

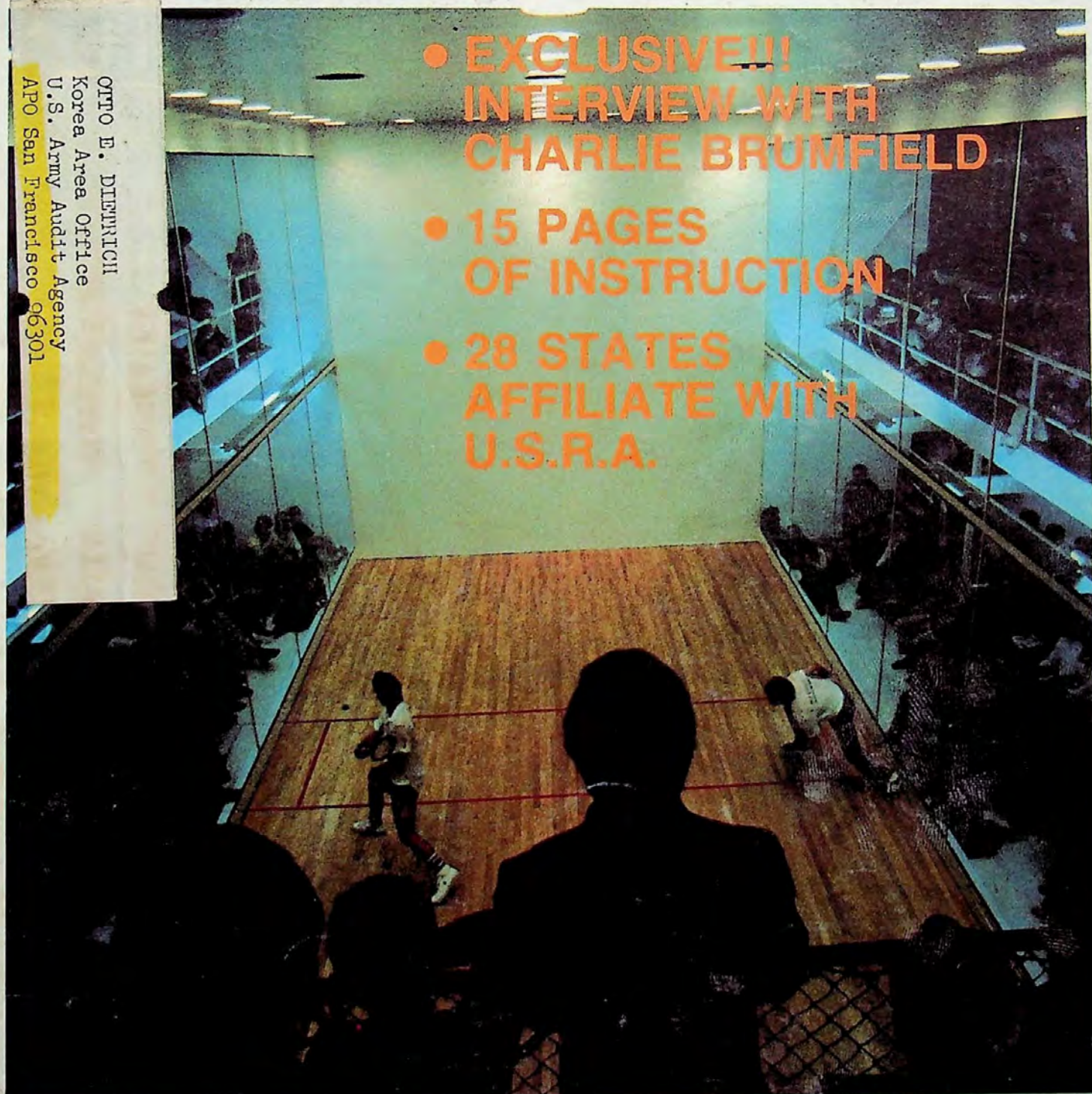
National Racquetball

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 5 • \$1.00 • SEPTEMBER, 1976

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE U.S. RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION

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National Racquetball

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On The Cover . . .

Few photographers can capture the artistic nature of sport and none can accomplish it in racquetball like our very own Arthur Shay. In this cover shot, taken from behind the referee, Art truly holds the beauty of racquetball.
—photo by Arthur Shay

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President and Publisher • Robert W. Kendler
National Director and Editor • Charles S. Leve
National Commissioner and Business Manager • Joseph Ardito
National Executive Coordinator • Terry Fancher
Circulation Manager • Ellen H. Kendler
National Court Construction Consultant • Forest D. Wendt, A.I.A.
Photographic Consultant • Arthur Shay

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Design Director • Milton W. Presler

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Who Is Really Worth What?

I have heard a rumbling within racquetball and it disturbs me. The noise comes from many of our game's greatest players, all of them male.

It seems that some of the men resent the fact that the N.R.C. has diverted \$2,000 per tournament to the women's professional division. These players feel that until the top eight or 16 men can make a sizeable income in pro racquetball, the women should sit on the sidelines, smiling sweetly and admitting, "yes, it's unfair, but the men are bigger and stronger, so they deserve to be richer."

These male stars have done some research, too. They claim that no other sport has tried to award women prize money until the men have been making a living playing. Isn't that interesting.

Wake up, fellows! This is 1976. The fact that everybody else took women in sport for granted does not mean that racquetball will. Quite to the contrary, - we will continue to promote, cover and donate prize money to women's events, - this year, next year and forever after. And I'll tell you why.

For openers, and the most influential reason, our women players have class, - something that many of our men know little about, and show less. I would rather award prize money to the players who show some respect for the sport, the sport's future and the game's officials, than to players who crave self glory second only to the size of their pocketbook.

Personally, I think we should have given women a more equal share of the prize money a lot sooner. Since when are women second class

competitors? Some of us would rather watch women than men. Their poise, their polish and certainly their court etiquette is a joy to watch, along with their tremendous skills.

Can you imagine women demeaning the sport as some of our male pros have with their court conduct? Not on your life, and it's not because they're women, but because they are individuals who care about the sport, its image, and have pride in their court conduct.

Now there are plenty of men players who can be proud of their court conduct. Rather than name names and embarrass the guilty, let's just say they know who they are and all of them are a credit to the sport both on and off the court.

It is unfortunate, however, that these players are victimized by the shenanigans of others, who care less for the sport and more for themselves. What the rowdies on the court don't realize is that they are the ones who hurt racquetball and indirectly will cause the demise of their sport as a viable profession.

National sponsors do *not* want another pro wrestling or roller derby. Neither do we. What we *do* want is the highest caliber of play possible, with winners determined by skill, not theatrics. Sure our sport has room for colorful players, and some color is good for the game. We understand the high degree of emotion that builds up within a player who has dedicated long hours of



training and practicing to develop such outstanding skills. But we also want the nation to recognize and admire those same skills, not the rowdyism and lack of etiquette as shown by some of our stars.

The National Racquetball Club is constantly seeking additional sponsors to inject additional monies into racquetball. The promotion of the sport through professionalism was the foundation upon which we built the N.R.C. And I don't mind telling you that we have a number of firms who are right now taking a hard look at the many advantages of sponsorship.

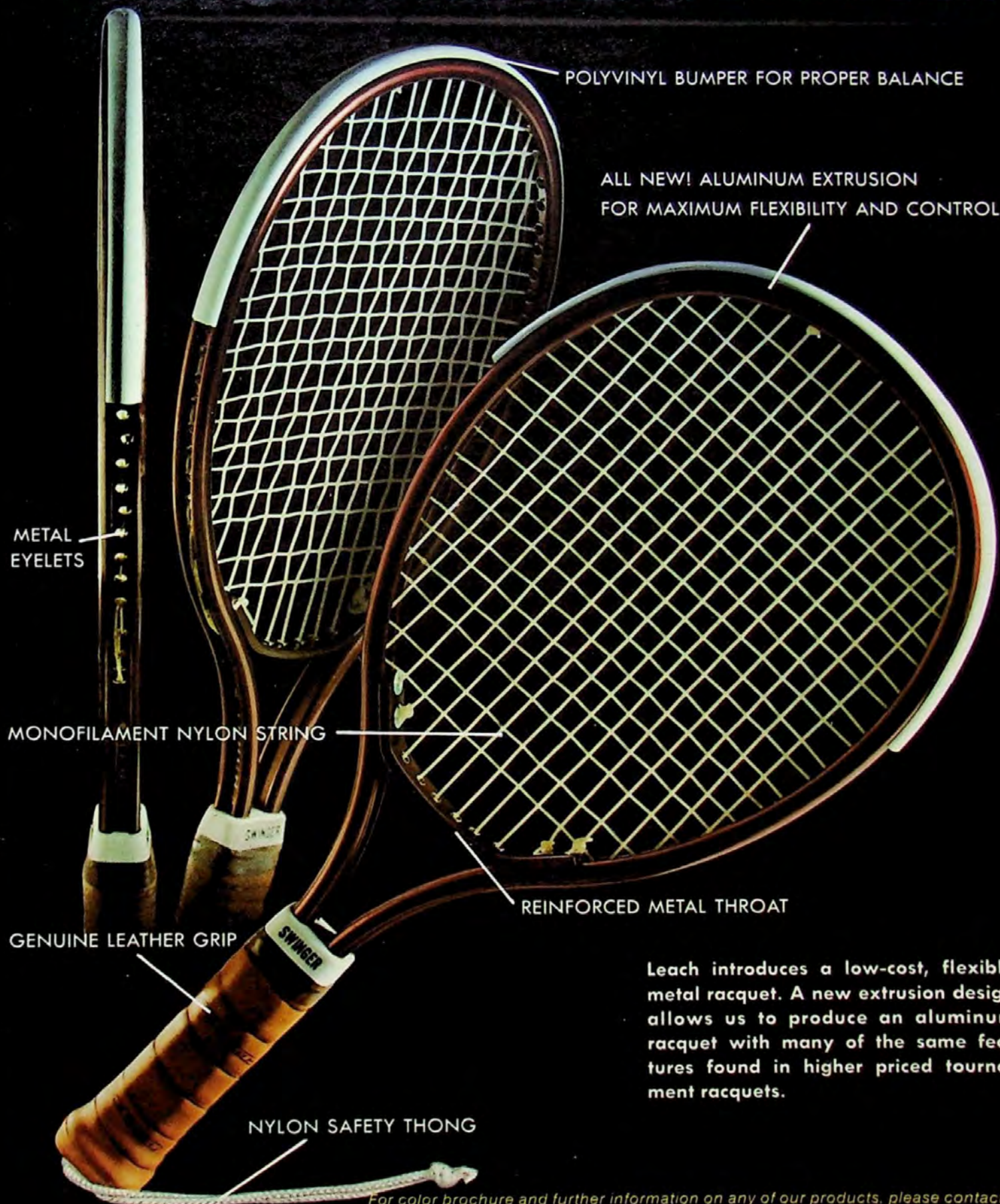
But the pro men's division is cutting its own throat. The men, whether they realize it or not, are signaling the demise of their profession due to their conduct. I would not be at all surprised if the first truly big break in prize money on the national scale went to the women. What national firm would want to be aligned with court conduct as despicable as some of our men show?

Gentlemen, it is our opinion that you can learn a great lesson from your underpaid, opposite sex competitors. If you don't, it could be that in a few years, the *women* will be complaining because we are diverting some of *their* prize money to the men.

Bob Kendler

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We Hope You Enjoy



Our first issue of the 1976-77 racquetball season should become a classic if for only one reason, - part one of a two part exclusive interview with the greatest player in the history of our game, National Champion Charlie Brumfield.

For two and one-half hours the tape recorder whirled as Brum, this reporter and U.S.R.A. staffer Terry Fancher conversed over the entire spectrum of racquetball. If you enjoy the interview only fractionally as much as we enjoyed doing it, you're in for some truly stimulating reading.

Always outspoken, Brumfield has many things to say about racquetball, its history, its evolutions, its players and himself. Slightly egotistical, but seldom straying from the facts of his performances, Brumfield's comments sometimes shock, often bewilder, and always entertain.

Few sports are privileged to have a national champion who truly cares about the future of his game. Brumfield is such a champion. Possessing stimulating insight, Brumfield makes it clear why he is the best, why he believes he will continue to dominate racquetball, and what he plans to do when that domination ends. We hope you like it.

The second reason for such optimism on the reception of this issue is the beginning of a six part instructional series by Steve Keeley, excerpted from Steve's new publication, *The Complete Book of Racquetball*. Published by D.B.I. Books, Inc. of Northfield, Illinois, *The Complete Book of Racquetball* is easily the best instructional book on our sport yet, and the only instructional manual approved by the U.S.R.A.

It has to be exciting. Where else can you have Charlie Brumfield tell you

what to do to help your game, and Steve Keeley show you how to do it? Only in *National Racquetball*.

Another sure bet in this issue, is women pro Jean Sausser's instructional article on *How To Teach Your Child Racquetball*. Currently a pro/manager at the Northbrook, Illinois Sky Harbor Court Club, Jean's experience in teaching racquetball points to the many bright years our sport has, especially if our teaching professionals especially if our teaching professionals all strive toward the excellence Jean has shown in her work.

How can we say enough about the upcoming Seamco-Leach professional tour? Twelve stops, - four more than either of the last two seasons, and prize money topping the \$100,000 mark for the first time, continues to prove that there is a market and a desire for pro racquetball.

Like all new adventures, pro racquetball has started small, but the vibrations around N.R.C. headquarters are entirely good. We feel that this is the season for national television, and that being the case, our eyes are already focused on the 1977-78 year, which promises to be the one that truly vaults racquetball into the public sports limelight.

The tremendous progress of the U.S.R.A.'s state affiliation program is monitored in this issue. The state effort is one of the most exciting and stimulating programs this organization has ever undertaken. As the nation dedicates itself to a cohesive, united effort at promoting racquetball locally, we can only improve upon the great strides already made.

U.S.R.A. National Executive Co-ordinator Terry Fancher has put in many hours of telephoning and corresponding with state representatives across the land, seeking that common bond, and inquiring how we, the national organization can further the goals of each and every state.

"There's an awful lot that has been accomplished already," said Fancher. "But there's still so much to do. Fortunately, the support by the states for our program has been overwhelming, and in every single one of them, the reception to our efforts has been gratifying."

Entry form to the upcoming Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) Pro-Am is contained in this issue. You won't want to miss this spectacular show.

Richard First, Ed Torkelson and Bruno Cerchai have initiated a bold building program to help the greater Miami area begin catching up with the rest of the country. Their Ft. Lauderdale club is but one of a half-dozen planned by the group for South Florida. They too, are promotional minded, and by all signs, The Courtrooms promises to become a solid fixture on the N.R.C. tour.

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The States Are Where It's At



By every conceivable measurement, the 1976-77 racquetball season guarantees to be the most progressive and successful year in racquetball's history. Strangely and fortunately, I seem to say the same thing about this time every year. But the truth of the matter is that racquetball continues to grow at its amazingly fast pace, and we are growing with it.

So much is in store for the racquetball world this year that I could fill many pages with the information. I would like to spend a little time to compliment my newest colleague, Terry Fancher, our National Executive Co-ordinator, for the fantastic job he's been doing since joining our organization just three months ago.

Terry has already become one of the guys around the office and the ease with which he assumed a great deal of responsibility has been impressive. Terry's primary role, as most of you already know, is to co-ordinate and organize the state association affiliates across the nation.

This is not an easy task. It involves long hours on the phone and in correspondence contacting hundreds of players and groups, to explain the U.S.R.A.'s position of helping the state associations. It is a new function of U.S.R.A., but a long-needed and desired one.

The fact that over 25 states elected to affiliate with the U.S.R.A. in Terry's first six weeks at 4101 Dempster, shows Terry's expert handling of the situation, the desire to affiliate by the states, and the progressive, bold and helpful program of the U.S.R.A.

I would like to salute Terry Fancher for not only his efforts, but for the progress he has shown on our behalf, as well as the progress that has been shown on behalf of the state

racquetball associations. We anticipate having over 45 of the 50 states affiliate by the end of the year, and as every one of them knows, as the future grows brighter, so will the benefits.

The other main reason that the state organizations are so important to the U.S.R.A. is to further the promotion of amateur racquetball. The N.R.C. has done great things in the professional arena, but unfortunately, the amateurs have not been given their fair share of the promotion the past few years. We intend to turn that around.

However, to promote amateur racquetball on the local level, we must have the support of the state organizations. We can only do so much from the national office, and as we all realize, we cannot possibly know what is best in each and every location across the nation.

Instead, we need the help from state and local associations. We need their input, their ideas, and yes, their criticisms. We need to know what they need from the national association before we can even hope to give it to them. Hopefully, with as many as 40-45 state associations, (and one day, believe me, it will be 50) we can form a united effort to help each other further promote racquetball. And that's what it's all about.

The amateur player is our lifeblood. With him we all grow, and the sport continues its meteoric path forward. With the amateur players, by virtue of their state associations, behind us, we cannot fail. We *will* make racquetball "the sport of the 80's."

You know, I keep a little checklist in my office here at racquetball's headquarters. I started the list three

years ago when I first joined the U.S.R.A. And each year I have been checking off goal after goal once accomplished.

First, there was the effort to gain the confidence and support of the racquetball world, from novice player to manufacturer, - goal achieved. Then there was the effort to organize and sanction a cohesive, exciting, successful professional tour, - goal achieved. Next we wanted to make *National Racquetball* a polished, impressive and attractive magazine, both informative and helpful, - goal achieved. Then we wanted to begin a bold National Juniors program - fun and competitive, - goal achieved. Now, the state associations, - goal achieved.

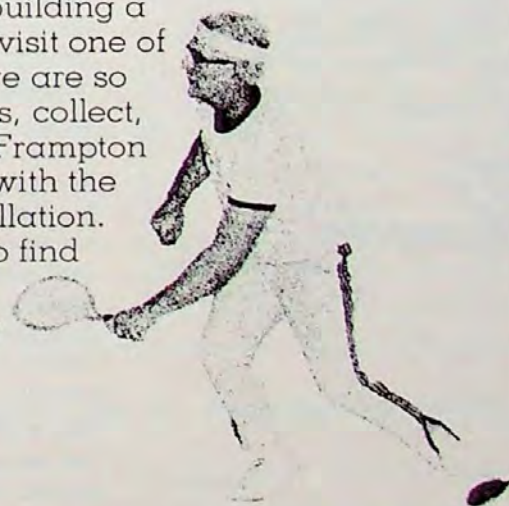
And one of the biggest goals, to do all this without raising our membership dues one penny from the annual \$3 fee, - and of course, goal achieved.

Who are the people responsible for these successes? The most influential have been you, the U.S.R.A. member. It has been your guidance, desires and help that has enabled our staff and our friends to put together a program to benefit all of racquetball.

All the Bob Kendlers, Joe Arditos, Bud Leachs, Al Mackies, Chuck Leves, Charlie Drakes, and Terry Fanchers cannot do the job alone. For it takes the support of each and every one of you reading these words. YOU buy the products; YOU support the association; YOU participate in the tournaments; and YOU have been the force behind the success of racquetball. Nobody else.

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Historical observances such as the Bicentennial celebration are designed to remind us of our heritage. The result, according to theories on the subject, should be a massive effort to preserve or recapture some of the best features of the past. Whether or not the Bicentennial will have the desired effect on American society remains to be seen, but there is evidence that it is working on at least one front.

When Federal agencies were asked several years ago to begin devising special programs for our 200th anniversary, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports decided on an intensive campaign to increase adult participation in sport. Special advertising materials were developed, and cooperative projects involving sport governing bodies and private business were launched. The idea was that we would recapture some of our traditional energy and strength by engaging in vigorous physical exercise.

Americans obviously are responding to this idea. The number of joggers and cyclists one encounters, the fantastic growth of tennis, racquetball, skiing and other sports, and the tremendous market for exercise attire and equipment of various kinds all indicate there is a genuine physical fitness revival in progress in this country.

Many of our newly-energetic citizens are wearing the Presidential Sports Award emblem, which is becoming

recognized as the badge (there's also a pin and a certificate) of the participatory sports enthusiast.

You don't have to be expert in your favorite sport to earn the Presidential Award, but you do have to participate approximately three times a week (requirements vary slightly for some sports) over a period of four months. In other words, you have to make a commitment to physical activity.

We think the Award is an excellent idea and hope that the end of the Bicentennial year will find several million Americans wearing it. Anyone aged 15 years or older can get a free personal log book and qualifying standards for all 43 Award sports simply by writing to: Presidential Sports Award, P.O. Box 129, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10019. Upon fulfillment of the qualifying requirements and submission of a \$3 check or money order (this program doesn't use tax monies), you will receive your Presidential Sports Award.

Our enthusiasm for this program doesn't stem exclusively from our vested interest in sport. After 200 years, we think it's about time Americans realized that sport can make significant contributions to our physical and emotional health, and to our enjoyment and appreciation of life. What better birthday present could we give ourselves than a trim, fit citizenry filled with that spirit of adventure which once was so closely identified with this country?

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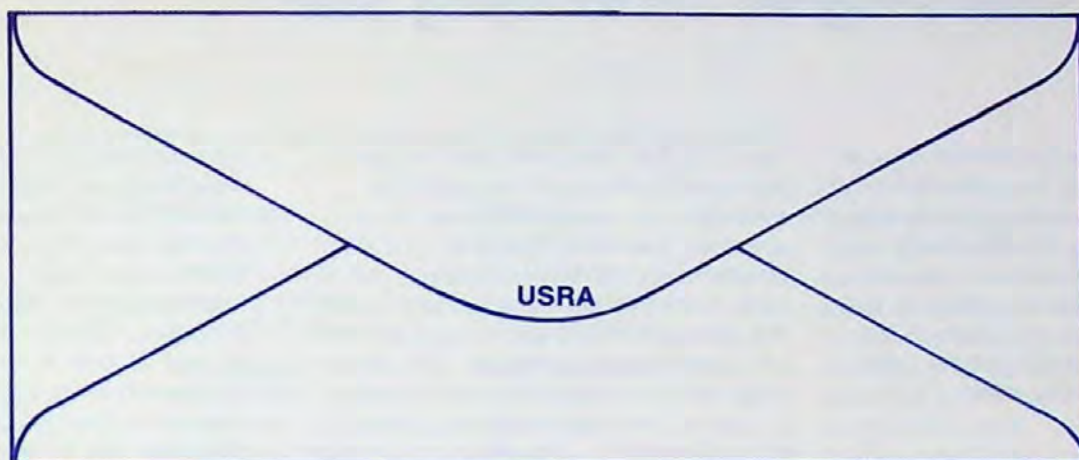


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LETTERS



Dear Chuck:

Many thanks for your generous supply of racquetball info. It helped to kick off a successful opening day and initiated a lot of interest to newcomers to our wonderful sport.

Thanks again.

Alicia Moore
Aptos, Cal.

Dear Chuck:

Thanks for the nice words and your continuing interest in me as a professional and as a person. It certainly is a two-way street; you and the people who run the U.S.R.A. made a very positive impression on me. My interest in racquetball continues to grow; have been playing on occasion and learning more about the game.

