player. This player chalked up 21 points in the pre-game fashion show, so he was declared the winner without ever having to hit a ball. A spectator who was present describes the action in this exclusive report for *Racquetball*:

"It was a landmark in the game of racquetball," he relates. "From the moment Bob (the eventual winner) walked out, you could tell that something special was going to happen. I'm telling you, every head in the place turned and there was dead silence. You had to be there to appreciate it."

"This guy was dressed to the hilt. I'm talking funky-disco-out-a-sight-stream-lined-color coordinated explosions of too much. He was a walking rainbow, from his chartreuse headband to the green and orange shoe laces in his fluorescent, high-heeled racquetball shoes. Heck, it took the announcer 15 minutes just to describe the outfit and all the accessories that went with it. But what I really think he picked up points

on, though, was his lemon-colored fur-lined wrap-around tunic, which was a combination smoking jacket and warm-up suit. I'm telling you, it was a sight to behold."

Bear in mind, now, that the aforementioned spectator who passed along this report to us also works as an advertising executive for a major fashion designer. We became suspicious when he showed up in our offices decked out in a flowing cape, top hat and tails. We did some checking into his background, and learned that his company is the nation's only manufacturer of lemon-colored smoking jackets and high-heeled racquetball shoes. So, we have our doubts.

There is one effect of the current fashion mania, however, about which there can be no doubt, and that is the role it has played in the emergence of a new breed of pseudo racquetball players. We've all seen this type of player. They're the ones who go to the court club dressed in the latest fashions, but rarely if ever go *near* a court. About the only thing they use a racquet for is to offset the color of their outfits. These

continued on page 26

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RACQUETBALL

September 7-9

Open Singles 45+ (3)
Honolulu YMCA
Tournament Director:
Phyllis Gomes
Central YMCA
401 Atkinson Dr.
Honolulu, HI 96814

September 14-16

Cape Cod Open (3)
The Racquet Club
South Yarmouth, MA
Tournament Director:
Dennis Aceto
617-394-1688

September 28-30

**Yogi Berra's/Lite Beer Grand
Prix for Muscular Dystrophy (4)**
Yogi Berra Hall of Fame
Fairfield, New Jersey
Tournament Director:
Pete Talbot
201-227-4000

**Greater Pittsburgh Open
Doubles Championships
Men's & Women's (3)**
Moon Racquetball Club
Tournament Director:
Chuck Kohl
412-262-5335

Texas State Championships (2)
Racquetball and Handball
Clubs of San Antonio
Tournament Director:
Bruce Hendin
512-344-8596
512-349-2781

Welsh Steel/Royal Courts

**Massachusetts I.R.A. Closed
State Doubles (2)**
(Site to be announced)
Contact: Paul Henrickson
617-754-6073

October 5, 6, 7
Florida State Doubles
(closed) (2)
Omega 40
1 So. Old Kings Road
Orman Beach, FL 32074
Tournament Director:
Gordon Ira
Steve Xynidis
904-672-4044

October 12-14
2nd Annual Mid Atlantic
Regional YMCA
Championships Open (3)
Harrisburg Central YMCA
Harrisburg, PA
Tournament Director:
Y Athletic Director
717-234-6221

**Memphis State/Jack Fulton
Open (3)**
Memphis State University
Tournament Director:
Larry Liles
901-454-2807

October 18-21
I.R.A. National Doubles
Championships (6)
OK Racquet Club
1508 S.E. 25th
Oklahoma City, OK 73129
Tournament Director:
Luke St. Onge
901-761-1172

October 25-28
Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
Continental Racquetball Club
7717 Edgewater
Oakland, CA 94621
Tournament Director:
Mark Auerbach
415-568-0132

**Aidenlea Racquetball Club
Tournament (3)**
Aidenlea Racquetball Club
474 Iroquois Shore Rd.
Oakville, Ontario L6H 2Y7
Tournament Director:
Ebbe Marquardpen
416-842-2386

October 26-28
Greenfield Open (3)
Greenfield Racquet Club
Lancaster, PA
Tournament Director:
Elaine Lee
717-392-4194

**Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)**
Fox Racquetball Club
2500 Interplex Drive
Philadelphia, PA 19047
Tournament Director:
Mike Flieshut or Lou Gillmore
215-638-7320

**6th Annual Charlotte Open
Racquetball Tournament (3)**
Sports Illustrated Court Club
Charlotte, N.C.
Tournament Director:
Tony Giordano
704-372-1946

November 7-11
Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
Racquettime of Ballwin
(formerly Wilson-Coryell
Racquetball Club)
910 Clayton Rd.
Ballwin, MO 63011
Tournament Director:
Sherry Ridings
314-391-8087

November 8-11
Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
Racquet Club of Monroeville
1 Racquet Lane
Monroeville, PA 15146
Tournament Directors:
Brian Engle and
Ken Baron
412-242-8636

**Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)**
Racquetball Centre
440 Interstate No. Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339
Tournament Director:
Bobby Siegle
404-955-5555

November 9-12
Heart Association Benefit (3)
Downtown Racquet Club
230 George St.
New Haven, CT 06510
203-787-6501
Tournament Director:
Will Verhoeff

November 10-12

November 30
Backwall Holiday Closed
State Tournament (2)
Backwall Racquetball Club
Altoona, PA
Tournament Director:
Chris Kister
814-946-1668

December 1-3
Western New England Open (3)
Racquet Club at Bousquet
Pittsfield, MA
Tournament Director:
Mike Meyer
413-499-4600

January 3-7
I.R.A. Open State Men and
Women Doubles (4)
Central YMCA
401 Atkinson Dr.
Honolulu, HI 96814
Tournament Director:
Phyllis Gomes

February 7-11
Open I.R.A. State Men and
Women Singles (4)
Central YMCA
401 Atkinson Dr.
Honolulu, HI 96814
Tournament Director:
Phyllis Gomes

February 8-10
Women '80 Tournament (3)
Boston Tennis Club
Tournament Director:
Maureen Boulette
617-754-6073

February 24-March 2
Racquetball Week

Open State Racquetball
Tournament (3)
Royal Courts
Wilkes Barre, PA
Tournament Director:
Virginia Jones
717-822-8900

October 4-7
Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
Playoff Racquetball Club
288 Wood Road
Braintree, MA 02184
Tournament Director:
Tom Melnor
617-848-8050

Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
Denver Sporting House
5151 DTC Parkway
Englewood, CO 80110
Tournament Director:
Andy Sabo
303-779-0700

I.R.A. Women's Novice
Invitational (2)
Central YMCA
401 Atkinson Dr.
Honolulu, HI 96814
Tournament Director:
Phyllis Gomes

Women's Open Singles (3)
Central YMCA
401 Atkinson Dr.
Honolulu, HI 96814
Tournament Director:
Phyllis Gomes

Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
Santa Monica Racquetball Club
1815 Centinella
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Tournament Director:
Steve Lubarsky
213-829-6836

October 19-21
Racquettime Raise Your
Racquet Benefit Open
Tournament (3)
Racquettime
Dedham, MA
Tournament Director:
Bill Cavanagh
617-326-2900

October 24-28
Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
King Arthur's Court
1355 15th St.
Ft. Lee, NJ 07024
Tournament Director:
Stan Danzig
201-944-8300

November 1-4
Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
Courts, Etc.
Ashford Square
14690 Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77079
Tournament Director:
Jim Austin
713-497-7570

Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
The Glove And Racquet
3855 Wales Rd. N. 10
Massillon, OH 44646
216-837-9602
Tournament Director:
Dave Wallace

