THE GLASS COURT

RACQUETBALL HANDBALL CLUB AND STADIUM

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PRO-AM

RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT

April 28, 1977 through May 1, 1977

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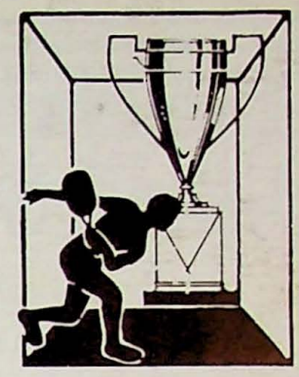

THE GLASS COURT

RACQUETBALL HANDBALL CLUB AND STADIUM

Welcome to Chicago, The Glass Court Racquetball Club and Stadium, and the Leach/Seamco Pro-Am Racquetball Classic.

We are very pleased to have been selected for an NCCA sponsored tournament to host you these next 4 days, and if there is anything we can do to accommodate you more fully please don't hesitate to call upon us.

The Glass Court houses 12 quality courts, one of which is 3 wall glass with spectator viewing for 350 people, complete locker facilities inclusive of saunas and exercise rooms, and the Wallbanger Room, which will allow you to relax and enjoy your favorite drink while watching the tournament competition on our exhibition courts.

We are extremely pleased to have contestants from all parts of the country with us at The Glass Court and hope that you will not only enjoy the tournament, but will find the time to visit some of the many attractions in Chicago and the surrounding areas.

We wish to thank the NRC, our dedicated club members and of course, our staff, who donated many hours towards making this tournament the success that we feel it will be.

Best wishes to all,

Ronald Hankin, President
Tim Kostick, Vice-President
George Smith, Vice-President
Dan Bertolucci, General Manager

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Meet the National Racquetball Club and United States Racquetball Assoc.

Bob Kendler, at age 72 still a dynamo on the court, is the father of all the court sports. Before racquetball was ever imagined, this Milwaukee born real estate giant was wowing the spectators on the handball court. And if you've been following handball or racquetball for a few years, then you know the story of court sport success that has followed Bob.

In 1951, at the urging of his fellow players, and in an attempt to right what were then and still are inconsistencies in the amateur code, Bob formed the U.S. Handball Association. At that time the Amateur Athletic Union (A.A.U.) had total jurisdiction over the sport of handball, but not for long. Within two years, virtually every player of stature had joined the U.S.H.A.

Under Kendler's leadership, the U.S.H.A. grew to a strong and healthy body, the true voice of handball. Its publication Ace magazine (since changed to Handball) has become the recognized Bible of the sport.

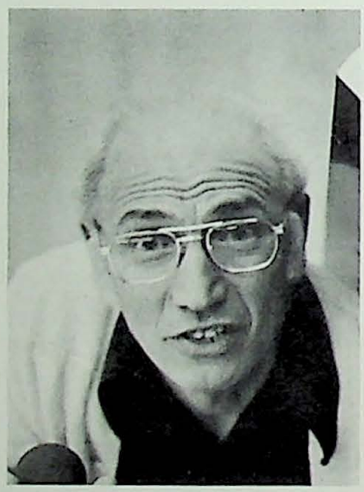
As president of the N.R.C. and U.S.R.A., and like all N.R.C. personnel, Mr. Kendler welcomes your comments. If you have any questions regarding racquetball or the N.R.C./U.S.R.A., feel free to drop him a line.

The business manager and national commissioner of both the U.S.R.A. and N.R.C. is likeable Joe Ardito. Another "refugee" from handball, Joe brought with him 25 years of tournament and player experience into the racquetball world three years ago. Now thoroughly comfortable in his important racquetball role, Ardito has rapidly become the liaison between major manufacturers and the N.R.C./U.S.R.A.

His responsibilities include negotiations of contracts, advertising in National Racquetball magazine, and generally handling the business end of running our Associations.

As National Commissioner he has earned the respect of all pro players as a fair, but firm enforcer

ROBERT W. KENDLER



JOE ARDITO

CHUCK LEVE

After forming the first racquetball association in 1968, Kendler formed the N.R.C. to promote pro racquetball and the U.S.R.A. to further promote amateur racquetball in 1973. From the beginning both of these organizations have shown tremendous growth, paralleling the growth of racquetball.

By publishing National Racquetball magazine, the U.S.R.A./N.R.C. group has by all guidelines, the most professional, timely and interesting racquetball publication there is.

The official rule book, development of court clubs, relations with manufacturers and all aspects of racquetball's promotion go through Mr. Kendler's office.

of N.R.C. policies. If ever a problem arises before, during or after a tournament, you can be sure Joe Ardito will be able to handle it.

Ardito's latest project is organization of state and local chapters of the U.S.R.A. to give an even bigger boost to racquetball's promotion.

The one man who has ridden herd on the rise of racquetball is Chuck Leve. Tabbed by Bob Kendler to run his racquetball organization in 1970, Leve quickly assimilated his talents to his babe of a sport.

Racquetball and Leve became synonymous. Anxious to utilize his journalism degree, Leve became editor of the first racquetball publication in 1972 and is now editor of National Racquetball.

His duties include general promotion of racquetball, from sending out news releases, keeping tabs on membership, co-ordinating sales of National Racquetball to court clubs, to making up the draw at all professional events and refereeing all semi-final and final round professional play.

As editor of National Racquetball it is his chore to make sure the proper balance of interview, instruction, tournament results and other features makes this magazine the best possible publication for U.S.R.A. members.

Creator of new ideas, it was Leve who proposed that racquetball do away with the three-bounce rule, and try playing all third games to 11 point tie-breakers. It has proved a tremendous success every place it has been used.

The newest member of the N.R.C./U.S.R.A. staff is 29-year-old Terry Fancher, former teaching pro and Madison, Wisconsin native. Fancher, who earned his masters degree in physical education from the University of Wisconsin, wrote his masters thesis on the history of racquetball.

Although his primary duties involve the organization, coordination and aiding of state and local racquetball associations, Terry's other attributes are already showing. A top notch player, Terry has an understanding of the players' needs and desires, he is an outstanding referee and will be contributing instructional and feature articles to National Racquetball magazine.

Another of Bob Kendler's young promoters, Terry Fancher is a solid addition to the N.R.C./U.S.R.A. staff. If you need any information or help concerning racquetball in your area, seek him out this weekend. He'll be glad to help you.

U.S.R.A./N.R.C. Appoints Promotion Firm

The U.S. Racquetball Association and National Racquetball Club recently announced the signing of a five-year contract with the International Management Group of Cleveland, Ohio. IMG, as the group is known, is the world's leading sports promotion firm, holding the capabilities of television, public relations, advertising, sponsorship, player representation and more.

IMG was founded by its president, Mark H. McCormick, 16 years ago. It began as a firm representing athletes. The business now spans five continents, and a multitude of sports in which player representation is only one facet.

Television producing is one of the fields in which IMG has become active. Through its affiliate, Trans World International, Inc., programs such as Superstars, Female Superstars, Battle of the Network Stars, and Battle of the Sexes were conceived, assembled, produced and marketed.

TWI holds official telecast and film rights for Wimbledon and Forest Hills. They also represent the U.S. Tennis Association, U.S. Ski Association and United States Auto Club (USAC). IMG represents some of the world's largest corporations, which annually spend millions of dollars on sports promotion.

With these accomplishments behind it, the question is, "What can IMG do for racquetball?"

"The answer to that," according to Bob Kendler, U.S.R.A./N.R.C. president, "is almost anything. We really don't know what the true potential of racquetball is. But if anybody can tap that potential and turn it into promotional benefits for the entire sport, that person is Mark McCormick.

"IMG has the expertise where we don't," Kendler continued. "They know which companies are spending money on sports—they know who to contact within those companies and they know how to put the entire package together. We feel certain they will."