I too am hopeful that we will be able to work together as television coverage of the tour grows. Thanks again for your encouragement. Best regards to Bob Kendler, Joe Ardito, and the entire staff.

Fred Lewis
San Diego, CA

Sirs:

As previously promised, here is my 'under separate cover' list of recommendations concerning televised racquetball.

1. The glass through which the camera aims should be cleaned before starting, and hopefully some method can be found to keep it clean.
2. Slow motion instant replays tend to accentuate the instinctive ballet-like movements. Also the viewer can follow the flight of the ball more easily. Tape should be no problem. Live broadcasts will present a challenge.
3. Distasteful as it may be, a change of ball color should be considered.
4. Try to recruit announcers who understand the game (particularly the rules) but can resist the temptation to talk continuously.
5. Several different camera perspectives would be more interesting. Your all glass enclosure should partially solve the problem.
6. Devise some sort of wide angle picture which shows both contestants, the ball, and the shot area.
7. "Mike" the referee, so that his explanations and rulings will be clearly heard by the viewer, in first person vernacular.

No doubt most (if not all) of these items have been considered by you, and we all realize it is easier to say "Something is wrong with televised racquetball", than it is to suggest corrective measures, but I have tried. (Please try to not let this letter destroy my credibility.)

Probably the incident I am about to relate would not come across right on TV, but to me it was very interesting. I was sitting in the lounge area of the AHC watching the Mike Zeitman TV interview. So was Steve Strandemo. His reaction and comments in rebuttal to Zeitman's remarks were quite memorable. Especially after their match.

For more than two years I have read every article in every issue of your magazine. It seems that somewhere along the line an 'elbow' discussion was to be forthcoming. I never saw it. Or at least I don't remember reading it. My elbow primarily, but in fact my entire arm, between wrist and shoulder bothered me two years ago, and it still does. Not only that, but my shoulder hurts too at times. Attempting to hit forehand ceiling shots really racks up the arm. Improper technique no doubt.

Incidentally, in my opinion, the man who most closely personifies the ideal racquetball player (physical appearance) is Craig McCoy. He should be great.

Long Live THE Sport!

Kenneth A. Williams
Imperial Beach, Cal

U.S.R.A. State Program Off to Flying Start

That great, resounding cheer you all have been hearing the past few months has come from virtually every state in the union. It is the cheer of appreciation and optimism voiced by representatives of racquetball to the newest and boldest program of the U.S. Racquetball Association, - the formation of U.S.R.A. state associations.

Spearheaded by the U.S.R.A.'s newest staff member, National Executive Co-ordinator Terry Fancher, 45 of the 50 states to date have been contacted to initiate an affiliation and promotional program designed to enhance the growth of racquetball throughout the nation.

Terry has been telephoning and writing state racquetball representatives daily for the past two months. His discussions with nearly 150 active and interested people has been both revealing and rewarding. State associations range from the neophytes to the highly organized, independent bodies.

The primary purpose of the U.S.R.A.'s surge into the state association arena is to provide the states with leadership and guidelines to enable each state to better promote racquetball in their own area. The program of affiliation with the U.S.R.A. serves these purposes.

Racquetball's organization has come a long way since that first national tournament at the Milwaukee J.C.C. in 1968, where veteran paddleball and newly developed "paddle racquet" players convinced Bob Kendler to add a racquetball section to Ace magazine, the official handball publication.

Yet a void has always existed in the development of a cohesive, and strong national promotional effort on behalf of the states. The N.R.C. has made tremendous strides in the promotion of professional racquetball, the traveling showcase of the sport. Now its "sister" organization, the U.S.R.A. is turning its attention to doing an even better job helping improve racquetball on the state level.

The U.S.R.A. believes that the heart and soul of the sport lies with the average club player, whether he or she may play at a Y.M.C.A., J.C.C., private club, military installation, or park district facility. This person is still the strength of the game, and should be supported accordingly. The player must have a strong state association to turn to for local leadership, news and information. These state chairmen and committees, of course, are voluntary positions, given free in the interests of the sport.

Outline of the program

The U.S.R.A.'s approach has been an initial telephone call to people known from personal meetings, letters or referrals. It was during these initial contacts that the great need for this program became so apparent. As word got around that the U.S.R.A. had begun initiating a state association/affiliation program, we actually doubled our list of volunteers because they sought us out.

After briefly discussing the current racquetball situation in each particular state, we were able to describe our intentions and goals for national affiliation and what assistance we could give. At the same time, we expounded the advantages of the state joining the U.S.R.A., and working with the national association.

One extremely important point which the U.S.R.A. has continually stressed is that we are not attempting to control racquetball from our headquarters or dictate to an association as to how to run racquetball in their state. There are some reciprocal qualifications before affiliation can be completed, but they are minimal.

A brief outline of the program, which we feel is the single, most important step toward the continuing progress and growth of racquetball, is as follows.

1. An information packet is sent to the state association chairman or interested party.
2. The packet contains our magazine, rule book, draw sheets, scorecard, bumper

stickers and a cover letter describing our plans and goals.

3. To sanctioned tournaments we provide free of charge rule books, draw sheets, scorecards and magazines for promotional purposes. The bumper stickers we sell at cost to the states.
4. After each state has had a chance to discuss of vote on affiliation, we again make telephone contact to answer any questions and discuss final plans. We begin our affiliation with a \$100 donation to the state association to help with expenses.
5. A complete information booklet is then sent out, which includes guidelines on how to promote the game, how to run a tournament, how to make a draw, suggested committee structure, a sample constitution and by-laws and how to obtain and improve referees.

To date, the following states are now affiliated with the U.S.R.A. and will be implementing many of our programs: Connecticut, Illinois, Nevada, Washington, Iowa, Florida, Mississippi, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Oklahoma, North Carolina, South Carolina, Vermont, Kentucky, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Maine, Wisconsin, Michigan, California, Oregon, New Mexico, Minnesota, Nebraska, Idaho.

That adds up to 27 affiliates in a two month span. Many other states are still voting and discussing our proposals with a decision expected soon, but after this magazine's deadline.

"We are thrilled with the reception we've received," said Fancher. "We knew the job wasn't getting done on the state level, but we never realized just how great the need and desire on the part of the states was."

Arkansas

Bob Blake
2201 Braden
Jacksonville 72076
501-982-6209

California

Dr. Chuck Hanna
3303 Ruffin Rd. #G
San Diego 92123
714-278-6342

Connecticut

George & Gerri Rudysz
11 East Lawlor St.
New Britain 06051
201-753-7921

Florida

Frank Johnson
7501 N.W. 66th St.
Miami 33166
305-925-8173

Idaho

Gary Wight
305 Balsam Dr.
Idaho Falls 83401
208-523-7517

Illinois

Fred Blaess, Tom Street
1701 Carmen Dr.
Elk Grove Village 60007
312-439-3030

Iowa

Jerry Lucas
526 Eicher
Keokuk 52636
319-524-1651

Kentucky

David Fleischaker
16 Fincastle Bldg.
Louisville 40205

Louisiana

Sanford Comeaux (acting)
P.O. Box 3644
Lafayette 70502
318-984-5753

Maine

Ken Astor, Kevin York
170 Rt. 1
Falmouth
207-781-4281

Michigan

Chuck Guinther
1932 Kuerbitz Dr.
Lansing 48906
517-372-5784

Minnesota

Bob Adams, Sr.
7600 Park Lawn Ave.
Edina 55435
612-835-6515

Mississippi

Dr. C.T. Carley
213 Windsor
Starkville 39759
601-323-4915

Nebraska

R. W. Kincade
1025 Lamplighter Lane
Lincoln 68510
402-489-3419

Nevada

Dan Seaton
3727 Centennial Cir.
Las Vegas 89120
702-386-4011

New Jersey

Doug Clark
Linden Hill Apts. 534
Lindenwold 08021
609-627-4926

New Mexico

Gary Mazaroff
Route 9, Box 513
Albuquerque 87105
505-821-0536

North & South Carolina

Sonny Harmon
316 Huffman Hill Rd.
Burlington, NC 27215
919-227-1161

Oklahoma

Clayton Rahlfs
4127 S. Cincinnati
Tulsa 74105
918-749-9081

Oregon

Reed Fitkin
2372 Rockwood Ave.
Eugene 97405
503-687-8384

Pennsylvania

Jim Pruitt
304 Minor St.
Emmaus 18049
215-965-6645

Texas

Dewey Strickland
201 Vanderpool
Houston 77024
713-868-3340

Vermont

Bill Burnett
Woodland Shores Tr. Pk.
Winooski 05404
802-863-5627

Virginia

Ed Remen
32 Penny Lane
Sterling 22170
703-430-2552

Washington

Douglas A. Wilson
5817 57 Ave., N.E.
Seattle 98105
206-623-4320 Ext. 31

Wisconsin

Bob Kennan
P.O. Box 203
Wales 53183
414-646-3607

Future Plans

The ultimate goal of the U.S.R.A. is to have 50 (or more if some states need additional promotion) well-organized state chapters, all working independently, but in conjunction with the U.S.R.A. to achieve the common goal: the betterment of racquetball on a national basis.

Eventually we see each state publishing a newsletter to provide additional information to state players. This newsletter would be supplemental to *National Racquetball* magazine and would be sent not only to individual state members, but to heads of all states, to ensure that all players are kept abreast the most recent racquetball developments.

Another major undertaking is to ensure that all state-sanctioned champions will have a round-trip airline ticket to the U.S.R.A. National Championships each year, paid for by the U.S.R.A. This would make our Nationals the ultimate in true representation of all the states. Our hope on this score is for yearly inter-action among the players and we, of course, encourage all amateur players to enter the annual National Championships.

We would give each state their choice of sending their state open champ, state junior champ, or state women's champ. The National Juniors tournament is being scheduled for the summer of 1977 and promises to be another superb tournament and even more importantly, good, clean fun for racquetball's youngsters.

Magazine Coverage

National Racquetball magazine will also have a section devoted entirely to the states. Included will be available space for news items and new promotional ideas. Additionally, coverage for feature articles concerning "what's happening" at the state level such as fund-raising, competition within or between states,

R. B. Aids Hockey Player

election of officers, human interest, and suggestions as to how the state organizations can better serve their members, will be provided in *National Racquetball*.

A listing of upcoming tournaments will also be included in this section. These will primarily be closed tournaments because the listing of open events will be posted in the *Upcoming Events* section of our publication. We encourage the states to send us this information as far as 90 days in advance to ensure timely publication.

We want to stress that *National Racquetball* is a magazine for the members of U.S.R.A. Any articles or ideas that you, the individual member feels will improve our publication, will be welcomed with delight.

New Affiliates

You will note on these pages a list of state representatives, their addresses and phone numbers. You probably will recognize many of the names, for these are people who are dedicated to racquetball, and are willing to sacrifice their time and energy in order to ensure the future well being of our sport.

How to get involved

If you want information on your state association, contact the representative listed. We are in the process of finalizing affiliation with many more states and we'll continue to update our listing in each issue of *National Racquetball*.

If you want to become involved in any way with your state association, contact your state representative. All state chairmen are encouraged to find a way to incorporate all interested individuals into their structure. We do not intend for our state chairmen or chapters to be figureheads, but rather active leaders. It should again be stressed that the work is voluntary, but can be greatly rewarding.

Those players who are dissatisfied with the organization within a particular state, or upset with a certain area of administration, must realize that the best way to help remedy the situation is to become involved to help change things for the better.

If your home state is not listed above and you are or know of somebody who truly cares about the future of racquetball and is willing to work on behalf of our sport, let us know. We will be happy to contact that person and spell out even further the advantages of affiliation with the U.S.R.A.

We are always pleased to hear from people who have racquetball at heart. Recommendations for state chairmen have been a great source of help for the various states. Input from the states and our readers have led to changes in equipment, rules, and over-all improvement of racquetball. Write us or your state chairman.

What we want to avoid is having 50 splinter groups or state associations all going in 50 different directions. Racquetball is growing rapidly and unification toward some common goals will enhance the productivity of our sport not only within, but in the eyes of the public as well.

We look forward to your comments.

Dean Curcio is 17-years-old and has already chosen his profession, - professional hockey. A Chicago native now living in Cypress, Cal., the high school senior is also known as "La Beef" on the ice. *La Beef* has signed a contract with the Chicago Black Hawks.

So, why is this news for racquetballers? Dean worked this past summer for the Chicago Health and Tennis Clubs as a weight training instructor. At the club he was able to concentrate on his off season training, a program that includes heavy doses of racquetball.

"I'd play racquetball 365 days a year if I could," says Dean. "I've played everything from lacrosse to rugby and I feel that racquetball is the best sport for co-ordinating the body and the mind."

A natural right-hander, Dean is a southpaw on the ice, blasting his slap shots from the left side. He feels very strongly that racquetball not only is a great conditioner for hockey, but aids his hockey game as well.

"With the puck traveling at speeds of up to 140 miles per hour, the eye-hand co-ordination needed in hockey is similar to that in racquetball," says Curcio.

As a conditioner, Dean says he feels racquetball is good for lateral movement, balance, footwork, and self-confidence on your feet. Additionally, he says, racquetball

Curcio letting go with his booming slap shot. A plug to racquetball for its development.



FEATURE

Payment For Articles

Do you know a better way to teach a particular phase of racquetball? Have you experienced something first hand within our sport that you would want to share with the entire nation? Taken any good pictures of racquetball lately? Have any health tips that could help somebody's game?

If you possess or are capable of writing any of the above, *National Racquetball* will be happy to accept contributions from our readers.

Payment will be made, on publication at the following rates:

\$200 for Instructional Articles.

Contributions must be specific, well documented with drawings or photographs, on a particular phase of our sport and how to improve it. Potential contributors should read any of Ken Wong's instructional series (November, 1975, January, March, 1976) as a good example. Minimum length: 2,000 words.

\$200 for First Person Articles.

Contributions must be actual, true, original unpublished story about something that happened to you or you witnessed within racquetball. It can be humorous, dramatic or just plain interesting. Potential contributors should read David Northcutt's *A Game With Charlie Brumfield* (May, 1976) as a good example. Minimum length: 1,000 words.

\$200 for Health Articles. Contributions must be factual, documented and related to how to improve or maintain your health in or with racquetball.

Articles dealing with diet, conditioning, safety, cardio-vascular improvement, or psychological areas are particularly desirable. Dr. P.E. Allsen's

Racquetball Increases

Cardiovascular Fitness (March, 1976) is a good example. Minimum length: 750 words.

\$50 for pictures, cartoons or drawings.

The material may be dramatic, humorous, or singularly interesting. It must be original and unpublished. Regular tournament photos, unless containing an unusually high degree of originality will not be considered. All photos must be black-and-white glossy, and any cartoons or drawings must be camera ready.

The contributor's name and address and the date the contribution is sent should be on all items. Compositions must be type-written, double spaced, and are subject to revision, alteration, correction or rejection by the editor. **CONTRIBUTIONS CANNOT BE ACKNOWLEDGED OR RETURNED.**

Please address contributions to The Editor *National Racquetball*, 4101 Dempster Street, Skokie, Illinois 60076.

helps his ability to execute difficult maneuvers on the ice.

Outside of hockey and racquetball, television comes next in the life of Dean Curcio. He was a sports reporter for his high school closed circuit television station, a role that led to further experience on public television reporting high school sporting news.

By residing in California the past few years, Dean has witnessed the amazing growth of racquetball in that area, the number one market in the nation. When pressed for an answer as to why Southern California leads the way in racquetball, La Beef had some ready answers.

"The difference is in the school systems," he said. "Many of the California public schools have outdoor three-wall courts, and they're always filled. Racquetball is taught in physical education classes, - it's made an integral part of the school's recreational sports curriculum."

Looking for every bit of information to help his hockey game, Dean attends the Los Angeles Kings home games to chart moves (fakes, feints, etc.) to use on the ice.

"I feel you could do the same with racquetball," he said. "There's always something to be learned from other players."

Another common bond between racquetball conditioning and hockey conditioning is weight lifting, both for strength and endurance. Dean prefers lighter weights with many, fast repetitions for racquetball and heavier weights for hockey. Endurance is the primary goal in racquetball.

The personable youngster is headed for the Black Hawks' St. Catharines, Ontario minor league training camp this fall, and fully expects to gradually break in with the major leaguers.

"I've seen too many players try and rush their development," he maintains. "When they want me, I want to be ready."

In the meantime, he works on his slap shot, - in a racquetball court.

The Pass Shots

Editor's Note – The following article and five subsequent articles are excerpted from Steve Keeley's recent publication, *The Complete Book Of Racquetball*. The book, endorsed by the U.S. Racquetball Association, is published by D.B.I. Books, Inc., 540 Frontage Rd., Northfield, Illinois 60093. *The Complete Book Of Racquetball* sells for \$7.95 and in our opinion is the finest instructional manual on racquetball published to date. This segment is from chapter six: Pass Shots.

The pass is exactly what its name implies: it is a shot which is hit *past*, as opposed to at, the opponent. It is sometimes a defensive, and sometimes an offensive play. The pass may be used *defensively* to move one's rival out of center court position. An example of this is hitting a cross-court pass off a drive serve which has come to your forehand. You drive the serve past the opponent's backhand and he is sent scurrying. In this instance, the opposition is forced to retreat deep into the backhand back court, though you realize he will be able to make a play on the ball, and you subsequently occupy the now vacant center court. The pass can be a potent *offensive* weapon also. Many times you will catch your opponent in the act of "poaching," or anticipating, one of your kill shots. Frequently it is possible to outwit his strategic anticipation by blasting the ball by him as he is leaning in total commitment toward the front wall. Both as a defensive bread-and-butter shot and as an offensive threat, the pass is a mandatory component of any serious racquetballer's game.

There are two types of passes, or drives, which can be initiated from the backhand side of the court, and another two from the forehand side. That is, there are four different possible drives: the backhand down-the-line, forehand down-the-line, the backhand cross-court and forehand cross-court.

Down-The-Line Passes

The basic forehand and backhand down-the-liners are diagrammed in figures 1 and 2. Synonymous with the R.A.W. ball (run along the wall ball), the down-the-line pass is almost always utilized on the left or *backhand* side of the court. (As usual, it is

assumed two right-handed players are involved.) Although beginning players should not entirely discount the feasibility of the pass hit along and parallel to the forehand sidewall, such a drive must be caressed with utmost precision or a set-up to the opponent's lethal forehand will ensue. In concurrence with this, rarely does one witness a professional player intentionally hitting the forehand down-the-line, although more than one pro has been observed walking casually away after aiming for a low kill shot in the forehand corner only to have the ball rise, hit the front wall three feet high and run along the right wall for a winner.

A much more effective down-the-line pass is hit along and parallel to the backhand sidewall, and the reader is urged to devote a majority of his pass

practice time to this particular shot. This, the backhand R.A.W. ball, is most often struck from fairly deep in the backhand back court. The stroke is the model backhand. The height of contact of racquet on ball is *knee to navel high*, and the ball should contact the front wall 1-3 feet from the left sidewall. That is, it should travel in parallel and close to the left sidewall in its forward movement, rebound off the front wall 2-4 feet up from the floor and slide back along the same sidewall to backcourt. Note in the illustrations (figure 3) the point of racquet contact and the other important stroke mechanics of the backhand R.A.W. ball. Try it yourself.

Now that you have attempted a few down-the-line passes with the backhand, you have no doubt walked away disgruntled by the fact that your

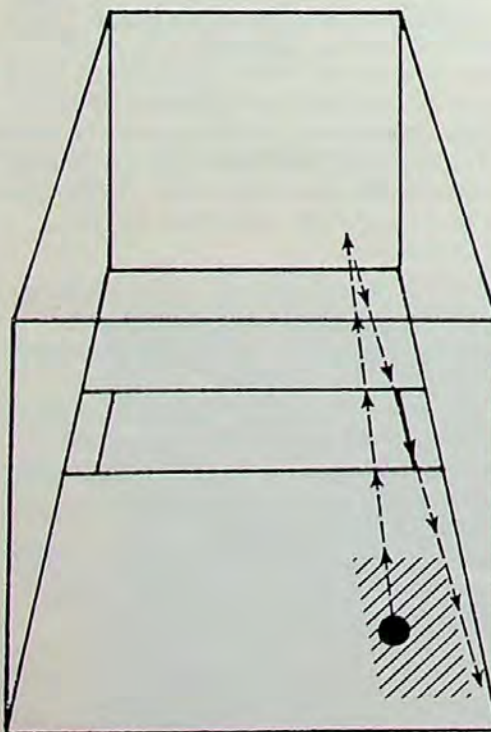


Fig. 1 – Forehand down-the-line pass.

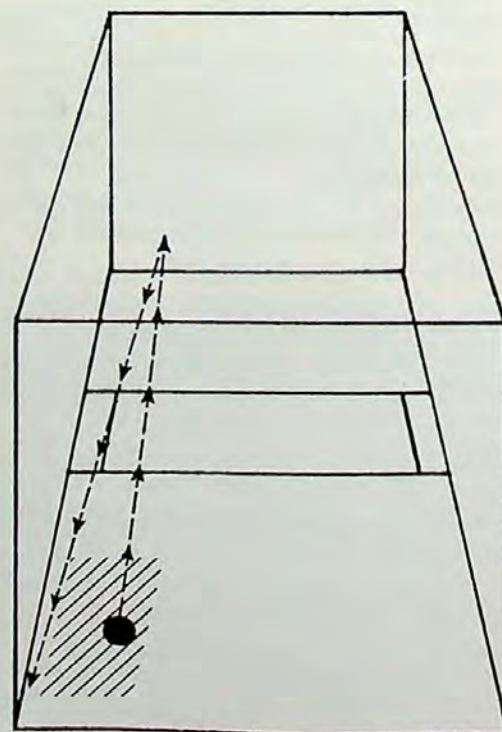


Fig. 2 – Backhand down-the-line pass.



Fig. 3
THE BACKHAND PASS.
The mechanics of the pass stroke are essentially those of the regular backhand stroke.

shots rebound off the front wall alright, but they unfortunately do not parallel the left sidewall for perfect "wallpaper" shots. Instead, your shots carom off the front plaster only to strike the left sidewall at about mid-court. Your balls thus ricochet into the middle of the court for potential set-ups for happily salivating opponents. There is a simple secret—though difficult to master—to making the ball slide along rather than popping out off the side wall. The key is that the ball must be hit with *spin*, either with top spin (similar to the way a tennis player comes over the ball with his racquet) or with backspin (much as a squash player chops down on the ball in order to straighten its path along a sidewall). These two types of English may be better comprehended by referring to figure 4. Most seasoned racquetball players employ the backspin method, although the inexperienced individual is encouraged to experiment with both. Now attempt a few more down-the-line passes utilizing the paralleling effect of top or bottom spin.

Even with the use of spins, it is difficult to slam wallpaper drives down the

backhand lane. The first player who masters the backhand R.A.W. ball will be the next to join Muehleisen, Serot, and Brumfield in the legion of racquetball super-heroes. And whoever learns to consistently execute this elusive drive shot with exactness will have done so because of spin.

Practice the exercises listed at the termination of this chapter, until at least with moderate consistency and accuracy, you are able to hit picture-perfect backhand R.A.W. balls. That is, strive for a drive struck knee high from about three-quarter court which rebounds approximately 3 feet high off the front wall and then skims along the left sidewall until it dies at the backwall.