November 2-4
Long Island Open (4)
Universal Racquetball
Massapequa, NY
and
Center Courts
40 Maple Ave.
Rockville Center, NY 11570
Tournament Director:
Al Seitelman
516-288-1448

Nittany Lion Open (4)
Penn State University
Contact: Jere Willey
814-865-6588 (work)
814-238-2864 (home)

November 16-18
LeBlanc Open (3)
Shrewsbury Racquet Club
Shrewsbury, Mass.
Tournament Director:
Paul Henrickson
617-845-1001

November 29-December 2
Omega-Hertz Racquetball
Classic (3)
Franklin Racquet Club
29350 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, MI 48034
Tournament Director:
Jim Easterling
313-352-8000

Peter Cornell Open (3)
Downtown YMCA Fitness
Center
2 W. Franklin St.
Richmond, VA 23220
Tournament Director:
Carter Brook
804-644-4611

February 28-March 2
I.R.A. State Championships (2)
Contact local state directors
for sites

March 21-23
March of Dimes Benefit (3)
Downtown Racquet Club
230 George St.
New Haven, CT 06510
Tournament Director:
Wayne Bruno
203-787-6501

April 25-27
I.R.A. Regionals (5)
Sites to be announced

I.R.A. sanctioned tournaments in bold

- (1) - 1st level tournament
- (2) - 2nd level tournament
- (3) - 3rd level tournament
- (4) - 4th level tournament
- (5) - 5th level tournament
- (6) - 6th level tournament

CALENDAR

continued from page 23

"players" spend most of their time around the club bar, drinking and comparing outfits. They have only disdain and disgust for the sweaty slobbs dressed in T-shirts and old gym shorts who race up to the bar for a quick glass of fruit juice before returning to the court for another strenuous match. They feel as if these sweaty jocks are invading *their* domain. And perhaps rightly so.

As a result, there is now considerable talk about the prospects of building a nationwide chain of court clubs designed especially for fashion conscious racquetballers. These "racquetball boutiques," as they would be called, would have strict dress codes and a doorman to check members as they enter for proper color coordination and possible color clashes with other members. Racquets would be considered optional at these clubs, but playing courts would be eliminated. Instead, the centerpiece of the club would be an elaborate bar, surrounded by hundreds of mirrors so that members could admire themselves. Many court club owners are adamantly opposed to the idea of such clubs, saying they are completely at odds

with the egalitarian, participatory spirit of racquetball. Fashion proponents counter, however, that those who oppose fashionable clubs do so only because they are afraid racquetball boutiques would become so popular that they'd put regular court clubs out of business.

And so, it seems, fashion is destined to become a permanent fixture in racquetball. Indeed, an omen of things to come recently occurred during a tournament on the east coast, according to a reliable authority. (My cousin Abner again. He gets around.)

According to this report, one player came sweeping into the club with an entourage of 20 people. He had a fashion consultant, a valet, a hair stylist, three men to carry his portable barber's chair, several aides to carry his clothes, technicians, electricians and a couple of lackeys just to fold and unfold his outfits. All this, and he was only scheduled to play one match that day.

While the player was being preened, pressed and blow-dried in the locker room, his valet began supervising courtside preparations. Several racks of clothes were moved next to the court,

while another aide began busily laying out an assortment of colored towels. A couple of lighting technicians worked frantically near the locker room door. Soon, everything was ready.

Suddenly, the locker room door opened, and out stepped the player dressed in a Purple Passion warm-up suit complete with a Regal Red cape. As he paused dramatically in the doorway, someone switched on a fan. The cape spread out behind him and his hair flowed back like the mane of a lion. A spotlight burst on and the player was showered in a brilliant colored light. After he was sure everyone had seen him, the light clicked off, the fan stopped and the player moved quickly to the court and proceeded to play his match.

He played miserably, losing 21-2, 21-4. Still, he did change shirts 25 times during the match. And when he came off the court, he was all smiles. "I love this game," he told one spectator as he acknowledged the admiring cheers of the crowd. "Racquetball is the greatest because it's not whether you win or lose that counts, but how you dress for the game." ■

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THE LOOK OF FASHION

A PHOTO SURVEY
BY LARRY KUZNIEWSKI

Racquetball clothing designers are fast becoming as plentiful as leaves in autumn. Everybody, it seems, has gotten into the act. This includes companies ranging from such traditional equipment manufacturers as Ektelon to high fashion outfits like Catalina and Top Seed. The result of this rush to the cloth is a virtual deluge of smart-looking, eminently fashionable—and often—high-priced racquetball outfits for both men and women. To sort out some of the confusion, the editors of *Racquetball* magazine recently gathered samples of the best in racquetball clothing from the top companies in the field. Herewith, then, our first annual survey of the wide, wide world of racquetball fashions.

At left, a two piece men's outfit from Catalina. The shirt features a blend of cotton jersey knit and terry, Fortrel polyester and cotton mesh, while the shorts come with an inside coin pocket. Retail, \$30. The ladies' outfit at right is from Quantum. It is made of 53 per cent polyester and 47 per cent cotton. Shirt and shorts retail for \$38. The jacket is sold separately, retail \$46. All models' shoes provided courtesy of Patrick and Lotto.



Above: The outfit at left is from Racquettes of Hialeah, Florida. The wash-and-wear ensemble, made from 50 per cent polyester and 50 per cent cotton interlock, retails for \$25.50. At right is a ladies' ensemble from Kaz of California. The shirt features a square neck design and the shorts come with a back pocket. Made of 50 per cent Kodel polyester and 50 per cent cotton interlock, the outfit retails for \$26.

Inset: Outfits from At Ease (left) and Ektelon. The ladies' ensemble features contrasting trim around the shirt and shorts and is made of a 50/50 poly/cotton interlock fabric. Suggested retail price, \$27. The men's outfit features a V-neck style pullover shirt and shorts with a button-down pocket on the side. The shirt is 50 per cent Fortrel polyester and 50 per cent cotton interlock, while the shorts are 65 per cent Dacron polyester and 35 per cent cotton. Suggested retail price, \$29.





Above: The ladies' outfit at left is from Elja Unlimited. It features hand painted racquets on the shirt and is made from 100 per cent cotton. Suggested retail price, \$40. The men's outfit is from Adidas. The shirt is 100 per cent cotton and the cotton twill shorts include a back pocket. Suggested retail price, \$25.90. Racquetball jewelry courtesy of Tinker and Company.

Inset: Outfits from Paul Sullivan Sportswear (left) and Intertwoven. The outfit at left features a 100 per cent cotton shirt and shorts made of 80 per cent nylon and 20 per cent Spandex. The shorts include an inner lining and inside key pocket and the outfit retails for \$34.50. The men's outfit at right features a V-neck shirt and shorts with a waistband drawstring. Made of 50 per cent polyester and 50 per cent cotton, the outfit retails for \$25.



Racquetball warm-up outfits from AMF Head Sports Wear (left) and Ladies First. The men's outfit includes a 50/50 poly/cotton shirt with a porous cotton mesh bottom and shorts made of 65 per cent polyester and 35 per cent cotton. The warm-up suit includes a 100 per cent Orlon jacket with a hood and matching pants (not shown). The shirt and shorts retail for \$37. The warm-up suit, sold separately, retails for \$72. The ladies' outfit at right includes a Ladies First T-shirt—suggested retail price, \$2.50—and a poly/fleece warm-up suit with a front pocket in the jacket and matching pants. The warm-up retails for \$59.95.



