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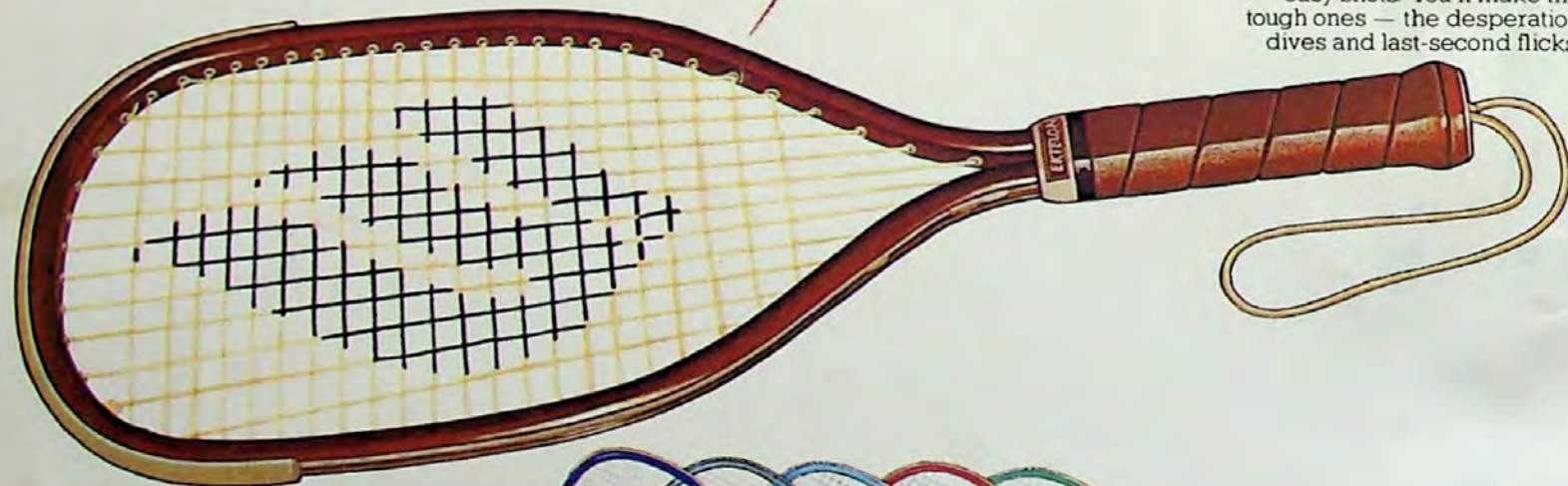
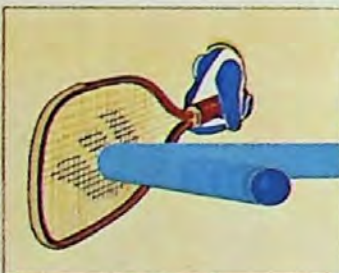


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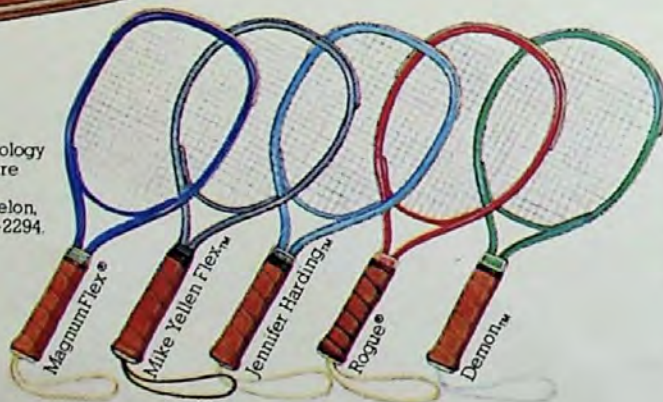
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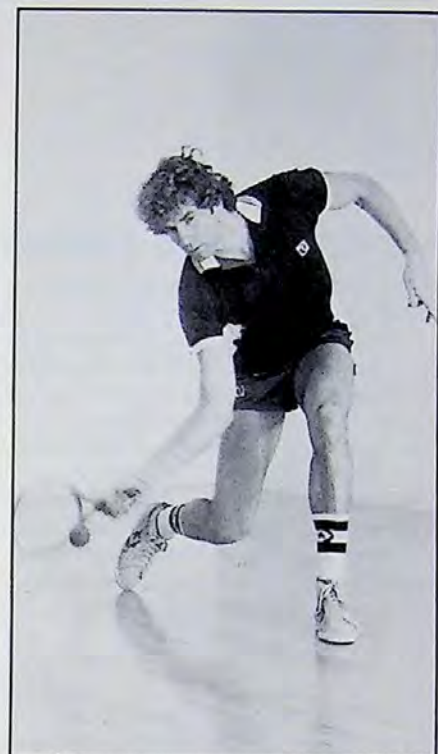
VOL. 5, NO. 4

