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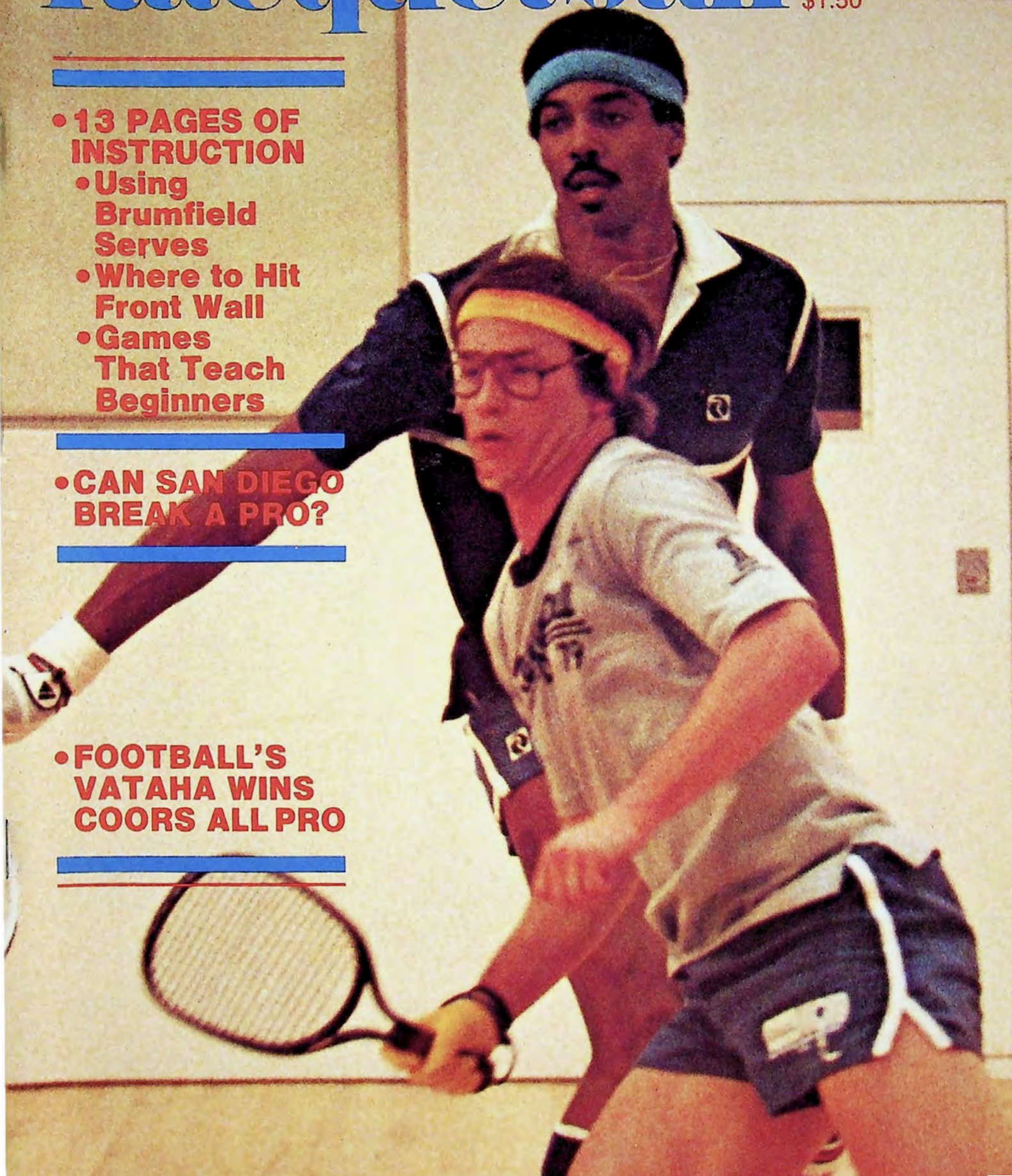
Vol. 7 No. 4
April, 1979
\$1.50

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- Where to Hit Front Wall
- Games That Teach Beginners

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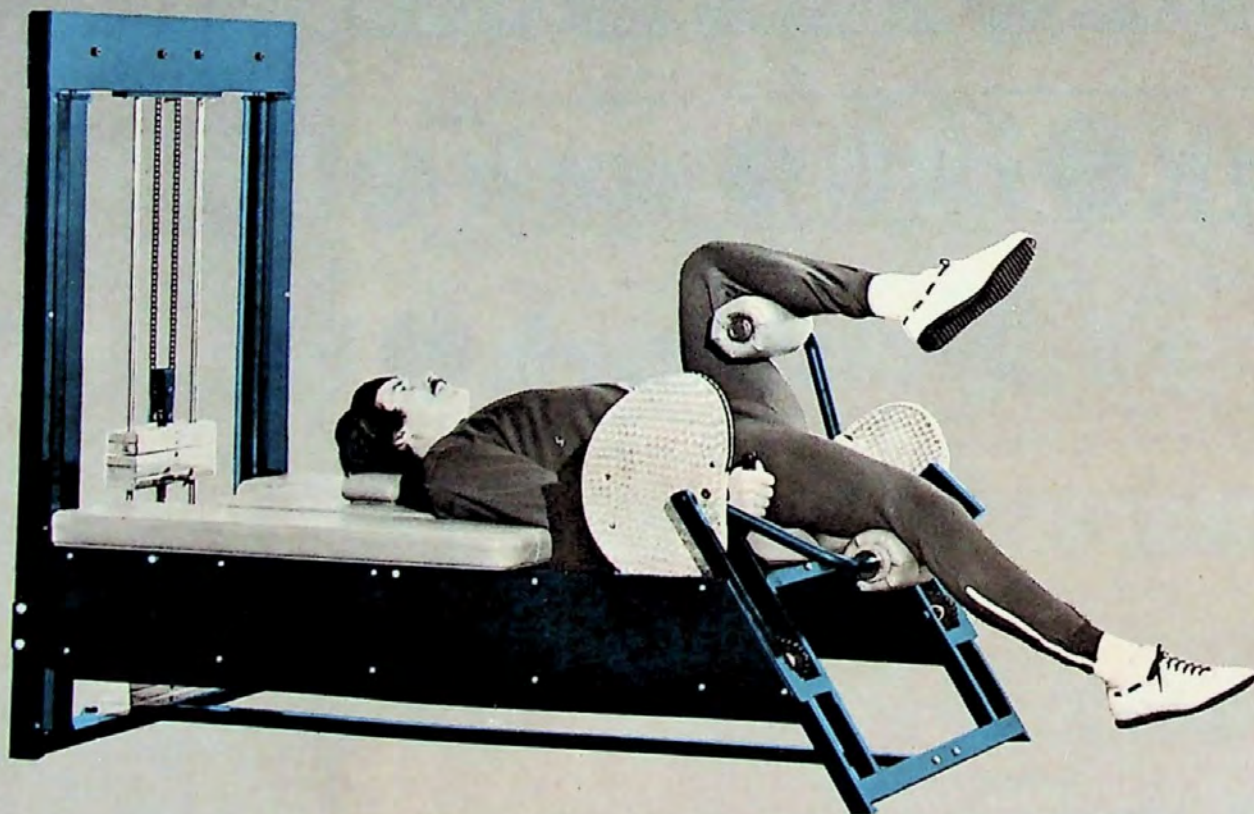
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On the cover . . .

Randy Vataha races to retrieve a Derrick Dickey shot at the Coors All Pro Racquetball Championships Jan. 12-14. Vataha went on to win \$58,000 in the Las Vegas tournament, which offered the biggest purse in racquetball history.

—Photo by Randy Tunnell

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President and Publisher • Robert W. Kendler
National Director and Editor • Charles S. Leve
National Commissioner and Business Manager • Joseph Ardito
National Coordinator • Terry Fancher . . . Associate Coordinator • Dan Bertolucci
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Managing Editor • Carol Brusslan . . . West Coast Editor • Nick Longhurst
Circulation Manager • Kip Fancher . . . Circulation Administrator • Jack Kendler
Photographic Consultant • Arthur Shay

Advertising information requests should be addressed to Joseph Ardito, Business Manager, National Racquetball magazine, 4101 Dempster Street, Skokie, Illinois 60076 or Media Representative: Michael A. Guerino, M. Anthony & Associates, P.O. Box 112, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201 (414) 933-0200. Copy subject to approval of the publisher.

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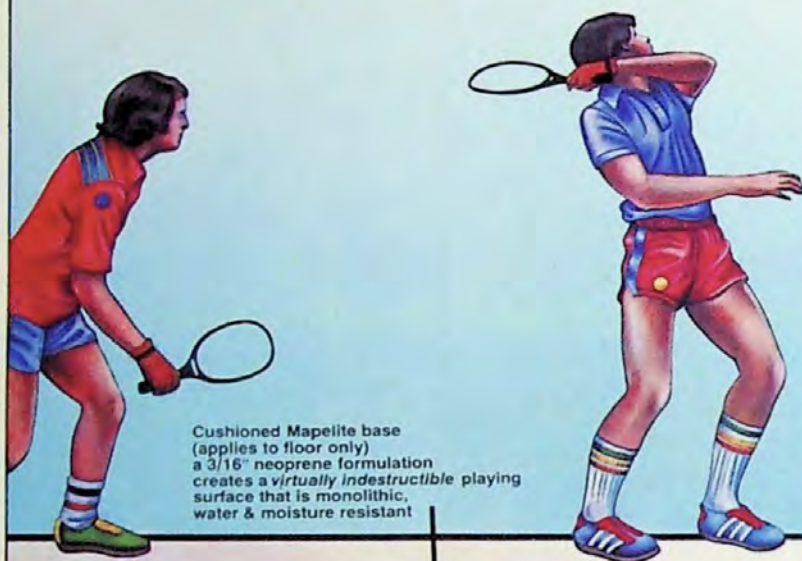
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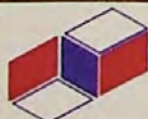
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From Bob Kendler

All Pros Are Racquetball Heroes

To Special Kids . . .

These remarks are adapted from Bob Kendler's speech in Las Vegas at the All Pro Tournament.

You know the more I think about the Coors All Pro tournament and the remarkable athletes participating in it, the more I realize you are paying racquetball the ultimate tribute. When you stop to think about it, the finest athletes in all the world . . . America's professionals . . . have entered this event. We can come to only one conclusion: we are honored by your presence.

The glow that your participation brings to racquetball can't help but brighten our way. We salute you for adding your greatness to an emerging sport that is on the threshold of greatness.

The Coors family has certainly paved the way for us to reach the pinnacle. Their history of innovation and pioneering is well known. We are indebted to them, not only for their financial contribution, but also for the unlimited good the name "Coors" has been to our ambitious program. Thank you, Mr. Coors, and all those brewmasters who make my favorite beer. Please don't ever lose that recipe.

I shouldn't say this, but I think Charlie Drake has had MORE faith in racquetball than anyone else, maybe even more than I have.

Jim Flood's novel idea and Charlie's enthusiasm are what have made the Coors Tour what it is today. I cannot say too much about Charlie and the tremendously good influence he has had on all facets of the game. He has surrounded himself with two capable

promoters — Jim Flood and Dave Armstrong — and the success we enjoy is due primarily to their genius and drive.

Flying out here today I couldn't help thinking about a letter I received from Boys Republic in Farmington Hills, MI. It seems they were overwhelmed by the magazines, rule books and racquetballs we sent them and the racquets that Leach Industries sent. What impressed me about this letter was the description of the boys who showed noticeable improvement in their mental attitude due to racquetball.

. . . Like the boy who had refused to read, and now studies *National Racquetball* magazine with a real sparkle in his eye . . . or the boy without goals, whose life was friendless and empty, and who is now interacting with his peers on the racquetball court . . . or the boy who would never leave the TV room because he was too fat to take part in physical activities. He now spends his time on the court shedding weight and improving his self image.

The eight finalists who are left in this event are playing this weekend for \$50,000 cash. The kids at these institutional homes are literally playing for their lives, and they are not blessed with impressive natural ability to aid their cause. But they are winning their battle, and racquetball is helping them to win. That's what this sport can do.

Our friends in Michigan are not alone. We've had word that this healing process is going on in other institutions, and the pages of *National Racquetball* will carry news of a USRA program that will give thousands of kids with



problems that "magic ingredient" that provides the positive feeling of being swift, strong and skillful.

What fascinates me is the wide range of appeal of our sport. On the one hand we are thankful for those with such great skill who play the game to its fullest. On the other hand are those who possess little, if any, skill, but they, too, play the game to its fullest. The universal appeal and the overall benefits of our sport stagger the imagination. There are physical, social and psychological benefits. But I like the healing benefit, and you are going to hear a lot more from me about this. That's because some day one of these kids will have a total recovery from his problem through racquetball, and don't be surprised when you learn it was hero worship that made this possible. And one of you just may be that hero!

So Don Kessinger, Al Oliver, Jim Bakken, Randy Vataha, Derrick Dickey, Jim Roberts, Bob McNamara and Al Ferrari — thank you for giving racquetball your glamour . . . a glamour that even children with problems can identify with. This may be a tournament to some people, but to me it is healing ministry. For your part in this labor of love, God will make every one of you a winner, and I am sure He will bless you all the days of your life, as you have blessed these unfortunate kids.

Evie & Bob Kendler

Evie and Bob Kendler

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:9

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Age Clarification Okayed For USRA Junior Regionals



One of the most difficult problems surrounding our National Juniors program has finally been solved, that former problem being the dispute over the date a junior player's age becomes effective.

Long and agonizing hours have been spent attempting to solve this dilemma. We have looked not only within our own sport — to our state chairmen, our national staff and our sponsors — but we have even sought the advice from other sports as we strive for a policy that is fairest for all players.

What the USRA has decided is the following: the age of the player shall be determined as his or her age on the first day of the Regional Juniors Championships. That date this season (1979) is July 19, 1979.

What this means is that if a player turns 18 on July 19, 1979, then he or she is ineligible. If a player turns 18 on July 20, then he or she would have been 17 on the first day of the Regional Juniors Championships (July 19) and would therefore be allowed to play.

All Regional Juniors Championships will be played the same weekend, so that a consistent policy will have been established. In the event that a tournament has too few entries to warrant beginning play on the 19th, the 19th will still remain the effective date.

Now, you ask, what about the National Junior Championships? What if a player's age changes between the time of the regionals and the time of the nationals? And it very easily could since the National Junior Championships will be Aug. 13-18, 1979.

The answer is a basic "*nothing*." The effective age date will remain the first day of the Regional Championships. Therefore any player who competes in the Regionals will be eligible age-wise for the same bracket of play in the Nationals.

Gone will be the confusion and doubt of past years, where many of the players were unsure of what age group they were to play in. Part of that problem was due to the fact that the Junior Regionals were really just a minor portion of the "*regular*" amateur Regional Championships. Often in the past those tournaments were not on the same dates, and in fact, could vary by as much as four or five months.

And that was one of the primary reasons the USRA elected to take the junior divisions out of the amateur Regionals. We knew the juniors both deserved and needed separate regional events of their own. And as long as the host facilities continue to feel the kids are a viable promotion, we will extend the policy.

So by extracting the Junior Regionals we were able to standardize them in terms of dates, making an age clarification the first order of business.

The age divisions will not change: Boys 17-and-under; 15-and-under; and 13-and-under. Girls 17-and-under and 14-and-under.

The winners of those divisions (excluding consolation, of course) will receive round trip coach air fare to the National Juniors Championships in Tucson, AZ.

So the stage is set once again for the finest in junior racquetball competition. The tournaments from which emerged players like Larry Meyers, Ben Koltun, Mike Yellen, Bobby Bolan, John Egerman and many others will again spawn new names and more fast rising youngsters eager to make their mark in racquetball.

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Randy Vataha Wins Biggest Prize

Football Player Gets \$58,000 for Coors All Pro Victory

Randy Vataha thanks the heavens as he accepts the largest prize money check, \$50,000, in racquetball's history from Jeff Coors at the Coors All Pro awards presentation.



At 5' 7" Randy Vataha was the smallest athlete competing in the Jan. 12-14 finals of the Coors All Pro Racquetball Championship.

But he was the quickest when it counted.

The former New England Patriot beat 6' 3" Al Ferrari, who had been a basketball star, in the Grand Finals at the Las Vegas Sporting House to win the \$58,000 first prize. It was a case of speed over size. An exhausting earlier encounter against Derreck Dickey, former Golden State Warrior, slowed Ferrari down in his match against Vataha.

Vataha, who never went to the Super Bowl during his seven professional seasons with the Patriots and the Green Bay Packers, said *"If I had played in the Super Bowl and even if I had won, I don't think it would have been as exciting for me as this."*

Vataha advanced to the All Pro Finals from the National Football League qualifying event last March, along with Jim Bakken of the St. Louis Cardinals.

"The purpose of the Coors All Pro Racquetball Championship is to determine the best racquetball player among professional athletes," said Horace Irwin, director of advertising of Adolph Coors Co., the sponsor of the series.

Vataha proved himself best in a field of over 220 professional athletes who competed in the \$188,000 tournament, which offered the richest purse in the history of racquetball.

Eight athletes representing major league baseball, the NFL, NBA and the National Hockey League competed in the All Pro finals at the Las Vegas Sporting House. Each contestant had advanced to the finals by winning qualifying events held in 1978 for their respective sport. The four preliminary events also awarded each of its two qualifiers \$4,000.

Al Oliver (Texas Rangers) and Don Kessinger (new player-coach of the Chicago White Sox) won the major league baseball players' event held in January, 1978. The NFL players' event sent Vataha and Bakken and the July NBA-NHL players' competition qualified Gail Goodrich (New Orleans Jazz) and Dickey. But due to a scheduling conflict Goodrich was

unable to participate in the All Pro Finals and St. Louis Blue hockey player, Jim Roberts (whom Goodrich had defeated in their semi-final match), played in his place.

The November qualifying event for individual sports stars, soccer players and sports veterans was won by two veterans, Bob McNamara (former Denver Bronco) and Ferrari (a St. Louis Hawk basketball club star nearly 25 years ago).

Vataha coasted to a 21-8 win in the first game of the Grand Finals over Ferrari. But he had to scramble out of a 14-14 tie in the second game, finally winning 21-15.

Ferrari, who earned \$33,000 for second place, said the match was won in the middle court, an area where Vataha was at his strongest and which Ferrari couldn't penetrate.

"I just couldn't execute passing shots to get him out of that area," Ferrari said. *"He consistently hit ceiling shots to keep me deep."*

"But what the heck, \$33,000 isn't so bad."

In the round robin competition held the second day of the finals Vataha edged Oliver, hard hitting Ranger outfielder, 21-1, 11-21, 11-7. He had some anxious moments in the first game against Dickey when the score was deadlocked at 18-18. But Vataha delivered three unreturned serves to finish out the game. In the second game after dissolving a 5-5 tie, Vataha breezed to an easy 21-10 victory.

Vataha won the NFL players' final in first round competition, downing St. Louis placekicker Bakken 21-6, 21-6. Vataha went ahead 13-3 in the first game and won the first 15 points of the second for his easy triumph.

Oliver won the professional baseball players' competition by defeating Kessinger in a tiebreaker 21-17, 5-21, 11-6.

Oliver, who led 11-5 in the first game, had to recover when trailing 15-16 and then survived a one sided second game loss to capture the tiebreaker.

"This is the first time I won something completely on my own," said an emotional Oliver, a 10 year major

Results — \$188,000 Coors All Pro Racquetball Championship

First Round: Al Oliver (Texas Rangers) d. Don Kessinger (Chicago White Sox) 21-17, 5-21, 11-6; Derreck Dickey (Golden State Warriors) d. Jim Roberts (St. Louis Blues) 21-15, 21-10; Randy Vataha (Green Bay Packers) d. Jim Bakken (St. Louis Cardinals) 21-6, 21-6; Al Ferrari (former St. Louis Hawk) d. Bob McNamara (former Denver Bronco) 21-3, 21-12.

Second Round: Vataha d. Dickey 21-18, 21-10; Ferrari d. Oliver 21-4, 21-11; Vataha d. Oliver 21-1, 11-21, 11-7; Ferrari d. Dickey, 21-6, 21-19.

Finals: Third-Fourth Place Playoff: Dickey d. Oliver 21-16, 17-21, 11-4. First-Second Place Playoff: Vataha d. Ferrari 21-8, 21-15.



Al Oliver is all concentration as he prepares to blast his vicious drive serve to the left.

The full gallery and television cameras at the beautiful Las Vegas Sporting House turned out to view the championship matches.



league veteran. *"They'll have to give me the credit. It's a great feeling to know you have accomplished something as an individual. Sure, I've done some good things in baseball. But nearly all the time the team or someone else has received the credit."*

In the third-fourth place playoff Dickey defeated Oliver, to take the third place purse of \$23,000. Oliver received \$18,000 for his fourth place finish, an amount \$8,000 greater than his first major league contract.

Ferrari ran out 10 straight points against Oliver to take a 10-1 lead in the first game of their round robin match. Oliver fell behind 8-0 in the second

game before rallying to draw within 17-11. However the 45-year-old Ferrari hit four straight winners for the victory. Ferrari easily took the first game against Dickey in the round robin, 21-6, but barely edged the former cager in the second 21-19.

Ferrari defeated McNamara 21-3, 21-12 to capture the veterans' final, while Dickey also won an easy victory in the NBA-NHL players' final over Roberts 21-15, 21-10.

Vataha came out on top in the March All Pro matches by beating Matt Blair of the Minnesota Vikings, Joe Theismann of the Washington Redskins, Ed Galigher of the San Francisco 49ers, and Dave Dalby of the Oakland Raiders.

Vataha began playing racquetball only a little over a year ago and finished his career with New England at the conclusion of the 1977 season. Now he's concentrating on racquetball as an investor in a club — the Playoff in Braintree, MA — and he's planning to get involved in the business end of more facilities.

"I proved myself in football," said the former wide receiver. "Now I'm trying to do it in racquetball." ●

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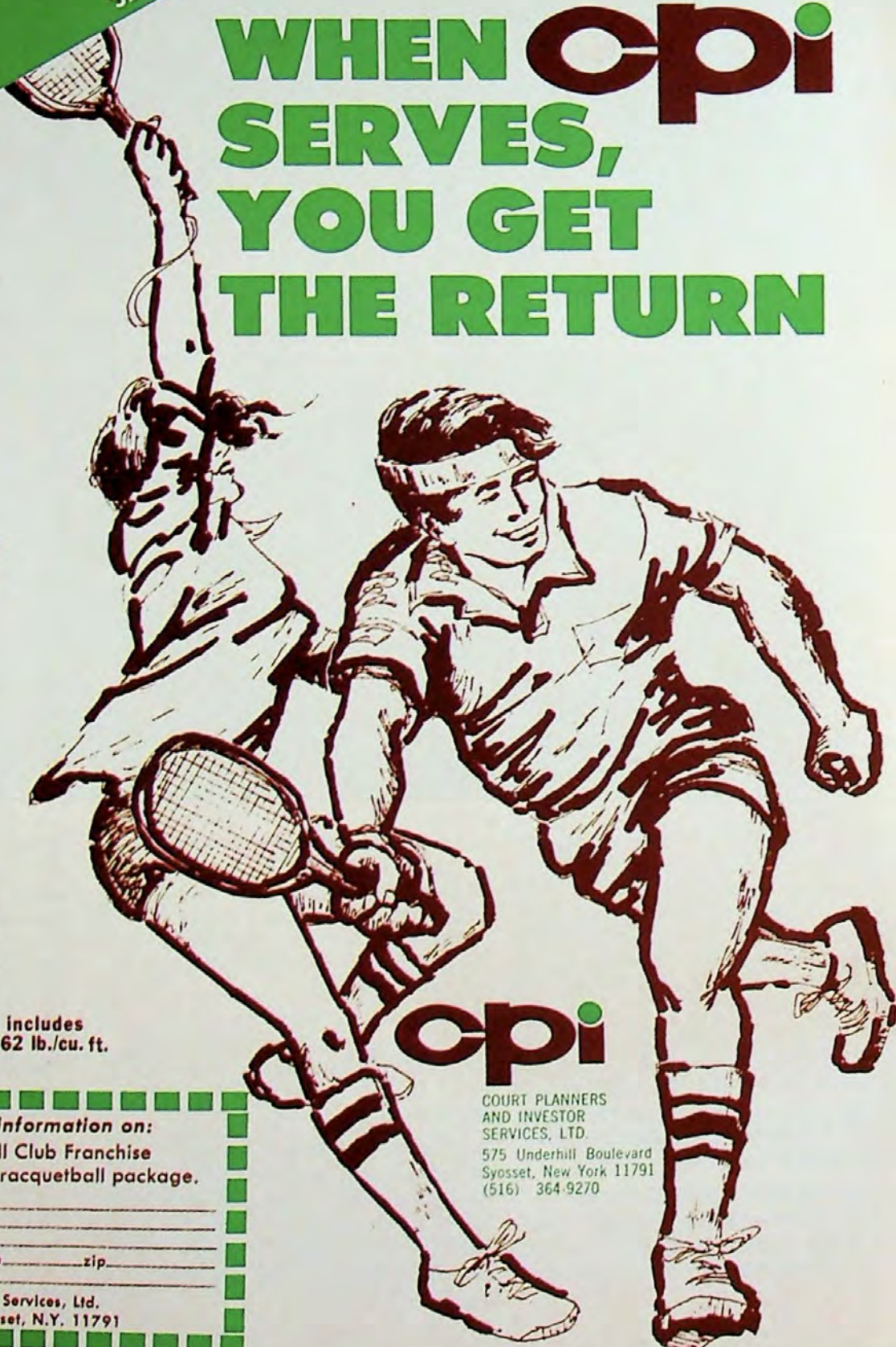
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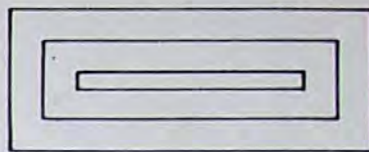


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Inside the Master's Mind

by Charlie Brumfield



Applying The Serves To Your Game

With this continuation of his article on serves Charlie Brumfield, four time national champion and touring pro for the Sportrooms Racquetball Clubs, continues his exclusive series for *National Racquetball*.

Now that we've reviewed some serves available to you at the present state-of-the art, how can you go about making some or all of these serves a regular part of your own repertoire? The answer is practice.

The Service Book

When I was struggling with my serve during the whole 1978 professional season, fellow pro Jay Jones was generous enough with his acquired knowledge to show me his *service book*. This book became my savior and it can become yours as well.

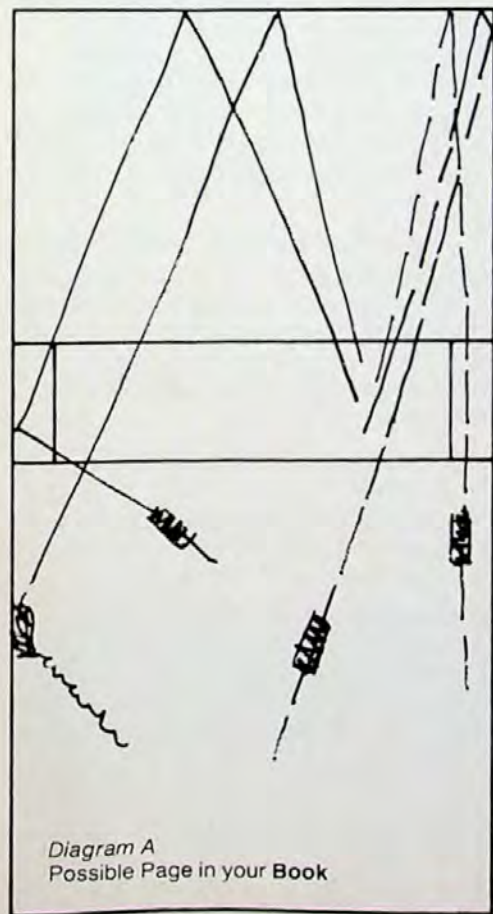


Diagram A
Possible Page in your Book

To me, the ultimate goal for the ardent amateur is to write his own *Little black book* of 15 or 20 serves, complete with angles, memory keynotes, and reminders of common service faults peculiar to certain areas. An example of page 1 might look something like this:

1. Use against deep position
2. Neutralize power
3. Triple Option theory
4. Miss short, not long on Angle Cracks
5. Watch ball during serve
6. Don't look back on serve return

As you can see, the *service book* is simply a codification of your understanding of a certain service pattern. I live by the old saying that goes, "the faintest pencil lasts longer than the sharpest memory."

But what about learning the *Big E* — Execution?

The Black Tape Method

The first thing you should do when attempting to learn a new shot, serve or not, is to pull out a roll of Jay Jones' black tape and cut a few strips. Put one piece on the floor in the service zone at the point where you want to contact the ball.

Put the second piece at the spot on the front wall where you estimate the proper trajectory will be. A third piece of tape (although optional) should go where you expect the serve to land. Now, you won't be able to see if your serve strikes near this third piece, but if you can corral the help of a second party, it will make it easier for that person to help you.

I have Carl Loveday, my coach, watch me practice for where the ball strikes the front wall relative to the tape. After a while I'll begin hitting very near the tape almost every time. If the serve does not land in the proper area, then I adjust my tape position.

The *Black Tape Method* is particularly effective for a player who uses more than one court, because each court has a slightly different bounce. A veteran *Black Tape Method* player will be able to adjust to different court surfaces much easier than other players by adjusting his mental picture of where the tape should be.

After prolonged use of the *Black Tape and Service Book Methods* you will be able to recognize the exact position each serve needs to be in — for instance on the **Deep Angle Z** the proper front wall spot is three feet in from the side wall and two feet up.

Once you have this information for your 10 or 15 bread and butter serves, form a mental picture — as you take your pre-serve pose — of the desired spot on the front wall that you wish to contact. The consequent rebound characteristics will follow.

Caution: Do not look at the spot during the swing! If you do you're asking for the big whiff!

This method of learning has been frequently and successfully used by Jack Nicklaus and other professional golfers to help create a "feel" for the shot without sacrificing ball-eye contact.

The primary fundamental that will determine the accuracy and consistency of your efforts is constant and total eye contact with the ball. You

should *not* see your ball hit the front wall and you should *not* have turned by the time the ball passes the short line. Those who turn quickly to see for themselves if their serve is short or not, actually serve short 20 percent or more often because of it.

Swing and Deception

It's fair for you to ask, "what swing should I use for these new serves?" Most texts on the serve give detailed drawings or photo sequences on how to hit the ball. Such illustrations have their place and you can learn much from them.

However for the most rapid improvement, I believe that it is more important to know the *where* and *why* about your shot than the proper form. As for your swing don't worry, we'll be taking it apart in later articles.

Using The Serves To Win

How can we use these new tools most effectively — to score points and win matches?!

Everyone should go into a match just as a major league pitcher does a World Series game. Concentrate on your serve — and know the hitter's weakness. If you've had the pleasure of facing this particular opponent before, then you already instinctively know some of his weaknesses.

But dig a little deeper — make a *little black book* on him. What serves does he murder? What can't he handle? Where is he likely to hit each serve, if he does hit it!

Serving Techniques

The nature of today's racquetball allows straight execution to make the serve effective. For example even if the receiver knows that Marty Hogan was serving a drive to the left, when the ball arrives at 142 miles per hour, it is effective.

The next step in making the serve even more deadly is developing clusters of serves from the same spot, off the same motion but going to *alternate coverage zones*.

For instance we've talked about the down-the-line drive, the Hard V and the Deep Z. If you combine all of these off the same motion, you effectively freeze the receiver because he can't anticipate which serve he'll get due to your variety as well as the different zones he must cover.

One up and coming professional player who uses these options well is Steve Mondry. In fact I've coined them as the **Mondry Options** due to their great effectiveness. (See Diagram B).