If IMG's track record is any indication, racquetballers can look forward to plenty of promotion in the next few years. And, according to Kendler, that promotion will be for both amateur and professional racquetball—equally.

"We would not have signed the agreement without IMG's assurances that the amateurs would get their share of the promotional dollars," Kendler said.

The beginnings of racquetball can be traced to paddleball which was popularized at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and in the Army during World War II. In this sport, a solid wooden paddle was used.

Racquetball came into its own in 1949, when Joe Sobek had the inspiration to design a new racket—strung like a tennis racket but of the same dimensions as the solid wood paddleball racket. Racquetball was born.

The years 1949 through 1955 were years of slow but steady growth. Then, due to the increasing popularity of racquetball throughout the country in the 1960's, competition on a nationwide basis began to emerge. After an introductory national tournament in Milwaukee, the first "International Championship" was conducted in St. Louis, Missouri, at which time the International Racquetball Association was established.

The National PaddleRackets Tournament, held in 1968 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, served as the springboard which sent Racquetball soaring to its present level of prominence.

In 1968 it was difficult to determine how many gut paddle players there were in the country because nobody had taken the time to find out and organize them into an association. The Milwaukee group had held a couple of "International" tournaments and were the quasi-spokesmen for the infant game. In 1968 the organization turned to the United States Handball Association which had headquarters in Chicago, and a national magazine.

In the summer of 1968 a combined national tournament and organizational meeting was held in Madison, Wisconsin. Invitations went out and were answered from throughout the United States.

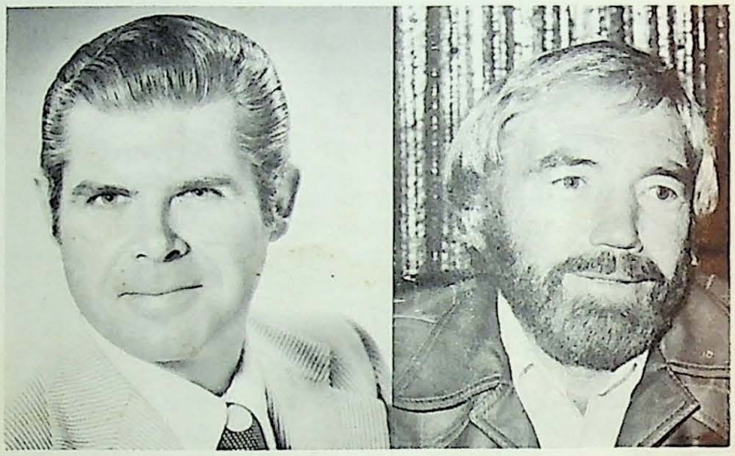
In 1969, players and officials decided that Racquetball would be the official name of the four-wall racket game. Bob Kendler was named President of the Association and Charles Leve became Executive Secretary. Racquetball boomed.

Racquetball courts, being identical to handball courts became the recipient of many years of court improvement pioneered by handball, such as glass sidewalls or backwalls for better viewing, superior floor and wall textures and improved court lighting. This synthesis of the various aspects of the game, along with the design and construction of court clubs across the country, of which the largest in the world is the Southfield Racquetime Center, to showcase facilities and top players, has aided in making Racquetball an almost instant success.

Racquetball's progress has been phenomenal. It has gone beyond the greatest hopes of its followers. Today, the building boom in courts appears to be exceeded only by the demand for more courts. Where it will lead is to a new generation of healthy men, women and children who enjoy a sport that is simple to understand, yet contains all the sophisticated elements of three dimensional chess.

1 SHORT

Seamco-Leach Sponsor Pro Tour



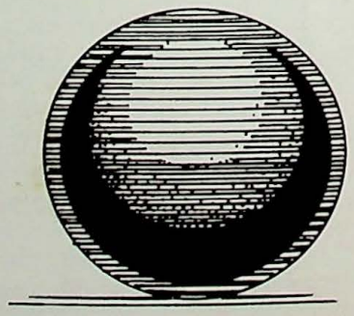
AL MACKIE BUD LEACH

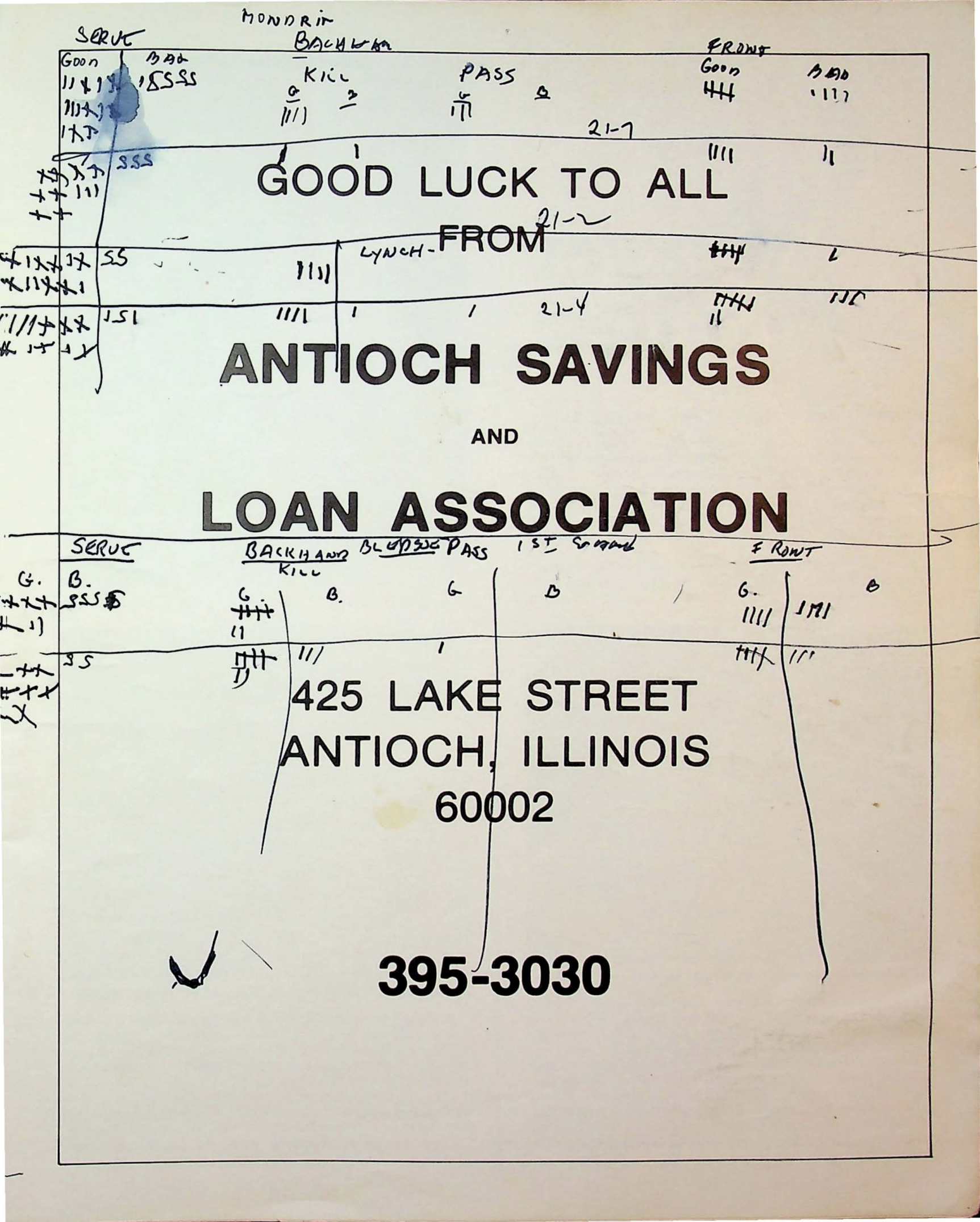
The current racquetball season is not possible without the tremendous aid given the N.R.C. and U.S.R.A. by the Seamco Sporting Goods Company and Leach Industries.