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THE FUTILITY OF MID-SEASON RANKINGS

There is a letter in our "Side Out" section from a reader in San Diego who asks us why we put Mike Yellen on the cover of our February issue ("Shooting For Number One") claiming he was the number two player. The writer reasoned that because Dave Peck had won more tournaments up to that point in the season, that he or Marty Hogan should be considered number two and Yellen should be ranked third or fourth.

At about the same time we received a call from another reader asking us why we put Lynn Adams on the same cover claiming she was number two. The caller said that because Adams won the tournament in Louisiana she should be ranked number one and that either Heather McKay or Shannon Wright should have been ranked second.

Basically, both parties are correct and yet both parties are wrong. At the time the magazine went on sale, Adams and Yellen had different rankings, but at the end of last season, Yellen and Adams were ranked number two, and that was the basis for our cover decision. In our mind, the rankings at the end of a season are the only legitimate rankings that can be used.

To our way of thinking mid-season rankings are much ado about nothing. Rankings in the men's pro tour are a farce. The men plan to rank on the basis of a select number of tournaments. This doesn't take into account other big tournaments which also attract the top players, not to mention the events in which the players not invited on the Catalina pro tour compete.

As for the women's tour, everything is a little clearer because they play under one umbrella organization. But for people to claim Adams is number one on the basis of winning one event in Louisiana—an event in which defending national champion McKay did not play—is stretching it.

Mid-season rankings are basically for the purpose of publicity hype. For example, when the women go into a new tour city, the promotion can claim that the former number one player (Wright) and the end-of-season number one player (McKay) are being challenged by the current number one player (Adams).

Or the men can build up the Hogan vs. whoever is number one the weeks Hogan has slipped.

Rankings are interesting but often they are abused. There is always the story of the player who at one month in his or her career attained a ranking of number seven or eight. The rest of the season that player lost almost every match and was ranked between 15th and 20th. In succeeding years, the player never broke into the top 10. Yet, during his or her playing career and even long after the career is over, the person claims or is promoted by his company to be a former number seven ranking player.

For that person to be recognized as the seventh ranking player is an insult to the players who consistently had beaten him or her and an out-and-out lie promoted by companies to hype an appearance or clinic.

At the end of this season, *Racquetball Illustrated* will offer its own set of "final" rankings. They will be based on the entire season of events, not on a selected few tournaments. We don't expect this to be the last word on rankings, nor will we try to claim it should be taken as gospel. We just want it to be as fair as possible.

Ben Kalb

Ben Kalb
Editor

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RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

In the January issue is an article on page 37, "How To Play Relaxed." This is a fine introductory article to some interesting concepts. But it is little more than a casual acquaintance with "performance relaxation."

It would be better if you ran a series of articles outlining the techniques of deep muscle relaxation, systematic desensitization, and specific relaxation techniques through attention focusing.

That way we readers could benefit from the programs without having to go to Montana State University for a couple of terms.

In other words, give us a kill shot of an article instead of a lob.

Also, the articles on kids were great. I hope a lot of club owners read them.

Neil Wolf
Livonia, Mich.

Editor's note: The four-part in-depth series on relaxation techniques began last month. Part two—cures for anxiety—can be found elsewhere in this issue.

MISSING THE BOAT

I have been reading your editorials and articles with much interest concerning the new professional tour format sponsored by Catalina.

I would like to go on record in saying that I think Catalina is missing the boat. At our recent 6th Annual Christmas Classic we had over 916 entries with 52 participants in the men's pro division. The tournament generated tremendous excitement because everyone wanted to see how the local players would do against the professionals.

As it turned out, the local hype increased each day as one by one the five Catalina tour pros who had entered the tournament were eliminated. Racquetball needs an open pro tour. The life blood of any sport has to be the development of new talent, as well as the promotion of the sport. With only one pro tour and given its present format, we think that tournaments such as the Christmas Classic will do more for the sport than the Catalina Pro Tour. In reality the reverse should be true.

William R. Dunn
Schoeber's Racquetball Spas
Fremont, Calif.

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BRET HARNETT

Just a short note to say thank you very much for your recent article on "Bret Harnett: Rise To Prominence." I thought your layout was done in great taste.

