

RACQUETBALL

NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

MANILLA/RUIZ AND LANDA/MONCHIK TAKE GOLD!



IN THIS ISSUE: NATIONAL
HIGH SCHOOL
CHAMPIONSHIPS

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IN THIS ISSUE



ON THE COVER

National Doubles Champions Erika Manilla/Aimee Ruiz and Alex Landa/
Sudsy Monchik. Insert: National High School Championships
Photos by KSphotography

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Racquetball Magazine welcomes submissions from our
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St. Louis University High School (SLUH) wins their 10th Consecutive Boys Team Title

Photo By KSphotography

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USA RACQUETBALL MISSION STATEMENT

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

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NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS & TEAM QUALIFYING

All future National Championship details remain tentative until entry information is published.

U.S. NATIONAL TEAM QUALIFYING

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

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

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

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BE CONSIDERED FOR A FUTURE ISSUE.



FROM THE
Executive Director

By Mike Wedel

National Headquarters Update



I recently returned from Portland, Oregon, where I attended the 2020 National High School Championships. I want to tell you how motivating and inspiring this Championship is. It is amazing! When you are looking for growth and bright spots within the sport of racquetball, this is where you should look. The High School game is growing. It is great to see so many young players competing at all skill levels. There are a lot of players that are just beginning the game and a large group that looks like they are nearing the pro level.

This was some of the most intense competition and sportsmanship I have ever witnessed. If you have an opportunity to attend this Championship next year in St. Louis, you will be inspired by the cheering and excitement generated by the many teams that attend. The team aspect of this event is the best part of the competition. It is so much fun to watch and be a part of the thrill these young people experience from competing at a national championship. I want to congratulate all of the 2020 National High School Champions, and I encourage you to keep up the GREAT work!



If you have ever thought starting a High School team and taking them to Nationals, we are here to help you along the way. We can help you get your team started, share ideas for trip fundraising, with coaching skills.

The 2020 National Doubles Championships was held in Tempe, Arizona, again this year. I want to thank all of the players who came to Tempe and enjoyed this great event. Attendance was up slightly, and we take that as a win! Congratulations to our newly crowned National Doubles champions!

The USA Racquetball Staff and the National Events Committee are working hard to continue to grow our national championships. Thank you to the National Events Committee for the hours they commit to help us come up with the best suggestions for our events. The committee members are Mike Grisz, Larry Haemmerle, Cheryl Kirk, Terry Rogers, Aimee Ruiz, and Cindy Tilbury.

I'd like to formally introduce our newest USA Racquetball staff member, Connor Shane. Connor is our new Director of National

Championships. He comes to us from USA Fencing and has several years of experience running national championships and events. Connor will bring a fresh new look and perspective. Learn more about Connor on page 10.

Thank you for your support of racquetball and USA Racquetball. We will continue to work to not only develop the sport but share the love of the game with new players. Please reach out to me at any time for assistance and support. I'm at mwedel@usaracquetball.com.



High School Championships Stats

By Dan Whitley

I became involved in racquetball as a junior player. My parents both played racquetball and I would play with them at the end of their matches. After doing that for a while, I joined a junior league and that evolved into entering tournaments. That was almost 40 years ago. The culture was phenomenal, and I had opportunities to play racquetball!

I just returned home from the USA Racquetball High School National Championships in Portland, Oregon. The event alternates annually between Portland and St. Louis. Both cities are hubs to large high school racquetball programs. These championships, in my mind and in the minds of all who attend year in and year out, constitute the greatest week of racquetball that no one really knows about. It's almost like it's a secret!

Did You Know?

- **There were 365 participants in the 2020 USA Racquetball National High School Championships** in Portland and 420 in the same championships in 2019 in St. Louis. These were all-time records at both locations.
- Aside from the US OPEN, the **National High School Championships have had the largest enrollment of any USA Racquetball Championship six out of the last seven years.**
- **Unique matches: There are over 1,000 matches scheduled every year at the event** (1,038 in Portland this year and 1,165 in St. Louis last year). The US OPEN is the only other event with over 1,000 matches annually in a tournament.
- **You can represent your school at this championship, even if you are a "school" of one player!** You will need a second if you are going to play doubles, as doubles teams must be players from the same school.
- This tournament is about high school teams (similar to Intercollegiates and as opposed to Junior Nationals). The event is not solely focused on the top-of-the-pyramid players. **There are 21 divisions;** Boys and Girls Singles #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, and #6; Boys and Girls Doubles #1, #2, and #3; and Mixed Doubles #1, #2, and #3. Each school's top player enters #1, the next #2, and so on.
- **The #6 division is for everyone and is the biggest division of any tournament in racquetball on an annual basis. It averages over 100 entrants in the division each year.** You can only enter one player in divisions #1-5, but you can enter as many as you want in division #6. It's a great way to get newer players more familiar with competing in a national championship and to give them the opportunity to play in the nation's deepest draw of any national championship.
- Everyone feels like a winner and contributes to their team's success. Every singles division follows an Olympic format and has four different color categories (Gold, Blue, Red, and White), ensuring three matches for every entry. All doubles divisions have consolation brackets. The top four in every singles division and color category receive a medal—that's 16 medals in every singles division. In the doubles divisions, the top four teams in the main draw and in each consolation draw receive medals. That's 16 medals in every doubles division, too! In total, **336 medals were awarded!** Talk about some proud players!
- In addition to medals, the top eight #1 Singles players, the top two #2 Singles players, and the top four #1 Doubles players are named **USA Racquetball High School All-Americans** and are recognized annually at the Championships.
- The overall growth of junior and high school racquetball has led to all-time record numbers of applications for **USA Racquetball Scholarships** over the last two years. Be on the lookout in Fall 2020 to apply for the 2021 scholarship.

One of the neatest byproducts of the tournament is players leave the event pumped, inspired, and ready to play more racquetball. Kids are more driven and hooked on the game. The one variable you can't quantify is the social portion. Racquetball is a lifetime sport, and lifetime friendships are formed among the players. There are always smiling faces, and sportsmanship, fellowship, and inclusiveness are at high levels. You can see the enjoyment on the livestreaming, but actually being present in the club, it is so great to see so many kids brought together due to their love and common interest in racquetball!

None of this is possible without the parents. They play racquetball with their kids; they chaperone and coach teams; and in some cases they begin to play or resume playing racquetball again because of their involvement with a high school racquetball team. As a parent myself, I know my kids will play high school racquetball. Whether or not they choose to fully commit to racquetball doesn't matter. There is a spot for every level, and it's a social lifespan that doesn't turn anyone away.

There is plenty of time to prepare for next year and start forming a team at your high school now. If you are interested in beginning a program in your area, here are some first steps:

- Ask about using courts at your racquetball club during off-peak times.
- Pitch the concept as a club or intramural for a school or a youth team activity for a church. Introduce the sport and have an open house for Cub Scouts or Girls Scouts (they can even earn a badge for participating). There are so many possibilities!
- Look at Missouri (Mohsrball.com) or Oregon (Highschoolracquetball.org) for ideas and proven concepts. Both regions structure their programs uniquely from one another.

Reach out to club owners, community resources, and the experts in Missouri and Oregon. Make a difference in the lives of high school players and at the same time, help build the foundation and future of racquetball!



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BREAKING NEWS

On March 13, 2020, USAR made the difficult but appropriate decision to cancel the National Intercollegiate Championships in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. That championship was scheduled to take place March 25-28. With further “stay at home” directives put into place, two more decisions were communicated to USAR members on March 23: to cancel the Nationals Singles and National Junior Championships scheduled for May and June, respectively.

With everyone's health and safety of paramount importance, USA Racquetball felt that bringing people into close quarters on flights and in the host clubs and hotels did not make sense. Additional factors were also considered, such as lack of training opportunities due to club closures as well as the costs to attend national events when many may have found it difficult to do so.

Cancelling these events raises the question of formation of the 2020-21 National Adult and Junior Teams that these tournaments determine. USAR leadership is discussing approaches to these challenges.

Moving into the Future -- How You Can Help

Club closures and the cancellation of racquetball events can have a significant and possibly long-lasting impact on the sport. USA Racquetball is committed to the health of the sport and supporting its players, event organizers, and club owners.

We are also concerned for the many people and families who have been negatively impacted by the current situation, financially and otherwise.

During this difficult time, if you are in a position to do so, please consider taking some of the below steps to help the sport we love prosper in the future.

Continue Making Club Membership Payments

Many club owners have been forced to close. Revenue losses from such closures are putting the very existence of these businesses and the courts they own in jeopardy. Continuing to pay membership fees during closure periods, and encouraging others to do the same, may make the difference between your club and its courts closing temporarily or permanently.

In continuing to make membership payments, let your club know you value the racquetball courts they provide. It is important that club owners understand the value that courts have to their members and businesses.

Support Cancelled Events

Event directors and state associations are the lifeblood of the competitive racquetball community. Most invest significant time and resources, making important contributions to the sport, with little or no financial benefit.

Many event directors and state associations who have had to cancel events have already invested funds in organizing these events. Ask them how you can help them get through these challenging times. Allowing them to keep entry fees may be helpful. Committing to sponsor, attend, or otherwise support their next event may be appropriate. Whatever you can do to help keep valued event directors and state associations healthy and invested in the sport will be important and greatly appreciated.

Join or Rejoin USA Racquetball as a Member

Membership revenue is the lifeblood of USA Racquetball. Without it, USA Racquetball is not able to conduct national championships, administer player rankings, sanction and support local events, fund state associations, manage the rules, foster player development, or fund TEAM USA as it strives for gold on the international stage.

[Joining or rejoining USA Racquetball](#), whether or not you plan to compete in a sanctioned event in the near future, will provide valuable support to help the Association get through these difficult times. Further, if you are in a position to do more, please consider a [tax-deductible donation](#) to USA Racquetball to help ensure it can support and promote the sport into the future.

Together, as a racquetball family, we can weather these difficult times and continue to enjoy the sport we love long into the future.

USARacquetball.com

THANK YOU!

WHERE YOUR 2019 DONATIONS WENT

Your gifts assisted in sending the U.S. National Team to the Pan American Racquetball Championships where they brought home Bronze in the Men's Team and Overall Team competitions.

The Pan American Games, the sport's premier international competition, saw Team USA bring home Bronze in Men's and Women's Doubles as well Bronze in the Men's and Women's Team divisions.