FASHION
INTERVIEW

EKTELON'S LENNY K

EDITOR'S NOTE: Racquetball fashions are increasingly becoming Big Business. An indication of just how important this segment of the marketplace is becoming was demonstrated recently when San Diego-based Ektelon, one of the largest racquetball merchandisers, created a new management position devoted exclusively to clothing. Leonard B. 'Lenny K' Kanarvogel is Ektelon's new merchandising manager for sportswear and accessories. A veteran of 17 years in New York's garment district, Kanarvogel most recently coordinated Jockey International's tennis wear line. His first official act upon joining Ektelon—even before moving his belongings out from the east coast—was to design a completely new line of racquetball clothing which has been well-received by retailers during preview showings. To find out what racquetball fashion designing is all about, *Racquetball* sent correspondent Mike Hogan to Ektelon's headquarters to talk to Kanarvogel. In this exclusive interview, Lenny K gives *Racquetball* readers an insight into the many hours of effort that go into the development of a "simple" racquetball shirt or pair of shorts.

RACQUETBALL: What is it that consumers are most concerned about when they buy a piece of racquetball clothing? Fashion? Function? What?
KANARVOGEL: Color is the single most important element in a garment

because that is what catches the consumer's attention. Proper coloring is essential to selling any clothing. There are four things to think about when designing any garment. The first is color because that is what will catch the customer's eye. Then customers will walk over and feel the goods, so the fabric must be appealing. They already know what store it is in and are aware whether that store is of good quality or not. The third thing consumers look at is the label. They see Ektelon and think, "Well, Ektelon is synonymous with racquetball so it must be good." The last thing consumers look at, surprisingly, is the price. They have to like the color, the texture, the people who make it before they ask, "How much is it going to cost me?"

R: Does that differ between male and female customers?

K: No. Generally, it's the same for everybody. It's not a set rule, of course, but there is enough marketing information to say, "That's the way the consumer shops."

R: While there are some similarities, the color and styling of the garments you've designed seem to be a major departure from Ektelon's old line, which, frankly, never struck us as being all that fashionable.

K: The new line is a major departure from the old.

R: Why did you select the colors that you did?

K: I selected colors that are punchy, exciting, active colors. The color story for next year for fashions in general is bright shades—bright royal blues, bright

yellows, bright reds. In ladies' wear, the colors for fall are reds, yellows and jades. Those are the colors on the main floors of the major department stores right now. We wanted to be both fashionable and timely, and we feel that our ladies' colors are right in tune with what is going on in the general world of fashion.

R: What about function? What are the special requirements of racquetball clothing?

K: The goods have to be able to flow, to handle the body torque and the stress of stretching and bending. If you're playing racquetball two or three times a week, you want your shorts and shirts to stand up well in the wash and wear afterwards. So both the functionality of the fabric and construction of the garment are important.

R: What about a fabric's ability to absorb perspiration?

K: In my particular line, I've gone with a 50-polyester-50-cotton blend for just that reason. The blend is important. When you wear a 100 per cent cotton garment in a high perspiration sport, the perspiration gets absorbed by the shirt and stays there. And it just hangs. But, with a poly-cotton blend, the cotton absorbs the perspiration and the polyester—which is a filament yarn with a wicking action—dispels it through the pores of the garment.

R: So it looks neater?

K: That's right and it's a much better wash-and-wear garment too. And, now, you're really addressing yourself to something which is important to the consumer, the one who has to wash the

BY MIKE HOGAN

KAZ



Shorts and Square neck top is 50% Kodel Polyester and 50% Cotton from Caroknit. Colors: White with navy and red trim Navy with yellow & red trim and Royal with powder and navy trim. Size range S-M-L-XL

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"In a way, I have a sales job. My product is Lenny K and that's who I sell."

garment.

R: What about construction?

K: Well, especially in the men's line, I felt there was a need for good, functional merchandise. Some garments have patch pockets, some have flap pockets, some have a jock line. But I demanded that every short we make have double needle felled seams. I didn't want anyone ripping his pants on the court.

R: What about women's clothes? Are they the same as men's?

K: No. The ladies must have clothing that is all their own. I took a different approach with the ladies' line. As far as fabrics are concerned, there are two: the traditional interlock and a stretch-and-lock. This is a soft piece of goods that has some body but will cling to the wearer. It allows movement and takes care of any high torque, high stretching, or high bending, and yet it is feminine. This fabric takes the ladies out of the "me too" area of interlock ladies' garments and says, "I'm different."

R: Is it expensive?

K: It is *very* expensive. It's not the run-of-the-mill fabric. But I wanted the ladies to have something of their own.

R: So, is that what being a designer is all about?

K: Designer? What is a designer? In my opinion, a designer is someone who works on Seventh Avenue in New York and caters to the high, high fashion of the ladies' wear industry. Maybe stylist is a better term for what I do. Actually, though, I'm just a merchant, in the same sense that a retailer is a merchant. I'm involved in many areas of Ektelon's functions—sales, advertising, merchandising—whatever it takes to run a little company within the overall company. I select fabrics and colors, buy them, do sales projections, work with the advertising people to make sure that what they do is consistent with the way the merchandise was styled. I lend my services to the sales department to make presentations, I make sure there are enough goods for the stores that buy

them and, once that sells, I make sure that their deliveries get advanced. It's something of an all-encompassing job, actually.

R: What's the secret to designing clothes people will buy?

K: It's the ability to spot trends and to be able to translate them into a finished product. If I had to pick one thing that makes me better at what I do than the next guy, I would say that it is that I am super observant. Nothing passes my eye that doesn't register as good or bad. When I was with Jockey International, I was projecting what people would be wearing a year in advance. That's not an easy talent and you have to have some data to do it.

R: Is that what people in your position are expected to do all the time?

K: Oh, absolutely. Being a successful guy, a guy who is respected in the marketplace, is always being with the right coloring, the right looks.

R: Did you pick that up in the New York garment district?

K: Yeah. When I first got in, I just needed a job. I got started at \$60 a week as a posting clerk and there was an opening in the merchandising department. I really wanted to go into sales, but the merchandising department was offering an extra \$7 a week and I really needed it then. Then, as I went along, I grew. I listened and I learned and I did all the things that nobody else wanted to do. In a way, I have a sales job. My product isn't Ektelon or clothing or racquets or the Ektelon catalog. My product is Lenny K and that's who I sell. If people buy me, if they trust me and feel that I know what I'm talking about, they will buy what I suggest they buy because they have confidence that I won't steer them wrong.

R: Do you always guess right?

K: Well, so far I've had a couple of good seasons in a row. It started 17 years ago and, with any luck, I'll be around for another 17.

R: That sounds like a good bet. ■

T

TOURNAMENT

R

REPORT

A New Day In Illinois

THE IRA/RAI CHAMPIONSHIPS BY DENNIS DORNER



Don Constable-First Place Men's Open.

The 1979 International Racquetball Association/Racquetball Association of Illinois Championships proved to be the catalyst of a new look in Illinois racquetball. For the last few years, there had been no IRA state tournament in Illinois. But this year, Ray Mitchell, publisher of *Racquetball Everyone*, laid the foundation for such a tournament by creating a new state organization, the Racquetball Association of Illinois (RAI).

The RAI was formed to provide Illinois players with an organization that would value the input of its members. With such a philosophy, the organization quickly became the arm of the IRA in Illinois. Almost immediately afterwards, Kay Fischer, Illinois state director for the IRA, and Ray Mitchell teamed up to establish a 1979 State Championship Tournament.

The tournament took place June 21-23 at Killshot, Ltd., in Bloomingdale, Illinois. The club is well-suited for tournament play with glass walls, 15 courts, a fully stocked bar, coed

whirlpool, plenty of viewing space and complete locker room facilities. The club manager, Don Jenkins, and his staff did everything they could to help the IRA volunteers run the tournament.