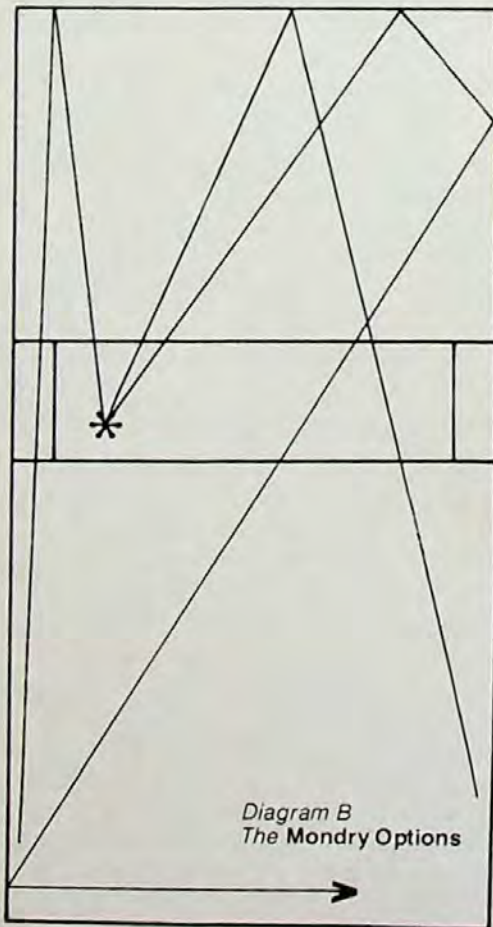


Diagram B
The Mondry Options

The corollary to the **Mondry Option** is developing different body motions that in and of themselves put the receiver at a distinct disadvantage. Famed baseball pitcher Luis Tiant comes to mind as that sport's analogy to our racquetball serves. Tiant throws basically the same pitches as all the other accomplished pitchers, but he has a hundred unusual deliveries that keep the hitters guessing until the last moment.

In racquetball Jerry Hilecher, who has risen to the game's number two player largely on his serves, is Tiant's counterpart. Hilecher has so much body motion that the receiver starts watching the delivery and often becomes confused by the feints and false starts.

For speedy improvement in your serving, and therefore your overall game, you should start working on your own serving techniques. They may look funny at first, but some of the funniest, most outlandish motions may have the most hypnotizing effect on your opponent.

Here are a few basic deceptive techniques currently being used by top professionals:

The Short Hop. The *Short Hop* serve is one of Hilecher's current favorites, especially in today's game where receivers often take their sweet time getting ready for the serve. Hilecher's ability to serve in a rapid delivery (the *Short Hop*) often catches opponents by surprise.

In reality the *Short Hop* serve is really just a Drive or a Hard Z. It is struck with a short, choppy movement just as the ball begins the upward movement off the floor as you bounce it. It should be contacted no more than three or four inches off the ground.

What is particularly nice about the *Short Hop* is the surprise element, added to the fact that often the server's body gets between the ball and the receiver long enough to help freeze the receiver.

The Running Serve. I like the *Running Serve* because it forces my opponent to watch a moving object (me) and then refocus on another moving object (the ball) as it travels in a different direction.

Running Serve

Diagram C-4



Diagram C-3



Diagram C-2



Diagram C-1



To execute the *Running Serve* begin at about center court and take three giant steps toward the right wall as you drop the ball far enough out in front of you. What you have done is now set up your own Mondry Option.

You can whip the ball cross court to the left, drive it down the line right or rip a Hard Z to the right. I've seen quality pros not even move on well executed *Running Serves*.

Right Foot Forward Step Back. That's a lot of words for a relatively simple footwork motion, but a most effective one. In contrast to the "normal" serving stance of feet apart as you face a side wall in this serving technique you will start with your right foot forward and your left foot either directly behind it (nearly touching toe to heel) or tucked into the instep of your right foot.

The next movement is a backwards motion with your left foot, followed by your right foot moving back and behind your left foot. Then push off your right foot, drop the ball about four feet in front of you and step into it with your left foot.

As you contact the ball, you will be hitting off your normal left foot from the normal hitting zone, the only difference being your approach.

Be careful that you don't jam yourself by dropping the ball too close to your body, the main hazard with this technique. Hilecher uses this method of footwork to develop tremendous power by utilizing his huge stride. Yet he is able to do it without jamming himself and by using this footwork, he's also able to eliminate foot faults.

Step Back

Diagram D-4



Diagram D-3



Strandemo Step Back. One of professional Steve Strandemo's favorite techniques is similar to the *Right Foot Forward*, and probably much easier for the beginning or intermediate player to perfect, primarily because it eliminates the first two steps from the *Right Foot Forward* technique.

From there the *Strandemo Step Back* is the same. It's just a simple step back with the right foot (after starting with the left foot forward) and a forward step with the left foot and into the ball. The most effective serves from the *Strandemo Step Back* would be either the drive to the left or the Deep Z behind your back to the deep right corner.

Overhead Motion. This is the same overhead motion as used in tennis and allows the server only one advantage, that being with the Deep Z serves because it helps eliminate the only weakness of the Z's, the ease with which it can be cut off and hit out of the air.

The overhead motion is extremely intimidating when used as a surprise weapon and should be limited in use and should virtually always be utilized with Z serves.

Bolo Motion. This is the motion used by softball pitchers or submarine style pitchers in baseball. The greatest potential for power is off this motion, but it is the most difficult to control as well.

An additional benefit is that the "windmill" created by this stroke can make for tremendous deception because the direction of the ball is determined at the last moment by a slight wrist snap.

Right Foot Forward

Diagram D-2



Diagram D-1



Second Serves

The second serve is the least developed shot in professional as well as amateur racquetball today. Virtually all players have fallen into the trap of *total safety* as their philosophy of the second serve. At no other time during the course of a rally would the modern *serve-and-shooter* think so conservatively.

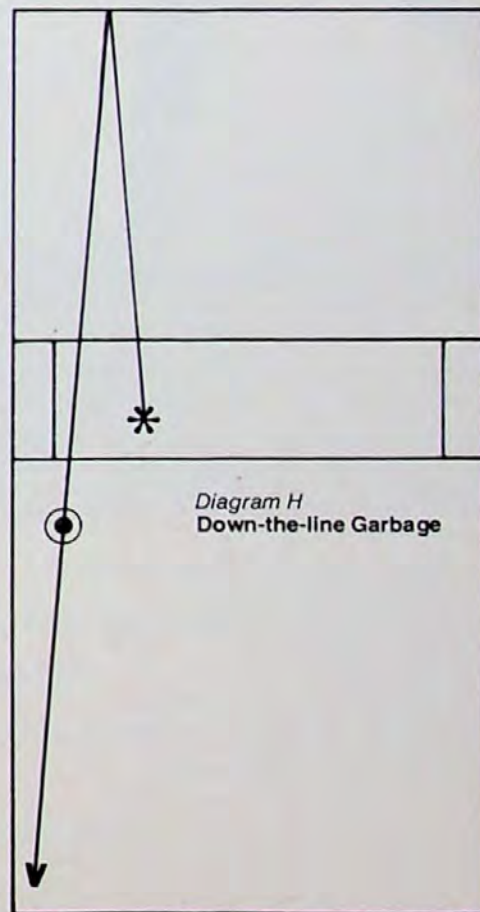
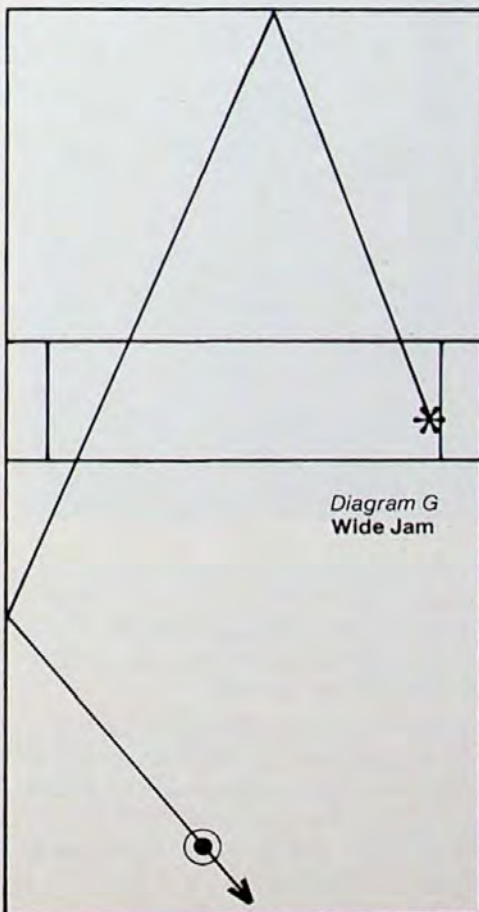
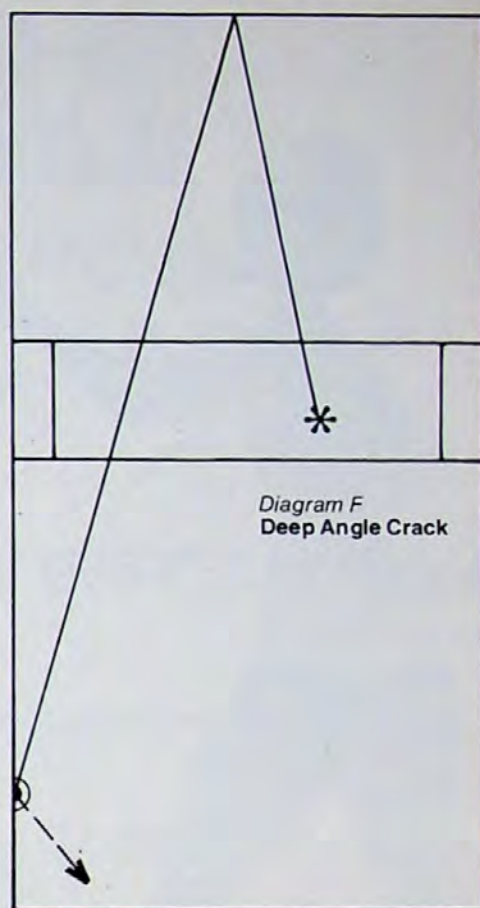
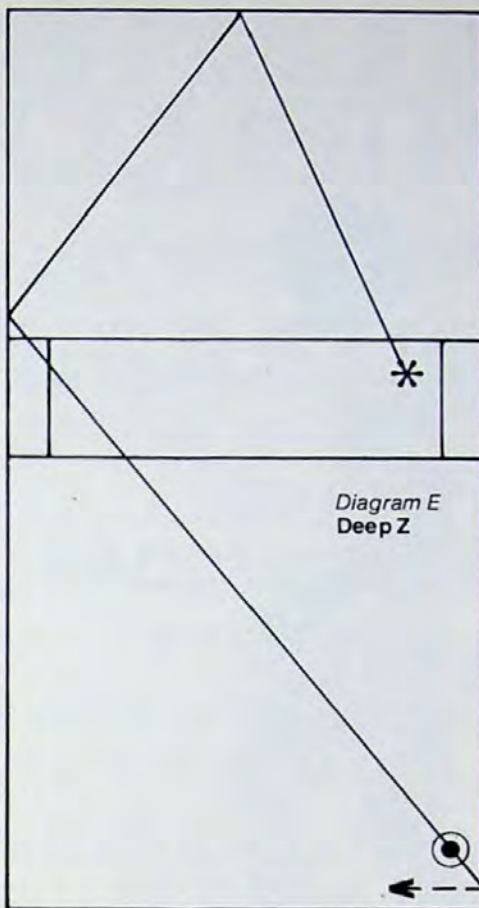
Yet a double fault (the dreaded fear on second serve) is really no different than a skipped kill shot attempt from a shoulder high backhand that the young pros win with week after week. How strange it is to see these go-for-broke players befriend the humble half-speed garbage serve time after time on the second serve!

In my opinion the serve is such an offensive weapon that percentage-wise it is worth it to go for an effective "*ace oriented*" serve on the second serve, even at the risk of a double fault. The great servers, the feared servers, will never play a match without double faults, often several of them on a good day. (I've seen Marty Hogan hit himself with the serve twice and double fault once all within the space of four service innings on the tour this season).

The reason for these pros double faulting is that they are going for great serves. In my first 10 years in racquetball (*I used to say proudly*) I double faulted *one* time. Although I won't say that I plan to hit more in the future, I will say that odds are that I will double fault much more, because my philosophy on the second serve has changed to become more aggressive.

I have found that by choosing this method of play, I average about five more aces or very weak returns (one shot rally enders) per game. Now that doesn't mean I'm going for the ultimate crack, one inch behind the short line — there are compromises, in the selection of second serves.

Here are the ones I use — safe, but aggressive second serves, yet certainly more than just getting the ball in play. All of these serves were detailed in the March issue, unless otherwise noted, and they are presented in approximate order of effectiveness.



A serve that works is a glorious thing – especially against Marty Hogan.



—Arthur Shay photo

1. *Deep Z*. Shallow Z is too risky as are most short zone serves.
2. *Deep Angle Crack*.
3. *Wide Jam*.
4. *Overhead Smash Z*. (Note explanation of Overhead in this article.)
5. *Down-the-line Garbage*.

Be careful here for the receiver trying to cut off the garbage, so be sure to keep it down-the-line. If the receiver moves up in anticipation of a garbage, then hit him serves 2, 3, or 4 above.

Certainly there are times during the course of a game or match when you will want to be totally safe on your second serve (20-20 is a good example). But for the most part use your second serve to *attack*, otherwise you have lost the advantage of your serve.

Using The Serve To Dictate The Rally

Many players execute their serves without giving proper consideration to the rally style that is likely to ensue. You should analyze your opponent's strengths and weaknesses; then interrelate that information with what shots are in your service arsenal.

Example: Let's assume you're a not-very-quick 35-year-old B player with a pretty fair ceiling game, stuck playing one of the young lions in a club tournament. Young players as a generic group like to flail. They prefer to contact the ball very low so they can rip it as hard as possible. Most young players detest slowly developed rallies and furthermore want you to put the ball in play with no delay. Naturally you will try to frustrate him in all these categories. Take your full allotted time before even considering putting the ball in play, while your opponent anxiously paws the hardwood in backcourt.

Then give him the style of serve that will most likely force him to the ceiling: 1) a well placed garbage; 2) soft, shoulder high Z; 3) Overhead Z; or 4) Side Wall Jam.

If your opponent does go to the ceiling, you have effectively neutralized his power and quickness advantage and forced him to play your game. If he should decide to shoot anyway, you'll probably end up with a setup at mid-court, which even you can put away.

What if the situation dictates a more aggressive serve style but you want to force him to hit to your forehand cross court? That calls for a serve that ends up slightly in front of his power zone. If your opponent is forced to contact the ball a little bit out in front (particularly if he is jammed slightly), 90 percent of the time the ball will be lifted cross court.

In this case use 1) *Short Angle Crack* to backhand; 2) *Jam and Fly* to backhand side; or 3) *Deep Z* to backhand (this one will almost always be pinched left side wall to front wall, so get your forehand cranked up for the rally-ending kill into the right corner) See the March issue for a description of these serves.

These are just a few isolated examples. In your service book you should begin noting which of your serves are followed by which returns and keep them in mind as you develop your serving repertoire. ●

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The Front Wall's Not as Big as It Looks

by Steve Strandemo

Look at the front wall of a racquetball court.

It's big — 20 feet high, 20 feet wide, 400 square feet to shoot at.

One of the attractions of racquetball as recreation is the quickness with which new players can acquire the basic skills. "*Instant mediocrity*," we call it. It sure looks easy, all right. Why give the clumsiest guy on the block a racquet and a ball and he could hit the front wall every time blindfolded.

Trouble is the guys who think they can play a good game with an attitude like

that will soon discover they might as well BE blindfolded, for all the success they have.

The first thing you need to realize, even before you pick up a racquet and a ball, is that most of the front wall is useless, or worse than that, because it compounds your weaknesses and penalizes you for being careless.

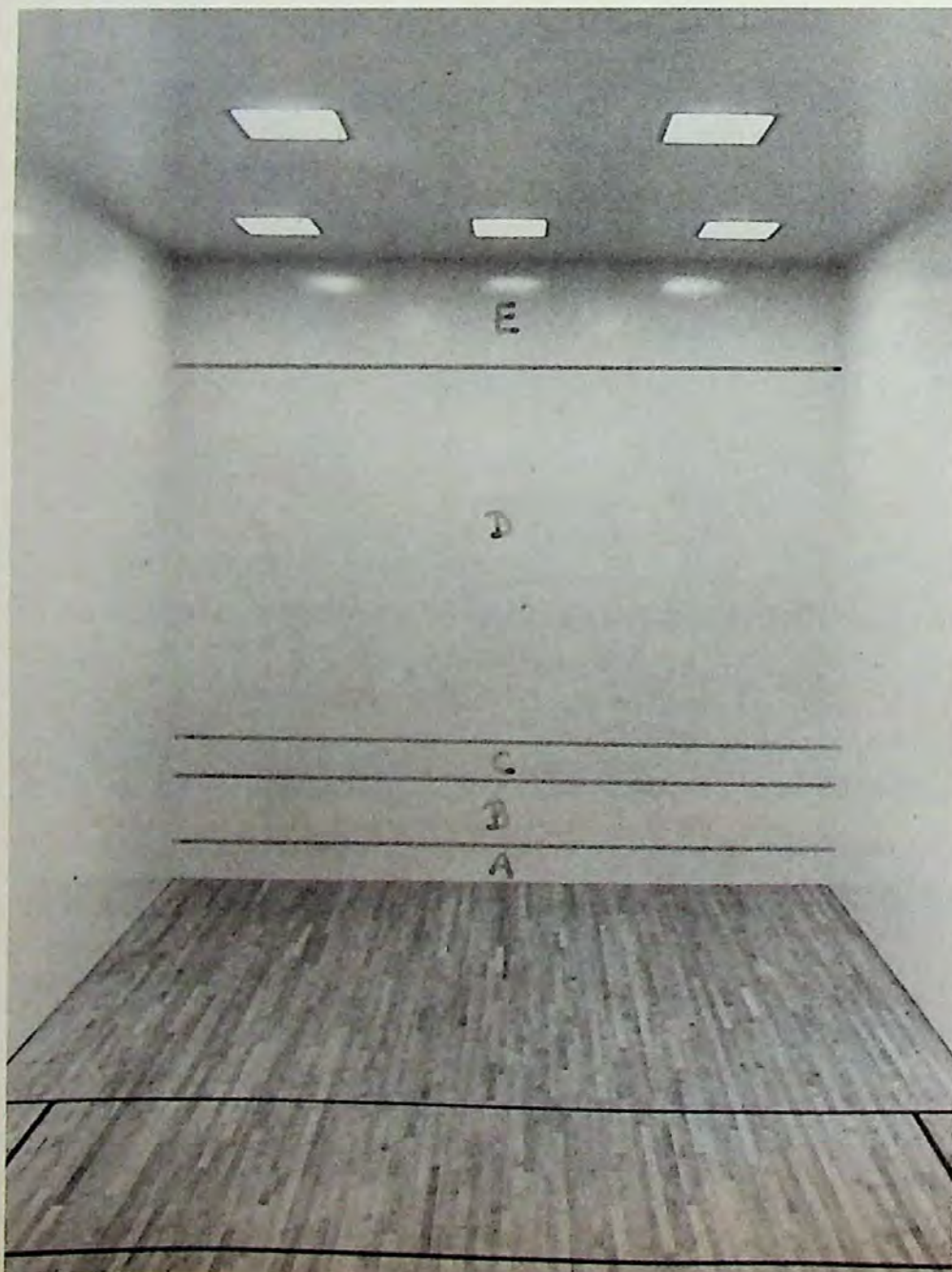
That's the way the ball bounces, literally.

A decent shot in racquetball will be a winner if it will bounce twice on the floor before it reaches the back wall. If it

bounces only once, then it will hit so low on the back wall that your opponent will have virtually no chance to get it.

In order for the ball to take two bounces, it must strike the front wall no higher than three feet. A surprising number of good players don't seem to realize this; they'll hit the front wall at four or four and a half feet, and they've got shots coming high off the back wall all day long.

Of course velocity matters; there are a couple of pros who blast the ball so hard that if they hit the front wall at the



The lines in this photo define several areas of the front wall with which all good racquetball players should be familiar. The areas have been drawn off assuming the ball has been hit with reasonable velocity. They are:

A. The area below a line drawn one foot above the floor. This is the "kill" area. Shots hitting in this area may be winners, and they all will be very difficult for your opponent to return.

B. This is all the area below a three foot line. All good shots hit the wall below this line. By aiming for this area players give themselves a good, big target, while maintaining the possibility of a shot into the "kill" area.

C. This area from three to four feet high is a "marginal" area, where your shot, depending on its velocity, may or may not get you into trouble. The chances of it caroming fatty off the back wall are increased.

D. "No man's land." It extends from four to 17 feet. Players hitting in this area should expect no mercy. The ball will rebound off the back wall and set up nicely for your opponent, either in the front court or the back court or center court. Wherever it is the opponent has a plum.

E. Another "marginal" area, though you'd never aim for it. This is the area in which a missed ceiling ball should hit, so that instead of flying straight to the back wall, it will shoot down to the floor and take a rainbow bounce into the back court. Of course the good ceiling ball hits the ceiling first, then the "E" area, and then the floor. If you hit "E" first, and then the ceiling, it'll look a little like a ceiling ball but won't be as good or accurate. But it is still better than hitting in no man's land.

one and a half foot level, the ball will bounce once on the floor and carom off the back wall for a setup. Generally, though, the things we'll discuss here are applicable to anyone hitting with reasonable velocity.

Look at the front wall again. Imagine a horizontal line drawn across it, one foot above the floor (Area A). A shot hitting the wall below that line will either be a winner, or be very, very hard to dig out.

Now draw a line at the three foot level (Area B). Anything hitting the wall in that one-to-three-foot area will come back as a good passing shot or force your opponent to execute a reaction shot, in the center court. This shot will come back low and hard off the front wall and bounce twice, the second bounce being deep in the backcourt, before hitting the back wall.

The next front wall line is at four feet (Area C). The three-to-four-foot area is a "marginal" area. The ball will come back too high off the front wall, so if it has any velocity at all, and your opponent waits for it to come off the back wall, it'll probably give him an easy shot, one that you wish you had.

From four to 17 feet on the front wall is "no man's land" (Area D). If you hit it anywhere in that area, at virtually any speed, it's going to take at least one big hop and maybe none at all, before it bounces off the back wall.

And of course your opponent is going to be waiting for it, possibly up in the front court, where he'll stride right into it and rip home the short winner. Or if it dies just off the back wall and hangs up for him in the back court, he'll take it there and blast it like a golfer hitting off the tee. Either way, you'd better duck. You might as well be playing blindfolded.

There is one more area on the front wall, above 18 feet (Area E). It is another "marginal" area, though you'd never try to hit it. That's the area you

want to hit in case you mis-hit a ceiling shot. If it hits above 18 feet, it'll bank up into the ceiling, and from there it will "look" like a ceiling ball. It'll shoot straight down and hit the floor and take a big rainbow bounce into the back court. That kind of shot is not as accurate as a true ceiling ball, but if you get in a bind and have to shoot high, it's much, much better than hitting it into "no man's land."

Obviously the front wall doesn't look so big now. But it needn't seem that small, either, and it certainly should not cause any player, novice on up, to begin to feel intimidated.

It's true that the one foot area is the most desirable place for your shot to strike the wall, and it does present a very small target. Of course it's nice if it happens, but the odds are stacked too greatly against "making" it happen. I would never tell a novice to think continually about going for the kill.

On the other hand I don't think it's asking too much to tell a player, even a novice, to concentrate on an area three times that size. Of course that means shooting for the wall below the three foot line. That's a pretty big area when you think about it; 60 square feet. Any player who says he can't focus on an area that big is only making mental excuses.

And that's all he has to think about: three feet. Shoot for three feet. If it goes lower, fine. But three feet gives you plenty of buffer from the floor, enough so you shouldn't even have to worry about "skipping" the ball.

There certainly is no reason to think about aiming for the kill. If you just keep "three feet" in your head, you may hit the wall two to two and a half feet high all day long — and it's going to put an incredible amount of pressure on your opponent. If you keep zipping shots past him, or low hard ones right at him, he's going to get rattled pretty soon and start making more than his usual amount of errors.

Wherever your racquet makes contact with the ball, you want to be thinking "Shoot down." Many players, when they hit a ball low, have the tendency to hit it in an upward trajectory, which naturally is not good. By thinking "down," they can hit it flat and bring it easily under the three foot line.

When you begin to find the range to that three foot area, several good things begin to happen.

First of all it gets you out of no man's land, where your scoring potential adds up to a fat zero and you can expect no mercy from your opponent.

Secondly there's always the chance you'll hit the kill area, without really trying.

Thirdly your opponent soon begins to feel the pressure. He has to make one good shot after another under difficult, reaction type circumstances. You are working on his lack of efficiency, maximizing his potential for error.

Fourth you may get lucky a time or two, and slip a weak sister past him that, if it had hit above four feet, would have set him up for a plum off the back wall. Luck can't help you in no man's land, but it surely can below three feet.

This is how important it is: If you are hitting the wall in no man's land, even the five-to-eight-foot area, and you're having a bad game even though you feel like you're moving well and hitting sharply, I would say that 99 per cent of the problem is that you're hitting the front wall too high.

Do this: Stand 30 feet from the front wall and hit shot after shot. Your goal should be to find how far up on the front wall you can hit and have the ball bounce twice on the floor before it hits the back wall. This accomplishes two things. It gets you to thinking, "Shoot Down," and it shows you how deep the balls that you hit will bounce off the front wall.

Don't even think about the side walls. Your first priority is to concentrate on the front wall and hit it low. That's the bull's-eye, and you should be able to hit it every time if you try. Once you get that down, you can start bringing all the side wall angles into play. ●

APRO Teaches . . . Lessons for Two Beginners

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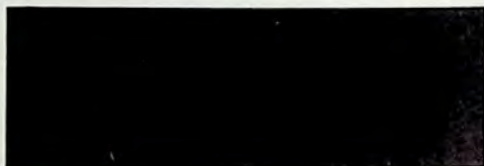
In this regular feature devoted to information from the American Professional Racquetball Organization APRO President Chuck Sheftel presents excerpts from the book he has written with *National Racquetball* Photographic Consultant Arthur Shay. The book's series of one hour lessons are for two beginners who want to learn on their own, for players who want to review their lessons or for teachers who want to pick up useful techniques for their classes.



Fourth Lesson

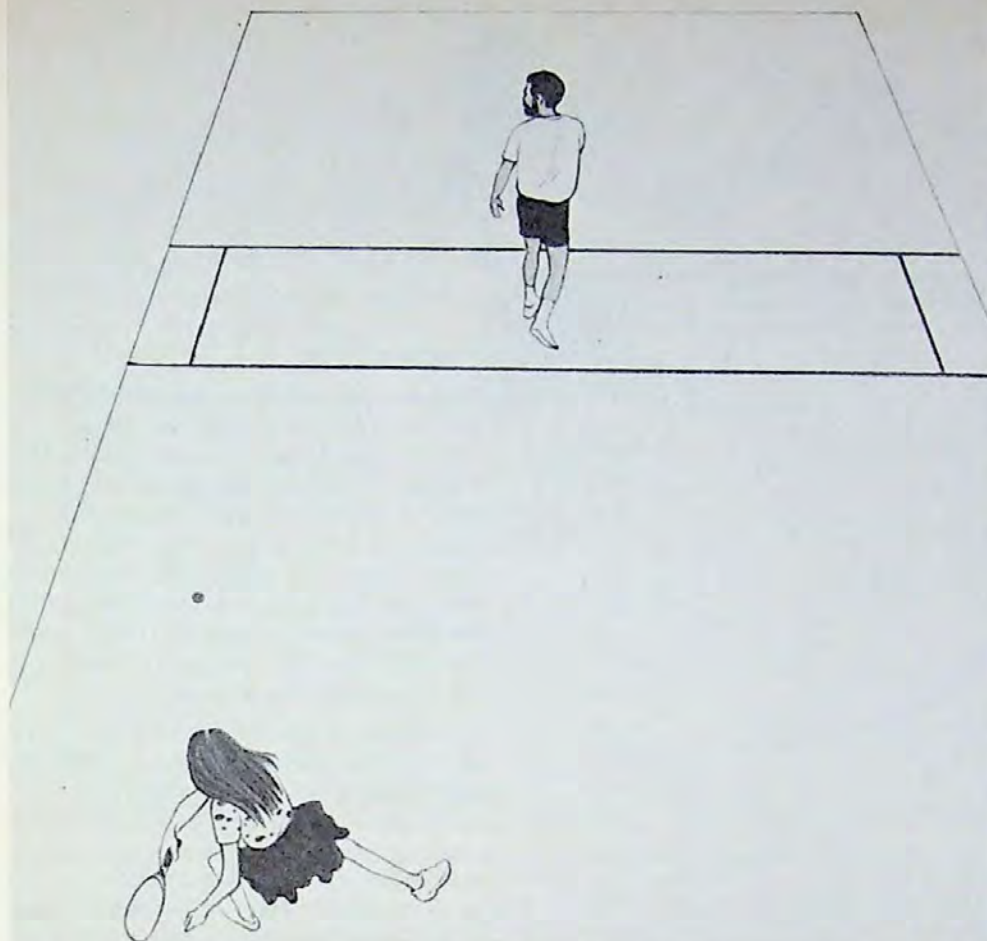
1. Briefly review the serves and returns (3 minutes)
2. Explanation of center court positioning (8 minutes)
3. Drills
 - a. Serve and return practice (10 minutes)
 - b. Touch and go (10 minutes)
 - c. Around the world (10 minutes)
4. Play (19 minutes)

Warm up before you get on the court, as usual. Now you might want to add a couple of minutes to your regimen. More situps are good for the waist and also to get the blood pumping. If your court is available early, start hitting a few slow shots, preparing your eyes and body for the learning hour. Do knee bends to loosen the long leg muscles. You're getting to be a racquetball player!



Reviewing the serves and returns

Start with the lob and after a few series of lobs and returns by your partner, go back to the fun of predicting where you intend to serve. The fun might turn into embarrassment, but the idea of the drill is to teach you to concentrate on accuracy, thereby improving your control and disproving the notion that racquetball is a random type game. Your strokes should no longer be random and uncoordinated; they should be purposeful, landing within a six foot circle of your target. Brumfield told me recently "On some shots I must hit within two inches of my aiming point or my opponent will have an easy setup for a kill." No one is asking you to try for two inch accuracy, but six feet isn't out of the question.



Receiving a serve to the backhand side, the woman has stepped off with the wrong (left) foot first. This will get her to the ball with her body facing the front wall not the side wall. Remember, racquetball is a sideways game. Hitting the ball from an "open" (facing front wall) position results in loss of almost all of the body's power except a portion of arm power.

Explanation of center court positioning

One of the areas of controversy for racquetball pros is center court positioning. This is a defensive maneuver involving an imaginary circle about six feet in diameter. This circle's outer forward edge starts a foot past the short line in center court. This imaginary circle has been called a "defensive headquarters." (A big "X" made of tape, placed four feet back of the short line, can be used as "home base" for center court position practice.) It is the position to which the racquetball player runs after he or she serves or during a long volley. Mathematically it's the area that gives the easiest access to all shots returned from the serve. From the center court position, you have the best chance of racing off in whatever direction your opponent's shot demands.