Your support provided funding to send the Junior National Team to the IRF World Junior Championships, where two World titles were won and 22 medals earned! Congratulations to Gold medalists Sonya Shetty (Girls 12 & Under) and Heather Mahoney (Girls 14 & Under)!



Thank you for being a part of the 2019 "Team Behind the Team"!



THIS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOUR GENEROSITY.

IN THE NEWS

Ashaway Named Official String of USA Racquetball

Ashaway has once again been named the Official String of USA Racquetball, an honor the company has earned for more than fifteen years. Known for its many technical innovations as well as the quality of its strings, Ashaway has long been a strong supporter of racquetball, sponsoring a great many amateur and professional players and promoting the sport through numerous activities.

USA Racquetball's Executive Director Mike Wedel states, "USA Racquetball is honored to continue our longstanding relationship with Ashaway. We are very pleased to be associated with quality companies that support racquetball. We look forward to many more years of partnering together."

Ashaway Racket Strings are made by Ashaway Line & Twine Mfg. Co., the only U.S. manufacturer of string for squash, tennis, racquetball, and badminton. Operated by the Crandall family since 1824, Ashaway has been making racquet strings since 1949 and is responsible for numerous technical innovations.

Recent Ashaway racquetball innovations include their MultiKill® and PowerKill® strings, which bring both new polymer technology and new construction and design techniques. PowerKill 17 and its sister string, PowerKill Pro, utilize advanced Zyex® polymer dynamic stiffness and PFT™ construction to provide power players with durable 'soft power' performance. New MultiKill 17 is the first racquetball string to utilize polyurethane (PU) resin in the wear layer of a multifilament nylon string to enhance both feel and durability.

"We are very proud to be the Official String of USA Racquetball," said Steve Crandall, Vice President of Ashaway. "Racquetball has always been one of my personal favorite sports, and it has been a pleasure for us as a company to do whatever we can to promote the sport and its players, both here in the US and internationally, wherever racquetball continues to grow."

Ashaway has been the Official String of USA Racquetball for more than fifteen years. Ashaway Line & Twine Mfg. Co. also makes braided products for medical and industrial applications. For more information, visit www.ashawayusa.com. Also, follow Steve Crandall on Instagram at [ashawayusastring](#). Zyex is a registered trademark of Victrex, Ltd.

WearRollout.com Continues as Official Apparel Partner of USA Racquetball

WearRollout.com (a division of Rollout Brand Group, LLC) and USA Racquetball have agreed to continue their nearly decade-long partnership naming Rollout as the Official Apparel Partner of USA Racquetball as well as the Adult and Junior US National Team Uniform Partner. Rollout is a well-respected apparel brand in racquetball and has seen its apparel worn by many of the top professional, junior, and amateur players across the U.S. and internationally since its inception in 2009.

When asked for comment, WearRollout.com Founder Jonathan Clay stated, "A partnership with USA Racquetball was my first goal when starting the brand. We wanted to be seen as the #1 clothing company in the racquetball world, and being worn by Team USA was the best way to do that. In the life of the company, sharing a partnership with USAR is one of the things I am most proud of."

This partnership will be punctuated by a brand-new line of Team USA apparel as well as a new line of uniforms for Team USA as they compete around the world for the Red, White, and Blue. Portions of every sale go to support the U.S. Teams.

Rollout Brand Group LLC is a team of brands that function in tandem with one another. In addition to WearRollout.com, RBG manages Kitch-Pickleball.com as well as Power Monkey Custom Tees and the New Jersey Open. Power Monkey has worked with racquetball clients around the country as a custom manufacturer of branded apparel for team uniforms, tournament shirts, and other custom-printed racquetball materials. Power Monkey has produced every USA Racquetball National Championships shirt for the last six years. The New Jersey Open is RBG's proprietary tournament and has played host to the IRT and LPRT since 2014.

ANNOUNCEMENT

2020 Hall of Fame Inductions



USA Racquetball is pleased to announce that Jason Mannino, Hank Marcus, and Gregg Peck have been selected for induction into the USA Racquetball Hall of Fame. For their years of playing and their devotion to helping grow the sport of Racquetball, these three worthy recipients will be officially inducted at the next USA Racquetball Hall of Fame Ceremony on a date to be announced on www.usaracquetball.com.

Jason Mannino, 45, of San Diego, California, has dedicated over 20 years to Racquetball as an Amateur and Professional Player, Coach, Mentor, and Owner/Commissioner of the International Racquetball Tour.

Mannino's contributions to the sport include assuming leadership of the IRT during economic downturns in 2010; stabilizing the number of Tier 1 events; and resurrecting the Ektelon Nationals in California. He also implemented IRT rule changes—including the return to two serves—as well as establishing anti-arguing rules and pace-of-play regulation toward improving streaming/broadcasting quality.

Gregg Peck, 56, of El Paso, Texas, has been involved in Racquetball for over 40 years as a Player, Coach, and Mentor.

Peck has been a valuable contributor to the sport over the years. His record of achievement and service speaks for itself as a dominant junior player, successful professional player, accomplished amateur age group champion, and a U.S. National Team Coach.

Peck led the U.S. Junior National Team for two years, culminating with two gold medal performances at IRF World Juniors. Under his guidance in 1999, the U.S. Junior National Team brought home 10 titles and then nearly swept the competition the following year, winning 14 of the 16 titles awarded. Peck was also instrumental in bringing aboard two key figures, Cheryl Gudinas and Mike Guidry, who went on to contribute to the U.S. Team in the years to follow.

Hank Marcus, 61, of Portland, Oregon, has been involved in the sport of Racquetball for over 50 years. When he created World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR), the outdoor game exploded in popularity.

Marcus was a talented junior and professional player in the 1970s and 1980s, but many of his successes manifested themselves off the court. As Commissioner of Men's Pro Racquetball, he was involved in the sport making its return to TV on ESPN. Marcus was also an integral part of the plans to create the US OPEN. He founded WOR in 2004 and led the charge to bring the organization under the umbrella of USA Racquetball in 2017.

Under Marcus' leadership, the WOR calendar was expanded from the one national event played annually in Huntington Beach, California, to the addition of the famous Las Vegas 3WallBall World Championships and the Beach Bash One-Wall National Championships in Florida. He grew outdoor racquetball to 17 states and 5 countries.

Marcus also co-founded the Military Racquetball Federation which conducts Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinics for veterans across the country in addition to hosting the John Pelham Memorial Tournament of Champions, an IRT Tier 1 Event.

INTRODUCTIONS

Meet Connor Shane: Director of National Events



Connor Shane has spent his professional career inside the Olympic/Paralympic movement. He was a competitive gymnast for most of his sports career and was involved with running numerous events with USA Gymnastics before moving to the USOPC. From there, he worked with USA Fencing where he ran their national event circuit, maxing out at 5,500 athletes at some events. Separately, Connor has been involved with the COMPETE Sport Diversity Council as well as serving on numerous sports industry committees. Most recently he spoke for the Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA) Webinar Series on Crisis Planning for Sporting Events in October 2019 as well as at the January 2020 ESPA Annual Conference in Denver as a panelist on growing sporting events.

USA Racquetball Names Jim Durham U.S. Adult National Team Head Coach



Jim Durham of Fresno, California, has been named Head Coach of the U.S. Adult Racquetball Team.

Jim possesses decades of experience coaching championship football, basketball, baseball, and track teams. He has worked with players, parents, coaches, officials, and administrative personnel; solicited donations for uniforms and equipment; and coordinated travel as integral parts of his coaching duties.

An open and open age level racquetball player who began competing in 1978, Jim has closely followed the game's evolution from the original racquets and game strategies to today's advanced equipment, training methods, and aggressive shot making. His knowledge and skills relative to game analysis of swing mechanics will serve Team USA well as they travel to international competitions representing their country.

Jim is a graduate of California State University at Fresno with a B.A. in Psychology. He and his wife Diana enjoy nature, hiking, and cycling. They are parents, grandparents, and dog parents.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Mac Linhart



Bernard “Mac” Linhart, 55, of Sierra Vista, Arizona, passed away on Wednesday evening, February 5, 2020, while competing at the USAR National Doubles Championships in Tempe, Arizona.

Among Mac’s many life accomplishments were a Master of Education from Troy University and his distinguished 22-year military career during which he earned the Bronze Star for service in Iraq. Mac

continued work as a Department of Army Civilian following his 2011 retirement from the Army as a Master Sergeant. He was civic minded, volunteering his time at a local assisted living facility.

Mac was proud of serving his country, and he was proud of his family. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Mac’s wife of 28 years, Susie; daughter Alex, 24; son Luke, 20; and beloved dog Rylie. His Sierra Vista racquetball buddies, Elmo Long and Matt Koop, plan to host a tournament in Mac’s memory in the near future.

-- Cheryl Kirk and Patti Adams

Wayne Toyne



Our beloved Wayne passed away December 29, 2019, at the young age of 78 years. Wayne was retired from the United States Air Force Band and was still an avid trumpet player. He could be found most weekends playing racquetball at Fort Myer Fitness Center in Arlington, Virginia.

Wayne was a fixture at the IRF World Senior and NMRA events.

He was at every local tournament—playing, coaching, helping the directors, and encouraging everyone. Wayne was the definition of an ambassador to the sport of racquetball.

Just weeks before his death, Wayne was inducted into the CVRA Hall of Fame, an honor that he was most proud of. He was so loved, and there are no words to express adequately how much he will be missed. Our condolences go to his two children, Clay and Issa.

-- Candi Linkous



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SPRAGUE REPEATS AS OVERALL CHAMPIONS

Roberts & Rojas Defend #1 Gold Singles Titles



By Rachel Hyman
Photos By KSpotography

The USA Racquetball 2020 National High School Championships officially wrapped up in Portland, Oregon, on Sunday, March 1st. Over 360 high school students from 10 states competed at three different clubs, playing over 1,000 matches! A total of 47 schools competed for titles in the Overall Team, Boys Team, and Girls Team divisions.

Sprague High School (Salem, OR) claimed the Overall Team title followed by runner-up Lindbergh High School (St. Louis) with third place going to Parkway West High School (St. Louis). Barlow High School (Gresham, Oregon) took the Girls Team title, followed by runner-up Lindbergh High School in 2nd place and Beaverton High School (Beaverton, Oregon) in third place. St. Louis University High School (St. Louis) won the Boys Team title with Sprague High School coming in second and Parkway West High School taking third.

After placing second in the Overall Team division from 2015-2018, Sprague High School claimed the Overall Team title for the second year in a row. With 37 student-athletes on their roster, Sprague fielded the largest team in the tournament.