And run it they did. The organization of the IRA tournament was superb, as times ran an hour ahead throughout the event. Credit must go to the exceptional scheduling and planning of the committee.

Needless to say, the tournament was a success, and as such, strengthened the IRA's presence in Illinois. It demonstrated to the players of that state that there is an alternative when it comes to addressing their racquetball needs.

The competition during the tournament was exciting, hard-fought, intense. What follows is a rundown on play in the various divisions.

Men's Open

Don Constable opposed Jim Scheyer in the Men's final. Constable had shown strong determination and a picture-book serve in eliminating three earlier opponents, while Scheyer gained the

championship round via his ability to get to everything and his prowess at firing terrific shots off those gets.

The final was a dramatic, closely contested match. And not just when the ball was in play. Numerous protests were lodged by each competitor. There were calls for a new referee, rule books and changes of linesmen. But in the end, Constable survived the intense struggle to take the crown 21-15, 21-16. Third place found Sean Moskwa defeating Ed Lindfors. Consolation honors went to John Slazas.

Women's Open

Judy Sawicki was matched against Nancy Kronenfeld in the Women's finals. Each had met many times before, and the match figured to be close. It was!

Game one saw Sawicki getting angry with the referee. This apparently kept her from playing her best, and she lost 21-18. In the second game, Sawicki brought her emotions under control and concentrated only on playing. She won 21-17.

This set the stage for the most exciting finale of the tournament, as the tiebreaker progressed point by point to its logical conclusion, a 14-14 standoff. After a flurry of shots, Sawicki claimed the crown with a nice pass and a 15-14 score. Lynne Farmer won third over Sue Prisching. Lana Engen won the consolation bracket.

Men's Senior A

Marshall Waldo and Scott Berry have been playing superior racquetball this season, and it was only fitting that the pair met for the championship in Men's Senior A competition. Neither player had it easy, however, in gaining the finals, as all the competitors in this division were of excellent quality.

In the finals, each player pulled off a narrow victory in the first two games. Waldo won the first 21-19, and Berry followed with a 21-20 victory. The tiebreaker started out a close affair, but

in the end, Berry seemed to have more stamina. . . and more shots, winning 15-5. Jack Moskwa won the consolation bracket.

Men's B

"I think I entered the wrong class. These guys are stars." Those were the words of Men's B entrant Pat Garrett, whose legendary namesake obviously had an easier time shooting down Billy the Kid than this present day Garrett had shooting down the other B men.

Pat was right, though; the Men's B play was very good racquetball. There were many time-honored rivalries on the line, and each match was a struggle from beginning to end. Ed Arias emerged as champion with a 21-20, 21-14 victory over Dale Eggert. Steve Schneider defeated Chuck Kennedy for third, while Tom Creal won the consolation honors.

Men's Senior B

With almost every match going to a tiebreaker, Senior B play featured some of the closest contests of the tournament. Gerald Cudar and Frank Lake both survived three-game semifinal matches in order to play a three-game affair of their own for the finals.

Cudar took game one 21-13, but Lake recovered to win game two 21-11. The tiebreaker was exciting, with Lake doing some hard-shooting only to have Cudar hustle to the ball and turn those near roll-outs into points of his own. Cudar's hustle paid off with a 15-6 victory. Third place was won by Tom Monk. First place in the consolation bracket was won by Mike Oester.

Golden Masters

In a round robin format, Al Hanke defeated Al Shively for the gold. Chuck Gudbrandsen took third.

Junior Boys

Three divisions of Junior Boys were played—13-and-under, 15-and-under and 17-and-under. Scott Brechon defeated David Nelson to win the 13-and-under group. Steve Gaetjens took third, and Mark Monje won the consolation. Jack Newman defeated Erik Scheyer to win the 15-and-under division. Stuart Gaetjens was third, and Mike Anasewicz was victorious in the consolation bracket. In the 17-and-under division, Sean Moskwa rolled to a first place win over second place Doug Dvorak. Sven Sampson was third.

The ability of the boys in all three classes amazed and then impressed many of the spectators. They are good, very good, and it won't be too long before these players will be dominating the

Open and A brackets of tournaments.

Women's B

The play in this division can be summed up in one word—competitive. Each contest was close, as the play and styles of all the participants were evenly matched. In the end though, this was the only bracket in the tournament where the top two seeds actually made it to the finals. And there, Mary Precht defeated Wava Wolfe 21-17, 21-12 for the championship.

Third place went to Shirley Gloden, who beat Karen Minsky. First place in the consolation bracket was claimed by Karen Marcheschi.

Men's Master A

Master play is probably as much fun to watch as the Super Bowl, the final game of the World Series or even Marty Hogan versus Mike Yellen. Saul Sandoval, a consistent tournament competitor in any bracket, showed his opponents a collection of soft touches, perfect pinches, two-wall passes and just about everything else on his way to winning the championship. His opponent in the finals was Dan Day, who also showed a great collection of kill shots, but his skill was not up to Saul's—for this tournament anyway. Chuck Martarano won third place honors.

Men's Master B

Take a group of racquetball veterans and put them into a tournament and the result is a flurry of fiercely-fought battles. In the three-game final match, Dorsey Boulton met John Leahy. Boulton took Leahy in the first game 21-10, and then dropped game two 15-21. The tiebreaker saw Boulton get off to a huge lead which forced Leahy to press, causing him to make numerous mistakes. As a result, Boulton won 15-3. Gib Kurtz beat Al Solinger for third. Consolation was won by Jordan Teplitz.

Men's C

All four seeds in this division were gone by the semifinals. In their place were Tim Heuel, Richard Planton, Tom Joy and Johnny Fabbrini. Planton knocked off Joy 21-10, 21-11 and Heuel got by Fabbrini 15-13 to make the finals.

Heuel easily took the championship with a 21-10, 21-18 victory. He utilized a devastating kill shot and a fine array of passes to dominate the action from the opening gun. In third was John Fabbrini, and Richard Engen won the consolation bracket.

Women's C

The quality of Women's C play was

outstanding. If one could compare the Women's C play with that of the C play two years back, he or she would notice about 300 per cent improvement. You have to be good to play in this class.

Kathy Tracy was good, as she utilized a sensational z-serve and a fine variety of power serves in totally mystifying Marilyn Fisher 21-3 and 21-19 to earn the championship. Third place was won by Jan Sarno over Joan Osborne. Betty Brennan won the consolation.

Men's D

With 40 players in this bracket one would expect a lot of blow-outs, but that wasn't the case. So equal in ability were the players that almost all the matches were cliff-hangers.

Coming off two particularly hard-fought matches, Bob Schwartz met up with Tom Knox in the finals. In a terrific match, Schwartz narrowly beat Knox 21-20 in game one. Game two was almost as close, but the result was the same—a Schwartz victory, 21-18. Mike Viola beat Mike O'Conner 21-12, 21-13 to take third. Willie Wilson won the consolation.

Women's D

Exciting racquetball is played at all levels. The spirit and talent on display in the Women's D division should have proved this fact to all the spectators. Lucy Wirth and Judy Lambert matched up in the championship round and put on a good show with each player exchanging 21-13 victories and then battling to a 15-12 conclusion with Lambert on top. In third was Nancy Amaro over Debbie Jepsen. Mimi Rose won the consolation.

Novice

The Novice divisions were for first-time tournament players only. In the Men's Novice, David Kronenfeld dominated the play from his first match through his fifth, the championship match, which he won over Daryl Cooperrider 21-3, 21-7. Kronenfeld was so good that he allowed only one player to score as many as 11 points against him in any one game. Ralph Duda beat Mick Krause for third. Joey LaCognata won the consolation.