These two firms, led by Al Mackie at Seamco and Bud Leach at Leach, unselfishly have donated prize money and further promotional funds toward the betterment of racquetball. With their help, the N.R.C.'s Pro-Am Tour is a reality, and has grown in stature to become the most exciting series of racquetball events annually.

The National Racquetball Club is honored, indeed, to be working once again with the nation's number one ball and racquet manufacturers. The fact that these firms have been willing to invest in racquetball, part of the profits they derive from racquetball, is indicative of the fine people and businessmen that our sport represents.

When you see the Leach and Seamco representatives here this weekend, stop by and give them the thank you they deserve for their great support. Without them, we couldn't do it.





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Player Profiles:

#1 Marty Hogan, St. Louis, 19 years old, $15,500

The new king of the hill is this hard-hitting youngster who has won seven of the N.R.C.'s eight tour stops this season, including the last seven tournaments in a row.

Hogan is strong, cocky and good. He boasts a devastating serve, booming forehand and fearless offensive game. His only loss this season came against Hilecher on front wall glass, and he has yet to lose on a conventional court.

Whether or not he can maintain his number-one position remains to be seen. But right now, nobody is playing better.

#2 Charlie Brumfield, San Diego, 29 years old, $4,450

The reigning national champ, Brumfield has not had a good year to this point, at least not for him. Eight tournaments into the season, and no victories has forced him down a notch to the number-two ranking.

He came into the season slightly weakened by a long summer illness and is just now rebounding into shape. Although his game has been off, he still has been able to pick up more than $4,000 since Labor Day at pro stops.

Look for many ace attempts on the serve, a calculated percentage game, few, if any playing weaknesses and a great rapport with the crowd.

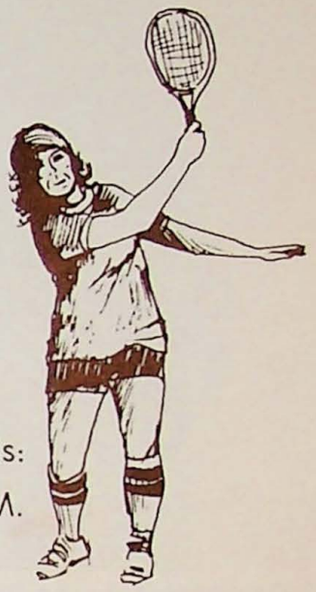
#3 Craig McCoy, Riverside, Cal., 20 years old, $3,075

Armchair racquetballers have said for years that if McCoy would play the entire tour, he would be up among the leaders. They were right. After sporatic showings early in the year, Craig has put four solid tournaments back-to-back to reach the number three seed.

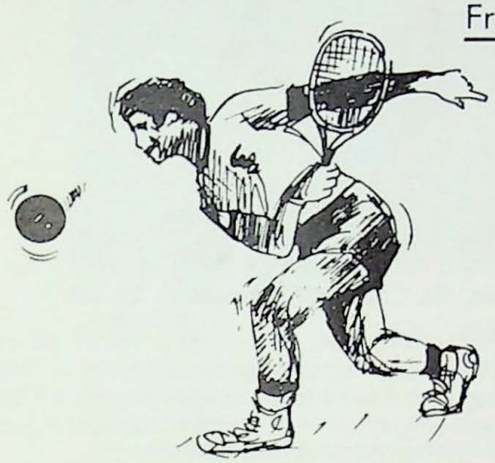
One of the two left-handers on tour, (Serot is the other), McCoy has smooth, sound strokes and the ability to get hot with forehand or backhand.

Look for forehand corner kills and tough back wall shooting.

SCHEDULE OF PROFESSIONAL MATCHES



Thursday: PRELIMINARY ROUNDS



Friday: Round of 16 (10 A. M. - 2 P. M.)
Quarter Finals:
4:00, 5:30, 7:00, and 8:30 P. M.

Saturday: Women's Semi-Finals:
3:30 and 5:00 P. M.

Men's Semi-Finals:
6:30 and 8:00 P. M.

Sunday: Women's Finals — 12 Noon
Men's Finals — 2:00 P. M.

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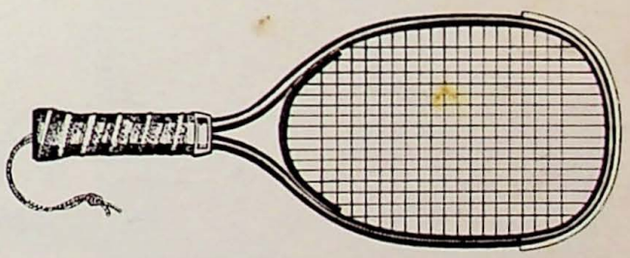

If you're not playing Omega, you're probably not playing your best game. Omega racquetball racquets are Win-Designed for more responsive control-power and balance. There's an Omega racquet to match your particular game style.

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#4 Davey Bledsoe, San Diego, 24 years old, $3,325

One of the tour's most consistent performers this season, Bledsoe has reached the quarter-finals or better in each of the eight tour stops. A transplanted Memphian, Davey has been a solid contender for the past two years.

He's one of the game's fastest, with court coverage second to none. Although he can be overpowering at times, he too is sometimes overpowered by the game's harder hitters.

He likes to drive the ball, and look for the overhead.

#5 Jerry Hilecher, St. Louis, 23 years old, $4,325

After a dismal 1975-76 season, Jerry began '76-'77 with a bang by winning the Sacramento stop number one on this year's tour. Although he hasn't been able to repeat so far, his game is strong, as evidenced by his number three standing in prize-money winning this season.

He's generally regarded as the best server on the tour, utilizing a power drive serve to both the backhand and forehand sides. He's a shooter and don't be surprised if he "goes for it" in surprising situations.

Hilecher has determination and guts, he's quick and smart. A pretty good combination that spells winner.

#6 Steve Strandemo, San Diego, 30 years old, $3,550

The veteran Strandemo has not been playing up to par the last few times out, although he still ranks fourth on the season's earnings list. He had a good first half, but tough losses of late have knocked him down to the sixth position, the lowest he's been in over three years.

He plays the control game and is one of the true "thinkers" on the court, having the ability to out-maneuver his opponents both mentally and physically.

His game is marked by Z serves, backhand kills and overhead drives.

#7 Richard Wagner, San Diego, 21 years old, $2,300

Inconsistency has plagued the likeable Wagner, who could go out in the round of 16 just as easily as he could reach the semi-finals. When he's playing well, as in Ft. Lauderdale, there's nobody he can't beat, as he topped both Serot and Brumfield in the same day, only to lose to Bledsoe in the semi's. However, Las Vegas saw him lose in the round of 32, while playing poorly.

His game is marked by fantastic retrieving ability, and great back wall kill shots, both forehand and backhand. But if his shots don't go in, he has a tendency to get down on himself.

Wagner's one of those players who, "when he's hot, he's hot, but when he's cold he's ice cold."

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#8 Steve Keeley, San Diego, 28 years old, $1,875

Steve's game had dropped so drastically this season, that he had not made it out of the round of 16, until Houston. The old fire and drive, that annually ranked him in the top four re-surfaced, and the major turn-around to move him back up the ladder occurred.

After his round of 32 loss in Las Vegas sent him down to a #16 rating, his number-two finish in Houston bounced Keeley, one of the game's "names" back up to number nine. While quarter-final finishes in Denver and Chattanooga moved him another notch.