For the first time in team history, Barlow High School took gold in the Girls Team division. Annie Roberts led the 15-girl roster. Annie won titles in Girls Singles #1 (for the third consecutive year) and Girls Doubles #1 with her partner, Kelsey Klinger.

It came as no surprise that St. Louis University High School took the top honor in the Boys Team division. This 32-man roster dominated the competition on the way to their 10th consecutive title.

In the Girls Doubles #1 division, Annie Roberts and Kelsey Klinger (Barlow High School) took on twin sisters Arya and Esha Cyril (Quarry Lane College High School). In the first game, Roberts and Klinger got off to an early 6-0 start, resulting in a timeout called by the Cyrils. When play began again, the sisters were able to score a few more points to tighten the gap but ultimately fell to the Barlow team, 15-8. The Cyrils started their second game out strong with an 8-0 lead. Roberts/Klinger took a timeout and came back stronger to make the score 13-10. Roberts hit two ace serves in a row to win the title, 15-11. Roberts stated, "It feels so good; we practiced a lot this year and last year. I'm proud of how we've been able to work together."

The Boys Doubles #1 finals commenced with the team of Darren Lee and Vedant Chauhan (Dougherty Valley High School) vs. Cole Hartman and Nathan Soltis (Wayzata High School).

The first game was a quick one. Hartman and Soltis scored the first point, but then Chauhan and Lee went on a 15-point run to take the win. Hartman and Soltis started the second game with the first point again. It was back and forth from there, first with Chauhan and Lee on a 5-point run, followed by a 3-point run from Hartman and Soltis, and so it went. Suddenly, the score was 10-7. After a brief stop in play, Chauhan and Lee went on to win the game 15-8. Chauhan said "I don't care about the gold medal; I just love playing new people. I love this experience." The Girls Singles #1 finals featured two-time defending National High School Champion Annie Roberts (a senior



at Barlow High School) against the 14 & Under 2019 World Junior Champion, sophomore Heather Mahoney (Casa Grande High School). Game 1 was unexpectedly quick. Roberts started with a 6-point run, followed by two points from Mahoney. Roberts took the first game 15-3. In game 2, Mahoney came out strong, scoring the first five points. Mahoney showed no hesitation in diving all over the court during long rallies, but Roberts came out on top. With Roberts up 9-7, she committed two rare unforced errors to tie up the score at nine points apiece. Just a few moments later, Roberts took the win, 15-11. "I'm really tired. I was just glad I had the strength to grind through this match. I feel like it's not Nationals if I'm not playing Heather, and it just gets more intense every time." said Roberts.

In one of the most entertaining matches of the tournament, defending champion Antonio Rojas (Langston Hughes Academy) took on Nikhil Prasad (Centerville Junior High) in the Boys Singles #1 finals match. Prasad took the first serve and first point, but Rojas came out with an early 4-1 lead. Down 10-2 and visibly frustrated, Prasad won a long rally and scored three more points to cut the lead to 12-8. Another ace serve for Prasad, slowly chipping away at the lead, but Rojas took game 1, 15-11.

Game 2 was a war! With the score tied 10-10, Prasad took a ball to the back and turned to Rojas with a big smile, saying, "You hit hard, bro." Prasad followed with another ace serve, took the lead to 12-10, and ultimately prevailed, 15-12.

In the only finals match to go tiebreaker, Prasad came out with an early 4-0 lead. Down 7-1, Rojas called a timeout. After the timeout, he hit an ace serve, bringing the score to 7-2. Prasad scored 3, bringing his lead to 10-2. Rojas took over and ultimately captured the win. Runner-up Prasad commented, "This guy has the heart of a champion, that's why he came back." We asked Rojas, "When you were way down in the tiebreaker, what was going through your mind?" He replied, "One at a time, that was it. My dad and I were just saying, 'Go for it.' Whatever happens, happens. Don't go home knowing you could've done more."

For complete results, visit <https://www.r2sports.com/tourney/viewResults.asp?TID=31700>



Left Top: Girls Team Champions - Barlow HS

Left Middle: Boys #1 Gold Champion Antonio Rojas (Langston Hughes Academy) and Runner-Up Nikhil Prasad (Centerville Junior High)

Left Below: Boys #1 Doubles Champions Darren Lee and Vedant Chauhan (Dougherty Valley High School)

Above Right: 2020 High School Coach of the Year - Brian Ancheta

Above: Overall Team Champions - Sprague HS

2020 NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Multnomah Athletic Club • Portland, OR • February 26th - March 1st

TEAM COMPETITION

Overall

1. Sprague HS, OR (4,072)
2. Lindbergh HS, MO (3,631)
3. Parkway West HS, MO (3,094)
4. Beaverton HS, OR (2,616)
5. Lafayette HS, MO (2,558)
6. Sam Barlow HS, OR (2,510)
7. Kirkwood HS, MO (1,772)
8. Sunset HS, OR (1,706)
9. Dougherty Valley HS, CA (1,240)
10. Mountainside HS, OR (984)

Boys

1. St. Louis University HS, MO (3,072)
2. Sprague HS, OR (2,127)
3. Parkway West HS, MO (1,590)
4. Chaminade College Prep., MO (1,322)
5. Sunset HS, OR (1,312)
6. Lindbergh HS, MO (1,305)
7. Wayzata, HS MN (979)
8. Lafayette HS, MO (860)
9. De Smet Jesuit HS, MO (855)
10. Dougherty Valley HS, CA (805)

Girls

1. Sam Barlow HS, OR (2,095)
2. Lindbergh HS, MO (1,879)
3. Beaverton HS, OR (1,440)
4. Cor Jesu Academy, MO (1,426)
5. Lafayette HS, MO (1,390)
6. Sprague HS, OR (1,235)
7. Parkway West HS, MO (1,076)
8. University HS, WA (1,014)
9. Kirkwood HS, MO (999)
10. The Quarry Lane School (936)

BOYS SINGLES

Champion

- #1 Antonio Rojas
- #2 Andrew Porterfield
- #3 Tucker Elkins
- #4 Kyle Zoellner
- #5 Oliver Allen
- #6 Ian Bell

Runner-Up

- Nikhil Prasad
- Cole Hartman
- Tom Phillips
- Adam Lancia
- Nio Hulen
- Max Telken

BOYS DOUBLES

Champion

- #1 Vedant Chauhan/Darren Lee
- #2 Josh Bradshaw/Tucker Elkins
- #3 Brendan Mueller/Ryan Strand

Runner-Up

- Cole Hartman/Nathan Soltis
- Tom Phillips/Kyle Zoellner
- Ben Harmon/Clark Martin

GIRLS SINGLES

Champion

- #1 Annie Roberts
- #2 Hannah Carver
- #3 Brielle Fernando
- #4 Izzy Castaldi
- #5 Chloe Hilsenteger
- #6 Clara Mundal

Runner-Up

- Heather Mahoney
- Alexandra Xu
- Hailey Fitts
- Ava Pietoso
- Janka Gerber
- Angelina Tesfu

GIRLS DOUBLES

Champion

- #1 Kelsey Klinger/Annie Roberts
- #2 Brielle Fernando/Elizabeth Nangle
- #3 Libby Eichhorn/Emma Wood

Runner-Up

- Arya Cyril/Esha Cyril
- Izzy Castaldi/Nicole Fritsch
- Janka Gerber/Maggie Leath

MIXED DOUBLES

Champion

- #1 Vedant Chauhan/Anisha Gupta
- #2 Josh Bradshaw/Caitlyn Joye
- #3 Jrue Blassingame/Nicole Fritsch

Runner-Up

- Erin Slutzky/Ethan Wood
- Christal Belsterling/Ben Sheehan
- Ian Bell/Ellie Horn

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Girls #1 Doubles Champions
Annie Roberts and Kelsey Klinger (Barlow HS)

2020 HIGH SCHOOL ALL AMERICANS

Boys

- Cody Boucher (Gilford, NH)
Vedant Chauhan (Dougherty Valley, CA)
Julius Ellis (Don Riggio, CA)
Atom Fjeldsted (Beaverton, OR)
Alec Grove (Chaminade, MO)
Cole Hartman (Wayzata, MN)
Rory Lampe (Sprague, OR)
Darren Lee (Dougherty Valley, CA)
Adam Pendleton (Chaminade, MO)
Andrew Porterfield (St. Louis University, MO)
Nikhil Prasad (Washington, CA)
Brady Reynolds (Gilford, NH)
Antonio Rojas (Langston Hughes, CA)
William Sherman (Lafayette, MO)
Nathan Soltis (Wayzata, MN)
Cody Thomas (Granite Bay, CA)
Ethan Wood (Parkway West, MO)

Girls

- Bella Bertarelli (Lindbergh, MO)
Alondra Canchola (Stockton, CA)
Hannah Carver (University, WA)
Megan Carver (University, WA)
Arya Cyril (Quarry Lane, CA)
Esha Cyril (Quarry Lane, CA)
Shane Diaz (San Antonio, TX)
Anisha Gupta (Dougherty Valley, CA)
Kelsey Klinger (Barlow, OR)
Katt Macgregor (Sprague, OR)
Heather Mahoney (Casa Grande, CA)
Grace Maloney (Lindbergh, MO)
Kareena Mathew (Crescent Valley, OR)
Annie Roberts (Barlow, OR)
Erin Slutzky (Parkway, MO)
Hannah Werk (Lafayette, MO)
Alexandra Xu (Beaverton, OR)





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Alliances of Youth and Experience Prevail at the 2020 National Doubles Championships

Manilla/Ruiz and Landa/Monchik Take Gold!

By Renée Isherwood
Photos By KSphotography



The 2020 USA Racquetball National Doubles Championships presented by Penn Racquetball and Tempe Tourism was held at the Arizona State University Sun Devil Fitness Center, February 5th-9th. Competitors numbering 330 from 32 states participated, playing more than 500 matches. With National Titles and Team USA appointments on the line, the competition was fierce!

In the Women's Doubles Team Qualifying semifinal, the #1 seed team of Aimee Ruiz and Erika Manilla took on Erin Slutzky and Jazmin Trevino. The experience of Ruiz and the power of Manilla were too much for this team and they won 15-7, 15-7. This was Slutzky and Trevino's first time teaming up together, and we look forward to seeing them compete again next year.

