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The Editors

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RACQUET SUMMER 1979

8 RACQUET MONSTERS *by Peter Baron*
The 10 worst performances on the racquet stage.

14 PEACH FUZZ *by Steve Keeley*
The day Marty Hogan came of age.

18 WIMBLEDON *by Steve Metcalfe*
There will always be a Wimbledon.

23 NAME DROPPING *by Herb FitzGibbon*
How to talk tennis to the pros.

29 SAVOIR FAIRE *by Gerald McCarthy*
Rate your racquet savoir faire.

32 HASHIM'S STORY *by Hashin Khan & Richard Randall*
He forged the greatest dynasty in the history of sport.

36 THE FOREHAND *by Steve Metcalfe*
It's the big shot in your racquet repertoire.

42 MYTHCONCEPTIONS *by Burling Lowery*
A controversial view of racquetball.

46 FRACTURED FICTION *by Gerald McCarthy*
Don't judge a book by its cover.

52 THE OLD PRO *by Steve L. Stern*
An exclusive interview with the oldest living racquet player.

DEPARTMENTS

6 SCHEDULE A calendar of events
58 EYES Off the court
62 ETCETERA A racquet potpourri
65 GALLERY Passing shots
67 TRENDS At a glance

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H.K. Pickens
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Andrea DaRif
Art Director and Designer

Jan Van der Meer
Copy Editor

Robert Cramer Jr.
Steve Metcalfe
Karen Rockow
Associate Editors

Wendy Murphy
Editorial Assistant

John P. Ross Jr.
Travel Editor

Charlie Brumfield
Herb FitzGibbon
Quentin Hyder, M.D.
Jackie Giroux
Doug Russell
Harry Saint
Richard Szathmary
Tom Wintrich
Contributing Editors

G.J. Jabara
H.K. Pickens
Publishers

342 Madison Avenue
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Sales Offices

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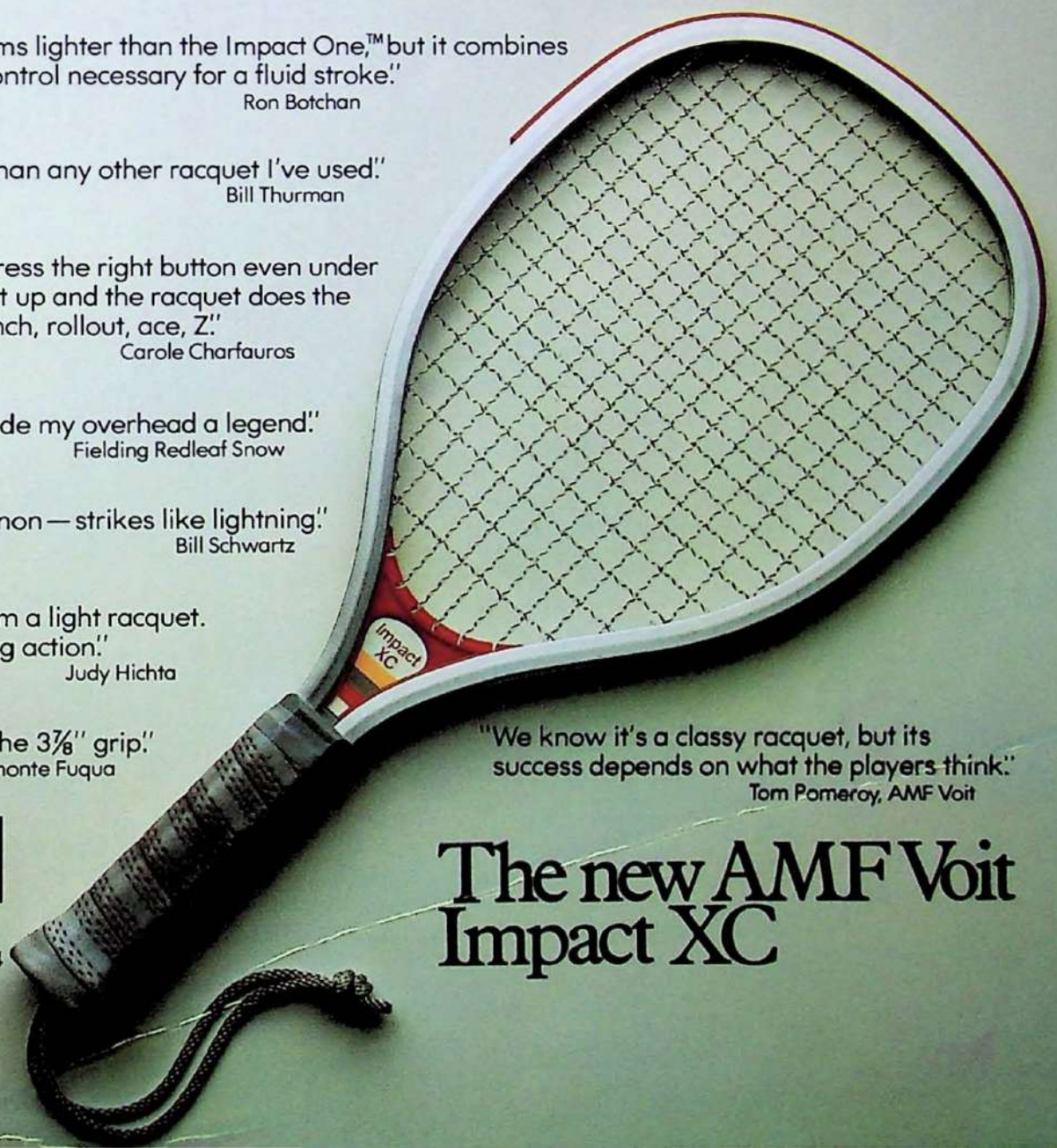

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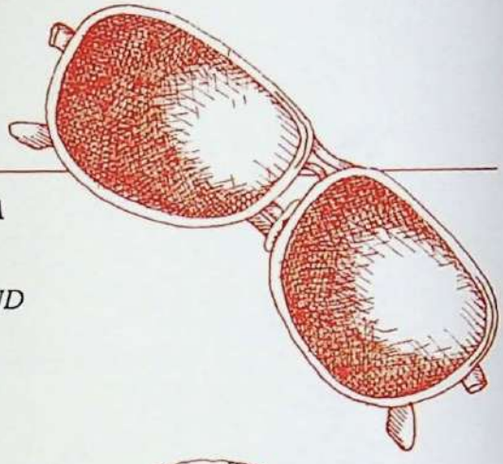
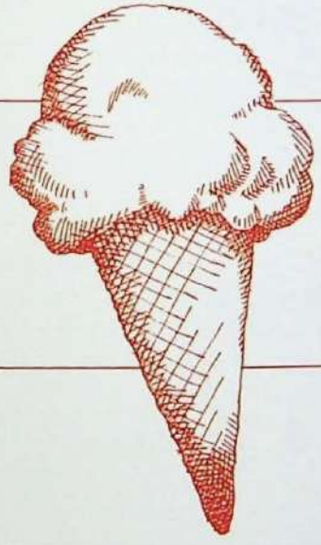
SCHEDULE

Calendar of Events



RACQUETBALL

May 4-6	Washington State Singles	*Tumwater, WA*
May 4-6	IRA Mid Atlantic Regionals	*Sterling, VA*
May 11-13	Husky Open	*Seattle, WA*
May 11-13	Racquetball Invitational	*Grand Forks, ND*
May 18-20	Southern California Open	*Ventura, CA*
May 24-28	World Amateur Championships	*Las Vegas, NV*
June 9-16	USRA National Championships	*Tempe, AZ*
June 29-July 1	J.W. Million Classic	*Seattle, WA*

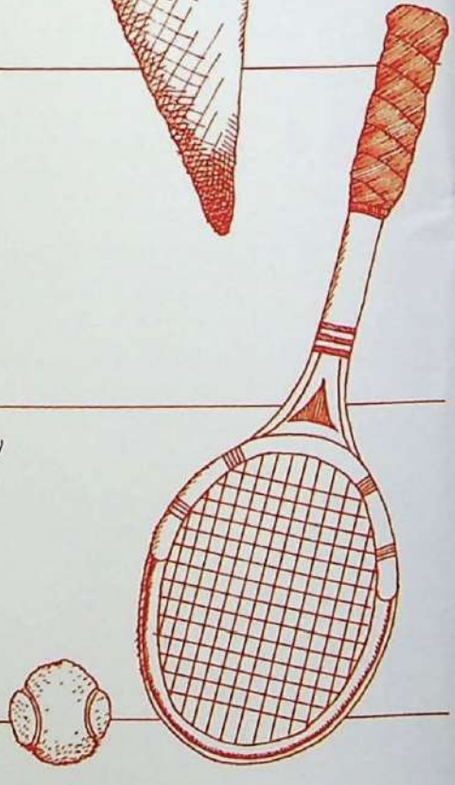


SQUASH

May 4	Rhode Island English Ball Open	*Providence, RI*
May 12-13	Boston Invitational Softball Singles	*Boston, MA*
June 1-3	The Hyder Cup	*New York, NY*
June 13-17	The Mennen Cup Classic	*Toronto, Canada*

TABLE TENNIS

May 12-13	Wolverine State Open	*Grand Rapids, MI*
May 12-13	Second Annual Summer Open	*Wilson, NC*
May 19-20	Midwest Team Tournament	*Dayton, OH*
June 2-3	Capital City Open	*Columbus, OH*
June 9-10	First Annual Butterfly Tournament	*Wilson, NC*
June 27-30	U.S. Open	*Uniondale, NY*



TENNIS

May 14-20	German Championships	*Hamburg, Germany*
May 21-27	Italian Championships	*Rome, Italy*
May 28-June 30	French Championships	*Paris, France*
June 25-July 8	Wimbledon	*London, England*
July 9-15	Forest Hills Invitational	*Forest Hills, NY*

OTHER RACQUETS

May 5-6	Arizona-New Mexico Badminton	*Tucson, AZ*

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SUMMER 1979
RACQUET

RACQUET MONSTERS

THE 10 WORST PERFORMERS ON THE RACQUET STAGE

by Peter Baron

"The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones."
—Julius Caeser

These famous words penned by William Shakespeare still hold true. Many people have a morbid fascination for villains and evil doers and, as often as not, are just as likely to remember someone for a nefarious deed as for some good work. Historians and novelists have chronicled the exploits of Genghis Khan, John Dillinger and Adolph Hitler and often, in some convoluted turn of logic, we begin to empathize with the bad guys. Maybe it's a universal disdain for the establishment or just the attraction of one person doing his own thing, right or wrong, in this technological world.

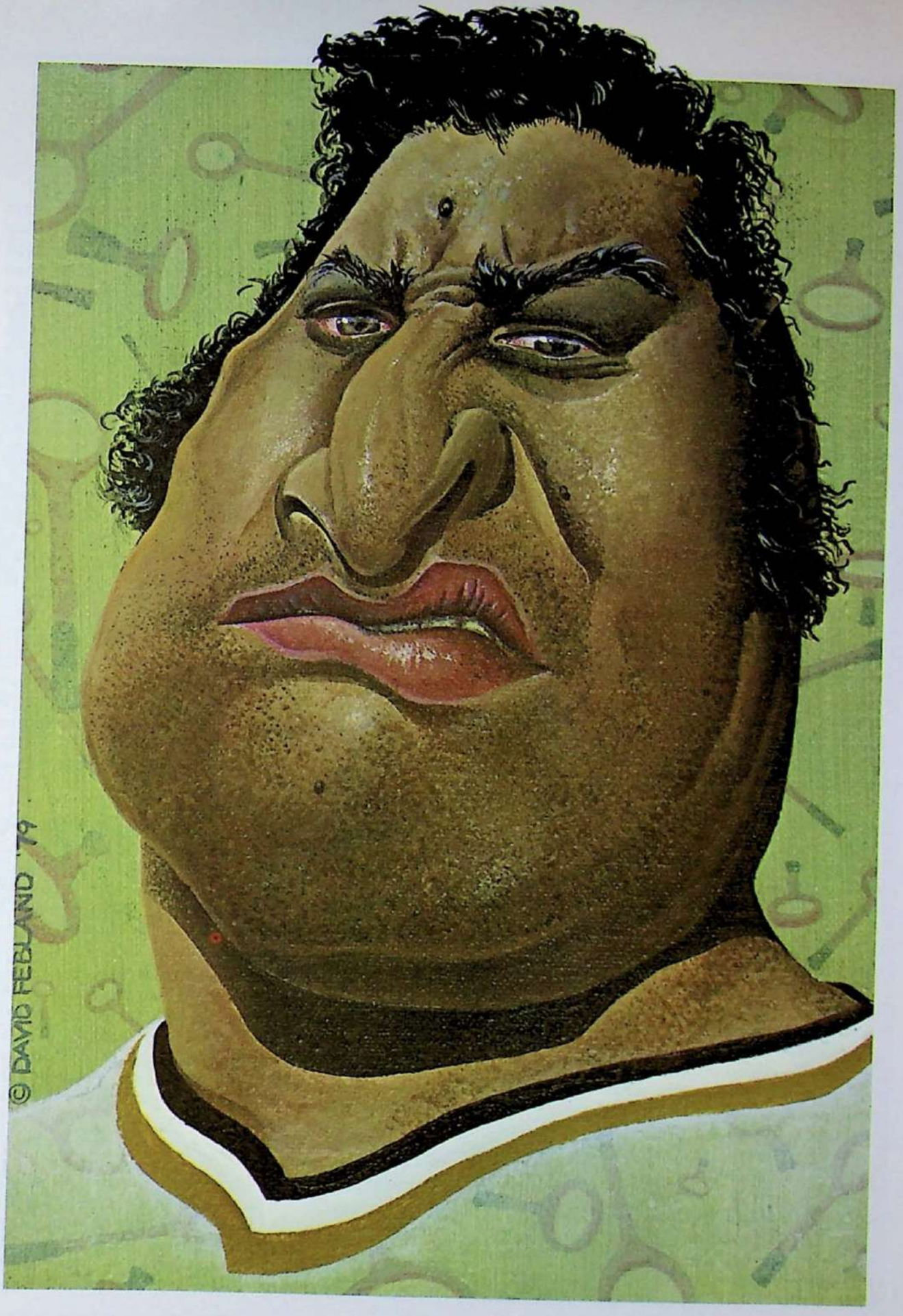
Paralleling America's new found awareness of self is the athlete's discovery of self-expression. In the racquet sports particularly, always singular expressions of ego, the watchwords have become, "let it all hang out." And hang out it does. From the Tudor clubhouse of Forest Hills to the manicured lawns of Merion, steeped in decades of traditions, sportsmanship and fair play, there has emerged a hydra. The creature bears responsibility to no one but itself—to win is everything, the game secondary. The increased popularity of the racquet sports coupled with escalating prize money has spawned a new generation of bad actors. There have been poor sports in the past but this new, particularly virulent strain, is the first to receive media attention. They display their poor sportsmanship and inability to control themselves in front of millions on television and in the pages of magazines. Tragically, some of the best players are the worst sports, and we tend to remember their outbursts instead of their good shots.

Here now, Racquet picks its own list of the ten worst actors of modern times with some of their most memorable performances:

1. **Ilie Nastase (tennis):** Nasty tops the list for his consistently outrageous behavior in virtually every conceivable situation. One gets the feeling while watching the brooding Rumanian that the instant he steps onto a tennis court there is potential trouble. And once he turns on, he doesn't turn off. At times he is a crowd pleaser, an entertainer who can hold an audience spellbound. But suddenly he changes from Dr. Jeckyl to Mr. Hyde. His trademarks are the frequent use of the third digit, assailing linesmen and referees with invectives in four or five languages, and intimidating opponents with stalling tactics and menacing gestures. One of his memorable moments occured in the finals of the Canadian Open '75,

Mo Khan ranks with the squash greats.

Peter Baron is a free lance writer living in Los Angeles. His latest book, *How to Beat Your Wife Without Feeling Guilty* will be released this fall.


© DAVID FEBLAND '79

"Churlish behavior, breaches of good manners and ill-timed humor are standard operating procedures for Connors."

against Manuel Orantes, when Nastase got a bad call and went berserk. From that point on he barely went through the motions of playing and treated the packed house to an unabashed display of sulking and self-destruction. He was later fined $6,000 and suspended. His list of defaults and fines is endless. He was suspended after Wimbledon, and actually spit at fellow player Hans-Jurgen Pohman at Forest Hills. Nasty is a clear choice for number one!

2. **Jimmy Connors (tennis):** Connors does not lose control like Nastase and his unpleasant actions on the court are more in the form of personality flaws than specific outbursts. In many ways this is more reprehensible since Connors is vulgar by choice. His loutish deportment is well chronicled and tiresome. He does not have the ability to lose with grace and never gives credit to those who beat him. At the U.S. Open two years ago, after losing in the finals to Guillermo Vilas, he stormed off center court in a fury of profanity and obscene gestures for millions of television viewers to see. . . and pity. Churlish behavior, breaches of good manners and ill-timed humor are standard operating procedure for Connors. In a match at Forest Hills against the Italian, Barazzutti, he raced over to his opponent's side of the court and erased the ball mark on a close call. Last year at Flushing Meadow he pulled down his pants and flashed the spectators during a practice match. And so it goes for "Jimbo."

3. **Mo Khan (squash):** In his day he was a great champion, with all the flair and brilliance of Nastase. He won both the British Open and North American titles. But as his skills age, he has become surly, feisty and finally dangerous in his play. In a game where it is imperative to observe the basic rules of sportsmanship, Khan goes beyond the limits of intimidation and opponents must resign themselves to the fact that they'll be black and blue after an encounter with him. The best example of this reckless behavior occured in a match against Stu Goldstein several years ago. Khan continually came around, blasting Goldstein with the ball, and came dangerously close to Goldstein's head with his racquet on more than one occassion. It's too bad when a great player fails to age with grace.

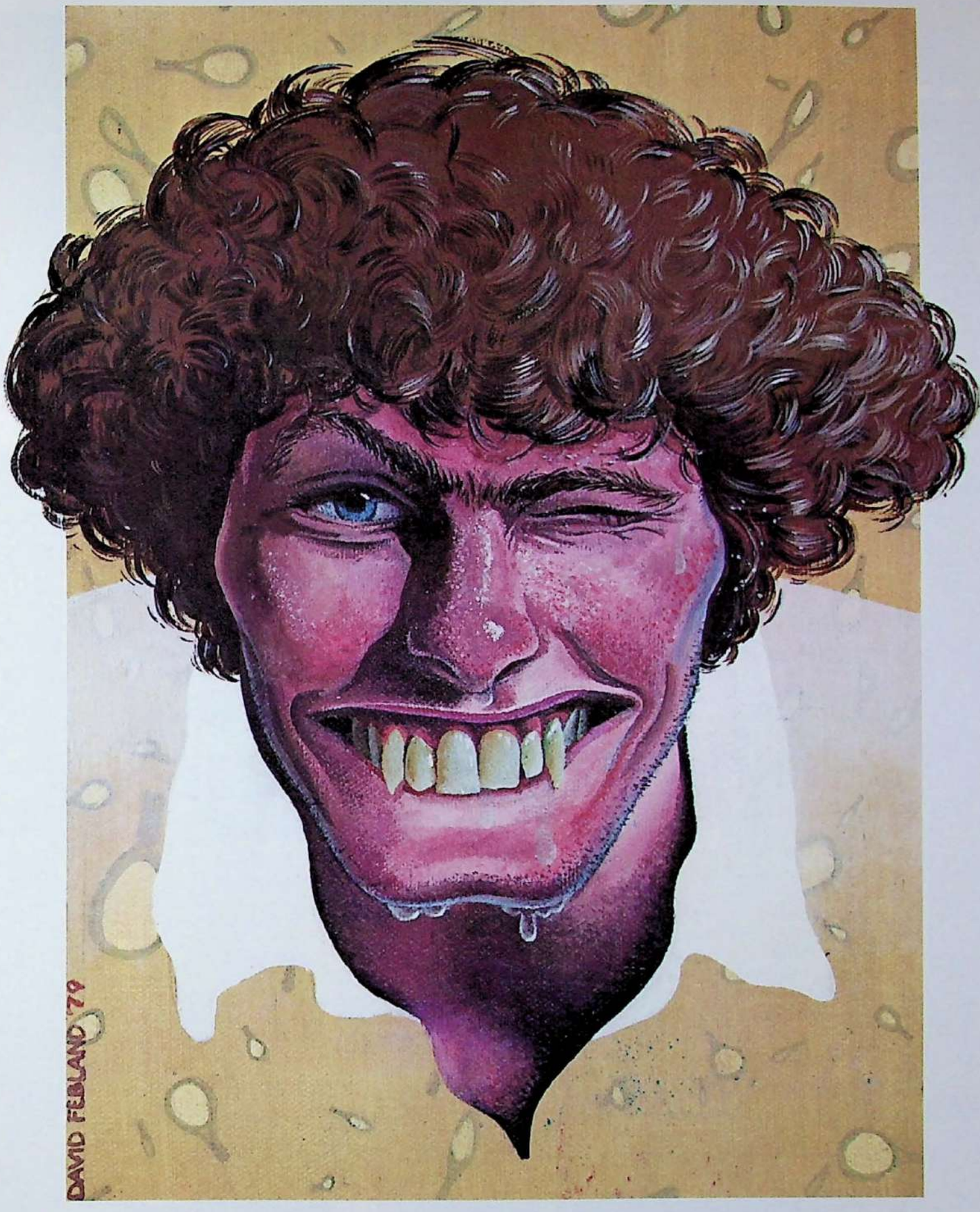
4. **Charlie Brumfield (racquetball):** Brumfield is the master psycher and disciple of the Vince Lombardi philosophy of winning at all costs. He is always in control—of himself and his opponent. In one match he hit a hapless Canadian with the ball ten times in exactly the same place. Another time against Steve Keeley he fell to the floor in the tiebreaker, feigning injury, and didn't get up. When he finally dragged himself to his feet, he went into a raving madman act—glazed look, eyes bulging. The fans became so incensed they threw trash and beer cans onto the court. He has whistled through an entire match to upset his opponent and is the inventor of the "donkey kick" and "butt," both intimidating acts to say the least. Of late, Brumfield has cooled off, befitting his status as the game's elder statesman, although showing one's jock to the gallery does show a reservation of good taste.

5. **Tom Poor (squash):** Tom Poor has been a highly ranked player for many years. In his early days he was an embarrasment to the old school tradition of amateur squash. A not-so-mild mannered dead ringer for Clark Kent, Poor had a well-rounded court repertoire. He smashed racquets, swore unabashedly, threw temper tantrums and was known to hit balls at the gallery. All of which resulted in his being barred from such tournaments as the prestigious Gold Racquets. (Poor's ranking for bad behavior is severely handicapped by the fact that he plied his trade in the lily-white confines of the best clubs in front of smallish crowds. But if he had had a press agent or some television coverage, he could have moved higher.)

6. **Bob Hewitt (tennis):** Battlin' Bob is described by many as the best doubles player in the history of tennis. He also has a history of atrocious behavior. One wonders if he emigrated to South Africa by choice or if he was expelled from his homeland—he was thrown off the Australian Davis Cup Team for fighting with spectators. He once had a fist fight with Roger Taylor in Germany, has been known to try to knock an umpire out of his chair, has thrown balls, chairs, etc. at spectators and has hit at least one ball boy with his racquet. But perhaps his strongest testimonial comes from a septuagenarian. This white haired gent, while observing Hewitt's manic behavior, become so incensed that he ran up to him after a match and knocked him down with a judo chop to the back.

7. **Marty Hogan (racquetball):** Hogan has a decided advantage in Racquet's bad behavior rankings since he is the first superstar of a sport that has adopted a new, relaxed code of behavior—different from the staid world of tennis and squash. To say he is cocky is an understatement. In his first tournament win ever,

Marty Hogan has redefined cockiness!


DAVID FEBLAND '79

"She often displays the intemperate behavior of a star who has seen her best days and is damned unhappy about it."

over Steve Serot in 1975, he got into a yelling match. Primal screams. Everyone was in a frenzy with Hogan screaming, "Your're a 'C' player" (which is like being called ugly by a toad in racquetballs circles). Like Brumfield, Hogan has mellowed or maybe he just doesn't need to dramatize his ability anymore. Yet at a recent tour stop, a spectator asked Hogan who was playing in an important semifinal match. Hogan replied, "Nobody, absolutely nobody."

8. **Billie Jean King (tennis):** The grand dame of all the racquet sports is a rabble rouser. When things are going her way she's a joy, kidding with the crowd and showing off. But when things start going against her, watch out. She mercilessly berates linespersons, and is a master of the stare down. She often resorts to an odd mixture of self-flagellation and off-color language. Her pristine image obscures the fact that this lady does not like to lose. She often displays the intemperate behavior of a star who has seen her best days and is damned unhappy about it. One of her worst moments came at Forest Hills when she refused to shake hands after beating Julie Heldman—now that's no way to treat a lady.

9. **Linda Wolf (platform tennis):** Lovely Linda is the second rated lady on the list. Physically intimidating, she scares many of the smaller ladies on the platform circuit. Her striking countenance belies a fierce competitiveness that sometimes manifests itself coldly. She is given to frequent temper tantrums and has a decided preference for strong language. After a particularly hard loss she would vow to replace her doubles partner. Last season it was Wendy Chase who took the brunt, "Get a new partner, all I want to do is win," she screamed. This year, with a new partner she has calmed down . . . and won.

10. **Clark Graebner (tennis/platform tennis):** Graebner, in his prime, gave new meaning to the word "obnoxious." There was the time he brandished the finger to a spectator at a tennis tournament in Virginia who turned out to be the Governor's wife! But like others who have behaved badly, he has matured with age,though he still has his quirks. Graebner is still the master of the eye roll/body language that says, "Gee partner, I can't believe you missed that shot." But perhaps Graebner is best remembered for his attempted thrashing of Nastase many years ago. There they stood, toe to toe, with Graebner threatening to pound Nastase senseless unless he cut the act and played tennis. If he had decked the wily Rumanian, he would have won a special Racquet award. ■

THE TOP TEN

1. Ilie Nastase (tennis)
   For consistently outrageous behavior.
2. Jimmy Connors (tennis)
   For his lack of timing, wit and style.
3. Mo Khan (squash)
   For refusing to age with grace.
4. Charlie Brumfield (racquetball)
   For carrying the art of psyching to the limit.
5. Tom Poor (squash)
   For disguising himself as a proper Bostonian.
6. Bob Hewitt (tennis)
   For rewriting the Australian deportment code.
7. Marty Hogan (racquetball)
   For carrying cockiness to new heights.
8. Billie Jean King (tennis)
   For fooling most of the people most of the time.
9. Linda Wolf (platform tennis)
   For confirming that beauty is only skin deep.
10. Clark Graebner (tennis)
    For giving new meaning to "obnoxious."