The Women's Novice class matched up Chris Evon and Chris Jasky in the last round. The result was a fine match with Jasky taking game one 21-13 and Evon taking game two 21-18. The tiebreaker was close, but Jasky seemed to have more composure and pulled to a 15-10 victory to earn the title. Bonnie Jenkins defeated Jan Hansen to win third, and Susan Barnes won the consolation. ■



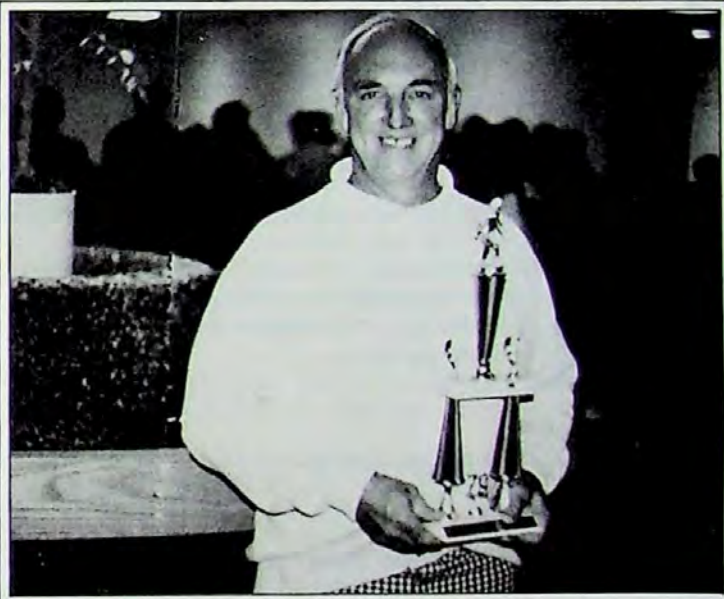
Ed Arias-First Place Men's B.



Scott Berry-First Place Men's Seniors.



Sean Moskwa-First Place Boy's 17-and-under.



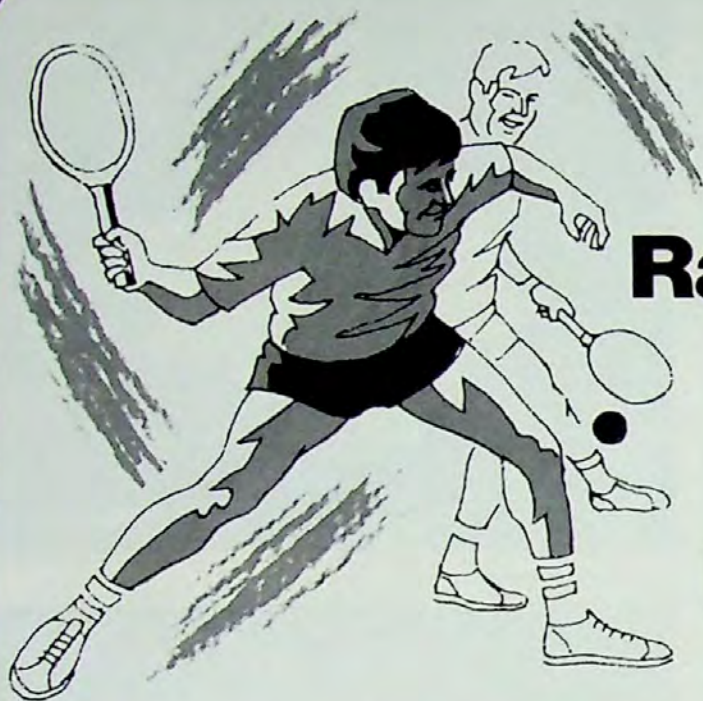
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WINNING POINTS

BACKHAND FOR BEGINNERS

A GUIDE FOR AMATEUR SWINGERS

By Mike Yellen

Mike Yellen, ranked sixth on the pro circuit, is a member of Ektelon's professional player advisory staff.

Without a doubt, the most difficult stroke in racquetball for a beginner to master is the backhand.

In nearly every case, the backhand side is a player's weak side, and consequently, the side that one's opponent will usually play to. Even professional players have weaker backhands than forehands and, for some, it is a real Achilles heel.

In fact, many less experienced players try to avoid the backhand altogether. When their opponents hit to their backhands, they frantically move into

position for a forehand shot. No one, though, will progress very far in the sport if they persist in this gambit. Developing a backhand is a must for any would-be racquetball player. And luckily for beginners, there is an easier way to execute the backhand stroke than the way the top players approach it.

Most professional players have a pendulum-like backhand swing that generates the optimum amount of power and is practically the mirror image of their forehand stroke. If executed correctly, it is the most effective way to hit the ball on the backhand side. Unfortunately, there is little margin for error with this stroke.

To hit the professional backhand, you start your swing with your racquet high

over your head, bringing it down in a sweeping arc. The ball must be contacted just off the front foot and very close to the floor. Too far in front of the foot and the ball flies up high on the front wall. Too far behind and it digs into the floor.

It's the kind of stroke that takes a great deal of time to develop. If you plan to play for money, you will be willing to invest the many hours needed to perfect this shot. But, for beginners or casual players, I think a somewhat easier stroke is in order.

That's why, in my clinics, I always teach a less difficult variation of the pendulum stroke. The key to this shot is to shorten the length of the arc of your swing and to bring the racquet face across your body, instead of sweeping by it. This will reduce the power of your stroke, but it also will conserve the energy you expend and increase your accuracy. These are, I believe, far more important considerations for the beginner or casual amateur player than sheer power.

To hit this easy-to-master backhand, start with your feet pointing directly into the sidewall and your knees bent as with the pendulum stroke. Bring your racquet up behind your head with the face of the racquet pointing toward the sidewall and the butt of the racquet pointing straight down into the floor. Your arm from



The beginning of Yellen's backhand stroke for beginners. Note that the height of the racquet is lower than that of the pendulum back stroke and the stroke much more level.



In Yellen's beginner's backhand stroke, the ball can be contacted at more points in the swing with less chance of error.



The path of Yellen's beginner backhand stroke is more level and the follow-through ends closer to the player's body.

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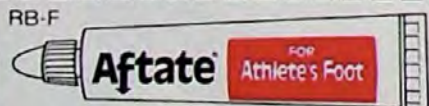
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Mike Yellen begins the pendulum backhand stroke. Note the position of the racquet over his head and facing the back wall.



The follow-through of the pendulum backhand stroke is much higher, wider and more likely to hit an opponent than Yellen's beginner's back stroke.

shoulder to elbow should also be pointing down into the floor, while your forearm should be parallel to the floor.

In order to hit the pendulum stroke, the entire racquet is held above the head with the racquet face pointing toward the back wall and the forearm held straight up and down. If you try to hold your racquet both ways, you will quickly see that my method feels much more comfortable and causes considerably less strain.

Now, keeping your knees bent, bring the racquet face down and around, stepping forward with your front foot and contacting the ball just off that foot. The racquet face will pass across your body just below your waist and should be held parallel to the front wall.

Because your knees are bent, the racquet will contact the ball much lower than what is normally considered "waist height." Of course, with the pendulum swing, the ball is contacted even lower—down around the ankles.

With my stroke, however, there is less chance of digging the ball or sending it high up the front wall when contacting the ball too soon or too late. Since it is an across-the-body stroke, if you do hit the ball wrong, it will either hit the sidewall or a little farther over on the front wall toward the opposite sidewall (depending on whether you hit the ball too soon or too late). Either way, you have a different and probably less effective shot than if you had hit the ball properly. But

at least your shot is not a total disaster, as is inevitably the case when you hit a poor pendulum stroke.