The second semifinal featured #2 seed Kelani Lawrence and Sheryl Lotts taking on Hollie Scott and Lexi York. All four have been making their mark on the LPRT this season in singles, and each team has been playing together on tour, so we knew they were in for a great battle. Lawrence has a variety of serves which can throw her opponents off guard, but Scott/York were prepared for the z-serves, jams, and wraparounds and handled them with ease, winning the first game 15-8. In the second game Lawrence/Lotts raced out to an 8-2 lead but Scott/York clawed their way back to 5-8. With Lawrence making great gets in the front of court and Lotts covering the back of the court, they took another commanding lead and went up 11-5. We thought this match was going tiebreaker! However, Scott/York thought otherwise and fought back to 10-11. At 12-12, Lawrence/Lotts called a time out. At 13-12, York served an ace to the left side to get to match point, but Lawrence/Lotts got the serve back. After one point scored for encroachment on York, it was a side out and Scott/York

were back in the box for another chance at the match. Side out again! Lawrence/Lotts could not convert, and Scott/York were back in the box to serve yet again for the match. After taking a timeout to regroup, Scott/York were able to score the final point and secure their place in the finals.

In the Women's Doubles Team Qualifying final between Ruiz/Manilla and Scott/York, Ruiz's variety of drive and z-serves kept Scott off guard. This catapulted Ruiz and Manilla to an 11-1 lead. Scott and York climbed back, scoring five unanswered points. Once Ruiz got the serve back, she didn't let up, leading the ladies to a 15-6 first game. Scott became frustrated in the second game, calling an early time out and coming back in to take a 5-4 lead. After several rallies back and forth at 5-4, Ruiz and Manilla got the serve back, and they took off from there. The second game ended 15-9 with an encroachment call on York, giving Ruiz her twelfth National Doubles title and Manilla her first.

The Men's Doubles Team Qualifying semifinals were equally exciting. In one semifinal, Sudsy Monchik and Alejandro "Alex" Landa took on the #1 seeds and defending champions Rocky Carson and Charlie Pratt. Monchik is no stranger to winning National Doubles titles; he's won this event twice, once in 1994 with Tim Sweeney and his most recent in 2018 with Carson. Landa had previously competed for the Mexican National Team and possesses dual citizenship. With written approval from the Mexican Federation, Landa entered National Doubles to attempt to qualify to be a member of the U.S. National Team. This semifinal on paper looked to be one of the best matches of the tournament, and it did not disappoint. In the first game Monchik/Landa appeared the more experienced team, even having never stepped onto the court

together before this event. They came out to a quick 8-4 lead with Carson/Pratt stopping them a brief moment to score several quick points, but Monchik/Landa prevailed and won the first game 15-8. The second game was a battle back and forth until 8-8 when Carson/Pratt started gaining a comfortable lead and closed out the game 15-9. In the tiebreaker, Carson and Pratt went out to a 6-2 lead, prompting a timeout by Monchik/Landa. Monchik/Landa then started chipping away at the lead with some great wide-angle passes. They tied it up at 8-8. From there, the two carried the momentum to win the match 11-10 on a skip ball by Pratt.

The second semifinal featured 2018 Runners-Up Jose Diaz/Jake Bredenbeck vs. the newly formed team of Erik Garcia/David “Bobby” Horn. Diaz/Bredenbeck went out quickly to a 6-2 lead, but Garcia/Horn crept back in the game and eventually took the lead, winning 15-10. In the second game, Diaz/Bredenbeck started looking like the team that has been playing together for years. Diaz’s anticipation and quick reflexes in the front of the court coupled with Bredenbeck’s hard hitting in the back brought them to a comfortable win in the second game, 15-5. They carried this momentum into the tiebreaker where they won 11-3.

It was a packed crowd for the final! Monchik/Landa vs. Diaz/Bredenbeck. Down the first game 3-10, Bredenbeck’s power allowed the duo to fight their way back to 11-13, but Landa and Monchik held on to take the first game. Early in game two, there were several serves with no points scored. Diaz/Bredenbeck went on a run at 10-4, with Diaz making a squeeze pinch to take them to 11. There were long rallies followed by roars from an appreciative crowd. Diaz/Bredenbeck took game 2, forcing the tiebreaker. The third game was close throughout. At 8-8, the crowd got behind Diaz/Bredenbeck. The match became heated, with both teams jawing at each other. At 10-9, Referee Troy Warigon called a skip ball on Diaz/Bredenbeck which was appealed but not overturned. Serving for the match, Landa executed a straight-in lob serve that Bredenbeck skipped, which crowned Landa and Monchik the National Doubles Champions.

In the Race for the Team (Singles), Rocky Carson battled Alejandro Landa in the Men’s Team Qualifying Singles finals. Throughout the match, there were numerous gasps and cheers for the incredible gets these two managed. Carson was in complete control of game 1, winning 15-6. Landa’s frustration showed in game 2. And while Landa brought the score to 13-12, Carson dug out the win, 15-14, earning himself 30 more points going into the final qualifying event in May at National Singles.

Erika Manilla and Hollie Scott faced off in the finals of the Women’s Singles Team Qualifying division. These two former Junior National Team teammates battled fiercely with Scott winning the first game 15-3. Each fought hard for the game 2 win, with Manilla ultimately forcing the tiebreaker after a 15-12 win. This tiebreaker was a thriller for the racquetball crowd! Each player left it all on the court, trading serves and taking the game to 9-9. Scott pulled out the win, 11-9.

Amateurs competed, too! See pp. 20-21 for a complete listing of Gold and Silver medalists in Tempe.



Above: Jake Bredenbeck, David “Bobby” Horn, Jose Diaz, and Erik Garcia in US Team Qualifying Doubles
Right: US Team Qualifying Doubles Runners-Up Lexi York and Hollie Scott

2020 NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona · February 5 - 9

MENS

Division

Qualifying
Open
Elite
24-
30+
35+
40+
45+
50+
55+
60+
65+
70+
75+
80+
30+ Elite
40+ Elite
50+ Elite
A
B
C
30+ A
40+ A
50A/60A
Centurion+ Open/Elite
Centurion A
Centurion B
Mega Centurion
50+ B
60+ B
60+ C
Heroes Open
Heroes B
Heroes 50+

Champion

Alejandro Lando/Sudsy Monchik
Maurice Miller/Troy Warigon
Armando Burmendez/Tony Hernandez
Iain Dunn/Paul Saraceno
Destry Everhart/Jacob Corrigan
Brent Huff/Damian Zamorano
Jason Richard Conway/Mark Monje
Jeff Stark/Keith Minor
Jeff Stark/Keith Minor
Chris Hawks/Stephen Henderson
Mike Lubbers/Dave Azuma
Dave Azuma/Mark Baron
Jim Harvey/Mike Pawka
Danial White/James Troutt
Francis Florey/William Herron
David Piper/Gary Desanti
Dominic Maestes/Ronen Tish
David DeCicco/Gregg Espin
Coy Rogers/Mel West
Dan Dryden/David Bandelier
Kevin Malison/Rich Bailowitz
Brian Laney/Jon Rafkind
David Singer/Jake Ryan
Chris Handorf/Ron Couch
Jeff Stark/Tim Hansen
Jeffrey Hill/Jake Ryan
Jeffrey Hill/David Singer
Gilbert Cepeda/Jim Durham
Dan Dryden/David Bandelier
Dave Williams/Sam Anselmo
Kevin Malison/Rich Bailowitz
Dominic Maestes/AJ Bennett
Justin Pryzbyla/Michael Mayer
David Bandelier/Orlando Welsh

Runner-Up

Jake Bredenbeck/Jose Diaz
Thomas Carter/Will Reynolds
Iain Dunn/Jeffrey Rollins
Jacob Kingsford/Taner Trujillo
Bryan Crosser/Anthony Herrera
Brent Walters/Jonathan Clay
Brian Ahern/Mike Gaffney
Jason Richard Conway/Mark Monje
Doug Ganim/Kelly North
Unchallenged
Stephen Wattz/Tim Hansen
Billy Cannon/James Corrigan
Bruce Thompson/Joe Weiss
George Moore/ Robert Sullins
Unchallenged
Unchallenged
Unchallenged
Mike Grisz/Rick Betts
Jose Perez/Jon Rafkind
Frank Saraceno/Paul Saraceno
Jody Ashley/Patrick Buckley
Matt Bartlett/Bob Hinke
Ro Blackwood/Stefan Rudolph
Douglas Fulp/Thomas McCloskey
Giovanni Luciano/Terry Kisling
Eric New/Will Costanza
Charles Pelton/Tom Fry
Mark Baron/Tyrone Gilmore
Frank Saraceno/Tom Fry
Mark Sikorski/Ray Cornell
Unchallenged
Ian Burgess/Thomas McCloskey
Unchallenged
Robert Frazier/Tyrone White

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WOMENS

Division

Qualifying
Open
Elite
A/C
30+
35+
45+
55+
60+
65+
75+
Centurion+ Open
30+ A
40+ A
50+ A
Centurion A
40+ Elite
50+ Elite
Mega Centurion

Champion

Aimee Ruiz/Erika Manilla
Jazmin Trevino/Erin Slutzky
Michele Stapleton/Rebecca Bowman
Andrea Hartman/Therese Zadnik Klecker
Ashley Karmelin/Katara Borrero
Kanesha Madison/Felicia Green
CJ Herceg/Debra Tisinger-Moore
Debra Tisinger-Moore/Huguette Keohen
Janet Tyler/Mary Lyons
Terry Ann Rogers/Wanda Collins
Mildred Gwinn/Marquita Molina
Debra Tisinger-Moore/Malia Bailey
Rebecca Bowman/Kim Reimschisel
Francine Fulp/Janet Scheffer
Cathy Law/Michelle Lekites
Huguette Keohen/Maureen Baldwin
Michele Stapleton/Vivian Schneider
Celia Vigil/Cindy Gilbert
Mildred Gwinn/Marquita Molina

Runner-Up

Hollie Scott/Lexie York
Janet Tyler/Mary Lyons
Michele-Lynn Luke/Sarah Houghtailing
Esther Lozano/Cheryl Vlacilek
Unchallenged
Unchallenged
Cindy Tilbury/Jennifer Hunter
Unchallenged
Cindy Tilbury/Sandy Rios
Carla Francis/Cheryl Conrad
Unchallenged
Susie Boulanger/Sarah Houghtailing
Meaghan Lieburn/Therese Zadnik Klecker
Doris Roberts/Kelly Johnson
Tami Costanza/Doris Roberts
Cheryl Conrad/Michelle Lekites
CJ Herceg/Maureen Baldwin
Unchallenged
Unchallenged