HONORABLE MENTION

To Buster Mottram (tennis) for his bad jokes on and off the court . . . to Natasha Chmyreva (tennis) whose stalling tactics left her in Siberia . . . to Davey Bledsoe (racquetball) for his emotional overkill . . . to Jerry Hilecher (racquetball) for appealing more calls than F. Lee Bailey . . . to Clive Caldwell (squash) for his philosophy that squash is war.

OLD TIMER AWARD

Earl Cochell (tennis) for climbing up on the referee's chair, wresting the mike from the referee and getting banned from tennis for life . . . with apologies to Pancho Gonzales and others.

DISQUALIFIED

Craig Fanning (squash) for the absolute worst behaviour of anyone who has ever played a racquet sport. He is unranked because anyone who does what he has done *must* be insane.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

John McEnroe (tennis) who can whine, spit and carry on with the best of them . . . Doug Russell (platform tennis) who calls them the way he sees them . . .

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PEACH FUZZ

THE DAY HOGAN INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO THE RACQUET WORLD

by Steve Keeley

By now everyone has heard of Marty Hogan but in December 1975 he was just emerging from his cocoon. He had not yet won a major tournament and had not yet begun to compile his phenomenal record. The scene was Burlington, Vermont in what turned out to be a crazy and atypical pro stop. In the quaterfinals against Charlie Brumfield, Hogan introduced himself to the racquet world. It was the veteran versus the greenhorn, the Beelzebub-bearded Brumfield against Peach Fuzz Hogan. And nobody gave Marty an ice cubes chance in Hades.

But Burlington *adored* Marty Hogan. Indeed, who could resist the munchkinized bundle of energy as he bounded into the court for the warmup against Brumfield? Hogan performed his pre-game antics. Outside the court, Leach Industry bigwig Charlie Drake scrambled for bets: "Who'll give me ten points and the kid who hasn't gone through puberty yet?" Drake found no wager takers because he couldn't get anyone's attention. All 600 eyeballs were glued on Mr. Pre-puberty . . . and the game had not even begun!

Judging from his Charley Brown squiggly grin, Hogan was cognate of those incredulous stares from the gallery. He played to that crowd. First, some quick jumping jacks, followed by a dozen pushups and then an inimitable tour of the court: Marty started in the rear court corner and sprinted full blast the length of the court, only to stop just short of collision with the front wall. There he sprang high into the air and shrieked, "YAH!" Once earthborn again,. he jogged slowly to the opposite side wall. From there it was another all-out dash to the back wall terminated by the self-leapfrog and the aerial yell, "YAH!" Thus, in this toad-with-conniptions manner, the heart throb of the training bra set circumvented the playing area three times. As I reflect, without the vocal additions it would have been remarkably similar to the way a dog explores a yard, pausing to piddle in each corner.

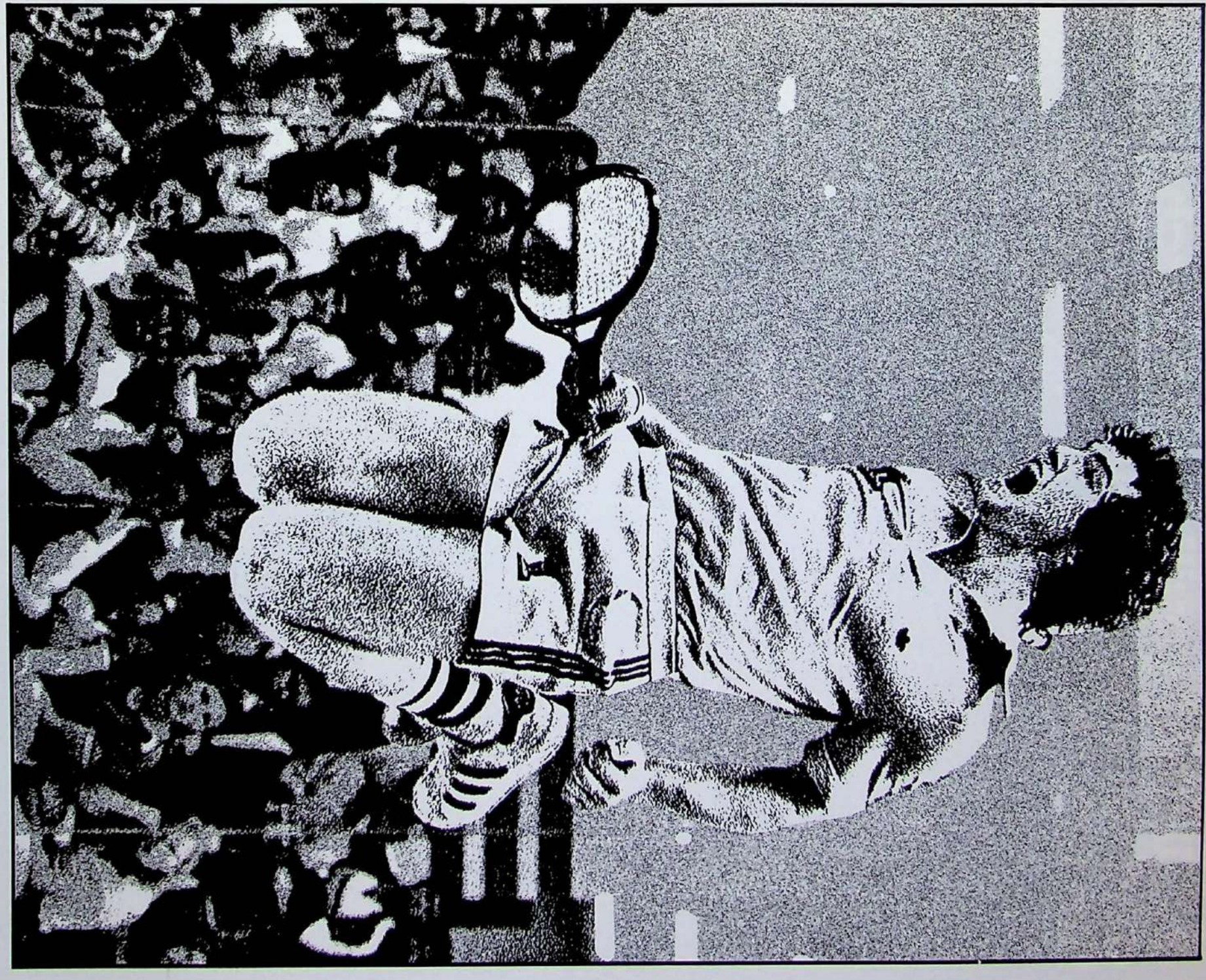
And that last analogy is about how Brumfield seemed to view it. At first, he wore a sardonic look and gossiped to himself as Hogy went through his impromptu court circuit. Then Charlie slouched against the backwall in apparent amusement. (Or was it grin-and-bare-it contempt?) Brum's body language seemed to betray: "This merry-andrew is about to receive a well-deserved spanking!"

Brumfield's act, if more subdued without Hogan's crazed choreography, was nonetheless as entertaining. He shot wise cracks from both hips at no one in particular. "I hope bug-wit's mouth doesn't get lodged under my size twelve stompers, or it'll seem awful quiet around here!" Following such quips, he cast furtive "knowing" glances through the right glass wall to the "knowing" people in the stands. I was a member of that gallery,

Nobody gave Marty Hogan a chance.

Steve Keeley is a racquetball pro and author. This article from his hilarious book *It's a Racquet!* soon to be released. To order, $4.50 to Service Press, 6369 Reynolds Rd., Haslett, MI 48840

Rick Diaz © 1979



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"Behind that neatly trimmed goatee and those Elton John spectacles of Charlie Brumfield lurks a computer mind . . . "

and though my return gaze might not have been all so knowing as Brum might like for purposes of his self-assurance, *his* sidelong look put me in mind of Jack Benny's trademark expression of feigned disgust: "You all know, and I know, but this ignoramus here doesn't know."

They split the first two games. The opener was all Hogan's 21-16, the second all Brum's 21-3. Yawn, sigh and ho hum . . . another routine win in three for the champ? Maybe not . . . as the third game commenced, Brumfield's unzippered sense of humor suddenly was zipped up. No more flippant verbal jabs and no more arrogant gestures. Peering through the looking glass side wall, I watched Chas isolate himself in a corner of the court. His obsidian eyes dilated behind coke bottle lenses. His hairy chin drooped to his concave sternum in profound concentration, as through his head were too heavy to hold up. The Sweeper appeared to be drifting into the *quiet rage,* a state of mind during which Charlie plays his best ball. (I had seen him slip into this type of trance previously from much closer up—when he played against me—only to orchestrate all that focused energy to clean *my* clock.)

Hogan noted Brumfield's transformation too, and it was infectious. Hogy's expression altered from haughty mischievousness to a pose of pernicious determination. Yes, the cherub took on an almost evil look. His bright youthful eyes dulled to vacant resolution. It was scarey that someone so young could concentrate so deeply. Like Brum, Hogan also ceased the verbal shenanigans; he somehow sensed that the situation transcended snide remarks. In place of the earlier yack, now Marty's lips parted slightly and contorted into a sort of snarl—which I liken to the chops of a Doberman pinscher who thought he just heard a sound far off in the night; who thought he might like to grasp that distant sound and rip it to shreds.

Let's cut from this forthcoming dog fight to delve briefly into the minds of the animals about to do battle. I have stated that Charlie Brumfield's cerebral game is unparalled. (Only Bud Muehleisen's heady play is comparable, and unfortunately these days the Mule's body is not as nimble as his mind.) You can almost hear Brumfield's mind shout orders, "Hup two, three, four . . . Hup two, three, four!" as he marches to twenty-one points. Behind that neatly trimmed goatee and those Elton John spectacles there lurks a computer mind whose vast memory banks spew out info much more quickly than any average Joe.

And whose bionic mouth is capable of spewing output with the machine gun rapidity of a hyperactive Don Rickles. Many times when Brum babbles on in overdrive, you would never guess he is particularly intelligent. Lots of words but not saying a heck of a lot, verbosely similar to a baby finger painting all over the bathroom walls. But pay stricter attention . . . remember that computer mind and listen more closely. During an important tournament each ostensibly off-the-cuff Brumfield phrase actually has cold and calculated purpose. It's all part of a pervasive, penetrating psych.

A case in point: The Broomer had arrived days early at the Burlington site to mingle and play with the players' minds. Continually he had fired quips with barbed implications which must have evoked acute tummy rumbles among the panting puppy racquetballers: "It's hard to be humble when you are so great." . . . "Yes, I'm playing well at present, but that doesn't mean someone won't get double figures on me." . . . "I'll do the best I can, but remember, I'm only a genius."

At jabber he *is* a genius. It didn't matter that *every* player had not heard *each* boast. Like legends and miracles, word-of-mouth is an amplifying vehicle for the psych. So, prior to the tournament's opening coin toss, Brumfield had sent up a verbal smoke screen which had permeated the deepest recesses of most of his opponents' minds.

But what about Hogan's mind? Marty is at a delightful point in his fresh racquetball career when immunity to the psych attack is especially strong. At present, he enters the court basically unaware of the many psychological factors involved in professional athletics. But not for long. He may be ignorant along these lines in a blissful sort of way but, in the words of Steve Serot (who knows from experience), "Pretty soon he'll start thinking about what he's doing and then he'll become one of 'us'." In sum, Mark Twain could have been referring to Marty Hogan when he wrote, "All you need in life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is assured."

I have observed the Brumfield-Hogan relationship evolve through the past couple years, and it is amazing to me that Hogan's relatively virgin mental terrain has thus far withstood Brumfield's omnipresent psychological erosion. Charlie recognized long ago that Marty had superstar potential and that eventually the two of them would vie for the bucks. Thus, Brum long ago initiated the subtle browbeating. At first it was very sly. After he edged Marty in the last Spokane World Tourney finals: "It sure is strange how a person's backhand can deteriorate from one tournament to the next." A week later it was more

An ecstatic Marty Hogan leaned against the wall out in the corridor—"I don't know how I did it. It just happened . . . "

direct: "What can we do to help your backhand, Marty?" And a month later there was no sugarcoat: "Your backhand is pitiful!'

The funny thing about this is, all the while Hogan's backhand was extremely *strong*. But no matter to Brum. If he sees no legitimate opening then he creates one. Then he harps on you like a man picking a scab. One quick probe . . . a pause . . . always followed by another probe . . . until the scab is gone.

Rather than condemn Brum's masterful psychological ploys (I think they are as much a psych-up as a psych-out.), I endure and sometimes even enjoy them—in the same way I once observed with curious interest as a physician took a scalpel and incised my anesthesized skin for a knee arthroscopy; how could the knife blade be cutting when I didn't feel a thing? I skittishly admire anyone so profoundly gifted at any art . . . and, make no mistake, Charlie Brumfield is a gifted court shrink.

Back at the scene of the third game action, it was the proverbial underdog vs. overdog contest, and the majority of the gallery was rooting for that sawed-off underdog with the look of the Doberman who had heard a sound far off in the night. The crowd's expectation was gratified. Hogan destroyed Brumfield in the rubber game, 21-7. Charlie didn't play poorly and, in fact, he was not much of a factor in the game. Hogan's bottom board blasts were irretrievable, almost invisible. ("You can't hit what you can't see!" admonished the kids during our playground baseball games of yore.)

As the winner and loser exchanged perfunctory post-game handshakes, Steve Serot perched grimly on the hardwood bleacher as though psyching up to face a firing squad. I sneaked a glance and could read Steve's thoughts: "How can such a pipsqueak hit the freakin' ball so hard?" Because now Hogan was Serot's upcoming semifinal foe.

Serot probably was too occupied sizing up Hogan to take in C.B.'s expression following the loss. It was a strange situation. Charlie Brumfield has been an ostentatious winner in the past and typically after a big win he does some form of the pachyderm stomp, raises both arms in a victory salute to the audience, flashes the numero uno sign in front of his freshly succumbed victim's face and screams at the top of his lungs, "The People's Champ comes through again!"

Brumfield is not so experienced at losing, especially to a non-veteran. Bearded chin still held high, he accepted Hogan's handclasp. Then Brum's chin drooped in a hangdog expression as he wilted unpretentiously from the court and shuffled through the crowded hallways to the vacant locker room.

Brum slumped in front of his locker, wallowing in sweat and self-pity. I had not seen him this forlorn since his startling quarterfinal loss to Charley Garfinkle in the 1971 Salt Lake Nationals. That's when Chas's post-game remark was, "I'll never play singles Racquetball again!" But no idea of quitting this time. Rather, Brum appeared to be entertaining the thoughts of a perplexed Alice in Wonderland: "It takes all the running you can do to stay in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast."

The psych artist was done in. As my Bible toting brother, Tom, might quote from the scriptures, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." For the first time in over a year, Charlie Brumfield had been knocked out of a major tournament before the semifinals.

Meanwhile, an ecstatic Marty Hogan leaned against a wall out in the teeming corridor. He was surrounded by a winner's semi-circle of mostly youngsters. Clutching a pay telephone receiver, he tried to blurt the big news to his mother in St. Louis. But words came faster than tongue and lips could control, as Hogy sputtered more than spoke. "Yeah, ma! I don't know how I did it. It just happened!" The young fame sniffers nosed in closer to be near a celebrity. Rubber necks strained to catch bits of the conversation. "Yeah! Yeah! The score? I don't know, but it wasn't even close! Yeah! Serot's next . . . sure, I'll get 'em!

Fortunately, the St. Louis whirlwind has matured in more ways than one during the last couple years. At 5'5" he is still fairly knee-high to a skunk, but what a bulldozer of muscle power crammed into that growing frame. With Popeye biceps and workhorse legs, he's a curly haired miniature of Joe Palooka.

Too, Marty's former skunky disposition is an air of the past, and he's much more pleasant to have around now. He still chatters continually, but this banter is more intelligible, less self-centered and often naively humorous. Time may erode his innocence, but for now Marty Hogan is Marty Hogan—which is different and delightful.

He's not the polished entertainer like Brumfield, but that's because he is his spontaneous, uncensored self. And though he may not hold the racquetball gallery precisely in the palm of his hand like the Brum, he does hold them. Jivin' and connivin' with carcass and mouth in perpetual motion, Hogan is the darling of the court crowd wherever he plants his high top tennies. ■

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WIMBLEDON

by Steve Metcalfe

It's the world's oldest and most pretigious tennis tournament, its formal name, the Lawn Tennis Championships on Grass, first won by Spencer Gore in 1877. To those who compete, 128 in men's singles, 96 in women's singles, it is simply, the Championships.

It is a spectacle based on tradition: roses and hydrangeas, ivy, strawberries and cream. It is eight clay courts, two indoor courts, and 15 grass courts on which the tournament is played. The grass courts, each approximately one fifth of an acre, are under the watchful eye of head groundskeeper, Robert Twynan, the finest in the world.

It is crowds. On a given day 30,000 people will converge on the club. Some will be lucky and already have tickets—each December, 6,500 blocks of tickets go on sale by public lottery. All competitors are given choice tickets for friends and relatives. But for many, tickets will be purchased from scalpers or "touts," legal in Britain, at prices ranging from $10 to $200, depending on the day and match.

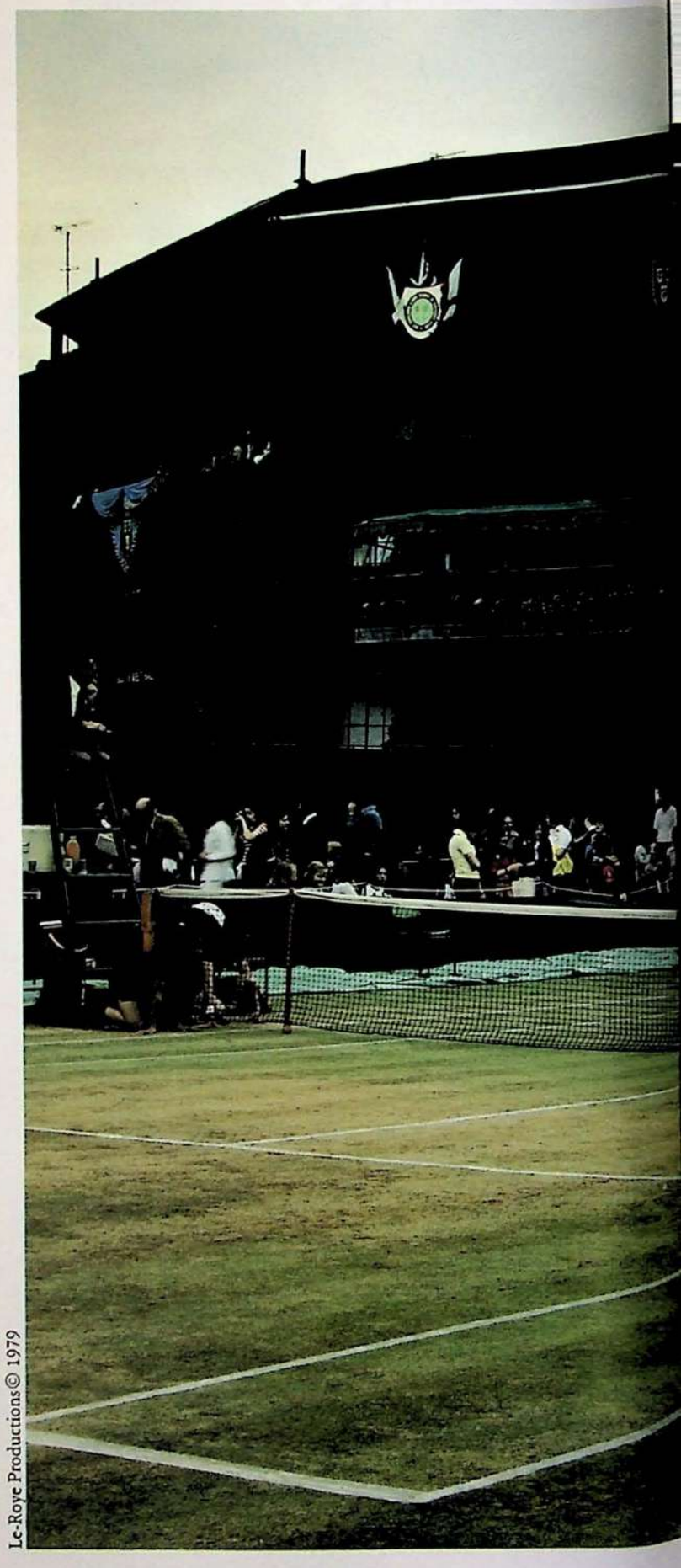
It is media: the World Series, the Indy 500 and the Superbowl rolled into one. The newspapers are filled with results—Rex Bellamy of the Times, Lance Tingay of the Daily Telegraph, each of them opinionated, enlightening, and, where the glory of England is concerned, anything but objective. And the B.B.C. To many, the finest seat of the tournament is the stool closest to the tap and the telly where John Barrett and Winnie Shaw Wooldridge give crisp, knowledgeable and politely restrained commentary.

It is unpredictable weather, tournament official's optimistic announcements of sunshine and balmy temperatures not withstanding. On any given day sun hats and umbrellas abound and everyone, no matter what his attire, will be drenched. Should the day be washed out, there are no refunds.

It is punctuality. Matches start at 2 p.m. sharp. Players are given five minutes, no more, no less, for the "knock-up." The longest match ever played here lasted 112 games. At the end of five hours and twelve minutes, Pancho Gonzales had defeated Charles Pasarell 22-24, 1-6, 16-14, 6-3, 11-9.

It was the first tournament to accept amateurs and professionals alike, defying an edict that had existed in tennis for 100 years. With one move the game was modernized. And each year the men's champion becomes an honorary lifetime member, joining a roster of the greatest names the game has known. Here, glory last far longer then the winner's purse.

It is Wimbledon.■



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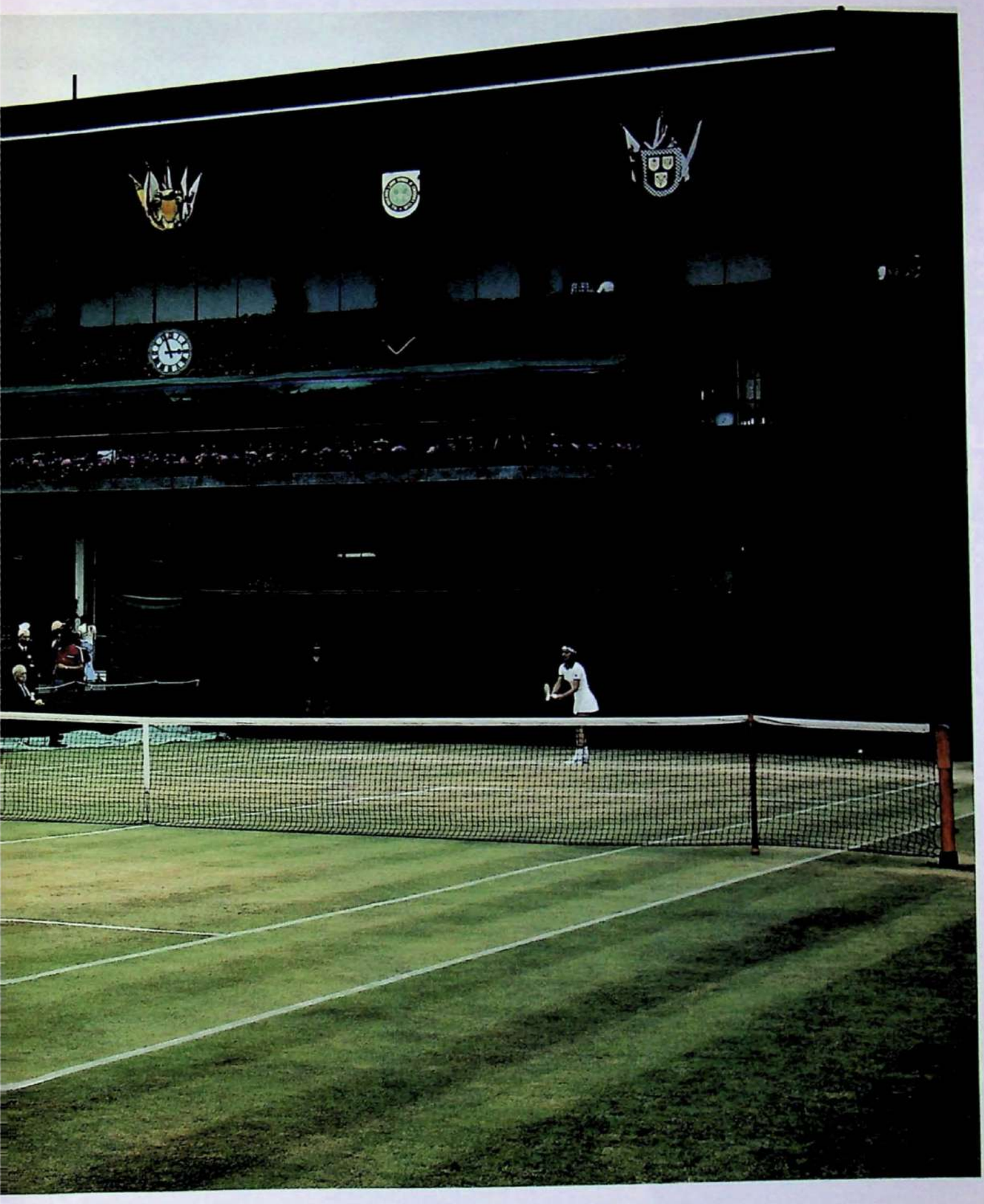

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NAME DROPPING

HOW TO TALK TENNIS TO THE PROS

by Herb FitzGibbon

Recently, I had the opportunity to play some tennis with the "King" himself, Bjorn Borg. He was passing through New York and was desperate to hit a few. I was one of three court jesters summoned at the eleventh hour to satisfy his needs.