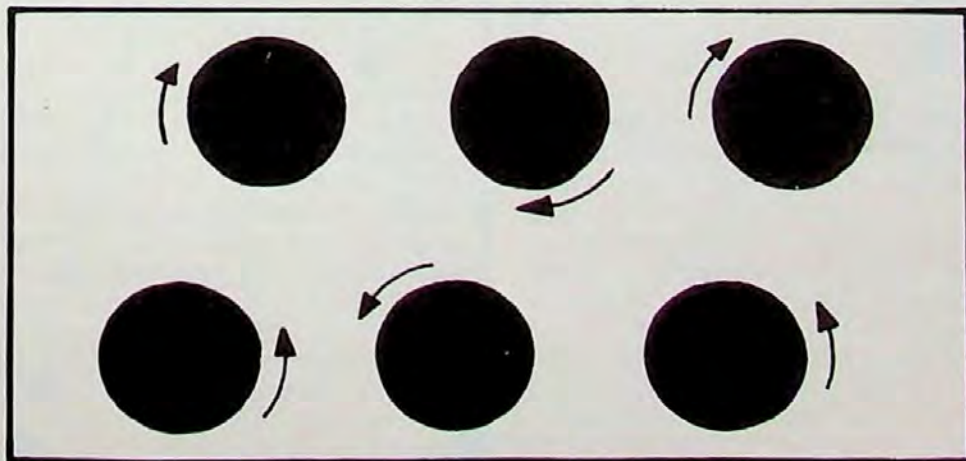


Fig. 4 – (Side view) The top racquetball has been struck with a topspin or "closed" racquet face. The bottom ball has bottom spin due to being sliced or being hit with an "open" face.

Cross-Court Passes

The basic forehand and backhand cross-courts are diagrammed in figures 5 and 6. The cross-court drive is often termed a V-ball in the racquetball vernacular because of the "V" letter design the ball's flight path makes from point of contact to point of termination. The V-ball may be struck with either the backhand or forehand. Obviously when two right-handed players are in court combat, the more effective shot is the *forehand cross-court*, since it is hit to the opponent's weaker backhand. Too, the more easily executed shot of the two is the forehand V-ball because the author of the shot is employing his stronger forehand to stroke the sphere. For these two reasons the forehand cross-court drive can be justifiably termed the "bread and butter" shot of our court sport. The forehand cross-court is an easily performed shot with a wide margin for error and, most importantly, it may be used to return *almost any ball* that comes to the player's forehand (excluding a well-placed ceiling ball). Think of it, especially the beginning to intermediate aspirer: a shot to use on practically any forehand set-up on the right side of the court . . . bread-and-butter.

Although it may be initiated from closer to the front wall, the forehand V is more often hit from a more posterior vicinity on the court. The set-up for this bread-and-butter drive may result from a ceiling ball that comes up short, or a too-high kill or a pass which rebounds off either the side or back walls. Whatever the presentation, be prepared on any ball coming to your forehand to set and tee off with a slashing drive.

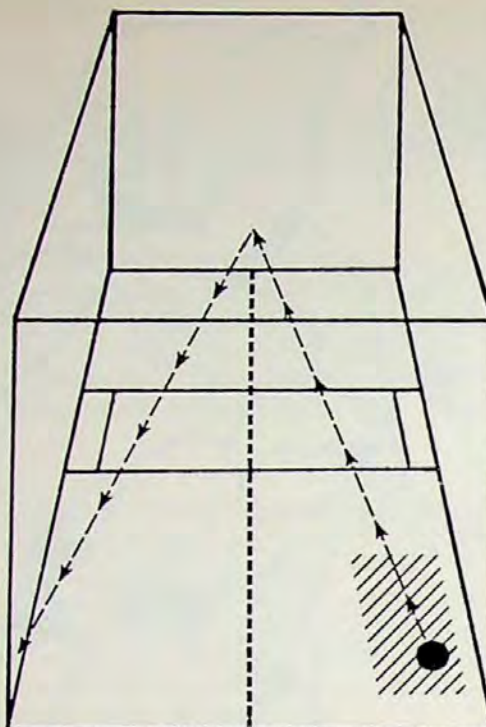


Fig. 5 – Forehand cross-court drive (dotted line represents midpoint between the two side walls).

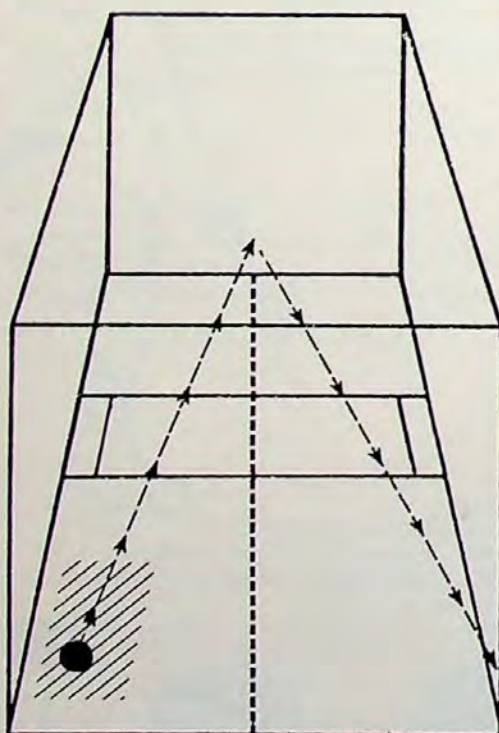


Fig. 6 – Backhand cross-court drive.

As with the down-the-line shot, the cross-court should be contacted with the racquet *knee to waist high*. Note: because of the high percentage nature of this shot, these limitations may be exceeded in many cases. However, it is generally advantageous to back up a step or two on the ball and stroke it at knee level. Propel the ball with your normal forehand motion, striking it such that it caroms off the front wall 2-4 feet high and zooms past the opponent's outreached racquet en route to the backhand rear court. A few attempts at this shot should yield rapid gratification as it is perhaps the easiest shot to develop in the fetal learning stages of the game.

Now that we have tackled the forehand V, at least superficially, it is time to delve more deeply into this multi-purpose shot by presenting some useful hints. There are three "dimensions" involved in hitting the cross-court drive: how hard, how wide and how high. How hard will be dealt with momentarily. In considering the other two dimensions, how wide and how high, it is helpful to visualize the floor of the racquetball court as an oversized *pool table* surface. As you peruse the following explanation refer to figure 7. Now, how wide? Suppose

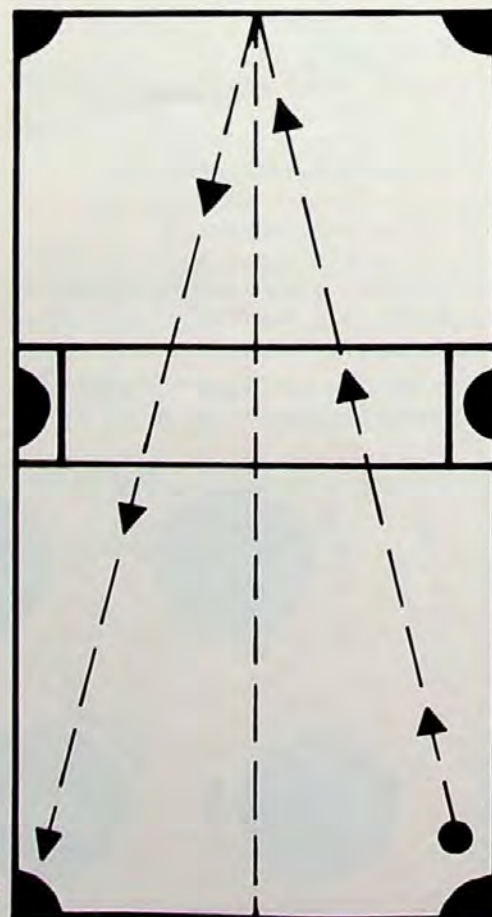


Fig. 7 – Pool table analogy for forehand cross-court pass. Better to err a bit toward the left front wall pocket rather than right one.

the racquetball were a pool ball and you wished to propel it from the right rear corner to the left rear corner on a "bank" shot off the front wall. For this to occur the ball must bank off the front wall exactly in the middle, or equidistant from either sidewall. According to any pool hustler or geometry text, the resulting rebound will carry precisely into the opposite rear corner. Therefore, the answer to "how wide?" is to hit the middle of the front wall.

That last sentence is made with slight reservation. Actually the sophisticated racqueteer will endeavor to hit about *1 foot to the left of center* on a forehand V-ball. (The exactness of this off-center target will vary a bit with the position of the opposing player and the spot on the court from whence the ball contact originates.) The left of center striking area on the front wall dictates a wider angled shot. This more obtuse angle ensures the ball will carry well beyond the hyperextended backhand reach of the groveling opponent.

Also, it is much "safer" to err too far to the *left* than right, in considering the ball's point of contact on the front wall. That is, a ball hit at too wide and angle (let us say 2 feet instead of 1 foot left of center on the front wall) will nevertheless present a difficult return—the drive frequently "handcuffs" the opponent after ricocheting off the sidewall. To the contrary, an error a tad to the right—striking, for example, just a foot to the right of center on the front wall—sends the rebound directly at the opponents racquet. This latter example is a suicide shot.

Now for the "how high?". It has already been mentioned that the ball should rebound off the front wall 2-4 feet high for the most effective cross-court pass. Superficially this is all well and good, but it has been this author's experience that with 90 percent of all racquetball players—from hackers to hotshots, their passes tend to *rise* as the ball jets off the strings. Therefore, the ball gains elevation after coming off the racquet face and strikes the front wall at least a foot higher than intended. Players with better controlled passes have compensated for this inherent miscalculation by aiming *1 foot lower* on the front wall than the actual desired height of contact. A *reverse* analogy here may be borrowed from the sport of archery. The avid bowman

aims above the bullseye to allow for a natural fall in trajectory as the arrow whizzes to the target. The racquetballer should aim at a point *1 to 3 feet high* on a cross-court drive in order that the ball will slightly elevate during its course of flight to strike the front wall at the desired 2-4 feet off the floor.

If you have satisfactorily performed the forehand V-ball, move to the backhand side of the court. As before, contact the ball knee to navel high, aim for 1-3 feet high on the front wall (the ball should actually rebound off 2-4 feet high) and aim at a point on the front wall midway or slightly to the *right* of center. Note: since you are now bidding to power the ball past your rival's forehand, it is helpful to aim for a *wider angle* pass. This is because the reach of the forehand to the side exceeds that of the backhand.

We have now covered the four types of passes: the forehand and backhand down-the-line drives, and the forehand and backhand cross-courts. Before presenting a practice routine for these, let us round out the chapter with a few additional highlights which encompass all four passes.

It was previously promised that the answer to "how hard?" would be considered. In this regard, passes are a bit of a paradox, since if you touch them too lightly, they will not have enough force to carry past a well prepared opponent. On the other hand, if you blast them too hard they will surely rebound off the back wall for just as ill an error. It was noted earlier, and it will be emphasized later, strike almost all shots (including passes) with *80 percent power*. This ample force will impart sufficient momentum to the ball without sacrificing the crucial control.

By way of summary, keep in mind the purpose of the pass. It can be used for defensive as well as for offensive play. Therefore, do not worry if your intended rally-ending drive does not immediately win a point or side-out. If instead the pass forces a weak return, then an alternate goal has been accomplished. Put away that flimsy return by your adversary for the point or side-out. The passer must be a patient player as opposed to the every shot, hit-or-miss, flailing killer.

As has been demonstrated above, the two most effective passes (with two righties in court combat) are the R.A.W. ball from the backhand side and the bread-and-butter V-ball from the forehand side. The former is more difficult to control and usually requires the use of spin, while the latter is an excellent shot to be utilized off most any forehand set-up.

On cross-courts, aim lower and wider than you think you should; on down-the-liners just aim lower.

When should one attempt a pass shot? This is a difficult question to answer simply, and the best solution lies in individual experience. This is not meant to side-step the issue; you will learn through playing and analyzing your strong and weak points when and from where certain drives work best for *you*. If Brumfield tried to employ Serot's drive shot strategy or vice versa, their games would go haywire and it would be a cakewalk to the National Championship for this author. As a guideline to "when?", it is not advisable to squander the opportunity of killing an easy plum ball in favor of a less offensive shot. That is, play aggressively and kill the set-ups in front court. Neither is it

recommended to attempt a drive when off balance while stationed very deep in the backhand back court. In this particular instance a more defensive shot, such as a ceiling ball, might be wiser.

Hit a pass when given a set-up at midcourt that you are unsure you could accurately kill. Hit a pass when

your opponent is leaning toward the front wall in expectation of a kill. Hit a pass if your ambition is to erode your opponent's energy reserve through the use of a punishing running game. Hit a pass as a change-up in order to alter the momentum or pace of the game. Some of the "whens" of pass shooting are shown in figures 8 and 9.

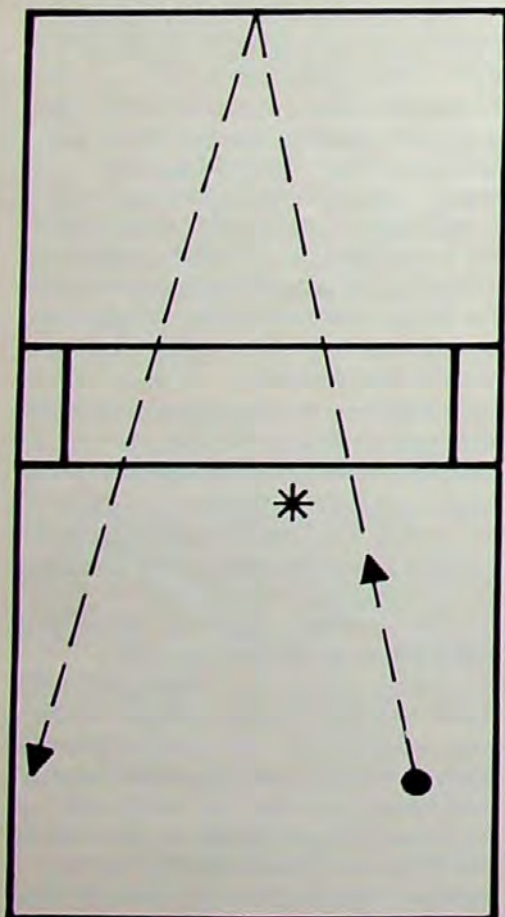


Fig. 8 – The two main "whens" of cross-court pass shooting: 1) When you are presented with a set-up in three-quarter court with your opponent in center court position and...

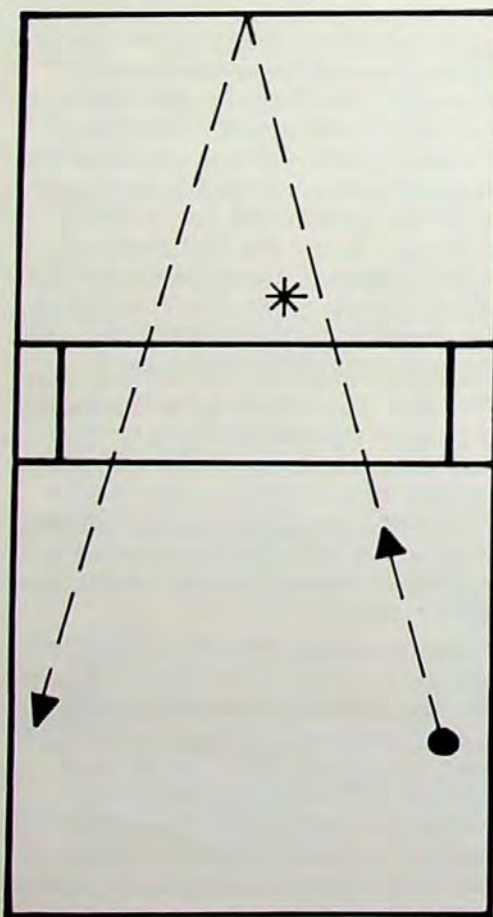


Fig. 9 – 2) When your opponent "poaches" for an anticipated kill shot.

Finally, there will be times when your pass shots, instead of rising off the racquet as per norm, actually will go as low or lower than you aim for perfect rollouts. Luck shot. In other instances, your intended kill shots will somehow ascend and evolve into picturesque passes. Luck shot. In such cases, play it like the pros: straighten that crack between your lips, elevate your nose rather than eyebrows, ignore the gallery's thundering adulations and strut sanctimoniously for the service box.

Pass Practice Drills

Despite the immediately preceding paragraph, it is preferable to have your shots go where you direct them, rather than have a poorly struck bumper-ball accidentally develop into a lucky winner. The answer, as before, is *practice*. The drudgery is not quite so arduous for the pass shots as with other shot exercises, provided you are swinging a satisfactory forehand and backhand. In fact, the four drives are basically just these two strokes—given purpose and direction.

The down-the-line exercises are relatively easy to practice alone.

Exercise 1: Drop and Hit. Standing at three-quarter court about 3 feet from the sidewall (left side if you are practicing backhand R.A.W. balls and vice versa), drop the ball and hit a pass down the alley. Contact the ball, knee to waist high with top or backspin such that the rebound closely hugs the

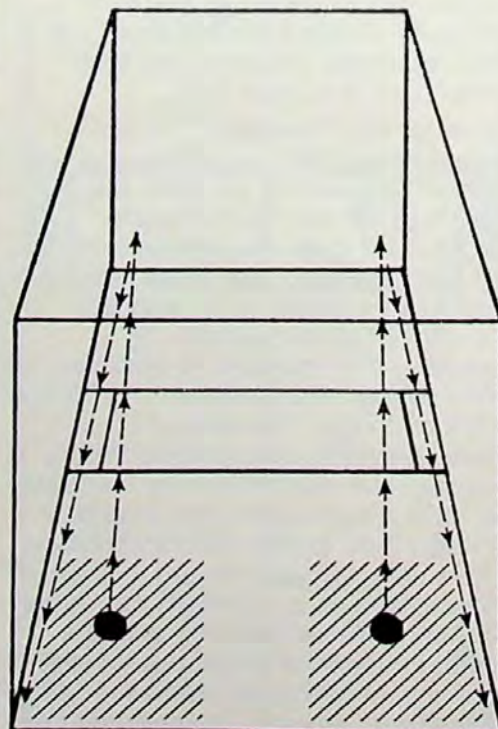


Fig. 10 – Down-the-line pass drills. Drop and hit and set-up and hit from both forehand and backhand sides.

sidewall prior to dying in the rear corner. Repeat the motion the desired number of times from this position, then slightly anterior or posterior, as in figure 10. Satisfied? Now drop and hit down-the-liners on the other side of the court with the opposite stroke.

Exercise 2: Set-up and Hit. Refer to figure 10; while reading the following repeat Exercise One, only strike the ball after it has taken an easy set-up rebound off the front wall. This is obviously more similar to a game situation. Catch the drive you have hit and repeat. When satisfied, go to the opposite side of the court, give yourself another series of set-ups and hit down-the-line passes off of them.

Exercise 3: Perpetual Drive Drill. This somewhat advanced routine is much more difficult than the previous two, but it is more fun. The object is to carry on a down-the-line drive rally with yourself. The better you control the elusive orb, the longer your rallies will last, and this volley count is a good measuring stick of progress. From the backhand side, hit continual R.A.W. balls to yourself, then do the same on the forehand side. The perpetual drive drill especially enhances racquet control.

The cross-court drive drills are next. These shots normally will be developed much more rapidly by the beginner than the down-the-line exercise sequence.

Exercise 1: Drop and Hit. Contact the ball about kneecap high and aim lower on the front wall than you would imagine necessary. The ball's path of travel is displayed in figure 11. Experiment with various angles, for example with wider or less acute V-balls. Hit with 80 percent effort for the optimal combo of accuracy and speed. Practice this exercise with forehand and backhand. (Figures 11a, 11b, and 11c.).

Exercise 2: Set-up and Hit. This is fairly self-explanatory, but for help see figure 11. The most common mistake here is contacting the ball too high. Knee high is the key. Hit the cross-court drive off a variety of set-ups: soft lobbs off the front wall, harder rebounds, short ceiling balls and back wall set-ups all should be utilized as practice set-ups for the V-ball. Perform from both sides of the court with forehand and backhand. (Again, see figures 11a, 11b and 11c.)

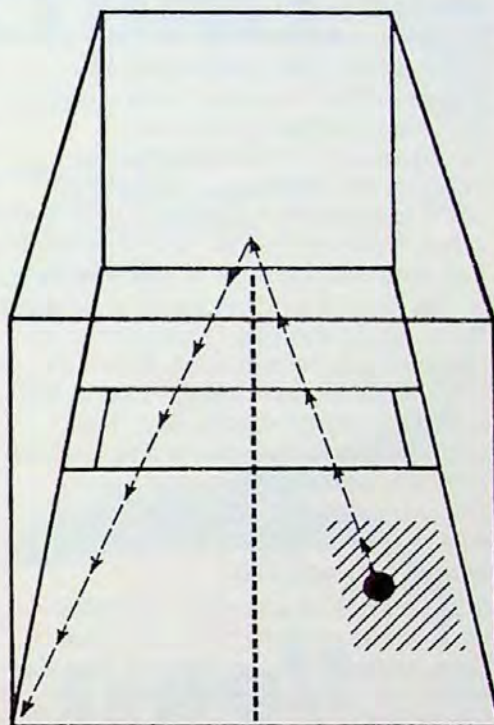


Fig. 11 – Forehand cross-court pass exercises, for the drop and hit and set-up and hit. (Note the midpoint dotted line in this and the next three diagrams.)

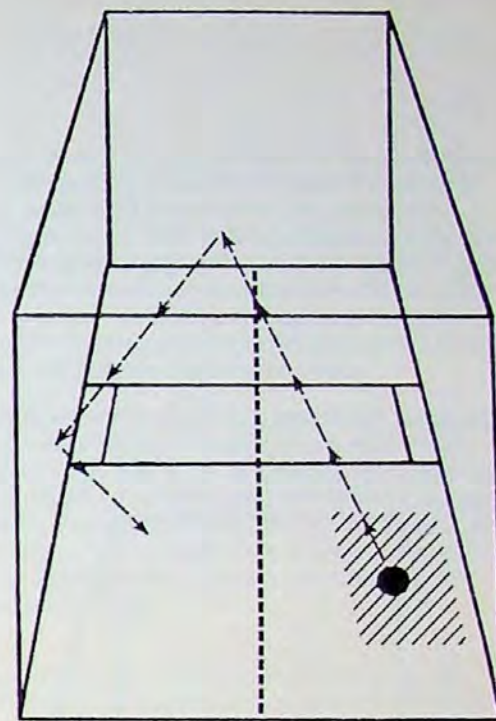


Fig. 11a – Same drills, only a wider angle drive is hit. Ball contacts left side wall at short line.