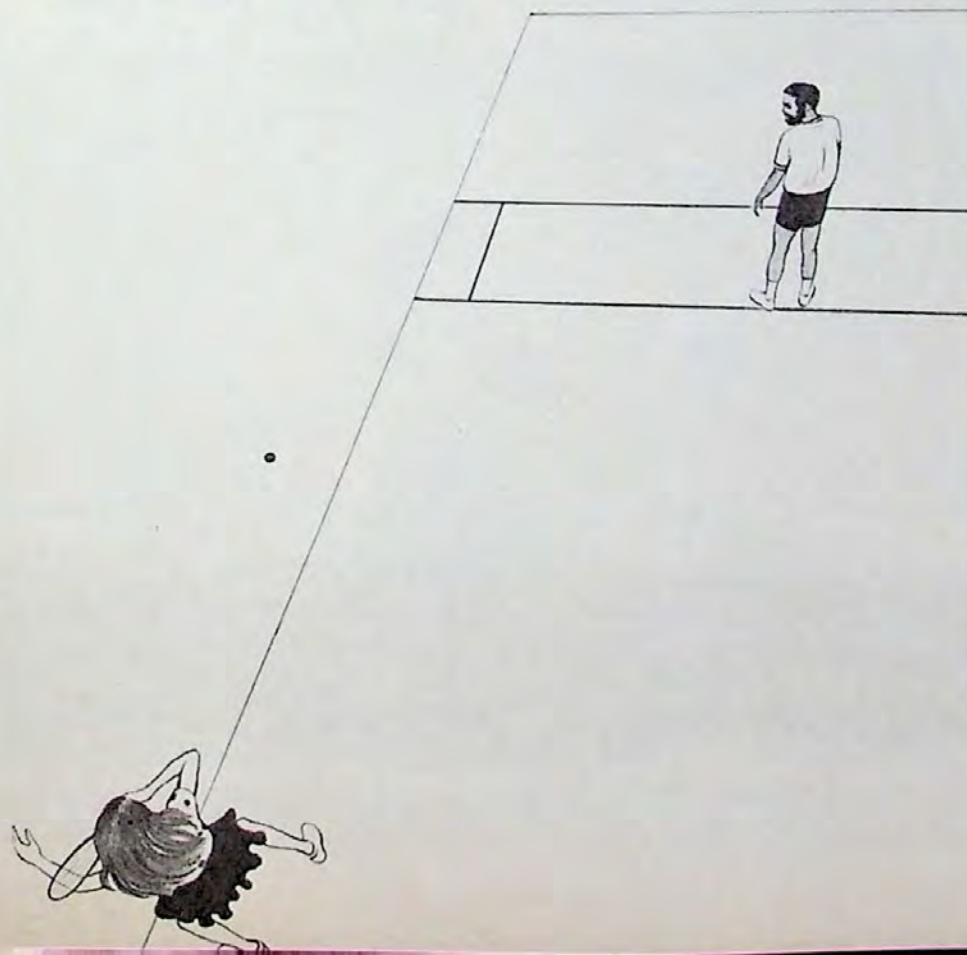
During the past three years the ball used in racquetball has become about 20 percent faster. This has, some players feel, moved that invisible circle back somewhat, about four feet back. Faster players have experimented with this with some success.

Drills

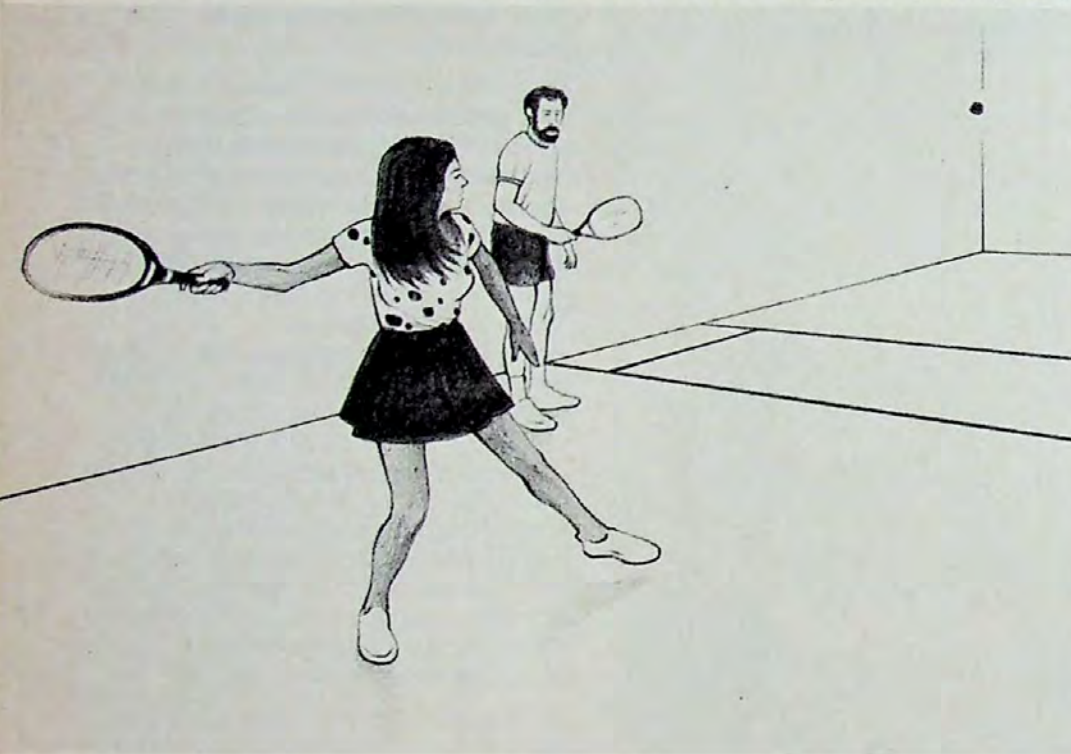
Serve and return practice

Now, instead of announcing your serve's target, resolve in your mind where you want to hit and carry out your intention. Alternate lobs and drives — left and right, high and low. Try to deceive your opponent. If he or she appears to be playing too close to the short line, use a hard drive to one side or the other. Keep your volleys going. Remember to get back to your center court position when on defense.

Watching opponent player gets an instant feeling for where he must be for his next shot. Note woman's feet are facing side wall properly, but she is a bit too close to the wall.



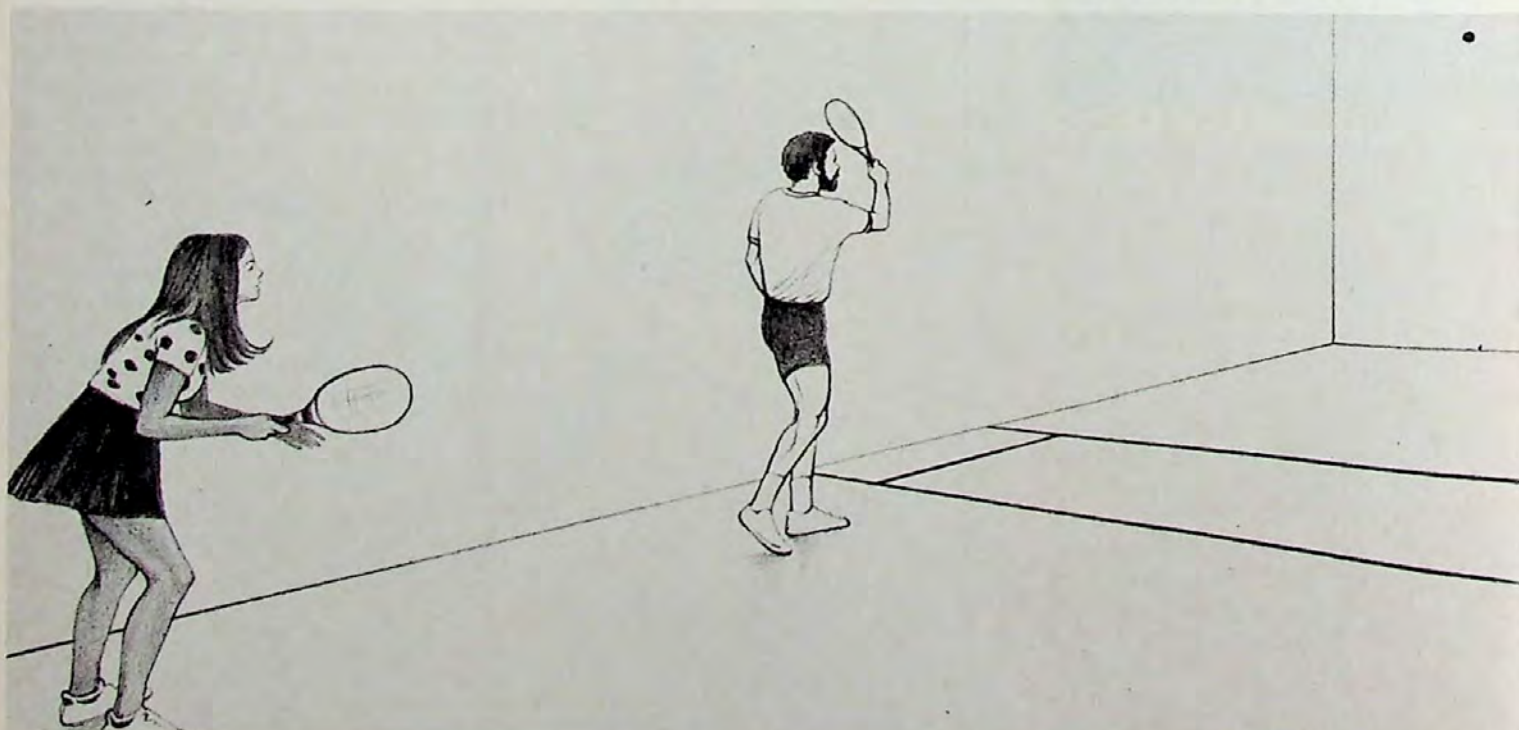
The transfer of weight from the back of the body to the front seems well organized here, but again, the racquet should be nearly vertical at this position with the handle pointing to the floor. As it's held now the chances are that the ball will go into the ceiling wildly.



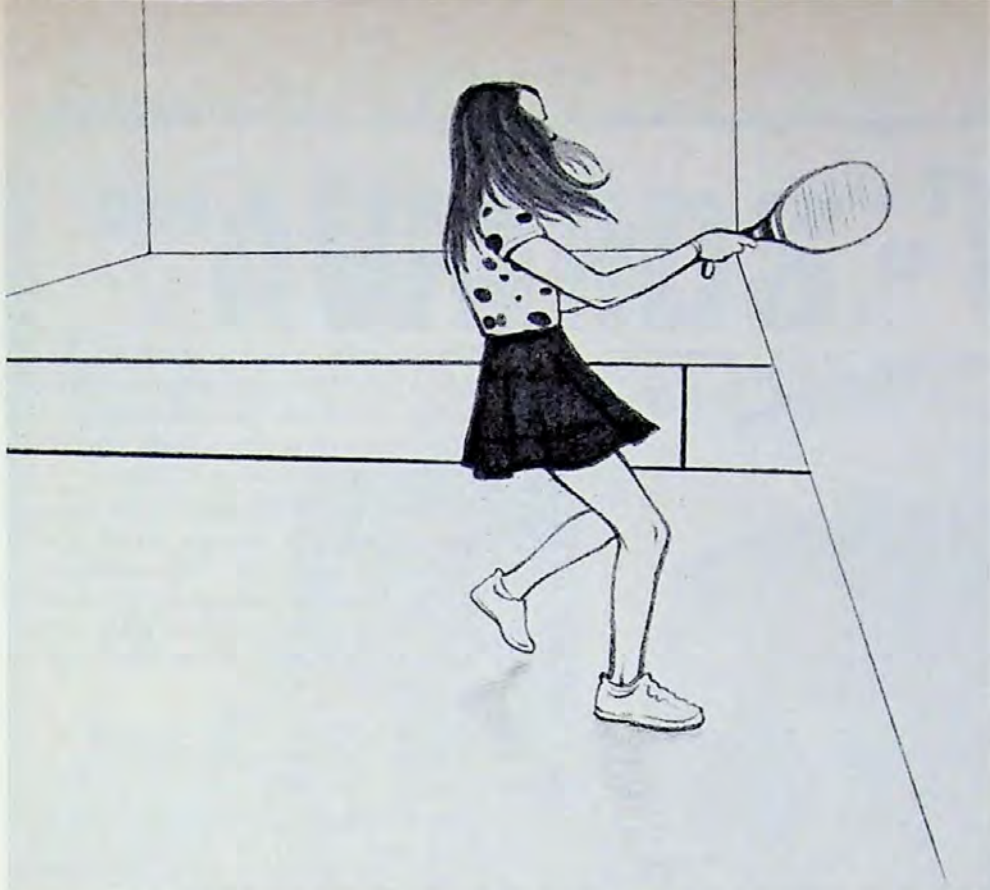
Touch and go

This is a game that can be played solo, with one player or with two other players. Start the ball moving by hitting it against the front wall or having your partner serve it to you, preferably slowly, in a lob at first. You then must run to one of the side walls and touch it with your racquet, then pursue and hit the ball. In other words you must touch the wall with your racquet before you are allowed to hit the ball.

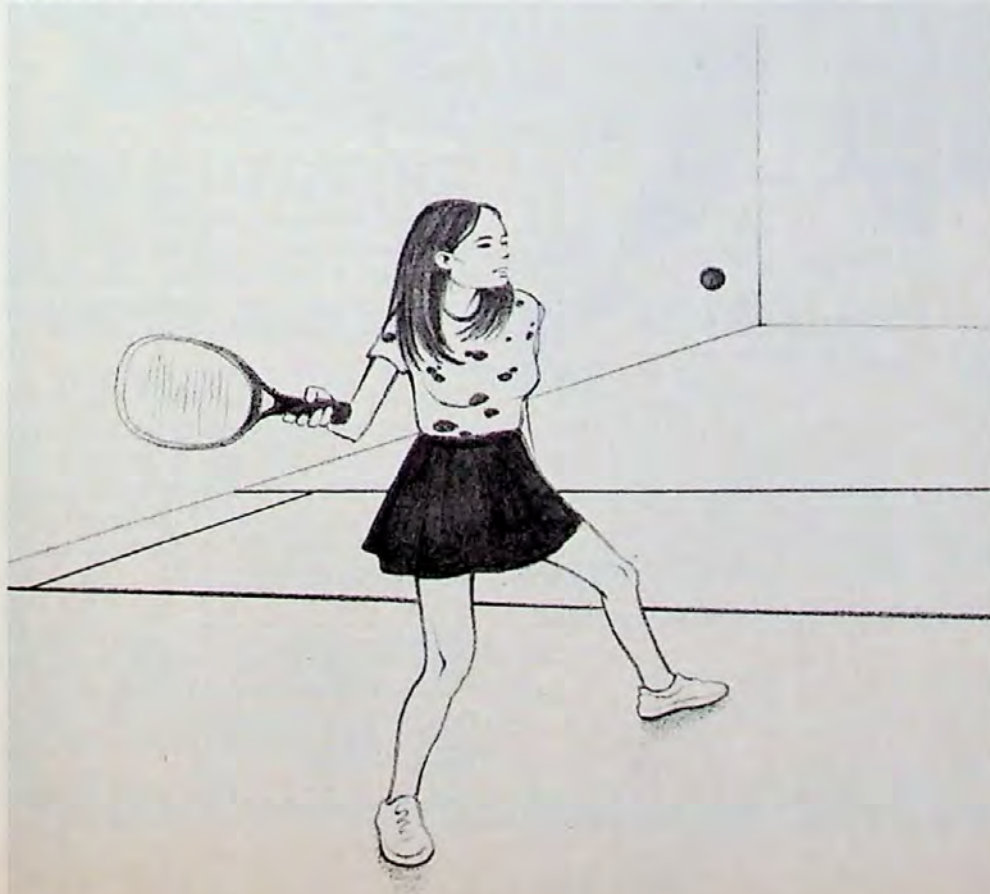
This exercise teaches you that there's usually more setup time than you think, and it helps you understand that racquetball is a game of motion. One can't and shouldn't stand in one spot and reach out for balls in the neighborhood. The whole court must be your neighborhood, and you should learn to run and play in that neighborhood. Knowing you have a chore to do — touching the wall — before you can hit the ball should force you to use your inherent speed!



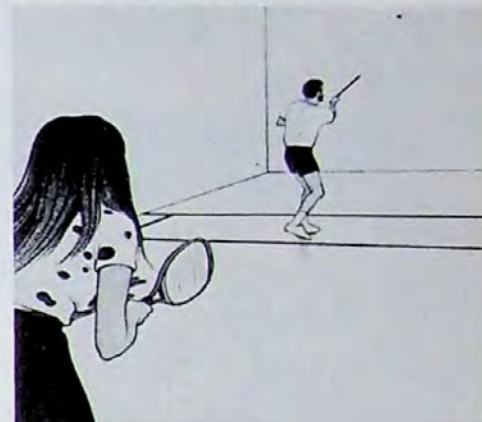
When two people practice together, one can hit to the area in which the other needs practice. In this case a forehand stroke to the woman's forehand.



The touch and go drill is one of the best racquetball practice sequences, because it gets the body moving within a planned framework. The idea is to stand in center court, a few feet behind the short line and hit the ball to the wall. The player then runs to the side wall, touches the wall with her racquet, then races to catch up with the ball if possible. If the student isn't yet advanced enough to keep the ball up and in play, the sequence should be: hit the ball, run to the wall, then run back to center court position. Center court position is a good defensive position, an invisible circle about six feet in diameter that starts a couple of feet back from the short line. After almost every shot it's a good "headquarters" position for the player to take while waiting for her opponent's next shot. Touch and go, of course, should also include running to the backhand side and touching the backhand side wall.



A lob serve to the forehand side.



Around the world

Line up with your partner (or if you're practicing in a larger group, with the others) as if at a free throw line on a basketball court. Do this about halfway back between the short line and the back wall. The first person on line lobs the ball to the front wall. The last person on line must run from his or her position "around the world" — that is, around the entire group — and somehow get to the ball and return it. Don't attempt to volley on this one.

Play

By now you should be expert at determining what parts of your game need hard work. Are you lobbing too far from the side walls, giving your opponents easy shots to return? Does your drive serve go into the floor for a skip (floor first) as often as it hits the wall first? Are you not using your backhand? With your areas of weakness in mind approach the play period constructively, using the shots you're most anxious to improve.

Progress comes quicker in racquetball than in most other sports, and it's possible to have fun in racquetball even if you play poorly and miss many shots, but racquetball is much more fun when you play well, adding a feeling of achievement to the pleasant glow that comes from a good workout. ●

Ask an Expert . . .

by Dan Bertolucci

Screen Serves



The referee would call screen serve in this situation because Ben Koltun didn't have a clear enough view of the ball to return Marty Hogan's serve.

People often ask just what a screen serve is and how and when it should be called. I've come across heated arguments over the screen serve both as a player and as a referee.

Screens are discussed in the section under Defective Serves (Rule 4.3) in the USRA rulebook. The rulebook states "*Screen balls pass too close to the server or the server's partner and obstruct the view of the returning side.*"

This judgement must be made by the referee, not the individuals who are playing. For instance a server might attempt to call a screen serve because he doesn't want the receiver to take advantage of a setup. Or the receiver might call a screen serve because he missed the chance to take advantage of a setup.

A referee makes his or her judgement about a screen serve based on the flow of action and the relative position of each player to the ball.

Here are two examples of how a referee judges whether or not to call a screen serve:

Jim hits a drive serve to Mary's backhand, going for the crack just behind the short service line. Jim casually stands to the left of center, closer to the side wall than usual. If Jim fails to move out of the path of the ball, the referee calls a screen serve. However, if upon serving, Jim moves toward center court or in the center of the service zone, then no screen results.

Jane, a right handed player, serves to the right side of the court and chooses to stand near the right side wall. As in Jim's case if Jane moves back toward center court and out of the path of the ball as it rebounds off the front wall, there is no screen called. ●

Dan Bertolucci, associate coordinator of the USRA, and frequent referee at professional matches, will answer your questions about rules if you write him at the USRA, 4101 Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076.

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Racquetball Brings Them Back to the

New Haven Is Seething And Stirring With Happenings

To the Editor:

Last June I drove up the Connecticut Turnpike to New Haven from my home in Rowayton. My knowledge of the city was quite sketchy and shallow to say the least. I knew Yale was there (26 years before, as a junior at Williams College, I had won the New England Intercollegiate Tennis Singles title on the Payne Whitney courts). I was also aware it was renowned for its fine medical facilities, had a prestigious art museum, an excellent dramatics theater and was located on Long Island Sound. I hate to admit it, but that was just about the extent of my familiarity with this "Gateway City To New England."

The reason for my trip a few months ago was to have a job interview with Ed Fusco, a Connecticut builder/developer of some repute. He and a group of investors were giving serious consideration to constructing a racquetball club in the heart of midtown New Haven.

When I left his office around 6 p.m., I had a somewhat uneasy feeling. Ambling toward the garage I suddenly knew why. Where in hell was everybody? The streets were as empty as a western movie's ghost town! (I half expected to see tumbleweed come slithering around the corner at Temple and Crown Streets).

Other investors had previously explored the possibilities of installing a recreational club in the center of the city, but had ultimately been discouraged by the mass exodus phenomenon that seems to take place each evening after the work day. The favorite expression was to the effect that people were afraid to come downtown in the evenings. Plus, "there really isn't much to do."

With some massive apprehensions I accepted the job as director of what eventually was to be called the Downtown Racquet Club. (Originally some clever individual had named the proposed facilities the Racquetballs Club, but I thought another name would be more appropriate and prudent.)

While construction commenced in August on the top floor of the Medical Center's Municipal Garage between George and Frontage Streets, I braced myself for the worst. Prior to

putting together a promotional program I talked (or listened) to people from City Planning and Redevelopment. Their optimism and enthusiasm for the project combined with a genuine, contagious faith in the future of the city were reassuring. The creative guys at that marvelous advertising agency, Langelier Mason, never doubted for a moment that we "would have several hundred members signed up before we opened the club."

We started our membership drive on Oct. 1 and by the first of November over 1,400 (!) persons had joined the Downtown Racquet Club. I would like to believe it was the creativity and astute continuity of our media plan, but, with apologies to my ego and peers, that would be a fallacious assumption. The truth of the matter is that there has been a long overdue, crying need for such a sports facility at a nominal cost.

There is also another important factor. Things are truly beginning to happen downtown. There is a tangible air of excitement with new buildings being erected, restaurants opening up and becoming successful, talk about renovating the shameful, shabby railroad terminal section, developing the shoreline area, and there's a new sense of pride emanating from not just the civic leaders but the citizens themselves.

If there is any doubt about the reality of this optimistic outlook toward the future, get this. The Downtown Racquet Club, the racquetball complex that was snubbed by many sophisticated financiers because of its location in basically a daytime town, opened its doors on Nov. 25 with 1,600 members. At least 35 percent of the club enrollment are women. (Afraid? Nothing to do? Baloney!)

In just a few short months I have grown very fond of New Haven. I am caught up with its almost frontier spirit. The town is seething and stirring with excitement and happenings.

If there are any Doubting Thomases or pessimists who do not agree, just remind them about the smashing success story of the Downtown Racquet Club. Sure, racquetball's time has come, but so has New Haven's!

—Dick Squires
Director
New Haven

by Dick Squires

The "Letter To The Editor," which was published in both major newspapers in New Haven, (we're reprinting the letter from *The New Haven Register*), tells only a partial story. Here is the rest.

Six weeks after the Downtown Racquet Club opened we shut off the membership at 2,000. We presently have a growing waiting list of close to 400. We plan to expand the facilities by adding another ten courts, so by next fall we will have a total of 20.

Surely there are other cities across America that could use and would welcome a racquetball complex located right in the heart of their downtown district. By putting up a first class club we have all but preempted future competition. By creating a nominal price structure the Average Joe and Jill can afford it (\$50 to join, \$7-9 per hour to play). I am not that confident that we would have experienced such startling success if we had gone the so-called "Club" route (\$350 to join, then a set monthly dues rate). You have to know your market.

Since the beginning of commercial racquetball clubs — with a few exceptions — courts have invariably been erected in small, suburban communities. This was probably the most logical way to go at the time. But times change. The game is far better known now. Many cities could use a racquetball facility as one method of helping to revitalize the downtown area. The cooperation and enthusiasm we received from the civic leaders and city planners were both helpful and heartening. The playing times we were originally worried about (evenings and weekends) are literally sold out one week in advance. So are lunch hours. Ladies programs and students classes in the mornings and mid-afternoons will fill out the court capacity.

Another innovative and precedent setting aspect of the Downtown Racquet Club is that it is located atop a four story New Haven Municipal

Developers of the Downtown Racquet Club believed in the future of the city when they built in the heart of New Haven, CT. Their faith has paid off in a prospering facility.



garage. It is a marvelous use of otherwise dead air space. Under an agreement between the city and us (the builder) the Parking Authority owns and operates the public garage. The racquetball facility on the top floor is privately owned and is, therefore, tax producing. Needless to say there are no problems of parking at the Club!

A custom engineered Butler building provides a 124 foot clear span design over the area originally constructed for four indoor tennis courts — until some astute accountants did a pro forma projection of income versus expenses. Twenty racquetball courts in the same space looked immensely more appealing!

A project such as New Haven's Downtown Racquet Club illustrates

how government and private enterprise can work together to provide much needed public recreational facilities that do not put a strain on local budgets. Everybody wins — the cities, the taxpayers, the investors in the Club, the members, and, of course, the great sport of racquetball.

While *location* is certainly a key element to consider in any commercial real estate venture, there are other ingredients that comprise a formula for eventual success. A racquetball club should be designed and built with the idea of providing its members with an attractive, pleasant "home away from home." The few dollars saved in "cutting corners" in the beginning will inevitably be regretted when a competitor opens up a "better mousetrap" right down the street.

Effective, thoughtful promotion tailored for a specific area is another vital factor. In addition a well-managed club and bright, enthusiastic personnel can combine to create a profitable operation no matter where the facility is sited.

Looking back I can now unequivocally state that probably the paramount reason for the optimistic financial position of the Downtown Racquet Club today is due directly to its unique central-city location — ironically the one negative aspect we all initially feared when the club was being contemplated. ●

The Downtown Racquet Club is the site of the Robert W. Kendler Racquetball Classic April 25-29, a stop on the Colgate Pro-Am Tour co-sponsored by Seamco/Leach.

New Court Club Listings

Colonial Racquetball Club
Route 222
Sinking Spring, PA 19608

The Corner Shot Racquetball/Handball Club
43 Jefferson Blvd.
Warwick, RI 02889

The Court House
10 Leighton Place
Mahwah, NJ 07430

The Courthouse
Courthouse Circle
Jackson, MS 39208

Danbury Racquetball Club
6 Stony Hill
Bethel, CT 06801

Darrow Road Racquetball Club
5133 Darrow Rd.
Hudson, OH 44236

The Fighting Creek Club
Route 7
Redding, CT 06875

The Front Wall
140 Derby Downs Rd.
Newark, OH 43055

Great Bay Racquet Center
Route 108 - Exeter Rd.
Newmarket, NH 03857

Oakridge Athletic Club
5434 Thornwood Dr.
San Jose, CA 95123

Olympic Racquetball & Health Club
Randolph Park West
Randolph, NJ 07801

Pelham Racquetball & Health Club
6 Pelham Pkwy.
Pelham Manor, NY 10803

The Perfect Racquet
405 Camino del Rio So.
San Diego, CA 92108

Racquetball Courts of Appeal
200 Grand Ave.
Englewood, NJ 07631

Racquetball International
342 Hamburg Turnpike
Wayne, NJ 07470

Racquetball Plus of Garfield
83 River Dr.
Garfield, NJ 07026

Ricochet Racquetball Club
219 St. Nicholas Ave.
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

St. Clair Courts
1337 McLaughlin Run Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15241

Santa Barbara Racquetball Club
520 Castillo St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Sarasota Racquetball Club
2170 Robinhood St.
Sarasota, FL 33579

Spaulding Racquetball Clubs
4010 Sterling
Independence, MO 64054
5890 Point West Dr.
Houston, TX 77036
725 River Rd.
Edgewater, NJ 07020
500 New Circle Rd. N.W.
Lexington, KY 40505

Sports Illustrated Court Clubs
Flint 2
5219 W. Pierson Rd.
Flint, MI 48504
Charlotte
5501-77 Executive Park
Charlotte, NC 28210

Stratford Racquetball Club
140 Watson Blvd.
Stratford, CT 06597

Supreme Court
1838 Perryville Rd.
Rockford, IL 61112

Tampa Bay Court House
7815 N. Dale Mabry
Tampa, FL 33614

Unique Racquetball and Health Clubs, Inc.
2229 Nesconset-Port
Jefferson Hwy.
Lake Grove, NY 11755
1191 Portion Rd.
Farmingville, NY 11738
3098 Long Beach Rd.
Oceanside, NY 11572
530 Hicksville Rd.
Bethpage, NY 11714

West Side Racquet Club
7160 State Ave.
Kansas City, KS 66112 ● ● ●

American Airlines is showing a racquetball action film before its in flight movies . . . Leach Industries of San Diego, manufacturer of racquetball equipment, has announced the appointment of Bob Faught as national sales manager . . . Spaulding Racquetball Clubs, Inc. have acquired the Westport Racquet Club, which brings to seven the number of Spaulding Clubs in the St. Louis area . . . Bob Minihane and Associates of Newton, MA, is the northeast representative group for Ektelon, San Diego-based manufacturer of racquetball racquets and accessory equipment . . . Court Management, Inc., operators and franchisers of the Circuit Courts racquetball clubs, have moved into their new corporate offices and training center in Miamisburg, OH . . . USRA/NRC National Commissioner Joe Ardito has been elected to the board of directors of the Youth Hall of Fame, a national organization of high school coaches that provides financial self help programs to schools . . . Wallbangers, Inc. has added a ninth facility — this one in Mountain View, CA — to its chain of western clubs . . . Arthur Ascoli



is new director of sales and marketing for Vittert Sports, Ashland, OH. ●



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Gourmet Eating that's Good for You

by Judith Neisser

According to health food mavin, Gayelord Hauser, "you are what you eat." And more and more it appears that people are abiding by this axiom with an almost religious fervor.

There is no question that racquetball players are among those people who are extremely conscious of the importance of healthy eating habits. But since they are also people who like to dine in style, they are unwilling to settle for the colorless recipes more often than not associated with health food and proper eating.

For this reason, the *National Racquetball* food department has designed this very healthy but delicious gourmet menu, incorporating natural foods in nutritious yet appetizing recipes.

In creating this menu we have focused on those foods which are rich in vitamins and nutrients. For example the herb appetizer dip contains, among other things, a large quantity of yogurt. This adaptable nutritious milk product serves as an aid to digestion and to the production and absorption of essential vitamins (the B group).

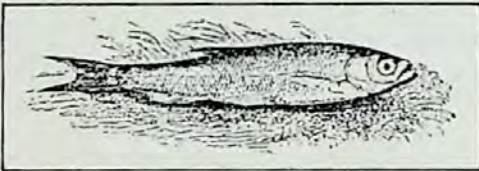
Our main course of fresh fish and vegetables en papillote is an excellent source of protein, iodine, phosphorous, the B vitamins and vitamins A and C. We cannot overemphasize the importance of proper fish cookery. *Do not overcook.* Explains well known Nutritionist Adelle Davis in *Let's Cook It Right*: "Since fish are active and the B vitamins are necessary for energy production, their flesh is a rich source of these vitamins provided the juices are not lost before or during cooking. . . . If the fish is properly cooked, these juices are held in and the flavor and deliciousness are held in." The vegetables steamed along with the fish are served with their natural juices in order to retain the greatest degree of vitamin potency. The tiny new potatoes accompanying the fish are baked in their jackets to most efficiently preserve the valuable water soluble C vitamins contained within the potato skins.