It is articles such as this one and others that your magazine has done that will aid in the promotion and familiarization of professional racquetball players to the public. Articles such as these can only assist in the growth and promotion of professional racquetball.

Gary M. Naseef
Racquetball Spectaculars, Inc.
Las Vegas, Nev.

ZEN ARTICLE

Your magazine is the finest and most up to date reading in the field of racquetball today. It is very informative for the beginner to the advanced player. But I think you should leave the articles of mystic, yoga and Zen to the cults that practice them, not the racquetball players of America.

Alan J. Byers
Lakeland, Fla.

SHOE REVIEW

Fine story on how a racquetball shoe differs from a tennis shoe and a running shoe. I was most pleased to see that you let the physicians have their say about which shoes they recommend.

I also was glad to see an article on ankle injuries. I sprained mine for the third time a few weeks ago.

Robert Deppold
Madison, Wisc.

COURT MEMORIES

I am writing you to say how much I enjoy the Court Memories section you have added to your magazine. The article in your January issue on Marty Hogan growing up was interesting and the article in February on the Brumfield-Myers match by Steve Keeley was a work of art.

Mindy Maxwell
Dallas, Tex.

RANKINGS

I thoroughly enjoyed your cover story on Lynn Adams and Mike Yellen: "Shooting For Number One." There's one thing I don't understand, though.

I follow the men's Catalina pro tour through your publication and I can't understand how you figure Mike Yellen is number two. My readings tell me that Jerry Hilecher won in Los Angeles, Marty Hogan won in New Haven and David Peck won in Minnesota and Hawaii, plus David won an invitational in Maine. It seems to be that Peck should be at least number two, if not number one.

L. C. Dow
San Diego, Calif.

Editor's note: The cover story referred to the rankings at the conclusion of last season. If we were to base our story on the current rankings (following the Hawaii stop), Yellen would be ranked fourth behind Peck, Marty Hogan and Hilecher.

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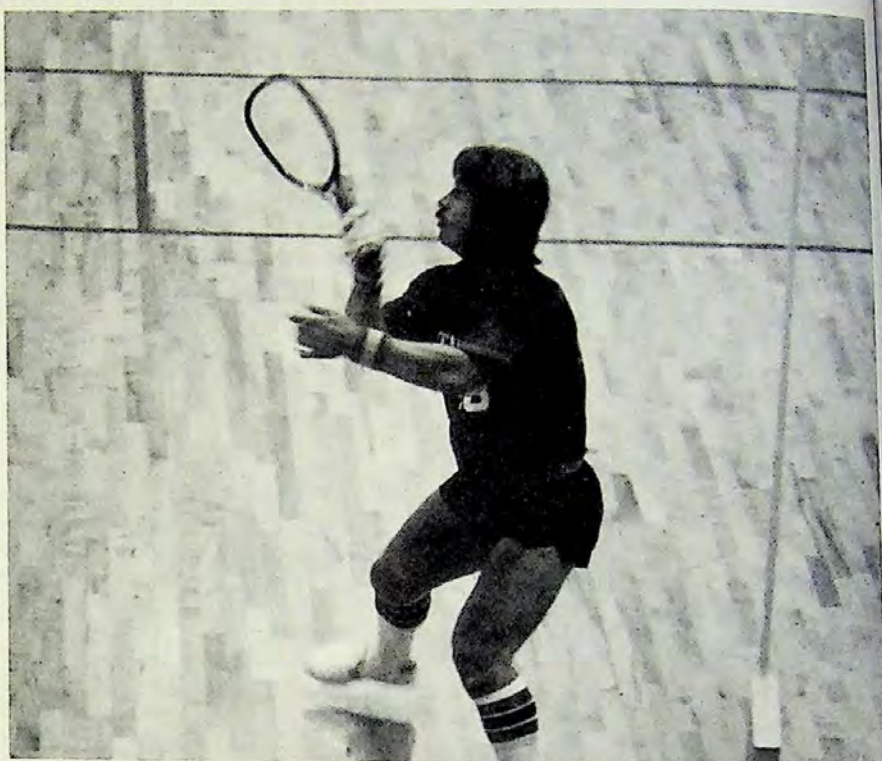


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RACQUETBALL PER CEY



Los Angeles Dodger third baseman Ron Cey participates in an exhibition and a clinic with Jerry Henderson at Federal Way (Wash.) Athletic Club. Cey is originally from Tacoma, a stone's throw from Federal Way, and was in town visiting relatives. Cey's younger brother works at the Federal Way club and Cey and Henderson are former fraternity brothers at Washington State University. Henderson is the general manager of the Federal Way club.