MIXED

Division

Open
Elite
30+
35+
40+
60+
65+
70+
75+
Centurion+ Open
A
B
C
25+ Elite
40+ Elite
50+ Elite
45+ A
50+ A
55+ A
60+ A
Centurion+ A
35+ B
50+ B
Centurion+ B
Centurion+ C
Mega Centurion

Champion

Melania Sauma/Preston Tribble
Estefania Perez/Jose Perez
Ashley Karmelin/Destry Everhart
Aimee Ruiz/Jonathan Clay
Susie Boulanger/Damian Zamorano
Dave Azuma/Mary Lyons
Billy Cannon/Diana Matthews
Jim Harvey/Shirley Parsons
James Troutt/Nidia Funes
Malia Bailey/Will Reynolds
Huguette Keohen/Paul Saraceno
Jason S./Michelle Dockter
Mark Sikorski/Michelle Dockter
Stephanie Bankes/Pierce Johnston
Ken Courtney/Vivian Schneider
Tom Lonardo/Celia Vigil
Richard Aal/Wendy Miller
Chris Handorf/Julie McNeil
Tami Costanza/Will Costanza
Cheryl Jones/David Johnson
Aaron Parsons/Shirley Parsons
Matt Rustin/Meaghan Lieburn
Claudia Marco/John Ortiz
Carter Jaynes/Lorena Chables
Russ Randolph/Sophie Thompson
Cathy Law/Warren Bailey

Runner-Up

Amie Brewer/Thomas Gerhardt
Rebecca Bowman/AJ Bennett
Unchallenged
Amie Brewer/Brent Walters
Unchallenged
Unchallenged
Jim Barrett/Susan Hendricks
Unchallenged
Danial White/Marquita Molina
Michele Stapleton/Steve Strahler
Patrice Calvi/Ryan Lettow
Patrice Calvi/Roberto Tijerino
Russ Randolph/Sophie Thompson
Unchallenged
Jeffery Rollins/Maureen Baldwin
David Pardun/Kim Reimschisel
Unchallenged
Cathy Law/Joe Law
Unchallenged
Cheryl Kirk/Robert Frazier
Harold Jagoda/Kimberly Randolph
Andrew Blasquez/Michelle Dockter
Unchallenged
Jack Morgenroth/Betty Mota
Sharon Mooney/Ed Mooney
Jill Avery/Kevin Dahlberg







The Race for the 2020-2021 U.S. National Team

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

THE UNITEDHEALTHCARE US OPEN COMPRISES 20 PERCENT OF THE TEAM QUALIFICATION PROCESS, WITH A TEAM QUALIFYING SINGLES DIVISION HELD AT NATIONAL DOUBLES CONTRIBUTING 30 PERCENT AND THE NATIONAL SINGLES TEAM QUALIFYING DIVISION COMPRISING THE REMAINING 50 PERCENT.

Final U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings SINGLES DIVISION

STANDING	PLAYER	US OPEN IRT DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	SINGLES DIVISION AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%	NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	TOTAL POINTS
1	ROCKY CARSON	10	2	100	30			32
2	ALEJANDRO LANDA	-	-	80	24			24
T3	JAKE BREDENBECK	10	2	60	18			20
T3	DAVID HORN	10	2	60	18			20
T5	THOMAS CARTER	10	2	30	9			11
T5	ADAM MANILLA	10	2	30	9			11
7	MAURICE MILLER	5	1	30	9			10
8	MAURICIO ZELADA	0	0	30	9			9

Final U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings SINGLES DIVISION

STANDING	PLAYER	US OPEN LPRT DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	SINGLES DIVISIONS AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%	NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	TOTAL POINTS
1	HOLLIESCOTT	5	1	100	30			31
2	ERIKA MANILLA	0	0	80	24			24
3	RHONDA RAJSICH	10	2	60	18			20
4	KELANI LAWRENCE	5	1	60	18			19
T5	SHERYL LOTTS	5	1	30	9			10
T5	LEXI YORK	5	1	30	9			10
T5	CASSIE LEE	5	1	30	9			10
8	JESSICA CHEN	0	0	30	9			9

THE QUALIFICATION PROCESS FOR DOUBLES TEAMS CONTINUES TO BE BASED ON THE TEAM QUALIFYING DOUBLES DIVISION AT USAR NATIONAL DOUBLES.



WSMRA Annual Women's Senior/Masters Tournament Begins New Decade in St. Louis!

"Meet Me in St. Louis" was the theme of the Women's Senior/Masters Racquetball Association's 31st annual event held January 17-19, 2020, at Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord. St. Louis was a great location to begin the fourth decade of this tournament, since in 1993 at the 4th Annual event in St. Louis, the WSMRA was formed as an organization to carry on the tournament and promote racquetball as the sport for a lifetime.

Tournament Director Shari Coplen had a wonderful treat in store for players arriving early: a Thursday morning tour showcasing many highlights of St. Louis. Shari made sure players saw everything from the famous St. Louis Gateway Arch and Budweiser Farms to the many beautifully restored Victorian houses and a drive through lovely Forest Park, site of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St. Louis World's Fair) where many structures including the Art Museum remain. The grand finale was a visit to the St. Louis Cathedral with its gorgeous collection of mosaics, the largest outside of Russia. Snacks were provided featuring local favorites Fitz's Root Beer and Ted Drewes Frozen Custard.

On Thursday afternoon the tournament kicked off with the traditional "fun doubles" to benefit breast cancer research. This is a yearly tradition that gives players a chance to check out the courts and facilities, and this year several local high school players joined us on the courts. The players are always generous with their contributions and over \$370 was raised for breast cancer awareness and research, thanks to the efforts of Nidia Funes who runs this event so well each year.

Following the fun doubles, players checked in and received their tournament gift bags: Gearbox backpacks from Pinchshot owners Brian Shaw and Nancy Davis stuffed with many local products including playing cards featuring the St. Louis Gateway Arch; chocolate bars from Crown Candy Kitchens; Tums (who knew they made Tums in St. Louis?); headbands courtesy of "Court Diva" Joanna Reyes; and a welcome packet with a letter from the Mayor of St. Louis. While players enjoyed snacks and drinks, Shari and WSMRA Tournament Committee Chair Terry Rogers went over the format, rules, and procedures. Players received their awesome tournament hoodie jackets and the group picture was taken directly after check-in while everyone was at the club.

Friday morning the tournament kicked off with round robin play in singles and doubles for the 45 players from 23 states and Guatemala (yes, this is truly an international event!). A first for the WSMRA, Cindy Tilbury arranged to live stream some of the matches, and we had over 5,000 views during the weekend! Skill level doubles were offered, and many players chose to play two doubles divisions, or one singles and one doubles. This meant that a few intrepid players had 12 or more matches over 2-1/2 days!

It takes a lot to fuel these ladies, and Shari made sure that the food served all weekend featured delicious local specialties. A real hit was the "Goosey Louie" butter cake.

The players also had time to check out the silent auction, organized every year by auction specialist Carol Gellman and including many donated items including equipment from Head and Gearbox, candy, art items, and entries to tournaments from the NMRA and World Seniors. This annual event raises money for the WSMRA and an additional worthy cause. This year it went to support Missouri High School Racquetball, to help grow the sport. Over \$500 was raised, thanks to the many donors and bidders!

The Saturday night banquet is a highlight of the weekend, and Shari Coplen outdid herself with a beach theme complete with palm trees, flamingo lights, and leis for everyone! Bar-B-Q from Pappy's Smokehouse, along with other local favorites, ensured a delicious dining experience.

The program started with a moment of silence to remember all the friends who we lost in the last year, including long-time WSMRA player and inspiration Lola Markus and her husband Ray, a true supporter of women's racquetball.

WSMRA Chair Kendra Tutsch presented a gift bag of Wisconsin goodies to Tournament Director Shari Coplen for her incredible efforts to make the tournament a fun experience for all. Special thanks also went out to Doug Ganim and Ben Simons of Penn/Head, the WSMRA ball sponsor, for their valued support over the past few years; to Dan Whitley and his staff at Vetta Sports for a great tournament experience; and to Joanna Reyes for donations and assistance with the jackets. Volunteers were recognized with the amazing Baraboo Candy Company "cow pie" and Wisconsin maple syrup.

Recognition and thanks also go to:

The WSMRA Board members who keep the organization moving forward: Terry Rogers, MeriJean Kelley, Paula Sperling, Cindy Tilbury, and Linda Moore (and Jean Halahan who could not attend) along with advisors Nancy Kronenfeld and Jane Snyder.

The local tournament committee of Shari Coplen, Ann Fingerhood, Nancy Davis, and Karen Stephens, as well as the Missouri High School Players who helped out all weekend. Karen deserves special mention for manning the tournament desk virtually all weekend!

The players who come back every year and along with playing, work hard to make the tournament a success: Carol Gellman, who organizes the Silent Auction; Nidia Funes who runs the fun doubles; Pat Meyer and Marie Gomar who lend a hand wherever it is needed.

Also, Eddie Myers for taking photos and helping out all weekend and Joe Williams for driving the shuttle.

Three players joined the "25-year" club, having attended 25 or more tournaments over the years: Renee Fish, Linda Moore, and Marquita Molina.

The U.S. players who came the furthest were from the San Francisco Bay area, though of course Marie Gomar from Guatemala deserves a special award because her actual travel plans take the most effort.

Special mention goes to Marie for founding the Tracks program in Guatemala that teaches life skills to at-risk children through the sport of racquetball. She related that thanks to past fundraising efforts from our silent auction, the project is currently self-sustaining!

After the banquet program, Shari organized several trivia contests and a joke contest (won by Mildred Gwinn, but we can't repeat it here). Many great prizes were given out while the players relaxed and plotted strategy for the finals matches on Sunday morning. The last announcement of the night was met with much enthusiasm - the 32nd Annual Women's Senior/Masters tournament is currently in the planning stages for Atlanta, January 15-17, 2021!

On Sunday morning, play wrapped up and top finishers were presented with lovely cutting boards imprinted with the tournament logo. Find more information on our web site wsmra.com and the Women's Senior/Masters Racquetball Association Facebook page.