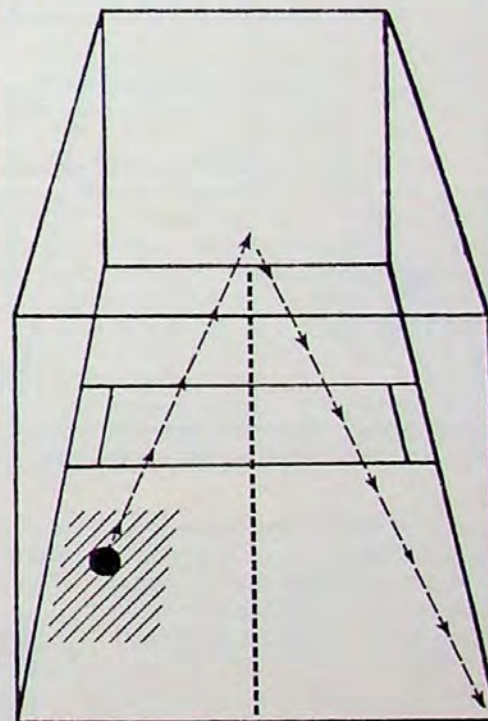


Fig. 11b – Backhand cross-court pass exercises.

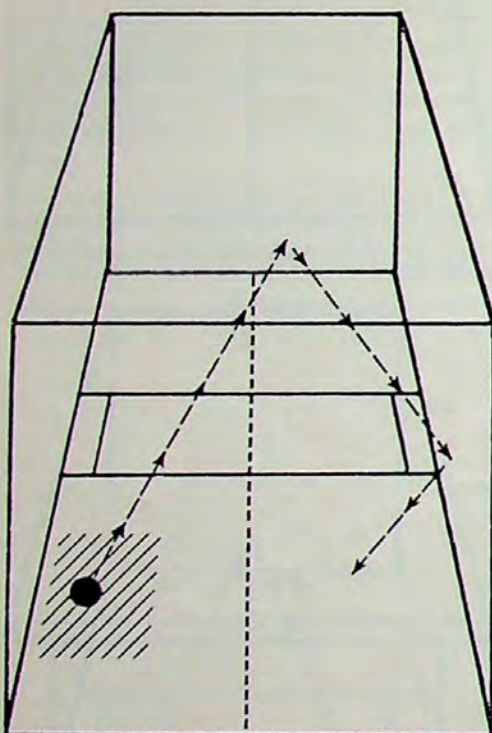


Fig. 11c – Wider angle backhand pass drills.

Alternate exercise: One of the superior methods of developing your drive game, after performing the above solitary routines, is to dig up a *partner* of similar ability who possesses a comparable mental capacity for entering a racquetball court specifically to bat back and forth a few hundred R.A.W. and V-balls. You and your partner in this exercise act as mutual ball returners in taking turns hitting the ball. Thus a practice drive rally is perpetuated. Strive for control rather than trying to bang the ball past your practice peer. This continual drive exercise works well for both the down-the-line and the cross-court pass shots. These pick-a-partner drills are diagrammed in figures 12a and 12b.

In a nutshell of admitted redundancy, what are the most common errors in pass making? There are four of them which are almost universally miscalculated by court dwellers, even in the lofty ranks of the professionals. The first is hitting the ball *too hard*. Be an intelligent controller instead of a brainless blaster. The second is hitting the ball *too high* on the front wall. Remember, most balls will usually rise above the intended target area. The third common mistake occurs on cross-court passes, and it is not getting enough *angle* on those V-balls. Better to err with too much as opposed to too little slant. Finally, it is mandatory that the player contact all potential drives at a height no greater than above the waist, preferably hitting at *knee level*.

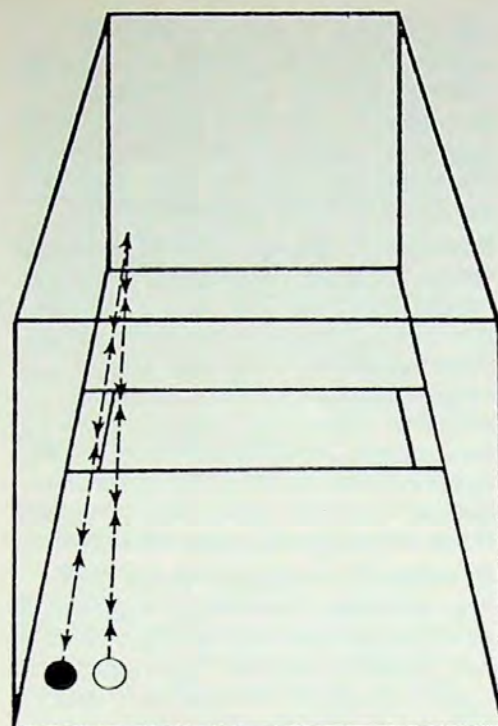


Fig. 12a – Perpetual cross-court drive drill with two players.

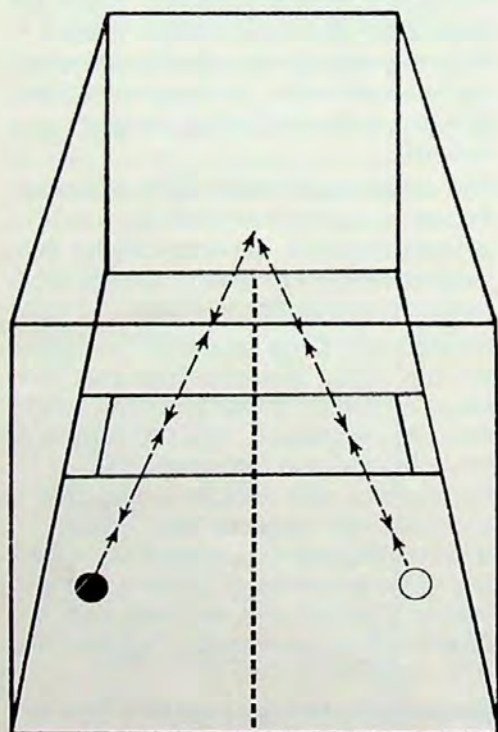


Fig. 12b – Perpetual down-the-line drive drill with two players.

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Double Your Fun — With Doubles!

There are many excellent features associated with doubles play. It is a good change of pace from constant singles play; it is fun to play as a team and with friends; it is less strenuous but just as satisfying as singles; and average players can be more competitive with advanced players.

Doubles play is often scoffed at by many players because of the limited space for four players allowed in a regulation racquetball court. This feeling of "closeness" keeps many beginners as well as more advanced players from participating. It is true that you must give the opposing team members enough space to swing at the ball, yet this can be accomplished by paying close attention during actual play and simply moving out of the way of the opponent's swing even though you may give up good court position.

Choosing a partner

One major problem in choosing a partner in doubles is finding a person who's compatible or supportive of your type of game. Ideally, it is best to have a strong left-handed partner if you are right-handed or vice-versa. The stronger shot-maker or more experienced doubles partner should play the left side or the players may switch off, since playing the left side can be more physically taxing.

In any case, choose a partner to whom you can relate and communicate. Remember, two good singles players do not always make a good doubles team. Many doubles players become frustrated when their partner misses a few easy shots or one partner will blame the other for mistakes or losing. The doubles team must play together smoothly, as a breakdown in trust or support usually spells disaster.

Communication and teamwork

Playing together as a unit is not as difficult as may be expected if some basic designs are followed. Of course, constant play with the same partner will instill confidence and cooperation. Communicating with your partner may

be accomplished by talking after the rally ends to resolve any conflict or revise strategy. Having one partner calling shots during the rally so there are no hesitations as to which player will return a given shot is helpful. A simple "yours" or "mine" is the most effective way to quickly let your partner know who is responsible for a given shot; it is easier to designate one partner to call each ball throughout the match.

Position

Center court position in doubles is all-important. After the ball is put into play, the serving team should occupy center court position on their respective sides of the court immediately after the ball crosses the short service line (Figure 1). Maintaining a position just behind the

short service line on both the right and left center of the court enables the team to control the game and provides the opportunity of hitting shorter shots to the front wall, yet allowing enough time to retrieve the ball in deep court if necessary.

The receiving team should try to return the serve in such a way that the opposition is forced away from center court, then move quickly to regain center court themselves (see Figure 1). Try to avoid getting caught behind the other team in deep court; this is poor position. Player's feet should be facing off-center toward the right side wall if playing the right side and off-center toward the left side wall if playing the left side (see Figure 2), especially when preparing to stroke the ball.

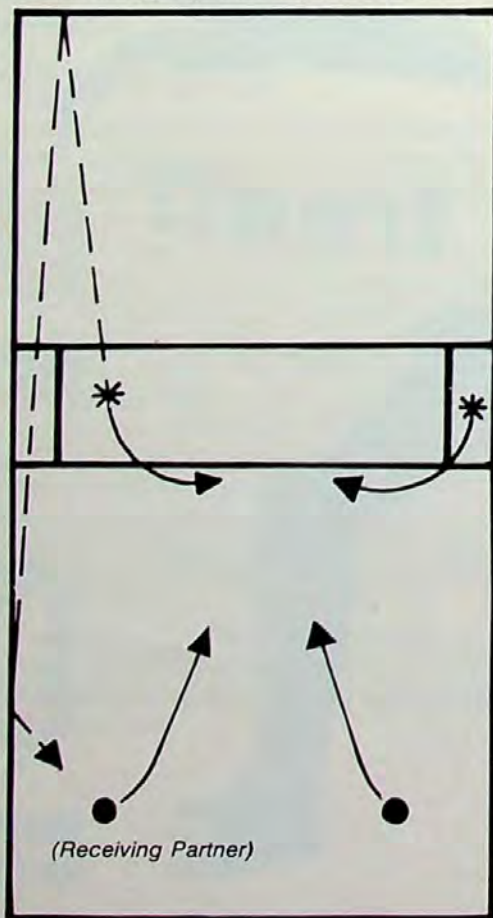
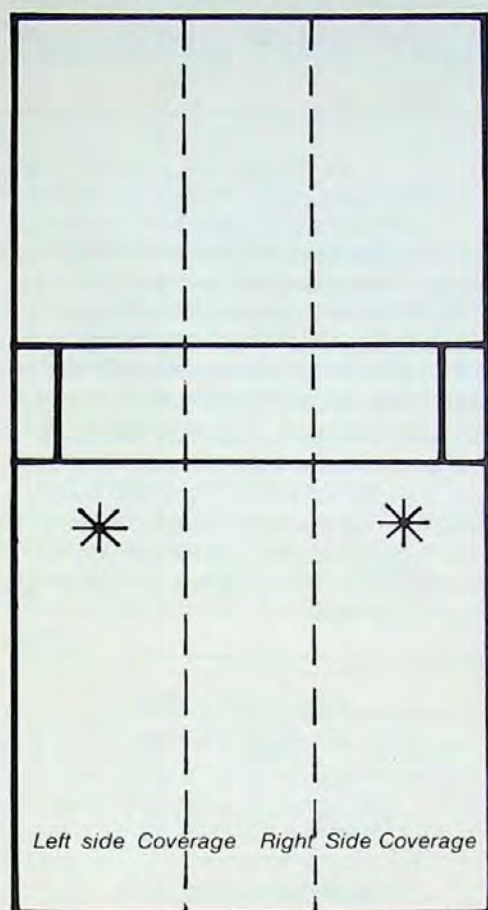


Fig. 1 Serve
Strive to maintain center court position after the serve.



Fig. 2 Playing with off-center footwork.

Fig. 3
Side by side coverage may take you slightly into your partner's side.



The most common division for doubles play is the side-by-side method (Figure 3) with each partner covering half of the court. This can be modified so that the left side player may cover more than his half of the court, especially on back wall shots slightly off-center to the right. A right-handed player playing the left side position should also take shots returned down the middle of the court with the stronger forehand stroke as opposed to the right side player returning the ball with a backhand stroke.

Players should not cross into each other's zone unless it is an emergency. This will help prevent the common problem in doubles – which partner takes the shot? It may also help eliminate injury from collision.

Serving

There are several types of serves that can be used in doubles depending upon your team's strength. Normally, a safe "Z" serve to the opposing team's weaker player is adequate to start play, or a high lob causing a defensive return. A drive serve is more risky since the receiving team has

both corners of the court covered and a hard drive serve that reaches the back wall can be returned equally as hard causing the serving team to have to react too quickly and mis-hit the service return.

Ideally, the serve should allow the serving team time to get into position on both sides of the court. As soon as the ball crosses the short line, the partner who is not receiving should immediately step into position on his side of the court just behind the short line, away from the side wall. A good habit to acquire for the non-server in this situation is to place the racquet between his face and the opposing team to prevent being struck in the face on a wild return.

Another good serve (Figure 4), which was used effectively by both teams in

the open doubles finals of the USRA nationals in San Diego, was the power serve by the left-handed player which caromed sharply off the back wall thereby jamming the right side opponent. Rarely was there ever an offensive return of this serve.

A soft half-lob or garbage serve hugging the wall along either side wall is also useful (Figure 5). If the left side player is right-handed and all of the serves are fed to that side you can rest assured that constant bombardment will eventually cause weak returns of serve unless the player has exceptional backhand endurance. Often, if one team constantly serves to one opponent, an occasional serve to the other team member will cause a hurried and unexpected response resulting in a poor return.

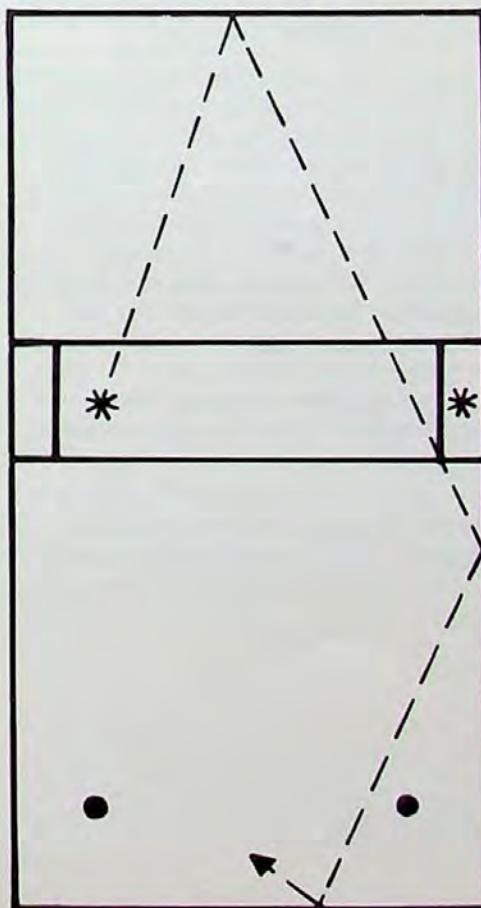


Fig. 4 Effective drive serve used in U.S.R.A. San Diego Nationals.

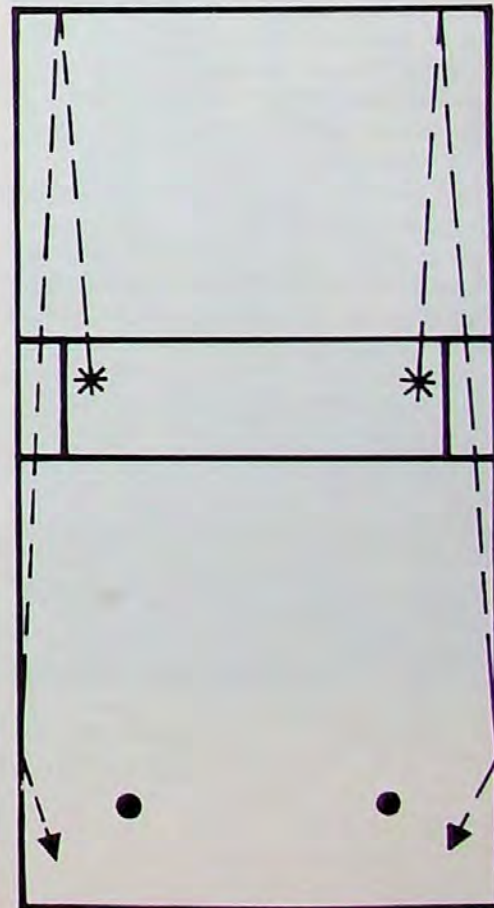


Fig. 5 Soft-garbage serve hugging side wall can be used by either partner.

Basic strategy and suggestions

The theme behind playing successful doubles is, of course, to play to the opposing team's weakness. If they reciprocate you must make your team's weakness the lesser of the two. Above all, your team must start out with a basic strategy in mind before beginning the match. If the plan works, your team has chosen the correct course of action; if the plan fails it will need some quick revisions if you hope to stay in the game or match.

Another important element of success is the ability to keep faith in your partner even if he or she is not playing well. Encouragement and support for each other is important throughout the match; this is evident in successful doubles teams. There is a certain calmness and self-assurance that somehow endures through tight situations until victory is assured. Some partners will shoulder the responsibility or the blame for losing or playing badly which can lead to severe frustration; winning or losing should be shared equally.

It works to the advantage of a team in doubles to show spirit if your team makes a good shot or wins a rally. A short, loud yell of affirmation can go a long way in undermining the other team's confidence and concentration, — make some noise as any winning team will do in any sport, — but be careful not to become obnoxious in yelling, for you will quickly lose court friends.

In addition, keep in mind the pace at which your team plays best. If you score points steadily by quickly putting

the ball into play on the serve, keep the pace fast; if the other team plays best this way, try to slow the game down to allow time to catch up again. Try to avoid letting the other team jump to a big lead early in the game, it can be very difficult to overcome late. Although it appears easier to catch up in doubles play as opposed to singles because the physical burden can be shared, remember, this holds true for both teams.

Patience is one of the more important facets of doubles play. Many teams lose simply because they are not willing to wait until the proper time to take the correct shot. Keep the ball to the ceiling and wait for the opponents to make an error or take a low percentage shot, then take the offensive. Guard against becoming too passive in doubles though, as this may cause a loss of momentum that could be difficult to regain.

In summary, a note of caution — wear protective eye guards or glasses when you play doubles for your own safety. There are many more quick-reaction situations and twice as many people swinging racquets in the court as compared to singles, therefore doubling the danger. Since it is so important to watch where the ball actually is during play and see where it is going to be stroked, both by your partner and the opposing team, eye protection is highly recommended to prevent injury.

It is also recommended that players avoid clinging to the side walls in doubles unless absolutely necessary, for two reasons. First, this limits the

amount of space a player has to move clear of the opponent's swing, a definite hazard. Second, such a position leaves little or no swinging space for you, making you vulnerable for a hard, down-the-line shot.

Doubles can be and is fun. It allows you to compete against more players with a wider variety of skills and styles. Doubles, by its very nature can help your singles game, and it can be an exciting alternative method of enjoying your court time.

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Teaching Your Youngster

Jean Sauser, Head Pro at SkyHarbor Court Club, has been teaching 8-14 year-olds to play racquetball at the Northbrook, Ill. center since the club opened for business in September of 1975. Jean has been running SkyHarbor's Youth Excellence program and will start Saturday morning league play at the club this fall. A nationally ranked player, Jean has a degree in Art and Physical Education (University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse) and instructed racquetball for two years at the Northbrook YMCA before she joined the SkyHarbor staff.

Every year racquetball filters down to a younger group of players. It started with the older handball, squash and tennis enthusiasts, appealed to businessmen and housewives in their 20's and 30's, became a popular college sport, hit the high school population and recently has been discovered by elementary school children. I wouldn't be surprised to see it adopted as a grade school sport, even if they have youngsters playing it on one wall marked with masking tape.

Racquetball is a good game for youngsters. That's obvious to all of us who are into the sport. We're all familiar with the immediate success factor in racquetball and that's something that appeals to the child in all of us.

Then there's the chance to pick up fundamentals that apply to other sports. Things like Hand-Eye Coordination, Kinetic Awareness (Balance, Spatial Judgment, Efficient Body Movement) are greatly improved through the mastery of racquetball skills.

And – what's most important to you if you are teaching your own boy or girl – children who are beginners can play with more skilled parents – racquetball can be a family project!

Here's how you can get your child started on a lifetime of safe and happy racquetball competition.

LESSON ONE

Your basement wall or a garage door will work fine for your first lesson when you will focus on:

1. Forehand Grip and Stroke (25 Min.)
2. Backhand Grip and Stroke (25 Min.)
3. General Rules for Play (10-15 Min.)

Start off right by emphasizing the wrist thong – showing how to make a secure twist of it, explaining the safety involved (photo A). Then have your youngster shake hands with the racquet. If his hand is small let him choke up on the racquet. Fingers and thumb should be securely wrapped around the racquet handle. Do not allow for an improper grip.

Photographs by Carol Brusslan.

Photo A



Tell your child to keep the V of the hand on the top of the racquet.

Photo B



Shoulders should be parallel to the forehand side wall.

Now have your child turn and face the forehand side wall (an imaginary one if you're using a garage door or basement wall) (photo B). Have her hold her racquet back, tell her to bring the racquet forward (photo C) across her body with the wrist leading. Have her *snap her wrist* as the racquet passes her lead foot. Tell her to step toward the front wall every time she

executes the stroke. Allow her a minute or two to practice the stroke thru the air without the ball. You can spot any errors she is making in her stroke and correct them immediately. Then tell her to take the ball in her free hand, drop it out and away from her body, step toward the ball and hit it to the front wall.

Photo C



In striking position, your child should have weight on the foot closest to the front wall.

Photo D



For the ready position, backhand stroke, have your youngster face the backhand wall.

Demonstrate a lot – children are great imitators. Give her setups off the front wall, encouraging her to let the ball drop below waist level while she sets up to hit thru the side of her body.

For the backhand grip and stroke, follow the same procedure emphasizing:

1. Setting the shoulders to the side wall and hitting thru the side of the body (photo D).
2. Correct racquet position thru the entire stroke.
3. Wrist Snap (photo E).
4. Fingers wrapped around the racquet.
5. Stepping toward the front wall every time the ball is contacted.

Now it's time to describe the general rules: legal serve, legal return and legal volley. Play games to 11 points stressing the hinder calls – remember that you are teaching for safety as well

Photo E



Wrist snap is important in both the forehand and backhand strokes.



Have your child set up properly every time he takes a shot off the back wall.

as skill. Stress the importance of watching the ball thru the entire volley – this will prevent hinders and help start strategy. Explain the idea of center court position, how to keep it off the serve or get it on the return. And – during game play do not allow your youngster to swing at a ball that is out of play (examples: a ball that has bounced twice or an illegal serve). This will again reinforce safety and teach the rules for game play.

LESSON TWO

For lesson two you'll move into a racquetball court to teach your youngster:

1. Overhand Stroke (10 Min.)
2. Back Wall Shots (35 Min.) (photo F)
3. More Rules/Strategy (15 Min.)

You are teaching your child to cover the entire court with effective forehand and backhand strokes. Most youngsters hit overhand shots with little or no effort. They usually hit too many overhand shots and that is why I never devote an entire lesson to it. Explain that overhand shots can be used in game play but mostly in deep court.

The grip for the overhand shot is the same as the grip for the forehand. Emphasize stepping toward the front wall and directing the ball with the

Photo G



Tell your child to set up quickly in deep court for effective returns.

racquet. During game play later in the hour don't discourage your youngster from using too many overhand shots but be quick to point out situations where it would have been more effective to use a forehand stroke or backhand stroke.