As soon as I had taken my beating (6-1, 6-0), and before his next victim appeared, I found myself with the chance to talk to him. Aaahh, I thought, the chance of a lifetime. Within moments I'll have the best player in the world fascinated, not to mention mesmerized, by the breadth and scope of my tennis knowledge.

"How heavy is your racquet?"

"Fourteen and a half ounces."

"Can I hold it?"

"Yes."

"Is it really strung at 80 pounds?"

"Yes."

"Where are you playing next?"

"Wimbledon."

"Ohhh . . . ."

Silence. End of conversation.

While he was hitting with his second partner, I realized Borg really didn't have the slightest interest in *my* tennis. He hadn't even nibbled at my bait. He didn't ask about the weight of my racquet (13 and ½ ounces), the tension of my strings (62 lbs), or where I was playing next (Boulevard Gardens in Queens).

Not that I wanted to, or *could have*, overwhelmed him with my tennis background. To do so would have been pretentious—the jester lecturing the king. No, what I wanted was more along the lines of cocktail party conversation, courts and elbows and competition. You see, the art of tennis talk is to get the other fellow to ask *you* the questions, so you can show your stuff, those wonderful and fascinating tidbits that set you apart from the common hacker.

The conversation should have gone like this:

". . . and where are you playing next, Mr. Borg?"

"Wimbledon."

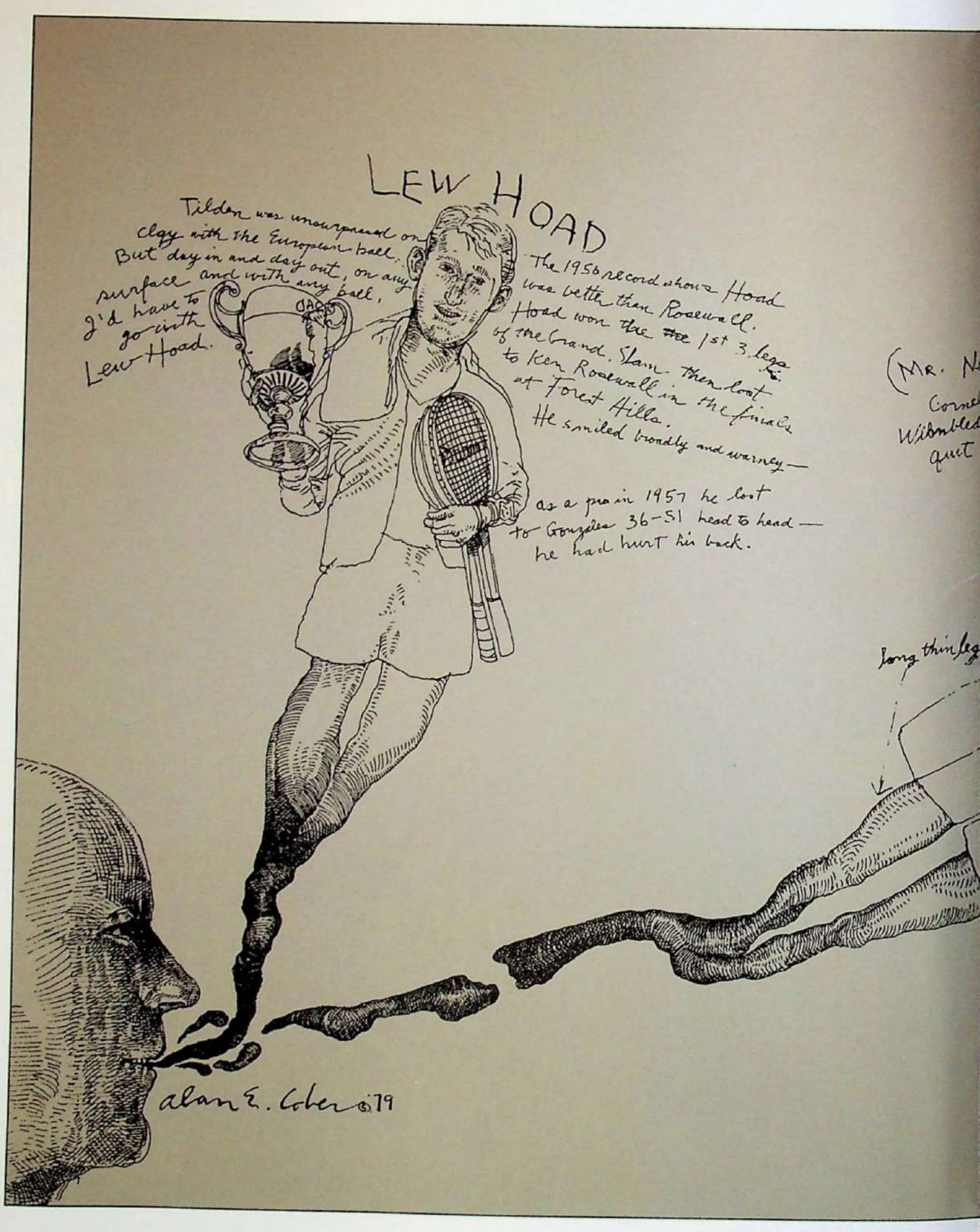
"Ahhh."

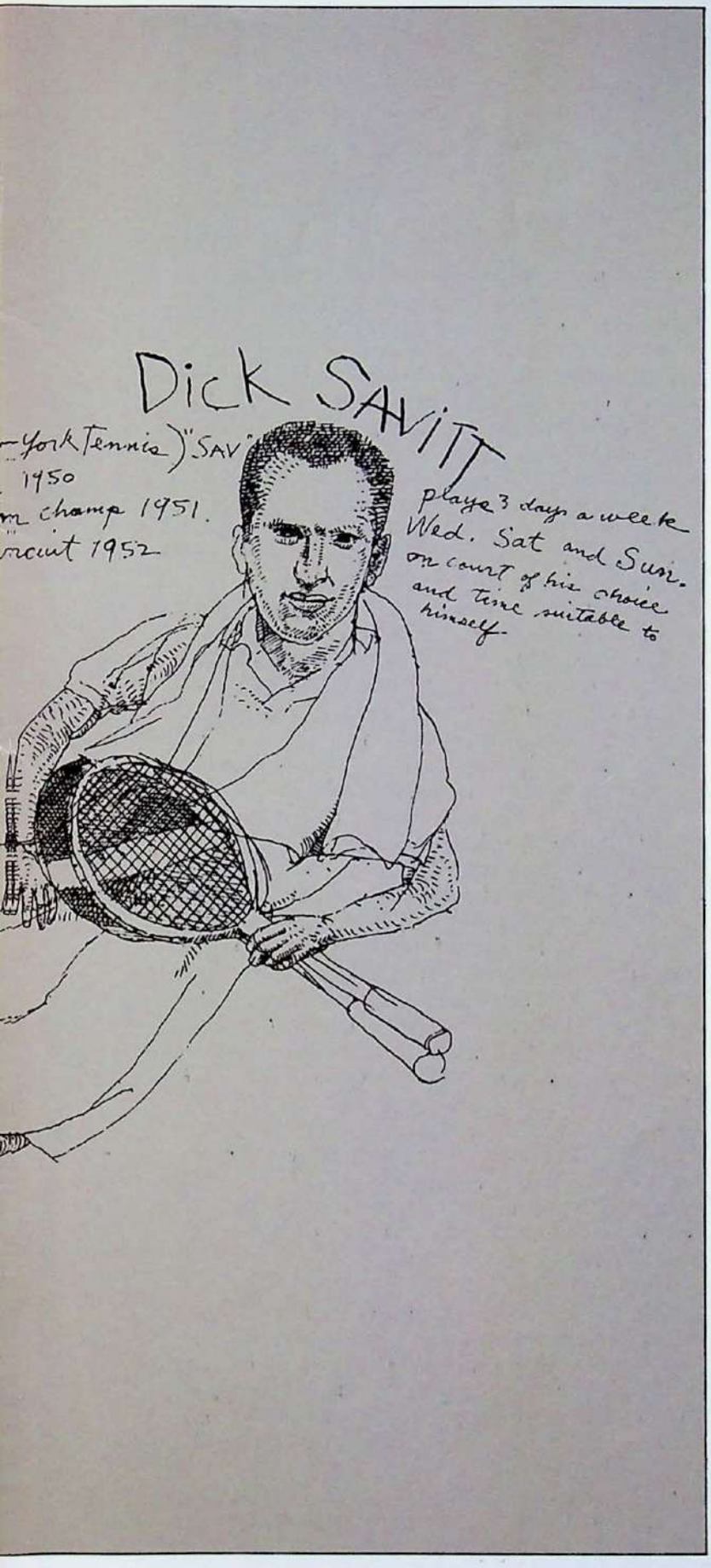
"And you, Mr. FitzGibbon?"

"Boulevard Gardens in Queens."

"Ahhh . . . Tell me, Mr. FitzGibbon, who in your esteemed opinion is the greatest player of all time?"

"Well, Mr. Borg, Connors would be my choice on a fast surface. And of course, I would probably have


LEW HOAD
Tilden was unsurpassed on clay with the European ball. But day in and day out, on any surface and with any ball, I'd have to go with Lew Hoad.
The 1956 record shows Hoad was better than Rosewall. Hoad won the 1st 3 legs of the Grand Slam then lost to Ken Roseall in the finals at Forest Hills. He smiled broadly and warmly—
as a pro in 1957 he lost to Gonzales 36-51 head to head— he had hurt his back.
(MR. N
Wibbled
quet
long thin leg
alan E. Cober ©79



Alan E. Cober © 1979

"When Hoad turned pro he was actually beating Gonzales one-on-one."

to go with you on *en tout cas*. And Tilden was unsurpassed on clay with the European ball. But day in day out, on any surface and with any ball, I'd have to go with Lew Hoad. The record book shows . . . .

"The record book shows that in 1956, Lew Hoad was better than Ken Rosewall when both were among the top amateurs in the world. During that year, Hoad won the first three legs of the coveted Grand Slam, until that time accomplished only by Don Budge in 1938. He played Ken Rosewall in the finals at Forest Hills, the remaining slam event. It was one of those extremely blustery September days and the wind on the center court was treacherous. Hoad's massive arsenal of shots was blunted by the wind, while the compact, precision-built Rosewall game seemed little affected. Hoad lost in four sets.

"If Hoad was not the best player who ever picked up a racquet, he was certainly the most manly of the great players. In spite of the bitter disappointment the wind had helped inflict upon him, he smiled broadly and warmly as he shook Rosewall's hand at the conclusion. It was the kind of smile we had all been taught to bring out when we lost, but could never quite manage after particularly disappointing defeats. For those who admire superior ability combined with exceptional sportsmanship, Hoad was the greatest.

"When Hoad turned professional in 1957, at the age of 23 he was actually beating Gonzales one-on-one until he injured his back. He lost the head-to-head competition 36-51, but he was the only first year pro to ever seriously challenge Gonzales. The previous year Rosewall lost to Gonzales 26-50, and never even looked like he could beat him. Hoad never fully recovered from his back injury. Yet those who saw him play say there was no weakness in his game, and had he been able to mature injury-free for a few more years, he might have given more conclusive proof of his greatness."

I stop self-consciously. Borg is awed, I can tell. Having been completely unimpressed with my game, only now is he starting to get the idea that I might once have been a ranked player.

"Please continue, Mr. FitzGibbon. For sure this is most interesting."

"Why thank you. You know, I remember watching Hoad practicing with Savitt. If any one person deserves the title of Mr. New York Tennis it is Richard Savitt. "Sav," as he is called, was the apotheosis of the pre-open tennis player in this country.

"Everyone who was anyone in tennis played at Rip's just off Sutton Place."

He was educated (Cornell, 1950), won Wimbledon a year later, and quit the circuit at the top in 1952 to pursue a highly successful business career. But he can be difficult—like New York.

"The difficulty arises if you want to play tennis with him. He only plays three days a week, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, on the court of his choice, and at a time suitable to him. He will not compromise. He almost never plays doubles, customer games or women.

"Everyone who came up through the ranks in New York since 1956 lived with it for a while because Savitt was so much fun to play. His long thin legs and massive upper body made him look like some powerful bird of prey hovering over the ball while he drove every shot at full force. It was exhilarating—trying to run down his big shots until he missed or to stand toe to toe and slug it out.

"Through the years, almost all the top players in the world have called "Sav" when they were in New York if they wanted a good workout. These practice matches served to reinforce his stature in New York tennis circles, for who among us wouldn't want to get a call from any of the greats, even if it was just a wrong number? This happened to few others in New York as regularly as it happened to Savitt.

"Savitt is now in his 50's and he doesn't get the calls he once did. But in 1977 Ken Rosewall called him before his match with Harold Solomon at the Felt Forum in the $60,000 Shakey's Pizza Classic. He wanted to hit with Savitt at the Forum in preparation for his match. Savitt said he couldn't play that early. He never plays until after the close of the market."

I stop again, confident that I have Borg's attention but politely wondering if he wants the ball passed to him. He too may want to express opinions on why one would refuse to play Rosewall in the Felt Forum. There is a comfortable lull in our conversation. I fire my *coup de grace.*

"By the way, Bjorn, did you ever play at Rip's?" (This is extremely unlikely as Rip's has not been in the papers lately being torn down for an apartment building in the early 50's, before Borg was born. I have him in the palm of my hand.)

"No Mr. Fitzgibbon I didn't."

"Rip's was once the tennis Mecca of New York City. Everyone who was anyone in New York tennis played on the club's eight outdoor courts just off Sutton Place. Bill Talbert can tell stories about the place all night—the characters, the celebrities, the betting, the women, the cheating. It was the New York tennis scene.

"One of the best known characters at Rip's was a tennis pro from Long Island named John Nogrady. His clientele consisted primarily of the very rich. Such old family names as Phipps, Martin, Doubleday, Fairchild and Grace were among his regular partners. Nogrady's customers were not entirely old money, there were a few doctors and assorted self-made men who could also afford $10 per hour in those days. Back in the 50's, Nogrady was the highest paid pro in the area. Not only did you pay him the $10 fee, you also had to provide the court because Nogrady almost never worked as a club pro. He much preferred the privacy of the Phipp's indoor court in the winter and their poolside outdoor court in the warm weather. He also liked the Martin's two courts and the Fairchild courts as well. When he did have to teach at Rip's, however, you can be sure the student paid for the court and the balls.

"Nogrady's tennis background is a little hazy, but it is said that he toured briefly against Budge and developed a backhand second only to his opponent's famed stroke. Nogrady was also a charming fellow who knew tennis backwards and forwards, and possessed a knowledge of psychology that would have allowed him to go into private practice. The combination of his association with the very rich, his preference for private courts, and above all, his impact on his pupils, helped make his name synonomous with teaching greatness in the New York area."

Oh, the respect in his eyes. His questions come at me fast and furiously. I have finally established myself as a player with a sense of history of the game, a profound knowledge of it's more sophisticated aspects and, yes, an uncommon playing ability, my recent performance to the contrary.

I come to my senses.

Borg is on the court making finely chopped hamburger of his latest opponent's game. My chance to be witty and esoteric will have to wait until I am comfortably entrenched with friends at the corner pub. Borg has places to go, tournaments to win, and money to bank. No time or interest for tennis talk with us mere mortals.

As I move off to my shower I find myself thinking perhaps that's a shame. You see, I know many wonderful and fascinating things. ■

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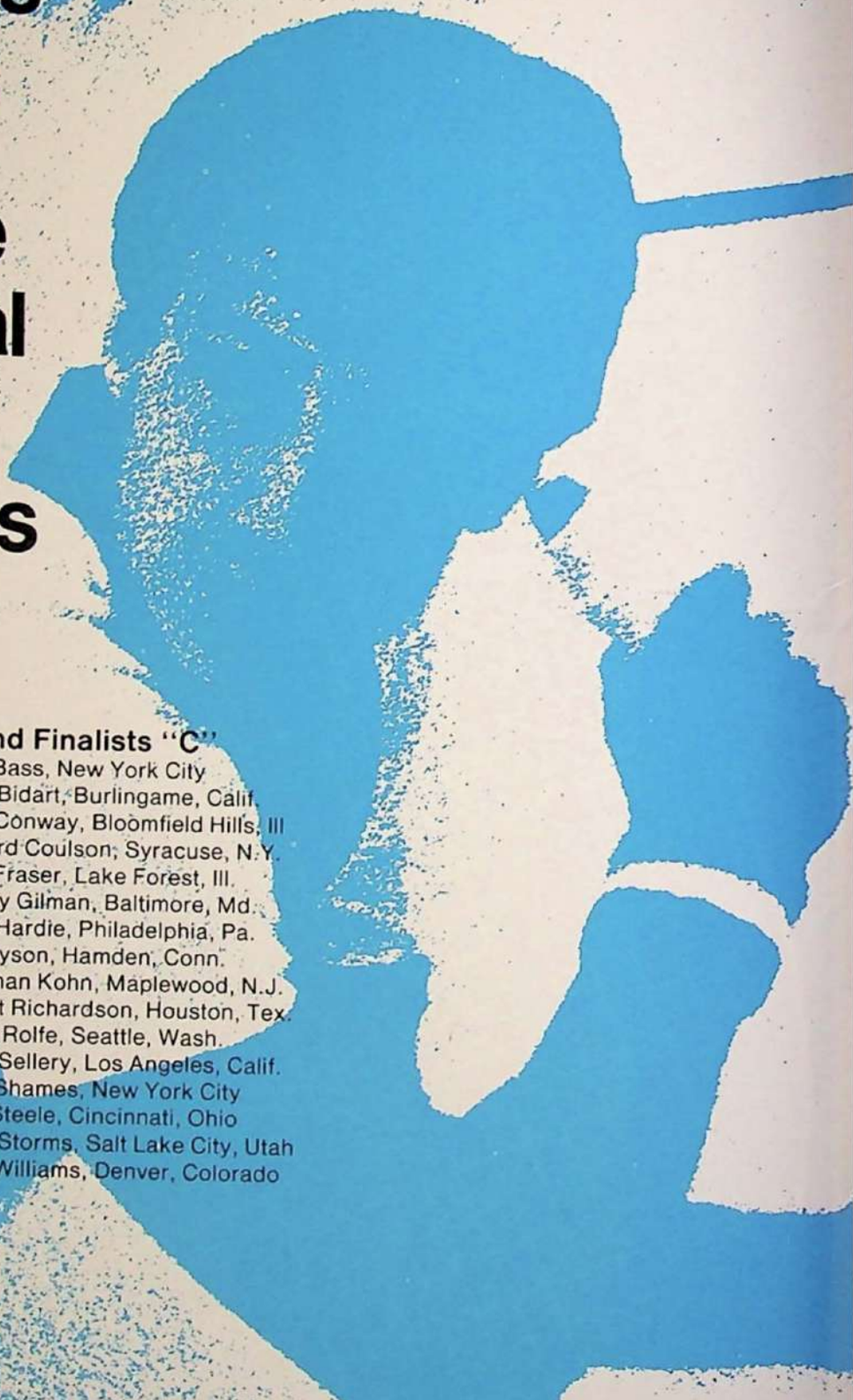

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Rick Drooyan, Los Angeles, Calif.
Jess Gitt, St. Louis, Missouri
Bruce Hallet, Chicago, Illinois
Sewall Hodges, New York City
Guy Lampard, San Francisco, Calif.
Bill Lane, Seattle, Wash.
Ralph Marsh, Salt Lake City, Utah
Art Nielson, Bethesda, Maryland
Steve Previs, Atlanta, Georgia
Taylor Quick, Denver, Colorado
Paul Sorensen, Birmingham, Alabama

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John Conway, Bloomfield Hills, Ill
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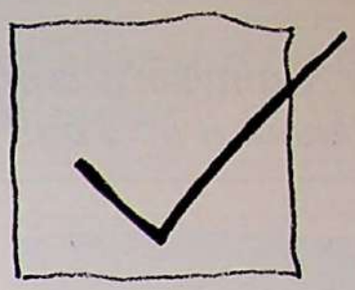
CHECK YOUR RACQUET SAVOIR FAIRE

DO YOU HAVE INSOUCIANCE, AMBIENCE AND CACHET ON THE COURT?

by Gerald McCarthy



1. As a result of having raised a large amount of money for a local charitable organization, you are invited to participate in the organization's pro-celebrity doubles tournament. Your first round opponents include a volatile professional. At a crucial point in the match, responding to your wife's constant and vocal cheering at his mistakes, the professional walks over to the guest pavilion and wrings out his sweatband on her dress. You should:

(a) Tell your wife you'll buy her a new dress.
(b) Wring out your own sweatband on his backup racquet.
(c) Demand that the referee test the net's height.

2. In a vigorous racquetball match against your boss, the vain J. B. Bigley, you notice that your opponent's toupee, unbeknownst to its owner, has fallen in one of the back corners of the court, out of harm's way. As the game ends and J. B. begins to realize his state, you determine that your best bet for escape is to ignore the shine of his pate and treat the furry object as entirely foreign. You should:

(a) With a crisp backhand stroke, loft the wig through the spectator's porthole.
(b) Announce your surprise that the club provides dustmops.
(c) Pin it to your belt as a tribute to your victory.

"In a distinctly Australian accent, she surprises you by asking if you'd like to 'knock it up a bit!' . . . "

3. At a tournament sponsored by your company for all its executives, you find yourself in Hawaii hitting practice balls off a training wall. You also find yourself next to a rather buxom woman who is pursuing the same exercise. After a few moments of admiring her and wondering whether she would like to practice with you on a court, you find yourself talking to her. In a distinctly Australian accent, she surprises you by asking if you'd like to "knock it up a bit." You should:

(a) Cramp up and assume the fetal position.
(b) Make fun of her accent.
(c) Inform her that you've had a vasectomy.

4. At a party in the home of an international squash champion, you find yourself admiring and then handling a solid gold trophy won some years ago in London and known to be the prized possession in the Trophy Room. Your reverie is disturbed by the dinner gong and you look down in horror to find that the head of the figurine has broken off in your hand. You should:

(a) Ask your hostess for a jar of Elmer's Glue-all.
(b) Hide the trophy head in the cushion of the couch and go home.
(c) Stick it in your pocket and go to dinner.

5. Lord and Lady Farnesworth, whose houseguest you are at their country estate north of London, boast an impressive library of holograph manuscripts by such tennis progenitors as Major Walter Clopton Wingfield and Big Bill Tilden. For your bedtime reading you ask if you can read the handwritten text of Wingfield's original instructions on how to play the new sport of Sphairistike (or lawn tennis). Being a teaching pro, your zeal gets the best of you and you realize halfway through that you have been writing marginal criticisms of Wingfield's instructions. You should:

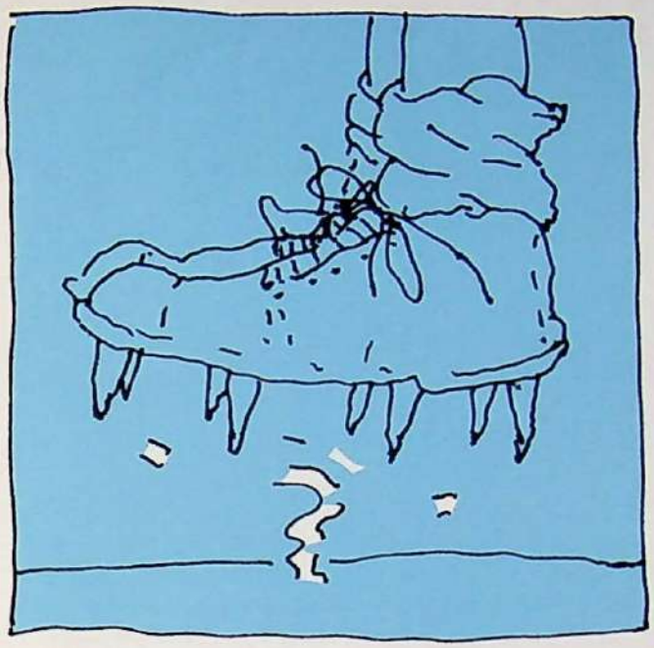
(a) Send the Farnesworths a photocopy of the printed version from the British Museum.
(b) Use chlorox on the marginalia.
(c) Announce at breakfast that you are giving Wingfield a B-.

6. On a cross–country trip somewhere in Central Iowa, you are passed by a souped-up Volkswagen with a bumper sticker reading "Honk if you play squash." Eager for a game, but finding to your chagrin that your horn doesn't work, you accelerate and pull alongside the VW. Attempting to communicate your desire for a match by gesturing, you accidentally sideswipe the VW and run it off the road. When you examine the wreck, you find that your victim has two broken legs. You should:

(a) Suggest he get a citizen's band radio.
(b) Ask where he learned to play squash.
(c) Ask if there are other 'B' players in town.

Jerry McLaughlin © 1979

"During the first match, you become aware that the cleats she is wearing are inappropriate for the clay surface."



7. You are the new tournament chairman for a ladies auxiliary tournament held each year at the local country club, of which you are not a member. Because of your new position, your wife has been invited to participate. During her first match, you become aware of a stirring in the crowd and slowly realize that the cleats she is wearing are inappropriate for the clay surface. You should:
(a) Slip away and hire a cloud-seeding service.
(b) Shout encouragement, telling her to "dig in."
(c) Immediately call a foot fault.

8. During the finals of a tournament at the Uptown Squash Club, you are sipping Gin and Yogurt with your new girlfriend, the daughter of the Martin LeDucs of Philadelphia—a family tracing its ancestry to the Norman conquerors of the 11th Century. During a particularly energetic display of hustle, one of the combatants experiences a long tear in the seam of his shorts. Ignorant of his compromised state, he prepares for the next serve by squatting. You should:
(a) Stand up and sing the *Marseillaise*.
(b) Throw your drink at the glass backwall.
(c) Announce that your broker is E. F. Hutton.