Top: "Court Divas" with Dan Whitley (L to R: Jenniffer Hunter, Tournament Director Shari Coplen, Dan Whitley, Vikki Pickard, Marie Gomar)

Above: 65+ Doubles Finals Action

Photos By: Kendra Tutsch



Tournament Winners by Division

<https://www.r2sports.com/tourney/viewResults.asp?TID=31207>

Singles

35 – Tracy Bucholz (MO)	65 – Marsha Berry (KY)
40 – Susan Caillier (IL)	70 – Cheryl Conrad (IA)
45 – Jenniffer Hunter (TN)	75 – Mildred Gwinn (NC)
50 – Marie Gomar (Guatemala)	45 B/C – Cheryl Miller (OH)
55 – Amy Pivovar (NE)	55 B/C – Jill Hitt (OH)
60 – Cindy Tilbury (CA)	65 B/C – Patricia Meyer (NY)

Doubles

Open/A – Lori Southwick/Page Kern (MN)
 45 – Victoria Pickard/Lori Southwick (PA/MN)
 55 – Ann Fingerhood/Page Kern (MO/MN)
 65 – Lynette Froehlich/Marsha Berry (SC/KY)
 75 – Mildred Gwinn/Marquita Molina (NC/CA)



MRF Hosts Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinic (RRC) Team Challenge

By Terry Rogers
Photos Courtesy of MRF

In February, players from three Veteran Administration facilities—Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Prescott—came together at the USA Racquetball National Doubles Championships in Tempe to take part in the fifth year of competition for team champion bragging rights. Individual champions were also crowned.

Match play was fierce but smiles were in evidence all around. When all was said and done, the Prescott VA took home the championship trophy followed by the Las Vegas and Phoenix VAs. Every player was a winner!

Players were treated to team shirts and goodie bags from the MRF and USA Racquetball as well as commemorative coins from the IRF. A lively group lunch followed.

MRF Regional Program Directors Terry Rogers and Jack Hughes (Las Vegas) organized the event, but it could not have happened without the leadership of RRC program directors Jerry Northwood and Cory Sanders (Prescott) and Ray Bierner (Phoenix).

The MRF would like to extend a special thank you to long-time Prescott program volunteer Jerry Northwood, as this was his last event with the Prescott VA. Jerry is moving to Tallahassee and plans to start a program there. Good luck, Jerry, and thank you!

The veterans from these facilities as well as others across the country are part of the MRF's Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinics (RRC) program, which promotes racquetball as a means of therapy for veterans with a variety of challenges.

Check for information on future MRF events at www.militaryracquetball.com.



JOHN PELHAM MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

When the racquetball world thinks of the Military Racquetball Federation (MRF), they may think of Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinics and the thousands of veterans who have been involved in the programs; or the RRC Challenge held each year at USAR National Doubles; or even putting outdoor courts on an aircraft carrier. But one of the most important events the MRF is involved with is a partnership with Live Like John and the International Racquetball Tour (IRT) to host the annual SPC John Pelham Memorial Tournament of Champions. This event is no ordinary IRT stop. Indeed, it is a celebration of John's love of racquetball. The pros (IRT and LPRT) are the show, but the event includes so many special touches to honor the military, including a High School Clinic, the MRF Doubles Pro-Am, and (new this year) dog tag stickers on the pro court allowing anyone to honor a veteran or service member in their lives.



Photo Courtesy KSpography



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THE MAMBA MENTALITY: MINDSET OF A CHAMPION

By Toni Bevelock Delos Santos



Honoring the memory of Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna, and the seven other victims killed in the devastating helicopter crash on January 26, 2020, let's all try to learn how to be our best selves, not only in our sport but in every aspect of our lives.

The Mamba Mentality is the title of Kobe Bryant's first book. In an interview with Chris Schluep on October 23, 2018, for Amazon Book Review, Kobe was asked, "What is the Mamba mentality?" He answered, "Mamba mentality is all about focusing on the process and trusting in the hard work when it matters most. It's the ultimate mantra for the competitive spirit. It started just as a hashtag that came to me one day, and it's grown into something athletes — and even non-athletes — embrace as a mindset."

"Hard work outweighs talent — every time," he continued. "Mamba mentality is about 4 a.m. workouts, doing more than the next guy and then trusting in the work you've put in when it's time to perform. Without studying, preparation and practice, you're leaving the outcome to fate. I don't do fate."

Kobe inspired so many athletes of all generations with his relentless work ethic and his ability to master any craft that he put his mind to. He believed that you can master anything if you are hyper focused and not afraid to fail. He viewed failure as one of the key critical tools that you need in order to persevere and become successful. So many times, we let fear of failure or embarrassment get in the way of our ability to excel. His belief in preparation, both physically—and more important, mentally—is what is needed to achieve your highest level of success in all areas of your life.

Kobe inspired, taught, and motivated so many individuals, teams, and organizations on how to achieve greatness through hard work, dedication, and a commitment to excellence. Taking Kobe's valuable insights and applying them to our own lives will bring honor to ourselves as well as to one of the greatest basketball players of all time.

Book Review: <http://bit.ly/2lLeS2b>

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



Rhonda Rajsich taking a moment of silence of remembrance of Kobe Bryant at the 2020 USAR National Doubles Championships
Photo By KSpography



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PRE-TOURNAMENT THOUGHTS AND PREPARATION

By Dave Ellis



You are all set: you've paid your entry fee, your USA Racquetball membership is current, and you have your starting time. You are thinking, "What should I do now to be physically and mentally ready for competition?"

1. The day prior to competition is a good time to plan food consumption for the first day of the tournament. Get good rest the night before. Eat a healthy breakfast, the size of which will depend upon your starting time. Think about eating during other times of the day, the "when, where, and what."
2. Have your bag ready. Organize your racquets, eye guards, and gloves so your equipment does not become an issue for you during your match. Know where that extra pair of eye guards and those dry gloves are located. Do you have enough racquets on hand? Do you have a second shirt in your bag?
3. Get to the club early to get used to the courts. Pay particular attention to any courts with glass back walls or side walls. Go over different shots in your mind and then warm them up on a variety of the courts as much as possible. One key aspect about playing on glass is to FOCUS on the ball while ignoring what you see outside the court. Watch the ball go into the glass.
4. Warm up dynamically rather than statically. Do a small amount of cardio and then stretch. On the court, after a few "drop and hits," give yourself direct feeds or feeds off the back wall. Continuously strike the ball. If you are on the court alone, hit some wraparounds. Get your feet ready to move by the first rally of your match.
5. Warm up your variety of serves. You want that first serve to be as precise as possible. Keep the serves off the back wall. In your mind, plan your first series of serves. Be determined to elicit weak returns off of your serves.
6. Be mentally ready to dig in on your service returns. Be determined to not let your opponent score. If you know your opponent's "go-to serves," think about different service return options.
7. If there is time and court availability, perhaps play one game to 7 with a friend or teammate. A little competition beforehand will increase your readiness. Don't overdo it, however.
8. Most players concentrate on warming up their favorite shots. Watch your opponent warm up, and look for tendencies. This will aid that all-important anticipation.
9. If you are winning, be mentally ready for your opponent to crowd you, especially if it's toward the end of the match. Command your space by setting up and taking your shots with good follow-through.
10. Be mentally ready for bad calls. Have your say briefly and respectfully, but then forget it. If there are line judges, know the appeal process. Don't let a bad call affect your efforts on future rallies. It can be calming to say to yourself, "Whatever the referee calls, that's what happened. Time to move on."

About Dave: Dave Ellis was Team Leader/Assistant Coach for two years under Coach Winterton. He was appointed Head Coach serving two intervals, 2004 - 2008 and 2012 - 2019. In 2004, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2016, Team USA won the prestigious Overall World Championships under his leadership. Working with the Reaching Your Dream Foundation (RYDF), Dave now dedicates himself to promoting junior racquetball in Northern California.



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"... NEITHER 'BLUE' PLAYER HAS ANY POSSIBILITY OF A LEGAL HIT BEFORE THE BALL HITS THE FLOOR A SECOND TIME."



By Otto Dietrich, USA Racquetball National Rules Commissioner



Teams, Coaches, and Parents awaiting the awards ceremony at the National High School Championships
Photo by KSphotography

One benefit of our USA Racquetball membership is that all members' match results are included in the national ranking system. When you have competed in a USAR-sanctioned tournament, I encourage you to check USAR's ranking system about 45 days afterward to make sure that the matches you played in it have been entered. Infrequently, a busy tournament director could miss the step of submitting results, so please assist them (and yourself!) by double-checking. If you discover that your match results from a particular event are not showing up, contact the tournament director to verify that he/she has submitted the results. If that query doesn't produce the desired corrective action, please contact Renée Isherwood (Risherwood@usarac-

quetball.com) at the National Office so she can help.

Scott W. wondered: Our group plays recreationally and would like a rule clarification. In doubles, assume Red v. Blue. During a rally, Red strikes a legal hit. The ball passes both Blue players and before it hits the floor a second time, it hits a Red player. However, due to Blue's position on the court (and after it has passed both Blue players), neither Blue player has any possibility of a legal hit before the ball hits the floor a second time.

So, I responded with: The answer is that the ball remains in play until it touches the floor a second time. Of course, I

know that sometimes there are clear cases where the person/team whose turn it is to hit the ball cannot possibly ever do that (that is, get to the ball before it bounces on the floor a second time. But there are other times when they just might get to the ball. Racquetball has plenty of judgment calls already, so it was decided to leave this particular judgment call out of the game—"Could they have gotten to the ball or not?"—by saying that if a ball that you (or your partner in doubles) hit touches you (or your partner) at all while it is still in play, then you/your team loses that rally. See Rule 3.13(c)5 and to some extent Rule 3.13(c)9.

DO YOU HAVE A RULES/REFEREEING QUESTION?

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

Always Play by the Rules

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

Larry C. inquired: If an offensive player hits a ball that hits the front wall and then hits the opposing (defensive) player, does the “failure to return” rule apply and the offensive player receives the point? Or, is the rally replayed? Also, is Rule 4.2(a) regarding the order of serve in doubles still in effect (not allowing the order of serve to be changed during the game) or, has that been changed to allow any partner on a team to serve in any order as long as neither partner serves twice?

I told Larry: With regard to your first question, if a ball hit by Player A rebounds off of the front wall and then next hits his opponent (Player B) either with or without the ball first bouncing on the floor or off of a wall, then Player B loses that rally. And you are correct, that does constitute a “failure to return,” and I would suggest that it is best covered by Rule 3.13(c)9. Of course, I guess that Player B might be screened (hindered) in some way and, if allowed, that could result in a replay, but that is far less likely in singles and probably a rare occurrence.