THE BEAR FACTS



PHOTO BY NICK SCHMITZ

Chicago Bears tight end Bob Fisher (right) poses for the cameras after playing exhibition with model Charlotte Dillante. Also joining in the photo session was handball champion Naty Alvarado. All this took place at the Super Bowl III tournament at Killshot Ltd. in Bloomingdale, Ill.

SWITCH HITTER



Los Angeles Dodger pitcher Terry Forster gets in a little racquetball practice at Mid-Valley Racquetball Club in Reseda, Calif. On the mound, Forster is a southpaw. In racquetball, Forster plays right handed.

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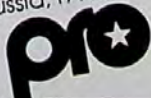


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COURT MEMORIES

How San Diego Became the Hotbed of Racquetball

BY DR. BUD MUEHLEISEN
WITH MIKE HOGAN

San Diego has become known as the Mecca of racquetball, a city where most of the best players come to train. Although racquetball wasn't invented in San Diego, it was in San Diego where the game developed into a multi-million dollar industry. The major racquet manufacturers are located in San Diego and most of the major technological breakthroughs in equipment have been made in San Diego. If a player can make it in San Diego, he can make it anywhere.

But how did it happen that this area tucked off in the southwest corner of the United States, so far from the game's origins in Connecticut, became such a hotbed?

Actually, racquetball owes its speedy development to paddleball and a hard-core group in San Diego who built San Diego's first court club in the mid-sixties.

It was the construction of a private court which resulted in the formation of the Pacific Paddleball Association, the spawning ground of Charlie Brumfield, racquetball's first pro champion, and many other top players.

The start of racquetball in San Diego goes back to 1963 when a group of older guys used to get together every Wednesday night at the Copley YMCA or the Foothill Athletic Club (now defunct) to play paddleball.

We used to play and then go to dinner afterwards. Sometimes, though, a few of the guys would have to work late and we'd get bumped off the courts. One night, we were sitting around at dinner and someone suggested that we build our own court.

One of the guys, Al Chamberlain, was a contractor and supervised the actual construction while another of the group, Dr. James Skidmore, leased the land on which to put it. Ten of us formed a non-profit corporation called the Pacific Paddleball Association (PPA) and we all chipped in \$1,450 for the \$14,500 court.

In addition to Skidmore, Chamberlain and myself, the group included Dr. Gerald Kobernick, a dentist; Dr. T. Kimball Hill, an oral surgeon; Newton Martinez, a school teacher; Carl Loveday, a sporting goods merchant; investment broker Jim McDaniel; Dr. Chuck Hanna and Dr. Roger Ballard, an orthodontist.

The court was completed in 1965 and was first class all the way. But you could get a lot more for your money back then, of course. There was a big locker room with showers, individual lockers and weights. We got a 14-



Members of the original Pacific Paddleball Association, April, 1969: Carl Loveday, Chuck Hanna, Charlie Brumfield, Bud Muehleisen, Al Chamberlain.

year lease from Skidmore, and after it was up in 1979, the club reverted back to him. We just picked 14 years out of the air because back then, we figured we'd all be dead long before the lease was up anyway.

About six or seven guys played there on a regular basis, but you could always get the court. This was before Goreham's, the first public club, opened in San Diego. The PPA was a place I knew would always be available for practice or teaching. I helped guys such as Brumfield develop their games there.

Brumfield was just out of high school then and I used to bring him to the PPA as my guest. He had been playing in what he called the "concrete dungeon" at the San Carlos Swim Club.

We met in a paddleball tournament at the Kona Kai Club and, after that, played together three or four times a week at the PPA. We would play singles at 6:30 a.m. and doubles at night.

My background had been tennis but when I started my dental practice in San Diego, I was looking for a quick workout. One day I walked over to the Copley Y and saw these two guys playing paddleball.

One was Dr. Abe Swerdlow, an orthodontist, who introduced me to the game. I worked out with him and Loveday for a long time and

along the way we picked up Kim Hill and Ben Press, the tennis pro at the Kona Kai Club.

One day, we decided to have a tournament and Charlie came down from San Carlos. I beat him in the finals. He was just a kid then, but was to become racquetball's first professional champion. We had been playing paddleball together for several years in 1969 when we heard about this new game, racquetball, that was going to have a national tournament.

We were National paddleball doubles champions (I was National singles champion with him a close second) so we decided to go. We only had six weeks to get ready, but we went back to St. Louis where it was being held.

We wound up in the finals against each other and I won 21-20 in the third game to become the first open champ.