9. Though you have never played the sport, you are invited to a racquetball party at which you are to compete in the novice division of the round-robin. Having played seven matches without winning a point, you find yourself the target of some subtle sarcasm about your sport, which is handball. One wag, slightly tipsy, asks you in front of your date whether the racquet is too complicated an instrument for you to master. You should:
(a) Slap your tormentor upside the head.
(b) Ask him how much he earned last year.
(c) Quote the entire first book of *Paradise Lost.*

10. At an exhibition of table tennis in the People's Republic of China, you have been asked to represent the United States as coach, a duty that also includes the inevitable toasts at the pre-exhibition banquet. You have spent hours practicing a rousing tribute to Chinese sportsmanship in the Mandarin dialect, but immediately after delivering it you are told by a translator that it came out as "Ping pong is for sissies." You should:
(a) Cable Washington for further instructions.
(b) Defect and hope for the best.
(c) Attribute the quote to the "Gang of Four".

YOUR SCORE:

The correct answer in each case is 'c'

10-8 correct: Excellent. You have insouciance, ambience, and you are probably tournament tough. You would have no trouble convincing Jimmy Connors, Marty Hogan and Vic Niederhoffer to form a committee for ERA passage. You can no doubt describe the comparative physiological effects of a sauna vs. steam, and you can recognize the laminated-core layer triple sandwich racquet at 40 paces. You have recently switched from a department store warmup to a Fila (while in Europe), and choose to suffer inept referees in silence.

7-3 correct: Not all that bad, really. Sixty-percent of those scoring at least 3 correct wear matching socks and avoid T-shirts with LOVE IS SCORING printed across the front. Your cachet is limited to an occasional Tequila Sunrise between games, and you slap your thigh too often in moments of frustration. A score of five or below disqualifies you from verbal repartee without written notes. Never try to get a game when away from home.

2-0 correct: Irremedial, hopeless. Bring a hand calculator for scoring and never extend a match to best two-of-three. Let a computer match you with opponents and try to limit your activity to being a spectator. Don't accept Gatorade from strangers. Give up the presidency of your local club immediately and never have your racquet restrung. ■

HASHIM'S STORY

HE FORGED THE GREATEST DYNASTY IN THE HISTORY OF SPORTS

by Hashim Khan & Richard E. Randall

Hashim Khan began the greatest dynasty in the history of sport. At 64, he is a legend in his own time. From his first tournament victory in 1944 over his cousin, Abdul Bari, in the All-of-India Championship, he went on to win the British Open, the supreme test of the squash player, a total of seven times. His last British Open victory was in 1957 at the remarkable age of 44, and it inspired The New Yorker's Herbert Warren Wind to write: "The more I think about it, the more firmly convinced I am that the greatest athlete for his age the world has ever seen may well be Hashim Khan, the Pakistani squash player." The following is an excerpt from "The Khan Game" a collaboration between Hashim and Richard E. Randall. It is written as Hashim actually talks in his simple, poetic english.

• • • •

I am born in Nawakille, a village near city of Peshawar, Northwest Frontier Province, India, in 1916. All my people belong to Kalil Mohmund tribe of Pathans. They are Moslem, they believe in God very much, they are poor but they do not worry about this, and they are ready to put down their life for a friend.

I tell you about my tribe, for there are many other Pathans in this province—Yusafzais, Mahsuds, Darush Khel Waziris, others. These tribes live in mountains and no one tells them what to do. They do not live in law, British law or Indian law, they are very quick to fight.

But the Kalil Mohmunds, my tribe, come down from mountains a long time ago into flat land and they live in law.

Nawakille has maybe one thousand people, dirt streets, small houses, little gardens for vegetables, some chickens. It is a village for working people. In Nawakille, nothing much occurs.

But Peshawar, a big city you can find on your map, is close, and there many things happen. You walk fifteen minutes east from Nawakille, and you come into British cantonment where soldiers stay. Since my great, great grandfather, there are many many British soldiers in Peshawar, and they are there to keep watch on Khyber Pass, about forty miles away, in mountains. Nobody ever tries to come through this Pass.

At this club, the officers have many amusements: lawn tennis, hard racquets, squash racquets, billiards, swimming pool, drinking cocktails in bar. Two times every week there is music and they go dancing in ballroom. This club is not small: for one sport, lawn tennis, twenty-five courts!

My father, Abdullah Khan, is Chief Steward of this Club, an excellent position. He loves all sports, he is keen tennis player. And he understands small boys, my father. When I start to walk to club from Nawakille to watch these games, he does not say No. Then, I am about 8 years.

Here I see squash racquets for first time.

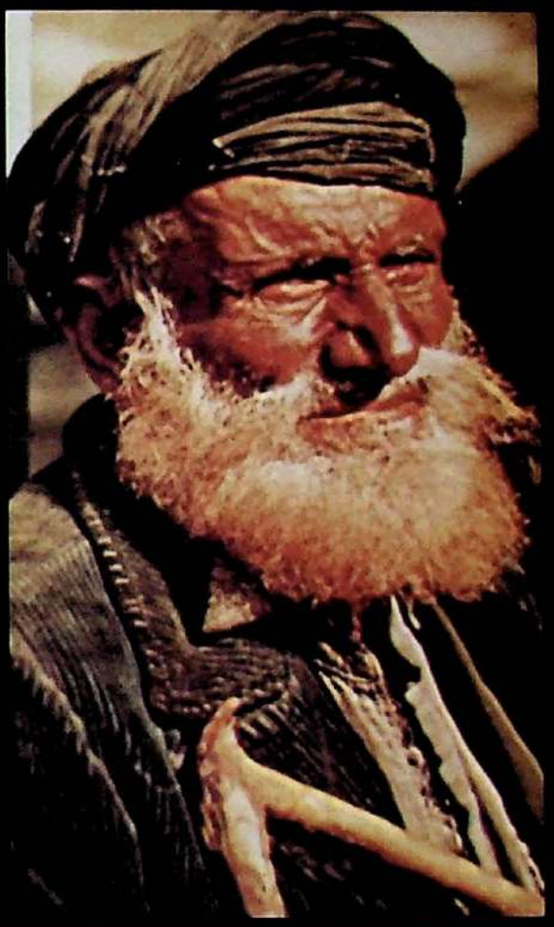
• • • •

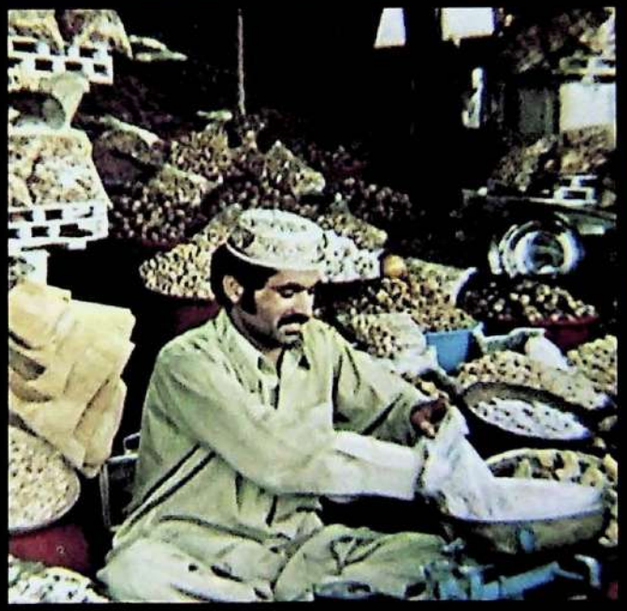
I climb little steps in back wall of court and look down inside at this game. All walls are brick covered by plaster. Floor is cement. Ceiling? No ceiling, court is open to sky. This lets in light and air. Also, rain. When this occurs, British go inside to play cards or something amusing.

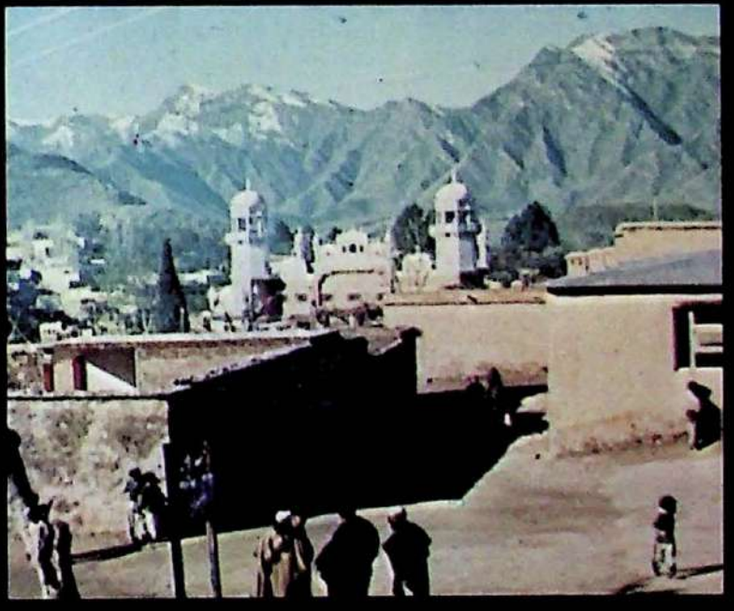
First time I sit on this back wall, no other boys sit with me. There is a mistake in game and ball flies out from top. But British officers do not run out little back door. They stand and look up to smile at me. I jump down outside and send the ball back in, quick. Four or five times ball flies out. Always I am glad to send it back. I wish this game to continue.

Next day is again like this. For me it is a good ar-

A panorama of Pakistan







"I play Hashim against Hashim. True, the other Hashim knows where ball is going, I cannot keep this secret from him . . . "

rangement. I chase ball, this way I pay for my place on back wall. But officers do not understand, they think *they* must pay! Soon I have regular job, I come to courts every day after school to chase ball, and for this every month I receive five rupees, same as $1 American money. I have annas from my father before, but never rupees. I think I am rich!

In afternoon, late, maybe 5 o'clock, officers go to showers in clubhouse, they wish to make themselves clean for dinner. Then ballboys come down off wall and go in courts to play. I come down also. We play until we cannot see ball for reason it is dark. And sometime when moon is high and bright and shines in court, we continue to play long long time. You understand, there is no electric.

There is a difficulty. I am a very small boy with big racquet. I must put my hand high on handle to make my stroke. But I have a quick eye and I can run. I am so light I can run up and down court many games and never do I have a pain in my ribs. When it is my stroke and ball is a long way off, I run fast. When I run, it seems there is enough time always, time stretches out like some rubber band, and I am there for stroke. In this way I am fortunate.

. . . .

After my father dies, I begin to change from a little boy. I begin to think more. When I am twelve, I tell my mother, "I want to stop school and stay on squash courts all day."

Mother does not like this. "You are small boy," she says, "You must learn in school, you cannot get a man's job. You stop now, people think 'Those people are very poor, Hashim must chase balls to bring home a few rupees.' They will look down on us. We do not need money."

For a while I go to school, but it is like I am not there. I do not hear teacher, I do not see what it is he puts on blackboard. He thinks I am in his room, but I am in court, playing squash. I hear ball dash on wall, I see it bounce to me. I sit on floor in this school, yes, but my arm makes squash strokes.

It is wrong to be here in this school, I think. Nothing here helps me. But on courts, I can learn, someday I can make money this way. Look at professionals! English officers give them a salary to teach them game that comes from England. Yes, they play well, they work many years with this game, they start young. I must work now, too. If I wait four, five more years to finish school, I am too late for this sport.

I am a boy, yes, but I see few good jobs for my people. A little education does not help. If you can go to be a doctor or a lawyer in a university in England, excellent, yes! But who in Nawakille has money for this?

So I stop school, never I go back. But I do not make my mother sad other ways. I do not stop my religion. Every day I go to mosque in Peshawar to take instructions in Koran.

. . . .

Now I have morning time free and there are squash courts empty at club. Sometimes I have no opponent, no ball boy is there so early. What do I do?

One thing, I play Hashim against Hashim. I stand in back and stroke ball very soft to front. True, that other Hashim knows where ball is going, I cannot keep this secret from him. Still he runs like a hare to arrive before second bounce. Ah, he succeeds! He drives ball hard and it flies to back. Now first Hashim must turn and run like a hare also, to be in time. So I turn to back, to front, to left side, to right side always running, stroking, running, stroking.

One day an officer comes to top of wall and watches. "Young man," he says. "You kill yourself." I do not like to worry this man. I slow down until he goes away.

It is good to run as hard as you can like this. You find out what you can do. Then you play a real opponent and never touch your limit, you are surprised, everything is more easy. But I do not know these reasons when I am a boy. I play alone because I am alone, that is all.

One way to learn fast, I know, is lessons, but one does not arrange this in a moment. Not every ball boy has a teacher. When my father is alive, he is a good friend of Abdullah Majid Khan, head coach for squash racquets at British Club. He wears a beard, he is old, and is very busy with officers. I do not like to ask him: it is not proper for such an important man to take time with a ball boy.

But Abdullah Majid has a son, Ismathullah, he is assistant, maybe 25 years, no beard. Also, he makes jokes, and he is very good in court. Before he come to work for his father, he is professional for Viceroy of India in Delhi.

One morning I say to Ismathullah, "Give me a lesson, and I give you four annas." This is my lunch money and is the same as 5c. I am lucky this day. Ismathullah needs this money.

I work alone also. Not running only. One thing I want is to make ball move properly to some mark. I stand in one place in court and make same shot many many times. Maybe one hundred, two hundred times. When ball begins to go again and again to that certain place where I aim, I go to a new position and I start again. Almost every day I do this. Af-

"Soon I do not sit on backwall to watch for ball flying out. I am not a ball boy. I am a squash player."

ter a while, it is like court moves inside my head, I can close my eyes and see everything. Eyes shut, I stroke and ball goes to that mark.

All time I go to club in these years, I grow and get strong in arm and wrist. My racquet feels more light, I move my hand down on handle. I learn to snap my wrist and send ball like a bullet.

My lessons begin to change. They are not lessons, they are games. This does not happen all at once, this change. I do not remember when—maybe I am sixteen—when Ismathullah says nothing about mistakes. He puts all his thinking on his play, he does not relax, he runs and strokes hard and works for points. I go into court with him like I am opponent.

Now some British officers watch me in courts with Ismathullah and other friends, and they begin to say, "Give me a game, please, Hashim." I am delighted.

Soon I do not sit on back wall to watch for ball flying out. I am not a ball boy. I am a squash player!

Yes, I play but I do not coach. At this time there are professionals enough in Peshawar. No club needs one more. But I do not wish to leave home. I have patience, I wait, I am still young. I earn a little money stringing racquets with new gut and for being a playing partner on the courts. I do not need money for smoking or drinking, I am Moslem, and also a single man.

One day in 1942 everything changes. The commander of British Air Force in Peshawar, walks to our club to play tennis with Abdullah Majid. While they are on court, the commander says, "Our professional is leaving, who is a good man for us?" Abdullah Majid answers, "Hashim Khan, I know him well."

So it is I become tennis and squash professional for Air Force Officer's Mess: a man leaves, another man speaks my name. It is luck for me, and I am very happy I do not wait longer. I am 28 years old.

Fifty rupees a month I get in this job! With such money one can marry and raise a family. This I do. In this same year, I marry Mehria, a girl of my village. This is arranged by my mother a long time before, and we go to live in my mother's house in Nawakille. This is custom in my country.

My job is most pleasant. In mornings, I give lessons to officers, they make appointments with me when they have time free from duty in Air Force planes. In afternoon, I do not give lessons. I go in courts with officers and play, play, play until they are tired out, and go to showers. Also I play professionals so I will not forget to run and work.

Where is a better job? I hope I have this life in Peshawar forever. ■

BALL

What can one say about ball? You can see it is a small black rubber ball, less than one ounce. Important thing you do not see. Hollow, this ball. When it is cold, it is hard, it sleeps, it does not wish to play. But you knock it up a bit, air in hollow inside warms up and pushes to get out, it becomes like a spring. Now this ball bounds with joy.

I play with English ball for 30 years, then I come to United States for Open matches in 1954. I have surprise. This American ball wants to leap like a cat. Like a cat it has nine lives. I have to learn how to put it away.

COURT

Look in this court, you see why many people do not come to watch this game of squash racquets like boxing, tennis, such sports. Where do they go? They see a big box, walls every side, ceiling on top, little door to go in and out, and only a small place in back for seats.

But that is all right. Walls keep people out, yes, but they give joy to game. You thank these walls, I think. You play tennis, the ball goes by and you are not ready, too bad, you lose that point. In squash racquets not so always. Many times when you turn, you see back wall catch that ball and bounce it back to you. Maybe then you are ready. You have second chance.

STROKE

Some people are in hurry, they do not want to take trouble with squash stroke, they think, "Why so serious, do I study to hit fly with flyswatter?" They want to hit ball, that is all. So they go in court and hit that ball, and they find ways I never see before. One man I watch, he plays many years now, you think he is on horse with polo mallet, the racquet goes in a big circle, you better give room to him. Another man is fencer, he leaps and sends his arm out like he wants to stab that ball with racquet.

ALLEY SHOT

Alley is little road that runs close all along building. Alley shot is like that. It runs close all along side of court. You make side wall your friend.

THE FOREHAND

IT'S YOUR BIG WEAPON IN ALL THE RACQUET SPORTS

by Steve Metcalfe

Bjorn Borg runs wide to his right, goes into his patented clay court power slide, and powders the ball up the line. It passes his opponent like a furiously buzzing bee, leaving him stranded halfway to the net shaking his head in bewilderment.

The little green ball comes off the back wall a foot too far and Gordon Anderson, a huge, hungry spider, pounces on it. He swings so hard, the sound of gut on rubber is gunshot loud. Sidewall, sidewall and the ball kisses the front wall and dies. Anderson's opponent stares at him with a shellshocked grin.

Marty Hogan uncoils, blasts forward. His racquet takes the ball a scant six inches off the floor and buries it in the front wall crack at 140 miles per hour. He glares at his opponent and dares him to give him the same shot again.

In each case it's the forehand, their basic weapon. The forehand is the Saturday night dinner of the racquet games. It is the cruncher—satisfying and at times, purely gluttonous. The forehand is the power stroke, the shot used to set up and finish off the point. The backhand may be more graceful, more consistent and reliable, even more natural—the arm flowing out and away from the body, supposedly as easily as throwing a frisbee—but is the forehand that inspires, that is often the difference between a win and a loss. To the individual reared in a tradition of thrown footballs and battled baseballs, the forehand, with it's forward motion of the arm, it's roll of the wrist in tennis, it's snap of the wrist in racquetball and squash, is the familiar, adoptable motion.

The forehand is dangerous because it can be hit so suddenly and convincingly from an untenable position. One serves away from it, attacks away from it because it takes less preparation, less backswing and less balance than the backhand. The forehand is the stroke that can turn a scrambling, defensive position into an offensive thrust.

Steve Metcalfe, a squash and tennis professional, is an ardent enthusiast of all the racquet sports. He is a playwright, author and frequent contributor to Racquet.

TOPSPINNING

In tennis, the key word to the forehand is adaptability. From the all-court game of Bill Tilden, to the attacking, "big game" of Jack Kramer, to Borg's spinning parabolas, nothing has influenced strategy and technique more than court surface.

Modern tennis is a game of changing surfaces and, from tournament to tournament, the stroke must change with them. The forehand must have the power to open up the court and pave the way to the net. It must have the spin and control to pass the charging net rusher. And it must have the depth and steadiness to stay in a baseline rally.

In today's game, replete with incredible talent, the finest forehands in tennis belong to Bjorn Borg, a baseliner, John Newcombe, an attacker, and Ilie Nastase, an all-court player. Other than in their effectiveness, it would be hard to call the strokes similar. Indeed, it is often an idiosyncrasy that makes a shot so effective. Borg, for example, hits out of an open stance with a western grip. Newcombe hits an eastern forehand—"the buggywhip" more than one color commentator has called it. Nastase, with a continental grip, uses his wristy forehand to dink, probe, change speeds and, when the feeling moves him, put the ball away.

Rather than similarities, it is more beneficial to discuss influence. The most obvious single attribute of today's forehand is topspin and the first player to consistently use topspin as a major weapon was Rod Laver. Rightfully referred to as "the father of space age tennis," Laver's wrist-snapping, looping forehands (once used more as an odd change of pace

"If there is one constant in the play of the top competitors it's that they get down on the ball . . ."

than as a staple, by other players) are now the tennis player's bread and butter. Topspin—the racquet head starting well below ball level, ending high above—keeps the attacking shot from clearing the baseline, makes the defensive shot dip to the attacker's shoetops as it clears the net, and has become the keystone of the game. Players at every level attempt to emulate Laver's style.

POWER PLUS

If tennis went modern with Rod Laver, one wonders if racquetball wasn't born modern. It is the power game, the game of who can kill the ball first. The ball itself seems to get faster and faster. The growing number of glass walls, while enhancing the game for the spectator, makes it difficult for the competitor to pick up the ball. And in a category all their own are the style and influence of the game's dominant player, Marty Hogan. His is a game that stresses offense, offense, and should it get rough, should the back be against the glass wall, still more offense. At a recent tournament in Denver it was noted that the average rally lasted 2.5 swings of the racquet including serve.

While obviously, there can be no weakness on either wing for a player competing at the top of the sport, the emphasis on power makes the forehand the pre-eminent shot. For the majority of players, the forehand starts the point in the service motion and ends the point in the kill shot. The backhand reverts to what racquetball's Charlie Brumfield, calls "an act of God."

Steve Keeley, also a top racquetball pro, describes the game's best forehands—Hogan's, Jerry Hilecher's, Davey Bledsoe's—as being similar to the sidearm snap of a bullwhip. It is short, brutal and though the swing stops shortly after contact, concentrates all of its energy into the speed at which the strings meet the ball. Keeley says that this sidearm bullwhip imparts such velocity to the ball, most players can't even react to a shot hit directly at them. There is simply not enough time.

If there is a constant in the lightening fast, reflex play of the top competitors, it is that they get down to the ball. The abscence of preparation time eliminates everything but a short, wrist-cocking backswing. There is rarely "picture book" footwork and the player finds himself hitting from an open stance, often hitting off the back foot. The flailing forehand style of racquetball which at first glance seems graceless and chaotic is, in truth, a ferociously controlled improvisation.

It should be noted that racquetball is a game in transition. Both Brumfield and Keeley feel that the ball should, and will be, slowed down eventually. For the good of the game, a compromise will be found between the firepower of Hogan and Hilecher, and the control and strategy that highlight their own games. The forehand will reflect this. It will become both the hammer and anvil a well developed shot should be.

COURT CONTROL

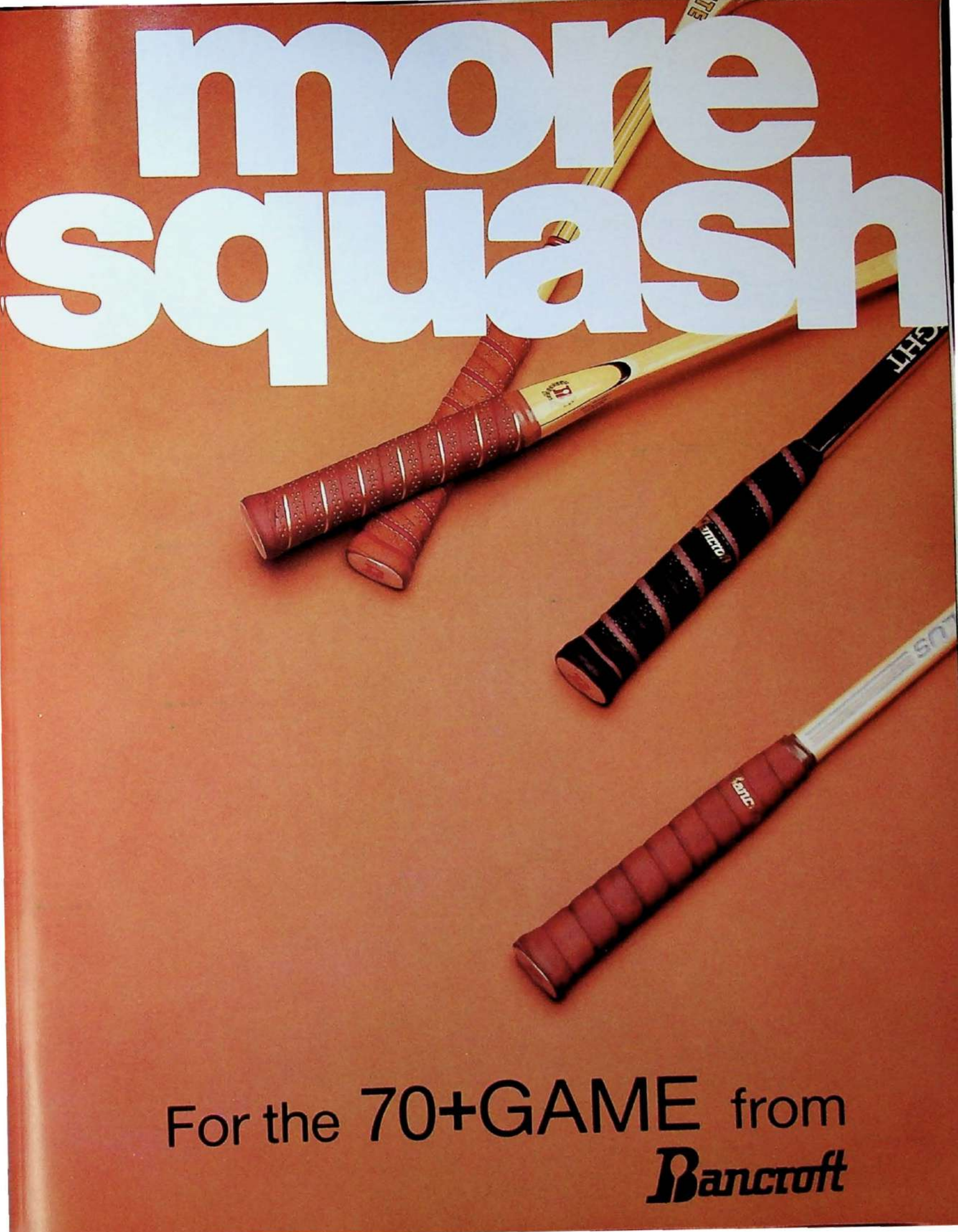
Such a compromise has already been reached in squash initiated with the introduction of the 70+ ball in 1977. The new ball quickly added variety and touch to what was becoming, like racquetball, a power game. It also added subtle changes, especially in the forehand, to stroke production.