Herb Appetizer Dip

(Serve with whole wheat melba toast or wedges of pita bread)

Makes 1 cup

1 teaspoon caraway seeds
1 tablespoon chopped green onions
1/3 cup smooth cottage cheese (smooth cheese in blender or food processor)
1/2 teaspoon basil leaves, crushed
2/3 cup plain yogurt
Pour boiling water over caraway seeds and let stand 5 minutes, then drain. Place cottage cheese in a bowl and blend in the remaining ingredients except the yogurt and mix well. Fold in the yogurt. Cover and chill.



Whole Fish and Vegetables en Papillote

Serves 6 to 8

1 whole fish, sea bass or snapper (4 pounds), head and tail intact
4 cups diced vegetables (onions, carrots, celery)
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, dried dill
4 to 6 tablespoons white wine (dry)

Optional: Before cooking, lightly rub fish with unsalted butter or a little oil

Have fish market scale, gut and remove gills from the fish. Rinse the fish well and dry immediately with paper towels. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Butter or oil one side of an aluminum foil sheet (long enough and wide enough to completely enclose the fish in a package) and place the fish in the center of the sheet. Sprinkle the fish with fresh lemon juice, lightly season with dill and strew the vegetables along the top of the fish. Gently lift up borders of the foil and add wine. Close the foil so that it forms a loosefitting, airtight package, pinching the edges together tightly. Bake the fish in a 450 degree oven for 25 to 35 minutes or until done. A thick fish will take longer to cook than a thin, flattish one, so after 25 minutes, check for doneness by poking the fish with your finger or the flat part of the blade of a blunt knife. The fish is done when it feels firm to touch (not "undercooked squishy" or "overcooked hard"). Contrary to popular belief a fish is OVERCOOKED when the flesh flakes.

Remove the package to a heated serving platter. Slit open the foil at the table. Slice the fish and serve with the surrounding vegetables and cooking juices.

The fish is especially good when served with tiny new potatoes which have been buttered and baked in their jackets in a 400 degree oven for 20 to 30 minutes. Just before serving sprinkle potatoes with finely chopped fresh parsley.

Avocado Tomato Salad

Serves 6

1 small to medium size head of lettuce
2 medium tomatoes
2 medium avocados
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/2 cup alfalfa sprouts

Cut the tomatoes in half and then in eighths. Peel the avocados, remove the seeds, and slice lengthwise. Moisten the avocado slices with a little lemon juice to prevent them from darkening. Arrange alternate slices of avocado and tomato on individual salad plates which have been lined with the shredded lettuce. Top each plate with a generous sprinkling of alfalfa sprouts. Serve with vinaigrette dressing.

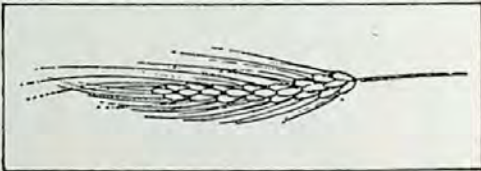
Vinaigrette Dressing

Makes 1 cup (enough for the above salad with some left over)

3/4 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground pepper

optional: If a less tart dressing is preferred, add honey or raw sugar to taste

Blend all of the ingredients in a bottle or jar. Cover and shake well. Chill.



Wheat Germ Oatmeal Crisps

Variation on a Recipe by Abby Mandel

Makes 36 squares

6 tablespoons unsalted butter (room temperature)
3/4 cup light or dark brown sugar, firmly packed
2 teaspoons vanilla
1-1/2 cups rolled oats (slightly crushed with a rolling pin or in the food processor)
1/4 cup wheat germ
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup whole wheat pastry flour

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter an 8x8x2 cake pan. Cream butter, sugar and vanilla with a wooden spoon or an electric mixer on low speed. Add the remaining ingredients and again mix with a wooden spoon or an electric mixer on low speed.

Pat dough in the prepared pan and bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Watch carefully to avoid burning. When done, remove from the oven. Let cool for a few minutes, then carefully cut into squares. Cool completely and remove from the pan.

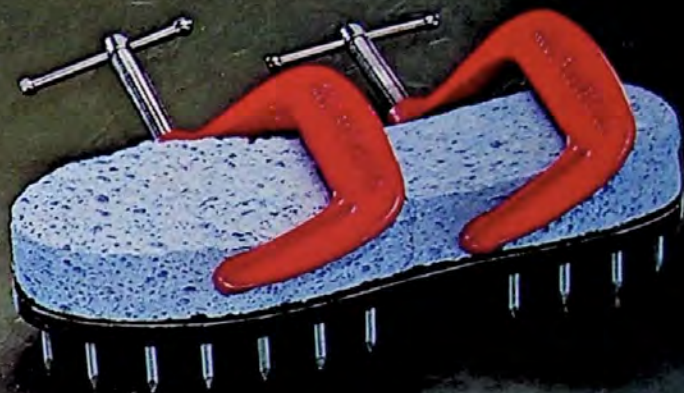
If we built all these features into one All Court shoe...

Also included in this menu is a salad of fresh fruits (avocados and tomatoes), lettuce and alfalfa sprouts. Insists Miss Davis: "A raw vegetable or salad of raw fruits or vegetables should be served at almost every lunch and dinner throughout the entire year. Raw foods contribute vitamins, minerals, and bulk, and are particularly important as sources of vitamin C."

Last but not least, our dessert, crunchy wheat germ oatmeal crisps, provides not only a nirvana-like taste experience but also some extremely important B vitamins, protein, iron and vitamin E.

In creating this menu we have not shied away from butter. Although butter and its high cholesterol content has been the subject of much controversy, many scientists feel that this natural food is an important addition to almost every diet. Says Biochemist Richard Passwater in *Super-Nutrition Megavitamins Revolution*: "... the low cholesterol diets do not prevent heart disease and ... the high cholesterol diets do not cause heart disease. Indeed many Americans are doing themselves far more harm than good by drastically cutting down on their intake of butter, whole milk and eggs."

These well-tested recipes should please even the most discriminating palates. Here's to healthy eating and bon appetit! ●



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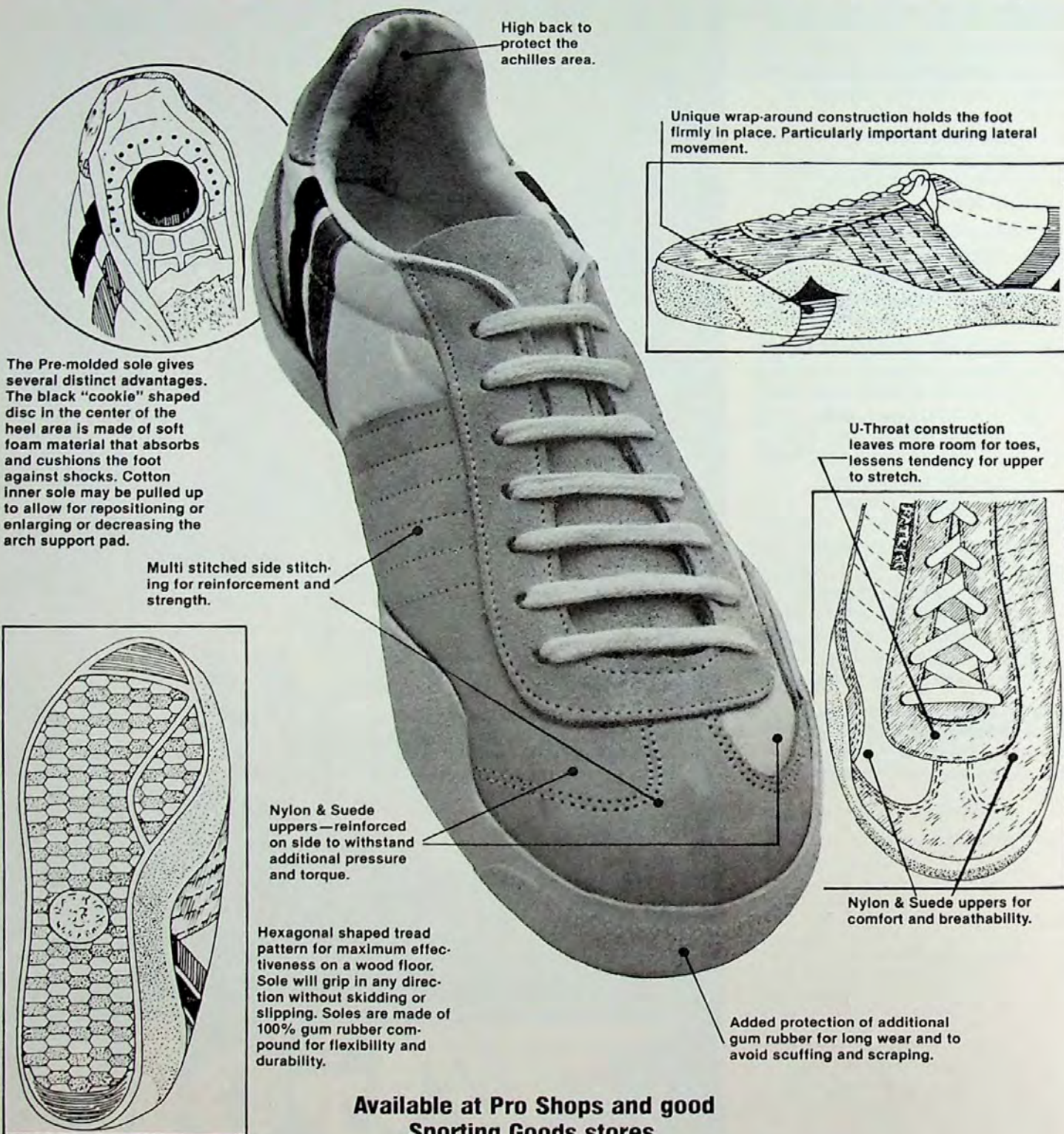
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Ron Botchan

"...more control than any other racquet I've used."
Bill Thurman

"The XC lets me press the right button even under pressure. I get set up and the racquet does the rest — reverse pinch, rollout, ace, Z."
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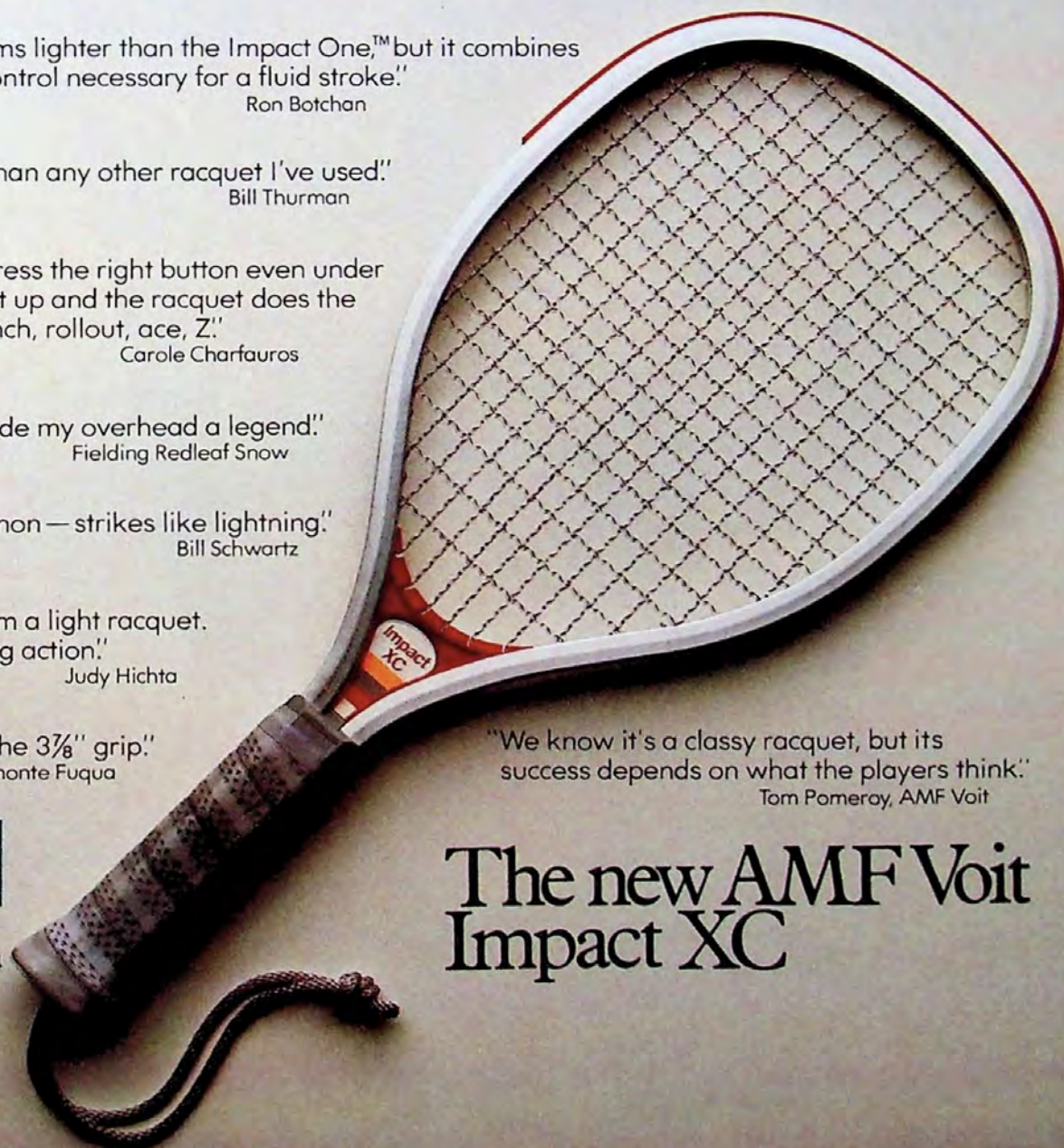
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"We know it's a classy racquet, but its success depends on what the players think."
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Women In Racquetball



Carol Brusslan

The Only Woman

"I can honestly say I was surprised to discover I was the only woman," says Jane Goodsill, whose distinction is obvious in this group photo taken at the USRA's first state chairmen convention in Las Vegas last January.

"Socially I'm aware of my gender," says the attractive brunette, who's 26. "I don't give it a thought in a business situation."

Racquetball has been Jane's business since she accepted a job as manager of the Courthouse Racquetball Club, Hawaii's first, opening in Kaneohe, a mountain pass away from Honolulu. At about the same time she moved up from secretary-treasurer to co-chairperson (with Randy Lau) of USRA's Hawaiian association.

And though there are women heading USRA organizations in two other states, Jane was the only woman delegate at the convention. Once she realized it, Jane decided that being the only woman — along with representing the country's most

glamorous state — might have been why it was so easy for her to meet other chairmen.

That was important to Jane because "being new at my USRA job I have a great deal to learn. I was all ears and I learned about finding sponsors, setting up tournaments, refereeing, starting juniors' programs and promoting the organization. I feel much better equipped to do my job."

For their love of the game most state chairmen — like Jane — work all those responsibilities in with their full time jobs.

"But what a great opportunity state association work is for married women who don't have outside jobs," Jane says. "There's voluminous work to be done on a volunteer level in every state, and women and men are eagerly welcomed into every racquetball organization. Were I married with a family I suspect I'd flock to this kind of participation, making it as full or part time as I chose."



Escape from No Man's Land

What happens when a male tries an all female club . . . 44

The Dancer's Look

Looks good on racquetball players, too . . . 48

Who's Playing Racquetball?

The game for the liberated woman . . . 50



Escape from No Man's Land

by Nick Longhurst

Racquetball club owner Jon Gonzales shifted his weight easily and sized up the situation. He decided on a strategy, poised his right hand and . . . snip.

A lock of hair tumbled to the floor.

The sound of scissors shearing hair is just as common at his club, the Getaway, in Huntington Beach, CA as the more familiar sound of the slap of racquet on ball. All that because Jon boasts of owning a very special club, where a trained staff discusses fashions as easily as kill shots and weight loss as succinctly as tournament results.

Where else would you find a hairdressing salon next to the pro shop, and a women's locker room which looks more like a makeup parlor?

Add to that a potential membership of 600 females and you can easily understand why Jon is understandably happy . . . he's the only man in the place.

That was, until I came along.

"You are privileged, and don't forget it," grinned this former handball champion who owned his own beauty shop for 13 years before starting the Getaway.

Jon has the only facility in the country which caters exclusively to women whom Jon claims are second class citizens in most athletic clubs.

"Most women hate to be seen by male players in tights and leotards. Many of them start playing racquetball for weight loss in the first place, and for them it is downright embarrassing to have to march around a club dressed like that.

"Face the fact," he says counting off club owners' sins on his fingers, "usually their women's locker rooms are smaller and women members don't have parity facilities with the men."

Jon has one firm belief. "Eighty per cent of women who really would like to play racquetball just won't go to one of those jock clubs."

So, swallowing my masculine pride, I signed in for the evening, joining the over 250 women who had paid their \$150 initiation fees and signed on the dotted line for around \$35 a month.

Probing

"First thing you do is fill in a health card," said Jon's wife Barbara, who finds time to work at the club while bringing up their six children.

The questions were pretty probing, from entries for hospitalization and surgery records, current medical history, whether I ever smoked and an either/or section depending on my credit/debit status in the weight stakes.

I put down "ever so slightly overweight," hoping she wasn't going to notice an ample spare tire and pants which shouldn't fit tightly, but do.

"Next thing we do is give you a record card which will be filled in and signed off when you exercise," added Barbara.

At this point Marty West, the fitness director who really lives up to her title, got cracking with a tape measure taking my eight vital statistics.

"Eight statistics are the minimum we consider. Some people manage to find 11 areas where they want to lose weight," she explained, taking the tape measure and working from the top down. By this time I had a feeling that the Getaway knew more about my excess blubber than I did. . . and I still hadn't even gotten to play racquetball.

She was quick to tell me about the customer they are all very proud of who took up racquetball coupled with an exercise program and zapped off 32 excess inches in 18 visits.

Does this profile fit you? The Getaway caters to women.

the getaway

8007 Warner Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647 / (714) 847-4419
a Health, Beauty and Racquetball Club for Women

HEALTH DATA

Name Angi Warden Physician's Name A. Brinkman
Home Phone 714-3288 Physician's Phone 714-3333
Business Phone 714-3296 Age 35 Date of Birth 5/16/52

Please answer the following questions carefully, as they will help us construct the proper fitness program for you.

- When was your last complete physical examination? May, 1977
- Are you currently under a physician's care? No If so, why?
For how long?
- Any major stresses in the past five years? List stress and date. No
- Any hospitalization, Surgery? Yes When and why?
1970 - appendectomy
- Are you taking any type of medication? Yes If so, what? diet pills
- Have you sustained any injuries or have a history of weak muscles, bones, joints, or specific age?
Explain. yes, back, ankle, skiing 3 years ago. No complications
- Any other medical complaints? No
- Do you smoke? Yes Packages per day 1 How long? 1 Packages per day
- Have you ever smoked? No How long since you quit?
- Please circle Yes or No to indicate any present or past experience:

☒ Yes ☐ No Diabetes	☒ Yes ☐ No Shortness of breath at rest
☒ Yes ☐ No Hypertension	☒ Yes ☐ No Shortness of breath while active
☒ Yes ☐ No High Blood Pressure	☒ Yes ☐ No Shortness of breath after two flights of stairs
☒ Yes ☐ No Occasional Chest Pains	☒ Yes ☐ No Asthma
☒ Yes ☐ No Chest pains on exertion	☒ Yes ☐ No Heart Disease, known
☒ Yes ☐ No Fainting	☒ Yes ☐ No Heart Disease, felt
☒ Yes ☐ No Daily Coughing	☒ Yes ☐ No Heart Murmur
- Overweight Questionnaire: What was your heaviest weight? 135
What was your age? 35 When did you start to gain weight? 3 years ago
How long did it take you to gain the excess weight? 3 yrs
- Underweight Questionnaire: Have you always been underweight?
If not, when did you start to lose weight? Why?
- Do you take any vitamins or other supplements? Yes Please list with quantity per day
vitamin B, 1 a day
- Do you drink alcoholic beverages? Yes How often and how much? 2 drinks a day

with sedentary jobs and a slight weight control problem.

The Getaway
8907 Warner Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647 / (714) 847-4419
A Health, Beauty and Racquetball Club for Women

Please answer the following questions concerning your physical activities.

1. What is your profession? Executive Secretary

2. In an average day, how many hours do you spend performing the following activities?

Sitting, (typing, writing, reading, etc.)	<u>6</u>
Driving, (car, truck, bus or equipment)	<u>2</u>
Standing	<u>1</u>
Walking	<u>10 min</u>
Light physical labor (dusting, washing dishes, working a lathe, other equipment, etc.)	<u>2 hrs</u>
Moderate physical labor (sawing, digging, etc.)	<u>1.2 hrs</u>
Heavy physical labor (lifting heavy objects, digging)	<u>0</u>
Other (specify):	

3. During a day's work, how would you rate the amount of physical activity you perform? (circle one)

very little moderate active very active

4. How would you rate the amount of physical activity you perform during your leisure time? (circle one)

very little moderate active very active

5. Are you presently performing a "physical fitness" program? no If so, what are you doing?

6. How physically fit do you currently feel? (circle one)

unfit average above average very fit

7. Providing the equipment and facilities were available, which activities would be of interest to you? (Please check)

☒ Racquetball	☐ Ballet
☒ Supervised Conditioning Program	☒ Jazz Dance
☐ Jogging	☒ Yoga
☐ Rope Jumping	☐ Belly Dancing
☐ Strength and Energy Building	☐ Other (specify):

Notes and Comments: St. like to learn racquetball well enough to play with my boyfriend - Her last 10 pounds playing it.

I certify the above information to be true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Angi Warden Date: Today

She didn't point out where all those inches came from. And I didn't ask.

My first trip was to the gym where two women were working out. I knew they were related when they both made the same sort of painful noises when asked to pull the handles which had a way of being attached to weights which were just too heavy to move.

It turned out that Huntington Beach realtor, Janet Sherg, and her daughter, Bobbi, hit the weight room after an hour's racquetball.

"I joined for the racquetball," explained Janet. "The rest is a bonus."

"There are subtle differences in belonging to a women's only club which go deeper than just not wanting to parade in front of men while wearing shorts. The place is geared to us. There are regular fashion coordination sessions, a special yoga room and an exercise room with mirrors and a barre," she explained.

"Even when men do design facilities for women they don't get everything we have here. First of all in those clubs women are in the minority so even if the owners think of everything we need, they often can't justify the cost."

Workout

And Bobbi added "When we come to play racquetball, we come for the workout - not just to be social."

Later that evening there was deportment class, and half a dozen members took turns standing up straight and putting one leg in front of the other. I still wanted to play racquetball so I gave that a miss, sneaking into the yoga room where several more members were enthusiastically trying to tie themselves in knots.

"Weight control and exercise programs in most racquetball clubs are geared to men," added Marty West as I tried to knot my knees into a lotus position facsimile.

"Even the machines are set up for men. Here we have the best program possible for women who are interested in seriously getting into shape."

"We have our own racquetball tournaments where women can compete without fear that they are going to be laughed at by men. Their own men - husbands and boyfriends - are usually off at the ballgame or playing at their own clubs, so there is no jealousy. It is just a relaxed, feminine atmosphere here," she added, as she went off to fetch a pry bar to help get my legs parallel and pointing to the floor again.

Marty is also the racquetball pro and heck, that's what I was there for, so I flexed my muscles, hit the hustle and modestly suggested a game in which I'd spot a handful of points.

She agreed and went off to get a racquet while I had a last word with the owner.

"We hired an ad agency to come up with a catchy name. They produced dozens but none of them were right for the concept I wanted. I kept explaining to them that the place I needed was to be a sort of getaway for women. Finally it dawned on me, I had the name all along."

Out of the corner of my eye I could see my opponent warming up on one of the facility's three courts and not only was she fit, she could hit. Hard.

I saw the ball roll out a few too many times for comfort, so I signed off my temporary membership and sex change certificate.

I gracefully got out of the game by explaining that I had something to make and it couldn't wait, grabbed my gear and headed for the door.

Yeah, I made it all right. My getaway.



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Graphite. The extraordinary successor to wood, fiberglass and aluminum.

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The Graphite 100. Racquetball's first 100% graphite racquet.

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Using the lightest, strongest, stiffest material available, Leach has produced a racquet virtually indestructible on the court.

And since the Graphite 100 uses pure graphite fiber, vibration has been reduced to the point that all power generated by the player is transferred to the ball — not back down the grip.



The Graphite Competitor. The age-old properties of wood balanced with graphite.

This could well be the most unique racquet in the sport, combining the natural

lightness and flex of wood, with the strength and power of graphite.

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Leach introduced the Graphite-Performer over a year ago, and it remains one of our best selling, best playing racquets ever.

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And it feels as great as it looks.

All three graphite beauties come with the Leach 2-year unconditional warranty and a pre-designed heritage you won't find anywhere else.

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5567 Kearny Villa Road, San Diego, CA 92123

A Dancer's Look for Racquetball

by Judith Neisser

The brand name Danskin evokes a mental picture of a lithe, young dancer fashionably dressed in a skin like attire of leotard and tights.

This spring, Danskin Inc., the same company which first provided the dancer in the early 50's with this revolutionary dancewear, is offering an active sportswear line called Trakskin.TM

Says Danskin spokesperson Dorothy Harper: *"Danskin's entrance into the active sportswear field with the addition of shorts, pants, tops, etc. is a natural evolution of the leotard concept. Over the years, our experience with dancers has been enormously helpful in the development of*



The heart of the TrakskinTM collection is the tank leotard, cut to be worn with a bra and featuring side rainbow stripes and a 100 percent knit-in panty. It comes in sizes small, medium and large in black, celestial blue, flight blue, gold, kelly green, red and white.



The TrakskinTM pull on shorts, with a cut that allows free movement and a fabric that's a lightweight blend of Antron[®] nylon and Lycra[®] spandex, match the tank leotard. Or you can wear the shorts (they have a key pocket on the inner waistband) with this separate top, styled to be worn with a bra. The two pieces come in black, celestial blue, kelly green, red and white.



She's racing from the racquetball court to the club pool, where she'll just have to pull off her shoes, socks and shorts and dive in because this Danskin leotard doubles as a swimsuit. Made of nylon and spandex the fabric gives support to women who feel they can play an occasional game without a bra. The matching satin shorts and the leotard/swimsuit are available in celestial blue, flight blue, red and black.

garments which are both functional and beautiful. And with the emergence in the 70's of the 'new active woman,' we recognized that there was an ever greater demand for such clothes."

Since racquetball is the ultimate sport for the "new active woman," the Danskin designs pictured here are ideal for those racquetball players who are concerned with excellence in style as well as comfort.

These versatile garments, which are machine washable and modestly priced, are available in major department stores in sizes small, medium and large.



This one piece Trakskin[®] Playotard offers the fullness that some women prefer over their thighs, yet the outfit is close fitting enough to stay clear of the ball. The fabric is lightweight, shiny Antron[®] nylon, the colors are celestial blue, flight blue, gold, kelly green and red and there's a concealed key pocket in the waistband.

Who's Playing Racquetball?

Karen Kauffman: Psychologist Correlating Mind and Body

Karen Kauffman's life is jammed with matters of the mind.

Not only does she work full time as a school psychologist for the New York City Board of Education, but she also teaches an undergraduate course on psychology of women at PACE University, is training in Gestalt Therapy and is working on her Ph.D. on the topic of joint custody.

It's only been recently though that she's found a non-academic way to build her intellect.

"I expect as my body gets better my mind will improve," says the 30-year old Brooklyn resident who recently discovered the wonders of the racquetball court.

"It's incredible that I didn't make the correlation before. But now that I have, I try to integrate it into my life, and to tell others the importance of physical activity."

Though she originally began playing so she could have something to do with her athletically oriented husband, Karen's interest was rapidly kindled. After a series of five lessons she joined a women's league and began seeking friends with whom she could share her new enthusiasm.

Karen feels strongly that as a woman she was deprived of the opportunity to achieve physically. *"I grew up in the city. All the money went to boys for organized sports and there was not much left for us."*

"I'm only glad I was able to find something where I am given the opportunity to feel good about myself," she adds.

Though Karen and her husband have recently moved from Long Island to Brooklyn where they have had difficulty finding a suitable court situation, they are still managing to play once a week by searching out various courts around the city.



Psychologist Karen Kauffman, surrounded by some of her books on women, says her racquetball workouts sharpen her ability to probe the heavy subjects she studies and teaches.



And the sport has begun to affect their lives in another way as well. Not long ago the couple went off for a weekend vacation. And what did they look for when choosing their destination?

A resort complete with racquetball court.

—Jennifer Alter

If you know a woman who plays racquetball and whose job or hobby would make her a good subject for this series, send her name, address and phone number to Carol Brusslan, National Racquetball, 4101 Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076.



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The sole is made of gum rubber—because it's lighter and offers better traction on a hardwood floor. The leather toe is extended along the sides and reinforced with extra stitching, so you get more support to withstand

stop-and-start pressure, quick pivot turns and increased lateral stress. The sides are made of mesh for even more lightness and cool breathing. The heel cup locks around your foot at the back, to keep it firmly in place while your toes still have room to move. And Tred 2's special negative heel absorbs the shock of fast-action jolts and backward motion.

Of course, you'll also find on Tred 2-Z many of the same features that have given our tennis

shoes the fastest-growing reputation in the sports world. Like our new Ventilator insole. And our full range of sizes, including half sizes, with two widths to choose from. And our handsome, contemporary styling.

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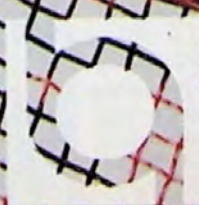
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San Diego:

Is It Worth the Trek to Mecca?

by Nick Longhurst

*"Here we come, Oh Allah, here we come.
Here we come. No partner have You.
Here we come, Praise indeed and
blessings, are Yours — the Kingdom too.
No partner have you."*

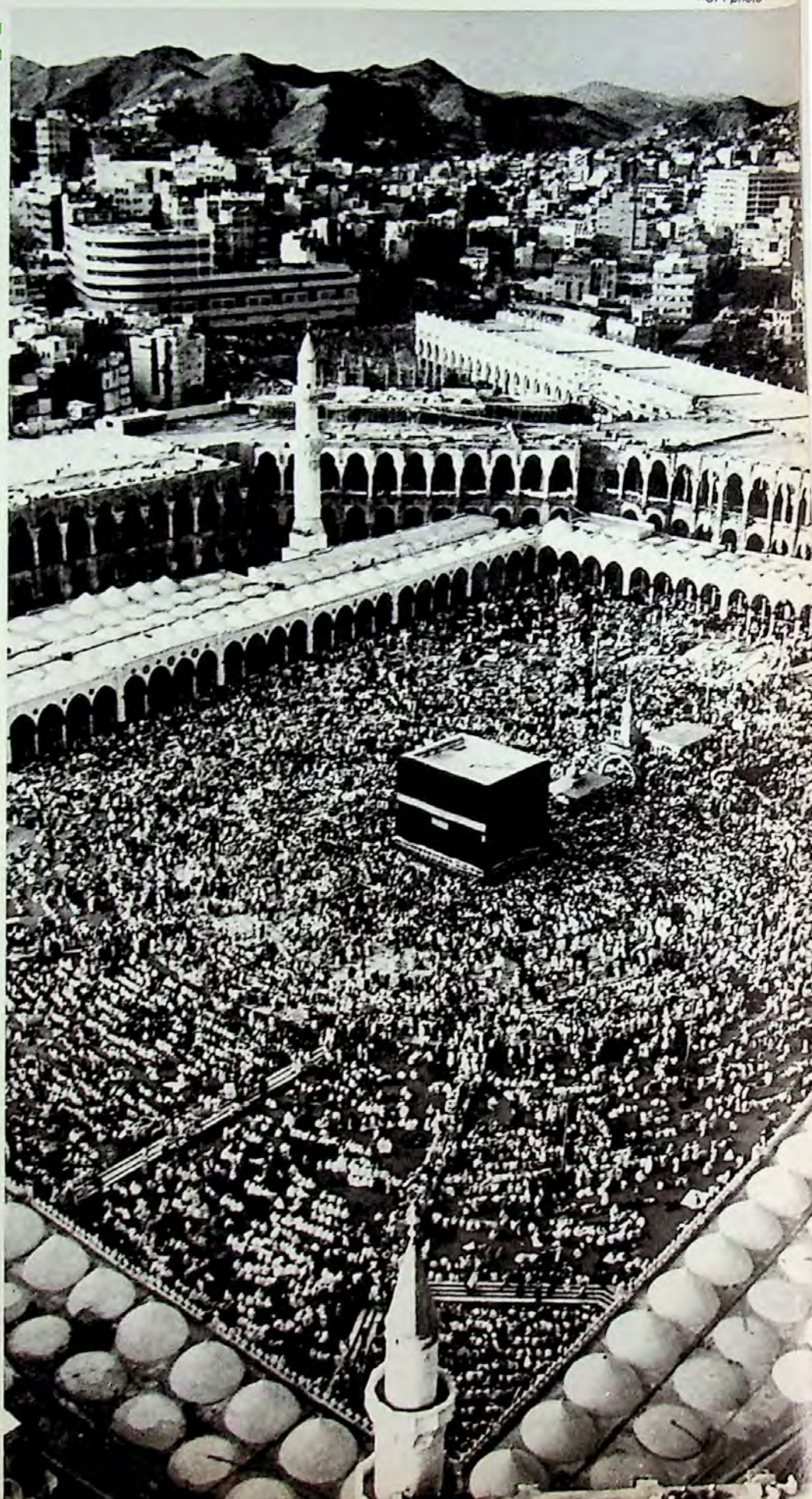
Those words, the Talbiyah, have been recited by pilgrims for more than 13 centuries who have traveled to a special place in the Middle East.