When we got back to San Diego, everyone was talking racquetball, and we never did go back to paddleball. Once they got a taste of racquetball, not many other paddleball players did either.

As for the PPA, it's Skidmore's now. It's still up there, though, on a mesa overlooking Mission Valley and San Diego Stadium. I take a wistful peek at it every time I drive down the valley.

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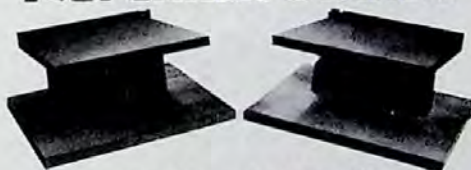
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SHORT SHOTS

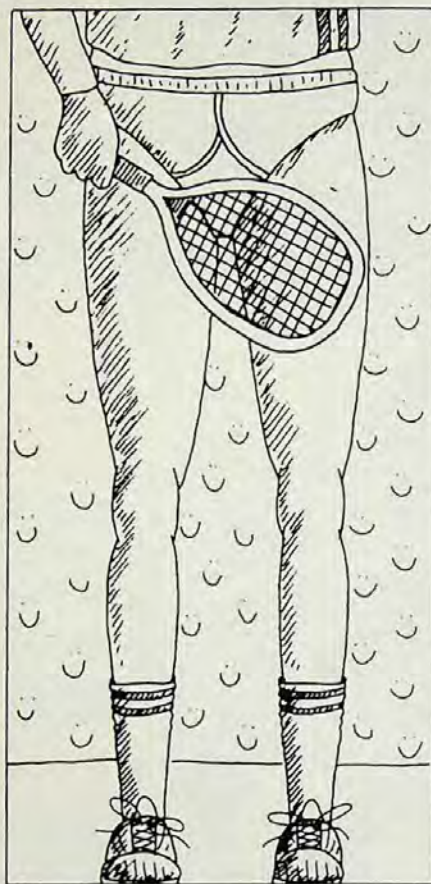


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ONE FROM KEELEY

Former touring pro Steve Keeley has long been known as a keen observer of the unusual. From his travels, he has compiled a collection of anecdotes—some more outrageous than others—but all coming under his journalistic eye.

"The scene is the 1979 Winnipeg Pro Invitational, which features the top Canadian against the top American players. The Canadian Broadcasting Company is there with a half-dozen cyclopean TV cameras to record this 'international racquetball grudge match.' The matches were kicked off the first evening with a ball hitting contest in which the tourney participants compete to see who can hit the racquetball the fastest. Two Canadian policemen, decked out in starched blue uniforms and polished black boots, shuffle nervously in the glass-wall exhibition court. They are operating a police radar gun, the device normally used to catch automobile speeders but utilized here to measure ball velocity. The packed bleachers respond enthusiastically as Canadian Heather McKay cracks the ball over 100 mph. The television cameras continue to roll as Canadian Lindsay Myer's forehand shots sound like cherry bombs exploding. Then Marty Hogan vaporizes

the ball with his racquet, the speeding sphere reappearing only after rebounding off the front wall. The gallery collectively wonders how the heck the radar gun (or the TV cameras) can possibly pick up the flight of the ball.

Now the loudspeaker announces that it is American Charlie Brumfield's turn to hit. Brumfield is sitting in the front row of bleachers right behind the back wall and is jawboning to anyone who will listen. Caught off guard by the loudspeaker calling his name, he still has on his sweats. Now he scrambles out of them and strides toward the court door in the glass back wall. Suddenly, there are shy giggles, then louder laughs which crescendo into hearty guffaws. Charlie freezes and looks down. Time stands still as he stares incredulously at his skimpy white underwear. Each second struggles to pass into time as the crowd, cops and cameras watch Brumfield stare open-mouthed at a kid's nightmare come true. He had forgotten to put racquetball shorts on under his sweats.

"Charlie wheels around to face the gallery. Legs planted defiantly in his white undies, he smiles and simply says, 'I can't believe the smartest player in the history of the game just did that!'"

FIVE-YEAR PACT

Lynn Adams, the number two-ranking player on the WPRA tour, has signed a five-year contract with Ektelon for sponsorship.

The contract includes a salary and bonuses based on rankings and tournament victories. The contract is guaranteed, meaning that even if Adams is injured she will still be paid by Ektelon for the duration of the pact.

"This is the longest contract we have given a player," said Norm Peck of Ektelon. "We feel the length of the contract reflects our confidence in her ability as a player and a personality."