Frank Satterthwaite, author of *The Three Wall Nick and Other Angles: A Squash Autobiography,* feels the change is best seen in the contrasting styles of two men. Victor Niederhoffer, with decidedly undramatic but uniformly perfect preparation, beautifully illustrated the attributes of the hard ball forehand. His backswing was short and quick, the stroke deceptive and surprisingly powerful because of Niederhoffer's superior arm strength. Yet Mo Khan, with a very high, flowing, golf-like backswing, has what Satterthwaite feels is squash's finest forehand and it is his style, more International than North American, that characterizes 70+ play.

There is now more preparation time and a bigger forehand wind-up to generate power. There are more shots in the game, more drops, more lobs. Because the top players can literally "catch up" to the 70+ ball, winners come on a shot that nicks and rolls, when a player is faked out, or when a player is hopelessly out of position. Control is the key word. The forehand must not only keep the opponent deep with effective rails and crosscourts, it must draw a commitment from him and then take advantage of it.

In all these sports necessity has made the forehand the shot of flair and versatility, a combination of power and control. In a racquet player's development, the forehand is the beginner's building block. Blowing sometimes hot, sometimes cold, it becomes the intermediate player's agony and ecstasy. To the practiced professional it is the culmination of talent, strength and work. It is the most exciting shot in the game. ■

more squash



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6 ply bow of Maple/Ash/Bamboo and fiber. Long white fiber throat & shaft reinforcement. Steam bent walnut shoulder overlays. Wood grip in "A" (oval) and "B" (rectangle) shapes covered with rich brown plain extra tach cowhide grip. Frame wt. 7½-8¼ oz. Use with both 70+ and English ball.

PRO 70

6 ply Bamboo/fiber bow construction. English head and shaft. Double fiber reinforced throat and shoulders plus bamboo overlay across throat and shoulders. Double fiber and wood pallet above grip. Rich brown perforated leather grip. Strung wt. 7½-8¼ oz. Use with both 70+ and English ball.

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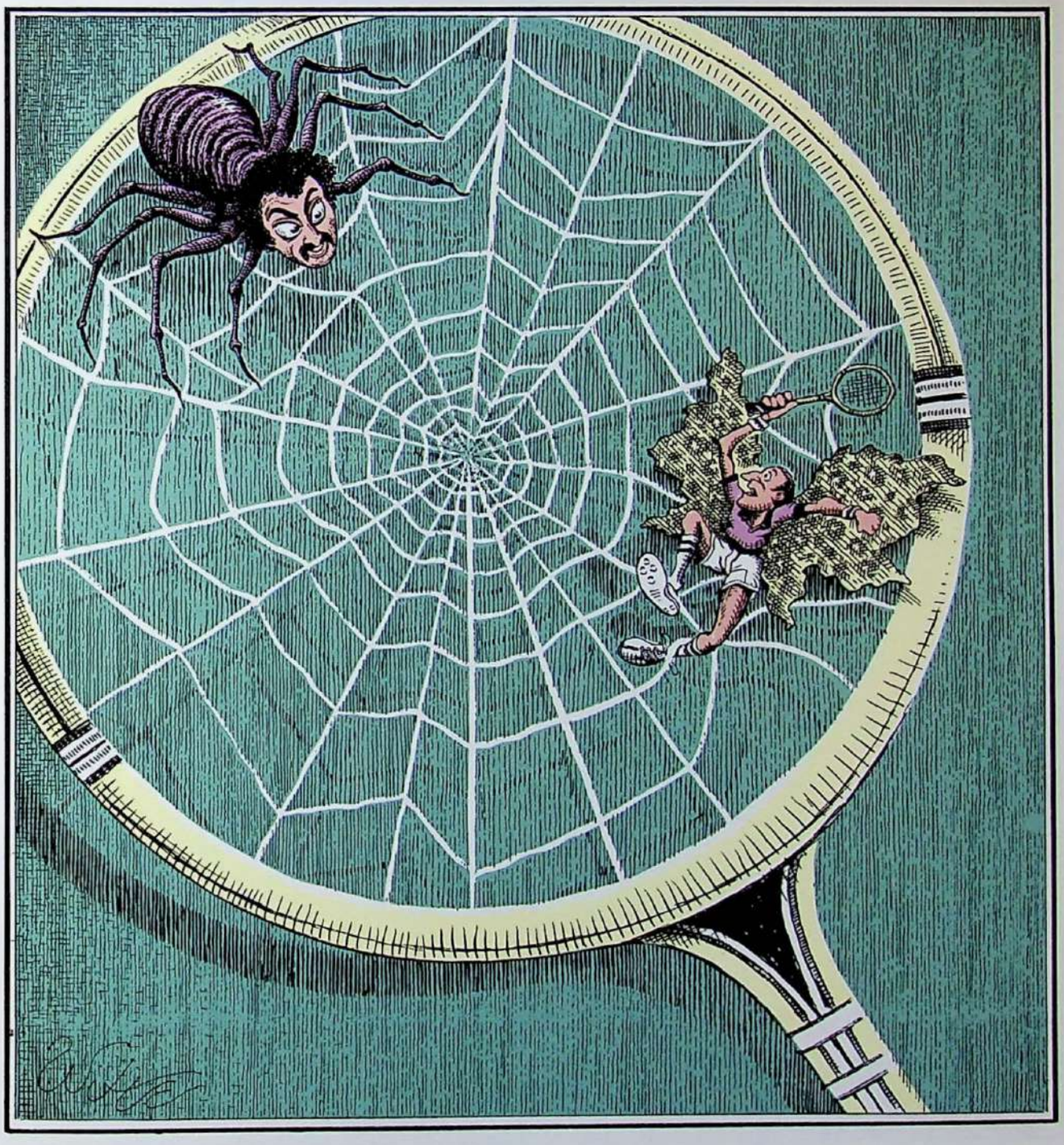
BESTIARY

THE SHERIFF SPIDER
(Arachnida Pakistanda)

by Michael Witte

They're deadly and don't miss a nick . . .
Hashim, Mo, Sharif . . .Take your pick
When you're playing a Khan
The conclusion's foregone.
And the ending is mercifully quick.



MYTH-CONCEPTIONS

RACQUETBALL MYTHS AND REALITIES

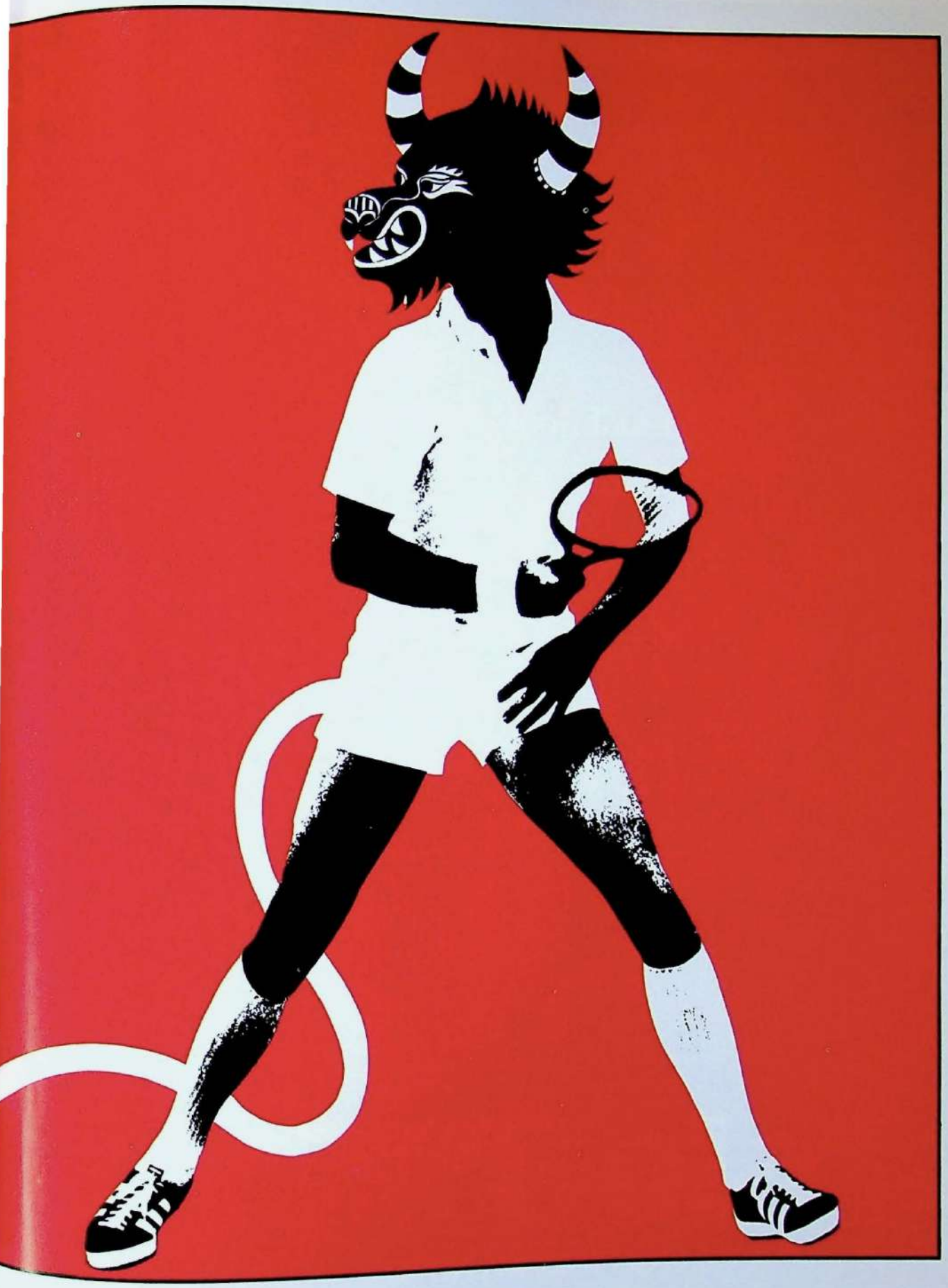
by Burling Lowrey

With the rapid expansion and intensified interest in racquetball during the 1970's has come a spate of articles on the sport, most of which are filled with so much inflated rhetoric, Neanderthal posturing, and plain nonsense that it's a wonder how they ever managed to see print. Unfortunately, these puff pieces, which appear with boring regularity in all types of newspapers and magazines, cannot be ignored since they reflect a disturbing trend that, can reduce racquetball to the barbaric level of a blood sport.

Typical of the obligatory racquetball piece is one entitled "A Two Man War in a Very Small Place," featured recently in a weekly recreation section of the *Washington Post*. The author's thesis is that hostility and aggressiveness are desirable human traits and racquetball provides a socially acceptable outlet for these emotions. The piece is sprinkled with images of homicide. For example, the serve sounds like "a big-bore handgun," the balls are "beaten dead," the names of racquets provide the player "phallic-homicidal gratification," a player struck by his opponent is at fault for his own "mutilation," "blind animal fury" is preferable to finesse in returning a shot. Underlying these fantasies of death and destruction are two premises: (1) racquetball is "demanding, democratic, dangerous and all-American, and (2) in keeping with the American character, the game rewards hostility.

Trendy racquetball features like this have many qualities in common. Most are written by overenthusiastic converts who gush over racquetball like a new lover. (Typical title, from *The Washington Star*: "A Love Affair With Racquetball") As to possessing any skill or knowledge of the game, most of these writers are embarrassing neophytes. Their articles abound with misinformation and false claims. The stress is almost totally on the visceral qualities of the game with very little said about the finer points of style and tactics. Other four-wall racquet games, such as handball and squash, are dismissed as being too mild or too elitist. The democratic virtues of racquetball are always extolled and linked to violence and danger.

A question: Do these hyped-up, fantasy-ridden love poems to racquetball have *any* basis in reality? I think not. For proof I offer the following critique: *(continued)*



"Most of the hyperbole about racquetball can be traced to the severe character defects in a couple of players."

ON HOSTILITY

There is no rational explanation for the pervasive idea that hostility is a built-in ingredient of racquetball. After all, the game is based on the same principle as squash, whose participants are renowed for their civility and sensitivity to sportsmanship. The notion of displaying contempt for an opponent in order to win represents nothing more than a misguided application of "gamesmanship." In racquetball this mild use of psychology has taken on a more virulent form known as "psyching." At its worst, psyching entails verbal abuse and threats directed at an opponent, stalling, shouting obscenities at the gallery and at officials, and other patterns of Nastase-type boorishness. One recent champion admitted, "I am at all times looking for that opportunity within the rules to infuriate my opponent to the point where he can't play as well as he'd like to." Of course it is sheer nonsense that something in the nature of racquetball *requires* that the participants indulge in unsportsmanlike conduct.

ON DANGER

Another myth perpetuated by writers uninformed on racquetball is that anyone playing the game risks serious bodily injury from being hit by a racquet or a ball. Some of these writers seem to relish this prospect of danger, implying that it duplicates all the macho thrill of bull fighting. The reality is that the possibilities of getting hurt in racquetball are minimal. Most injuries stem from inexperience—not knowing how to move around the court and swinging wildly with the arm instead of the wrist. A skillful racquetball player risks no more injury than his counterpart in table tennis.

ON ELITISM

A common theme running through articles on racquetball is that the game is not burdened with a tradition of class-consciousness and sexism. The point is often made that while squash is elitist and genteel, a gentleman's game, racquetball is democratic and free from social constraints. As proof writers love to quote statistics that are supposed to prove that racquetball is the fastest growing game in the United States. The problem here is that the "democratic" hype, like so many other facets of the sport, is abused. Obviously, when it comes to evaluating the inherent worth of any activity, statistics proving its popularity are meaningless. Yet most supporters insist that the large number of players has something to do with racquetball being the greatest game ever invented. Would they say the same thing about skateboarding or jogging?

Most of the hyperbole about racquetball can be traced to the severe character defects in a couple of men who have ridden to national championships on the crest of the 1970's boom. Suffice it to say that the behavior of these men during tournament matches make Ilie Nastase and Jimmy Connors seem like choir boys. And since young people taking up the sport tend to emulate the court manners of those at the top, a generation of racquetball monsters has been created who have bypassed hundreds of years of plain, everyday civility. The syndrome is perpetuated by media more preoccupied with trendiness and titillation than substance.

ON SPEED

Much of the puffery on racquetball concentrates on the tremendous speed of the game. Again this is more illusion, than reality. You don't have to be a 9.5 sprinter to win in racquetball. It is quickness that is required, not speed. And saying that the ball travels anywhere from 100 to 165 miles per hour, the writers fail to note the important fact that this pace is considerably reduced when the ball caroms off a second wall. In actuality, the speed of racquetball is a myth that permeates the sport.

ON AGGRESSIVENESS

Racquetball is not a body contact sport, therefore, any claim as to its being physical is irrelevant. Certainly, one always tries vigorously to win points; but this is accomplished simply by putting the ball where the other guy ain't, not by trying to beat his brains out.

The chief problem with racquetball at this stage is that the game has grown too rapidly for its own good. It is suffering from the pains associated with puberty—self-indulgence and erratic, undisciplined behavior. The game needs to be wrenched out of this state by those in authority and by the players themselves. Finally, editors can lighten the atmosphere of the game by refusing to publish articles by opportunistic writers who seem to regard racquetball more as a branch of primal therapy than a sport. Other racquet sports have managed to move gracefully into maturity. There is no reason why racquetball cannot.■

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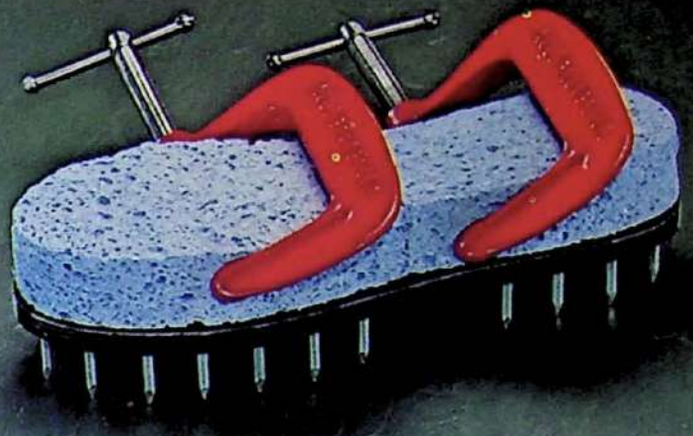

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FRACTURED FICTION

DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

by Gerald McCarthy

Inner Racquetball: A Hypnotic Approach

by Gunther Heniken, Ph. D. (Zen Press, 697 pps.).

This hefty tome has been six years in the writing, and racquetball enthusiasts have been eagerly awaiting it. It will probably rank with Bill Tilden's *Match Play and the Spin of the Ball* as a racquet classic. The Heniken thesis is simple: racquetball players brood too much, suffering what he calls, "Hamlet's craven scruple of thinking too much about the event." Instead, he says, "they must learn to embellish the physical aspects of the sport, lose themselves in an exotic ritual, emphasize the atavistic urgings of dance and drama, and resist the temptation to plan shots and plot strategies."

Critics will, no doubt, scoff at the mysticism which is popularly associated with Dr. Heniken's method. But this is a practical book as well as a guide to the racquet lifestyle. His treatment of the ceiling shot is typical and should serve as an exemplar of his entire approach. Allow me to quote an extended passage by way of exemplification:

> "The Ceiling shot is typically made in crisis; in fact, it should be engaged in as a sexual, orgiastic explosion of will. Our racquetball acculturation dictates a ceiling shot as a desire to *reenter* the contest anew as an unequal. It marks *defeat*, hopelessness, despair. The hypnosis approach preaches that the ceiling shot is a *celebration of power,* accomplished in ecstatic assertion, and a reintegration of racquetballer with the heavens at which the ball is directed but never realized."

Dr. Heniken's devotees can achieve this proper state of mind by listening to two records which accompany the book (at no additional cost). One attempts to place the audience into a trance-like state by reversion therapy—to become "childlike, innocent and unfettered with racquetball anxieties." The second record is the voice of Charlie Brumfield giving racquetball lessons in baby-talk. (The book itself can be, and should be, read as a long gloss on these methods and is must reading for racquet enthusiasts.)

The Final Boast: A Perfect Diamond

by Warren Doyle (Telltale Press, 196 pps.).

One's first reaction upon skimming this latest Doyle effort is, of course, to exclaim, "not another squash novel!" Yet despite the current rash of intrigues woven around the international squash scene, a careful reader can discern some rather startling insights into the sport and its fellow travellers. Unlike Doyle's last book *Squash is Not a Vegetable!,* in which he probed the erotic fantasies of *le danse de squash, The Final Boast* is action-packed, taking us directly into the sordid world of big-time squash politics, a world of brutal, if elegant, trading of squash flesh to the highest bidder, where loyalties seem of no consequence. This world is given metaphorical expression in the boast, an angulated, mediated attack which is struck by hero, Rodney McCarter from behind his opponent, (one which finally encircles him in a Dantesque force field of self-condemnation).

It is tempting, of course, to read too much into this literary effort which owes more to William Dean Howells in his darker moods than to Robbe-Grillet and the *nouveau roman.* But it would be foolish to take *The Final Boast* as only a thriller. Take Rebecca Marsh, McCarter's mistress. Sensuous, supple, surrendering as she is after a McCarter victory, Rebecca is also a reminder of the post-Gutenberg perception that is given ultimate expression in the squash athlete. It is no accident that the author, who has never played nor seen a game of squash, chose as his subject a game of molecular, seemingly random motion, where man can only *react* to necessity in the nanosecond of choice.

It is also no accident that Doyle's McCarter must finally reject his mistress for the potential trap she represents. He will not, Doyle seems to say, be "bogged" down with Rebecca.

The Final Boast is essentially comic in its philosophical conception. We are left with a vision of a McCarter who has reconciled himself to the creeping imperfection of his boast, and when he is sold to a polyestered agent for an insignificant sum, there is a feeling of desperation. His final triumph is reminiscent of another Doyle character, Goeffrey Wentworth Broom of *Vegetable,* who is left on a side court practicing alone with an old American ball.

Andrzej Dudziński © 1979

Topspin and the Myth of Stroke Production

by Sidney O'Meara (Torque Press, 501 pps.).

At last the myth is exposed! According to O'Meara (a touring pro in Eastern Europe), "The misconception that the *direction* of a tennis ball's spin is important has retarded more people's tennis development than any teaching idea since Major Wingfield chased croquet from the lawns of England and replaced it with what he called Sphairistike." O'Meara's method replaces this myth with the findings of five years research: "It is not the direction of the spin (clockwise, counterclockwise, etc.) but the *part of the ball that is spinning* that generates stroke production," he argues. "Very simply, when the top half of the ball spins at a faster rate than the lower half, the relatively higher rate of friction at the top heats the air and, acting like the wing of a plane, forces a slightly upward movement of the ball. This results in a sailing effect."

Stroke production, according to O'Meara, has nothing to do with the *pace generated but is, quite simply, a result of the part of the ball which is struck.* "The less one part of the ball spins in relation to other parts," says O'Meara, "the greater the stroke production. The ideal stroke does not spin at all, moving like an intelligent object which holds itself on course. When a man crosses the street," concludes O'Meara, "he does not spin."

The thesis is impressive, if not altogether convincing. O'Meara himself admits that never having won a competitive match vitiates the effect of his thesis, and is quick to point out that he has not yet achieved the tennis version of Blackwell's *eephus ball.* "My ball rotates at its equator," he admits in the introduction, "which makes me more effective on windless days. For me to win, the air must be perfectly still."

Many players are taking this approach seriously, and some believe that because of it the tennis racquet as we know it will be replaced by something more akin to a lacrosse stick. "The ultimate racquet for the future," says O'Meara, "is what we used to call a slingshot. They have already started throwing the eephus ball with what was called the "spaghetti" racquet. The temporary banning of it will not stop the evolution of the sport.■

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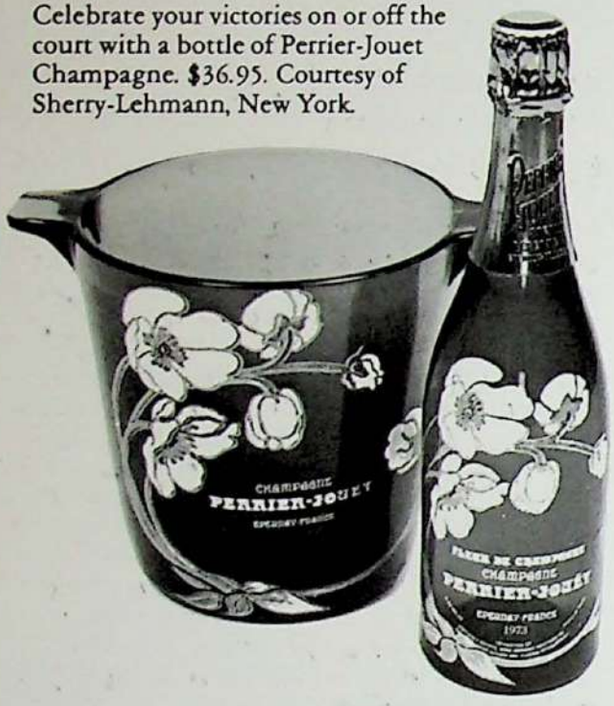

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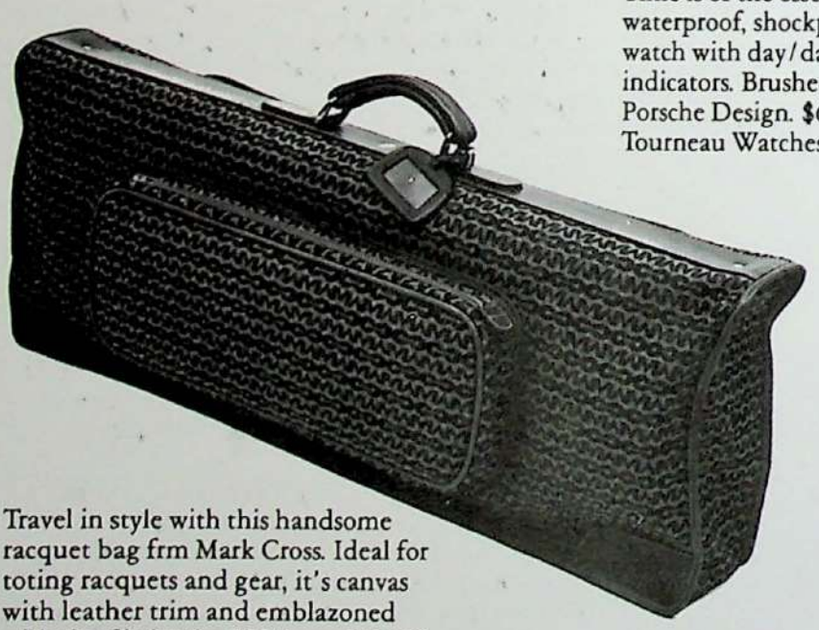