For the back wall shots (taking the ball off the back wall with a forehand or backhand stroke) have your youngster stand in deep court facing the front wall. Set him up with a high lob that will come off the back wall in such a way that the ball can be easily reached with a forehand and backhand stroke. Tell him to pull his racquet back and allow the ball to bounce by him into the back wall. This will pull his body into proper striking position. Have him step in behind the ball as it rebounds off the back wall. Tell him to start his stroke as the ball rebounds past him and to contact the ball off the lead foot below the waist.

Start out with set ups that can be easily reached with a forehand or backhand stroke and gradually work toward the side walls and the corners of the court. Remind your young one that he will have more success if he gets behind the ball quickly and executes the best stroke he can.

Review the rules and strategy. At the end of this lesson your youngster should know what a legal serve is, what a legal volley is, when the ball is out of play, who serves and who receives as a result.

During game play hit shots that will force your child to run back to deep court, set up and shoot off the back wall or use a controlled overhand stroke (photo G). Stress the importance of setting up quickly in deep court in order to return the ball effectively.

LESSON THREE

In this last lesson you will work on:

1. Serves (20 Min.) (photo H).
2. Serve Return (20 min.) (photo I).
3. Rules and Strategy (20 Min.)

Explain, demonstrate and practice the lob serve, two wall serve and drive serve.

When working on the lob serve encourage your youngster to hit the ball softly and aim to a spot high on the front wall (serve to the right of the center of the court to lob to the forehand side of the court, serve to the left of center to lob to the backhand side of the court). The ball should then rebound high into deep court scraping the side wall first and forcing a weak return from the back corner of the court.

For the two wall serve (cross court serve) make sure your child knows where on the front wall to place the ball (close to the seam between the

Photo H



Emphasize the importance of a good serve to get good position in the court.

Photo I



Game play improves when your child makes effective returns from deep court.

side wall and the front wall). Again the objective is to have the ball rebound into the deep corner of the court.

Until your youngster has a good solid forehand stroke, the drive serve will be difficult to execute. Stress accuracy more than force. The main objective is to drive the ball into the front wall having it rebound in deep court low on the side first hopefully catching a crack.

After the serves have been practiced, place your child in the receiver's position. Demonstrate and practice overhand returns and passing shots. Point out where on the front wall to hit the ball for a down the line pass or a cross court pass. These two shots can be done with an overhand stroke, with a forehand stroke or with a backhand

Photo J



Practice passing shots which make game play more exciting.

stroke (photo J). If your youngster can master these shots he can play a good position game with few hinders. While working on these shots remind him that a ball that comes down the center of the court is the least desirable shot in racquetball.

Finish your hour of play with a game or two, review general strategy, shots and strokes when necessary. Have a ball! (photo K).

Photo K



Have a ball!

SUMMARY:

These three lessons are designed as a general approach plan for getting your young ones into the game safely and quickly. If you are in need of more details for a skill you are teaching your youngster, you can consult the following books:

1. *Inside Racquetball*, by Chuck Leve
 2. *Developing Racquetball Skills*, by Ed Vockell Ph.D., and Ottis Campbell
 3. *The Complete Book of Racquetball*, by Steve Keeley
- All three were used for sections of this article.

In teaching your youngsters the correct way to play the game you may find your own game improving!

National Racquetball

EXTRA!

General News

Bledsoe Hired

Dave Bledsoe, a veteran professional racquetball player, has joined the marketing department of Leach Industries, the San Diego-based company that is the nation's largest manufacturer of racquetball racquets.

Bledsoe, 25, is the sport's sixth ranked pro and was a finalist of this year's Pro-Am event in Aurora, Ill. A native of Memphis, Tenn., he has moved to San Diego.

Charles Drake, vice president and director of sales and marketing for Leach, said that Bledsoe would be active in the company's expanding promotional department. He also will work closely with the playing staff.

Players representing Leach competitively include Charles Brumfield, Marty Hogan, Richard Wagner, Jan Campbell, Steve Serot, Steve Keeley, Mike Zeitman, Ron Strom, John Lynch and Bledsoe.

"Davey will be involved in our various programs that



are designed to promote racquetball among those who presently play the sport and also to encourage even greater participation and interest from the public," Drake said.

"Leach also intends to continue its strong support and involvement in the pro tour and has expanded its efforts to promote racquetball in the schools and colleges, at all grade levels."

Thousands were thinking racquetball on July 5 when SkyHarbor Court Club took part in parades in Highland Park and Deerfield, Illinois. The Northbrook facility's float featured head pro Jean Sauser and four other young players, a huge crepe paper racket and the advice: "Keep America Strong, Play Racquetball." The float also announced that SkyHarbor would open its new Highland Park center in the fall.



World Record

On May 22 at 6 a.m., four players stepped onto a racquetball court at the Down East Court Club in Maine with one thought in mind — to set a world record for longest continuous racquetball play. The players, Wayne Clark, Bill Flahive, Bill Rich and Phil Soule had been in training over the past weeks for this event, running, canoe racing, playing hard racquetball and psyching each other for the long hours that lay ahead of them on the court. The world record event was being done for the Pine Tree Society for Crippled Children and Adults and all proceeds would be given to the

Society to help send a crippled child to their summer camp.

The players had consulted with Dr. Hanley, the Olympic doctor on proper diet (peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, pizza and plenty of liquids) and physical danger signs that they should watch for. The players were warned before going onto the court that they had a long way to go and that they should take it easy, and Phil Soule barked back "We're out to set a world record in racquetball and that's what we're going to do — play racquetball!"

Just as Phil had promised,

they played hard racquetball. Throughout the event the players were diving and flailing as if it were the biggest tournament in the history of the game.

At 20 hours and five minutes an announcement was made to the spectators and players that a new world record had been set. The excitement generated by the announcement was unbelievable. A satisfied smile came to the faces of the players who had worked so hard to make it happen, and the spectators went wild because they had witnessed something that had never been done before. To put

the frosting on the cake the new world record holders played an additional two hours to make sure that their record would stand.

Over 22 hours and five minutes, four men had played over 52 games and scored over 1600 points, and the average point span on each game was 21-14. On top of the whole thing, they raised about \$1000 for The Pine Tree Society for Crippled Children and Adults.

Bill Rich summed up each players feelings by saying, "It was a great feeling to do this thing. But I wouldn't want to do it again."

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In Memoriam

John Halverson, a masters singles champion and well-known racquetball player, died last month (July) in San Diego. He was 49.

Prominent in racquetball activities in the San Diego area and winner of several national championships, Halverson was a physical education teacher, coach and counselor on the junior high school level.

He was the IRA masters singles champion in 1974 and

1975, and won the Masters Invitational singles title those same years. He also held various state and regional masters titles both in singles and doubles.

He is survived by his wife, Paula, and four children.

The U.S.R.A. and N.R.C. join the racquetball world in expressing our sympathy to the Halverson family. Their loss is racquetball's loss as well.

Sports Psyching, Playing Your Best Game All of the Time,

by Thomas Tutko

Ph.D. Co-founder, Institute of Athletic Motivation, and Professor of Psychology, San Jose State University, and Umberto Tosi, published by J. P. Tarcher, Inc., Los Angeles, distributed by Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York. 225 pages, \$6.95

Do you choke when the pressure is on?

Do you miss easy shots often?

Do you consistently make the same errors again and again?

How can you rectify all this — for good?

The strength of this well-researched book is that the techniques and explanation offered can be applied to all levels of players — in fact, it can be especially meaningful to the average player. Dr. Tutko is a Professor of Psychology who has spent the "past twelve years working with thousands of athletes and coaches attempting to understand and overcome the intangibles that destroy athletic fulfillment," both at the amateur and professional levels. The author has been a consultant to many professional and college teams such as the Pittsburgh Steelers, Oakland A's, Dallas Cowboys, University of Southern California and University of Nebraska to name a few.

The involvement of psychologists in the world of sports has been practiced successfully by the Soviets and other sporting powers, but has only been utilized in the United States over the past decade. The book not only describes techniques to help playing performance (which are not complicated or profound); it also allows a player to objectively observe his own reasons for playing

racquetball or any sport and may help curb frustration in the process.

The first four chapters of the book cover background information on the emotional and mental aspects of sports which have often been neglected by most participants. Some topics covered include: *Getting a Grip on your Game: The Need to Overcome the Pressures of Play; the Social and Personal Pressures of Sports; and Physical and Mental Disruptions*. These subjects lead to a basic understanding of why most people should participate in sports for the personal satisfaction gained and not to attain some unreachable goal that is inconsistent with their ability.

This leads to the fifth chapter, *The Sports Emotional Reaction Profile (SERP): Scouting Yourself*. This "SERP" test gives the player an outline of emotional reactions to the game by using a common psychological tool. Questions are answered which give you information about yourself and your psychological tendencies as applied to sports only. The test questions cover several different psychological areas of athletics such as desire, confidence, assertiveness, tension control and self-discipline.

Be forewarned, looking at yourself this objectively can be very revealing but it can cover areas that cause you difficulties in your game. The ensuing chapters help you analyze and evaluate your mental and physical sports characteristics by scoring yourself and examining your profile. This is perhaps the most personally informative portion of the book and you will recognize your own characteristics as well as the

characteristics of the people you play with as you read.

The second half of this work introduces you to a set of techniques described as your *Sports Psyching* routine to help you "control pressure, focus your energy, and get yourself set for the best chance at a successful play." There is nothing magical about this approach; it is divided into three major categories of preparation/practice/play, which sounds reasonable enough. The techniques of mental preparation must be practiced a minimum of six weeks to be effective but are sound methods to help you learn to attain a state of relaxed concentration as you play. The practice phase explains why practicing your sport (described as overlearning the techniques) has a positive effect on your game and why it actually works. The play phase or game situation phase is geared to help you employ the Sports Psyching techniques of the preparation and practice stages so you can apply yourself totally to the action of the game in an actual competitive situation. Included in the section also is a pre-game warm-up routine which can be very useful.

The second half of the book is as interesting as the first, even if you do not decide to invest the time to learn the mental techniques. Chapter twelve, *Your Game and Their Game: Psych-outs and how to avoid them*, describes in detail the various psychological ploys players use to distract or intimidate their opponents and more importantly the underlying reasons behind these actions.

Awareness of these actions, as stressed by the author, is the major defense against

being psyched out. Even if you want to psych someone out, you must be aware of what you are doing and the consequences involved. The four most common types of psych-out games are provocation, intimidation, evoking guilt feelings, and distraction — recognize any of these in racquetball? Don't be overly concerned, each type is covered in detail along with a section describing how to avoid psych-out games.

The remaining chapters deal with the subject of how to get the most out of taking lessons, winning — what it is and what it is not, and growth with your game and how to use sports to help your life. It may seem at this point that the theme of this book is how to win. It is not. Of course, it is more fun to win than to lose and wanting to win is nothing to apologize for says the author. However, if the only satisfaction in sports is to win then we are indeed in trouble.

In conclusion, let me say that Sport Psychology is not voodoo. This book is extremely informative and the facts presented are based upon research with athletes at all skill levels and ages, both amateur and professional. A comprehensive picture of the mental aspects involved in a game such as racquetball are presented in a direct and meaningful manner. It would seem that understanding and practicing the principles given can help a player at any level play more consistently and with a feeling of well-being that you experience when you are hitting nothing but roll-outs.

Terry Fancher

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COURT CLUBS

Front view of the attractive University Racquetball Club in Pontiac, Michigan.



The combined recreational enthusiasm and business resources of three Orion Township (Mich.) men have resulted in a new racquetball facility in the area.

Ron Zilka of Newman Road and Art Schell and Carl Messer, whose homes are on Hi-Dale, are partners in the University Racquetball Club at 2675 Lapeer Road, Pontiac Township, Michigan.

The three, who frequently had gotten together for workouts on courts in neighboring communities, were among the increasing numbers of persons attracted to racquetball.

As the popularity of the sport grew, so did the men's awareness of its investment potential.

The owners of property in Orion and Pontiac townships, they saw the Lapeer Road site as ideal for a new

racquetball club to serve the Lake Orion, Rochester and Pontiac areas.

They put their construction expertise together with some ideas they had developed as racquetball participants as they designed, built and began operation of the club.

Zilka, manager of the club, is owner of Height's Heating and Cooling, Inc. Schell and Messer are partners in both Vintage Construction Co. and Timbercraft Inc.

Their new enterprise is operated in a \$550,000 facility on the west side of Lapeer Road, just north of Walton.

While eight regulation-sized courts now are available, there is provision for two more, allowing the membership of the club to go over 1,000.

The two courts adjacent to the main lounge are glass-paneled to lend themselves to tournament use. The



Owners of the facility (l. to r.) Carl Messer, Ron Zilka - manager, and Art Schell.

A couple of new players enjoy some mixed singles at the grand opening of the University Club.



arrangement also permits potential players to watch a game in progress. The 20-by-40-foot courts, which are 20 feet high, are suitable for handball and paddleball as well as racquetball. Lessons are available from Kerri Vizena. She and Dick Valentine, a Lake Orion physical education teacher, are assistant managers of the club.

Auxiliary areas in the club building include men's and women's locker rooms, saunas and a pro shop.

Open seven days a week, the club's hours are 6:30 a.m. to midnight.

Universal Fitness and Recreational Consultants, a Miami based firm specializing in racquetball club consultation and development, on behalf of RDM Corp. has announced the Sept. 1, 1976 opening of their first racquetball/handball club "The Courtrooms" of Ft. Lauderdale.

RDM Corp. has three other court club locations in Dade and Broward Counties now at various stages of development. All clubs will have similar facilities and will be doing business as "The Courtrooms". Owners Richard First, Ed Torkelson, and Bruno Cerchiai are heading up the management of all "The Courtrooms" clubs.

Extensive research has enabled all parties concerned to put together a first class facility that includes all of the amenities necessary to satisfy members.

"The Courtrooms" of Ft. Lauderdale will have 9 four wall air conditioned

courts with excellent viewing, separate mens and womens carpeted locker areas each with giant whirlpools and saunas, complete exercise area including "Universal" gym machines, fully equipped pro-shop, childrens nursery and a gymnasium for basketball and volleyball.

The lounge will also have comfortable spectator viewing and will feature a 7 foot T.V. screen. Food and beverages will be served.

Further information may be obtained from either Universal Fitness and Recreation Consultants at 305/558-7780 or "The Courtrooms" at 305/764-8700. Vacationers are invited to call for special guest rates.

"The Courtrooms" also wishes to announce that they will be hosting one of the pro-tour stops in conjunction with National Racquetball Club December 4-7, 1976.

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Present at groundbreaking ceremonies for the Sun Prairie Racquetball Club were (l. to r.) Jon Oehrlein, general partner; Ken Slottery, Vice President, Bank of Sun Prairie; Tom Robertson, President, City Council; Bruce Thompson, general partner; Robert Shaben, Mayor, Sun Prairie; Jo Ann Orbon, City Council Member; Stan Wayner, general partner; Dan Rouser, Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce. Not pictured: William Birkinbine, general partner.

If you're looking for glass walls, the bold plans of the Sun Prairie Racquetball Club, in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin is the new club for you. Located at 1010 North Bird Street, the club is offering three memberships, — family, adult and young adult.

There will be spacious locker rooms for men and women, complete with

saunas, showers, exercise equipment and many other extras. In addition, a spacious lounge, comfortable furniture, and plenty of game tables will be featured.

But the real draw at Sun Prairie will be the seven air-conditioned courts, all of which promise glass back walls. The seventh court will also feature a glass side wall with spectator facilities to accommodate over 200.

A public bar, serving refreshments and sandwiches daily, a nursery, and the fully-stocked pro shop offering competitive prices, all ensure the very best in amenities at Sun Prairie.

Memberships are now being taken. Sun Prairie Racquetball Club will open in late October.

PARK FOREST



Park Forest Racquet Club Racquetball Expansion

The Park Forest Racquet Club (Ill.) will add ten racquetball courts with separate lockers, saunas and whirlpools. Enlarged locker rooms with whirlpools and saunas will be added to existing facility and a new childcare center will be constructed. The club is located at Sauk Trail and Westwood Drive (3200 West) in Park Forest. For information call 312-481-6060.

The largest privately owned commercial racquetball/handball facility under one roof in the United States and possibly the world, is being built in Huntington Beach, California.

George Brown's Racquetball World is being installed in an existing building that has some 52,000 square feet of space that will house 40 playing courts. The project is estimated to cost close to \$2 million.

"It's not only going to have the most courts of any place in the country," owner George Brown III said, "It's also going to have the biggest square-footage gym and the most exercise and weight-type equipment of any gym in the country."

ADDITIONAL COURTS

The facility is scheduled to open within six months, Brown said. It will open with only 28 courts at first. Then in another six months they will open an additional 12 courts to total 40 courts, with four spectator courts included.

"We'll have all the locker rooms, gyms, health spas and pro-shops completed at the first opening," Brown said.

Both men and women's locker rooms will have the full range of health spa equipment, including (for each) a lounge, "private" petitioned-off lockers, jacuzzi, steam bath, sauna, inhalation room, cold dunk and sun-lamps.

The gym will feature custom-made equipment by Bob Clark and the indoor swimming pool will be about 40 feet long.

Racquetball World will be open to the public, as are most of George Brown III's other clubs, with no membership necessary. All facilities, gym and health spas are for free use by players. The only charge will be for court time and that usually runs about \$3 per hour.

George Brown Jr. and writer Mike Packard go over the plans for Brown's new Huntington Beach "super court club."



OPEN EVERYDAY

The World will be open 7 days a week from 6 a.m. to midnight and because of the separate facilities, both men and women can enjoy all of it all week long. (Most health spas are open on alternate days for men or women, because of limited facilities).

"Racquetball is growing by leaps and bounds," says Brown III, *"we're geared to the every-day player."*

George Brown III is in the business with his father, Dr. George Brown, Jr. They started four years ago with one place in San Diego and now have three racquetball clubs there with one more being built and one in the planning stages.

The second club they built, in Kearny Mesa, has 12 courts and close to \$100,000 worth of gym equipment with separate but equal jacuzzi and steam bath for men and women.

—Mike Packard
from *Racquetball/Handball News*

Warner Center Racquet Club in Woodland Hills, California has announced the Grand Opening of its first six racquetball/handball courts and health spa on October 2, 1976. The facility has been under construction for the past spring and summer while the tennis portion of the club has been operating for 16 months.

The four million dollar facility will be the largest multi-activity center in Southern California and offer a variety of programs for its membership. This will be the first racquetball court club in the San Fernando Valley, a suburb of Los Angeles located 18 miles northwest of the Civic Center.

The Racquet Club will feature 6 racquetball/handball courts (with plans to add 12 more), 26 outdoor tennis courts, two yearly heated swimming

pools, private lockers, saunas, and jacuzzis for men and women, a massage facility, a fully equipped exercise room, a child care center and teen patio and also a cocktail lounge and mini-restaurant.

The main emphasis by the management is to serve its members. A variety of programs are available in tennis, racquetball and handball. Junior development programs are also included and special clinics for ladies and beginners in racquetball are scheduled. Tennis leagues have been a great success and racquetball leagues are anticipated. A head pro and assistant pros in tennis and racquetball are available for instruction and clinics.

The number one AAU swim team in Southern California, Aquarius Swim Club, uses one of the pools and offers discount swim lessons to the club's members. The Pro Shop is fully equipped with a full line of tennis,

racquetball and handball equipment as well as a tremendous display of playing apparel.

Mr. Lou Ryave is the general manager of Warner Center Racquet Club. The director of the racquetball and handball programs is Mr. Jim Bird. Both Bird and Ryave come from an extensive background in the field of physical education. Mr. Ryave has taught in the L.A. City Schools for the past 16 years and Bird comes from the department of Kinesiology at California State University, Northridge.

Soon after the opening October 2, Warner Center will host the First Annual San Fernando Valley Racquetball Open Tournament.

"This will be the first time the Valley resident players have had an open tournament," explained Bird. "The racquetball explosion is about to be felt in this area with a good number of

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WOODLAND HILLS

court clubs planning to open their doors in the next six months. Our tournament should help all the court clubs in this area promote this great sport. The tournament will be open to members and non-members of the club who are residents of the Valley." Applicants should contact Jim Bird at (213) 884-1100.

Charter racquetball membership sales have been going well for the club. The initiation fee is comparatively low and monthly dues allow unlimited play on the courts. The tennis membership is being limited and racquetball memberships will be limited to 100 per court. The 12 additional courts will be added when the membership reaches the 600 mark.

As the first racquetball court club in the San Fernando Valley, Warner Center Racquet Club has many features that compare it to the Atlas Health Club of San Diego. It is evident that these two facilities are in the elite class of the multi-activity facilities in California.



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TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Minnesota

The Minneapolis Aquatennial Racquetball Tournament at Kings Court, Edina, Minnesota, July 16-18 included 183 players from a seven state area playing in 12 divisions. The split Junior division — 14 years and under — and 15-18 years; the class B doubles and the pro division Round Robin were good additions to the tournament.

The family atmosphere of the tournament included father and son entries —

Scott Schafer - Juniors 15-18 and Charlie Schafer - Senior from Winona, Minnesota; Damian Carpenter - Junior Under 14 and Dick Carpenter - Senior from Rochester, Minnesota; Fritz Banfield - Junior Under 14 and Fred Banfield - Senior from Rochester, Minnesota; Phil Rosenbloom - Juniors 15-18 and Amos Rosenbloom - Masters from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Saturday evening brought the players together for a cookout at Bob Adam's house. Food was excellent and Dean Constantine, a good player on the court and a dancing instructor in real life, taught "The Hustle". Players from 12 to 48 joined the action as Dean talked them into moving to the beat. Dean is a master at gaining control of the action on and off the court. His dialogue is worth up to five points in a match.

The most exciting doubles team at the tournament was Brian Heeb and Pat Page from Minneapolis, who upset highly regarded Mike Weum of Minneapolis and Mike Gorman of Rochester. Then with an excited cheering crowded gallerie behind them, they went against 1st seed Steve Singer and Ron Haskavitz of Minneapolis. Brian, 23, and Pat, 25, were diving and shooting their way to victory until Singer and Haskavitz broke their concentration with a series of verbal confrontations. Page and Heeb in their first major tournament did not recognize the tactic, and the "darlings" of the tournament lost in a tie breaker.

Paul Ikier, Minneapolis, won the Round Robin pro-am event by defeating Bob McNamara, Don Brechtold, Mark Hegg and Bill Schmidtke, two-time National

champion. This was Ikier's tournament, as his control was faultless, his kills on target and his concentration unbroken. Paul was into every game probing the weakness of his opponents and playing every point as if it were match point. Paul teamed with Barry Gerr to win the open doubles championship. Barry, better known as "Barney Google", admitted, "my skill was choosing a partner. My best moves on the court were keeping out of Paul's way — he was rolling them out."

Jottings: Bob McNamara, who went from the Aquatennial Tournament to win the Masters division at the Canadian Open and complete a "Grand Slam" in Racquetball.

"Playing in the pro division Round Robin was a great conditioner — I kept improving with each match." Mac, with his two handed backhand, grafighter racquet and Munsingwear outfits, always filled the gallery.

A clapping, cheering gallery adds excitement to the game and the tournament; a smiling face, a lifted fist or a call of encouragement is worth two points; racquetball tournaments provide super people watching.