Look for picture-book style, both forehand and backhand and an almost unbeatable ceiling ball.

#9 Steve Serot, San Diego, 21 years old, $1,450

Serot's game has gone up and down over the past year and a half like a roller coaster. Earlier this season he was in the throes of a personal slump that puzzled the entire sport. Around mid-season, however, his game began to round back into shape, culminating in a semi-final finish in Chattanooga.

His forte is unbelieveable retrieving, highlighted by spectacular diving gets. He wowed the Lombard fans two months ago with wins over Keeley and Lynch and could be a major factor here.

#10 Jay Jones, Los Angeles, 33 years old, $800

This Hollywood stunt man has put as much time and effort into his game as any player over the past two years, and the work is paying off in his performances.

His big tournament was Denver, where he knocked off Brumfield and Wagner before bowing to McCoy in the semi-finals.

His game is marked by forehand power, while still playing a thinking man's game. That earphone you'll see him wear plays "mind-soothing static", a Jones invention to aid concentration.

#11 Ben Koltun, St. Louis, 19 years old, $1,425

It's been a good rookie season for the tour's youngest player, the 1976 National Juniors and National Amateur champ.

Although plagued from time to time by inexperienced mistakes, Koltun has the speed, shooting ability and guts to stay with the best.

He's quick and smooth, but unpredictible. His season record shows he's reached as high as the semi's and as low as a round of 32 loss. Watch him.

Jack L. Kemmerly

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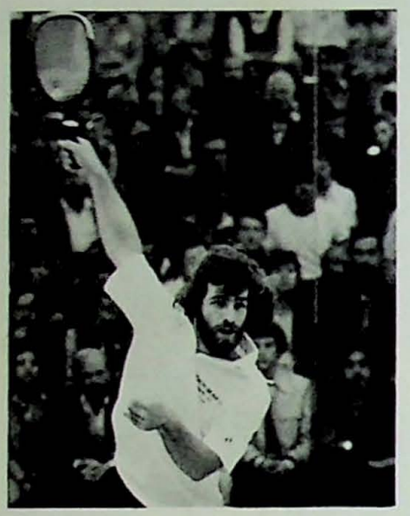


#12 Mark Morrow, Los Angeles, 24 years old, $500

Mark was the surprise of the Las Vegas pro tour stop, coming from an unseeded position to top number-eight Ben Koltun and number-nine Bill Schmidtke before succumbing to top seed Hogan in the quarter-finals. And even there Mark was no pushover, taking the first game from Hogan, dropping the second and leading in the tie-breaker 6-0 before losing 11-7.

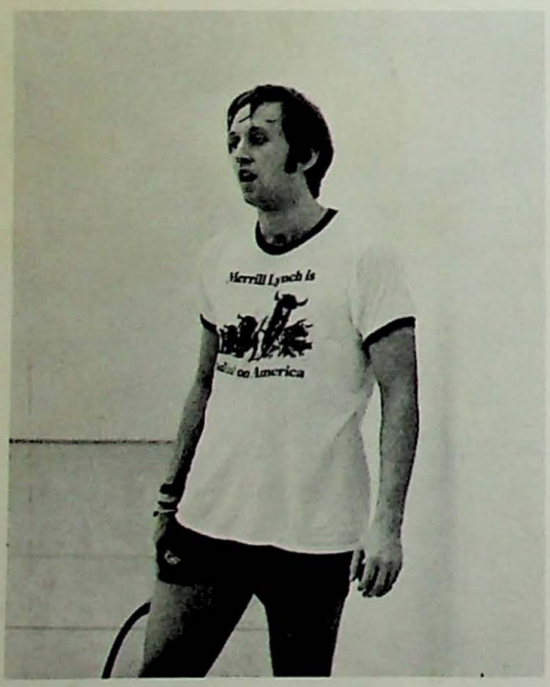
A power player with plenty of guts and confidence, Morrow needs only to continue to play on the tour to increase his standing. His finish in Las Vegas, his first pro tournament, was more of an accomplishment than some players who have been on the pro tour for years.

A welcomed new addition to the top 16, Mark Morrow definitely does have a future.

#13 Steve Chase, Phoenix, 23 years old, $600

This is Steve's first trip to the top 16 and it is based on two consecutive fine finishes, a round of 16 in Las Vegas and a quarter-final in Houston. His victims include Keeley and Kiltun en route to his current ranking.

Chase's game is marked by smooth, percentage racquetball, a control player in the Brumfield or Strandemo mold. He's young and improving and could be a factor before the year is out.



#14 John Lynch, Chicago, Ill., 22 years old, $1,000

His confidence built with a quarter-final finish in Houston, this recent graduate of the University of Illinois (23 courts), has a bright future if his development continues.

He's a hard hitter, taking up the serve and shoot style of his contemporaries. Tough losses to Bledsoe, Hilencher and McCoy this season had kept him from entering the top eight, but his performance in Houston took care of that. The hometown fans should help.

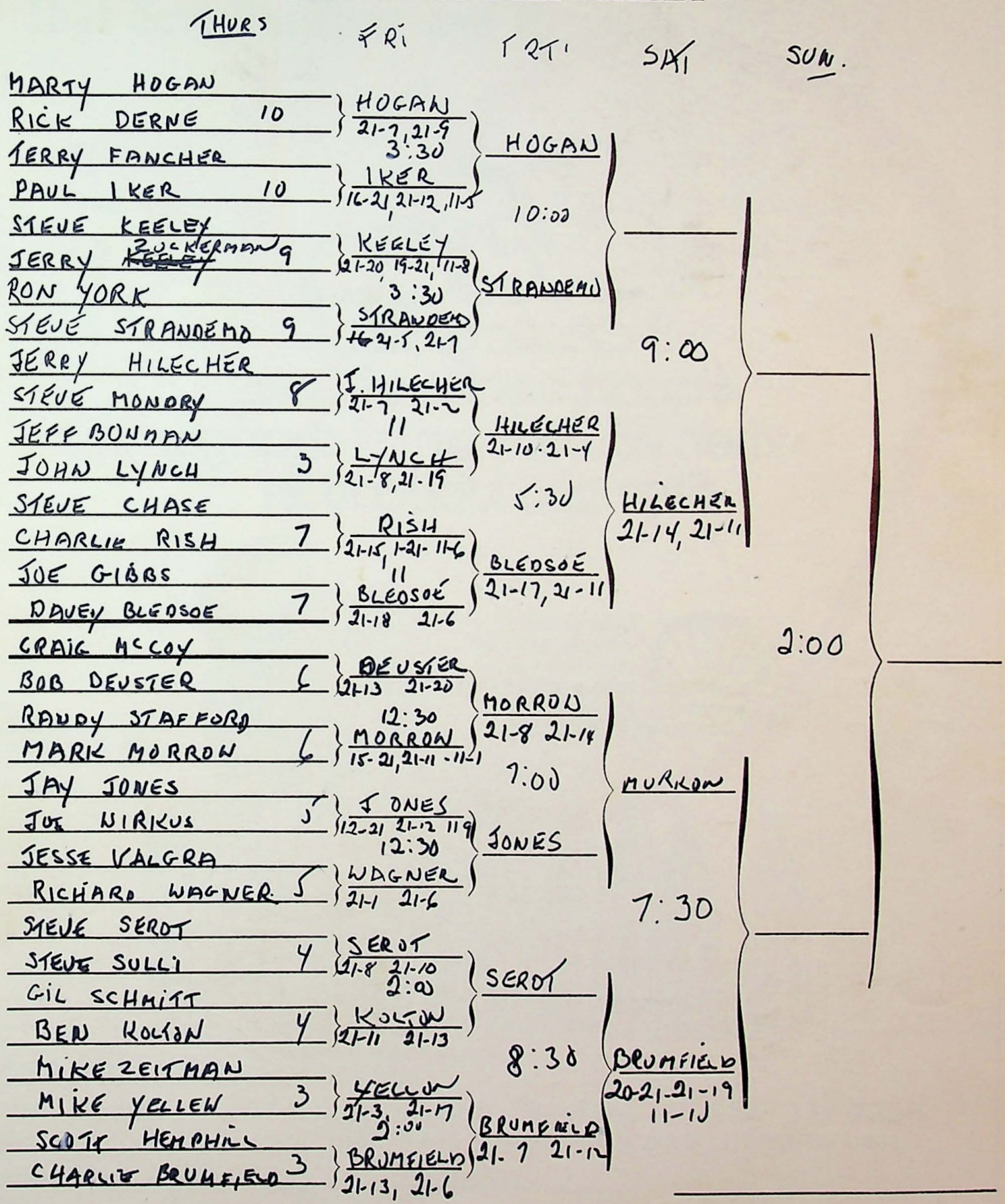
#15 Mike Zeitman, Memphis, 28 years old, $1,175