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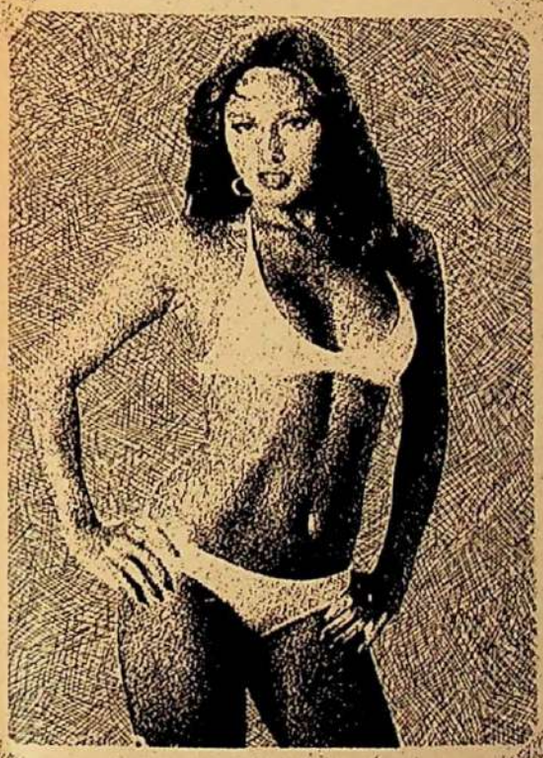
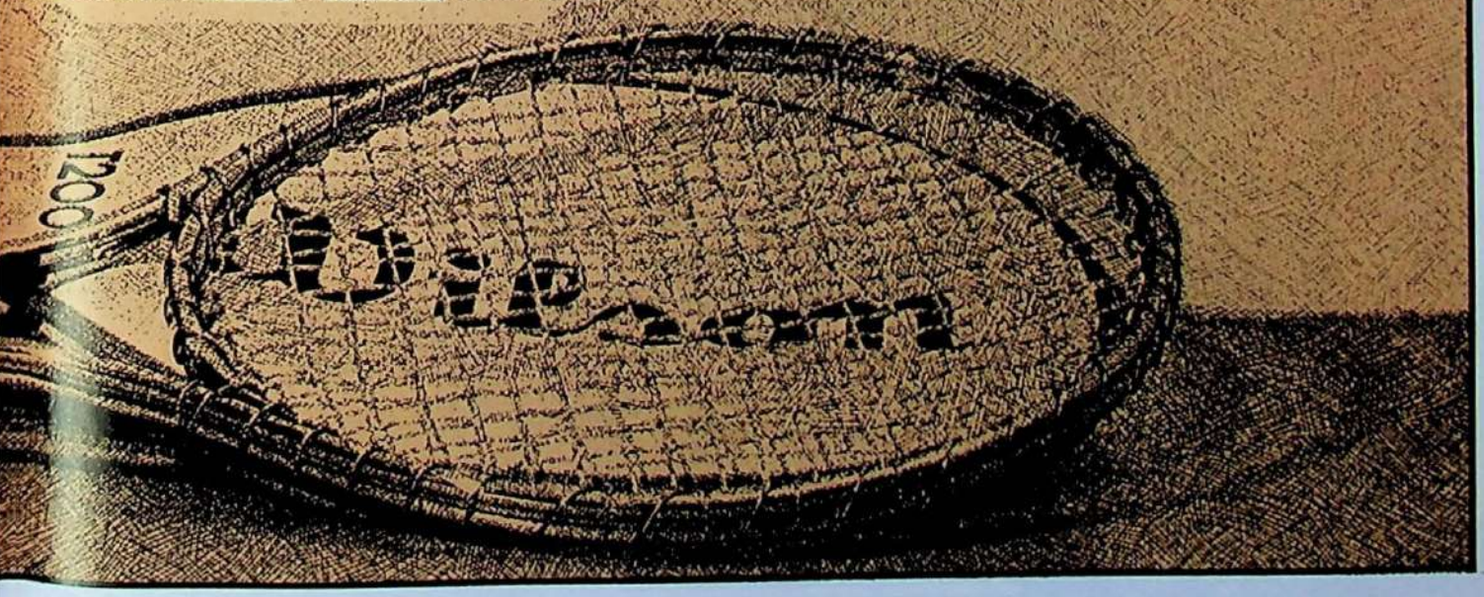
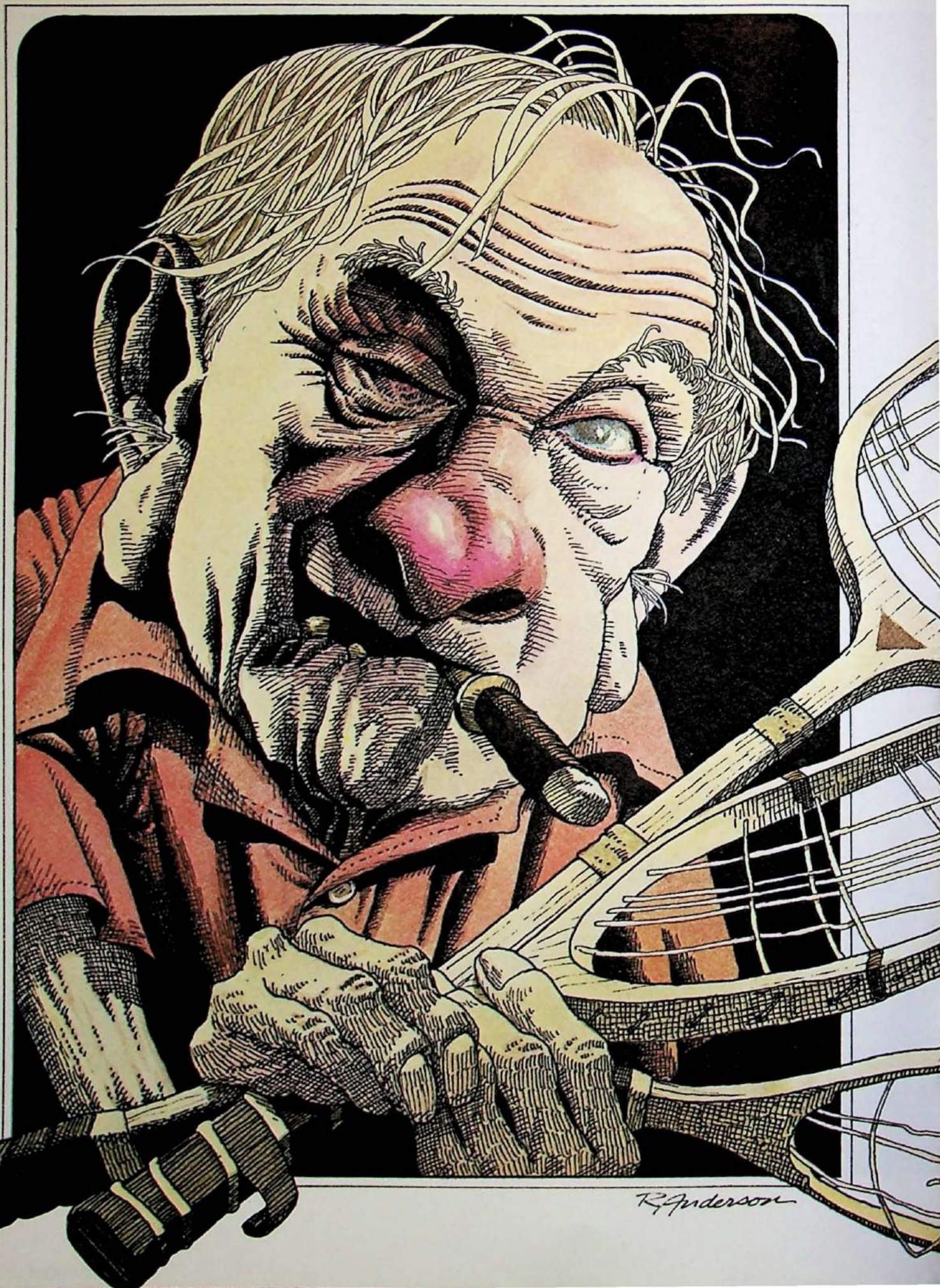
There once was a girl named McGuire
who lit a young tennis pro's fire.
She looks so much better in her altogether
it's a wonder he doesn't retire.

—Peter Kozik







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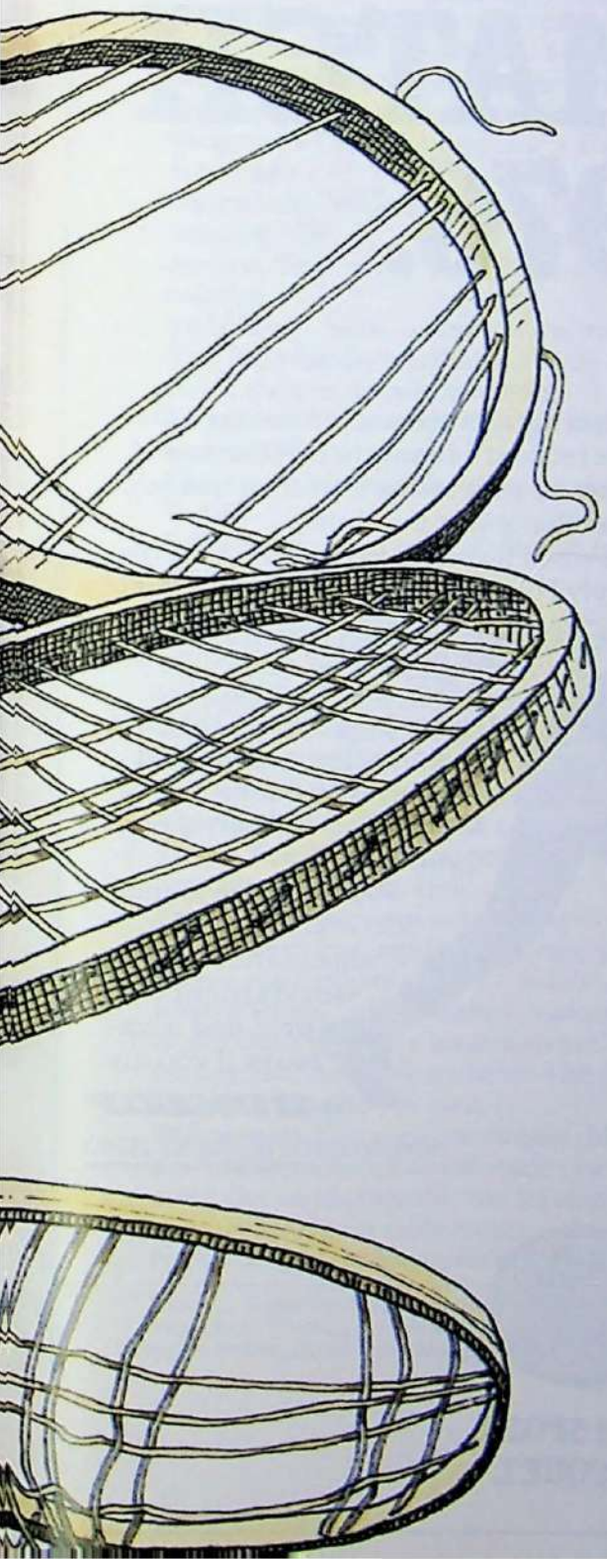

THE OLD PRO

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE OLDEST LIVING RACQUET PLAYER

by Steven L. Stern

Hailed by countless fans here and abroad, and acclaimed throughout the sports world as "Senior Racquet," Alexander Ballmeister holds a unique place in the annals of racquet sports.

Although his exact age is a mystery, the amazing Mr. Ballmeister is known to have played in racquet tournaments well before the turn of the century. Even today, the chunky, cigar-chewing, white-haired athlete, still in remarkable shape, can be found playing an occasional game of tennis, squash and even racquetball. . . .

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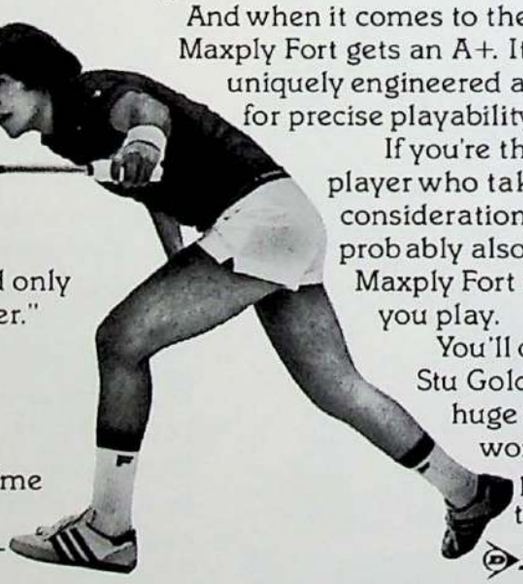

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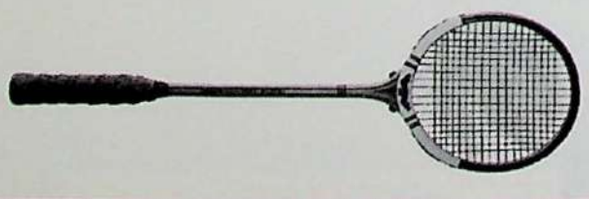


WHEREVER SQUASH IS THE #1 SPORT, MAXPLY FORT IS THE #1 RACQUET.

"Nowadays those clubs would stay open through a nuclear attack if they thought they could make a buck."

This interview took place at the Sunny Acres Home for Retired Swingers, where Mr. Ballmeister now lives with his bulldog, "Telltale."

* * *

Racquet: Mr. Ballmeister . . .

Ballmeister: Eh? My serve is it? Oh . . . sorry, force of habit. Excuse me.

Racquet: That's OK. I'm a little sleepy myself. Mr. Ballmeister, you're generally acknowledged to be the oldest living racquet sports player . . .

Ballmeister: Yup. That's me. Senior Racquet, they call me. The Gray Terror. The Silver Smash. The Elder Emperor.

Racquet: "The Elder Emperor"? Hadn't heard that one before.

Ballmeister: Made it up myself this morning. Like it?

Racquet: Ah . . . sure . . . nice ring. Mr. Ballmeister, how many years have you actually been playing?

Ballmeister: Well, to tell you the truth, it's been so long I can hardly recall myself. I do remember they closed the courts 'cause of the fire.

Racquet: You mean the Chicago fire?

Ballmeister: No, Rome.

Racquet: You were playing at the time Nero burned Rome?

Ballmeister: No, I just got through telling you, they shut the courts down.

Racquet: That's astounding . . .

Ballmeister: I thought so too. Nowadays those clubs would stay open through a nuclear attack, if they thought they could make a buck.

Racquet: I imagine things have changed quite a bit since you started playing.

Ballmeister: You're not kidding. Everything is so organized now. You got to make reservations in advance. You got to wear special clothes. You got to use a certain racquet. Hell.

Racquet: Things used to be less rigid?

Ballmeister: Less rigid? Years ago, you wanted to play, you played. You didn't need those, whatyacall'em, adios sneakers, and you didn't have to slip some bozo five bucks to move you up on the waiting list. And this nonsense with the racquets—

Racquet: How do you mean?

Ballmeister: You used one racquet. Just one—that's all. You know how many racquets I have in my closet now? Got one for squash, two for tennis, one for racquetball, three for table tennis, one for badminton. Hell, I collect 'em like bubblegum cards.

Racquet: In the old days, you used the same racquet for all those sports?

Ballmeister: That's right. Damn good racquet too. Big head, strung with wire. Steel grip. Not like the feeble things they use today. You see the squash racquet they play with now? Looks like an ostrich neck. I couldn't put a decent spin on a housefly with one of those. Now, my old racquet—you could hit a boast with a basketball if you wanted.

Racquet: Sounds like squash used to be a much rougher game.

Ballmeister: No doubt about it. Nowadays any good move I make on the court, they call a "let." Really screws up my technique, I tell you that. And this stuff about warning your opponent when you're coming around on a shot—hell, if he's in my way, he'll find out about it soon enough.

Racquet: I . . . er . . . imagine he would. I've heard you have the same every-man-for-himself approach to the game of hard racquets, too. Considering the ball used in racquets is so hard and travels over 100 miles per hour, doesn't such ruthless play frighten your opponents?

Ballmeister: Hmmm, maybe that's why I can't seem to get a game any more. Too bad, too—I have a helluva forehand drive. Once shattered a telltale during a tough match in Boston. Really upset the woman I was playing against, to say nothing of the club owner. Those hard racquets people have so little sense of humor.

Racquet: I think I'm beginning to see why. Tell me, Mr. Ballmeister, in general have the courts themselves changed much?

Ballmeister: The indoor courts more than the outdoor. Used to be, you'd raise your racquet to whomp that tennis ball or slam the squash ball, when all of a sudden a big glob of hot wax would drop on your nose.

Racquet: Hot wax?

Ballmeister: Sure—from the candles.

Racquet: Never thought of that. How about the game of badminton—has it changed much?

Ballmeister: Tell you the truth, I don't play much badminton any more. Always seemed like so much more of a challenge when they were using real birds.

Racquet: Uh . . . yes. How about racquetball—do you enjoy that sport? I guess it must seem rather new to you, considering all the years you've been playing the other racquet sports.

Ballmeister: As a matter of fact, I love racquetball. And the main reason is that it happens to be based on one of the sports I used to play.

Racquet: Really?

Steven L. Sterne has written humor and light satire for a variety of magazines. Working on his first book and playing the racquet sports, he lives in Millburn, New Jersey.

"Eventually the game came to be known as rocketball probably because of the way we belted that rock around . . ."

Ballmeister: Yup. Not a lot of people know that though. When I was a kid, before they had all these fancy-dancy, suede-glove, dress-in-white games, we used to play a game called "rockball." Two guys would go out and get a nice size rock, round if we could find one, and two heavy hunks of wood. Then we'd go into a big room, close the door, and knock hell out of that rock. Out of the room too. Eventually the game came to be known as *rocketball,* probably because of the way we belted that rock around. Years later some turkey had the bright idea of substituting a ball and a racquet, and the game was renamed "racquetball."

Racquet: Incredible.

Ballmeister: Yup. Today's version isn't bad, though. Doesn't have nearly the same excitement, of course, but the court walls hold up better.

Racquet: I'm curious—you seem to particularly enjoy some of the lesser-known racquet sports—rockball, as you just said, and hard racquets, for instance. Do you also play court tennis, the so-called father of modern tennis and the other racquet games?

Ballmeister: Well, I'll tell you. Court tennis was always one game I preferred to watch rather than play. Just too crazy to bother with—balls rolling on the roof, scoring system the CIA couldn't crack, weird openings in the wall. Too much to think about for my taste. But, I did play a little—in the old days. It was a real challenge.

Racquet: That must have been quite a while ago.

Ballmeister: Oh yeah. I played in France, when it really was the "game of kings." I'll tell you what a rotten serve Louis XIII had. I called him "Limp Lob Louis." Not to his face, of course. But talk about dangerous sports . . .

Racquet: How do you mean? Surely court tennis isn't nearly as dangerous as some of the other games we've discussed.

Ballmeister: You're way off there, Sonny. You think it's easy to play against a king? 'Specially one of them lunatic Louises. You gonna tell him his serve was out? You gonna drill the ball past his backhand? Lots of luck, you make a king look bad. Talk about sore losers and "sudden death" play . . . it's really cutthroat.

Racquet: I see . . . Mr. Ballmeister, you've been participating in racquet sports longer than anyone. In your lifetime you've witnessed an enormous number of changes: the use of new kinds of racquets, the advent of racquetball, the development of improved balls, revisions in the rules of many games, the construction of innumerable racquet courts and much more. Tell me, what do you think the future holds for the various racquet sports?

Ballmeister: . . . .

Racquet: Mr. Ballmeister

Ballmeister: . . . oh, sorry. Must have dropped off for a sec. You were saying?

Racquet: I was asking what you think the future will bring for the various racquet sports. Do you think there will be many changes?

Ballmeister: Yessiree, you bet there'll be changes. First of all, most of the racquet sports today cost too much. Especially tennis. I think singles tennis is going to be largely replaced by doubles, and doubles, as a matter of fact, will be replaced by triples.

Racquet: Triples?

Ballmeister: Sure. That way you can split court cost six ways, instead of two or four. It may screw up the game a little, but players can save a bundle in the long run.

Racquet: Interesting notion, but seems a bit farfetched.

Ballmeister: Farfetched? Weren't you ever a kid? Didn't you ever play baseball with ten guys on a side?

Racquet: Well, yes, but . . .

Ballmeister: But nothing—same principle: Extra players play "short court." Gives the game a little more of a volleyball flavor, don't you think?

Racquet: I suppose . . . Are there any other changes you foresee?

Ballmeister: Well, besides racquet sports being too expensive, there are also too many of them. Who needs ten different racquet games? I think some of them will disappear, or maybe be combined.

Racquet: Be combined?

Ballmeister: Why not — use your imagination: "Squashminton" . . . "Table racquetball" . . . One or two rules may need to be adjusted, sure, but the possibilities are endless.

Racquet: I guess so. Well, Mr. Ballmeister, I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with us. You certainly have many . . . unique ideas. Have you ever considered writing a book?

Ballmeister: As a matter of fact, I'm working on one now.

Racquet: Really? May I ask what it's about?

Ballmeister: Sure. It's called *The Complete Book of Racquet Sports,* and it's kind of a combination sports almanac and spy thriller, with some kinky sex thrown in. Also a two hundred page bibliography.

Racquet: I . . . see. Unusual combination. Well, best of luck with it.

Ballmeister: Thanks. See you on the courts. ■

Racquet Potpourri

Your Meter is Running!
Tired of paying $30.00 a week for transportation and still arriving late? One racquet player has an answer—he gave up on Checkers and put his faith in Adidas. For the past month he has been running around town with predictable results—arriving early and saving money. Right now he wears a couple of Adidas warmup suits to appointments but the bright colors and stripes just don't make it at meetings with bankers and city bigwigs. So he carries a change of clothes and toiletries with him: "I don't want to be overheated at meetings so I slip into a subway bathroom or hotel and change shirts and clean up. Sometimes I have to do it in an elevator or the lobby of a building and people look at me. But so what."

Bump and Run
Rita Hoff, currently the number four ranked woman on the racquetball tour has a thing with pro football players—she beats them at racquetball. So far she's three out of four with victories over Jim Baaken and Roger Wehrli of the Cardinals, and L.A. Ram, Jack Youngblood. Her only defeat came at the hands of Coors Pro Champion, Randy Vataha, late of the Patriots. In her most recent conquest, Hoff decisively beat mammoth defensive tackle Youngblood 21-8, 21-8. Commented Hoff, "Even before the game, Youngblood asked for a return match. Only his idea was to play me in his sport in the L.A. Coliseum."

Frank Bolle © 1979

One for the road!
The Aetna World Cup has been a friendly competition between teams from the U.S. and Australia. But unfortunately the decline of Australia's tennis fortunes has made the Cup a one-sided affair. So the Aetna folks want to have the U.S. face an all-star squad comprised of the best players from around the world.

But we'll miss the Aussies. As a group they have long embodied the true spirit of tennis

This spirit was perhaps best exemplified by Australian Phil Dent who was asked by a television commentator what the mood was in the Australian locker room after they had lost the decisive team point. "Well, there is a good amount of Foster's (beer) in the locker room, so none of us is feeling much pain."

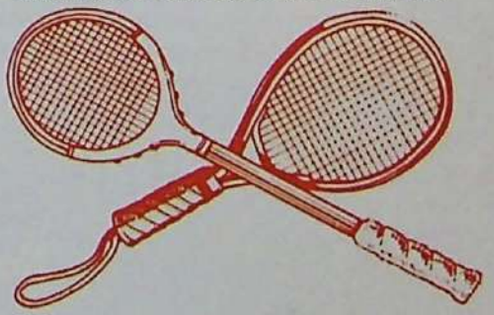
Bigger is better
Over 4,000 players took part in the Second Annual Insilco National B-C Squash Championships. Sewall Hodges captured the B and Fred Bass the C's. Next season Insilco plans to make its tournament even bigger!

Doctor in the house!
Dr. Rob Roy McGregor, a nationally known expert in the field of sports-medicine, wants to hear about your racquet sport related aches and pains. Information will be used for a book about exercise ailments. *Sportaches: Managing the Pain of Fitness.* Has tennis, racquetball or squash ever caused you elbow, wrist or shoulder problems. How about ankle, knee or hip pain?

What did you do about the pain? Did you take anti-inflammatory drugs, steroids, or try massage, ultrasound or accupuncture? Or maybe you have a home remedy that worked.

Help others benefit from your experience by contacting Dr. McGregor, 303 Main Street, Concord, MA 01742.

Moonlighting?
Those who hang around street corners late at night are once again regaled with the sight of Victor Niederhoffer racing madly up Park Avenue, his right arm swinging a racquet to deter potential muggers. The former North American Open Champion is not considering a comeback in squash, though. He has taken up racquetball again, and is practicing by himself in the wee hours of the morning at the Manhattan Squash Club, preparing new strokes and strategy to take on the wiz kids of the game. Word has it that Niederhoffer is inventing new shots never before seen on the circuit.



Squash Panache

You say that squash is losing its panache? Put your fears at rest. There are still a few grand sportsmen out there capable of a gesture or two that bring back the good old days.

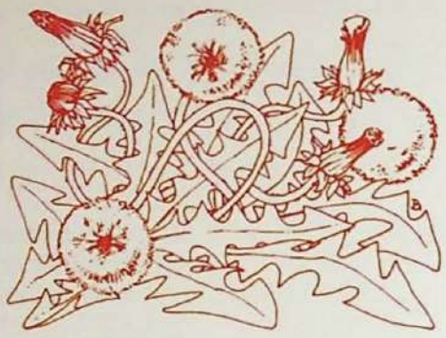
Scheduled to compete in a tournament in Rye, New York, squash pro Tom Rumpler missed his train out of Manhattan. Waiting for the next one would have meant risking a default on his match so Rumpler, equipment bag in hand, walked briskly out of Grand Central Station and hopped into a taxi cab. "Rye, New York! And step on it!"

Forty miles and $50 later, Rumpler was greeting his surprised chums in the locker room of the venerable and plush Appawamis Country Club. Several of them, having taken the train without him, expressed interest as to how he had managed to arrive with such punctuality. Rumpler merely shrugged, "Doesn't everyone in New York take a cab?"

By no means a dilettante, Rumpler later took the train home for $2 like everyone else.

Sportrooms Unlimited!

The Sportrooms of Coral Gables is fast acquiring a reputation as one of the finest racquet clubs in the U.S. It was chosen to host the 1979 National Handball Championships and recently hosted the Kunnan/Leach Tournament of Champions. Sportrooms is also franchising its operation to those interested in starting their own club. Don Smith, former Chief Exec. of McDonalds and now President of Burger King is a director of the company and is recognized throughout the world as a franchise expert. Five time racquetball champion Charlie Brumfield is their touring pro. For more information write: Sportrooms, 8955 S.W. 87th Court, Suite 201, Miami, Fla. 33176.