As you drive through the ball, snap your wrist, and then maintain a smooth, even follow-through. You will notice that your wrist was already "cocked" and ready for the snapping motion as a result of the way you originally positioned your racquet to hit the shot.

I find that the best swing for people is the smallest and most contained. Therefore, keep your elbow close to your body. You will find that you don't throw your arm out of joint as with the wide arc of the pendulum swing. You also expend less energy, and there is less danger of your nailing your opponent with your follow-through.

There are two important points to remember when using this stroke. The first is to keep your knees bent so that you will stay low and be able to hit the ball lower on the front wall. The other is to stay loose and execute with a smooth, even stroke so that you will be able to keep your racquet face parallel to the front wall when you contact the ball.

Also, don't try to muscle this shot. It will only lead to mistakes. At the beginning level, it is much more important to concentrate on control than on power.

And finally, don't forget to practice. This stroke may not be as hard as the pendulum stroke, but don't expect to master it on the first try. Work at it. ■

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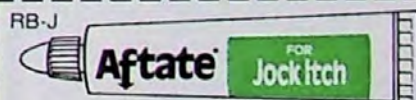
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WINNING POINTS

PRACTICING: PART 1

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO
BE BORED TO BE GOOD**

By Charlie Garfinkel

This is the first of two instructional articles on practicing. This month, Charlie Garfinkel gives some tips for a player practicing alone. Next month, he will discuss a situation in which two players practice together.

Many times I have read about players who claim that they practice various shots two to three hours at a time. Even though this may be true, such a lengthy practice could cause damage to muscles and tendons. It could also get downright boring.

A good practice session need last only an hour. The following represents a practicing routine that I have developed over several years.

Before hitting your first shot, you should do 10 to 15 minutes of stretching and calisthenics. Don't begin your practice until your body feels loose and has broken a slight sweat.

Now, you're ready to start your session. First, hit some balls easily for two to three minutes to get the "feel" of the court. You may want to hit a little longer if you feel that it is necessary. In either case, you will be amazed at how fast you will be able to adjust to the "play" of the ball and the court.

Next, begin hitting a shot that will not exert a great amount of stress on your arm. The ceiling ball is the answer.

And you don't have to hit 500 to 1,000 shots in a row as many pros claim they do. A hundred ceiling balls, divided between the backhand and forehand sides, is more than adequate. Because you hit a backhand ceiling ball more often in a match, you may want to hit 60 to 75 from the backhand side and the rest from the forehand.

When hitting a ceiling ball, there is no right place on the ceiling to aim for. Some players tell you to hit as close to the crack as possible, while others swear that you should aim for the first row of lights or some other magical point. In the

end, though, you have to decide what works for you.

But how do you decide? Well, you practice your ceiling ball until you find a spot on the ceiling that enables you to hit the ball in such a way that a would-be opponent can't return the shot safely unless he hits another ceiling ball. Depending on the play of the court and the liveliness of the ball, this spot could be anywhere from 5 inches to 10 feet

**A good practice
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in a row.**

back of the crack. So keep hitting the ball until you find the exact spot that works for you.

The ceiling ball shots will make your body feel free and loose. You should then do a drill that will help your front court game. I first saw this drill performed in St. Louis in 1970 by the National Doubles Championship team of Mike Zeitman and Alan Hyman.

Both players stood at the service line. They started slowly, just hitting the ball back and forth to each other. Within a minute, they were hitting the ball as hard as they could to each other, both still at the service line. Amazingly, each returned the other's shots.

Even though I'm 6'6", I can't cover the court with one step either way as has been suggested by some of my racquetball-playing cohorts. So I do a drill that is similar to the one performed by Zeitman and Hyman. Standing at the service line, I alternate hitting forehands and backhands. Starting slowly, I increase the tempo until I am alternately hitting the ball as hard as I can off both my forehand and backhand sides.

Even though this drill lasts only five minutes, it greatly speeds up your reflexes, helping you to hit shots that may at first seem impossible to return. You will also be amazed at how fast you can change your grip during this drill.

The next shots that you should practice are your kill shots. Standing in the back court on one side or the other, hit the ball to the front wall. The ball should be hit so that it bounces once and comes off the back wall.

Let the ball drop as low as possible, preferably well below knee level, before you hit it. Your knees should be bent, your racquet back and your eyes on the ball. You should step forward, swing, make contact and finish with a high follow-through.

An important point to remember is that you should hit almost all of your kill shots straight down the line. Attempting to hit kill shots crosscourt might result in an easy setup for your opponent if you don't put the ball away.

Also try to take as many kill shots as you can on your forehand side. This doesn't mean that you should have your posterior touching the left sidewall as you swing. But you have a much better view of where your opponent is if you take a forehand shot. When you hit a backhand, you are momentarily turned away from your opponent.

After hitting about 50 kill shots, you should practice your passing shots. Continue to give yourself shots off the front wall that rebound to the back wall.

Stand in the same position that you used for your forehand kill shot. Aim your shot slightly to the left of center and higher on the front wall. You should hit your shot so that the ball will bounce twice before hitting the back wall in the left corner. Practice your backhand passing shots in the same manner, but try to have the ball land in the back forehand corner.

A shot that is becoming more and more popular is the sidewall pinch shot. This shot is especially effective when you're in front of your opponent, as the ball breaks sharply away from him or her. At

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the same time, it is sometimes too risky to hit this shot from deep back court.

You should hit the ball to the front wall, let it bounce and then be prepared to hit the ball to the sidewall as close to the front wall as you can. Just as with the kill shot, you should attempt to hit the ball as low as possible. The closer you're standing to the sidewall, the better your shot will be.

Most sidewall shots should be hit from three-quarters court on up. Start with your forehand and hit approximately 50 shots. Do the same with the backhand shots.

Finally, remember that the beauty of this stroke is in how well you disguise it. Always make your swing look as if you are hitting a straight kill shot.

Serving is very important. Because of the faster racquetballs in use today, the predominant serves are the z-serves and drive serves. Even though you will use the high lob and medium lob serves occasionally, I wouldn't spend a great deal of time practicing them.

When practicing the z-serve you should move slightly to the left or right of center court in the service area. You may find that you'll have to move a foot or so either way to have the serve effectively land in the deep back court. When your z-serve constantly hits two to three feet from the back wall, it is time to switch to drive serves.

To hit a drive serve, stand in the middle of the court. This will give you maximum court coverage should your opponent return your serve.

You should hit your serve so that the ball will bounce twice before hitting the back wall. Keep the serves as low as possible. If you find you're having trouble placing the serve, adjust your position in the service box.

You may also try to hit some serves that crack just over the short line. However, I find that this is a dangerous serve, because hitting the crack has a great deal of luck involved.

You should usually hit around 35-50 serves all told. I feel that any more than this could cause damage to your arm.

Your total practice session has probably taken about 40 to 45 minutes. The last 15 to 20 minutes you should practice hitting shots off the front wall or a front wall-sidewall combination. Continue, though, to hit the shots that we have discussed. Mix them up. Keep hitting the ball over and over, always trying to kill, pinch or pass. When your hour is done, you will have had an excellent practice session. ■

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Scorecard

RACQUETBALL welcomes all tournaments to report their results. Please list all rounds of each event. Scorecard will report as many rounds of each tournament as space allows.

For reasons of space and clarity, tournament results submitted for listing in "Scorecard" should be arranged as shown in the example below. Entries using this format stand a better chance of being included in the "Scorecard" section.

Men's Open:

Semifinals: John Smith over Peter Smith 21-7, 21-15; John Doe over Peter Doe 21-20, 21-13.