In the Masters division, George Sladky telephoned the tournament director that he could not move and wanted to forfeit the championship match to Ralph Stillman. Stillman and Sladky had split in two previous meetings and Ralph refused to accept the easy first place trophy. George then pulled himself out of bed, hobbled over to the Court House, had two people help him dress, stumbled into the court and whipped Ralph 21-8; 21-11. Ralph is still mumbling about the match... "I would rather play George when he is healthy."

Damien Carpenter, age 12, refereed 10 games during the tournament — there were no complaints, only compliments for this young caller of kills and shorts. There were many "Thank yous" from tournament director, Tuck Peterson, and the players.

Amos Rosenbloom and Bob McNamara phoned in 15 taped

interviews on key matches to WWTC, a local news oriented radio station. WWTC became the voice of racquetball for the weekend and 1280 on the radio dial was posted at the court so interested players could be updated on matches. The interviews progressed from straight reporting of match scores to the color of one or two matches which were exciting at that point in the tournament.

Then, to keep the action moving, Kings Court owner Bob Adam used his car CB unit to keep the brothers informed. One report went like this:

This is PR Pete in Edina town reporting from the Minneapolis Aquatennial Racquetball Tournament.

Barney Google of Minneapolis was destroyed by **The Blender** from Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Little Dad from Milwaukee upset **Best Dressed** from Apple Valley.

Skinny from St. Paul upset **The Lover** from Rochester.

Moy Toy eliminated **Heaven Hill**.

This is PR Pete coming back at 2 PM tomorrow. Keep your channel open.

The cast: PR Pete - Amos Rosenbloom; Barney Google - Barry Gerr; The Blender - Dave Glander; Little Dad - Joe Wirkus; Best Dressed - Bill Schmidtke; Skinny - Gary Rivet; The Lover - Mike Gorman; Super Bod - Jan Schultdt; Tall and Tender - Koni Porter; Moy Toy - Tonya Mouw; Heaven Hill - Marlene Hill.

The Public Relations blitz coordinated by Bob Adam and Amos Rosenbloom also included three stories and a picture in the local newspaper, Associated Press Releases, a tournament book for all players and individual first match pictures of each player in action. It is hoped that next year's publicity can include individual releases to player's home towns.

Amos Rosenbloom
Minneapolis, Minn.

New York

The Rochester YMCA was the scene July 4th weekend for an invitational of the top 16 players in the East. Players were divided into fields of four.

In flight one Mike Luciw was tested only by Sam Poletta, a masters player, but in the end Mike was too much as he won, 21-10, 15-21, 21-10.

In flight two Ivan Velan gained a rough road to victory, being twice extended to three games and once was at the down end of a match point situation versus Herman Neumeier of Rochester.

In flight three Leo Marsocci coasted to victory, without losing a game.

In flight four Manny Gregorio emerged victorious as he bested Jim Winterton of Rochester, 21-20, 21-18. An unfortunate back injury to John Kruger of Burlington, Vermont gave forfeit victories to Jim Dollinger and Gregorio in flight four.

Sunday, Luciw played Gregorio and Velan played Marsocci for the right to

play for the number one spot. Leo, displaying new yells and quotes never used before, talked and shot his way to a 21-17, 9-21, 21-18 victory.

Meanwhile, Luciw was relatively quiet beating Gregorio in two 21-12, 21-16.

The stage was set for a Marsocci-Luciw final. Game one was all Luciw as he shot the trademarks off enroute to a 21-13 victory.

In game two Marsocci dug down deep for insults such as "*He's slow, fat, and he can't shoot*" or after a rollout forehand "*If you'da got that I'da gone home*". This game was clearly Leo's as he won 21-15.

In game three the talking stopped and at 16-14 it looked as if Leo had it in the bag, but Luciw got hot as only Mike can get, and the little black sphere began to find a home in that nirvana 1/2-inch from the floor on the front wall. The final score was 21-17.

The many spectators were treated to one of the most exciting finals seen

this year. The finalists were given a five minute standing ovation. Manny Gregorio defeated Ivan Velan 3-21, 21-18, 21-13 to take third spot in what was observed to be one of the most honest and cleanest displays of sportsmanship and racquetball ever witnessed.

Tournament director Jim Winterton would like to thank Don Koshute, YMCA director, and all the girls and wives of players who made the tournament a success. A special thanks to Sue Winterton who had to listen to Mike Luciw's old racquetball stories all weekend! The final standings were: 1. Mike Luciw 2. Leo Marsocci 3. Manny Gregorio 4. Ivan Velan 5. John Spencer 6. Ray Capitenelli 7. John Alfieri 8. Jim Winterton 9. Jim Dollinger 10. Herman Neumeier 11. Sam Poletta 12. Willie Wang 13. Dan Waingarten 14. Bill Goldstein 15. Bud Stange 16. John Kruger.

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California

Military

Santana Courts Racquetball Club played host to 316 entrants in one of the largest tournaments in Southern California. The complete 10 court facility and health club located on Columbine Avenue in Santa Ana proved to be totally equipped to handle the event.

Due to the effective scheduling and co-operation of all involved much fun was enjoyed by all. Dr. Bud Muehleisen added to the excitement by participating in an exhibition with pros Greg McCoy, Jay Jones, and open division champ Mark Morrow. The glass wall observation court provided excellent viewing for the large spectator turn-out.

Profits received from the tournament went to defray the cost of sending the basketball team from Saddleback High School to Hawaii.

MATCH RESULTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

MEN'S SENIOR DOUBLES Gullette and Scheinbaum defeated Starkman and Northwood - 21-14, 21-15

MEN'S OPEN DOUBLES Radford and Morrow defeated Starkman and Pool - 19-21, 21-20, 11-9

MEN'S NOVICE Schoo defeated White - 18-21, 21-18, 11-9

MEN'S C SINGLES Bush defeated Dennis - 15-21, 21-7, 11-5

MEN'S B SINGLES Radford defeated Rossman - 21-18, 18-21, 11-4

MEN'S OPEN SINGLES Morrow defeated Alderson - 21-18, 21-11

1975 East Coast Military Champion, Air Force Sgt., Danny Giordano from Hanscomb Air Force Base, Mass. successfully defended his open singles title with close 21-18, 19-21, 11-9 and 21-7, 21-19 victories over 1975 Military West Coast Champion, Lt. Carl Crown, U.S. Coast Guard, in the Spring East Coast Military Racquetball double elimination A singles event.

Competition took place at the Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, Norfolk, during the weekend of June 11-13, 1976, and attracted over 70 participants. Events included Mens A Singles, Mens B Singles, Mens B Singles Consolation, Women's Singles and Women's Singles Consolation.

Enroute to the prestigious Mens A title, Giordano defeated LCDR Glenn R.

Allen, Norfolk, 21-13, 21-11 in the semi-finals while Lt. Crown defeated Sgt. Richard Allman, U.S. Army, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, 21-15, 8-21, 11-5 and Captain Buzz Parker, U.S. Army, Ft. Monroe VA, 17-21, 21-13 and 11-1. Third place was captured by Captain Parker who defeated LCDR Glenn Allen 21-14, 21-20 and Sgt. Allman 31-10 in the losers bracket of the double elimination A singles event.

Probably the best match of the tournament was the Giordano/Crown winners bracket final which lasted in excess of two hours and was not decided until the final two points of the third game.

In Mens B Singles action, Captain Fred Mangino, U.S. Army, Fort Eustis, VA defeated Navy man Leon Temple of Norfolk, VA 21-19, 21-9 to capture first place. Enroute to the finals Captain Mangino defeated LT Fred Cumminger, U.S. Navy, Norfolk 21-15, 21-7 while Temple defeated retired navy man Bill Burbank, Norfolk 21-15, 21-7. Burbank defeated Cumminger 21-19, 13-21, 11-3 to capture third place honors.

The womens singles event attracted 18 service women and dependent wives or daughters of military personnel. Competition was close and exciting in just about all matches, but Sue Cumminger, a navy wife from Norfolk and 1976 Virginia state runner-up defeated California 1975 state womens outdoor champion, Linda Crown, Newport News, VA 21-8, 21-12. Enroute to the finals, Mrs. Cumminger defeated Pam Maltby, Norfolk, in a long and close match 17-21, 21-5, 11-6, while Mrs. Crown defeated LT Mary Anne Bradley, U.S. Navy, Norfolk 18-21, 21-0, 11-8 in what was probably the best womens match of the tournament. Third place was won by Pam Maltby who defeated LT Bradley 21-15, 21-15.

Both Mens B and Womens consolation events were conducted to insure all participants were afforded the opportunity of playing at least two tournament matches. In the Mens B

WOMEN'S NOVICE SINGLES Reiher defeated Graham - 21-7, 21-10

WOMEN'S C SINGLES K. Radford defeated Montalbano - 21-14, 21-15

WOMEN'S B SINGLES Walton defeated Davall - 21-7, 21-2

WOMEN'S OPEN Knudson defeated Frey - 21-16, 21-18

WOMEN'S C DOUBLES Haas and Holland defeated Monell and McGovern - 13-21, 21-10, 11-7

WOMEN'S B DOUBLES Rossman and Burgess defeated Radford and Williams - 21-18, 21-19



Paddleball

consolation finals, Wayne Beagle, Norfolk defeated navy man Roger Lowe, Norfolk 21-14, 21-4 for the first place consolation trophy. Third place was captured by navy man Bill Gillespie who defeated AQ1 Jimmie Allen, U.S. Navy, of Norfolk, VA 21-8, 21-12.

In womens consolation the smallest gal in the tournament, 5'0" Betty Harlan, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina defeated Mary Milbrandt, Norfolk, VA 21-17, 21-15. Womens consolation third place was won by Rosemary Boyd, Norfolk.

The Spring Military East Coast Tournament was organized and directed by navy men Glenn Allen, ABCS Tom Madison from Naval Air Station Bermuda and Rick Brown, LCDR, Portsmouth, VA. A special thanks is extended to Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek Special Services Athletic Director, Mr. Del Purden who authorized the tournament and provided outstanding assistance and support. To speed up the more than 100 matches played on only three courts during the weekend, 11 point third games were played, and resulted in quicker matches.

East Coast Military Racquetball players are invited to make plans for the following Military Tournaments at Little Creek, Naval Amphibious Base, Norfolk, VA. These include the Navy sponsored East Coast 76, Navy/Marine Corps Championships 11-14, October 1976 (orders required), and the 1976 (second annual) Military East Coast Racquetball Championships tentatively scheduled for 11-14 November 1976. The 1976/77 Racquetball season promises to be the biggest ever for both Navy and all military racquetballers.

Glenn R. Allen
Virginia Beach, VA

On Saturday, June 19, 1976, Seamco Sporting Goods hosted the first national PRO-AM Single Wall Paddleball Tournament, at Jacob Riis Park, Rockaway Park, N.Y. Marv Konowitz of Seamco Sporting Goods

Marv Konowitz, far left, and Dick Bendin, far right, representing Seamco Sporting Goods, award trophies and prize money to the winning doubles team and runners up in the \$5000.00 Seamco-Marcraft Pro-Am Paddleball Tournament. Working in cooperation with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, Seamco will also sponsor the city-wide handball and paddleball championship matches to be played this fall.

and Robert Sibarium, President of the Paddleball Players Association, Inc., served as tournament directors.

800 contestants turned out to play in the singles and doubles elimination matches, a record for the sport of paddleball. National Park police estimated the spectator attendance at 3,000. By the end of the day, 40 contestants emerged as finalists to play in the semi and final matches at Central Park, N.Y.C., on June 26, 1976.



Spencer Haywood, New York Knickerbockers basketball star, presents trophies and cash prizes to Barry Shieber (left) winner of the Amateur Singles Division, and Mark Vogel (right) runner-up in the Amateur Singles

Division. Looking on at far left is Marv Konowitz, Seamco Sporting Goods National Accounts Sales Manager, and Bob Sibarium, President of the Paddleball Player's Association, Inc., and tournament director.

Eastern Segment of \$100,000 Leach-Seamco Pro Tour Coming Up Soon.

As the Seamco-Leach pro tour moves east and swings from October through December, the N.R.C. is proud and fortunate to have two marvelous hosts at tour stops three, and four.

The beauty of the foliage season welcomes the tour to the warmest host of last season's tour, The Court Club in South Burlington, Vermont, October 14-17 for the third stop on the Leach-Seamco tour.

One of the most publicized court clubs in the nation, The Court Club stands out as an architectural and practical masterpiece within our industry. Owners Charlie Hubbard and Cliff Johnson have well-earned pride in their seven court facility and we are proud that they have been so anxious to have the Leach-Seamco tour, and the N.R.C. back once again.

"The pro tournament last year was the highlight of our season," said manager-pro John Kruger. *"The people here are still talking about the tournament."*

It was in Vermont, fans will remember, that Marty Hogan first upset Charlie Brumfield and went on to defeat Steve Serot and Steve Keeley for his first pro racquetball title.

"We feel a part of the history of racquetball," said Kruger, *"and we*

want to be able to give the racquetball players and fans in New England an annual chance to view the best racquetball in the world."

The Court Club, with its imaginative sliding glass upper back walls, liquor and sandwich bar, glass ceiling to the stars and over-all beauty will, we are sure, be a superior host once again.

November 6-9 was to have been the Lombard, Illinois stop on the Leach-Seamco tour. However, the beautiful new facility in Lombard ran into some construction delays. The Glass Court has been re-scheduled to host later in the season.

December brings us to another new facility, The Courtrooms in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, our first trip with the pro tour to that sunny clime. Owners Richard First, Bruno Cerchai and Ed Torkelson are determined to put on a show that players will long remember.

Soon to have a multi-club operation in South Florida, these far-sighted individuals, along with the U.S.R.A. affiliated Florida Racquetball Association, provide the leadership and experience necessary to ensure a successful tournament.

The seven court facility offers an exhibition court featuring a full glass

side wall, floor-to-ceiling, and a full glass back wall, floor-to-14 feet, making for excellent viewing, and as they say, not a bad seat in the house.

One of the special features of the club, in preparation for the expected overflow crowds is a giant, seven foot high closed circuit television screen in the club's lobby. So those players and fans who can't get into the gallery will still be able to see every match on the glass court.

The beautifully-designed club will offer the very best in amenities including men's and women's whirlpools, saunas, oversized lockers, and Universal gym.

As with most of the hosts along the Leach-Seamco pro tour, The Courtrooms will also be hosting a number of U.S.R.A.-sanctioned amateur events, to allow as many players as possible to become part of this first time tournament.

And to alleviate any worries, hotel space will not be a problem. Arrangements have already been made at the Holiday Inn West in Ft. Lauderdale to set aside a block of rooms, at a reduced rate, for the racquetball contingent.

Full information on entries and hotels for St. Lauderdale can be found in the entry form in this issue. We hope to see you all there!

LEACH-SEAMCO PRO TOUR

presents the

COURTROOMS PRO-AM FT. LAUDERDALE, FL DECEMBER 2-5, 1976

Site: The Courtrooms, 940 N.W. 7th Terrace, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33311.

Facilities: 7 regulation, indoor, four-wall courts, all with glass backwalls. Plus a 7-foot closed circuit television screen.

Dates: December 2-5, 1976.

Entry fee: \$25 in all professional brackets; \$15 in amateur singles brackets.

Entry deadline: Thursday, November 18, 1976. Entries received lat cannot be guaranteed a souvenir shirt.

Sanction: By U.S. Racquetball Association and National Racquetball Club.

Official ball: In all amateur events: Seamco 558 (black). In all professional events: Seamco 559 (green).

Rules: U.S.R.A. and N.R.C. rules and regulations apply. No Player having accepted \$500 or more in prize money in the past 12 months may enter amateur events.

Awards: To first three places in amateur events. \$6,000 in prize money in Men's Pro Singles; \$2,000 in Women's Pro Singles.

Mail entries to: Bruno Cerchai, The Courtrooms, 940 N.W. 7th Terrace, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33311.

Make checks payable to: The Courtrooms. Fee must accompany all entries.

Please enter me: ☐ Men's Pro ☐ Women's Pro
 ☐ Amateur Open Singles ☐ Amateur Women's Singles

Shirt Size: ☐ Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large ☐ X-Large

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Bus. _____ Phone Res. _____

Tournament headquarters: Holiday Inn, 4900 Powerline Rd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309. Call Mr. Berwig (305-776-4880) and identify yourself as part of the racquetball tournament for rates of \$14 per night single, \$18 per night double.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1976-77 Leach-Seamco Pro Tour

Date	Facility	City
October 14-17, 1976	The Court Club	South Burlington, Vermont
December 2-5, 1976	The Courtrooms	Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
January 8-11, 1977	Newport Sporting House	Newport Beach, California
February 10-13, 1977	Downtown Y.M.C.A.	Houston, Texas
March 5-8, 1977	Denver Sporting House	Denver, Colorado
March 24-27, 1977	Univ. of Tennessee	Chattanooga, Tennessee
April 16-19, 1977	Racquettime Center	Southfield, Michigan
April 30-May 3, 1977	The Glass Court	Lombard, Illinois
May 14-17, 1977	Courtside	Peoria, Illinois
June 4-11, 1977	Atlas Health Club	San Diego, California

Sites and dates for the National Juniors Championships and the U.S.R.A. Regional tournaments are currently being negotiated.

The National Juniors this season will be in early July, 1977, and promises to be one of the highlights of the season. Currently under consideration as sites are St. Louis, Chicago and Houston.

There will be eight U.S.R.A. Regionals this season, double the number of last. As in the 1975-76 year, the winners of

open singles and women's singles will receive round trip coach air fare from their home to the National Championships in San Diego.

Although not all of the sites are determined at press time, the dates will be early April, 1977.

Complete listing of the sites and dates of these tournaments will be included in the November issue of *National Racquetball*.



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NATIONAL RACQUETBALL CLINIC PRESENTS 1976-77 ATLAS RACQUETBALL CAMP



**A HEALTHFUL
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Located in exciting Mission Valley in San Diego's newest and most exclusive health club facility, the Atlas Health Club. The club in conjunction with National Racquetball Clinic, Inc. offers 4 days and 4 nights/20 hours of instruction by 3 of the nation's top professionals. The instructors staff consists of: Charlie Brumfield, Steve Keeley, Steve Serot, Rich Wagner, Marty Hogan, and Davey Bledsoe.

These professionals believe in both the practical and theoretical approach to teaching. Court time consists of applying classroom knowledge and concepts to the game. The Atlas Health Club Racquetball Camp is designed to utilize the best teaching and most successful techniques developed by the professionals.

Package includes: room accommodations at Atlas Hotel's Mission Valley Inn, cocktails and banquet; Zoofari and Sea World passes; equipment package (t-shirt, bag, racquet, balls, "The Complete Book of Racquetball"); 20 hours of instruction; pros subject to change.

Designed for today's man or woman who is both aware of the benefits and deeply interested in physical relaxation and well-being.

Centralized, easily accessible Mission Valley Hotel Circle location is ideal for business and professional people—those who appreciate a work-day work-out . . . a revitalizing hour on one of the tennis or racquetball/handball courts . . . a few invigorating laps around the jogging track . . . a skin-cleansing session in the steam room . . . a muscle relaxing jacuzzi bath.

Evening and weekenders will find the location equally suitable . . . in the heart of vibrant Mission Valley with shopping centers, theatres, clubs, and restaurants nearby.

Design and operation reflects the same high level of quality and attention to detail that has been a standard throughout the 20-year growth of the successful Atlas chain of hotel and restaurants.

Facilities include: six lighted tennis courts (one exhibition court); separate saunas for men and women; steam room; therapy pool; separate fully equipped exercise rooms for men and women; twenty-five meter, three-lane lap-pool; jogging track; club lounge; color t.v., snack shop for light meals, beer, soft drinks, pro shop; barber shop; separate massage rooms for men and women; game room; volleyball court; and videotape system.

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Double Room Occupancy
Both Persons Participate

\$200.00/person

PLAN II

Double Room Occupancy
One Person Participates

\$250.00/participant
\$ 50.00/guest

PLAN III

Single Room Occupancy
Single Participant

\$280.00/person

ATLAS HEALTH CLUB RACQUETBALL CAMP APPLICATION

FILL OUT AND MAIL WITH \$100 DEPOSIT

APPLICATIONS AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO START OF CLINIC

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CHECK PLAN DESIRED

DATE DESIRED:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Plan I | ☐ Nov. 12-15 | ☐ April 5-8 |
| ☐ Plan II | ☐ Feb. 11-14 | ☐ July 5-8 |
| ☐ Plan III | | |

YOUR DEPOSIT OF \$100 MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION . . .

Make Checks Payable To:

Mail To: Atlas Health Club 901 Hotel Circle San Diego, CA 92138 298-9321

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I'D RATHER BE RACQUETBALLING

U.S. RACQUETBALL ASSN., 4101 DEMSTER ST., SKOKIE, ILL. 60076

Charlie Brumfield

NATIONAL RACQUETBALL INTERVIEW

Charlie Brumfield, the 28-year-old San Diegan, is the best player in the history of racquetball. Such has been written often within these pages, yet never has there been an in-depth interview with this legendary figure.

This Part I and the subsequent Part II of a candid interview with the true Charlie Brumfield really could be put in our instructional section, or could have run in our sectionalized *History of Racquetball* series.

Brumfield has experienced everything there is to experience in racquetball. He has won, and far more than he has lost, but he has also lost. He has been humble, he has been obnoxious. He has been loved, and he has been hated more. Brum is known to be a thinker, but he can slobber beer better than most of us.

He has dissected racquetball in his never-ending search for the heart-beat of the game. Within that dissection he has found knowledge far superior to his contemporaries. The use of that knowledge, molded within the framework of his own physical abilities has put him head and shoulders above his competition.

These are not frivolous accolades. They are fact. In the past two seasons in pro singles tournaments where politics haven't kept some top players out of the events, Brumfield has won 11 of the 17 tournaments.

He has won National Championships in 1972, 1973, 1975 and 1976. He has won countless other tournaments including National doubles titles, Canadian Open titles, every invitational singles event ever hosted, in addition to the scores of smaller tourneys over the years.

At one point in his career he won 20 consecutive tournaments.

Prior to that he was the National Paddleball Champion in 1968 and 1969 in singles and the doubles champ in 1967 and 1968. And the score sheet goes on and on.

Brumfield has been both on the "ins" politically and on the "outs." He has been with Leach Industries, left Leach and returned after failing to make a success of his own racquet company.

He is spirited, sensitive, and egotistical. He is understanding, intelligent and crude. He is the champion, Charlie Brumfield.

Born in Oceanside, California and a San Diego resident since 1959, Brumfield graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of San Diego in 1969 with a double degree in Business Administration and Economics. His grade point average was 3.96 out of a possible 4.0.

He entered Law School at U.S.D. and after earning his degree, passed the California Bar in 1973. He has yet to practice law claiming he can make more money and have more fun earning his living in racquetball.

For a truly stimulating session, we invite you to read the following interview, Part I of the Brumfield story, conducted by *National Racquetball* editor Chuck Leve.

Leve: *What was your first introduction to racquetball?*

Brumfield: I started playing outdoor handball when I was in junior high school. I became pretty good and when we moved to San Carlos, a suburb of San Diego, there was a club there that had just put in two indoor courts. I had never played indoor before.