Weed Killers

The Institute of Groundsmanship has announced the date of the 34th Annual International Exhibition of Groundsmanship, 11th-13th, September, 1979. It happens that the Institute was founded in 1934 to improve the status of groundsmen and regularize the standards of their work. Its examinations lead to a Diploma of Turfculture. When contacted by a Racquet representative we discovered that members of the Institute would take care of the grass courts and putting greens but would absolutely not seed front lawns.

A Star is Reborn

Steve Keeley's racquetball skill is well known. For years he has been one of the most consistent players on the circuit. Less well known is the fact that he is the six time national four wall paddleball champion. In the recent championships, held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, he faced his arch rival and perennial nemesis, Marty Hogan, in the finals. Hogan, even though new to the game, went on to win his first title.

Heard about handball, Steve?

Flying off the handle

In the March/April issue of Racquet, Karen Rockow's article on grips inferred that the new suede-like grips had a tacky surface and word was still out as to their durability . . . , Robert Menson of Supreme Grip replies, "Supreme Grip is not tacky and is so durable that we wonder if we have invented the ever burning lightbulb. It will outlast leather three or four times and all our laboratory tests have given excellent results." Racquet's red-faced conclusion after talking to pros now using Supreme Grip is that he's right—it's getting raves!

Greying of America

It's been said that life begins at 40.

To many, racquet sports represent an enjoyable, energetic and efficient way of keeping fit, and provide a regular workout to keep in shape without too much of a time or money investment.

All of this is fine in your 20's and 30's. But what happens when you reach the dark side of 40 and you begin to realize that despite your regular racquet activity you are still putting on weight?

Like it or not, the sad fact of human physiology is that our bodies do not stay beautiful very long. Nothing can be done to slow down the irreversible decline, but many things can be done to reduce the symptoms of the inexorable reversal. Scores of books are currently flooding the market on the subject of diet and exercise. Almost all of them can be reduced to two simple concepts which answer these two questions: What fuel do you put *into* your body? What work do you put out *from* your body?

The older we get the more careful we must be about the foods we eat. Sugar and alcohol are the worst enemies. Also the more our metabolic rates slow down (with age) the more we need escalating exercise programs to prevent weight gain and to secure cardio-pulmonary health. After 40, the veteran racquet sport player must do *more* to retain excellent physical condition. It is necessary to supplement racquet sports with other activities: running, skipping rope, fast bicycling, swimming hard laps, rowing, cross-country skiing or any other activity that significantly increases aerobic and calorific expenditure.

—Dr. Q. Hyder

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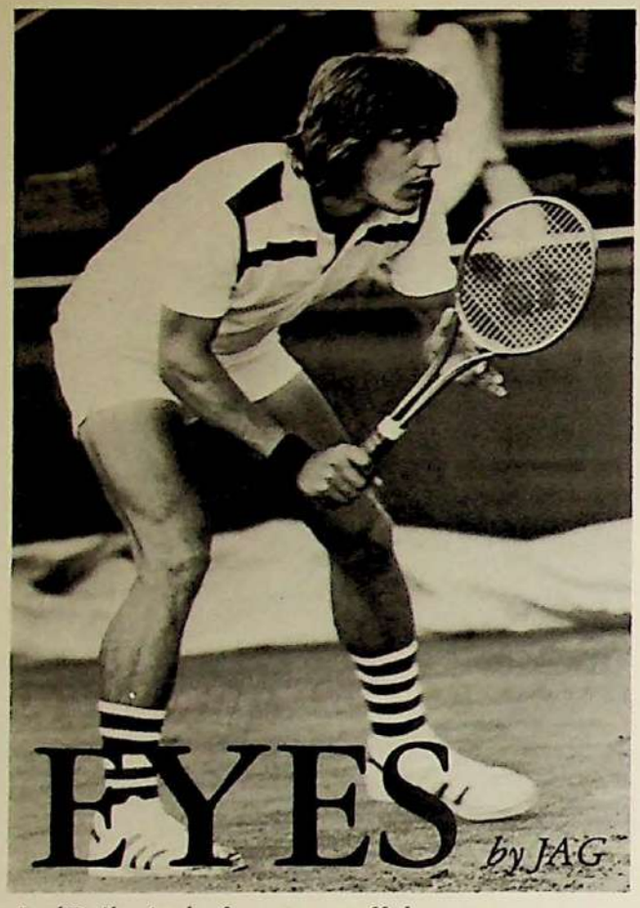


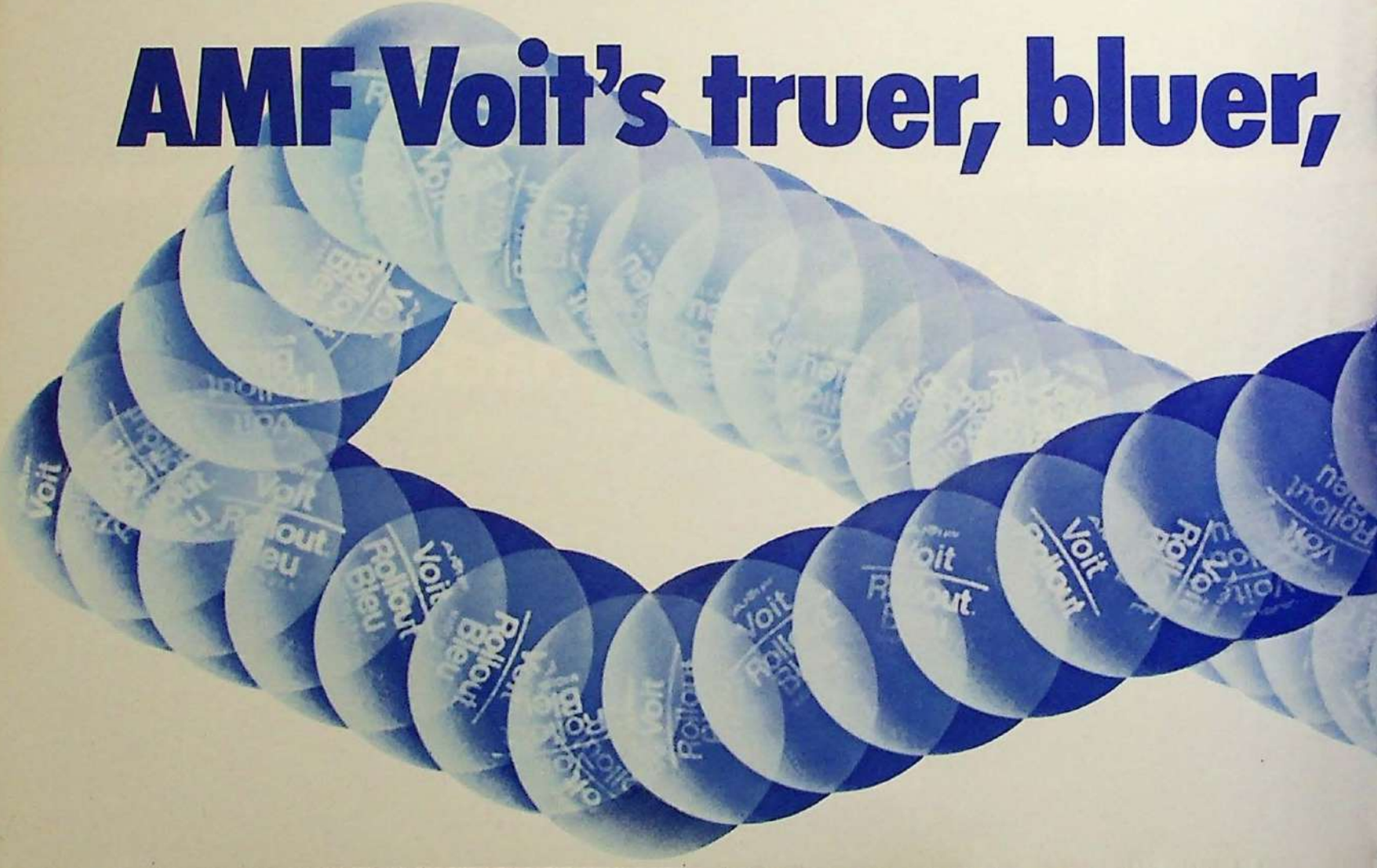
Joel Bailey is the fastest . . . off the court.

Well as the circuit continues, so do the surprises!

First, the big upset at the Mission Hills Tennis Tournament in Palm Springs when Bjorn Borg, who had not lost a first round match since 1976, lost this one. The man who beat him? Well, none other than the "late night dancer" himself—Bruce Manson. Yup, it wasn't so long ago that Bruce was discoing it up 'till three in the morning in Stockholm, and telling me (between numbers) how badly he would like to be in Borg's shoes. (He even promised me firsts on his story if/when he should become number one.) Well, dear Mr. Manson, ranked only 120th on the circuit, must have caught the Stockholm Rhythm 'cause he sure kept Bjorn moving all over the Palm Springs turf. Feeling good, Bruce threw a party at the Riviera . . . he even invited Bjorn!

Well, if Borg wants to lay off tennis for awhile, he couldn't have chosen a better time. This month he will be making his motion picture debut with Bert Convy in the new film "Racquet." Bjorn plays the young, current Wimbledon Champ (natch) and Convy plays the aging tennis star trying for a comeback. Actually Bjorn does quite well, when he convincingly misses shots he can hit blindfolded! And he even smirks a few times with a little expression!

Ilie Nastase (everything he touches turns to controversy) is in the film too but the Associate Producer, Jack Kinberg was chasing him all over the place to sign a release. It seems Nastase plays Borg in the beginning of the film, but didn't want to lose. Said the hot-headed Rumanian, "I don't want to be



in the film if I'm shown losing!" Bob Evans had the same problem with Ilie on "Players." When asked to lose to Dino Martin, Nastase stormed off the set. So they got Guillermo Vilas to do the part and—the Sexy Argentine runs off with the movie. . . .

Vitas Gerulaitis may not have a problem with the Red Brigade, but he will with the Connecticut police if he doesn't buy himself an accurate radar detector soon. It seems Vitas has a heavy foot and finds it difficult to drive under eighty miles an hour. One more speeding ticket and his license is gone! Vitas enjoys driving so much, he even rents a Rolls-Royce when he's in Europe. Last year at Wimbledon he really created a commotion when he arrived at the Hard Rock Cafe in his white Rolls with six blond females.

Vitas has a taste for other things besides flashy cars. Said one nineteen year old tennis player, "Vitas knows all the hot spots in every city . . . why one time he took some of us to this great place which had a room for everybody's private fantasies." No one partook, but I understand they really got an eyeful.

Speaking of bouncing, that was some match between Eliot Teltscher and John McEnroe in Palm Springs . . . proving the wheels of Karma do keep turning. Mac, who was angry with himself for partying all night and losing a doubles match, refused to finish a photo story claiming, "I don't need the publicity." Instead he quickly went to his room with Peter Fleming and two Philadelphia Fillies (and I don't mean the baseball team). Teltscher, hearing of the young reporter's disappointment, quickly offered his services . . . then went out and beat John.

But McEnroe wasn't that upset about losing this time since he was quite anxious to meet up with his tennis flame Stacy Margolin. Mac, who tells me he's very attracted to California women, may be humming a different tune as soon as he gets to the Italian Open. It seems there is a gorgeous Italian singer hot on his trail. She keeps sending him her records, but poor Mac doesn't understand Italian.

Swiss tennis player Heinz Gunthardt was voted "Best Tushy" by some females on tour. Believe me, his face ain't so bad either!

Recently some of the "rookies" called me from that exotic hotel, Westward Ho. They weren't quite sure what to do with their night off . . . until Peter Pearson showed up with an entourage of females. Thank heavens for Peter. He always has a solution.

Holland's finest, Tom Okker begged his trainer to bandage up his sprained ankle before he left for Denver. "Now don't play too hard on it," he was warned. "Play?" replied Okker. "I'm going skiing!"

Swedish player Jan Norbeck called me recently. He's a real cutie who took a long leave of absence from the tour to "fix up his car." Now that someone "stole it," he's back on the circuit. And speaking of cuties, add two more to the list of up and comers: American, Van Winitsky, who resembles Burt Reynolds both in appearance and disposition and Swede, Stefan Simonsson, who is not only winning games, but the hearts of many a young female!

See you all at Wimbledon!

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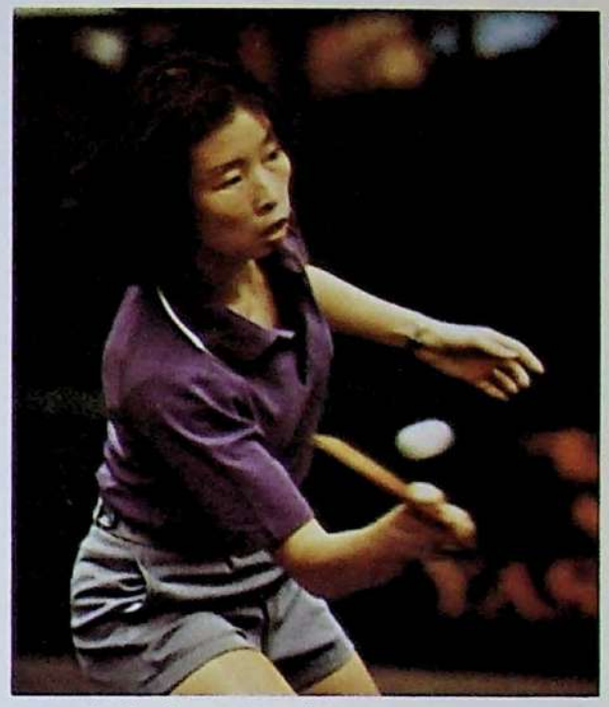
Passing Shots

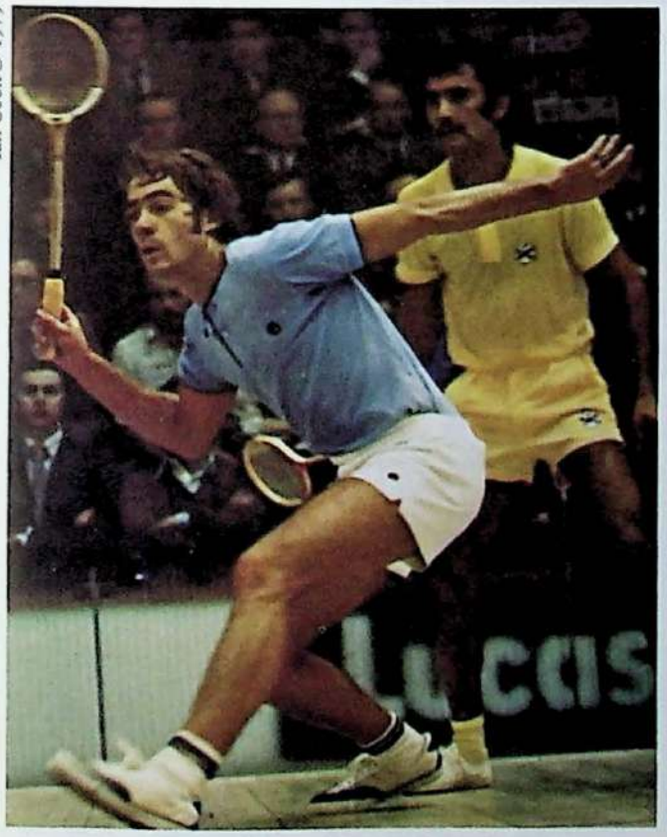
Victor Vondracek © 1979

Platform tennis champions Clark Graebner and Doug Russell.



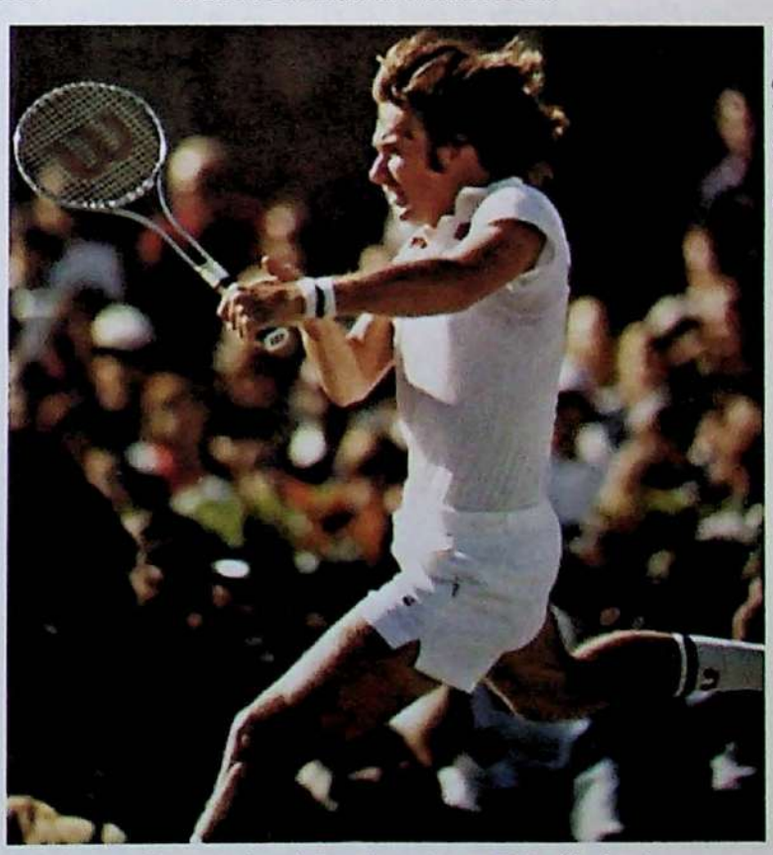
Neal Fox © 1979

In Sook Bhushan in North Korea.



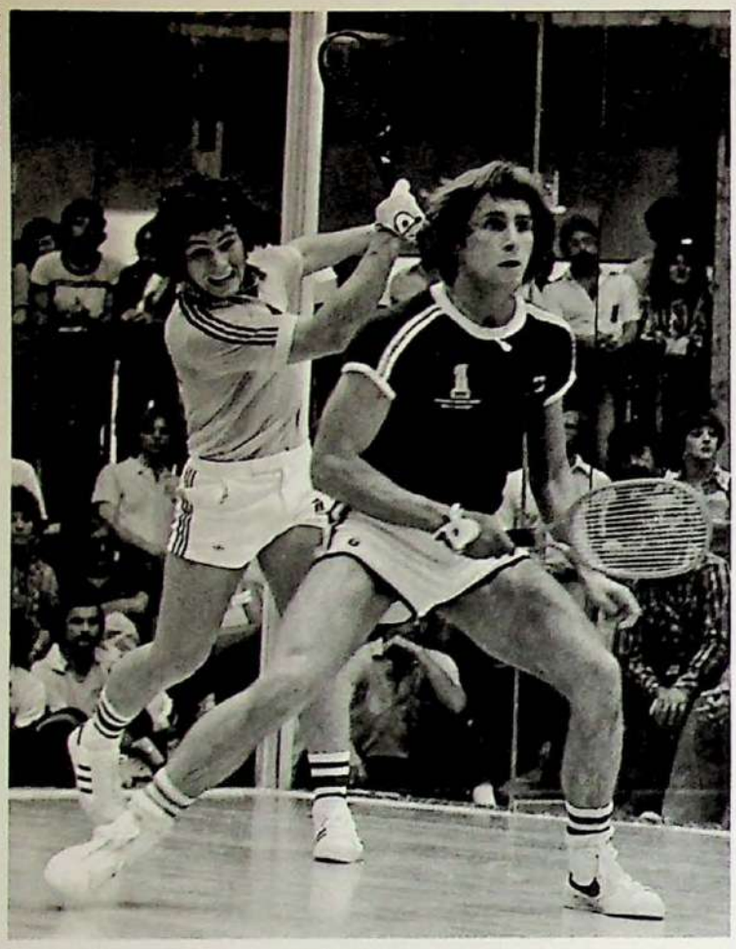
Ian Cook © 1979

Geoff Hunt and Mo Khan in the British Open.



Bruce Curtis © 1979

Can Jimmy Connors break Borg's string at Wimbledon?



Rick Diaz © 1979

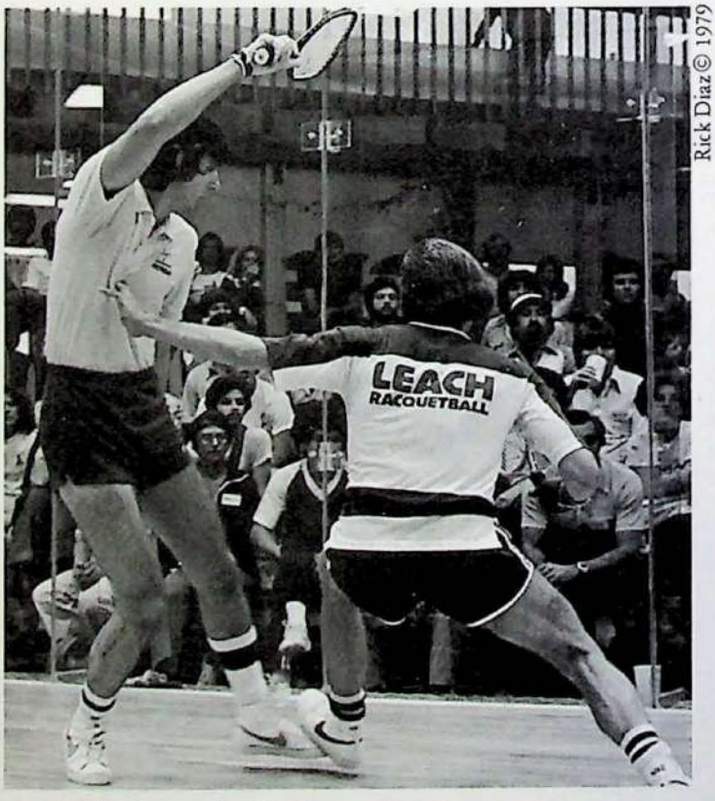
Marty Hogan is the one to beat.

Viktor Vondracek © 1979

Racquet Athlete of the Year Heather McKay.

Paramount Pictures © 1979

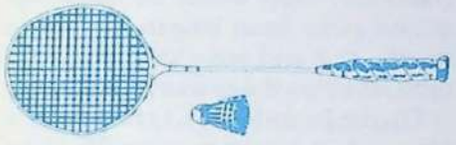
Dino Martin and Guillermo Vilas in the movie "Players."



Rick Diaz © 1979

Jerry Hilecher and Rich Wagner in action.

BADMINTON



Serious badminton is played in the U.S. by an estimated 100,000 people, so it does not qualify as one of this country's major racquet sports. However, in many countries the sport is far more popular than tennis. And since we must now finally admit that the rest of the world was right all along about soccer, why couldn't they eventually be right about badminton?

The world of badminton is like a peacefully sleeping giant. It is the most popular participant sport in England, the second most popular sport in Denmark next to soccer. It is very popular in Scandinavia, is enthusiastically played in India, and in countries of the far east—Indonesia, Malaysia, China, and Japan—it is a national pastime. Yet for all it's worldwide popularity, badminton finds itself frustrated in it's attempts to develop a media interest comparable to that of tennis. Undoubtably this is because the game hasn't caught on in the United States even though badminton equipment manufactures claim that many millions of Americans have played the outdoor game at one time in their lives. According to Dave Folinsbee, Executive Director of the Canadian Badminton Association, "Badminton can't make it in the world until it makes it in the U.S.".

Badminton did make one stab at commercialism back in 1975 when the Canadian Badminton Association conducted the first-ever large prize money event, a $19,000 tournament sponsored by Pepsi-Cola Canada. Afterwards, the International Badminton Federation (IBF) passed new regulations limiting prizes to $200. Since that time, international badminton has, at least on the surface, been an entirely amateur game. By keeping the game amateur, the federation thought that badminton could become become an Olympic event and so gain acceptance as a participant and spectator sport in the U.S. The effect of Olympic television coverage on gymnastics and figure skating in this country must have influenced on the thinking of badminton officials.

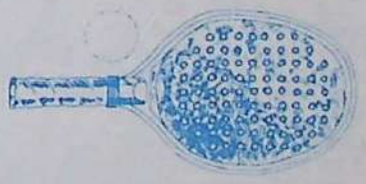
But badminton was only a demonstration sport in the 1972 Olympics at Munich and has not been included in the Olympic program since that time. Badminton officials hope to get their sport included in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, but that is a long time to wait for a definite maybe. The IBF is returning, therefore, to commercialism, in order to publicize their game, and it is expected that by mid-1979, the IBF will approve cash prize tournaments.

Not only has the badminton world been frustrated by lack of acceptance in the U.S., but there has been internal conflict as well. China, which claims many of the best players in the world, broke away from the IBF to form the World Badminton Federation. At the same time, the Chinese convinced the African nations as well as many of the Far Eastern Nations, to join this new federation and boycott all IBF events. If the sleeping giant is to be awakened by a kiss from U.S. commercialism, the Chinese certainly must be included in the competition for America's fascination with China knows no bounds and no sponsor wants to support a sport rife with conflict. That is why Pepsi Cola pulled out of the tennis Grand Prix in the early 1970's and that is why badminton must get its own house in order before it can attract U.S. sponsors. The U.S. badminton market alone is just too small to attract meaningful sponsorship. But if the international popularity of the game is stressed, and, in particular, if the Chinese are included in any U.S. tournaments, some large U.S. sponsors could be tempted.

I hope that the IBF will set its priorities in order. Professionalism brings money and recognition to a sport. Badminton is equally deserving of both.

—Herb Fitz Gibbon

PLATFORM TENNIS



Ah, to be number one . . .

Twice runnerup Doug Russell, who had won virtually every other title, and partner Clark Graebner, an ever improving talent, were the class of a very tough men's field in winning the National Championships, sponsored by Passport Scotch. It was the first National Championship for Graebner, the former U.S. Davis Cup star, who has played together with Russell for the past two seasons. To win the title they unleashed an awesome barrage of firepower to rout the usually tenacious brother tandem of Chip and Steve Baird, former

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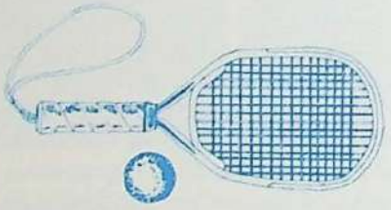
national titlists and number two seed: 6-4, 6-1, 6-1. The championship match was the most one-sided in recent history and clearly established the winners as the premier team in men's platform tennis.