"It's kind of scary making a commitment for such a long period of time," said Adams. "But it's a great feeling. I had no hesitation, no second thoughts. I'm excited. Ektelon has been so supportive of me the past year that I have been able to concentrate solely on racquetball."

Adams will be 29 when the contract expires.

HANDS VS. RACQUET

Naty Alvarado, a three-time national handball champion, overpowered professional racquetball player Francine Davis, 21-8, 21-7, in a Hands vs. Racquet Battle of the Sexes challenge as part of the K-Mart/AMF Voil Super Bowl III tournament put on by Prime Time Promotions at Killshot, Ltd. in Bloomingdale, Ill.

Alvarado became the first male to win the challenge in three years. Earlier, racquetball pros Jennifer Harding and Heather McKay each defeated handball pro Vern Roberts.

Davis led 5-3 in the first game but Alvarado tied it at 7-7 and went ahead 13-8 before closing things out with eight straight points.

Alvarado led 12-0 in the second game. Davis closed the gap a little to 14-5 but Alvarado coasted home.

"My hook serves were working against her," said Alvarado. "When I would hook she wouldn't be able to hit the ball in the center of the racquet."

"She was hitting the ball too hard. A handball is harder and it carries. I was

getting a lot of shots off the back wall. She was thinking racquetball, not handball."

Davis agreed with Alvarado's assessment. "I was thinking racquetball, not handball. It's hard not to," said Davis. "I was going for the right shots—low, hard ones down the line but I was missing them. I'm used to playing with a racquetball. The timing is different with a handball. It's slower. This was to his advantage. He had more time to set up than I am used to seeing from an opponent."

Each of the two players received an appearance fee.



PHOTO BY NICK SCHMITZ

SERVE/RETURN

Should Legalized Gambling Be Allowed in Professional Racquetball?

YES

BY DENNIS DORNER

Those players waiting for television to make racquetball a popular spectator sport are in for a long wait.

Even with the latest technology, television directors find the game tough to cover. The game is just too fast. Only in slow motion replays can a true picture of the action and ball be seen.

Large arenas will also not help the sport, as it is nearly impossible to see the ball more than 10 rows, or so, up from the court. Imagine the view from an upper balcony seat?

What is left, then, are the small stadium courts that many clubs have built in their facilities. But this also presents a problem.

Income generated by these crowds—less than 500 people—is very small. This small intake results in low purses for the professional players, and an even-smaller potential for a national viewing audience. Racquetball cannot grow by holding matches in clubs. Or can it?

Growth in any sport is dictated by the paying customer. There might be hundreds of top open players in the country, yet the best any of these players can hope for is a spot on a limited professional tour. Most of these top open players can earn a minimum amount of money from racquetball usually through becoming a club pro or manager. What usually happens is that the player will take a position outside of the sport to earn a living.

But imagine this: hundreds of racquetball stadium courts, all across the country, that offer professional matches and accept pari-mutuel betting. That's right, pari-mutuel betting.

Pari-mutuel betting is usually associated with horse and dog racing. But Americans have been betting at jai-alai matches for decades. Jai-alai is played in a building called a fronton. It uses a bigger ball and a larger court than racquetball, and can accommodate many more viewers than a stadium racquetball court. But the success of jai-alai as a betting sport leads one to believe that this is the way for racquetball to go. How many people do you know who play jai-alai? If the answer is more than one, then you are probably from the Basque area of France. But how many people do you know who play top-notch racquetball? Get the idea? Racquetball is already a familiar sport to most Americans. If they haven't played it, they probably have seen it, read about it or listened to descriptions of it from a friend. The audience is there, with more waiting in the wings, waving their dollars to bet on their favorite player.

\$5
WIN

\$5
WIN

1 MATCH

Class A match for players who have won an open level tournament within the past year.

1.

Segal

10-1

2.

Furuya

15-1

3.

Bogart

6-5

Gainer

3-

Lest you think that the American sports bettor would not waste his time on racquetball, think again. Just one look at any of Las Vegas' betting halls would tell you how much Americans think of sports betting. At one of these "books," you can legally bet on football, horses, dogs, basketball, baseball and just about anything else. There has recently been an upsurge in betting on such "off sports" as auto racing, tennis and marathon running. People like to think they know sports better than someone else. By betting, they try to test their skills in selecting winners. Betting on racquetball would give fans a further opportunity to show their abilities.

What will this do for racquetball and its players?

To begin with, racquetball will become a more publicized sport. Fans will want to get to know it better. The increase in popularity, in turn, will help the racquetball player become a media star. A celebrity. He will have arenas bidding for his services. The better he becomes, the larger the purses he will play for. He will finally get some financial reward for all that practice, time and money he has devoted to the game.