For the fun of it, I'd play handball against these guys with paddles, using a pink ball. I used to be able to beat everybody with my hands, so there didn't seem to be much point in taking up paddleball, which I considered a sissy sport.

My avenue of progression was not toward paddleball, but rather toward hardball handball. I played for a few months and then one day while in a doubles match I dislocated a finger on my right hand, which temporarily stopped my handball career.

I wanted to keep playing, though, and started using the paddle simply because it was easier for me to grip and play, than to try and hit the hard handball while my dislocated finger was healing.

Leve: *What year was this?*

Brumfield: 1964.

Leve: *Did you continue with paddleball?*

Brumfield: Yes. I continued to play paddleball and enjoyed it so I discontinued playing handball. I entered the club championship and won it in 1964, and started playing city-wide paddleball in 1965.

Leve: *What was the transition like from handball to paddleball?*

Brumfield: Well, first of all, I was unaware of any national competition, and of course, this is prior to the emergence of racquetball. I thought the only place paddleball was played was at my club, the San Carlos Swim and Racquet Club. But even back then I hated to lose, so I would practice three or four hours a day. Once I pick up anything I work really hard at it until I can win.

I worked real hard at paddleball. My backhand initially was weak, but I had played tennis and knew how to hold the racquet. The same principles apply to both backhands, so it wasn't long before I could hit the ball well from the backhand side. I actually had more trouble learning the forehand.

Leve: *How did your competitive record continue in paddleball?*

Brumfield: The first major tournament outside my club was at the Mission Valley Tennis Club, but I learned later that none of the better players in the city entered singles, they all played doubles. Having never seen them before, it was a chance to watch them play. Even though I won the singles, it was a hollow victory because all these good players were in doubles.

The first time I ever played in a big tournament was the state tournament in paddleball, at the Kona Kai Club in 1965. There were some big names in that one, at least big around San Diego. Dr. Bud Muehleisen was in it, and he was ranked number one in the nation at that time. Bruce Russell, now racquetballer, but then a top ranked paddleballer, was in it. Russell had beaten Bud the year before.

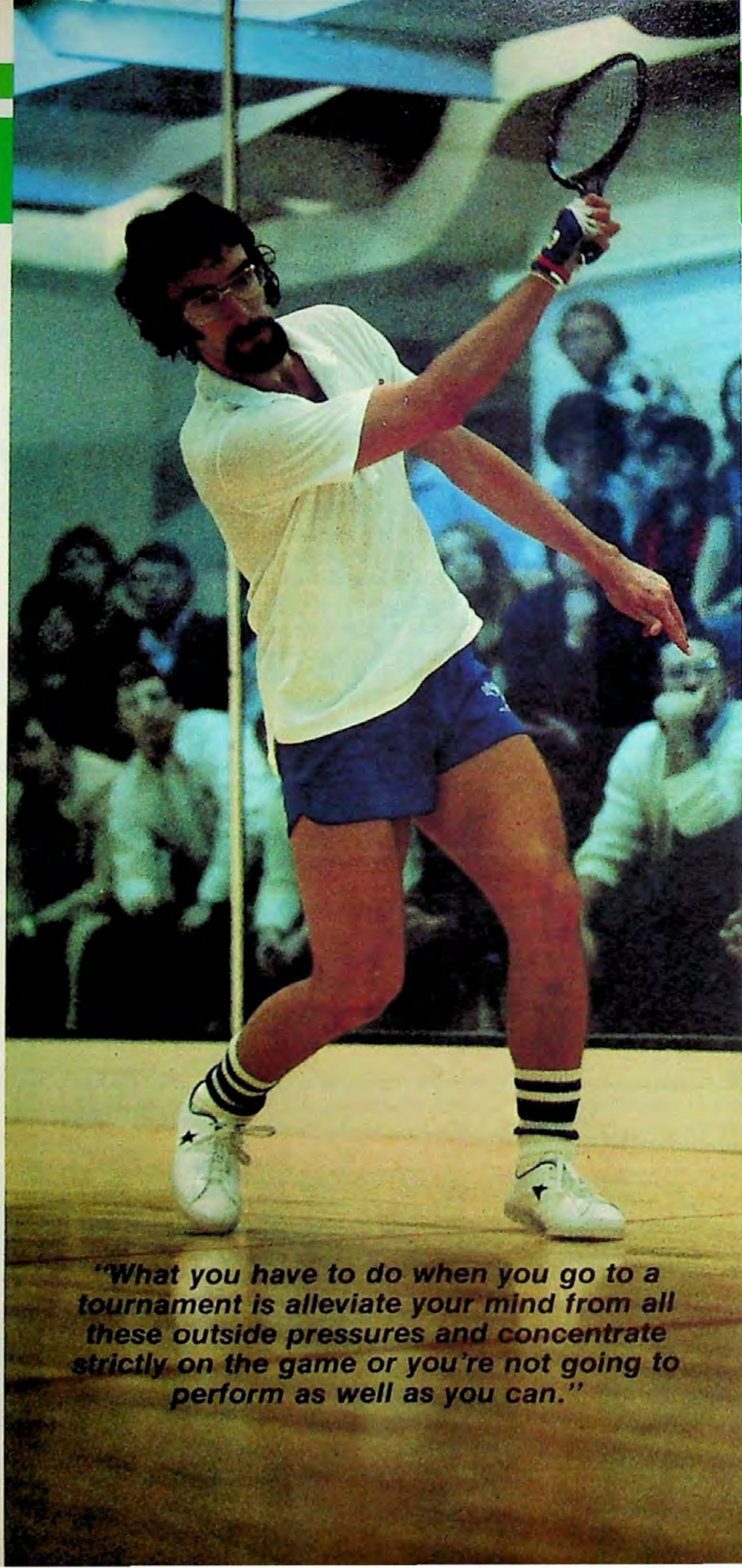
I ended up making the finals. I beat John Halverson in the first round 21-20, 21-20. He was a real fine paddleball player.

Leve: *Had you ever heard of any of these players?*

Brumfield: No. I didn't have any idea who they were.

I remember the finals. Bud came out in his "tennis whites," immaculately dressed, a new glove on his hand, and this real fancy paddle. And here I was with my \$1.50 paddle. I was awed to say the least.

Before I play any opponent I ask around to see what any of his weaknesses might be. I asked Ben Press, the pro at Kona Kai what Bud's weaknesses were, since I had never seen him even hit the ball. We were always playing simultaneously, Bud on the glass court and me in the dungeons.



"What you have to do when you go to a tournament is alleviate your mind from all these outside pressures and concentrate strictly on the game or you're not going to perform as well as you can."



So I asked Press what Bud's weaknesses were and he said, "*He tires after seven hours.*" That was discouraging.

The match was close until about 11, in fact it was 11-all both games and I got tired. He then ran 10 straight points, twice and I lost 21-11, 21-11. As bad as it sounds I scored more points against him than any other player in the tournament. These other players were "nationally ranked" and this was the first time I learned that there were any national competitions. This was 1965.

So after the tournament I started playing with Bud three times a week at the Copely Y.M.C.A. We played every day in 1965 and I got beat every day, very badly. Then in 1966 I started beating Bud, maybe 30-40 per cent of the time in early 1966. By the end of the year I was beating him regularly in practice.

Leve: *What was your style of play back then?*

Brumfield: There was no head game at all. I felt the way to attack Bud was to play the exact opposite game that he played. I couldn't match lob shots or overheads with him, - and that's what he hit. He would lob the ball cross-court to my backhand and we would exchange lobs until I would hit one short, which he would put away, or I would hit one long off the back wall, which he would put away. If I kept that up, I'd never win a rally.

So I played an extremely offensive game against him, much more so than anybody in racquetball does today. Once you learn to kill a paddleball it's dead, it won't come up. I could kill from any position on the court and that's the style I played.

In practice it was extremely efficient, - under no tension, no pressure conditions.

The two tournaments I mentioned were the only two tournaments I had played before trying to play in the National Paddleball Championships in Minneapolis in 1967. I played doubles

and singles. Bud went a day early to make sure the seeding was done properly, and it was. I played Paul Lawrence, the defending National Champion in the first round, while Bud was on the other side of the draw. He played a drunkard, an old man, and a forfeit. I played Bob McNamara, former National Champ in the second round, and Paul Nelson, another former National Champ in the third round before I met Bud in the finals.

It was an extremely grueling experience and I realized then that offensive play is not nearly as effective under pressure circumstances as it is in practice. But it took two or three years for me to engrain that concept into my game to a degree to where I was impervious to pressure. This would be as opposed to shooting, where you're always at 20-20 trying to make that one last, desperation kill shot off the back wall.

Leve: *What was your relationship with Bud in those days? Is it true he was your protector, your "mother" on the road?*

Brumfield: That was partially true. I was very inexperienced, and had never been without my parents. The trip to Minneapolis was the first time I had ever been away from home.

However, there was another major influence on the development of my game at that time and that was Carl Loveday. He more than anyone else is responsible for my analytical approach to the way the game is played. I don't think Bud is analytical. I think he wins on ability. He has one of the best eye-hand co-ordination quotients I have ever seen. He can hit shots that nobody else can hit and consequently he's very, very difficult to beat.

For instance, Bud's recent loss in the Nationals to Luther Bernstein, - that should never happen in a National tournament to an analytical player. That's what happens when a player who relies on his shots, gets nervous and his shots aren't there any more.

I roomed with both Bud and Carl in my early years of playing. The pressure was a lot greater in those days, even though it wasn't for money and the national recognition was far less. This is because there was only one shot a year, one major tournament in which all the top players competed. It was like the Olympic pressure, where such long hours are put in and it's all on the line once, so don't screw up now. In paddleball we worked the entire year for one tournament. Your draw was so important, your health was so important, how you played that particular day was so important.

Plus, at that time I was being sponsored by the San Carlos Club and they were raising money through their members to send me to these tournaments. And as a kid I didn't know any better and felt a real, sincere obligation to do the best I could.

Leve: *That's not so bad, is it?*

Brumfield: No, but that also added to the pressure. What you have to do when you go to a tournament is alleviate your mind from all these outside pressures and concentrate strictly on the game or you're not going to perform as well as you can.

Getting back to being under Bud's wing, - I think that was both good and bad. First of all, it prohibited me from developing as an individual as rapidly as I might ordinarily have. Therefore, it prohibited me from attaining confidence in myself, mainly in relationships with other people at tournaments. It also held back my game, because as long as you feel you are relying on somebody as a crutch, when the crutch is removed, like when you play that person, it is very difficult to handle. What was even more difficult was I knew I was better than he was, having beaten him regularly in practice.

To close the Minneapolis story, by the time I got to the finals, I was in terrible physical condition. Playing tough matches and both singles and doubles I had gone from 175 lbs. to 149 for the finals. The score was 20-20 in the first

game and it got down to where I had to make one of those fantastic shots off the back wall and I didn't make it.

It stuck with me for quite a long time and I didn't want to be in that circumstance ever again in a National tournament. The next year I wasn't. When I met Bud again I had learned to play defensive ball, mainly using one of Loveday's badminton theories of clearing nine balls and shooting the tenth.

This cleared my mind from having to make shot selection decisions on the spot at the spur of the moment. Consequently, my superiority over Bud physically came to the fore, and I beat him easily in 1968.

Leve: *Well, 1969 started racquetball, so let's discuss your transition from paddleball to racquetball.*

Brumfield: When I was at San Diego State they offered a "paddleball" class, which I enrolled in so I could have cake A. I brought my paddle out, and the teacher said, "you're not going to use that." I looked at my paddle and said, "Why not?" So he said, "Here's a paddle," and he handed me a strung wooden racquet. I said, "Well, that's nice, but I happen to play a little bit of this game competitively and I'd like to use my paddle during the class, the rest of the class can use whatever they want." He said, "I don't want anyone to have an advantage over you," and he handed me a racquet, which I had to use during the course of the class. That was 1968 and was my first introduction to racquetball.

Leve: *When did you first start playing in racquetball tournaments?*

Brumfield: First of all, as 1968 and early 1969 passed, more and more players were defecting from the paddleball group to take up racquetball. These were nationally ranked players, and we thought those guys were afraid to face us and consequently were going to racquetball, the "sissy" game.

The Nationals in racquetball in 1969 were in St. Louis, but the Western

Regionals were in San Diego, and they offered a free trip to the winners of singles and doubles. So Bud and I decided to try it, just to see if we could win a free trip to St. Louis. So both of us could win a trip, we entered doubles. We won the doubles since there were only two entrants and we went to St. Louis as the top seeded doubles team and unseeded in singles. Unseeded even though I was the National champ in paddleball and he was runner-up.

When we got to St. Louis, history seemed to repeat itself, as I got to play the number one seed in the first round, Bill Schmidtke. I beat Bill 21-20, 21-20, in a very tough match. It was an extremely exciting match, and Bill was and still is a real fine player. I was in good physical condition from playing paddleball and it was conditioning which paid off in the end against Bill. I was quite a bit faster than Bill and quite a bit faster than any of the modern players.

Leve: *You lost to Bud in the finals that year, yet I understand there was a lot of controversy.*

Brumfield: I think I won the tournament. However, you'll hear that a lot from the guy who finishes second. I think in this particular instance my belief was justified.

Remember, I had just beaten him in the paddleball Nationals, and I was sure I could beat him at racquetball also. I beat Bud the first game 21-14, and had a 20-14 lead in the second. We got into the rally, my serve, and Bud hit a shot that went crazily off his racquet edge and resulted in a ceiling ball, - which I had never seen before. Remember, this was with the old dead balls, in the pre-ceiling ball era. But the shot was a duck, a real floater, an absolute 100 per center, can't miss set up. In a desperation movement, Bud ran up right in front of me and crouched over in a cover-up position. At that time I was playing with one of the old heavy, wooden racquets and I thought I was going to hit him with the

racquet. So I caught the ball and said, "Hold it, I'm going to hit him with the racquet."

Leve: *What was the referee's response?*

Brumfield: "Side out." The referee, who happens to be a real nice guy was at first hesitant to make a call, and one of the people in the gallery who had lost to me in the quarters influenced him to call side out. And the call stood. So I went up to Bud and said, "Bud, look, I was going to hit you with the racquet. I would like to re-play the point." He turned and said, "Let the referee call the game."

That really upset me. Here was my father, so-to-speak in racquetball, and now when push gets to shove, he makes a decision that I know was contrary to our relationship and the sportsmanship of the sport of racquetball. This is the "White Knight." It really upset me and I went on to lose the game somehow 21-20. And I lost the third. I'll never forget that match.

Leve: *What was your court conduct like at this stage of your career?*

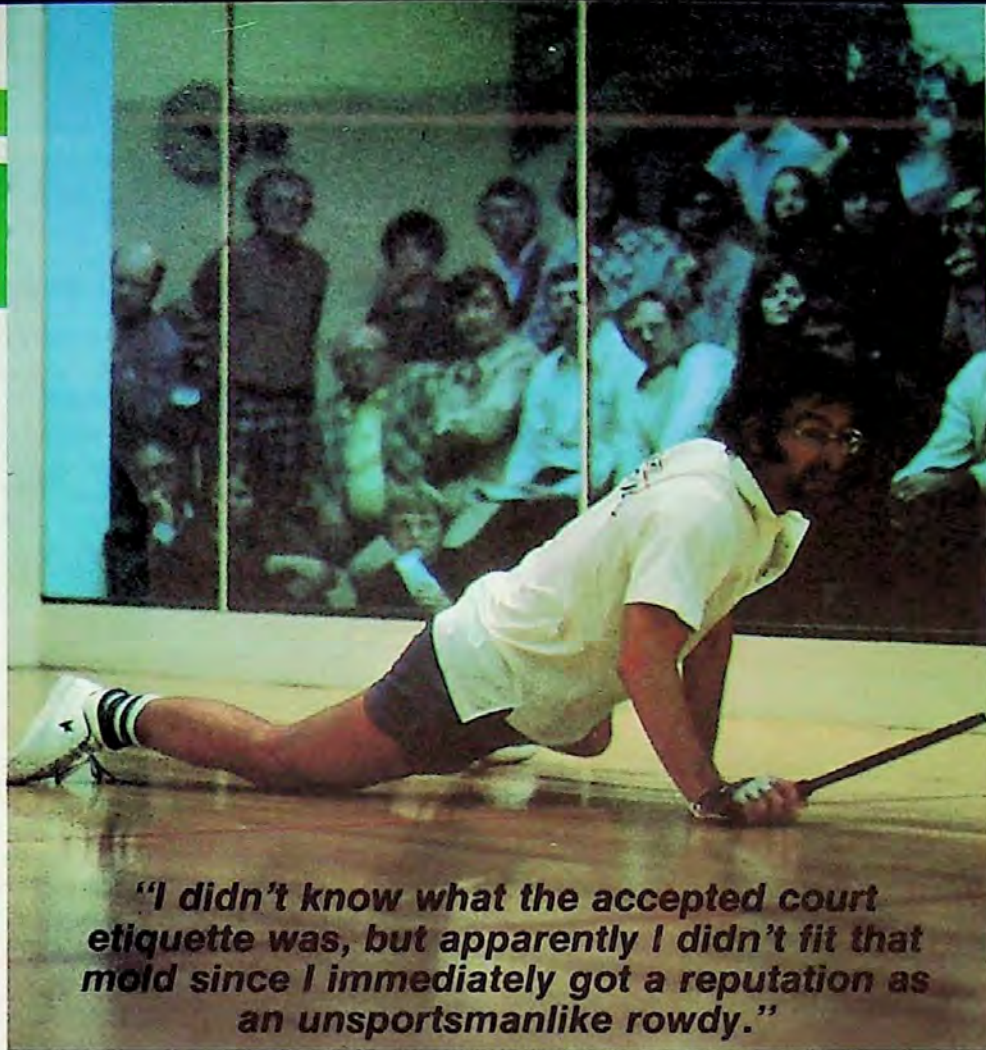
Brumfield: I was extremely aggressive.

Leve: *Verbally as well as shot selection?*

Brumfield: Verbally as well as physically. I was very fast and strong for my size so I utilized this plus my belief that the offensive player is allowed to take any position he wants to strike the ball. So I took positions that impeded the immediate progress of my opponent. They felt it was unsportsmanlike.

I also let them know what I thought during the course of the match, in between rallies. I had never played in a major racquetball tournament before and didn't know what the accepted court etiquette was, but apparently I didn't fit that mold since I immediately got a reputation as an unsportsmanlike rowdy. A very talented unsportsmanlike rally.

I've been fighting that reputation ever since, which is one of the problems I



"I didn't know what the accepted court etiquette was, but apparently I didn't fit that mold since I immediately got a reputation as an unsportsmanlike rowdy."

have right now. I wouldn't have wanted to play me, let's put it that way.

Leve: *Would you say Carl Loveday was the man most responsible for your early successes, outside yourself, of course?*

Brumfield: I feel my forte is mental. Carl developed my forte. Bud was most instrumental in teaching me different shots. What I'd do with Bud is every week ask him to teach me a new shot and by the end of the week I knew it.

I don't think shot-making separates anybody on the national level. I think what separates them is the ability to arrange your game in such a way so as to perform under pressure circumstances to your optimum ability. That's what I learned from Carl and from my own experimentation over the last 10 years.

Leve: *What have been the major changes in the game in those 10 years?*

Brumfield: Every time the equipment changes, the style of play changes with it. Originally the ball was much deader than it is today, consequently

there were no ceiling shots. Under those circumstances it was very difficult to play a percentage game because there was no "safe" shot, - no defensive serve return.

So what you had to do in '69, '70, and '71 was either drive the serve return or shoot it, those were your only two choices. That leads to slam/bang style rallies. The person who responds best under pressure at the end of the game is the one who wins those matches under those conditions. I found out early in my racquetball career that I did not respond well to pressure when the game was very tight.

I started to think about my game, trying to figure a style so that I wouldn't be put into a situation in which I didn't respond well, meaning pressure. I had to have it. I felt I should have won the first three National Championships and I didn't win a single one. I should have won '69, '70 and '71 easily. I don't think I'm being egotistical when I say I am and always have been the premier player in the game. I lost because I wasn't able to arrange what I had to work with in the right order.

Leve: *Aren't there a lot of losers in all sports with that same fault?*

Brumfield: No. I think there are many players who don't have the mental ability to arrange their game in the proper manner. I think there are a lot of people with overwhelming physical ability, but the ability to arrange that is also another ability that people often exclude from what people term "athletics."

It's always considered sour grapes, so I guess I should have lost because I did. But I was the best player and I still lost. After you lose enough times you begin to think, "How can I adjust my game so that I win?"

Fortunately, when I decided to make these changes it corresponded to a time when the ball was becoming progressively more lively which was a revision in my favor. I went to spend the summer with Steve Keeley at Michigan State University in 1971 to work on my game. It was here that I instituted the ceiling ball offense, which I intended to use in the 1972 season.

What it meant was that unless I got a shot in the front court with my backhand, I went to the ceiling down the left wall. I hit a thousand ceiling balls a day during the summer. I had the best ceiling ball in the country. And as you know, there's not much you can do with a well hit ceiling ball six inches off the left wall. All you can do is return it with an identical ceiling ball. So the rallies became very simple for me, - execution.

I played the ceiling ball down the left wall until my opponent either became frustrated and shot the ball, at which time I used my front court and speed ability to put the ball away, or he mis-hit it where it would pop up off the side wall to my forehand, in which case I would hit a hypotenuse shot, which is cross court right wall-front wall. Now, with my offense down that simple what it amounted to was that I could generally grind out a lead mid-way through the game. And consequently I was never put in those



pressure circumstances of 16 or 17-up in the third game, where I would have to hit a miracle shot to win the game.

Leve: *Has the evolution of racquets caused any game style changes?*

Brumfield: Yes, there have been substantial changes due to the improvement of racquets. The first racquets were extremely heavy, both the wood framed and the original metal racquets. I think my first racquet was 325 grams. My playing weight now is between 270 and 275 grams, so that's a marked difference.

As the weight of the racquet lessened the player became able to do much more with the ball. The fiber-filled composite racquets have since added to the game because they allow the player to keep the ball on the racquet longer. It wasn't until I switched to the

fiber glass composite that I won my first National title, back in 1972 with the old Leach swinger.

Leve: *That 1972 title continues your National tournament history. Even that win must have been somewhat empty, due to the diluted field that year.*

Brumfield: Exactly. At that time the second best player in the country was Steve Keeley, no question about it. He was extremely strong. Another strong contender was Dr. Muehleisen, who for some reason elected to play in the Masters even though he had beaten me three months earlier in the Western Regional. So without those two players, plus Steve Serot who was not yet playing singles, and Ken Porco who was hurt, the singles was pretty much between myself and Schmidtke, and we ended on the same side of the draw, where I beat Bill in the semi-finals.

I went on to defeat Ron Rubenstein in the finals, after Ron had upset Paul Lawrence in the bottom semi-final.