A similar drama on the women's side was unfolding for perennial bridesmaid, Linda Wolf. After winning the Nationals her first year on the tour, she was a second place finisher in both 1977 and 1978. It was beginning to look that way again this season since Wolf had failed to recruit 1978 champion, Hilary Hilton as her partner. But Wolf and new partner Yvonne Hackenberg showed no mercy in dispatching a subpar Hilton and Annabel Rogan 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 in this year's championship, gaining sweet revenge and sweeping them into the top money winning spot.

—Ernest Chu

RACQUETBALL



Like the wild gunslingers and desperados of the old west the racquetball gang will soon descend on the Arizona town of Tempe to compete for the biggest prize in racquetball, the U.S.R.A. Nationals. The field is led by reigning champions Marty Hogan and Shannon Wright. On paper both of these stars should win this year but whenever the stakes are high, anything can happen . . . and often does. Here now, the top players and their chances of winning.

In the men's division, Marty Hogan (even money) is the man to beat. Hogan has been virtually unstoppable in tournament action this year, winning the last five tour stops. His only weakness is a tendency to relax in the early rounds. But if he gets rolling. it's all over.

Jerry Hilecher(3-1) is one of the favorites if Hogan stumbles. It's taken him light years to move up to the #2 spot. But of late he has played very well with big wins over Wagner, Koltun, Yellen and Bledsoe. Unfortunately, he cannot beat Marty Hogan and in all likelihood it is Hogan who he must overcome to win the title. Rich Wagner(4-1) is the surprise of this year's tour. When he's on his game he is one of the two or three players capable of beating Hogan. He's been playing very well and just might spring the upset of the year. Mike Yellen(4-1) has improved with each tournament. His lack of tournament experience may hinder him in the rarified atmosphere of the Nationals, but when he took the second game from Hogan in a recent match, 21-6 and was ahead 8-0 in the third, the crowd was watching in awe.

Charlie Brumfield(5-1) hasn't done too much this year because of a long battle with hepatitis. He is coming around and shows sparkles of the old brilliance, but fitness will probably be his undoing this year. But he's a money player and loves the Nationals, so who knows? Steve Strandemo(6-1) started the season with a bang winning the first tournament in St. Louis. Since then his game has faltered and he appears to lack confidence in his game. His sporadic lapses of concentration are fatal at this level.

Davey Bledsoe(8-1) has never really regained the form that made him the National champion two years ago. He had been playing well until his recent back injury. Finally, Craig McCoy(12-1) looked better and better this year but does not have the guns to figure in this shootout.

On the distaff side, Shannon Wright(2-1) is the lady to beat. Despite her recent loss in California, she has been the dominant player on the women's tour this year. Her strong offensive game: a blend of power, serve and shoot, and control has made her number one. Janell Marriott(4-1) has shown continued improvement this year. With a big win over Wright under her belt her confidence is soaring. Has finally learned how to play in the close matches . . . and win. Jennifer Harding(6-1) is a one woman racquetball conglomerate and this diversity of interests has taken its toll on her game. While she has been

playing with consistency this year, her game has not been impressive nor has she been a dominant factor on the tour this season.

Rita Hoff(8-1) has long been one of the game's strongest players and this year she has developed control to match. A solid player, though she needs more seasoning to succeed at this level. Marci Greer(8-1) hasn't done much this year and chances for a big upset in the Nationals are slim. And although Peggy Steding(10-1) has aged with grace, she is no longer a contender for the top prize.

So put your money down!

SQUASH

The 1978-79 squash season is almost history and Sharif Khan once again ruled the roost. He won eight of the ten tournaments in which he competed—the Slazenger Title, Cleaves Open, Boodles Open, W.P.S.A. (N.A. Pro) Championship, Spalding Grand Prix and most significantly his tenth North American Open. During the season the awesome Khan turned back repeated challenges from the best of the rest: Stu Goldstein, Gordon Anderson and Clive Caldwell.

For the past few seasons members of this triumvirate have come close but still haven't mustered the big wins to propel themselves to the top spot. Maybe none of these very good players has what it takes to reach the top. On paper Goldstein has it all. His shot making, court coverage and stamina are second to none. If he has any physical flaw, it's his tendency to train to too fine an edge. He sometimes leaves his game on the practice court. But to beat Sharif you have to use all your physical skills *and* your mental faculties. Goldstein appears to possess the former but one wonders if he has the latter—that certain intangible that separates the almost great from the truly great.

The wiry Anderson came to the pro ranks from a very successful amateur career. His unorthodox style of play,

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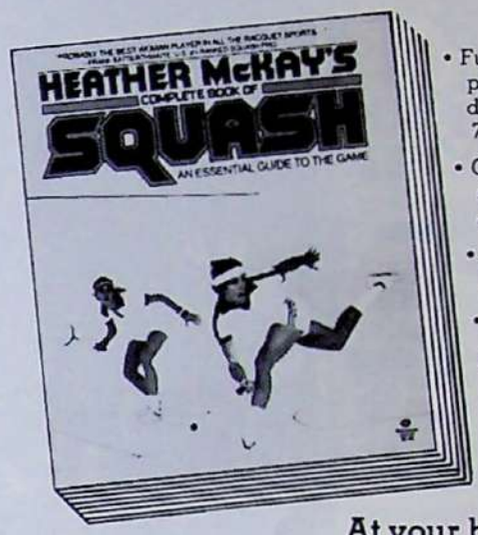

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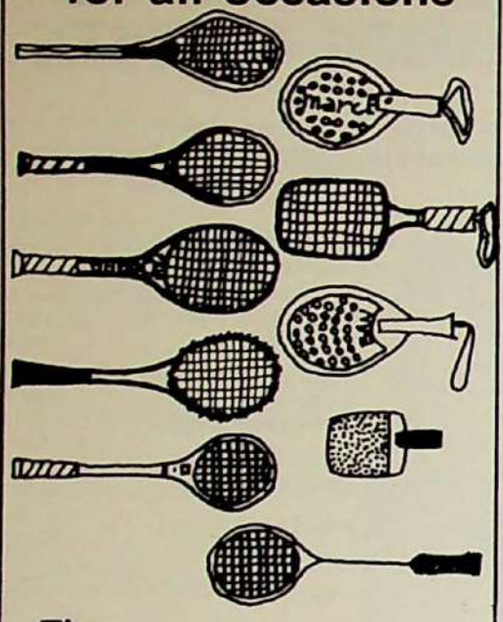

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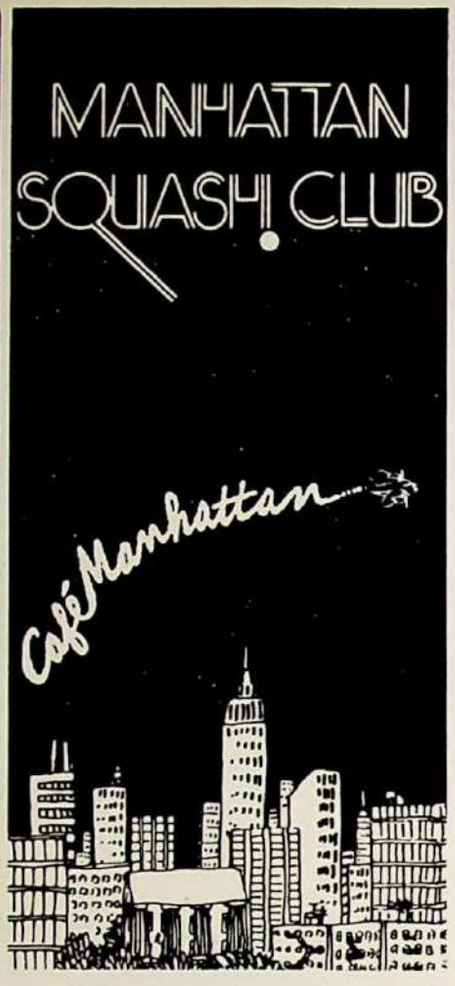

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coupled with his tremendous power have made him one of the three or four best players in the game. His forehand is the most fearsome shot in squash and he uses it to good advantage. He's also the master of the double boast: a side wall, side wall, front wall ballet that leaves opponents diving for the front wall. On the debit side, however, he lacks the physical conditioning of Caldwell and the quickness of Goldstein, so he depends for his success on winning shots. If he's on, he can beat anyone as his record attests, but if he's slightly off, he can lose to inferior players as his record confirms.

Finally, Clive Caldwell rounds out the top three. Caldwell has been a frequent bridesmaid but rarely a bride. His forte is conditioning; his stroke-making is clean if unspectacular; and he retrieves balls with the best of them. However, he lacks the raw speed and power necessary to win consistently at the top level. At this point in time, Sharif is able to retrieve just about anything Caldwell hits. For Caldwell to hit a winner it must be perfect and this necessity often leads to unforced errors—the tragic flaw in the game of champions.

On the other hand, maybe the challenge will come from one of the talented 20's. Mexican Mario Sanchez, Canadian Michael Desaulniers and American Tom Page, each barely 20, have long playing experience and have gotten into the habit of winning. Sanchez capped a fine amateur career (he has turned pro) with wins in the U.S. Nationals and the Canadian Nationals. He is a very consistent, if unspectacular player, who never beats himself. He seems committed to excellence and will be a regular on the pro tour next season.

Tom Page, a former National Amateur Champion, can be great. Physically intimidating, he is quick, strong and mobile—an advocate of the hard, harder, hardest school of hitting the ball. He was injured much of the season and never regained the form which saw him take Sharif Khan to five games in the North American Open two years ago. Michael Desaulniers, a Harvard senior this September, has also notched a National Championship. Of all the contenders

for the throne, Desaulniers is the most talented. He is the consumate squash player: all of the physical attributes plus a full understanding of the game's finer points. He uses the whole court and is capable of very long strings of winning shots. If he wants, he could challenge the top players. But is he willing to make the sacrifice that excellence demands? Time will tell.

For the present, Sharif Khan is still winner and champion.

TABLE TENNIS

It was a table tennis soap opera television scriptwriters would be wrought to embellish, the U.S.T.T.A. Team Trials—America's most fiercely contested table tennis competition. At stake were spots on the team that would compete at the World Championships in North Korea this April.

Twelve men and 12 women, playing in separate divisions, had advanced to the final competition from a preliminary field of 24 each. The finalists would be competing for five spots on the men's team and four on the women's. However, two of the men's slots and one of the women's would be determined by a vote of the USTTA's world team selection committee. The men and women, then, were only guaranteed a spot by finishing first, second, or third in the trials proper.

Speculation was rampant but the conjectured scenarios at the trials recognized the obvious. Three-time world team member, Danny Seemiller was considered locked in no matter what he did. Fifteen-year-old Eric Boggan, Scott's younger brother, was the new national champion and few doubted his ability to gain a berth on the team. The injured Scott Boggin was favored for the fifth position in spite of his noncompetitive status. That left two spots open: one to be won, the other to be placed. This popular assessment created a must-finish-third situation in order to avoid

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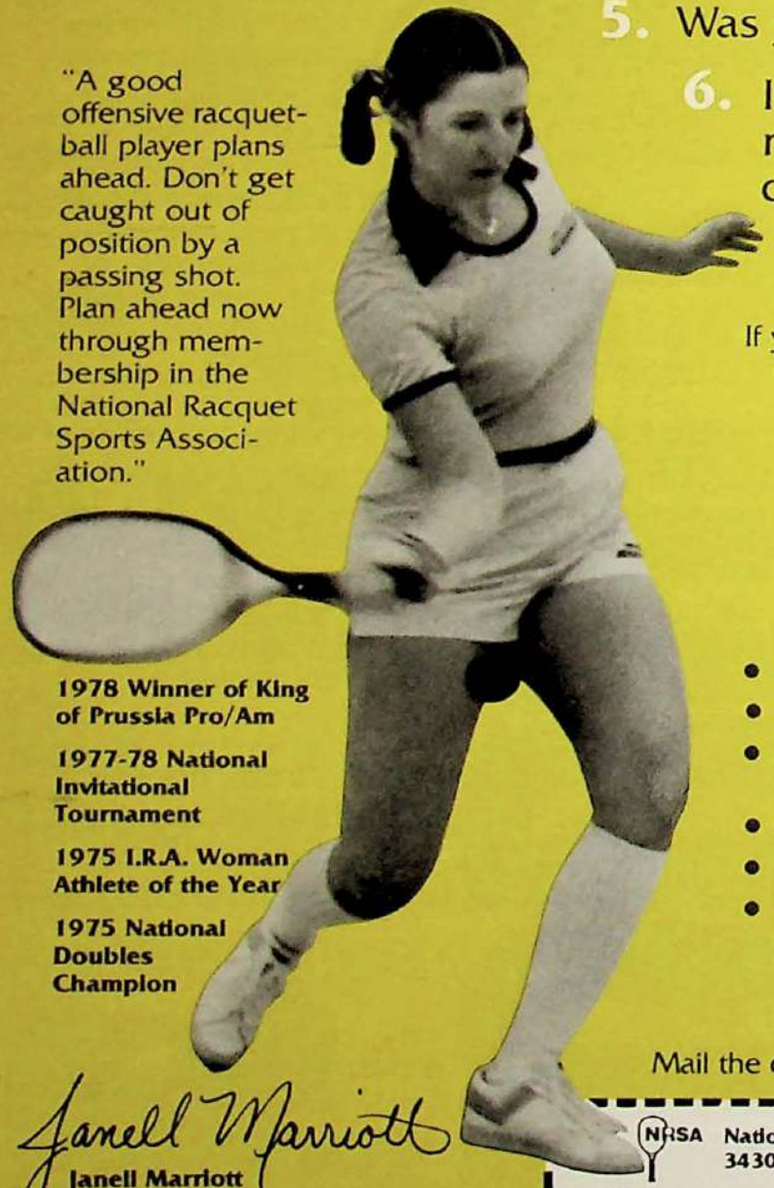

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subjecting their fate to the selection process where most were considered vulnerable.

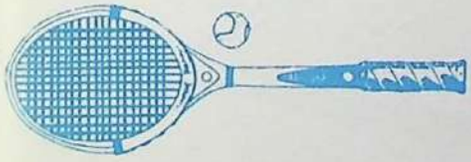
The trials are not a friendly competition. The players are trapped. Nothing is more important to them than making the world teams but nothing is more competitively agonizing than the trials itself, particularly since it follows the four-day long National Championships. Small wonder that the strains of participation emerge vehemently, even violently.

The majority of competitors, though, particularly the women, personified the sportsmanship of world class players. Although disturbed by the men's conduct, the women remained essentially impervious to the distractions, concentrating on their own competition. Ever-composed In-Sook Bhushan, ranked 23rd in the world, quietly and politely won all 11 of her matches in 22 straight games. Second place finisher, He-Ja Lee exemplified calmness amidst turmoil, compiling an impressive record of ten wins against one loss. While the deliberate, controlled style of New Yorker Alice Green secured her the third spot with an eight and three performance. The final team member, the one decided by vote, was 17-year-old Kasia Dawidowicz.

The association had just fielded its strongest world teams in its 46 year history, and since the 1977 teams had advanced the USTTA into the coveted first division of world team competition, everyone was excited about America's long overdue shot at the world team cups.

—Tom Wintrich

TENNIS



During the years when World Team Tennis still vainly hoped to make it, league prexy Larry King (spouse to Billie Jean and fount of her surname) once visited David Foster (who recently left his post as Colgate's chief executive officer) in hopes of securing some corporate support for both WTT and women's tennis in general.

Only King showed up in what he once referred to me as his "Larry Mahan outfit"—denim jeans, jacket, shirt and cowboy boots, all worn and dusty. This appalled the more conservatively attired Foster, who suppoedly wondered out loud right then and there if, with things like this going on, tennis would ever be worth business's all out support.

Luckily for tennis, Foster decided it was, and for the next three years, until his resignation, Colgate pumped enough toothpaste millions into both the men's and women's pro games as to give even naive observers like myself the idea it was out to "take over."

Except everyone watching forgot one thing. The goose who handed out all those golden eggs for three or four years might not always rule the roost. Today, Colgate has a new head who hasn't yet made public his feelings about pro tennis, and rumors are rife that his corporation, which has been generous to and good for tennis (if occasionally overbearing) may soon pull out of the sport altogether.

Nobody saw it coming, or maybe some people honestly believed David Foster would reign forever. But all along at Colgate presumably less enthusiastic folk than Foster have been evaluating just what they've gotten back for their support monies. The glory of advertising on a television series as opposed to a major tournament is that on the series if your star gets ill, you can place commercials on reruns. But in tennis, if Borg and Vilas don't show for your big tourney and Connors shows only after some public cajoling (plus unsubstantiated rumors that he was paid appearance money under the table), your company looks very bad indeed.

And if Colgate needs support from other quarters for a possible decision to pull out of tennis, it has only to ask the Insurance Company of North America (INA), which in late February cancelled its sponsorship of the $250,000 U.S. Pro Indoors Championships, probably the most prestigious event of the men's winter tour. The ostensible reason was alleged financial irregularities by the tournament's directors, but who could blame INA if it had just decided that a tennis tournament was simply no longer a good media buy. In TV if you don't get the ratings, you *go*, and tennis has always seemed to suffer from bad programming.

American Airlines and Arco are other corporate giants who have lately stopped backing major tennis tournaments.

And what about Avon, which this past season became sponsor of the major women's pro tour in addition to the Futures events for up-and-coming and lesser ranked players, which it has backed for year without the proper thank-yous from either the fans or the tennis establishment. . . .

Finally there are the noble efforts of Aetna Insurance, which since 1970 has sponsored the Aetna World Cup matches between the U.S. and Australia. It's the best run tennis event in the world bar none, and it benefits the ATP's pet charity, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. But the last three years have been runaway romps for the U.S. male pros over an Australia that essentially lacks comparable tennis talent anymore. So each year at the World Cup, you hear a *lot* of worries that Aetna will no longer support the matches.

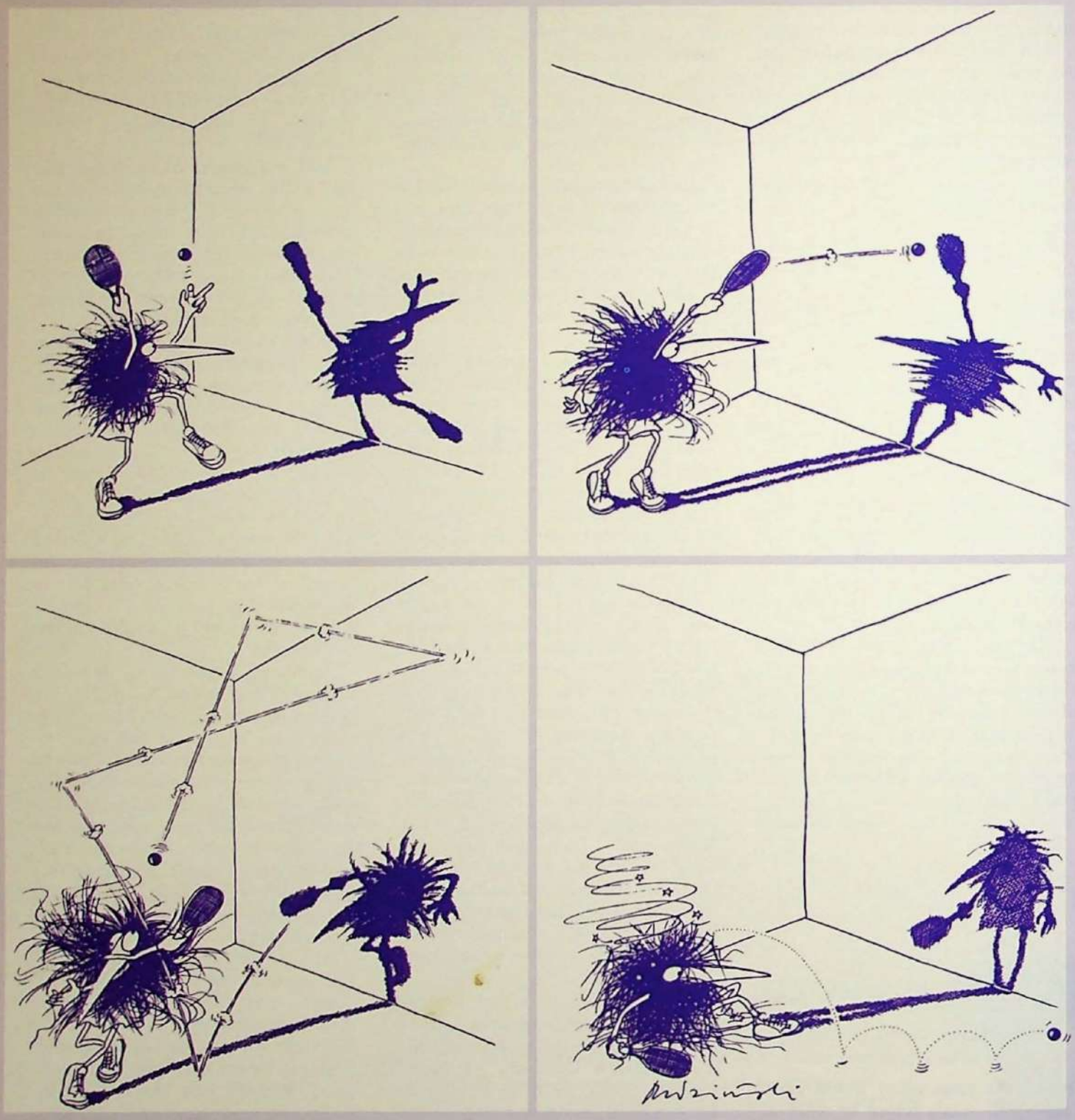
Pro tennis would be hurting for a while, but it could probably afford to lose a Colgate as sponsor, if only because other large-scale corporate patrons are probably hiding in the bushes. But an Aetna or an Avon, whose support has been underpublicized, simply because the sponsors themselves have been *modest*— that's another story entirely. The defection of companies like these will scare off the so-called "small investors" in the tennis market.

And, there's no getting around it. The loss of an Aetna would be a total disaster, even if no one could blame them for pulling out. What INA and American Airlines have suddenly realized may be the next lesson taught to other sponsors: that in a small henhouse, there is room for a limited number of eggs. And the goose that once was pro tennis seems to be losing its golden fertility quite rapidly.

—Richard Szathmary

DUDI

by Andrzej Dudzinski



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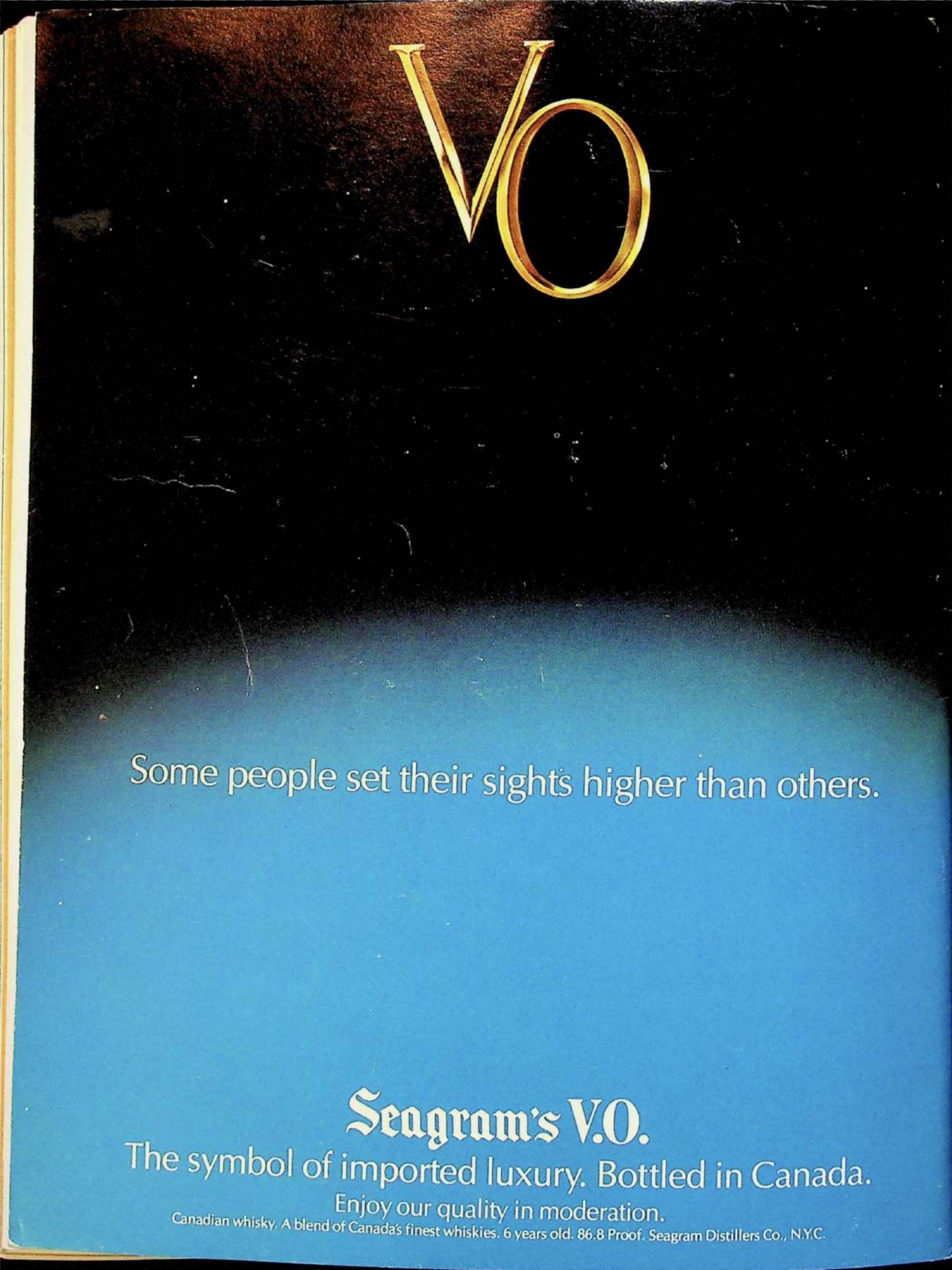
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