MECCA.

Since the Muslim God Allah issued his proclamation to Abraham which was later revealed to Mohammed, Muslims the world over have tried at least once in their lifetime to make a "Hajj" — the pilgrimage to Mecca.

And just as thoughts as well as bodies are turned four times a day towards Mecca as Muslims perform their ritual daily prayers — whether from dusty desert roads, teeming bazaars, London streets or American college campuses — there are times in every avid racquetballer's thinking when his mind turns to our own nerve center, a breezy town on the Pacific seaboard called San Diego.

San Diego — the Mecca of racquetball — attracts would-be pros in slightly smaller numbers than the Great Mosque pulls in pilgrims at the annual gathering of Muslim faithful in Mecca, birthplace of Mohammed, in Saudi Arabia.



Pilgrims to Mecca travel any way possible. Herdsmen walk, often striding over whole continents. Richer travelers fly, first class or otherwise, but they go, drawn on by an irresistible force to make that once in a lifetime journey. And it is the same sort of force which in racquetball's youthful 10 years of life has drawn players to San Diego, the Mecca of racquetball.

It used to be said that you could put five points on your game just through the osmosis of being there. True or false, and even without its top racquetball title, San Diego is a sportsman's town. With a climate conducive to open air training it harbors followers of every athletic cult from surfing to sailing, hiking to hang gliding.

And it also shelters the two biggest racquet manufacturers in racquetball — Leach and Ektelon — now responsible for pros, prize money and around two million racquets a year.

It's a place where old friends, in on the birth of a new sport, have become new enemies and racquet wielding personalities flourish like desert grass after the rain.

Technically San Diego is a strange town, more like a collection of strung out towns than a city, topheavy with fiscal dependence on the military and the aerospace industry, often short of jobs for unskilled people and a safe haven for illegal aliens.

Racquetball had its roots in the middlewest and was then nurtured in USRA/NRC offices in Chicago. And if snowy Chicago has been responsible for the vision and business upbringing of the new born sport, San Diego has been its school, where thinkers and strategists have sat huddled together in sweaty locker rooms plotting demon serves and dessicating backhands for that extra intellectual edge which wins tournaments.

In the BEGINNING there was Brumfield. For present day racquetball buffs used to listening to Brumfield's salty, seasoned, courtwise patter and play it is going to be hard to imagine there was once a youthful, less confident and probably spotty teenager looking around for a game to play. But there was and this is the way it was.

"You can say that the Koran was written in San Diego . . . and I helped write it," he opens modestly.

"In the mid 60's everyone was playing a game called paddleball which was in fact the early ancestor to racquetball."

"Paddleball was strong in Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa and back in that area. In those days I was a college intramural handball champion, then in 1965 and 1966, a group of us — not more than a dozen — got together with Carl Loveday, a former badminton champion, and we started playing paddleball on a regular basis three times a week down at the Copley Y.M.C.A. and the old Kona Kai club."

"Then we switched over to the Pacific Paddleball Association and built a court in the backyard of Dr. Jim Skidmore in San Diego. That court — still in existence — has to be the single most historical site in the development of racquetball — but we didn't know it then."

The PPA didn't have a great effect on the spread of paddleball in the area for two reasons. Spectators were only invited, guests and cronies of the players, and the only players were already members of the select group.

"It was a vicious circle and it didn't help spread the sport."

Sissy Sport

Adds Brum "In those days play with strung wooden racquets was just beginning to spread, although we paddleball players thought of early racquetball as a sissy sport. Still do as a matter of fact."

But the PPA group was getting older and the grueling bouts of paddleball singles were slipping in favor of doubles matches. But they still found the energy to enter the first racquetball national singles held in St. Louis in 1969.

"When we went for the first championships almost everyone was using wooden racquets with stringing. The San Diegans swept that tournament after having only played racquetball four or five times. It's quite ironic that we who thought that it was such a sissy sport actually won, but we could see the way things were going. Paddleball was dying."

"In paddleball a big tournament draw was 32. In that first racquetball tournament there were 128 entries."

Shucks we had never even seen that many people at a tournament."

The writing was on the wall.

"When I got back to San Diego, I never played paddleball again."

San Diego held its own regional tournament in 1969, an event which attracted an entry of four, but then in July, 1971, local constructor and developer, Mel Gorham, opened his first six court — Spartan by today's standards — facility in San Diego.

The champions were there, the courts were there, and nine months later the first pilgrim came to town.

Explains Brumfield *"I was so good that I had to leave San Diego to get competition. In 1971 I went to Michigan to play Steve Keeley for the summer, and I beat him most of the time, so the next year — 1972 — Keeley came to town to learn some of my secrets. That year I became a pro and signed for Leach, which had gone into the racquet business in 1971. My first contract was for equipment and they generously gave me \$100 to go out and buy some new clothes."*

"Mel Gorham's club was pretty small, but we all thought it was a dramatic move at the time. Then when George Brown built his place on 70th street, which was at least 40 minutes by car from Mel's in any kind of traffic, we saw it as a definite threat to Mel's financial position."

He smiles. *"That just goes to show how short sighted we were, and we thought of ourselves as being in the center of the boom."*

San Diego accurately reflects that boom. In all San Diego county has 1,738,000 in population and at the last count, 45 racquetball facilities. And although there have been myriad personal reasons why owners like George Brown have given up their holdings, the state of the court club art is sound in town.

After Keeley came Strandemo. After Strandemo came the hordes, youngsters and not so youngsters, who hit town with a bag full of racquets and dreams.

San Diego means too much to too many people to reflect the immensity of its involvement with the sport in these

pages. There is too little space to chart the rises and falls, the politics, the developments, the disasters, the successes and the failures.

But we can look San Diego through the eyes of some of the players who came and found what they were looking for. Some of them found the going too tough, both mentally and physically, and others just got plain homesick. They left, but there were many who stayed.

Jerry Hilecher won a national tournament the summer he graduated with a financial degree from the University of Missouri. The pro tour had started when Jerry was still a junior and he already had some idea of the price he was going to have to pay to improve his game.

"The courts at school were not any good so weekends I would travel home, a two hour drive, and then play all weekend. I was ranked eighth on the pro tour and although my game was improving a little, I knew that I could get a lot better if I had the time to spend working on it," he explains.

"When I graduated I had to make the choice of taking an honest job or playing racquetball. Then I had to make another choice on whether to stay home, where I would probably have wound up in the club management end of things, or moving."

Ektelon had showed some interest in Jerry moving to San Diego but he had an additional consideration, a very pretty girlfriend named Debbie.

"I figured that I would marry Debbie, so I knew that I would have to have a livelihood other than racquetball. And I had already heard on the grapevine that if I moved to San Diego I was going to need a job. I know now that the pit that a lot of players fall into, which makes many just turn around and go back home because they can't handle the situation, is that there is not much chance of work other than low paid, mundane jobs."

Hilecher solved his work problems by taking a job at Ektelon in their burgeoning player department. After a year in town he married Debbie and moved her to San Diego.

He adds, *"It wasn't an 8 to 5 job, but it was important to us because racquetball on the pro tour was maybe five or six thousand dollars a year. Now prize money is greater and the salary is a secondary thing."* But Jerry still works in the office and travels around the country for Ektelon when he is not playing in tournaments.

Hollywood Effect on Ability

San Diego can also have a cruel, Hollywood-like effect on the ability levels of players who move to town to learn.

"The biggest problem that people have here in San Diego is that they can very easily fall into a pit and lose their confidence. In St. Louis I could always win practice matches, here there are so many good players that you can't win all the time. In fact in San Diego you can really be on top of your game and only win half the time. Let that upset you and you are in deep trouble. Your confidence fades away and then you go to pro stops thinking that you have absolutely no chance of winning because you lost to the same guys in practice."

"I look at those practice games as not caring about winning so much. I just forget the score and skip in 15 backhands in a row now and again."

Spend just a short time in San Diego and the preconceptions of open, easy-to-find, top flight racquetball on every court soon start to fade away fast. There are not that many top players who are ready and willing to play with an enthusiastic but unskilled newcomer.

"You have to hustle and nag them to play with you. If you don't aggressively look for good people to play, they certainly won't come running to you," explains El Paso teaching pro, David Peck.

David saved up a few hundred dollars and drove out to San Diego in the summer of '78. He left behind a good job as a teaching pro at the Supreme Court in El Paso, but he didn't burn his bridges... the job was waiting for him if things didn't turn out.

"I spent three months in San Diego. The first month I didn't work out much. It was like life in the fast lane to someone coming from El Paso. I was constantly on the go, partying and doing things, it seemed like a great way to enjoy life."

As David drove down the interstate towards San Diego, he figured he had one good thing going for him... he could get a job.

"I was offered a job at a club in San Diego as a teaching pro, but the first thing I found out was that a pro is not such a prestigious thing in San Diego as it was back home. I was charging the same rates in San Diego as I did in El Paso, but the Diegans certainly didn't like paying \$8 a half hour and \$16 an hour for instruction."

Consequently David ran out of money in a very, very short space of time and it was only a chance to teach at some of Davey Bledsoe's racquetball camps which kept him going with cash.

"I knew what it was going to be like going in there. I didn't have the misconception of going out there and taking on the whole San Diego population. I didn't have stars in my eyes and I knew exactly what I was going there for - to improve my game."

"It's the same in any sport, you don't improve by winning all the time. To get better you have to meet the toughest opposition possible."



Dave Peck: "... like life in the fast lane to someone coming from El Paso."

Arthur Shney photo

"But getting a game with these guys turns out to be a tough business. They always put off with a 'maybe,' 'maybe' type answer. Bledsoe tried to do that to me, so finally I said to him - 'Hey listen what are you running away from?' Rich Wagner was listening and I said it in a half joking, half serious way. I told him I was leaving in a couple of days and I told HIM - 'We are going to play ball at 3 p.m. tomorrow.'

"It was worthwhile. I kept bugging Davey and finally we had some good workouts which I think helped Bledsoe some as well as me. And when he saw that I was serious, Jerry Hilecher let me play him, too.

"So I got what I went for. But then I decided it was time to go back. I couldn't handle having to spend so much time and energy just existing and hustling. I went back home to play."

San Diego is where the visibility is. With three major talent spotters located in the seaside town, young players hope that they can get noticed often enough to produce that crock of gold at the end of the rainbow — a sponsorship from a major manufacturer.

But sometimes staying at home can do the job a lot better.

"To be sponsored in San Diego you have to be the best, because the major companies have the choice of everyone. But sometimes it suits marketing situations to have a high profile pro in a region well away from San Diego," explains Tom Stofko, player rep for Ektelon.

"Depending on what you want from the experience, moving to San Diego may or may not be the right thing to do. If you came from Bangor, ME, you are not going to have the level of competition that you do in San Diego and you are not going to develop as a player unless you get competition.

"But by its very nature the competition here is only going to expose the very very best. It's like Hollywood. Around 90 percent of the people who come here to make it are going to go home better players — but disillusioned.

Stofko and Wilson's Bill Torres each get 40 to 50 letters a month from young racquetballers seeking some form of sponsorship. Leach gets even more.

High Profiles out of San Diego

"Player sponsorship is a sort of advertising program and the same sort of business criteria fit. That means that often a player who has a high profile in tournaments outside San Diego in an area where our sales people feel we have a need for that sort of profile is going to get the money . . . the same player in San Diego and playing in and around this area may not get the same considerations.

"We try to make sound business decisions and at the same time reward effort."

At the bottom end of the sponsorship scale is an equipment-only contract. Since there is no money to be shelled out, companies tend to offer more contracts for players to play with a specific type of racquet. But without that additional cash many players can't afford to hit the out-of-town tournaments.

The USRA provides assistance, in the shape of air tickets and accommodation to winners of specific state and regional tournaments to the Nationals, which provide some of the highest visibility to open and junior winners.

Tom Stofko: "Around 90 percent of the people who come here to make it are going to go home better players — but disillusioned."



-photo courtesy Terry Cluck, Stadium Racquetball

At each of those tournaments the companies are represented and it is not uncommon for high place amateurs to suddenly be talking "money" with a company.

Says National Director Chuck Leve "The USRA helps between 100 and 150 players annually in the form of providing top notch competition and methods of reaching those tournaments.

"We want to help as many people as possible but financially it is not feasible. But what we do is provide the regional top class tournaments which become the shop window for a player's talents. What we do best is provide the players with top flight competition in each of the 50 states so that they can cheaply measure their talents against the best there are."

Many of those sponsorship pleas are from players who genuinely believe they are good players, but they don't have the tournament track records to back it up . . . and those letters aren't worth the 15¢ stamp which got them to San Diego.

"Anybody who has a remote possibility of competing on the pro circuit will get consideration," adds Stofko. "But those players are normally National Amateur champions of some nature. People honestly think that they happen to be the best players around — and that they can just walk into the pros. Believe me, it isn't at all like that. Look at the figures. In the last two years the only two guys who have really made it are Ben Koltun and Mike Yellen."

Three friends played together on the racquetball team of the University of Illinois. But now, of those three — Charlie Rish, John Lynch and Jeff Bowman — only Bowman makes his home in San Diego.

Explains Jeff, who won the 1978 National Open championship in Detroit, "I graduated from school with an accounting degree and I was sort of torn between racquetball and CPA work. But I thought I had it made when I interviewed for a job with one of the big eight accounting firms in — of all places — San Diego.

"I wasn't even seeded in the top 20 or 30 so I knew that I wasn't going to make much money out of racquetball,



but I was trying to improve my game so when I got the offer to work in San Diego, I took it thinking that if it didn't work out I could always go back to Chicago.

"When I flew out for my first interview, I stayed with Steve Keeley and I played 10 times in three days and at the time that was heaven — I could be an accountant and play racquetball all my life.

"But as soon as I got out to San Diego, I found out what being an accountant was all about. I was so busy working I went to one tournament a year for the next two years.

"I was still playing practice matches with all of the guys who were winning all those pro tournaments and although they would bury me, I was still fairly close to them."

Now Bowman works for his sponsoring company as an accountant with an agreement which gives him time off to attend all of the tournaments he wants.

"I work full time but I am allowed a few days off each month to go to tournaments. In practice I work three weeks a month."

Charlie Rish is a teaching pro back in Chicago and the third member of the triumvirate, John Lynch, is involved with racquetball club management. Lynch is soured by his experiences in San Diego.

"I have set out for San Diego numerous times but never lived there. So far I have logged four or five two week stints in the town and to me the advantages are that there is plenty of good climate and beaches to train in, and plenty of good players to play.

"But I prefer to be successful here in Chicago rather than a racquetball bum over on the west coast. You have to realize that the level of play you experience out there is punishing to the ego. The only person who has successfully handled it is Hogan — and he does it by not playing against anyone.

"Steve Serot was a good player when he was 17 years old. Then he moved to San Diego and his game has still not recovered. As far as I am concerned the level of competition is such that most of the guys in San Diego would cut your throat for 50 cents. They have to win at all costs, even if it means

cheating to do it. I have seen that happen lots of times, and some players end friendships because of it. To me that's too high a price to pay.

Little Prize Money to Show

He has a very strong philosophy: "What kids who drop out of school to play pro racquetball have to realize is that after their career ends they are going to have very little prize money to show for it . . . and people forget real quick."

John, who currently manages the Glass Court Club in Lombard, IL, is emphatic. "Winning isn't worth that cheating. And anything which makes you cheat, all the time, even in practice, isn't something I want to be involved in."

Whatever the reason for moving to San Diego the separation from family, friends and a familiar lifestyle has been enough to keep good players like Mike Yellen and Ben Koltun from packing their bags and making the "Hajj" west.

San Diego — and indeed racquetball itself — means different things to different people. The purpose of this story is not to judge, only to look at our so-called Mecca from those different viewpoints earned through personal experiences.

What follows is something of a study of determination which should teach us all something. It is told just the way 23-year-old Steve Mondry tells it — raw, uncut, just the way it happened when he left his home in Worcester, MA, three years ago for the big time.

Explains Steve: "I finished high school four years ago but I knew then that I wanted to play racquetball so badly that I dropped out of college after a year, loaded up my old Buick and headed west for San Diego.

"It all happened after I went out to Vermont for the first pro stop there in 1975 and watched them play. Afterwards I started to ask them how they had got so good. They all told me — San Diego. So, I went.

"It's almost three years to the day since I left. I didn't have a job when I got here and I still don't, racquetball is my job."

His only ties with his family was a sister living in LA. "I knew that I had an ace in the hole in case I ever needed

anything, so my elder brother and I just drove out as fast as we could. My brother went back and I lived out of my car. I would sleep in it for four nights playing Strandemo and Keeley during the days, then I would drive up to my sister's home to do my washing and get a good meal, then drive back down again.

"My mom would send me a little money whenever she could, and I had saved up six or seven thousand dollars. I got a couple of thousand from

Steve Mondry: "You can live with nothing if you have one goal."



my Bar Mitzvah and my mom had always made me and my brothers bank the money we earned from newspaper rounds.

"Then Strandemo's rent got too expensive in his apartment so I moved in."

After a few months in San Diego Steve's car died and some of his savings went to new transportation. Now he starts his day at 6 a.m., playing by himself until 10 in the morning.

"Then I play with people like Strandemo until 12, after which I work out for 90 minutes in a gym. Then I go home and I'm always in bed by 8:30."

Going without hasn't fazed him either.

"I don't remember the last time I went out to eat and the only time I ever go to see a movie is when I go home to Massachusetts.

"My parents respect me a little more now - in the early days their only encouragement was to tell me to go see a psychiatrist.

"They have a little more respect for me now that they can see that I am sticking it out, but they still think that I should go to school to be a doctor or a lawyer like my brothers and sisters are doing.

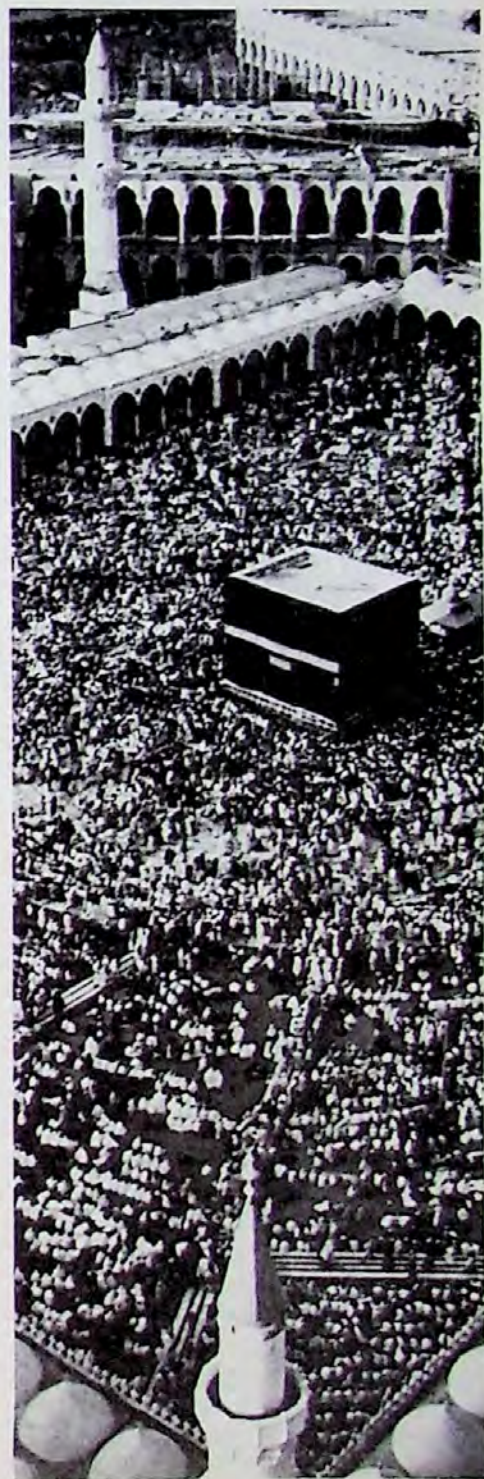
"But I don't miss the things that money would bring. If I wanted the financial rewards I could go home and work for my dad, but I know I wouldn't be happy. I have to live cheaply so I can't afford things like beef and candy. I eat an unbelievable amount of tuna fish though. One large \$1.19 can lasts me for two days and a head of lettuce, which costs 65¢, last me for four days.

"In fact I eat so much tuna fish I think I ought to have shares in a cannery," he grins.

He has no thoughts about giving up. "It is too late for me to go home now; I'm not going back until I have made it because all I have really ever wanted to do is play racquetball. There isn't one other thing in this world I would rather be doing.

"There were three guys from Florida who lasted about six months down here before they went back home. They couldn't live without the things that money provided. They knew they couldn't take girls out without money, or do this or that without the cash to pay for the pleasure. So they gave up."

Steve's last words probably sum up the spirit of San Diego better than anything else. "The hardest part of it all? Being without anything. But I know now that you can live with nothing if you have just one goal in mind. It doesn't make it all that difficult not to have material things when you feel your game getting better."



.welcome to Mecca. ●

Billie Jean's Husband Chooses Racquetball

by Len Ziehm

Somehow it didn't sound right.

Here was Larry King, a new guy in town and trying to make friends, wanting to line up a game of . . . racquetball?

"I know it sounds like heresy," he admits, "but it's the only game I can beat Billie Jean at."

Larry King is the 35-year-old husband of Billie Jean King. Billie Jean King, in the event you haven't been reading the newspapers, or magazines, or been listening to the television, or radio, is the queen of tennis.

No one, but no one, has done as much for that other racquet sport as Billie Jean King has for tennis. She's won 19 Wimbledon titles in singles and doubles. She's the first female athlete in any sport to earn more than \$100,000 in a single season of competition. She's the only woman ever to win the U.S. singles title on grass, clay, carpet and hard courts. She's the first woman to coach a coed team in professional sports; she guided the Philadelphia Freedoms to the best record in World Team Tennis history in 1974. She was the up front spokesperson in the formation of the women's pro tennis tour, the one who beat Bobby Riggs in the Battle of the Sexes. You name it, Billie Jean King has done it — in tennis.

Larry King is deep into tennis, too.

He and Billie Jean have formed Kingdom, Inc., a California-based company involved primarily in the promotion of tennis tournaments and exhibitions. Their company is also into publishing, souvenirs and even smoke-free ashtrays, but tennis is their main concern.

Larry is the promoter for the Avon women's tennis tour events in Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco. He also promotes the women's Colgate series event in Montreal and a



An unbearded version of Larry with his celebrity wife and their less famous dog, Lucy.

Tennis is Larry King's business . . . Racquetball's his pleasure.



—Bob Langer/ photos

tournament in Germany. He estimates that the tennis tournaments and exhibitions that Kingdom, Inc., ran in 1978 drew a half-million spectators.

So what is he calling about racquetball for? *"Actually, I find it a better workout than tennis,"* says Larry.

King's interest in racquetball isn't recently acquired. He played for the first time in 1963 while attending Los Angeles State College. At that time he was on the school tennis team — *"the seventh man on a six-man squad,"* he says — and his tennis coach introduced him to racquetball. The coach was Scotty Deeds, who was also the school's athletic director, and Larry King says, *"one of the top players on the West Coast."*

That first game of racquetball came two years before he and Billie Jean Moffitt were married in Long Beach, CA. They eventually settled in the San Francisco area while Larry finished work on his law degree. He continues to play both tennis and racquetball.

As a racquetball player King is — at the best — a B-level club player, but he obviously enjoys it. His game is run, run and run some more. That isn't surprising considering another of his major recreational activities is running.

He took up running during last year's U.S. Open tennis tournament. The first week he covered 15 miles. In a matter of months he was up to 60 miles a week and, in December, he ran the Hawaii marathon in three hours 34 minutes. He claims that will be his first and last marathon.

He's not done with racquetball, however. *"If I keep playing I may be ready to play my father-in-law, again,"* he says. *"I used to be able to beat him but not now."*

King's father-in-law, Bill Moffitt, turned to racquetball two years ago. Now he plays four times a week near his California home. Billie Jean calls him *"a terror at it."*

"Actually," says Larry, *"I don't think he was ever satisfied with his ability in tennis. He also has a knee problem that makes it hard for him to run the distances that you have to cover in tennis and he has a really aggressive personality that fits in better with racquetball."*

Billie Jean herself admits *"Racquetball is the game of the future."* She admits it's easier than tennis and *"the sense of satisfaction comes faster for the average player in racquetball than it does in tennis."* ●

National Racquetball

EXTRA!

Super 12-Year-Old Puts Racquetball on the Tube

Naomi Super, who's 12, is narrator of a three minute racquetball segment that will air on TV stations in 80 cities as part of *Kidsworld*, a national half hour children's news show.

The program, which local stations will schedule between May 12 and May 31, includes racquetball because Naomi suggested the topic in response to an ad in a Las Vegas newspaper. The Behrens Co., Inc., of Miami, producer of the show, encourages children to suggest subjects that would appeal to *Kidsworld's* eight-to-14-year-old viewers.



Naomi Super reports on racquetball for *Kidsworld*.

—Randy Tunnell photos



Sloan Holmes, left, and Benjamin Super played all day for the TV filming at the Las Vegas Racquet Ball Club.

Naomi rounded up some of the city's best young players for demonstrations and interviews. Eight-year-old Sloan Holmes and Benjamin Super (Naomi's brother) and Dottie Thornack and Patti DiLella, both 14, played for the cameras during the day long filming session at the Las Vegas Racquet Ball Club, where all the young players' families are members.

Viewers can call local television stations or check TV guides to learn when the *Kidsworld* racquetball feature will be on the air.

Women in Evidence at NCCA Convention



Jennifer Harding, Jean Sauser and Joy Fujimoto, left to right, were among 350 owners and operators attending the January National Court Clubs Association Convention in Anaheim, CA. James R. Bronner, of Chicago, was elected president of the not-for-profit organization which has 250 members in 43 states and Canada.

Teaching Teachers

—Randi Morgan photo



Thirty racquetball instructors attended the first clinic for teachers only sponsored in December by the American Professional Racquetball Organization at the Forest Grove Swim and Racquet Club in Palatine, IL. Here APRO President Chuck Sheffel gives an on court demonstration.

New University Study Proves It Again: Racquetball's Good For the Heart



John Kreissler was one of eight experienced racquetball players who wore battery and electrodes for a game of racquetball in an experiment conducted by Tom Bryant and Jerry Stockard, both Ph.D.'s and staff members of the department of health, physical education and recreation at Pittsburg (KS) State University. Bryant and Stockard found that the intensity and duration of the experimental racquetball games were sufficient to get the subjects' heart rate high enough to produce a training effect on the cardiovascular system. The Kansas study confirms experiment results from the University of British Vancouver reported in a previous issue of National Racquetball.

Racquetball's Spectacular Collapse



TV weathermen talked about racquetball during Chicago's history making snowfall when the roof of the Lake Shore Racquet Club fell in, causing what Crain's Chicago Business reported was more than a million dollars worth of damage. There were no injuries from the cave-in of the club, built in the 1940's with a roof supported by 110 foot long wooden trusses. Chicago Building Commissioner Joseph F. Fitzgerald Jr. said the wooden trusses type of roof is one of the most common types to fail in the snow.

In a neighborly gesture 16 clubs in and around Chicago offered complimentary memberships to the 5,000 Lake Shore Racquet Club members.



Racquetball



Terry Fancher

Chairman Convention Spotlights New Ball, Special Tournament Package

Some highlights of the very successful national USRA State Chairman convention at the Desert Inn Hotel in Las Vegas in January included round table discussions, sponsor presentations, a banquet, cocktail parties, entertainment and Coors' All Pro racquetball (Charlie Drake of Leach Industries contributed \$5,000 worth of tickets so chairmen could watch the All Pro matches free of charge.) It added up to a great time for all those who attended. This was the first of what is going to be a yearly event for USRA affiliated amateur racquetball organizers.

State chairmen shared ideas with each other, with sponsors and with the USRA staff members, as everyone went through a general education process. Judging by letters I've

received since the meeting all who attended learned a lot and enjoyed the gifts they received, including a copy of Dick Squires' *The Other Racquet Sports*, a racquetball radio from Seamco, a pair of Wilson-Bata shoes, a USRA portfolio and a USRA pewter mug.

Chairmen heard excellent presentations from Zahn Data Service, the company that handles USRA computer work, and from Seamco Sporting Goods and Leach Industries. Seamco unveiled another official USRA amateur racquetball — the Seamco blue "600" model, a pressureless ball that — along with the 558 and 559 models — will be the official balls for USRA/NRC sanctioned events.

Leach Industries announced an exclusive souvenir shirt program/teaching clinic program/promotional kit and trophy package available *only* through USRA affiliates. Information on these topics will be covered in this column in future issues of *National Racquetball*.

Our thanks go to: Lois and Chuck Blabolil and Sheldon Kiyabu of Trip Travel Service, Inc.; Louis Zahn Data Service; Leach; Seamco; Wilson-Bata; Coors' All Pro; Dan Seaton of the Nevada Racquetball Association; All table discussion leaders, the Desert Inn Hotel and Bob Kendler.