A good start this season was ruined for Mike when business committments kept him away from the tour. In stead of improving on a previous number seven position, Zeitman, after four consecutive no-shows found himself as far down as 15th.

His game is marked by power drive serves, fly kills and great retrieving. He likes to please the crowd, although sometimes to the detriment of his own game.

Whether Mike can stand the pace of the tour after being away so long remains to be seen.

MEN'S PRO DRAWSHEET



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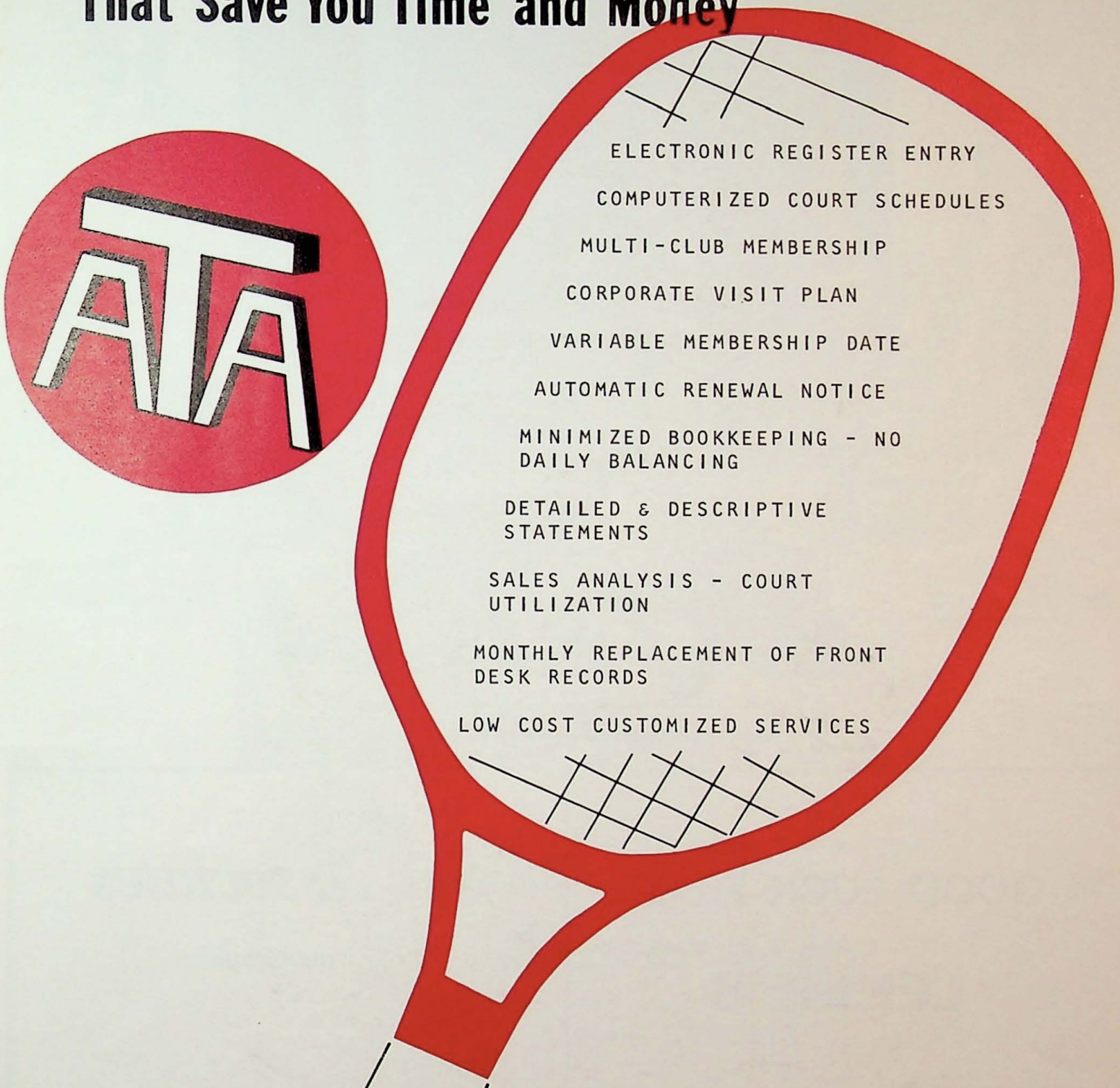

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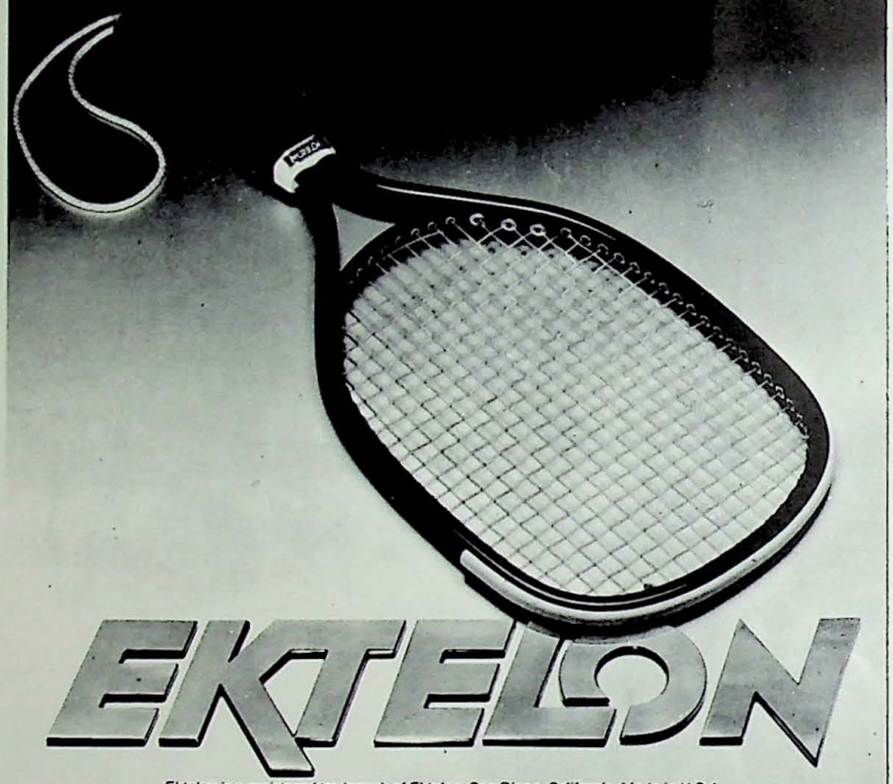