Leve: *What happened in the 1971 Nationals? I don't think I've ever seen you more frustrated than after you lost to Charlie Garfinkel, a match that will probably go down as one of the great upsets of all time.*

Brumfield: Essentially, I was well prepared for the Salt Lake tournament in 1971. I was in good shape and had gone up earlier in the year to play on the courts. Therein was the problem. I never got used to the courts. And remember, this was pre-ceiling ball days. The Desert Gym courts are very difficult courts to pass the ball in. Once you pass the man it's automatically guaranteed to come off the back wall. At least that's the case with the high, wide angle passing shots that have marked my career.

I was an excellent shooter at the time, this was the last stages of my shooting days. I blew Gar out the first game 21-8. And then I was coasting along, I think 14-3 in my favor in the second, when all of a sudden he started serving this ball, a Z serve to my forehand at about 50 per cent speed, a serve which I had never seen before. Right now I casually step up and punch that serve to the ceiling to his backhand, but back then there was no ceiling ball. So I was left with two choices, the first being to shoot this shoulder high ball into the right corner with my forehand, and the other was to drive the ball around the court behind him on his backhand side. I chose to drive the ball, it being I thought, the safer of the two alternatives as I saw them. But it came off the back wall.

Actually, there's no excuse for losing a 14-3 lead. It just got down to where it was close at the end of the game. I never took Garfinkel as a serious threat, even when he started coming back. I just couldn't believe I could lose to a fellow who I had been handling so easily. But he got tougher and tougher and it came down to 20-20 when I got a forehand from three feet and skipped it in. He won the game on the next shot.

He was hitting a lot of reverse pinches which was throwing off my normal coverage patterns. In the third game the pressure began to build on me. I had to live with going out a loser in the first two years when I was the favorite and as I created more pressures in my own mind, it got to where I couldn't make any shot whatsoever. I was actually struggling to get as many points in the third game as I did against him, which I think I lost 21-16.

He played well and was in excellent shape, - good enough shape to go three games later in the day against Schmidtke, the eventual champion.

I was very, very upset. That match more than anything else, forced me to go to Michigan and spend the entire summer working on my game.

Leve: *What are the main reasons that you have continued to be the dominant figure in the game while so many other talented players seem to come and go?*

Brumfield: The main reason has to be preparation. As the game changes the preparation changes. Other players have not been able to evolve to the different stages of the game and perform as well in different types of games as have I. Throughout the years I have played all types of styles and been very good at all styles. That gives me an attack that is multi-faceted. I can change my game style not only over a year's time, but over 10 minutes time in the course of a match.

Anybody who has the ability to attack in so many different ways, will be more successful than the guy who lacks the same weapons.

As you've seen, my opponent's styles have changed over the years, but the mode of the attack is always the same. Most players try and attack me with an offensive style of play. It is my estimation that the way I alleviated pressure disruption from my game was going to a defensive style of play and allowing my opponent a chance to beat himself. If you give anybody a



"The way I alleviated pressure disruption from my game was going to a defensive style of play and allowing my opponent a chance to beat himself."

chance to beat themselves, they'll do it more often than you if you play defensively.

For instance, this past pro season, there was only one match the entire year where I felt I beat myself, and that was in Milwaukee in the finals against Hogan. In my other two losses during the year, it was because the other player beat me. Hogan beat me in Vermont and Hilecher beat me in Buffalo, although I didn't put the ball away against Hilecher, I didn't hit it into the ground either.

So I rarely beat myself and I have enough of a multi-faceted attack to be able to play this way even through pressure situations.

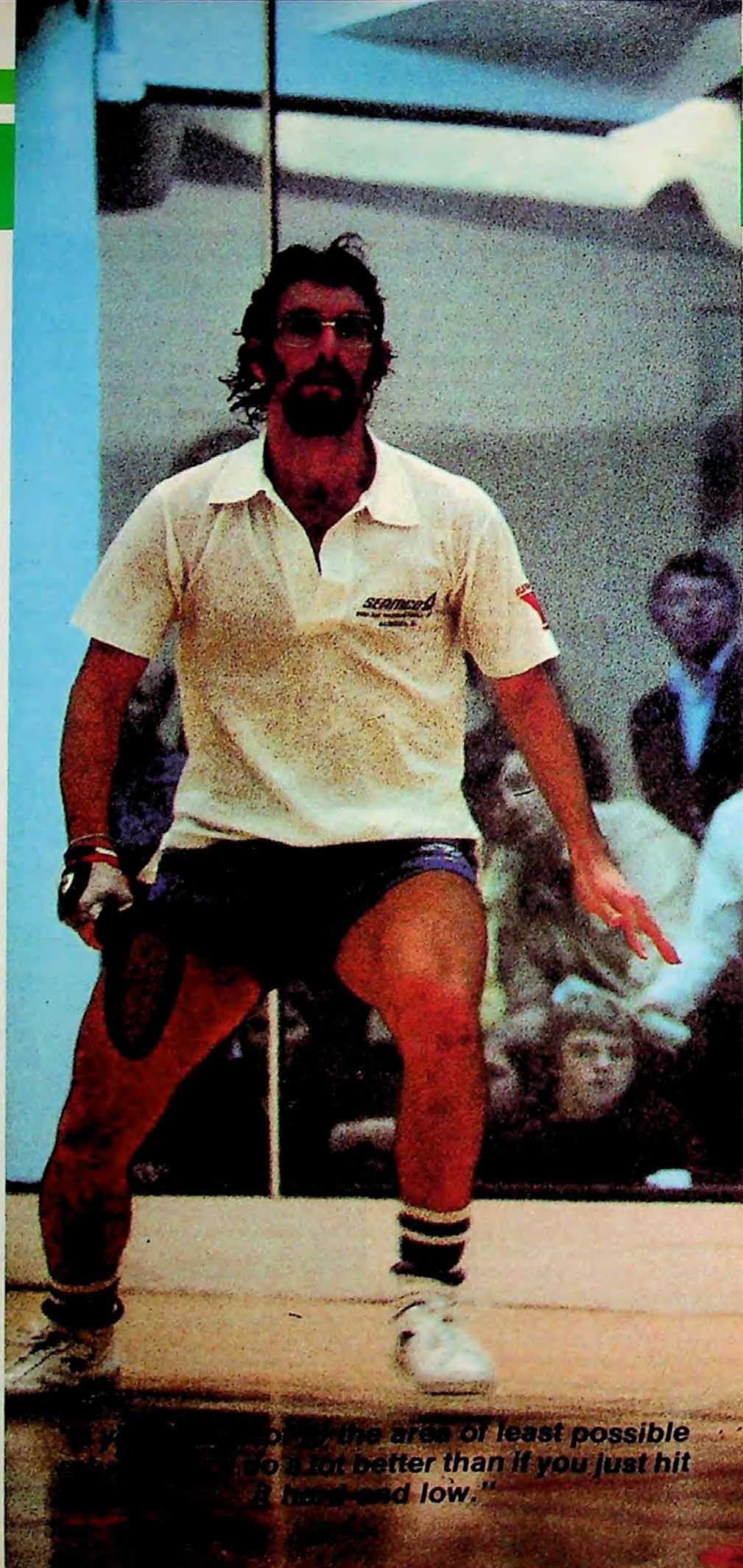
Leve: *Was there more to your decision to change your game from offense oriented to defense oriented?*

Brumfield: Let's take a little time to discuss that. The rules and the ball have changed substantially in the past year. We went from the ceiling ball hypotenuse offense I discussed earlier to my next stage of development which was the tour of the court.

The tour of the court meant moving the ball so that the opponent finally loses his edge, loses his legs and can no longer compete on the national level. I played that way because I felt that my preparation condition-wise and control-wise was such that no one could stay in the court with me in a match of two out of three games to 21.

Now that tournament schedules are such that we rarely play two matches in one day any more and the third game is the 11 point tie-breaker I have been forced to re-evaluate my style of play once again.

I thought I made the adjustment quite well this season. Initially it caused me some problems, since in theory I could no longer tire my opponent and win on conditioning and desire in the third. I had to beat the man legitimately with shot making quickly in the first two games or risk a pressure



"You're looking for the area of least possible resistance. It's a lot better than if you just hit it hard and low."

circumstance in the tie-breaker. And once again, I spent years thinking of how to alleviate ever being in those circumstances.

So I had to go to a much more aggressive style of play and I did it with one thing, - the serve. My serve probably produces more aces than anyone else on the tour. It's not as powerful and showy as some, but when you count the aces and count the balls that are just popped up to the front wall trying to return my serve, you'll see my dominance.

This is opposed to my former serves which were designed to force my opponent into a defensive, running mode of play. I believe I was the first player to intentionally use a particular serve to dictate the style of the ensuing rally.

Leve: *Have there been any other evolutions in your own game?*

Brumfield: We talked before about the ceiling ball offense in which I would never break the ceiling ball rally. Now, I will break the ceiling ball rally myself, either with an overhead drive or shooting the ball off the back wall. This is because the ball is livelier and it will often come off the back wall, presenting a set up for the many fine executing young players. I never would have done this in the old days because there was no reason to do it. I would simply move the man until he was unable to move. That is a sure, 100 per cent way of winning the match if you are in better shape and have better control. Now you can't do that and it has become much more difficult to dominate the game. Any player who gets hot can win an 11 point game.

Leve: *How do you define a control player and do you fit that definition?*

Brumfield: Everybody is a control player by my definition. They all try to put the ball where they want it to go. Now, by the definition of control as a player who hits more passing shots and ceiling balls and waits for the greater percentage shot, then I am more of a control player than anybody except Steve Strandemo.

I try to wait for the ball I can put away every time. But in one sense I am superior to Strandemo with control because I have more offensive thrust than he does so I can go for a shot earlier in the rally and still be playing within the confines of my percentage game.

I don't think you should swing recklessly. I think every shot should be planned as well as possible. I feel if you think things out you have a better chance at success. I mean if you hit the shot to the area of least possible return, you'll do much better than if you hit it just hard and low. In this last respect I differ from most of my younger opponents.

The faster ball and tie-breaker have shifted the advantage slightly toward the flailing style of play. However, I feel during the course of the year and over a career, the control player will come out ahead. I think this has been established on the record I had this past season and on my over all performances the last seven years.

Leve: *What is the most important single aspect of a player's game, in your opinion?*

Brumfield: Shot selection.

Leve: *How can players learn to make the correct shot selection in pressure situations?*

Brumfield: They can't, - that's my point. You've got to plan your game out beforehand and know what you're going to do in every individual circumstance that could occur in that game. You can rarely do it on the spur of the moment and if you do, I guarantee you will be far less efficient over the long run than me, because I'm going to sit down with a pad and pencil and map out what I'm going to be doing during the game before I ever step out onto the court.

It's like in any sport, where an individual knows before the situation ever arises, what he's going to do if the ball is hit to him, or if the defensive lineman does such a thing, and so forth.

I formulate my shot selection and pre-game planning around the

concept of center court position. I feel the person who controls center court will win most often, especially toward the end of the season in the important tournaments. As I mentioned before the miracle shots off the back wall, the overhead kills, and the short hop flails from back court off the backhand become much more difficult in the Nationals.

It's not because the court is different, or the opponent is different. It's because the self-made pressure is different. This is the Nationals.

Leve: *There's no doubt. The week prior to the Nationals some of the players were walking around like the weight of the world was on their shoulders.*

Brumfield: That's right. And for a guy who relies on putting the ball three inches from where he's aiming it, it's a lot bigger problem now. Especially against somebody like me, who's going to wait for him to make a mistake off that particular shot.

Leve: *What is your training schedule like?*

Brumfield: Right now I'm training harder than I ever have in my life. The reason for this is to compensate for the facts that there have been changes in the game and that I'm older. I feel that if I stay in shape I can continue to improve my game and my position within the sport of racquetball.

I'm not necessarily saying I will continue to win 70 per cent of the professional tournaments like I did last year, because the competition is continuing to increase. But I will continue to expand my own abilities and it will take even greater efforts by the others to beat me.

My program right now is very, very strenuous. I've been working out three times a day, a luxury of being the number one player in the game and of being subsidized by the number one manufacturer, Leach Industries. My job is to remain in top condition and I treat it as a job. I take it very seriously which many of the young players don't.

As a footnote, I think that's why there's such a changing of the guard in the younger players. They don't take the game analytically and when something goes wrong with their execution, they fade. I'm talking about the total decay of a player's game over the course of several months or years. I think that comes from lack of confidence, which comes from lack of performance, which comes from lack of preparation. That's why I'm preparing so hard for this season, as I have for every past professional season.

Leve: *What is your normal daily training routine?*

Brumfield: First of all, I do what I call "scurrying drills." They are by far the best physical preparation for the rigors of the professional tour. I can't practice with players of my own ability, since there are none. So I have to make do with the people I have available to train with and we make it a fun thing for both of us. Right now I play with a high C player in the mornings. I serve every ball. His job is to punch the ball by me to the back wall. I assume for purposes of this exercise that he is going to shoot every ball so I am near the front wall. I have to turn, scurry, dig, return the ball and scurry back to my position before he hits his next shot. So he doesn't get tired he stands in back court the whole time.

This serves to improve his control and passing game. In addition, it totally fatigues me. I do this for an hour and 15 minutes every morning. At that point I'm ready to vomit.

The next thing I do during the course of the day is head for the badminton court. Badminton is the hardest physical game in the world. San Diego happens to be a hotbed of the sport and I've got a friend, a very good badminton player, who works me for an hour. It strengthens my overhead motion and it is extremely punishing stop-and-go on the legs, which are really hurting after that.

Then I usually arrange a match a little later in the day against a nationally

ranked player. Either Rich Wagner, Dave Bledsoe or Steve Serot. Also, I'll spend 15 or 20 minutes working on whatever particular phase of my game needs improvement at that time.

It doesn't take top notch competition all the time to stay in top competitive shape. But you can imagine what this program can do to your body every day, seven days a week.

Leve: *Do you ever rest a day?*

Brumfield: The only time I rest is when something interferes. If I build in rest days and something else interferes, then I've lost a day and it's thrown my schedule off. Usually a clinic, or other appearance cuts into my schedule so I have to take a day off once a week or so.

Leve: *Doesn't this wear you out?*

Brumfield: It does wear me out. But if you ever work this hard at something and you get to that point in a tournament when you want to quit, you just think of all the punishment you've put yourself through, and you don't quit.

Leve: *Does your training taper off once the season begins?*

Brumfield: My training will definitely taper off once the season begins.

The main reason I work so hard during the summer is to avoid injury early in the season, something I think is a real threat. I think a lot of the players come off a summer of drinking and beaching and partying and when they get into those first few pressure circumstances, they try to make their body do more than it's prepared to do.

If you get an injury on a tour where you've got to play every three weeks against the best in the world, - you don't ever recover from it. You never have time to rest. I want to make sure that I'm prepared early in the season. If I can get a margin of success early and avoid injury it will give me a big step in confidence over my opponents.

I think over-training is primarily a thing of the mind. If you don't enjoy what you're doing, you're over-training. If you do it because you know it's what you have to do to win and it becomes a

drudgery and you learn not to like to play racquetball anymore, - then you've got to back off.

Leve: *What is the single, most satisfying match you've ever played?*

Brumfield: My favorite win of all time was beating Serot in Lansing, Michigan which was on the pro tour in February of 1975. I really enjoyed that. It was probably the best match I have ever seen. For sure it was the hardest and best two players have ever played against each other, that I've ever seen.

Leve: *I agree, that match was number one. And if I remember correctly that match wasn't even worth a title, - it was the semi's.*

Brumfield: Well, the thing that excites me is the adrenaline flush. Adrenaline flushes come when you're not sure you're going to win. If you're sure you're going to win and it's just a mechanical exercise of your superior ability, then you're not as excited about a win as you might be should you find yourself in a match against someone who for some reason or another you're not sure you can beat.

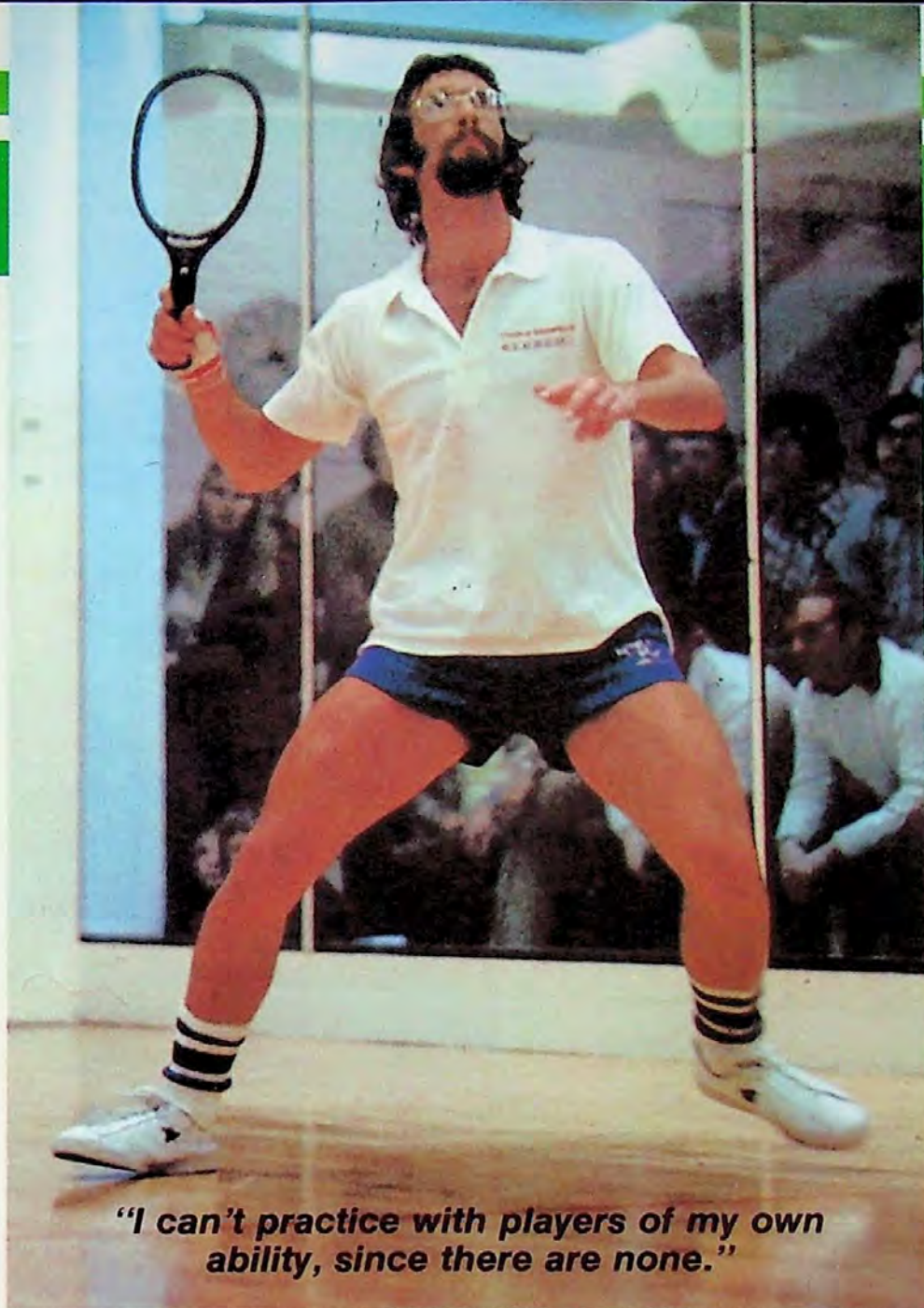
And at 18-12 in favor of Serot in the third, I wasn't sure I was going to win that one. There was a glimmer of doubt.

Leve: *Would you classify yourself as a legend in your own time?*

Brumfield: I feel I've done more in racquetball than will ever be done again in terms of years monopolizing the sport. Yet I don't feel that even with the publicity I've gotten within the ranks of the sport that anyone truly knows the extent of my accomplishments relative to the other players.

Leve: *Are you satisfied with your career?*

Brumfield: Oh, certainly. Look, there's very few people in the world who can say that they're the best there is in any one thing. If I never played another match, my career would still be successful, however, it could be more successful and I intend to make it so.



"I can't practice with players of my own ability, since there are none."

Leve: How do you feel when you go on the court, knowing that as the number one player many people would like to see you lose?

Brumfield: Well, my view of life, both professional and personal, is that if people care one way or another about you, you're more of a person than if nobody really gives a (blank) about you. I'd rather have somebody like me or dislike me. I don't want them to say, "Who is this guy, I didn't even notice him."

Leve: How do you get along with some of the other tour players off the court?

Brumfield: Very well, I think. Many of them are resentful, especially the

players my own age who have had to live under the shadow of my performances throughout their entire career. In your interview with Steve Keeley, Steve made some comments about my sportsmanship. I think Steve, who by the way is a real fine player, is one who is resentful of my accomplishments simply because it prevented him from attaining what he wanted to attain.

Leve: You've been known as the "master of the psychological game." What is the history of the Brumfield "psyche?"

Brumfield: I always try to save my most irritating moments for the point where they'll do me the most good. I

am at all times during the course of a match looking for that one opportunity, within the rules to infuriate my opponent to the point where he can't play as well as he'd like to.

This is difficult for them to forget once they leave the court, especially if they lost due to something or other that I did that they felt illegal, but obviously, the referee thought legal.

Generally speaking, I am toning down that type of thing. Now, I only use it in the most critical of circumstances, such as the match with Hogan in the Nationals. I don't intend to continue to act that way because I know it's not in the best interests of professional racquetball. But I do think it adds a little spice to the tournaments. It certainly makes me feel better knowing that I'm doing everything in my power to scratch and claw and dig my way to a win.

Leve: Don't you feel, though, that as National champion of an emerging sport, it is your responsibility to act in such a manner so as to bring the best image possible of racquetball to the forefront?

Brumfield: Yes, very definitely. We've talked a great deal about the factors that have gone into my winning. The single most important factor in my lesser performances has been a failure on my part to be ruthless. This is due to the fact that I'm older, more mature, and trying to present an image that is beneficial to the promotion of Leach racquets, myself and the sport in general.

However, people tend to forget. The person most quickly forgotten is last year's champion. So I always have to balance this problem and I think I've been doing a reasonable job, considering the pressures I've been under trying to maintain an image as a legitimate professional competitor. I must be able to also maintain an artificial hatred of my opponent which gives me the ruthlessness necessary to play the top quality racquetball of which I am capable. Therein lies my dilemma.

Leve: I assume, then that the most important tournament for you is the Nationals.

Brumfield: No question about it. Rightly or wrongly the entire season rests on one major performance at the end of the year. I feel that a point system, or total money winnings or some other standard of measurement should be used to determine who the best player in the country is, since we all meet in 10 or 15 events during the course of the season. I don't think the Nationals, although more important than the other events, should carry the entire weight of who is the best player.

Leve: Do you feel bitter at the lack of recognition you have received generally in the sportsworld?

Brumfield: No. I would like it to improve, but I realize that being in a small sport has its advantages and its disadvantages. An advantage is I don't have to compete against world class athletes; a disadvantage is I don't get the publicity a world class athlete gets. As racquetball becomes world class, which I anticipate it will in a short number of years, then the quality of play and the publicity will continue to improve.

As this occurs I imagine my records, as long as they are recorded properly, will stand as the Bobby Jones or Ben Hogan of racquetball.



Next issue: More theory, more technique, more controversy, more Charlie Brumfield.

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