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USRA State Affiliates

Alabama

Jerry O'Neal
Nat'l Homes
Acceptance Corp.
Box 3436A
Birmingham 35205
205-324-3431

Alaska

Dan Dompier
P.O. Box 4-3042
630 E. Tudor Rd.
Anchorage 99509
907-276-0700

Arizona

Chuck Hallock
Marc's Backlot
P.O. Box 275
Tempe 85281
602-967-0001
John Marsh
Phoenix Metro Chairman
(Central)
602-247-2041

Casey Blitt
Tucson Metro Chairman
(Southern)
602-626-6239

Arkansas

James Bixler
1205 Caddo Apt. #9
Arkadelphia 71923
501-246-9864

California

Jerry Monell
2767 Ocean Front Walk
S. Mission Beach 92109
714-275-3344

Colorado

John Mooney
3455 David Circle
Colorado Springs 80907
303-597-7775

Connecticut

Jack Fruin
Lakewood Racquetball
666 Lakewood Rd.
Waterbury 06704
203-755-6699

Delaware

Eric Faddis
75 East Main St.
Box 174
Newark 19711
302-366-1868

Florida

Jim Adkins
The Racquetball
5165 Adanson St.
Orlando 32804
305-645-3999

Georgia

Wayne Vincent
3777 Vineyard Ct.
Marietta 30062
404-971-5441

Hawaii

Jane Goodsill
Central YMCA
401 Atkinson Dr.
Honolulu 96814
808-941-3344

Idaho

Dirk Burgard
130 N. Placer
Idaho Falls 83401
208-523-0600

Illinois

Tom Street,
Alan Shetzer
570 East Higgins Rd.
Elk Grove Village 60007
312-439-3030

Indiana

Jim Stevens
7590 Harcourt Rd.
Indianapolis 46260
317-297-4623

Iowa

Tom Sweeney
380 Larick Ct.
Marion 52402
319-377-1385

Kansas

Rick Newcomer
11301 W. 88th St.
Overland Park 66214
913-888-9247

Kentucky

David Fleischaker
628 Fincastle Bldg.
Louisville 40202
502-585-5369

Louisiana

Larry Bobbitt
117 Doucet Rd.
Lafayette 70503
318-984-7256

Maine

Ken Astor, Kevin York
170 U.S. Rt. 1
Falmouth 04105
207-781-4281

Massachusetts

Jim McConchie
RB International
12 "A" Street
Burlington 01803
617-273-1025

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The Better-Be Attitudes of Racquetball

Dozens of state chairmen wrote Bob Kendler thanking him for the Las Vegas convention weekend. James Bixler went one step farther by writing the tribute printed here.

Dear Mr. Kendler:

It was a great privilege meeting you and Evie in Las Vegas. I know first hand now that all of the remarkable things people say about you are true. Your wife is even more beautiful and gracious than I expected. Thank you for a tremendous event.

Here is a story that honors all of the things you have done to promote and preserve the great game of racquetball. Some of it is serious and some is humorous. I hope you accept it in the spirit in which it is intended.

Again thank you for a spectacular weekend in Las Vegas and good luck with all your endeavors.

James L. Bixler
State Chairman, Arkansas

And in a dream I saw a great vision. I saw great white clouds to the East. And there, amidst the fog, standing in a white glass court, dressed in a white robe, holding a black Leach racquet, a blue Seamco ball, stood Robert W. Kendler. And standing faithfully at his side, in all her radiant beauty, was his lovely and gracious wife, Evie. And with a great crack and a roll of thunder, I saw the clouds part. And I saw a great mountain. The mountain measured 20 cubits wide, 40 cubits long and 20 cubits high. The mountain was called — Mt. Skokie!

From the four corners of the Earth the children of Racquetball gathered unto the mountain to hear him speak. There were the tall, the small, the lean, the clean — the white, the black and the mighty. There were the pros, the cons, the red, the brown and the yellow.

by James L. Bixler

There were the ladies, the spectators, the sponsors and the gentlemen. And kneeling at his feet were the boys, the girls, the young, the old, the impaired and the repaired. By the thousands the hundreds of thousands and millions they came.

And when all the children of Racquetball had gathered together at the foot of Mt. Skokie, Bob Kendler spake unto them saying,

"Blessed be the racquetball players for their health and happiness shall surely be their reward.

Blessed are the sponsors and spectators, for without their steadfastness we would not endure.

Blessed are the point makers, for surely they shall win most of their games.

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Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after a racquetball game, for surely they shall find meat and drink afterward.

Blessed are they that toil and labor in vain against a stronger adversary, for they shall improve.

Blessed be them that lose and lose and keep playing, for they should be comforted.

Blessed be them that endureth all manner of ridicule, bruises, blisters and abrasions for they shall wear those sores as a crown of glory."

When he stopped, the children were amazed and cried out for more. But the Sabbath was drawing nigh and Bob departed to the West. The children could not be satisfied and he drew a great following wherever he journeyed.

And when the children followed him to the sea of San Diego, Kendler spake from the seashore saying,

"Thou shalt love the sport, but love it with temperance.

Thou shalt not kill, unless properly set up by thine adversary.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's racquet.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's uniform.

Nay, thou shalt not covet thine opponent's ability, but develop thine own.

Thou shalt strike each ball with all thy soul, all thy heart and all thy might but with finesse and control.

Thou shalt love thy opponent's will to win even as thine own.

Thou shalt not steal a point but call each shot with fairness and understanding."

And by the twelfth hour of the day the multitudes grew weary and hungry so Robert concluded by saying,

"And if thine opponent strike thee on the right cheek, call a hindrance and turn unto him thy left cheek except that ye be stricken again on the same cheek."

As the sun was sinking low in the West the multitudes dispersed and went on their ways to practice the words of wisdom they had heard. And Bob and Evie rested, to gather their strength, so they might spread the good news another day.



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Tournament Results

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In choosing photos of tournament play for these pages, we will give priority to pictures of players wearing protective eye gear.

Hold on to your playing records so you can send them into the *National Racquetball* Most Improved Player contest next June. You may be your state's winner.

Texas

Pro-Am

The Supreme Court Club in El Paso was the site for the Second Annual Sun Carnival Classic, where players from throughout the country came to play for over \$8,000 in cash and prizes.

In the Men's Pro division, number two seed Mike Yellen took top prizes by defeating number one seed Jerry Hilecher in two straight games 21-17, 21-13. Mike won a check for \$2,000 plus a 14 karat diamond studded racquetball necklace donated by J. C. Penney Fine Jewelry, tournament sponsors along with Athletic Attic and Vallejo Bank.

In the semi-finals Yellen met up with Davey Bledsoe, 1977 Men's Professional National Champion. Davey came out blasting his serves as well as making tremendous shots and ran up a 10-0 lead. Then something happened, namely great consistent shot making, and Bledsoe's lead diminished. Yellen came back to win the first game 21-13. The momentum from the first game carried him through the second and he beat Bledsoe in two straight.

On the other side of the bracket Jerry Hilecher, the master of serve and shoot from St. Louis, went up against David Fleetwood of Memphis. Hilecher cruised through the first game winning 21-9. The second game Fleetwood came on strong scoring points at will. At 14-3 Hilecher called a time out. After returning from the rest period Hilecher seemed like a new man coming back stronger than ever to win 21-14.

In the Men's Open, Bobby Bolan from Tempe, AZ, took home top prizes by defeating surprise finalist Mike Carr from Houston 21-10, 21-13.

Bolan, who was playing hot all week, put it all together not losing one game en route to the championship. In the semis Bolan met up with Beaver Wickham of Oceanside, CA. Bolan and Wickham are both powerful players with tons of quickness. Bobby out lasted Beaver 21-16, 21-14

Mike Carr and Jeff Kwartler met up in the other semis. Carr playing stronger than ever, caught Kwartler off guard taking him in two straight games 21-15, 21-14.

The Men's Open Doubles showed that a little size never hurt anyone. John Hellard (6'4", 240 lbs.)

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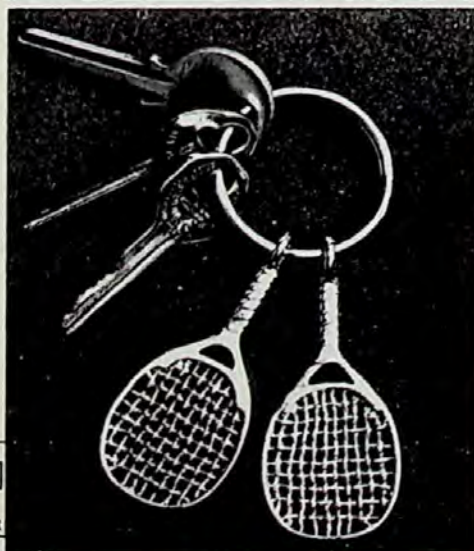
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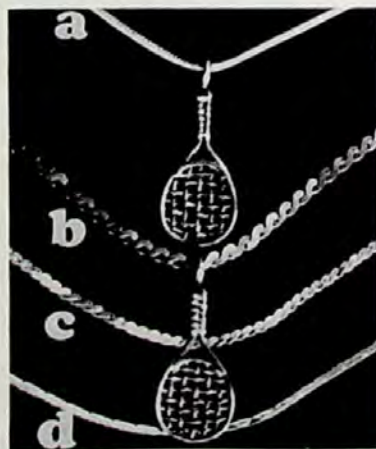
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and Bob Notley (6'2", 225 lbs.) eased by Kenny Kaihanen and Larry Nitishin 21-12, 21-3. Size as well as power made a big difference in this finals.

In the Women's Open Hope Weisbach from Tempe pushed by Liz Alvarado of Odessa in the tie-breaker 11-1. It wasn't until the tiebreaker when experience played off for Weisbach.

In the semis Weisbach eased by Colleen Shields 21-12, 21-13. In the other semis Texas State Champ Leslie Moughan was outpowered by Alvarado 21-15, 21-5.

In the Women's Open Doubles, the Ft. Worth team of Leslie Moughan and Miriam Merrill went up against the El Paso team of Dian Bohling and Kathy Dickason. In a well fought match Moughan/Merrill squeezed by in the tie-breaker 11-6.

David Peck

Other winners were

Men's & Women's B: Greg Peck d. Tim Ellis, Stacy Joseph d. Miriam Armengol

Men's & Women's C: Ricardo Miranda d. Paul Parker, Ellen Colleary d. Amy Lauterbach

Men's & Women's Novice: Mike Mendoza d. David Look, Judy Ruiz d. Kathy Padilla

Boys Juniors 17 and Under: Tim Ellis d. Pat McAvin

Boys Juniors 13 and Under: Raymond Navarro d. Luis Miranda

Seniors 35 and over: Simon Alvarado d. Jon Hellard

Masters 45 and over: Diego Aranda d. Bob Jones

New Mexico

Pro-Am

The Rocky Mountain Championships were played at Albuquerque's Supreme Courts Racquet and Health Club Dec. 14-17. The 235 participants in the tourney were treated to some fine racquetball as men and women pros traveled to this mile high city for the championships offering \$1,000 in prize money and directed by the New Mexico Racquetball Association. Jennifer Harding and Jean Sauser were Women's Open participants while Don Thomas, Bob Bolan, and Dave Peck complimented the high quality of players participating from New Mexico. Most noteworthy of the men's matches was Clay Childs' surprise performance against Bob Bolan. Bolan needed the tie-breaker to eliminate Childs after being handled easily in game one. Surprises in the women's divisions were ex New Mexico state champ Lynn Cirigos defeating Texas State Champ Leslie Moughan in the quarters and Hope Weisbach going down to Harding in the Open finals by an ever so slight margin. The NMRA was pleased that the lady pros conducted a fine clinic for the participants, who represented 19 divisions. Governor Jerry Apodaca of New Mexico was present at the event.

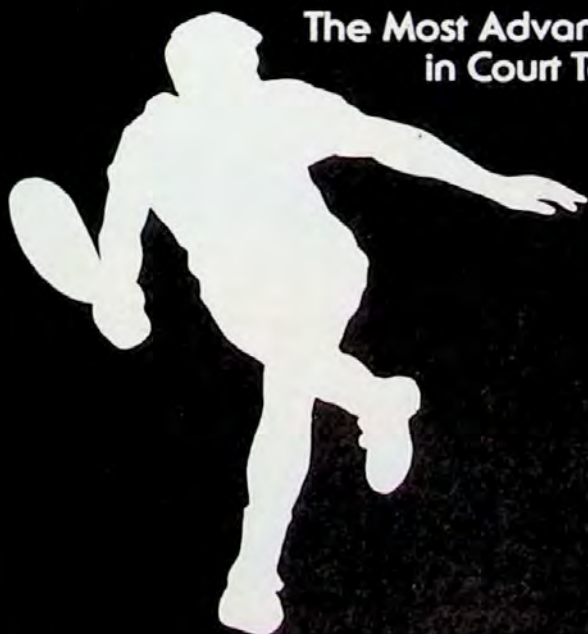
Results

Men's Open

Semis: Don Thomas d. Gary Mazaroff 21-10, 21-14, Dave Peck d. Bob Bolan 21-13, 21-4

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Finals: Peck d. Thomas 21-13, 16-21, 11-6

Women's Open

Semis: Jennifer Harding d. Lynn Chirigos 21-10, 21-7, Hope Weisbach d. Jean Sauser (injury default)

Finals: Harding d. Weisbach 19-21, 21-17, 11-5

Men's B

Semis: Tom Bird d. Wayne Wolfenbarger 21-3, 14-21, 11-3, Pat McAvin d. Jim Van Sickle 21-9, 21-18

Finals: McAvin d. Bird

Women's B

Semis: Ernestine Tenorio d. Judy VanderGeest 21-19, 21-1, Stacy Joseph d. Judy Aron 21-10, 21-10

Finals: Joseph d. Tenorio 21-10, 13-21, 11-3

Men's C

Semis: John Bogers d. Miranda, 21-12, 21-16, Matt Stanger d. Gary Sanchez 18-21, 21-18, 11-6

Finals: Stanger d. Bogers

Women's C

Semis: Judy Glenney d. Debbie Meyer 21-17, 21-8, Kathy Shustack d. Liz Morley 21-18, 21-16

Finals: Glenney d. Shustack 13-21, 21-11, 11-8

Men's Novice

Semis: Ross d. Paul Rozzell 21-5, 16-21, 11-8, Dennis Lihte d. Muehler (default)

Finals: Ross d. Lihte 18-21, 21-1, 11-4

Women's Novice

Semis: Nancy Clark d. Ross 21-19, 21-12, Ruth Stevens d. Laura Aguayo 21-8, 12-21, 11-6

Finals: Clark d. Stevens 21-9, 21-15

Men's 35

Semis: Ernie Nello d. Robert Light 21-11, 21-18, John Friedrich d. Jess Burch 21-13, 15-21, 11-4

Finals: Nello d. Friedrich 21-12, 21-3

Men's 55

First - Al Sample, **Second place -** Dave Rosenblum, **Third place -** Everett Castle

Juniors 17

Finals: Pat McAvin d. Alfredo Alvarez 21-7, 21-8

Juniors 15

Semis: Armando Armangol d. Glenn Buehler 21-4, 21-8, Brian Sanchez d. Vogel 21-11, 21-9

Finals: Armangol d. Sanchez 21-5, 21-10

Juniors 13

Finals: Ramon Navarro d. Gregg Stephenson 21-6, 21-2

Connecticut

Scott Anderson, an unseeded player, defeated the number one seed and current USRA state champ, Rob McKinney, in the second round of the Southern New England Racquetball Open at Courtside in Cromwell Jan. 26-28. Sponsors were Bernie Fields Jewelers, Anderson Oil and Chemical, Timbro Texaco and Laundromat, and Bob's Surplus. Tournament directors were Dick Wells and Margo Chase Wells, floor managers were Doris Roux and Carol Bouchard and committee workers were Ernie Goulet and Priscilla and Henry Racki.

Men's Open

Quarters: Scott Anderson d. Rob McKinney 14-21, 21-13, 11-8; Joe Curley d. Brian Barrabee 21-11, 21-12; Nick Caruso d. Mark Tomiso 21-10, 21-13; Jack Nocera d. Joe Abbate 21-11, 21-19

Semis: Anderson d. Packer 21-17, 21-12, Maturah d. Panarella 21-18, 21-11

Finals: Maturah d. Anderson 21-3, 21-3

Men's B

Quarters: Jerry Terraceno d. John Vigent 21-12, 19-21, 11-6; Joe Curley d. Brian Barrabee 21-11, 21-12; Nick Caruso d. Mark Tomiso 21-10, 21-13; Jack Nocera d. Joe Abbate 21-11, 21-19

Semis: Curley d. Terraceno 21-20, 21-18; Caruso d. Nocera 21-15, 9-21, 11-10

Finals: Curley d. Caruso 14-16 default

Men's C

Quarters: Ken Yuravich d. Roger Poudrier 21-8, 21-9, Eric Jensen d. Ernie Goulet 21-12, 21-7; Stan Borawski d. Barry McDermott 21-6, 21-3; Joe Abbate d. Art Ratner 21-7, 21-16

Semis: Yuravich d. Jensen 21-7, 21-11, Borawski d. Abbate 21-13, 21-7

Finals: Yuravich d. Borawski 21-11, 21-7

Men's Novice

Quarters: Jon Doucette d. Bob Miller 21-8, 21-13; Bob Nocera d. Brian Lenihan 21-1, 21-2; Ernie Goulet d. Gordon Plouffe 21-8, 21-10; Rick Funke d. Joe Grattaduria 21-13, 10-21, 11-10

Semis: Doucette d. Nocera 20-21, 21-19, 11-9, Goulet d. Funke 21-12, 21-1

Finals: Doucette d. Goulet 18-21, 21-6, 11-9

Seniors

Quarters: Jeff Coyle d. Mike Morrin 21-3, 21-3; Ed Costillo d. Tod O'Donnell 21-2, 21-10; Sal Marci d. Harvey Adler 21-1, 21-12; Tom Waltz d. Dick Clemente 21-5, 21-10

Semis: Costillo d. Coyle 21-12, 21-19, Waltz d. Marci 21-17, 21-18

Finals: Costillo d. Waltz 13-21, 21-4, 11-10

Doubles

Semis: Waltz/Costillo d. Bruce Daley/Dick Wolvertson by forfeit; Jack Nocera/Howie Packer d. Jeff Coyle/Sal Marci 21-15, 21-20

Finals: Costillo/Waltz d. Nocera/Packer 21-5, 21-14

Women's Open

Semis: Margo Chase Wells d. Rhonda Sacher 21-8, 21-3, Jackie Adler d. Rosie Bronsard 21-5, 21-5

Finals: Chase Wells d. Adler 21-15, 21-10

Women's B

Semis: Debbie Billington d. Lynn Petrowski 21-9, 21-19, Debbie Rooney d. Gail Stanley 21-6, 21-14

Finals: Billington d. Rooney 21-14, 21-14

Women's Novice

Semis: Debbie Billington d. Debbie Rooney 21-7, 21-7, Andy Fried d. Gail Stanley 21-18, 21-9

Finals: Billington d. Fried 21-16, 21-9

"What's the Score?"

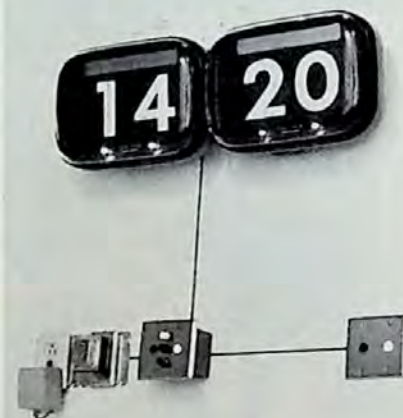
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Rhode Island

The Third Annual Get Acquainted Tournament was held at the Providence Central YMCA Jan. 26-28. Once again this tournament proved to be a successful way of acquainting people with the Rhode Island Racquetball Assn. and tournament style racquetball competition. Tournament Director and R.I.R.A. Chairman Jerry Melaragno reports that of the 84 participants, over 50 were playing in their first R.I.R.A. tournament. Two of the newcomers won first place trophies.

Thanks go to Howie Hawkins, Fred Miller, John Rosato, Bill Hanson, Chuck Batcher, Don Krasko and Norm Laliberte for helping to organize and run the tournament. A special thanks to Cal Steere and Tommy Ferro of the Providence Central YMCA for their cooperation and assistance. Door prizes and hospitality were provided courtesy of the following: the Fore Court Racquetball Club, the Playoff Racquetball Club, the Corner Shot Racquetball club, Kelly's Sporting Goods, Burger King, the Coca Cola Bottling Co. of Providence, Calise and Sons Bakery and Adolf's Beef and Sausage Co.

Results

Men's A

Quarters: Dennis Culberson d. Don Krasko 21-3, 21-4; Rene Depot d. John Rosato 21-11, 21-18; Bill Neri d. Jerry Melaragno 21-18, 21-13; Ed McGovern d. Mike Lee 21-7, 21-2

Semis: Depot d. Culberson 21-12, 21-10; McGovern d. Neri 21-7, 21-2

Finals: McGovern d. Depot 20-21, 21-9, 11-9

Third Place: Culberson d. Neri 21-20, 21-15

Consolation: John Rosato

Men's B

Quarters: Dick Zotti d. Roy Goodwin 20-21, 21-11, 11-6; Manny Pita d. John Ruggerio 12-21, 21-12, 11-2; Karl Krikorian d. Howie Schacter 21-12, 21-3; Alan Soucy d. Tommy Ferro 19-21, 21-13, 11-8

Semis: Pita d. Zotti 21-15, 21-19; Soucy d. Krikorian 21-19, 20-21, 11-4

Finals: Pita d. Soucy 15-21, 21-16, 11-9

Third Place: Krikorian d. Zotti 21-15

Consolation: Paul Cote

Men's C

Quarters: Dave Wehr d. Harris Yetra 21-10, 21-8; Dave Singer d. Bob Silvestri 17-21, 21-10, 11-0; Dick Shulman d. Harry Masiello 21-10, 21-20; Dave Louro d. Domenic Marcone 8-21, 21-8, 11-2

Semis: Wehr d. Singer 21-3, 21-9; Shulman d. Louro 13-21, 21-10, 11-10

Finals: Wehr d. Shulman Injury default

Third Place: Singer d. Louro forfeit

Consolation: Dave Mooradian

Women's

Quarters: Peggy Whittemore d. Betty Anderson 21-10, 21-5; Sharon Culberson d. Melba Campbell 6-21, 21-10, 11-8; Linda Sherrod d. Clare Garrabrants 21-18, 21-12; Norma Taylor d. Anne Roach 21-5, 21-5

Semis: Whittemore d. Culberson 21-12, 21-2; Taylor d. Sherrod 21-12, 21-15

Finals: Taylor d. Whittemore 21-15, 21-9

Third Place: Sherrod d. Culberson 21-16, 21-11

Consolation: Clare Garrabrants.

North Carolina

The second annual Sportime Mid-South Women's Open Racquetball Tournament Jan. 20-21, at Sportime Racquet Club in Greensboro drew participants from four states with Brenda Loube winning the Open Singles and a share of the Open Doubles.

Results

Open Singles

Finals: Brenda Loube d. Mildred Gwinn 21-12, 21-4

Semi-finals: Mildred Gwinn d. Caroline Brown 21-15, 21-15; Brenda Loube d. Luch Hardison 21-4, 21-4

Consolation Finals: Cindy Hunt d. Peggy Jo Rodney

Consolation Semi-finals: Peggy Jo Rodney d. Mary Jo Forde by forfeit; Cindy Hunt d. Pam Creech

B Singles

Finals: Betty Harlan d. Nancy Mize 21-11, 21-5

Semi-finals: Nancy Mize d. Bonnie Witt 21-12, 21-13; Betty Harlan d. Nancy Kehrberg 21-17, 21-12

Consolation Finals: Stephanie Bullington d. Cindy Hunt

Consolation Semi-finals: Stephanie Bullington d. Punky Gray; Cindy Hunt d. Di Worthing

C Singles

Finals: Maria Moll d. Karen Love 21-10, 21-8

Semi-finals: Karen Love d. Dody Cox 21-8, 21-12; Maria Moll d. Bonnie Witt 21-12, 21-4

Consolation Finals: Ann Rea d. Julia Shore

Consolation Semi-finals: Julia Shore d. Linda Stockton; Ann Rea d. Kristina Tisdale

Open Doubles

Finals: Brenda Loube/Caroline Brown d. Mildred Gwinn/Luch Hardison 21-9

Semi-finals: Mildred Gwinn/Luch Hardison d. Beth Cameron/Lesley Schmidt 21-1, 21-10; Brenda Loube/Caroline Brown d. Betty Harlan/Maria Moll 21-5, 21-2

Consolation Semi-finals: Linda Gosselin/Diana Swisher d. Gloria Brannon/Rose Keith

Consolation Finals: Linda Gosselin/Diana Swisher d. Robin Monroe/Dody Cox

Wisconsin

Paul Ikier successfully defended his title in the Wisconsin State Open Jan. 26-28, making it two in a row by easily defeating Bruce Thompson in the finals 21-11, 21-8. Ikier did not lose a game to anyone in the 46 man Open field and was only pushed once, in the quarters, by Dieter Schmidt 21-18, 21-11.

Upsets and near upsets seemed commonplace over the three day weekend but one stood out as perhaps the biggest upset in Wisconsin racquetball in the last ten years. Bill Schultz, playing the finest match of his career, upset number two seed Joe Wirkus in the quarters 10-21, 21-18, 11-7. Schultz, coming from an unseeded position, is the first player in six years to keep Wirkus out of the finals. Wirkus had no excuses after the match and complimented Schultz for his fine play.

This year's tournament was the largest ever in Wisconsin history with upwards of 380 entrants. Much of the credit must be given to the Miller Brewing Company, the co-sponsor for the event. All the awards were provided by Miller in addition to promotional material, advertising and door prizes. This was the first time the USRA Wisconsin Championships had a major sponsor. Thomas Kleiber, Miller manager of special events, told a standing room only crowd at the awards ceremony "We are very pleased with the results."

Host facility was the Falls Racquetball Club in Menomonee Falls, featuring 14 courts with a championship sidewall, backwall glass court. Lee Merkel and Margie Fish and their staff provided hospitality.

The Wirkus-Schultz match was just the beginning of surprises during the weekend. Bruce Thompson, coming from the sixth seed, pulled the second upset of the early rounds by topping highly regarded Gari Tate. Tate, the tourney's third seed, fell to Thompson 21-13, 14-21, 11-4 in the quarters. Tate had been playing superb racquetball in the four months preceding the tourney — his last three outings against Ikier were three gamers. The semi match-ups were Ikier vs. Jim Wirkus, who had stopped Galen Johnson in the quarters, and the

Bill Schultz pulled an upset in the Wisconsin State Open by beating Joe Wirkus in the quarters.



surprising match-up of Schultz vs. Thompson. A letdown was expected by Schultz, but he continued to play well, pushing Thompson to the tie breaker before falling 21-18, 17-21, 11-7. In the upper bracket Ikier had to overcome a 7-0 deficit against young Wirkus, but once he started rolling it was all downhill. Final score was Ikier 21-14, 21-8

The upsets continued in the Seniors division as Jerry Hoff, third seeded, topped number one seed and defending champion, Bill Harper, in the finals. A two hour match ensued with Hoff coming out on top 21-18, 17-21, 11-7. It was Hoff's first win ever over Harper. Hoff achieved another mild upset in the semi's by defeating number two seed Dan Trost 21-16, 21-15. Harper's semi win over Jim Compton went easily 21-14, 21-10. Compton went on to defeat Trost for third.

Surprises continued in the Womens Open division. Patricia Schmidt, the number one seed and going after her unprecedented sixth Wisconsin Open title, breezed through the quarters over Mary Johnson 21-13, 21-1, and Julie Jacobson in the semi's 21-1, 21-2. In the lower bracket, number two seed Connie Peterson stopped Green Bay's Susan Landry in the quarters 21-4, 21-5. In the semi's she then avenged a previous tournament loss to highly regarded 14-year-old Sheryl Kraus by defeating her 21-14, 21-12. This set up a Schmidt - Peterson finale for the umpteenth time. Another routine win was expected of Schmidt but this time she needed the tie-breaker to take home the title 18-21, 21-9, 11-9. This was the first time in five years Schmidt had even lost a game in state sanctioned play. In fact Peterson had a chance to win it — and should have. Game one had Peterson playing superb racquetball for the 21-18 win. In game two Schmidt seemed to settle down and hit all the right shots for a 21-9 lop sided win. In the tie-breaker Peterson dominated

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play for nine points with leads at 2-0, 4-2, 6-3, 7-3, 8-4, 8-5 and the last time at 9-6. Peterson held Schmidt twice 6-9 and then lost serve for the last time. The veteran Schmidt held service for five consecutive points from 6-9 and never let the second biggest upset of the tourney happen. This was Peterson's last tourney in Wisconsin as she moved to Oregon in mid-February. Another mild upset occurred in the Womens Open as Kraus topped number four seed Linda Waldron in the quarters 21-16, 21-11.

Pat Schmidt, right, defeated Connie Peterson in the finals of the Wisconsin State Open.



-Art Guenther photos

In the Masters division Jim White continued his dominance with a no sweat finale against "Diz" Kronenberg. The 21-1, 21-14 scores surprised no one. The absence of ailing Joe Bechard gave White the easiest Master's title in three years. In the quarters Corbin Stanelle fell to White 21-3, 21-7, and Dick Kalal couldn't do much better with 21-6, 21-9. Kronenberg stopped Wally Plazak 21-15, 21-15 in his quarters and barely got by Mike Makedon in the semi's 18-21, 21-15, 11-3.

The Men's C division was the gruelling event of the tourney with the largest entry - 100. Surprisingly the two finalists, Werner Zeitler and Randy Kerswill, both came from a feed-in position into the round of 64 - both played seven times. Zeitler came out on top of the marathon 21-18, 21-17.

The Mens B had 80 competitors. Andy Gutierrez topped the field by downing Bill Johnson in the finals 10-21, 21-15, 11-9. Gutierrez' route to the finals was not easy as he overcame Jim Marinello in the quarters 21-19, 21-19 and barely got by Tom Handlen in the semi's 21-19, 14-21, 11-10. Johnson defeated Bob Smith in his quarters 21-16, 21-18 and stopped Larry Krause in the semi's 21-16, 21-18.

The Womens C division was well played with Stacy Amend defeating Jane Oakley 21-19, 14-21, 11-9 for the title. Amend had an identical tie-breaker score in her semi's and defeated Cindy Kirkpatrick 21-11, 4-21, 11-9. Oakley's semi's were a little easier downing Madison's Pam Nelson 21-16, 21-19.

In the Juniors 17 & Under number one seed Dan Murray did what was expected and easily defeated Bob Kohl 21-12, 21-7 in the finale. In the semi's Murray handled Mike Rose easily 21-17, 21-3. The lower bracket semi's was quite another story as another near upset occurred. Second seeded Bob Kohl had to work extremely hard to get by much improved Dino Piscione. The score,

18-21, 21-20, 11-8, indicated how tough the match was and was probably the finest match of the tournament. Piscione served match point twice in game two but Kohl, the more experienced of the two, held on to push the match to the tie-breaker. A letdown by Piscione in the tie-breaker might have been his downfall, but he made his mark and will have to be contended with in the future.

The 15 & Under division had number one and number two Bob Kinney and Mike Manning squaring off in the finals with Kinney clearly being the stronger of the two as he came away with the title 21-11, 21-6. A well played third place match had Brian Kohl getting the win by the narrowest of margins over Dan Mohr 21-17, 18-21, 11-10.