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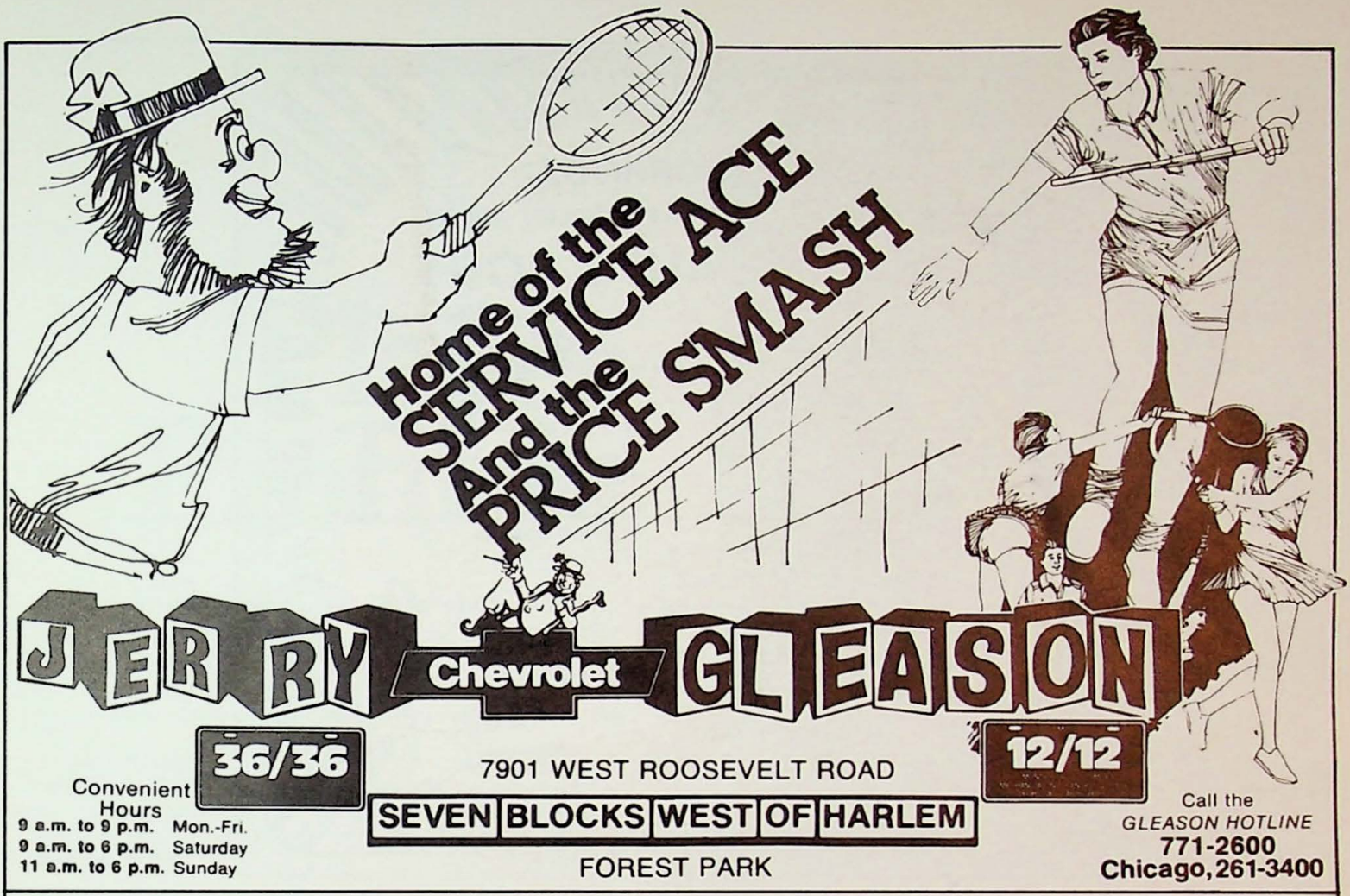

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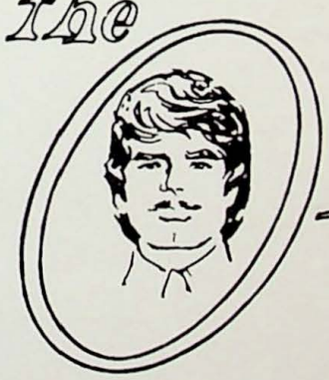

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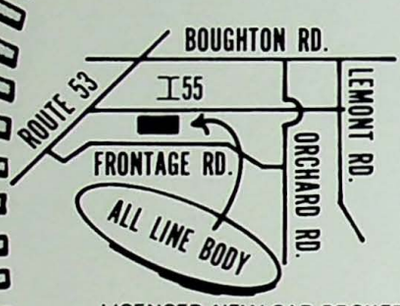

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Player Profiles:

#1 Shannon Wright, San Diego, 21-years-old, $3,900

Shannon, who improves with each tournament, entered the Southfield, Michigan tour stop as the number one ranked player. She has bested arch-rival and current champ Peggy Steding three of their last five meetings, all in the finals.

Passes had marked her game the past few years, but new found aggressiveness in shot selection has improved her play tremenduously.

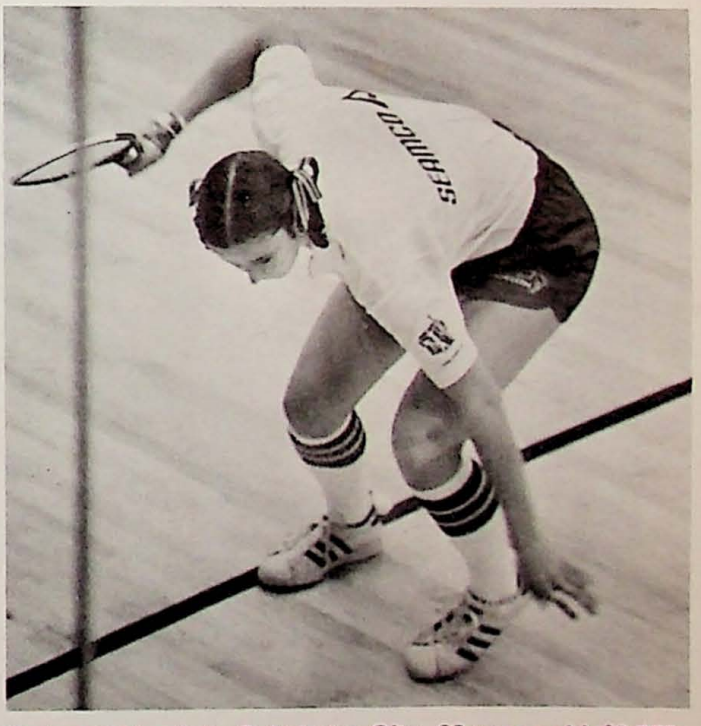
Now that she's at the top of the ladder, it may be difficult to get her down.

#2 Peggy Steding, Odessa, Tex., 40-years-old, $5,400

Although she lost the top seeded position the ageless Steding is still the season's top money winner, and must be considered at least a co-favorite to win any tournament she enters.

Her brilliant game includes power, kills overheads drives and she's one of the few female players who can fly kill.

She's still tough, and somebody will have to beat her.



#3 Janell Marriott, Salt Lake City, 23-years-old $2,050

A solid semi-finalist. Marriott has come close a couple of times but has yet to enter the winner's circle.

She's strong, hits excellent serves and can shoot the ball. Her only problem seems to be concentration, especially in tight games. She has a tendency to lose big leads, and must maintain her intensity throughout the match.

If she does, she could be in the finals.