As concerns your second question, there has been NO recent change to Rule 4.2(a) which provides that each time a doubles team steps into the service zone, either partner on the team can serve first as long as one serves after the other and neither gets more than one OUT scored against them.

A high school coach asked: Can the server and/or his partner now leave the Service Zone BEFORE the ball crosses the short line?

I told him: No, they may not. While International Racquetball Tour (IRT) and International Racquetball Federation (IRF) rules do permit that, the current USA Racquetball rules state that entering the receiving zone before the ball crosses the short line results in an immediate loss of serve.

John A. emailed me asking: If the ball is served and bounces short and then hits the server, is this a loss of serve or a fault serve. What if it hits him on a fly off the front wall?

I responded: If the served ball hits the server “on the fly” before the ball touches the floor as it is coming from the

front wall, that is an immediate “loss of rally” and, of course, a “loss of serve” for that player. But as soon as the served ball hits the floor, the serve is SHORT and thus the rally is immediately ended and that makes the server being touched by the served ball right after that a mere FAULT serve and if that were to happen on the first serve, then the server gets a second serve.

For most successive calls in racquetball, the order of occurrence determines what the call should be, i.e., whatever occurs first is what should be called. For example, a call of “hinder” negates anything that happens following the call -- including being hit by the ball. But I can think of one BIG exception: when the non-serving partner is hit on the fly with a served ball when standing “outside” of the doubles box. Obviously, he had to foot fault FIRST to do that, but the penalty for that happening has always been an immediate “loss of rally,” rather than just a fault.

Ray E. asked: If I am at center court, can my opponent, shooting from behind me, take any shot he wants, e.g., a cross-court splat which would more than likely hit me? I was told other than a ceiling lob, I have to give my opponent the down-the-line passing or kill shot and cross-court passing shot but that a kill shot cross-court that would knowingly hit your opponent is not a legal shot?

I responded: Technically, the player, whether he is behind you or anywhere else on the court, can take about any shot he wants. The only real limitation on his choices is “good sportsmanship.” Remember that if he hits you and you are NOT in either of those two specified paths you mentioned, then that is only a replay hinder which, by the way, is the very same outcome as if he had, instead, held up on that shot because he feared he might hit you with it. However, selecting the option of hitting you might also involve some degree of pain and is therefore the much poorer choice. So it is a judgment call as to whether the player exercised good judgment or not in taking his shot. We encourage liberal use of the safety hold-up rule as well as the assessment of a technical warning or foul when the poor choice becomes troublesome.

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CONTINUING THE Making of a Champion



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

Let's continue "Making You a Champion" using the core principles of "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" as you build your championship racquetball game one assessment at a time. In this issue I am going to discuss **"Coming Back in a Match."**

Paola Longoria was playing Maria Jose Vargas in the finals of the LPRT Christmas Classic on December 15, 2019, and they were in the tiebreaker. Maria went out to a 6-0 lead on Paola, and Paola decided to call a smart timeout. Magaly (her sports psychologist) and I spoke with Paola, and we recommended she make the following adjustments:

Coach Fran Davis: I told Paola to change her serve as Maria was sitting on the serve she was hitting and was too comfortable. "Mix up your serves more so she has to start guessing what's coming, and that will give you weak returns with opportunities to go offensive and end the rally."

Sports Psychologist Magaly Zeron: "I told Paola it was important only to have positive thoughts and to change her body language to display her positive attitude. Play one point at a time, keeping herself in the NOW. These solutions are a must."

Paola went back in and changed her serve, converting the score of 1-6 to 6-6. The rallies went back and forth until Paola won 11-8 in the tiebreaker to win professional title #102, an achievement that will likely never be matched.

I asked Paola what she was thinking on the court. She replied, "Never give up on the court as there is always a possibility I can win until the match is over. I played one point at a time and just stayed positive. I changed my body language and thought to myself, believe in my shots, believe in all my hard work, and believe I could come back strong with a possibility I could win. I am a player that never gives up, and I know I have a lot of the tools Magaly has been teaching me so that I can come back strong."

In sports, it's hard to come back when your mind is preoccupied (i.e., thinking about mistakes or worrying about the future). If you are dwelling on the past, your mind cannot let go of its own negativity. You become reactive and slow to respond. If your mind is worrying about the future (losing), it cannot focus on the shot that is happening now. Your ego always wants to be in control, so it holds onto things such as mistakes and fears, which puts you out of the moment. To get back to the now, as Paola did, incorporate some of the strategies Magaly gave to Paola into your game plan.

Here's how my Championship Team utilizes these techniques:

Rocky Carson and Paola Longoria are continuously working on their mental toughness. Every time they step on the court, their #1 goal is to be "in the NOW." They know this is an integral part of staying in the match. It is extremely important to keep the pressure on their opponents to keep themselves in a position to win the match.

Coming Back in a Match by Staying in the Now and Being Positive is yet another required skill on the road to championship racquetball. All of the players I coach, from the professionals led by Rocky and Paola, to the amateurs, know just how important it is to "Come Back in a Match." Their records speak for themselves...Rocky and Paola are two of the most decorated athletes in racquetball. Last season Paola finished the 2018/2019 ranked #1 on the LPRT (an undefeated 10th season) and was crowned the 2019 US OPEN Champion for the 10th time as well. Rocky finished the 2018/2019 season ranked #2 on the IRT.



Charlie Pratt, Fran Davis, and Rocky Carson
Photo By KSphotography

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Using the Core Principles of "Building Your Racquetball Dream House"

Jason Mannino
#1 Pro Player 2003

Rocky Carson
#1 Pro Player 2008
& 2018

Paola Longoria
10X #1 Pro Player

Fran's Credentials

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

Jason's Credentials

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

2020 Camp/Clinic Schedule: Weekend Training Camps

Camp Dates will be TBD at a later date due to the Corona Virus

Davie, FL	TBD
NJ/NY	TBD
Las Vegas, NV	TBD
Dallas, TX	TBD
Indianapolis, IN	TBD
Portland, OR	TBD
Pennsylvania	TBD
New England	TBD
San Francisco, CA	TBD
Fullerton, CA	TBD
Salt Lake City, UT	TBD
Chicago, IL	TBD
MD/VA	TBD
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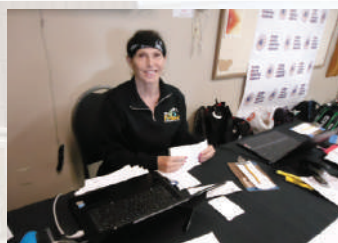


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Back to Back (to Back!)

Events for the IRT



By IRT CEO Mike Grisz

The IRT recently completed an exciting and grueling schedule of three tournaments in a three-week stretch: The Longhorn Open in Austin, Texas; the 42nd Lewis Drug Pro-Am in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and the 22nd Annual Lou Bradley Memorial in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin.

Overall, it was a great experience with continuing dominance from Kane Waselenchuk but also the future of pro racquetball peering through. The level of play of the Tour overall is as strong as it has ever been, and it's exciting to see the emergence of the younger players challenging the old guard with some success.

First, the **Longhorn Open**. Soly Kor has done a phenomenal job in building the Longhorn Open into one of the premier events in racquetball. The IRT was honored to participate, and we hope to be an integral part of the future success of this tournament.

The Longhorn was special because Kane, arguably the greatest player of all time, got to play a Tier 1 event in front of his home crowd. I'll come back to Kane. To me, the second story here was the play of Adam Manilla who had solid wins over Andree Parrilla and Mario Mercado to reach his first IRT Tier 1 semifinal. And, though he lost to the resurgent Daniel De La Rosa in the semifinals, he was also awarded the Chuck Grigson Sportsmanship Award for exemplary character, fairness on the court, and a winning attitude when winning or losing. This award was bestowed by someone from the tournament staff to someone competing in the event.

Daniel also played well all weekend and served notice to three of the new

contenders—Javier Estrada in the Round of 16, Eduardo Garay in the quarterfinals, and Manilla in the semifinals—that's he's still a bona fide Top 8 player.

Kane dominated the entire weekend to the delight of a cheerleading squad comprised of his family and friends as well as the hometown crowd who were in attendance for all of his matches. Neither Andres Acuña, Conrado Moscoso, nor Alvaro Beltran broke 10 in a game. Daniel played him the closest at 15-9, 15-10.

Next up was the **42nd Lewis Drug Pro-Am**, the longest-running professional tournament in the U.S. Kane was ill, so it became a wide-open draw and allowed room for other young players like Eduardo "Lalo" Portillo to enter the limelight. Lalo, having just turned 20, made his first finals appearance. To get to the finals, he beat Felipe Camacho, Alvaro Beltran, and Sam Murray without dropping a game. Sam Murray reached the semifinals for the first time this season after he defeated Alex Landa who had to

retire halfway through due to injury.

The winner of the tournament was the rejuvenated Daniel De La Rosa. His game was sharp in both singles and doubles throughout the tournament, and he was coming off of a strong Longhorn Open showing. He also had one very tough draw, beating Rodrigo Montoya in the '16's Round of 16, Rocky Carson in the quarterfinals, and Conrado Moscoso in the semifinals. Lalo played him well in the finals but it was Daniel's weekend. Daniel won 15-14, 15-9.

And then there was the pro doubles! Pro doubles is always a sight to behold. Tony Carson, coming back from his Achilles injury, played with Jansen Allen. They lost an 11-9 tiebreaker to Alex Landa and Sam Murray. Unfortunately, that was Landa and Murray's last match due to Alex's injury. There was a fantastic quarterfinal match between Charlie Pratt and Conrado Moscoso against Daniel De La Rosa and Alvaro Beltran. Daniel and Alvaro won 11-6 in the tiebreaker.



Longhorn Open Pro Singles Final featuring Daniel De La Rosa vs. Kane Waselenchuk

Photo By Ken Fife

The finals pitted Daniel and Alvaro against the extremely tough team of Rodrigo Montoya and Javier Mar. De La Rosa and Beltran won 15-13, 10-15, 11-3 in a long hard-fought match.

The third stop in as many weeks was the **22nd Lou Bradley Memorial** in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. The tournament, known as “The Lou”, was a first-time IRT Tier 1 event. The club hosted a great tournament that reminded me of old times, like a tournament in the late ‘70’s. Great atmosphere, intense crowd, great club, some alcohol.

Side note of interest: Mark Gibbs, a member of the IRT’s Executive Team, had 16 players stay with him between the tournaments. They rented two vans to commute between Sioux Falls and Sun Prairie!