For the first time in state sanctioned play a 13 & Under division was played and, surprisingly, the field was larger than both the 17 and 15-year-old divisions. Jeff Plazak was easily the class of the field. In the quarters he downed Steve Maasch 21-14, 21-1, and Mike Leban in the semi's 21-8, 21-3. Chris Fucci was Plazak's finalist opponent and managed a 21-13, 21-9 showing. The division was highlighted by the number of brothers in the field. Brother participants were Steve and John Maasch (Consolation Finalists), Tom and Steve Gildersleeve and Bobby and Sean Keenan. Ages ranged from nine to 13. Others contributing to the tournament, in addition to the Miller Brewing Company and the Falls Racquetball Club staff, were Leach Industries (shirts), Seamco (balls) and the USRA - Wisconsin Chapter (Gatorade). Bob Keenan

Results

Men's Open

Quarters: Paul Ikier d. Dieter Schmidt 21-8, 21-18; Jim Wirkus d. Galen Johnson 21-16, 21-11; Bruce Thompson d. Gari Tate 21-13, 14-21, 11-4; Bill Schultz d. Joe Wirkus 10-21, 21-19, 11-8
Semis: Ikier d. J. Wirkus 21-14, 21-8, Thompson d. Schultz 21-18, 17-21, 11-6

Finals: Ikier d. Thompson 21-11, 21-8, 3rd - Wirkus d. Schultz

Women's Open

Quarters: Pat Schmidt d. Mary Johnston 21-13, 21-1; Julie Jacobson d. Karen Finkelburg 21-18, 21-15; Sheryl Kraus d. Linda Waldron 21-16, 21-11; Connie Peterson d. Susan Landry 21-5, 21-4

Semis: Schmidt d. Jacobson 21-1, 21-2, Peterson d. Kraus 21-12, 21-14

Finals: Schmidt d. Peterson 18-21, 21-9, 11-9, 3rd - Kraus d. Jacobson

Seniors

Quarters: Bill Harper d. Mike Reitbrock 21-7, 21-8; Jim Compton d. Scott Wallace 21-13, 21-20; Jerry Hoff d. Bob Osterman 21-12, 21-7; Dan Trost d. Ed Koch 21-10, 21-1

Semis: Harper d. Compton 21-14, 21-10, Hoff d. Trost 21-16, 21-15

Finals: Hoff d. Harper 21-18, 17-21, 11-7; 3rd - Compton d. Trost

Masters

Quarters: Jim White d. Corbin Stanelle 21-3, 21-7; Dick Kalal d. Herman Herkert 21-13, 21-16; Mike Makedon d. Mike Jacobi 21-7, 6-21, 11-7; Diz Kronenberg d. Wally Plazak 21-15, 21-15

Semis: White d. Kalal 21-6, 21-9, Kronenberg d. Makedon 18-21, 21-15, 1-3

Finals: White d. Kronenberg 21-1, 21-14, 3rd - Makedon d. Kalal

Men's B

Quarters: Bob Smith d. Bill Johnson 21-16, 21-18; Larry Krause d. Jim Verhein 21-18, 17-21, 11-4; Tom Handlen d. Al Karter 21-16, 17-21, 11-4; Andy Gutierrez d. Jim Marinello 21-16, 21-19

Semis: Johnson d. Krause 21-16, 21-19, Gutierrez d. Handlen 21-15, 16-21, 11-10

Finals: Gutierrez d. Johnson 10-21, 21-15, 11-9, 3rd - Handlen d. Krause

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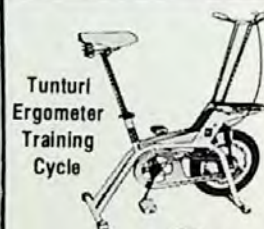
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Womens B

Quarters: Ginny Heft d. Joan Schloemer 21-10, 21-15; Diana Gagliano d. Su Joy Sobota 21-16, 21-11; Gina Waldron d. Dorothy Bergmann 21-19, 21-1; Celeste Horvath d. Dyanne Singler 14-21, 21-8, 11-7

Semis: Heft d. Gagliano 21-20, 17-21, 11-8; Waldron d. Horvath 21-16, 21-13

Finals: Waldron d. Heft 21-11, 21-8

Men's C

Quarters: Larry Hebring d. Bill Ersbo 31-21; Randy Kerswill d. Daryl Greenmeyer 31-11; Paul Schultz d. Dan Dillon 31-29; Werner Zeidler d. Tom Soens 31-28

Semis: Kerswill d. Hebring 21-8, 21-6; Zeidler d. Schultz 21-9, 21-6

Finals: Zeidler d. Kerswill 21-18, 21-17, 3rd - Hebring d. Schultz

Women's C

Quarters: Jane Oakley d. Pat Wagner 31-24; Pam Nelson d. Laura Merkel 31-29; Cindy Kirkpatrick d. Pat Molinaro 31-23; Stacy Amend d. Meryl Franke (injury forfeit)

Semis: Oakley d. Nelson 21-6, 21-19; Amend d. Kirkpatrick 21-11, 4-21, 11-9

Finals: Amend d. Oakley 21-19, 14-21, 11-9, 3rd - Nelson d. Kirkpatrick

Juniors 17 & Under

Semis: Dan Murray d. Mike Rose 21-7, 21-3; Bob Kohl d. Dino Piscione 17-21, 21-20, 11-7

Finals: Murray d. Kohl 21-12, 21-6, 3rd - Piscione d. Rose

Juniors 15 & Under

Semis: Bob Kinney d. Brian Kohl 21-12, 21-9; Mike Manning d. Dan Mohr 21-19, 21-8

Finals: Kinney d. Manning 21-7, 21-6, 3rd - Kohl d. Mohr 21-16, 17-21, 11-10

Juniors 13 & Under

Quarters: Jeff Plazak d. Steve Maash 21-4, 21-1; Mike Leban d. Steve Gildersleeve 21-6, 21-4; Chris Fucci d. John Maasch 21-2, 21-8; Tom Gildersleeve d. Paul Kreuger 21-8, 12-21, 11-10

Semis: Plazak d. Leban 21-8, 21-3; Fucci d. Gildersleeve 21-19, 21-9

Finals: Plazak d. Fucci 21-13, 21-9, 3rd - Leban d. Gildersleeve

Ohio

Over 180 players took part in the First Annual Loft Christmas Open Racquetball Tournament Dec. 15-17 hosted by Middletown Racquetball Club, Franklin. Some of the top players in the state saw exciting action. In the Men's Open Danny Clifford defeated former state champ, Rob Abrams, 21-19, 21-14. The Womens Open saw State Semi-finalist Bernice Friedberg defeat a strong Diana Parobeck 21-19, 21-17. Another highlight saw Jack "Thin" Dalton take former state senior's champ, Rod McKinley, to three games only to lose to Rod 11-9 in the tie-breaker.

Denny Stitsinger and Bob Bradley

Results

Men's Open: First - Dan Clifford, Second - Rob Abrams, Third - Ron Fox, Fourth - Charles Casuto, Consolation - James Curry

Men's B: First - Mark McIntosh, Second - Steve Miller, Third - Jim Warren, Fourth - Larry Gibbs, Consolation - Johnny Carney

Men's C: First - Bob H. Smith, Second - John Marinich, Third - Ed Lutz, Jr., Fourth - Jerry Leshner, Consolation - Bob Rice

Men's Seniors: First - Rod McKinley, Second - Thin Dalton, Third - Earl Heidman, Fourth - Rodger Cromer, Consolation - Gene Bonny

Men's Masters: First - Frank Redden, Second - Lawrence Curren, Third - Bill Maloney, Fourth - John Morris, Consolation - Jerry Merz

Juniors: First - Brooke McCarter, Second - Dave Lutz, Third - Rob Bradley, Fourth - Ben Underwood

Women's Open: First - Bernice Friedberg, Second - Diana Parobeck, Third - Lou Gifford, Fourth - Joyce Underwood, Consolation - Shelley Ogden

Women's B: First - Di Princell, Second - Carol Lang, Third - Janet Snider, Fourth - Vikki Webber, Consolation - Brenda Robb

Women's C: First - Carol Lang, Second - Sharon Balkenhol, Third - Jana Fowler, Fourth - Debora Wilson, Consolation - Nancy Huff

United Kingdom

RAF Mildenhall hosted a holiday racquetball tournament Dec. 28-30. Over 40 participants from six major USAF bases in the U.K. competed for the championship in Open Singles, Open Doubles, Women's Singles, Mixed Doubles, Seniors and Novice.

Intense, exciting racquetball was demonstrated during the tournament. The Open division championship was won by Lou Souther who defeated Art Potter 21-20, 21-13.

Potter then teamed with Fred Jenkins in the Open Doubles event, defeating Mildenhall's Art Evans and Matt Jones 21-8, 21-7 for first place.

The Women's division was won by Diane Rodgers. Rodgers defeated Paula Lomasney by scores of 21-7, 21-3. She then teamed with Ace Untalan to achieve yet another victory over the Lakenheath team of Souther and Kris Hudson 21-9, 21-10.

Untalan then defeated Phil Milton for the Senior's title 21-3, 21-9. Jack Potter slid by Bill George in a close contest 17-21, 21-14, and 11-6, for the Novice division title.



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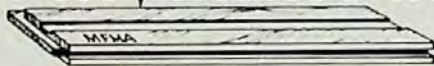
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Upcoming Events

April 27 and 28

First Dutch Open Championships, Racketcenter Westvliet 55, 2267 AC Leidschendam, The Netherlands, (070) 86 44 40, Tournament Directors Ron Valkenhoff and Jim Wright, April 14 closing date for entries.

April 27-29

3rd Annual Tinker's Guild Racquetball Tournament. Auburn YMCA-WEIU, 27-29 William St., Auburn, NY 13021.

May 1-6

2nd Annual Rinky Dink Open. The Montbello Sporting House, 4780 Oakland St., Denver, CO 80239; Tournament Director Norman Cornelius 303-373-4550

May 4-6

The Bob Boone Racquetball Open. The Bob Boone Action Courts, 65 Old King's Hwy, Maple Shade, NJ 08052; Tournament Director Pat Struthers 609-234-1333.

May 4-6

Women Only

3rd Annual Women's Racquetball Classic, Sacramento Handball and Racquetball Club, 725 14th St., Sacramento, CA 95814; Open, B, C, D, Junior, Senior, Open and B Doubles; Tim Scott, Kathy Schmidt, Bob Begert, Jeff Hetherington 916-441-2977.

May 18-20

National YMCA Championships

Houston Downtown YMCA, 1600 Louisiana, Houston, TX 77002; For information and entry blanks contact Jerry Sampson, Director of Sports and Recreation, 713-659-8501, Ext. 46 or 60; Entry deadline May 14, 1979, 5 p.m., no telephone entries, entry fee must accompany entry form; Official rules-USRA; Official ball - Seamco 600 (blue); Brackets of play — Championship, men only, limit 32 invitational, limit 16 team doubles, total prize money for both events \$3,150; Open brackets men Open singles and doubles, B singles and doubles, C singles and doubles, senior and masters singles, women Open singles and doubles, B singles and doubles, C singles and doubles; Tournament Director Dewey Strickland.



Will to Win Spurs on USRA— State Chairmen Partnership

USRA state chairmen heard Bob Kendler deliver these remarks during the Las Vegas convention in January.



National Convention



by Robert W. Kendler

During my many years in National Championship competition I discovered the winning teams were always made up of players who had the best teamwork. The winners were not always the best players, but they were always the best partners. We'd like to be YOUR winning partner. To do so we know we must be closer to you, must cover for you as you must cover for us, if ever the ball gets by. Frankly we want to develop a partnership that will be unbeatable. That's what this brief sabbatical is all about. We want to know you better. We want you to know us better. We want to work together better. Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success. Now we can't do it all in three days, but we surely can make a huge stride towards partnership. This is just the beginning of a wonderful adventure. We hope to gather annually, emphasizing not only a super seminar, but also a vacation setting that will make this the high point of your year.

You can be sure we will always have some pleasant surprises, and you can also be sure that nowhere else in the racquetball world will such a wealth of ideas and experience be available to you. Your job will be easier, even though the demands upon you may be greater. Remember . . . there are few, if any, jobs in which ability alone is sufficient. Needed also are loyalty, sincerity and team play.

To be a winning team I think the partners should know each other extremely well. At this point I know something about every one of you. I am going to know a lot more and, in the meantime, I would like you to know something about me. I have some reservations about describing myself and my plans, but I think you are entitled to know your partner's strength and weakness, as I know yours.

Let me start by telling you about Paterno. Joe Paterno of Penn State. Many of you may have read that he turned down one million dollars from the New England Patriots to become their new coach. He chose instead to remain with Penn State. Here is one of

the reasons he gave. He said, "I have had an opportunity to work with young people and have an influence on their lives. I think that was an overriding factor in my decision." I hesitate to tell you that I had to make the same decision in racquetball, turning down considerably more money because I had the good of our young people in mind. My association with the youth of America has been the most rewarding chapter of my life and, as you can see, it has also kept me young. Here in the 75th year of my life my prospects for continuing growth are self-evident because our organization exudes success. We have never known anything but success. We don't know how to fail. We realize, however, that success is not always eternal, failure is never fatal, and the only thing that counts is courage.

At times it takes a lot of courage to stand up for the amateurs, and occasionally for the state chairmen. I hope you will do the same for me. When you hear people criticize my efforts, refer them to the record . . . my record . . . of nearly half a century of serving amateurs, and particularly the ones who need more than four walls and a ball. For me, it has always been a labor of love; money has never been a consideration. Throughout every

examination of our books by Uncle Sam we were confirmed as a non-profit operation and, to this day, every inspection verifies that I have received no remuneration of any kind, other than the love and affection of the thousands of kids I helped through school or through the countless crises that go with "growing up." I'm familiar with all their disasters but, like Paterno, I enjoy working with young people and having an influence on their lives.

It would be perfectly natural for you now to ask "What's the reason?" Well I suppose everyone has a personal hero. Mine was Avery Brundage. I was not only his friend, I was best man at his wedding in Garmisch - Partenkirchen, and was privileged to spend many happy hours with him and his wife, Princess Marianne, at their home, and at ours in Lake Forest. We both attended the same Masonic Lodge as 33rd Degree members. I don't believe I ever needed to be sold the idea of fighting for the amateur, but if I did, Avery Brundage sold me. If ever there was a great American who deserved even greater honors, it was Avery Brundage. If you are wondering why I went into pro handball, it was to keep syndicate gambling out of it. If you are also wondering why I went into pro racquetball, the answer is the same. At least now I know all the money is going to the kids, and for the most part, they are using it very well. It's not for me to

tell them what to do with it, but if the information I have is correct, they are making good use of it. Marty Hogan has a couple more motorcycles than he can ride at one time, but he also bought a home for his parents, and I love him for that.

I hope I don't give you the idea that I think I am perfect. Nobody knows better than I that I'm not. One of my failings is that I am fiercely aggressive. I like the Vince Lombardi philosophy: "Winning is not a sometime thing, it is an all time thing. You don't win once in a while; you don't do things right once in a while; you do them right all the time. There is no room for second place. There's only one place, and that's first place."

I mention this because I want our State organization to be a model for the whole country. Now that the Olympics appear to be a possibility we would like to get our court sports considered for worldwide Olympic competition.

As we get to be better friends, you'll discover that whatever we do will be outstanding or we won't be involved. We run the best tournaments, produce the finest magazines and market the best products humanly possible, and we'll never stop trying. You'll get more help from us than you ask for, and we'll be as active in your state as you will permit us to be.



A smiling airport arrival includes, left to right, Dennis Wood (Michigan), Randy Lau (Hawaii), Alan Shetzer (Illinois), Dan Bertolucci (USRA), Wayne Vincent (Georgia), Tom Street (Illinois), Terry Fancher (USRA), Joe Ardito (USRA) and Sue Torbiki (Nevada).



(Top) At Ardito's round table discussion, left to right: Jerry Melaragno (Rhode Island), Pat York (Maine), Ardito, Bob Blier (New Hampshire) and Mike Gamache, (Vermont). **(Middle)** With Street leading the discussion on local promotion, left to right: Charlie White (South Carolina), Bob Baxter (North Carolina), Vincent, Street, Bob Keenan (Wisconsin), Marv Konowitz (Seamco), Art Orloski (Seamco) and Jerry O'Neal (Alabama). **(Bottom)** Dan Bertolucci leads the group on white glass, left to right: David Armstrong (Leach), Larry Bobbitt (Louisiana), Chuck Miner (Mississippi), Bertolucci, James Bixler (Arkansas), Dewey Strickland (Texas) and David Rippeto (Oklahoma).



Where do we go from here? That may be your next question. I don't know what YOU have planned for this year, but our main thrust will be on a widely expanded amateur program. Others here have described the minor and major improvements we are making in our program, and there will be progress in every area. All of this starts with money and, to generate money, we must first attract a very substantial sponsor. For this we need one of Fortune's "500" . . . and we are seriously negotiating with one of them now. Their sole interest is in our state and regional events and, should it be our good fortune to sell these people, our amateur program will be given an enormous boost. Stimulating our amateurs will be our major undertaking for 1979.



What's in our future? Incredible things. Like the portable court with one way glass. Galleries that will accommodate 10 to 15,000 spectators. Network television. Worldwide competition. Olympics. Spectacular court clubs. New balls. More visible balls. More durable balls. Extraordinary insurance coverage. Intercollegiate championships. Three wall tournaments. One wall tournaments. National outdoor championships. That's for the amateur players.

Now here is something for the owners. The Family Ball, its impact on racquetball. I am sure you all know I wear two hats, and carefully confine my remarks to the subject sport. In your best interests, however, I would like you to know about a new ball we have developed in handball for the women and children. It is a soft, painless ball that will produce many more hours of

(Left) All smiles in front of the new Seamco 600 blue racquetball are USRA President Bob Kendler, left, and Seamco President Al Mackie. (Top Right) Cocktail party grins come from, left to right, Patty Reid (Leach), Chuck Leve (USRA), Charlie Drake (president, Leach) and Seaton. (Bottom Right) About to lose another quarter is Vincent, who rumor has it, developed cramps in his elbow from pulling the slots all weekend.

play for the club owners and appeal to families where papa is handball oriented. We also think it will appeal to women as a change of pace from racquetball. Whatever the case may be, just as we developed racquetball for women, we will now do the same in handball. The overall effect will be to broaden the appeal of the court sports, and this must be good news for the club owners. The ball is half as hard and twice as fast... and the kids will love it. It will make its debut this year. These new players will be competing for your court time, and you should prepare for them.

What about our competition? There isn't much I can tell you because there isn't much around. However I really love competition, and I encourage all of our opponents to beat us, if they can. You know you should love your opponents because they make you do as well as you can. Without them you wouldn't have any reason to work hard, or any reason to strain and stretch to improve.

I don't deny that we're drivers here... we work hard to win them all. If we didn't try, it would be an insult to our opponents and, besides, WE LIKE TO WIN... but only with principle.

Propaganda to the contrary, we have the full responsibility in racquetball. Everyone knows this, and everyone respects us. We do not treat this responsibility lightly. We consult with the state chairmen and the players to insure a completely democratic decision. We consider you our Cabinet, and as these seminars grow, more and more will your thinking be sought by



management. There is some question about No. 1 in football, but not in racquetball! You can be proud to be a part of our family.

With regard to our advertising whiskey distillers, tobacco firms, and various other specialty manufacturers have leveled some criticism at us because we refuse to run their advertising if it does not enhance the "wholesome sports" image we seek. Others criticize if we deny them endorsements, but we are extremely selective. It seems our magazine is the textbook of the sport, and although other magazines are springing up regularly, our circulation continues to grow at a rapid rate.

We should finish up 1979 with 100,000 subscribers. Here again we take enormous pride in our product, and the result is that our advertising rate and content is far superior to any other similar publication.

It should be noted at this point that *National Racquetball* is the only publication not owned by a printer or a publisher. Ours is legitimately "the Voice of the player" because it is edited and run by the governing body of the sport. And in our shop the players run the show! We don't just publish the news, we make the news. What you get elsewhere, for the most part, is second hand. Integrity requires that every article be authentic and fully researched, and that no deception be used to stimulate sales.



By the same token our tours and tournaments are a model of managerial and professional preparation. Year after year, we produce more tournaments, better tournaments, and bigger tournaments than all the other groups combined. We have never had a failure, a suspension, or a rhubarb of any kind... and that must speak well for our staff. They are the most experienced tournament-team in America, and I for one am proud of their performance. The State Chairmen's Guidelines and Information Booklet will show you that we share our expertise with you.

Who ARE your partners? Now that is an appropriate question. In racquetball, we have Colgate, Leach, and Seamco. Without them, we would never have made the progress you now enjoy. We also enlist the computer services of Zahn Data Service Company and endorse the Wilson-Bata shoe. All of these people have been superb. They have been givers, not takers. They have supported racquetball to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. You can be proud of them too!

What are we going to do to strengthen our racquetball program?

First we are going to seek closer and more intimate cooperation with you. We are going to help you run bigger and better tournaments.



Chuck Hallock and his wife Susan discuss racquetball with convention coordinator and USRA National Coordinator Terry Fancher.

Second we are going to strengthen our position in other countries with a view of developing international competition.

Third we will develop a program of increased financial assistance for state organizations through both local and national sponsorship.

Fourth we will create more respect for amateurism. With the Olympics as our ultimate goal, we will begin now to ready our sport.

Fifth we will strive for better officiating. Certified referees and linesmen will shortly become standard procedure.

Sixth we will concentrate on developing good sportsmanship and take certain steps to make character profitable.

Seventh we will develop a variety of balls that will give you a choice and still qualify for USRA events.

Eighth we are going to make sure that we will be kept free of commercialism, that we will include no stunt sports, that this sport will not be fragmented or contaminated. That, by good example, we can establish a new order in sports . . . one that makes being State Chairman remain a mark of distinction.

As always my concluding thought is one of gratitude and thankfulness. Because I believe he who receives a benefit should never forget it — I also believe he who bestows a benefit should never remember it. We are trying in every way to benefit our State Staff, and I hope you will never forget what we do and what our sponsors do. Jack Grimm at Colgate, Al Mackie at Seamco, Charlie Drake at Leach and Al Gunther at Zahn, and all our other sponsors deserve your unbridled loyalty. By the same token we are beholden to you for the good you do at the grass roots level. Speaking for our staff, as well as the sponsors, you have our eternal gratitude. Cicero calls gratitude the mother of virtues, the most capitol of all duties, and uses the word "grateful" and "good" as synonymous terms, inseparably united in the same character. We will strive always to be grateful and good to you because you are *important* to us.

On your way home I want you to remember that we consider you a tremendous asset and a very vital and viable part of our whole team. You are our strength; you are an inspiration to us. Through you is funneled the best thinking in racquetball, and don't ever forget that we need you more than you'll ever realize. I wish I could find

some compelling way to thank you for what I know is a labor of love for you, as it is for me. I know we are both doing the same thing, in different categories. That doesn't change the fact that what you do is just as important as what I do, or Check Leve, or Terry Fancher, or Joe Ardito, or Danny Bertolucci, or Carol Brusslan, or Nick Longhurst, or Milt Presler or my sweet wife, Evie, or the several dozen other people who serve racquetball in our office.

It has been said that God has two dwellings . . . one in heaven, and the *other* in a meek and thankful heart. With all my heart, I pray God will bless you as you have blessed us.



Hogan's Place in the Sun

Marty Hogan emerged the champion of the Kunnan/Kennex Tournament of Champions, but it was Richard Wagner who put on the show.



Wagner races toward the deep right corner to track down a Hogan pass in their thrilling championship battle.

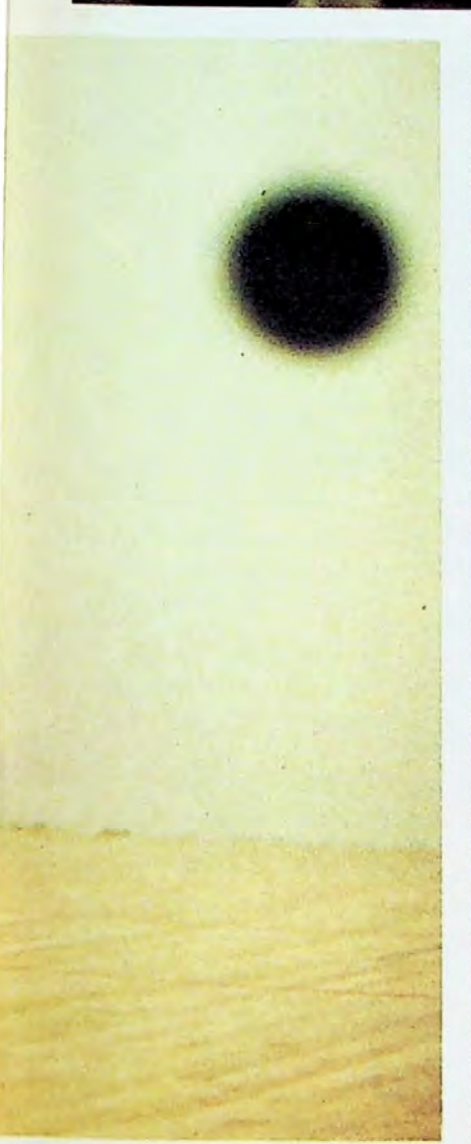
The Kunnan/Kennex Tournament of Champions, with its top 12, men only, double elimination, winner-take-all format, is probably the most unusual event of the season. It was also one of the most thrilling.

This was one tour stop in which Marty Hogan took a back seat in the public's eye — a back seat that is until he was down 6-1 in the tie-breaker of the finals.

From that point Hogan's shot making and Hogan's luck enabled him to come back and capture the \$10,000 first place victory.

Hogan's opponent, Richard Wagner, who had excited the full galleries all week, was unable to combat the rising emotionalism of one of the toughest tournaments in a long time, resulting in the devastating 11-7 tie-breaker loss.

\$10,000



Hogan shows the concentration and form that makes him the game's premier player.



Hogan, who had routined opponents all week, found himself in a match worth \$6,000, winner-take-all, as was the format all week. Each player had accumulated \$4,000 to the finals and Wagner had done it the hard way, first going three with Mike Yellen in the second round 20-21, 21-7, 11-7, then in one of pro racquetball's classic encounters, besting defending T.O.C champion Charlie Brumfield 21-20, 20-21, 11-10 in the quarters. That put him in the semi-finals against arch enemy Jerry Hilecher in a re-match for the number two rank. This time Wagner came out on top 21-17, 21-15 for a crack at Hogan.

"This was the first time I ever felt I really could beat him," said Wagner of Hogan. *"I was playing well and my intensity was good."*

Wagner's upbeat play was clearly evident from the onset of the match as he rolled up a surprising 9-2 lead forcing a rare Hogan time out to ponder the situation. Wagner had been using tough Z serves to the backhand and his own backhand shooting to build the lead.

Hogan regrouped and put together his first big run of the match after the time out, starting it with an ace on a drive left and taking a 10-9 advantage. From there the two traded points as Wagner refused to succumb and Hogan was unable to pull ahead.

A pass down the line left and two forehand kills broke the 15-15 deadlock and buoyed Hogan to an 18-15 lead as Wagner countered with his first time out of the match. It was to no avail, however, as Hogan stayed with the serve and added two more to 20-15.

Wagner held twice but was unable to dent the scoreboard and the third time Hogan served for the game he came in a winner with an ace on his *second* serve, a Z to the left 21-15.

Game two was a remarkable thriller as the game's two best players were obviously in the finals. The biggest lead by either player was three points (7-4, 13-10, 21-18) and the quality of play reflected the closeness of the score.

After ties at 4, 8 and 9 Hogan jumped to a 13-10 lead and continued to put the pressure on, but Wagner was able to mount his own pressure, largely on a red hot backhand, and tied the game at 13, then 14 and 15.

At 15-all Hogan cranked up the big serve and went for the throat. A drive left became an ace, and backhand pass another point and a drive left a second ace for an 18-15 lead, forcing Wagner to a time out, as he faced a carbon copy of the first game.

Not this time, though. A forehand kill off the back wall won Rich the serve and a Hogan skip of the serve got Wags off 15 making it 16-18. A forehand kill into the right corner made 17 and when Hogan skipped an absolute plum at the short line, the game was tied at 18.

Hogan then went for the impossible kill on the next rally, off a Z ball in the deep right corner with his forehand. Another skip. Now it was 19-18 and Wagner responded with a forehand kill in the right corner for 20-18, and moments later it was Hogan succumbing to the pressure, skipping again, this time a backhand toward the left corner, giving Wagner the game and the momentum 21-18.

The tie-breaker was played in two halves, Wagner winning the first half 6-1, Hogan winning the second half 10-1. That adds up to a 11-7 victory for Hogan. But he was on the ropes and he knew it.

"I don't like being down 6-1 in the tie-breaker," he said later. *"I was looking directly into the face of defeat."*

It must have been an ugly face because Hogan changed the features on it quickly, aided by two somewhat controversial calls by Referee (and former national champion) Bill Schmidtke. Both calls (at 6-1 Wagner lead and serve and 9-6 Hogan lead and serve) were on Hogan *"kills"* and both calls were upheld by Linesmen Dan Bertolucci and Terry Fancher of the NRC staff.

"That's what we have linesmen for," said Hogan later. *"There's always going to be controversial calls."*

"No way those shots were good," said Wagner. *"I got (blanked)."*

Good or not the calls stood, and from 6-1 (had the call gone in Wagner's favor it would have been 7-1) Hogan ran nine straight points (including two aces), the ninth point being the second call of controversy.

Wagner called his second time out there, but was unable to regroup in time and at 10-7 Hogan did apply the coup de grace on an ace serve, a drive to the right for the 11-7 victory, which was met by a standing ovation of five minutes by the 350 plus full gallery.

The site for the tournament was the Sportrooms of Coral Gables, in sunny Florida, and along with an abundant amateur entry, the weekend proved a deluxe time for pros and ams alike.

The semi-finals on Saturday afternoon found Wagner and Hilecher in a rematch of their New York semi-final battle in the Seamco Classic.

Hilecher had not been tested to the semi's, having bounced Steve Serot 21-17, 21-10 in his first match and David Fleetwood 21-11, 21-17 in the quarter-finals. But he was tested severely by Wagner, who used big streaks in both games to turn the tide each time.

In the opener Hilecher, who is a fast starter, did just that and moved quickly to an 8-4 advantage, as Wagner, generally slow out of the blocks, began to heat up. He warmed sufficiently to run seven consecutive points and take an 11-8 lead, largely with his forehand kill shot.

When the game tied at 13, the two men stalled at the crucial juncture, 14-13 Wagner lead. Three times they both served without scoring until Wagner finally hit a V pass right and then a down the line pass left to squeeze some daylight between them.

Hilecher, who was stuck on 13 for seven innings, finally dented the scoreboard, coming back to 16-15 and 18-17 before Wagner ran out the score with a forehand kill down the right line, a backhand kill in the left corner and at 20-17 a forehand skipped kill attempt by Hilecher from center court 21-17.



Hilecher follows through with a backhand kill into the left corner, his shot effectively taking Wagner out of the play.

The final score of game two was closer than the actual play, due again to a big run by Wagner. Down early 5-2 Wagner and Hilecher each reached seven together and when Jerry ran up three quick ones for a 10-7 lead, it looked like he meant to bring it to the tie-breaker.

But Wagner had different ideas. Keeping the ball effectively away from Hilecher's vaunted forehand and mixing his shots well Wagner ran up 12 consecutive points in the inning to take his own 19-10 lead! Of the 12 four were Hilecher errors and eight were winners, four passes and four kills.

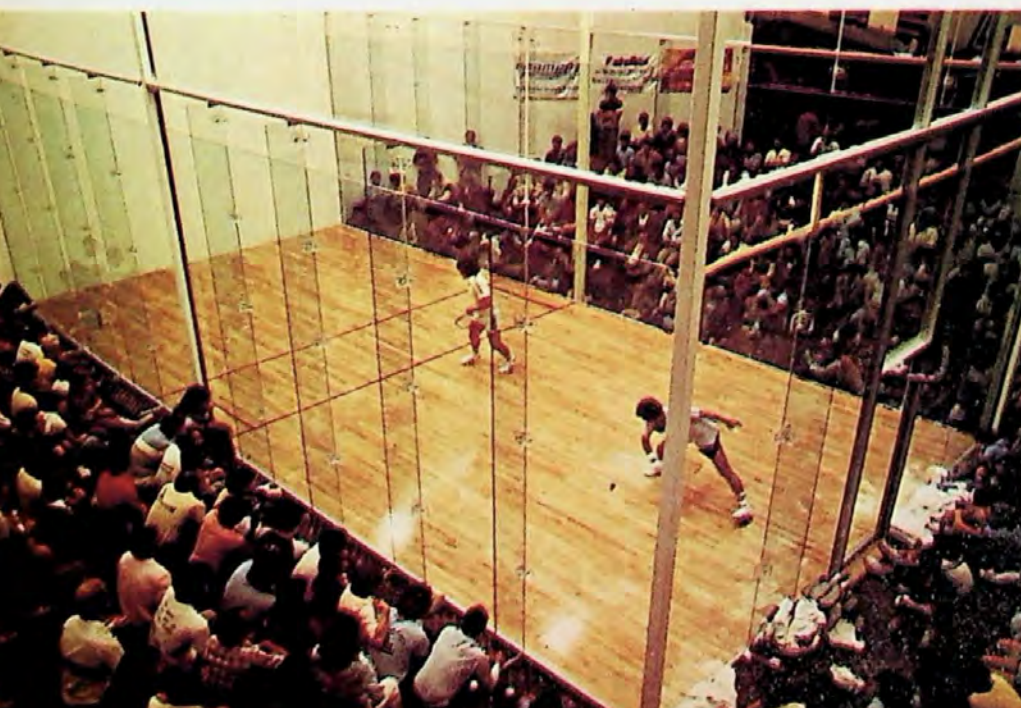
Hilecher scrambled to get back into it, closing to 15-19 and forcing a Wagner time out. But Jerry had too many skips in his racquet this day and a forehand error made 20 and a backhand skip of a tough serve to the left made the final 21-15.