Good luck to all from

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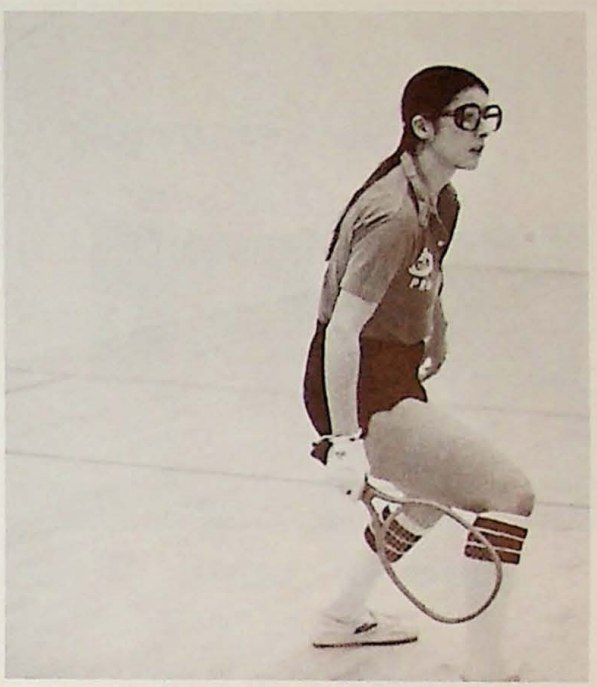
#4 Kathy Williams, Hazel Park, Mich., 28 years old, $1,650

Kathy has not had as big a season as she probably hoped. She's been consistent as can be, reaching the semi-finals in every event, but never knocking off any of the gals above her to take a crack at the finals.

Her solid power game, the serve and shoot variety, is well played and suited to her talents. Sometimes the butterflies catch up with her, but when relaxed she can beat anybody.

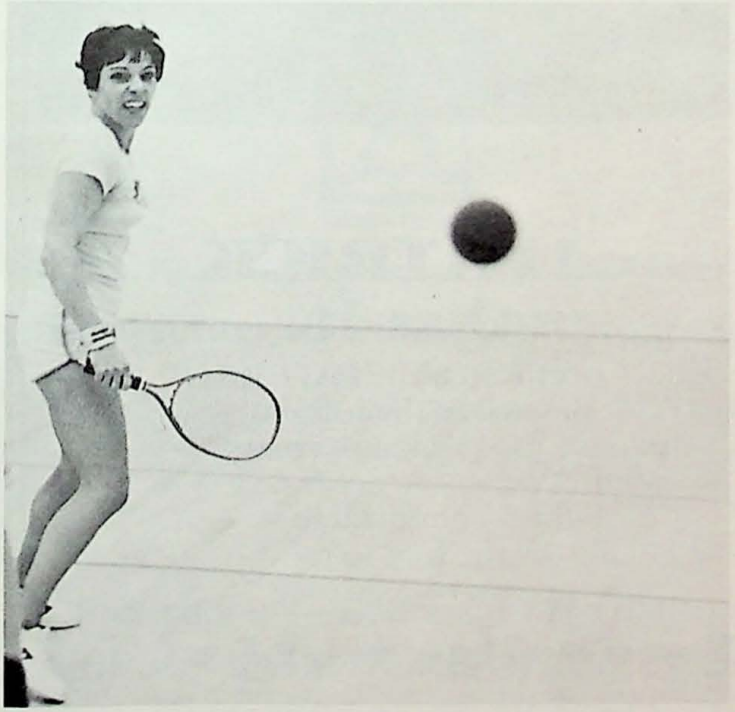


#5 Jean Sauser, Northbrook, Ill., 26 years old, $625

Jean's game has not been up to her excellent form of a year ago, although she still holds down the number five position. A consistent quarter-finalist, her game is marked by forehand kills, and super hustle.

One of the few female court club managers, Jean should be helped by the local fans, many of whom are coming out to see her play.

If the gallery is full, she could surprise.



#6 Sue Carow, Glenview, Ill., 39 years old, $625

A player who belies her age, Carow is a retriever whos game is marked by passes, passes, and more passes.

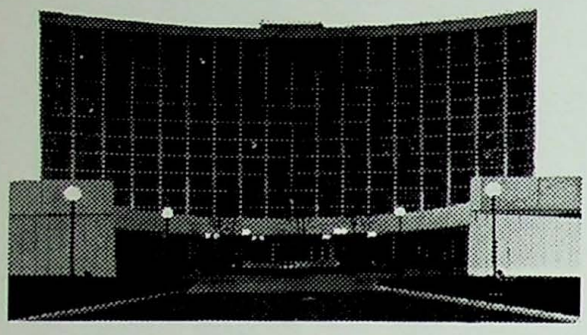
She's not powerful, and can be overpowered by some of the stronger hitters. But she's all guts, gives everything she has and then some.

The home town fans could help Sue, like Sauser, and she's been playing well of late. Watch her.

#7 Jennifer Harding, Portland, 23 years old, $625

Southpaw Jenny is a consistent quarter-finalist who has not been able to amass the necessary power to seriously challenge the ladies ranked ahead of her.

When it comes to control, there are few better, but the hard hitters have been able to dominate her. She, like many of the men, has neither the funds nor the time to make every stop.



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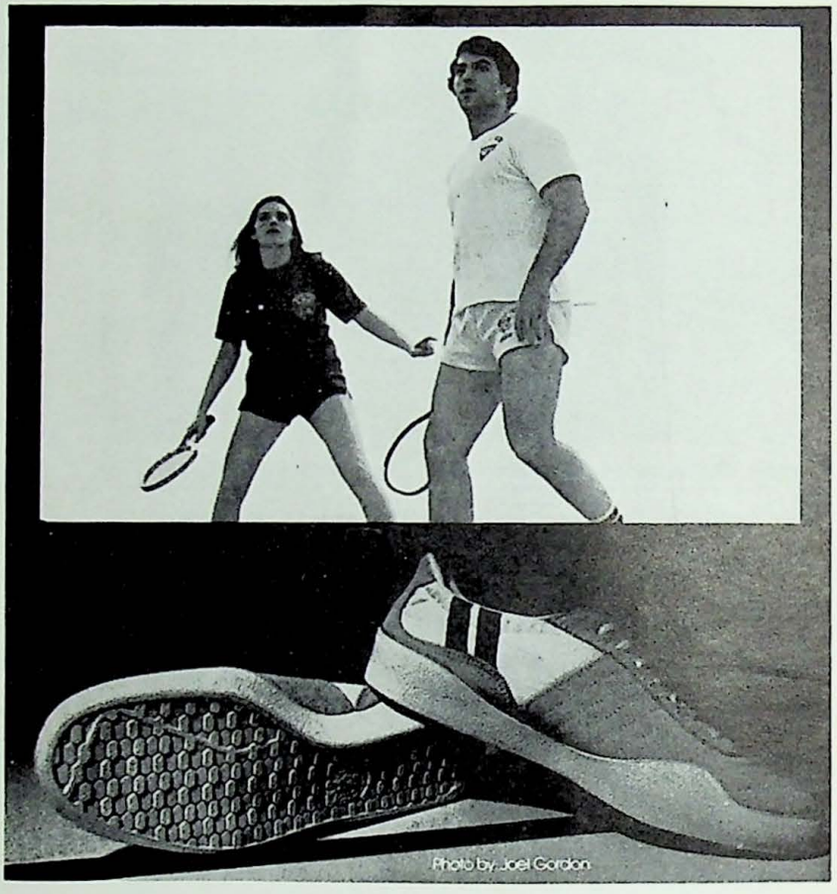