Pari-mutuel betting on racquetball will also benefit municipal, state and federal governments. Government is constantly looking for new sources of revenue. The tax dollars brought in by horse racing have been substantial. Because of economics, many states have begun lotteries to appeal to the betting nature of its citizens. Racquetball would be an additional treasury supplement.

If you believe that government wouldn't go for a new gambling idea, you are wrong. There has been, in the last few years, a great amount of legislature written in order to provide more gambling services in many states. Carried to the farthest point was New Jersey's institution of Atlantic City as a "Las Vegas of the East Coast," and other states have been attempting to establish city casinos. Ja-alai is now legal in Florida, Nevada, and Connecticut and all states have benefited financially from its presence.

How would a racquetball fronton work?

Let us say that your racquetball club gets a license to have pari-mutuel betting on racquetball. It has a 500-person stadium court.

You pay two dollars to enter, with the bulk of that money going to the state. You buy a program which lists the eight racquetball matches to be held that evening. Each match features eight players who play a game to 11 points. The first match has eight Grade C players (Grade C professionals). You like the 4-1 odds on player number 4 and go to the betting window and put two dollars to win on number 4.

The match starts. Player number 1 begins against player number 2. Number 1 wins and stays in the court and takes on the next player

in line, player number 3. Number 1 wins against number 3 and he again stays and plays against number 4. To your delight, number 4 wins the point, and now has one point towards the 11 he needs to win the match. Player number 1 goes to the back of the line. Just like a challenge court, you go to the bottom of the list and wait your turn to re-enter the court.

You were lucky. Number 4 beats number 5, 6 and 7, before losing to number 8, and has four points towards the 11. When he gets back into the court he becomes even tougher and runs off seven straight against the other players and wins the match. You smile, bring your ticket to the cashier window and receive your winnings.

Player number 4 receives \$700 for his win and will probably play in at least one more match before the evening is out.

Now you peruse the program and look at the entries for match two. This is an A match, matching the very best professional players together. And the thinking and the betting begins again. You become involved in the game and in making yourself a couple of bucks, and the player makes a good night's salary.

In case you are wondering what would determine a player's class, here's an answer. A player can start playing in "D" class. If he wins a "D" class match he must move up to "C." If he fails to finish in the top three positions for three consecutive matches he drops back into the D ranks (dog racing uses this class structuring system).

The possibilities are endless. Can you imagine racquetball with its own "Triple Crown?" Can you imagine Hogan versus Peck for a purse of \$100,000 with you having a \$10 bet riding on Marty's nose?

Racquetball is exciting in its own right, but a betting interest will increase this excitement, and more important, bring new people into the racquetball game.

All professional players would be able to make a good living, and the additional revenue brought into racquetball might help keep club or equipment costs down. Racquetball will now also need lots of line judges, referees, handicappers and government racquetball officials, so new jobs will be created.

Now the question comes about preserving the integrity of the game when millions of dollars are at stake?

Nevada has a very tight, ultra-strict gaming commission that protects the player from any wrongdoings on the part of a dealer, casino operator, etc. Florida, Illinois, and other states that allow horse racing also have racing boards and officials who monitor the proceedings. Anyone caught cheating, fixing or threatening is banished from the sport forever. But there is no way any sport can guarantee that a player isn't doing something to "fix" a game. They must rely on the integrity

of the players themselves.

But what do the pros and the top amateur players around the country think of this idea?

The top amateur players like the idea. It will allow them to get into racquetball for pay. Of 18 players I interviewed, only one had reservations about the idea, and his reservation had to do with concept make-up rather than the idea of pari-mutuel betting.

I was able to get in touch with two pros and two former pros, all of whom wished to remain anonymous. Both of the former pros liked the idea. One said, "It would open up opportunities for all racquetball players instead of having the professional ranks being limited to a dozen or so players." The other former touring pro thought the idea was good but "I wouldn't be personally interested due to my feelings on gambling in general."

Of the two pros playing now, both thought the idea certainly would be worth looking into. They thought that the opening of the sport to betting would only increase their potential of making a good living from the game.

The common player?

Out of 100 players I interviewed at a tournament in the Chicago area, 85 percent thought the idea to be a good one, while only 10 percent thought it would ruin their sport. The other five percent thought other areas of making racquetball a successful financial endeavor should be investigated before getting the game involved in gambling.

So, how about the average sports bettor?