Finals: John Smith over John Doe 21-20, 13-21, 21-16.



Glenn Allen, Okinawa Open Racquetball Champion: "Top Racquetballer on the Rock."

OKINAWA RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS Makiminato Gym Okinawa, Japan

Located about 400 miles east of the Asian mainland in the South China Sea, the tropical island of Okinawa would seem to be an unlikely location for extensive racquetball activity. Don't believe it; racquetball is flourishing among the 40,000 military men, women and dependents who call "The Rock" their home. With over 30 courts scattered around various Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps bases on Okinawa, racquetball fever has struck Americans on the island resulting in the largest concentration of players, facilities and organized tournaments in a foreign country anywhere in the world except Canada.

"The Rock," as Okinawa is fondly referred to, is an island only 65 miles long and 2 to 17 miles wide with an annual 82-inch average rainfall and high year-round temperatures. These somewhat unfavorable climatic conditions have resulted in courts uniquely constructed for the island. In addition to the 15 standard 20 feet x 40 feet x 20 feet indoor

courts, Okinawa racquetballers also utilize outdoor four-wall courts with wire mesh ceilings, three-wall outdoor courts and even some one-walled courts captured from the declining Okinawa tennis population. The end result has been that racquetball has become one of the most popular and fastest growing sports on the island.

On Okinawa virtually all interservice racquetball clinics and tournaments are planned and conducted by the Okinawa Racquetball Association (ORA), which has a membership of over 100 players and supporters. The most recent tournament was the island-wide, Okinawa Racquetball Championships which took place at the Makiminato gym. Over 100 players competed in the tournament, which culminated with the crowning of new island-wide champions in all divisions. Overall, U.S. Navy men and women easily dominated most divisions and took top honors in the tournament.

In the prestigious Men's Open finals, Navy Commander Glenn Allen from the staff of Commander Amphibious Group One assumed the title of "top racquetballer on the Rock" by edging defending champion Lieutenant Commander Kent Allison, another Navy man from Patrol Wing One, in an intensive two-hour match 21-17, 18-21, 11-4. En route to the finals, second-seeded Allen defeated local USO director Bob Paredes 21-12, 21-17, while top-seeded Allison defeated Ken Hines from Tori Station 21-13, 21-16. In Men's Open consolation (a consolation tournament was conducted for first round losers in all events to ensure all participants played at least two matches), Lt. Col. Jim Hayes (USMC) from Camp Foster defeated Army man David Yarde 21-13, 21-10.



Susan Widhalm and Geneva Allen, Finalists in Women's Open Division Memorial Day Tournament. Finals won by Widhalm.

Long rallies and strong backhand shots were commonplace in the Women's Open finals, as Navy nurse Susan Widhalm from the Navy Regional Medical Center defeated Geneva Allen, a Navy wife, 21-4, 21-6. In the semifinals Allen defeated Air Force wife Jenny Webinger 21-3, 21-7, while Widhalm

bested Sharon Guardino from Kadena Air Force Base 21-19, 21-1.

Men's Open Doubles competition featured several long and closely contested matches with several teams possessing the skill and teamwork to go all the way. However, when the frequent kill shots, ace serves and long rallies were completed, the top-seeded Navy team of Glenn Allen and Bob Paredes captured the Okinawa doubles racquetball championship by defeating the Marine Corps team of David Hickson and Jim Maness 17-21, 21-15, 11-4 in a very close match. Semifinals action featured Paredes/Allen besting another USMC team consisting of Tom Pugh and Marc Phillips 21-9, 21-11, while Hickson/Maness easily overcame Les Parker and Jim Tessman 21-6, 21-3. The Doubles consolation title was captured by William Thomas (U.S. Army from Naha) and his partner Jack Dougherty, who defeated the team of Gordy Votruba and Ed Price 21-10, 21-16.

The Men's Intermediate division attracted the largest number of entries and resulted in some of the closest matches. In fact, the final Men's Intermediate match was decided in the third game by one point when Ed Jones, a Marine from Camp Butler, edged James Womack from Tori Station 21-20, 16-21, 11-10. En route to the finals Womack defeated Doug Bryce, a Makiminato Marine 21-12, 21-17 in one semifinal match, while Jones edged Marion Brown, an 18-year-old Air Force dependent, 21-8, 11-21, 11-6. The Men's Intermediate consolation title was won by Ralph Polley of the USMC who defeated Michael Miller of Kadena Air Force Base.

The Men's Novice division featured a variety of inexperienced, beginner-class players. Included in this group was 12-year-old Craig Allen, the youngest player in the tournament, who did well in the early rounds of play, and several young servicemen who had only been playing a few weeks prior to entering the competition. The Novice 1st place trophy was won by another Navy man, Charles Jefferson of the Navy Regional Medical Center, who defeated James Ervin, the USMC director of the Makiminato gym, in an extremely hard-fought match 21-12, 15-21, 11-10. Both finalists had various opportunities to win the match in the tie-breaking third game as the score was tied for several serves at 10 to 10, before Jefferson finally prevailed in the two-hour match. The semifinals of the Men's Novice division saw Jefferson defeating leatherneck Steve Remetz 21-5, 21-17, while Ervin bested Doug McConnelly from Kadena Air Force Base 12-21, 21-18, 11-8. In Novice consolation competition, Cardea defeated Votruba.

The Okinawa Racquetball Championships were planned and directed by Bob Paredes of the Kadena USO who coordinated entries and acted as floor manager during the tournament. The tournament was sponsored by the Okinawa Racquetball Association, which collected no entry fees and provided trophies, Voit balls and towels for all participants. The ORA is currently planning a "members only" summer round robin racquetball tournament, a racquetball marathon, instructional clinics, implementation of an island-wide racquetball challenge board and, in the fall, an all-Okinawa weekend tournament.

4TH ANNUAL WILMINGTON YMCA OPEN RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT Wilmington YMCA Wilmington, North Carolina

Open Division: Quarterfinals: Bailey over

Monfre 21-4, 21-0; Peters over Purser 21-10, 21-7; Wickham over Miller 21-9, 21-19; Harmon over Tillery 11-21, 21-12, 11-10.
Semifinals: Bailey over Peters 21-3, 21-18; Harmon over Wickham 12-21, 21-19, 11-4.
Finals: Bailey over Harmon 21-17, 21-20.
3rd: Wickham over Peters 31-16.
Seniors Division: Quarterfinals: Acosta over Hellsten 21-4, 21-13; Sharpe over Freshwater 21-13, 21-19; Wyman over Howard 6-21, 21-10, 11-7; DeRossett over Gorson 21-17, 21-9.
Semifinals: Acosta over Sharpe 21-6, 21-8; Wyman over DeRossett 21-15, 21-8.
Finals: Acosta over Wyman 21-10, 20-21, 11-1.
3rd: Sharpe over DeRossett 31-17.

**2nd ANNUAL RBMMH INVITATIONAL
 RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT**
 Courts Royal North
 Rockville, Maryland

Men's A: Nathan Mills over Neal Maresca; 3rd, Bruce Avery.
Men's B: Dick Shipman over Bob Fritz; 3rd, Rick Jacobs.
Women's Open: Lisa Gold over Sandy Stankey.
Juniors (coed): John Ware, Jr. over Lisa Gold.