Hogan meanwhile got another crack at Steve Strandemo, who quietly reached the semi-finals, stopping Steve Keeley in the opening round and Davey Bledsoe in the quarters. It was Strandemo who eliminated Hogan from the JACK IN THE BOX Classic, Marty's only defeat of the season.

It looked like Hogan was going to run Strandy out of the park in game one, taking a 9-3 lead, but soon after Marty began shooting his kill 37 feet, resulting in an abundance of skips and subsequent Strandemo points. Never one to refuse a gift Strandemo added a few of his own and was right back in it 10-11.

As if he said "it's time to play again," Hogan got back on track and in a blink ran the score to 16-10. He started with an ace, then after two diving gets, forced a Strandemo error, then followed with a pass, a kill and another race.

When Marty ran it to 19-11, only the final score was in doubt and some fine deep court shooting by Strandemo made it close 21-16.



Full galleries were the order of the weekend, as seen here in the semi-final match between Hogan and Strandemo.



Hogan gets set to rip a forehand drive as Koltun prepares to cover.



Fleetwood, making the quarters with continued regularity, here goes for a forehand kill against Hilecher.

Game two was a blowout. Hogan took an early lead of 7-3, built it to 9-4 and both players held until Marty hit five kills with the serve (two backhand, three forehand) and now it was 14-4 and Strandemo knew he was in trouble.

Steve took his final time out at 16-5 and got three shots to reach double figures at 8-20 before a forehand skip toward the right corner made the final 21-8.

The players each received \$2,500 for reaching the finals and Strandemo and Hilecher each had earned \$1,500 prior to the semi-finals, making their losses slightly easier to take.

The formula for reaching the quarters was a bit unusual, but not nearly as rare as the highlight of that round — the Brumfield/Wagner battle.

There were two routes to the quarters, and \$500 to any player making it there. Players ranked 5-12 had to win their first match against each other (in that case the winner went directly to the quarters). The losers went to the second round against players ranked 1-4 and the winners of that match went on to the quarters.

Only two of the top eight failed to make it (Craig McCoy and Mike Yellen) with Ben Koltun (21-15, 21-9 win over Bledsoe) and David Fleetwood (6-21, 21-20, 11-8 win over Yellen) taking their place.

The top three won their matches with Hogan besting Koltun 21-12 21-17, Hilecher stopping Fleetwood 21-11, 21-17 and Wagner doing in Brumfield, making his first start since being sidelined by hepatitis. Strandemo took the fourth spot beating Bledsoe 21-9, 21-15 for the vacated McCoy place.

Only three times in pro racquetball annals can we recall a 21-20, 20-21, 11-10 (or 21-20 in the old days) match, and it literally had the full gallery on their feet during most of the tie-breaker.

Brumfield, who was defending champion in the Kunnan/Kennex Tournament of Champions, found himself in a battle royale with Wagner, his former traveling mate. Throughout the match the two went back and forth, ebb and flow, up and down as they each wound their way to 20.

Wagner got there first in the first game, with a 20-17 lead, but Brumfield, throwing aside a double fault at 17-19, came back on the strength of two forehand kills and a backhand pass. Prior to his third try for the 21st point Wagner called a time out to survey the situation, a hinder followed and the final rally found both players on the floor after remarkable diving gets, with Wagner putting the winner away a forehand V pass left with Brum on the floor right.

Game two was the opposite as Brumfield gave Wagner a myriad of serves from every imaginable place on the court, leading his way to a 20-13 lead. But Charlie couldn't put away the big one and Wagner mounted his comeback taking a point here and a point there to finally close the gap entirely.

But Rich was unable to grab the win, and when Brumfield put away the 21st point to make it go three, the fans were wondering out loud about the possibility of taking the tie-breaker down to the wire.

Well, it did ladies and gentlemen. Did it ever.

Wagner's 4-0 and 9-6 leads were the biggest margin, with Brumfield pulling back to tie at 4-4 and 9-9 each time. It was Brumfield who got the first crack at the match, when Wagner skipped a forehand kill attempt off a drive right on the serve, making it 10-9. When Brum tried it again, Wagner went for it again and rolled out the forehand back wall serve return to come in at 9-10.

A super Z serve left got Wagner the weak return and he hit a fly kill with his forehand into the left corner to make it 10-10.

An old racquetball saying is "never score 10 without scoring 11" and Wagner was able to accomplish the feat on the next rally in virtually the same manner as his 10th point. Again a superb Z serve to the left handcuffed Brumfield, who flailed with his backhand in an attempt to return the ball to the front wall. No way to do it and the skipped shot spelled the match 11-10.



Wagner prepares to bury a backhand in his thrilling win over Brumfield.



Strandemo does his best to avoid the ball as Bledsoe's retrieve off the back wall travels just by Steve's body.

Hilecher had an easy time with Fleetwood in their first game moving from 10-all to 17-11 and coasting 21-11 by cranking up his forehand kills and drive serves.

Fleetwood gave a much better account of himself in game two, hanging in for ties at 13 and 17 before faltering to the veteran Hilecher. Again Jerry got hot, hitting four straight kill shots in his final inning all with his forehand, the first two into the right corner and the last two cross court (one right, the other left) to take the victory 21-17.

Bledsoe and Strandemo, in a match that promised some fireworks, ended a dud, at least where Bledsoe is concerned. The former champ is still unable to put together a consistent tournament and even a consistent tough match. Sometimes his shots are right there and other times nowhere.

Strandemo, whose yearlong comeback in the rankings is nothing short of incredible, coasted to a 21-9 first game win, playing a steady and error-free game, as Bledsoe, despite some flashy aces, was unable to control the rallies.

Game two saw ties at 6, 9, 13 and 14 before Strademo kicked out to a 17-15 lead from which he never lost the serve. A backhand kill into the left corner was 18; a forehand kill right made 19; a forehand pass left was 20 and a forehand kill down the line left was 21-15 and on to the semi's for Strandemo.

The final quarter found Hogan and Koltun in a good and entertaining match as Koltun played well and forced the issue often with Marty. Ben was able to stay with the champ in the first half of the first game with ties occurring at three, nine and 12 before a flurry of kills and aces gave Koltun the TKO 21-12.

Koltun hung in a lot longer in the second game and actually looked like he could win it as ties again occurred at nine, 12, 15, 16 and 17. But Hogan hit a dump re-kill to regain the serve at 17-all and two quick points made it 19-17.

Ben got one back on an ace (drive left) but that was it as Hogan hit a forehand kill to get the serve and followed with a forehand kill off the back wall to set up match point.

And in typical Hogan fashion he went for and got the ace a drive to the left for the victory 21-18.

The first two rounds saw Koltun stopping Bledsoe 21-15, 21-9 in a match that some felt Bledsoe gave up in order to better position himself in the draw, but Koltun played well and would have won this one under any circumstances.

Fleetwood's thriller over Yellen saw him avoid a Yellen match point in the second game to emerge victorious 11-8 in the tie-breaker, in a match between two of the brightest young players on tour.

Brumfield was overpowering in his 21-6, 21-12 win over Serot, who still does not have the timing, nor shot selection needed to vault back up among the leaders.

Strandemo had all he could handle against Keeley in an 18-21, 21-10, 11-5 battle. It was one of Keeley's finest recent efforts with mental toughness on Strandemo's part separating the two.

In round two Keeley couldn't keep the edge and Hogan blasted him 21-7, 21-16 in a match that looked and was played like a tune-up.

Bledsoe stopped fourth seeded McCoy 21-16, 21-15 in one of his best efforts of the season, as McCoy let the Miami night life get the better of his game.

Wagner's exciting three-gamer with Yellen saw Rich start slowly and then get on track in the 20-21, 21-7, 11-7 encounter.

And Hilecher, the second seed, stopped Serot in the lower bracket of the second round 21-17, 21-10 knocking Steve out of the tourney and moving on to the quarters.



Part of the fun in the sun was a Saturday trip through inter-coastal waterway around Miami and the visit to the famed Stiltsville area.

Men Pro Results

(First Round): Koltun d. Bledsoe 21-15, 21-9; Fleetwood d. Yellen 6-21, 21-20, 11-8; Brumfield d. Serot 21-6, 21-12; Strandemo d. Keeley 18-21, 21-10, 11-5.

(Second Round): Hogan d. Keeley 21-7, 21-16; Bledsoe d. McCoy 21-16, 21-15; Wagner d. Yellen 20-21, 21-7, 11-7; Hilecher d. Serot 21-17, 21-10.

(Quarter-finals): Hogan d. Koltun 21-12, 21-17; Strandemo d. Bledsoe 21-9, 21-15; Wagner d. Brumfield 21-20, 20-21, 11-10; Hilecher d. Fleetwood 21-11, 21-17.

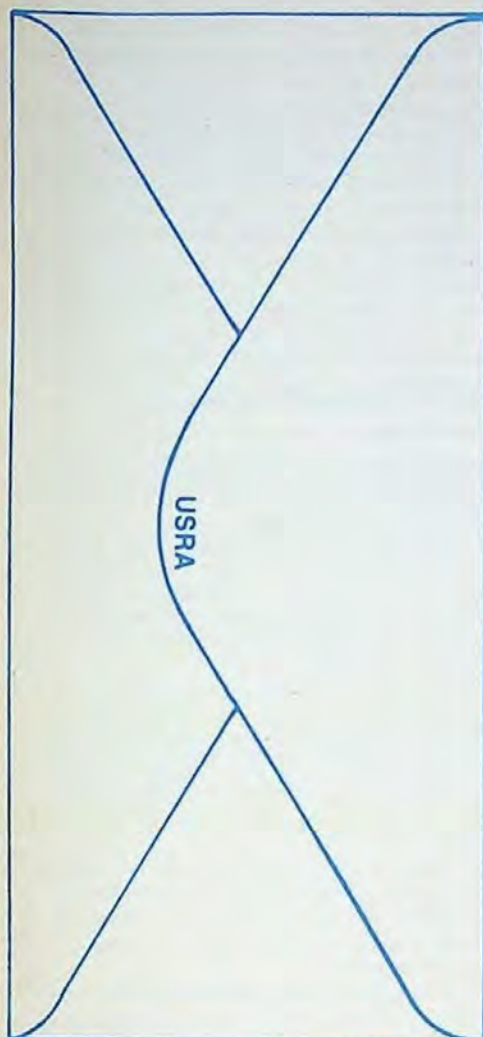
(Semi-finals): Hogan d. Strandemo 21-16, 21-8; Wagner d. Hilecher 21-17, 21-15.

(Finals): Hogan d. Wagner 21-15, 18-21, 11-7.

NOTES OF THE TOURNAMENT . . .

Owners Bruno Cerchiai, Ed Torkelson and Tim Foley were outstanding in providing hospitality for the players and administrators including a gorgeous buffet dinner the night prior to the tourney, and a wonderful boat trip through the intra-coastal waterway around the Miami area . . . weather was wonderfully cooperative and all out-of-towners found their way to the beaches in the area . . . Club managers Fred Lewis (of handball fame) and Frank Johnson ran the amateur divisions superbly with the help of Tom Karas . . . nice to see old friend Fred Blaess do well (second in the seniors) to Fred Letterer . . . other amateur winners were Bob Bos over Tim McAuliffe 21-20, 21-4 in the Open; Nancy Hornack over Nancy Hamrick 21-11, 21-18 in the Women's Open.

Thanks as well to Bill Swartz, Jerry Iafollo and all the other people who made the Kunnan/Kennex event so successful. Hats off to you all — it was a wonderful event. ●



Instructional Film Should Make Great Sport Greater

Dear Mr. Kendler:

As we near completion of our Racquetball Instructional film series at the Athletic Institute we are confident the films will make a significant contribution to the continued good health of this great sport. We sincerely hope you share our confidence and we thank you for your financial contribution.

We wish to specifically acknowledge the contribution of Terry Fancher of your staff. In addition to serving as the chief technical advisor Terry has given gladly of his time and expertise during the post production work.

Jim Hotchkiss
North Palm Beach, FL

A Champ

Gentleman of the NRC:

Not only does the title Tournament of Champions fit the finest players in the country it also fits the finest tournament to date. Congratulations to such greats as every member of the NRC involved in choosing Sportrooms Coliseum for this tournament, Ed Torkelson, Bruno Cerchiai, Tim Foley owners, Don Keils, Frank Johnson, Tom Karas, Ron Chapple, Singh Management and their efficient staff. What a job well done.

Jerry Iafollo
Chicago Heights, IL

Rod Orduna's Oasis

Dear National Racquetball:

As an avid fan of the sport of racquetball and a reader of its premier national periodical I want to call attention to the barren desert of Nebraska for just a moment. Lincoln has a promoter deserving a note of national recognition, not because this person is a national champion (he isn't) but because he gives so unselfishly of his own time, money and knowledge to a game he truly loves and to anyone of any age at any level of play. He doesn't stand to gain financially from the help he gives players. He has taught hundreds of people how to play the game and hundreds more how to improve their games. He is one of the catalysts behind the dynamic growth of the game. He should be given recognition for introducing a fine sport to a fine state, making Lincoln an oasis for Nebraska racquetball. This man's name is Rod Orduna.

Jim Kirkpatrick
Lincoln, NE

Another Player for the C/Novice Category

Dear Sir:

In response to Dick Chapin's call for a C/Novice category for players 35 and older in the December, 1978, issue, I support this idea. I am 41 and have been playing regularly for about two years. My game and conditioning have probably reached their top level and I find that playing in a C division tournament with 64 plus entries requires matches of two and three per day for three days. Very difficult even for the 20 and 30-year-olds. Playing in the senior men's division hasn't allowed for satisfying progress either. In that division it is not uncommon to run into A level and in some cases open caliber players.

I would regularly enter tournaments which included a senior men's C division.

Dan Jaksen
Utica, MI

Offensive . . .

Dear Editor:

Dr. (Victor) Spear's tongue-in-cheek offer to administer his "Revolutionary Backhand Cure" to women is the most offensive journalism I've seen in a long time.

Carol Wirkus
Lombard, IL

Informative . . .

Dear Ms. Brusslan:

I enjoyed your articles about women in racquetball in the *National Racquetball* magazine.

I am an obstetrician-gynecologist in the northwest suburbs of Chicago and, being a racquetball player as one of my partners also is, we are very interested in this sport and especially its excellent physical conditioning characteristics for women of all ages, especially those who are pregnant.

We feel that the better physical condition a woman is in, the better physical condition of the fetus, and, therefore, the newborn baby will be.

I will be interested in continuing to see further articles about pregnant women and racquetball in the future.

Joseph C. Ptasinski, M.D.
Hoffman Estates, IL

A Joy . . .

Dear Carol:

Thank you for your continuing articles on "Women in Racquetball." It has been a pleasure to receive *National Racquetball* because of its women's interest articles and other great stories. Thank you also for the January article on Kathie Davie and myself. What a joy to share racquetball with other American women.

Linda Nathurst
Nashville, TN

Absence of Eyeguards Concerns Society to Prevent Blindness

Dear Ms. Brusslan:

We are indeed encouraged by the forthright presentation of the realities of racquetball eye safety by Joseph Ardito, National Commissioner. Pointing out the very real possibility of participants accidentally inflicting ocular damage upon fellow players was an especially telling point. Coincidentally experience in the industrial environment supports Commissioner Ardito's contention; an estimated one-third of all shop work eye injuries result from the actions of co-workers!

For the "good of the cause" we call attention to the fact that from cover to cover in the December issue only tournament winner Steve Strandemo appears to be using safety eyewear! All players and individuals depicted, even in

advertisements, are either without eye protection, or wearing what clearly appear to be (unsafe at any racquetball speed) streetwear eyeglasses.

We are indebted to *National Racquetball* and, especially, to Commissioner Ardito for saying it like it is: racquetball and eye safety make a very good team.

James E. O'Neil
New York, NY

We are continuing to use photos of eyegard-wearing players when at all possible. Please see Steve Strandemo's instructional story in a future issue. Ed.

Mixed Doubles Views

Don't Protect Novice Female

Dear Chuck:

This letter is an answer to your question posed in the January issue concerning rules for mixed doubles.

I have trouble discerning whether you are trying to devise rules for novice players or for tournament play. All of the problems that you cited for mixed doubles would also hold true for men's doubles, if you are talking about novice players. Tennis does not make a distinction in their mixed doubles. Men serve to women and vice versa. In no way do they try to protect the woman player. In view of this I feel that the same attitude should prevail in discussing rules about mixed doubles.

Your first comment about the line being drawn on the court seems to present an extremely difficult situation for the referee. Men and women who understand doubles play will need no such line. In reference to your second statement, much like tennis, I feel that men and women should serve to both men and women.

Therefore I would like to propose the following rules:

1. The team that is serving shall serve to the left when their score is even and serve to the right when their score is odd.
2. Poaching on the serve should be made illegal. Otherwise all normal rules for doubles would be in force.

I want to reiterate that we should not devise rules to protect the novice female player. The same difficulties that she has when first playing doubles also hold true for the men in the same situation. We need consistent rules to govern tournament play. In our recent Schoeber's Pro-Am racquetball tournament we had 40 teams playing in both Open and B mixed doubles. At no time was the woman partner forced into the back corner with the man taking over. We should expect tournament players to react properly to the concept of mixed doubles. Novice players will gain this proper perspective as they mature as players.

William R. Dunn
Fremont, CA

A Line Would Be Terrible

Dear Chuck:

You requested opinions, so here goes: first and foremost, I don't think mixed doubles will ever really catch on, particularly in the pro ranks, because of the vast difference in ability between men and women. It hasn't really caught on in tennis, for the same reason. It may well work out, with some restrictions, in amateur racquetball, where there are some women who can, to a fair extent, hold their own against many of the men (excluding the top open players who would not be allowed to participate, and probably wouldn't want to).

I think the idea of drawing a line that cannot be crossed is terrible, as part of the skill and fun of doubles is covering for each other, switching sides and areas of the court when necessary, and dividing the court in a manner that best suits the talents of the participants. The only restrictions that make sense to me are on the serve: requiring the men to serve only to the men, or giving the men one serve instead of two.

One other idea comes to my mind, again for amateur racquetball: the A division of mixed doubles shall consist of any A women player, playing with any men's B player, or if the man is an A player, he must not have been the winner of any singles or doubles A tournament in the past two years. The mixed doubles B division would consist of women B players with men's C players.

Again I think your efforts in this area on a top, or professional level, will be futile, and even with restrictions that tend to equalize ability, it will be a poor game to play or watch, and just won't make it.

Phil Simborg
Posen, IL

Line Could Put a Hole in Her Back

Dear Chuck:

I agree that there is a need to control the "win-at-all-costs" male or female of the mixed doubles racquetball crowd; however you're suggesting putting a straightjacket on the game.

A line down the center of the court? You'd have partners hopping all over the place in an effort to keep on opposite sides causing more damage than would be caused without such a ruling. And did you stop to think of the excitement of "the good cover" by a partner who picks up a shot his or her partner missed? Your line would eliminate such finesse and teamwork. Why play doubles?

Serving to only your sex is also lacking thought about what can happen in a mixed doubles match. Picture this: Serving team — male on left, female in the box on the right. Receiving team — male on the right, female on the left. Male server serves to male receiver who hits the ball 150 m.p.h. down the right side. If she's quick (superhuman?) the server's partner is out of the line of play and here is no problem. But it is more likely than not that she'll have a "hole" drilled in her back or leg. Also have you ever thought that the male of the receiving team might be the weak member of the team? A basic idea in doubles is to play the weak side. You're suggesting we could no longer take advantage of that.

Again — why play? I believe your suggestions would be the death of mixed doubles at an early age.

You asked for suggestions. It is necessary that the basic rules not be changed. The only additional rule necessary would be to leave it up to the referee to first warn, and second take action (loss of serve or point) against the infringing player. The call should be subject to appeal.

Jeanette M. Crnich
Missoula, MT

Worth More than Three Dribbles

Dear Mr. Leve:

Responding for the "little people" to your rule proposals for mixed doubles I would suggest you consider the following:

1. Restrictive rules are an excessive means of controlling "male chauvinists" and considerably less effective than the reactions of a female partner. They would affect everyone's opportunity to play competitively not just those with the problem.
2. The average amateur club player doesn't hit the ball 130 miles per hour. Even if this was common, which is doubtful, the return of a racquetball serve primarily involves reflexes and coordination not muscle bulk. There is little documentation to support the notion that female reflexes are inferior.
3. Dividing the court lengthwise to prevent encroachment also prevents alternative strategies in court coverage — some prefer a front — back coverage due to varied skills of the partners involved.
4. The service pattern of male to male and female to female would further prevent the use of service strategy and the element of surprise — some of us work diligently to prevent telegraphing our intended service style and location — to no avail if this rule is implemented.
5. Standard hinder calls are needed for everyone's safety and are more essential to protection than service restrictions. I've never seen anyone hurt on the reception of a serve.
6. If some feel the need for such "protective legislation" perhaps a distinction should be made between "sociable" and "competitive" mixed doubles. The latter being played under the normal doubles rules.
7. Under the service and court restrictions you proposed the female partner would never have to strive to be as good or better than her best opponent. She would only have to be better than her best female opponent.

Although I am a definite novice to mixed doubles, I would prefer not to be "crippled" by the implementation of rules reminiscent of my former experience with "girls basketball." Hopefully there are a few other women out there who know they're capable of more than three dribbles and a "half-court" game, whatever the sport may be.

Sharon Taylor-Roepke
Kalamazoo, MI

How about a Buffer Zone

Dear Chuck:

I'm glad to see that something may finally be done about the problem concerning mixed doubles. I really enjoy playing it myself, but after several mixed doubles tournaments as both player and director I know there is a need for guidelines.

The serving rule is good, but it must be stated so it is clear when the served ball is good. Many times if the server tries to bring the ball into the right side player's backhand from the right side, the receiver will step over the line to hit forehand and the server is then charged with a fault serve. A lot of players will also let serves go that should be returned, trying to get faults because it's not the shot they prefer to hit. If the serve is hit short enough so it does not continue to the back wall, it should be a good serve. The same would apply to the left side if the receiver is left handed. If the receiver chooses to take the ball forehand and the server is in the way, an avoidable hinder should be called.

As far as the rest of the rally goes having the line through the middle of the court does prevent one player from dominating the game, but it also makes it hard to play a good strategic doubles game, especially at the open level. In regular doubles partners cross over sides to cover shots when their partner is out of position, and the same thing happens in mixed doubles. Here at our club we've thrown around the idea of having a three foot buffer zone up the middle where either player may take a shot.

Ruth K. McGovern
Anaheim, CA

Partners Often Affectionate, Not Equal

Dear Chuck:

The rules which you propose would hurt the game of mixed doubles both in club play and in tournament play. Painting a line down the middle of the court forces the partnership into two side by side singles games with little teamwork necessary. The weaker partner would be more easily isolated by the opposition and could expect no help from his/her partner since the center line could not be crossed to cover weak returns or to back up missed shots.

The segregated serve rule assumes that the woman is always the weaker of the pair. This is very often untrue of club play where bonds of affection rather than equality of ability determine the partnership. This serve rule also eliminates any element of surprise. At the tournament level the rule is superfluous due to the high quality of women's play.

Rule three concerning hinders is not an addition but rather a statement that mixed doubles play is doubles play and therefore falls under normal doubles rules.

The USRA should not fall into the trap of making special rules depending on who plays. The mixed doubles rules that you propose are designed to protect women from being bullied by their partners, picked on by the opposition or embarrassed by their own lack of skill. The proper purpose for rules is to enhance the quality of the game, not to bring about sexual equality on the court. Same sex doubles and mixed doubles

should play according to the same rules. If the game of mixed doubles gets watered down by "protective" rules, the game will lose its enjoyment and die.

Joan T. Pearce
Oak Park, IL

Let Men Play with Other Hand

Dear Mr. Leve:

One of the ways that we at our club in Dallas have enjoyed mixed doubles is to have the guys play with their other hand. In most cases that means the men will use their left hand. The results have been overwhelming. The women find the game more enjoyable because they are involved in the volleys more and they do not feel intimidated since the guys can't hit the ball as hard with their left hand. Personally I feel it helps my game as right hander because using your left hand takes your power away and makes you watch and concentrate on the ball at all times. Therefore you get down lower on your shots and you force yourself to be a more complete player.

It takes a while to get used to, but we are now forming a mixed doubles league because so many more players can enjoy doubles without being bored or hurt.

Phil Henning
Dallas, TX

Give Us More on Doubles

Dear Mr. Leve:

I would find it very interesting to see more articles relating to the play of doubles, especially in the instructional section of the magazine. I would think more articles on doubles relating to strategy and court position would be very enlightening to myself and other subscribers.

Louis M. Palomba
Staten Island, NY

We agree. See the story this month on doubles communication and watch for Steve Strandemo's instructional article coming up in a future issue. Ed

A Woman's Field

Dear Carol:

I'd like to thank you personally for the great article in the February issue. I have had many compliments and I think the story on women in the racquetball business will bring more girls into the field.

Linda Vaile
Mountain View, CA



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Top Male Pros Would Accept Mandatory Eye Guards



In an informal survey of the leading male professional players, *National Racquetball* has learned that virtually all top pros would accept a mandatory eye guard rule. The survey, as part of *National Racquetball's* continuing quest for a solution to the eye guard problem, was taken at recent stops in Miami and Denver along the Colgate Pro/Am Tour.

Nearly to the man, the pros reacted favorably to the question, "Would you accept a mandatory eye guard rule, assuming everybody else did?"

Most top players have played with eye guards at one point or another during their careers and the adjustment, if given over a period of a few months, would not be difficult.

"Sure, if the other guys had to wear them, so would I," said Jerry Hilecher, the tour's number two ranking player. "My only concern would be that the association would try to work in an eye guard royalty deal to take advantage of the ruling."

Such cynicism was only voiced by Hilecher, however. Marty Hogan, the main man on tour, was pleased with the concept. "I'd go along with it," he said. "It would be good for the pros to lead by example."

Some of the professionals had questions relative to such a rule including what effect, if any, a mandatory rule would have on those players who wear corrective eye glasses. The answer to that one is that such corrective glasses already impair vision more than would eye guards, so those players who wear glasses have been playing under a handicap for years.

Players who fall into that category, such as former champion Charlie Brumfield, wholly support the proposed rule. "I never was able to adjust to contact lenses," said Brumfield, "so I've worn glasses all these years. My peripheral vision has suffered a bit, but the lenses are safe."

Players wearing corrective lenses would have to verify that the lenses are, in fact, made of a non-breakable, shatterproof material. Other than that the glasses would be treated as if they were eye guards.

"Remember," said Brumfield, "that the players with glasses still are at a disadvantage because often sweat drips down onto the lens, distorting vision. Even with a headband, it's still a problem."

The timing of implementation of such a rule was another concern of the pros. Most felt that the rule should be instituted at the beginning of a season, in September, allowing the summer "off" season to be used to try different types and get used to the eye guards.

"As long as we have time to adjust, there shouldn't be a problem," said Craig McCoy, one of the pros who didn't, did and now doesn't wear eye guards. "I think the guys just need to be prodded a little."

Vanity, which was the concern of many pros, still is a worry, but as one unnamed player said, "Well at least we'll all be ugly together. I guess we'll look that much better when we take them off after the match."

Out attention next moves to the women professionals. Will the gals support a mandatory eye guard rule?

Find out next month in *National Racquetball*. ●

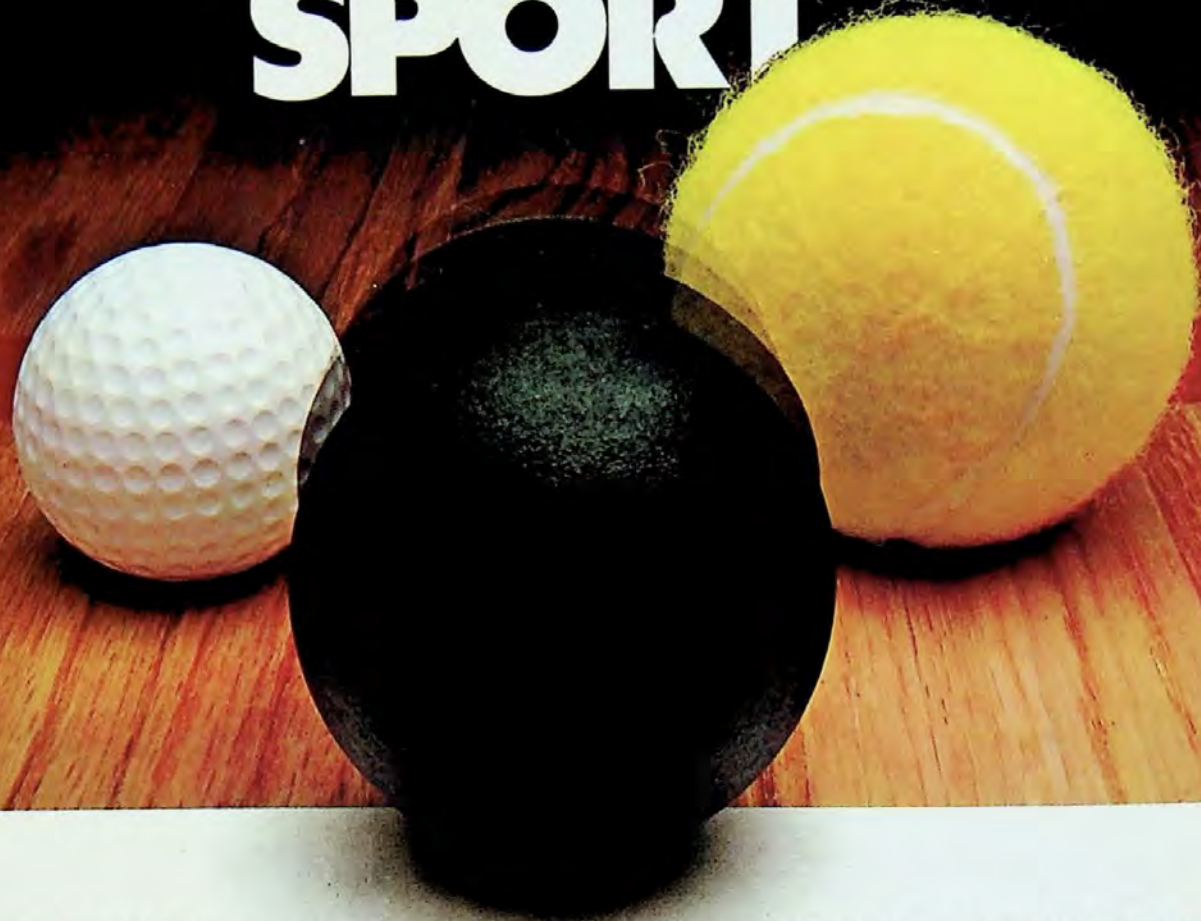


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