At the Lou Bradley, we saw a young rising player have a great tournament. This time it was Mario Mercado. Mario made it all the way to the finals with a very tough draw, beating Lalo Portillo, Gerardo Franco, and Alex Landa. His run was ended by (no surprise) Kane Waselenchuk.

Kane, for his part, went through the field without dropping a game in a tough draw: Mar in the ‘Round of 16, Montoya in the quarterfinals, Beltran in the semifinals, and Mercado in the finals. Total points allowed was 43 (an average of five points per competitor per game). Of the tournaments Kane has played this season, he’s won every one, and he’s dropped one game.

As of press time, the IRT had one remaining Grand Slam scheduled in the current season, the Suivant Consulting Pro-Am, Lilburn, GA - June 11-14, 2020.

For up-to-date information on all IRT events, visit www.irttour.com.



Left: Lewis Drug Pro-Am finalist Eduardo “Lalo” Portillo

Right: Lewis Drug Pro-Am Title Sponsor Mark Griffin with Dean Baer

Photos By KSpotography



IRT RANKINGS - AS OF MARCH 18, 2020

Ranking	Player	Points
1	Kane Waselenchuk, Austin, TX	3981.23
2	Alex Landa, Juarez, MEX	3394.69
3	Rocky Carson, Ladera Ranch, CA	3025.15
4	Andree Parrilla, San Luis Potosi, MEX	2531.79
5	Alvaro Beltran, Tijuana, MEX	2514.77
6	Daniel De La Rosa, Gilbert, AZ	2211.96
7	Conrrado Moscoso, Sucre, BOL	2033.96
8	Samuel Murray, Baie-Comeau, CAN	1828.68

Ranking	Player	Points
9	Eduardo Portillo, San Luis Potosi, MEX	1654.54
10	Mario Mercado, Cali, COL	1370.34
11	Rodrigo Montoya, Chihuahua, MEX	1343.81
12	Jake Bredenbeck, Marine, MN	1333.61
13	Sebastian Franco, Cali, COL	1272.20
14	Conrrado Moscoso, Sucre, BOL	1024.88
15	David Horn, Stockton, CA	1006.62
16	Gerardo Franco, Monterrey, MEX	967.34

LPRT 2020, Longoria Already Two-for-Two!

By T.J. Baumbaugh, LPRT Commissioner
Photos Courtesy of LPRT



The LPRT traveled to the beautiful Sunshine State in January for a new stop, the **Florida LPRT Pro-Am**. Paola Longoria (Mexico) was in full force, looking both rested and strong following the holiday break. She went straight through the draw without losing a game and winning the final over Maria Jose Vargas (Argentina). Longoria also won the doubles title with stand-in partner Alexandra Herrera (Mexico) since Samantha Salas could not attend this event. They squeaked out the final in two games 15-14, 15-14, over Vargas and her partner Natalia Mendez.

As always, the LPRT wants to thank our wonderful sponsors, organizer Margo Scott, and the tournament director, Tracie Valentine, for a great event. The David Posnack JCC in Davie was a perfect location, and we appreciate Risa Spevack at the JCC for her detailed assistance and support. A shout-out goes to Rick Bernstein as well who helped out even though he was running a local outdoor event the same weekend! For a recap and more photos of the LPRT Florida Pro-Am, visit <https://bit.ly/3dvDdap>.

Two weeks later, the LPRT was honored to once again be part of the annual **Sweet Caroline Open** in Greenville, South Carolina. This special event chooses a different charity to support each year while also spotlighting the LPRT. Safe Harbor, an organization that provides shelter, counseling, and advocacy for victims of domestic violence, was the non-profit chosen for Sweet Caroline 2020. Each year, 1 out of 4 women and 1 out of 9 men are affected by domestic violence. To learn more: <https://safeharborsc.org/>.

The pro women put on a show both on and off the court. The Thursday fundraising banquet for Safe Harbor included a fun talent show where some of the LPRT players sang, played, danced, and lip synced. Cristina Amaya (Colombia) won first place in the show, singing and playing the ukulele. She performed a variety of songs, finishing with "Sweet Caroline" and encouraging the attendees to sing along.



Top: Pro Doubles Champions Alexandra Herrera & Paola Longoria
Above: Sponsor Doubles at the Florida Pro-Am

On the court, Longoria did her thing, winning both singles and doubles, this time with regular partner Samantha Salas (Mexico). Longoria did not drop a game in singles or doubles, dominating and barely letting anyone get to double digits.

The Greenville event enjoyed a tremendous amount of sponsor and volunteer support. We would like to thank title sponsors OB Hospitalist Group and Piedmont Comprehensive Pain Management Group as well as other sponsors and volunteers including Sportsclub Greenville, Kevin Dehlinger, Wayne and Ruthie Reed, Jeff Hoffman, Jay Josey, Lynette Froehlich, The Swain Family, Racquet Therapy, and Rqtblr. Thank you to South Carolina Racquetball and their Board of Directors for their amazing hospitality and support of the LPRT. To read more about this event, please visit <https://www.ladiesprofessionalracquetballtour.com/post/another-sweet-title-for-longoria>.

A Special Announcement from the LPRT:

We are excited to announce that thanks to sponsor Piedmont Comprehensive Pain Management Group LLC, an LPRT Hall of Fame Wall will be built at Sportsclub Greenville. The Hall of Fame Wall will be completed by January 2021 with the first inductees honored at Sweet Caroline 2021.



Top Right: Maria Renee Rodriguez and Cristina Amaya in doubles action
Above: Sneak Peek at the LPRT Ladies Hall of Fame Wall



LPRT RANKINGS - AS OF March 12, 2020

Ranking	Player	Points
1	Paola Longoria, Monterrey, MEX	2625.00
2	Maria Jose Vargas, Buenos Aires, ARG	1527.00
3	Samantha Salas, Monterrey, MEX	1079.50
4	Alexandra Herrera, Guadalajara, MEX	746.50
5	Natalia Mendez, Buenos Aires, ARG	671.00
6	Rhonda Rajsich, Phoenix, AZ	668.00
7	Montserrat Mejia, Monterrey, MEX	573.50
8	Nancy Enriquez, Chihuahua, MEX	535.50

Ranking	Player	Points
9	Cristina Amaya, Cali, COL	501.25
10	Masiel Rivera, Columbia, MD	358.75
11	Jessica Parrilla, San Luis Potosí, MX	354.75
12	Carla Muñoz, Santiago, CHI	277.00
13	Brenda Laime, Cali, COL	260.75
14	Ana Laura Flores, San Luis Potosí, MEX	252.00
15	Adriana Riveros, Cali, COL	244..50
16	Sheryl Lotts, Columbus, OH	224.25



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Profiles in String: Ian Titus, Lawler Sports

By Steve Crandall | Vice President, Ashaway Sales & Marketing



It's probably a bad pun to say you cannot play racquetball with no strings attached. But it is true that those racquet technicians who attach strings are often among the unsung heroes of the game. Few others know as much about how string can affect your game, and no one is better able to provide you with a racquet strung with the right combination of consistency and performance you need.

One of the leading lights among today's stringers is Ian Titus, owner of Lawler Sports in Terre Haute, Indiana, and inheritor of Rex Lawler's title of "the String King." Active in the stringing business (both online and retail) and a frequent stringer at many tournaments including the US OPEN, Ian has become widely known for his knowledge and insight on both racquet and string technology and on how to combine them to best effect. We had a chance to chat with Ian recently and asked him first how he got involved in the business.

Ian: I started as a tennis player, then I played pickleball starting in my junior year in high school. That's when I met Rex, who said, "Why don't you come in and string?" I picked up racquetball after I met Rex and played on the Club Team at Indiana State, but tennis was always my main sport. So I've been stringing ever since 2008 or 2009, then I bought the business from Rex about three years ago. It's been an addiction ever since. If there were a Stringer's Anonymous, that's where I'd be. I just eat, sleep, and drink racquet sports now.

Ashaway: Tell us a little about your business.

Ian: We bill ourselves as "The Racquetball Player's Mart," and we offer a wide range of court products and services for Racquetball, Pickleball, Tennis, Squash, Badminton, and even Table Tennis, both online and at our store here in Terre Haute. Locally we pull from a 50-60-mile radius. Online business is also strong, but I prefer local to online, because I can build a better relationship with the customer. Also, I can get a grasp of what the grassroots vibe is—asking customers how racquetball is doing in their town and if they need anything. Online, you lose that relationship. Normally I try to engage through email if I can, to build a better rapport.

Ashaway: How does stringing work online?

Ian: If somebody's ordering online, I try to hunt them down and see exactly what they are looking for. A lot of times they might hear that so-and-so is playing with such and such, but it might not be the best string, or tension, or whatever, for their game. Once they've done one order online, they usually call back in or ship their racquet with a note and we just string it, put it back in the box and ship it out the same day.

Ashaway: How would you characterize your average customer in terms of age, level of play, level of knowledge, etc.?

Ian: We have a generally older crowd, probably 28 to 65. As for level of play, it is difficult to tell because we have these pockets. If a guy says he is an A-level player, it might mean he can beat everybody in his town, but he might get whopped elsewhere. In general, we have what I call "Weekend Warriors." They're playing every weekend and maybe two days during the week, and they know their skill level for their group. So, they are self-rated, I guess you would say.

Ashaway: How do people go about selecting a new string?

Ian: Most who order online think they know what they want—they've played with somebody else's frame, or they've heard something. Now the people who call in usually know they need some guidance. Generally I'd say 40-45% want something that somebody they know uses, another 40-45% have looked online at our website or the manufacturer's and see who plays with it. And then there is a small percentage who will pick a string because a top pro uses it. It's about the same for tennis. Other companies might not see it that way, but we do.

Ashaway: When someone calls for guidance, what kinds of questions do you ask them?

Ian: It's funny. Everybody wants more power, more control, more kill shots, more feel. Everybody wants everything! If I had a string for that, everybody would play with it and that would be it. So, I try to narrow down who they are as a player; what they're looking for; and what they actually go for on the court. Are they trying pinches or kill shots, or are they really just wanting to bang on serves? I try to get as close to maximizing their level of play as I can.

Ashaway: What technological change has had the most impact on the game in the past few years?

Ian: I'd say racquet design. Everybody can crush the ball now. New racquets come out every year, and guys who go on tour switch a lot. But if you go to a local club and one guy has a new frame and the other guys are playing with racquets that are 20-25 years old, you can tell that one guy is getting a lot more on the ball than the others.

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