7th DAFFY OPEN
 Family Fitness Center
 Tacoma, Washington

Men's Open Singles: 1st, Wendell Talaber; 2nd, Charlie Carosella; 3rd, Les Gee; cons., Doug Talaber.
Men's B Singles: 1st, Larry Roehr; 2nd, Dave Matheson; 3rd, Ken Fox; cons., Jeff Bannerman.
Men's C Singles: 1st, Mike Leigh; 2nd, Jim Wilson; 3rd, Tom Ferguson; cons., Ed Connolly.
Men's Novice: 1st, Brad Druktenis; 2nd, Gene Kolezynski; 3rd, Robbie Katz; cons., Alan Dennison.
Men's Senior Singles: 1st, Steve Katz; 2nd, Doug Moore; 3rd, Sid Williams; cons., Dan Buehler.
Men's Masters Singles: 1st, Tom Graham; 2nd, Tevie Smith; 3rd, Russ Bertrand; cons., Frank Shineman.
Men's Open Doubles: 1st, Les Gee-Doug Talaber; 2nd, Dave Kieler-Wendell Talaber; 3rd, Rhett Kirk-Mike Smith; cons., Rob Morley-Cliff Gibbons.
Men's BC Doubles: 1st, Jeff Swartz-Dan Owens; 2nd, Tevie Smith-Mike Smith; 3rd, Jim Julich-Paul Thackara; cons., Wayne Sageman-Tom Ferguson.
Women's Intermediate: 1st, Medrice Coluccio; 2nd, Yvonne Calavan; 3rd, Dianne Kijowski; cons., Jean Densen.
Women's Novice: 1st, Liz Trepanier; 2nd, Carol Davis; 3rd, Cindi Munt; cons., Sherry Berglund.
Women's Doubles: 1st, Ann Leuken-Wanda Schaff; 2nd, Medrice Coluccio-Yvonne Calavan; 3rd, Sandi McDonald-Dianne Kijowski; cons., Mary Ellen Stewart-Jean Densen.

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Men's Open: 1st, Dennis McDowell (Court-side III); 2nd, Doug Cohen (JCCA); 3rd, Ken Wong (St. Louis); 1st cons., Dan Cohen (JCCA).
Men's B: 1st, Jeff McDowell (Court-side III); 2nd, Neil Smith (JCCA); 3rd, Corrie Bibb



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Men's A: 1st, Rich Montoya (Allendale); 2nd, Terry Huggans (Wilson) 3rd, Rich Russell (Jefferson, KY); 1st cons., Gary Mills (Spaulding, AR).

Men's C: 1st, Mike Nobis (Quincy, IL); 2nd, David Valinetz (JCCA, IN); 3rd, Larry Simonson (Court House, MN); 1st cons., Randy Blackwell (Blue Ridge, SRC).

Men's Novice: 1st, Mark Dowling (Belleville, IL); 2nd, Bill Purington (Westport & Haz.); 3rd, Tim Timmons (His & Hers, St. L.); 1st cons., Dan Clinkenbeard (SRC-Columbia).

Men's Masters: 1st, Ken Retzer (Alton, IL); 2nd, Dan Davey (Alton, IL); 3rd, Max Scharf (JCCA); 1st cons., Jim Myers (JCCA).

Women's Open: 1st, Pam Prina (Peoria, IL); 2nd, Linda Hogan (JCCA); 3rd, Mary Dee (Town & Country); 1st cons., Del Lorella (St. Louis-Concord).

Women's A: 1st, Gail Burden (Supreme Court West); 2nd, Nancy Snarr (Courtside, IL); 3rd, Paula Morabito (Courtside III); 1st cons., Donna Frederick (Supreme Ct. West).

Women's B: 1st, Nancy Bindbeutel (SRC-Columbia); 2nd, Laura Doak (Ames, IA); 3rd, Margaret Laster (Mt. Vernon, IL); 1st cons., Betty Fisher (Omaha, NE).

Women's C: 1st, Kathy Pogue (His & Hers); 2nd, Jean Herrin (Courtside, IL) 3rd, Dee Ann Koontz (Belleville, IL) 1st cons., Tammy Woods (SRC-Concord).

Women's D: 1st, Kim Aydt (Mt. Vernon, IL); 2nd, Cathy Connelly (SRC-Gladstone); 3rd, Anne Weingold (SRC-Gladstone); 1st cons., Joyce Annett (Courtside III).

Women's Novice: 1st, Nancy Harrison (SRC-Manchester); 2nd, Donna Dorynek (Courtside, IL) 3rd, Grace Gratchner (Courtside III); 1st cons., Doris Duncan (Dorsett-St. L.). ■

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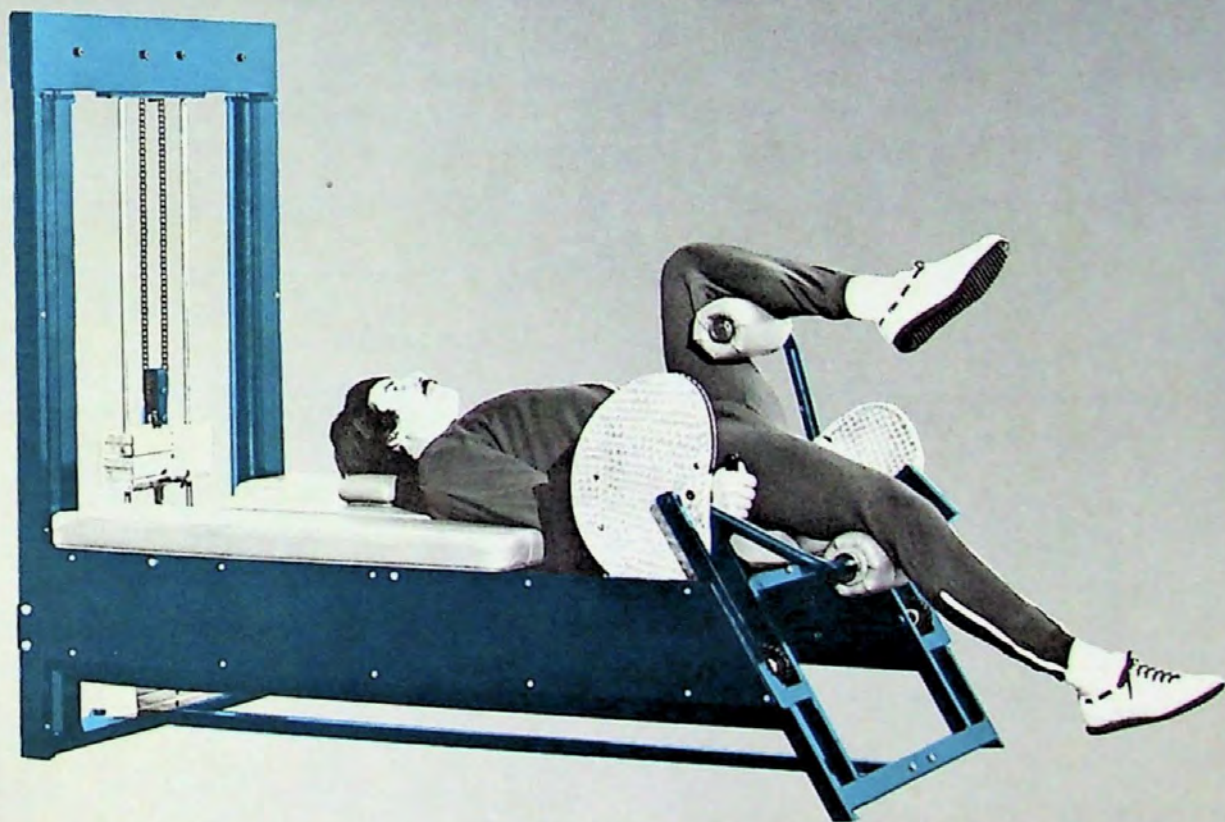
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