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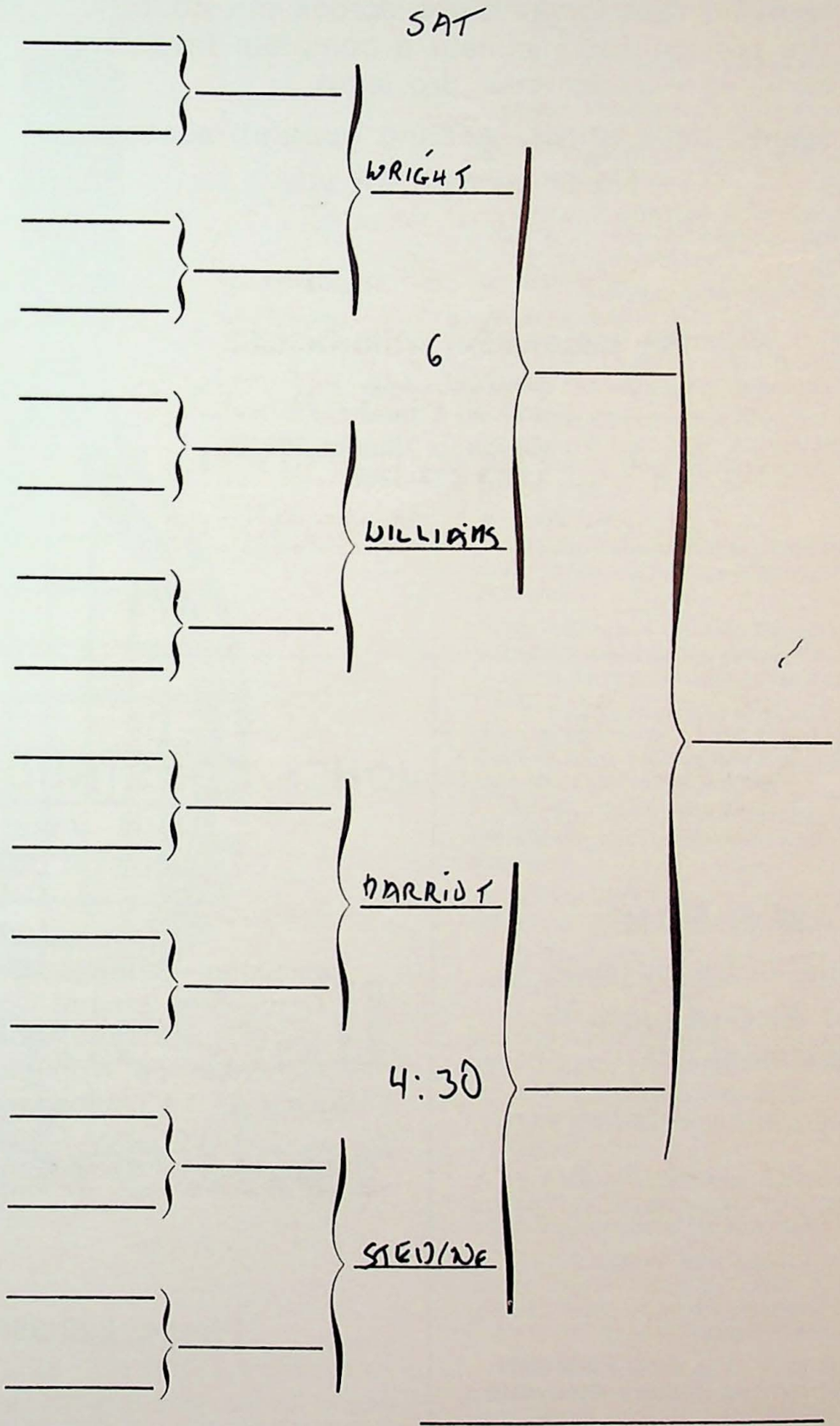

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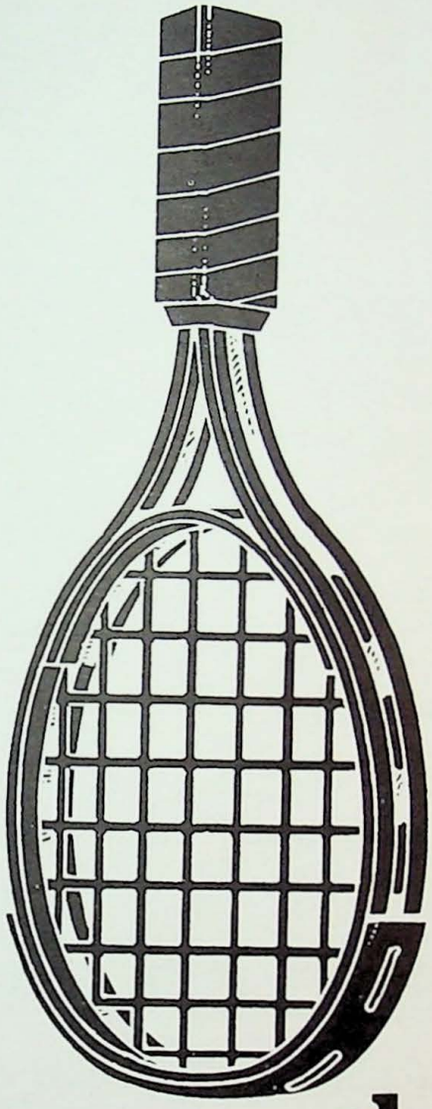

Racquetball Tie-Breaker

Tie-breaker, the 11–point third game, is now official in all U.S.R.A. and N.R.C. tournaments.

"Based on over a dozen professional tournaments and countless amateur events, we have concluded that the tie-breaker is a positive and workable solution to a majority of tournament problems," said N.R.C. National Director Chuck Leve.

The official U.S.R.A.-N.R.C. rules will be amended to show the change to tie-breaker for all tournament play. As those who have tried it know, there are just a few additional rules governing the tie-breaker.

A five minute rest period will now become standard between the second game and the tie-breaker, making both rest periods uniform. Players will be allowed two time outs each during the tie-breaker and there will be no deuce games—an 11-10 score will be a victory.

Also, the first serve in the tie-breaker will go to the player who scores the most points in the first two games combined.

"Tie-breaker is the best new rule in racquetball in a long time," said Lee Duda, who ran the Illinois State Singles tournament at his Evanston Court Club near Chicago. "We had over 250 entries and actually ran ahead of schedule."

"The 11-point tie-breaker made the matches even more exciting," stated John Doyle, president of Buffalo's Four Wall Courts, and the host of last year's Buffalo Pro-Am. "The players liked it, and the fans loved it."

Tie-breaker has proven to be a God-send in many areas of competitive action. Here are some of them:

1. Matches in tournament play are kept on schedule making for shorter tournament hours for players, fans and tourney directors.

2. Everyday players will now have a better chance to finish a match within the alloted court time at their club instead of splitting and not being able to determine a winner.

3. The excitement of the matches is actually enhanced, not dampened, and the pressure is even greater.

4. Referees don't mind refereeing so much when they know the third game is only to 11.

5. Underdog players have a better shot at an upset, which provides even better competition.

6. Players are less apt to "concede" either the first or second game, knowing the third game is only 11 points and anything can happen.

7. Players will be more fresh for the next round, thereby testing racquetball skill, rather than conditioning.

8. Fans will be able to calculate the time of the match they want to watch, and for those watching more than one match, the night won't drag on.

"Tie-breaker has been a huge success everywhere we've tried it," said Leve. "We've tested with all sorts of rules changes in the past, but this one's a rule that will really help the game."

All U.S.R.A.-N.R.C. tournaments will use tie-breaker, as will all sanctioned tournaments on every level, including the National Championships.

Tie-breaker is definitely here to stay.

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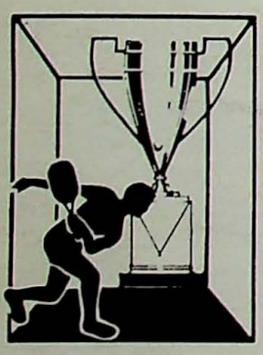

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