Of 50 active sports bettors I interviewed at a shopping mall, all thought any new avenue of betting would be welcome. Of the 50 people who called themselves "non-bettors," 47 thought the idea might be a good one if it would take part of the load off their personal taxes. "I'm all for the lottery ticket buyers, the horse race fans and anyone else who want to contribute to the state tax logs," said one person. Only three of these non-bettors were against the idea.

While these casual surveys were far from scientific, they show that there is a lot of interest in racquetball as a pari-mutuel betting sport.

Meanwhile, while waiting for this pari-mutuel betting to get underway, it wouldn't hurt to practice your game in anticipation of a racquetball financial windfall.

NO

BY WALTER BERKOWITZ

Although the idea of pari-mutuel betting in professional racquetball sounds interesting and even fun, I don't think it is the answer for the ultimate success of the sport.

There is one sentence in Dennis Dornier's

article that seems to hit me most: "A betting interest will... bring new people into the racquetball game." That's what I'm afraid of.

Dorner, of course, is referring to new professional racquetball players but the "new people" I'm worried about are the gambling element. I'm afraid of the underworld getting into the sport.

Granted, states have taken and can take a lot of precautions to avoid this type of element but it will still be hard to do. If someone wants to "fix" a match, he'll find a way to get to one of the players.

Dorner says it has worked in the areas that currently have jai alai but I disagree. Within the last few years there have been numerous scandals alleging that matches have been fixed at the frontons in Miami and Hartford, Conn.

And even though racquetball players have loads of integrity, I don't trust them. I don't think that some of them can withstand temptation.

I think that somewhere down the line, some player will be caught throwing a match. It has happened in jai alai, horse racing, boxing, even college basketball. It could just as easily happen in professional racquetball.

Some racquetball players may be offended by my questioning their integrity. But it's not their integrity I'm worried about. It's the temptation. I don't want them to be tempted in the first place. I don't even want it to get to the point where someone has to question their integrity.

Dorner also says that racquetball players will now get more publicity because of this system. Wrong. How many jai alai players can you name?

I do not quarrel with Dorner's interviews with players, bettors and such, but I'm interested in knowing more about the people interviewed and the ways the questions were presented.

To interview 50 sports bettors about betting, is like interviewing Nancy Reagan on what kind of job her husband is doing as president. Of the non-bettors, I wonder how many would really agree to it when both sides of a topic were presented in a forum, and they realized that there is the potential for underworld types to be present at their own court club for one of these events.

No, Mr. Dorner, I can't say I agree with you. I'd much rather push for professional racquetball on network television. It may not happen today but it will happen eventually. The emergence of the sport on television combined with moving the events out of small court clubs and into small arenas will be the answer to attracting more spectators, and hence, more participants. In the long run, that will be more beneficial to the sport than turning it into a jai alai-type operation.

You may say that's too much of a gamble. But, if so, it's the only gamble I'm willing to take.

R

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WRECKITBALL

ILLUSTRATED

APRIL 1982

SEX AND
VIOLENCE IN
RACQUETBALL

"COURTS OF SIN"—
A New Prime Time
Soap Opera

HOW TO AVOID
HITTING A
BACKHAND

The Other Usual
Pieces Of Garbage
We Manage To Find
To Fill Space

RONALD
REAGAN
PICKS UP
A NEW
RACQUET



WRECKITBALL

ILLUSTRATED

BY BEN KALB

APRIL 1982

Vol. 5, No. 4½

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SIDE OUT

THE DOCTOR IS OUT

I think your children in racquetball series has done a disservice to parents all over the world. For years my husband and I have tried to persuade our little son, Duane, to become a doctor or a lawyer and now you come up with the idea he can make a living playing racquetball.

We have encouraged our son to keep up on his studies but he hardly picks up a book now. Instead, he spends all his time on a racquetball court.

Could you please write my son a letter telling him to drop racquetball in favor of medicine, or print another story from the medical schools' points of view.

Mrs. Wilbur Gunn
Boston, Mass.

Editor's note: Dear son of Gunn: We think you are making the correct decision. By the time you get to college, professional racquetball players will be making gobs and gobs of money. Doctors will be a dime a dozen because socialized medicine will be instituted. Tell your parents they don't know what they are talking about and if they don't shut up we'll run a story on how up and coming players can leave home for good without their parents ever finding out.

INSTRUCTION

I have been reading your instruction series by Marty Hogan and I want to know one thing: Who is writing it for him?

Hogan couldn't possibly put into words those eloquent thoughts. The instruction is the best I have read in years, and it doesn't seem possible that he could do such a good job. I don't want to call him an airhead or anything but Hogan has never been known as a candidate for Harvard.

Charlie Bloomfield
San Diego, Ca.

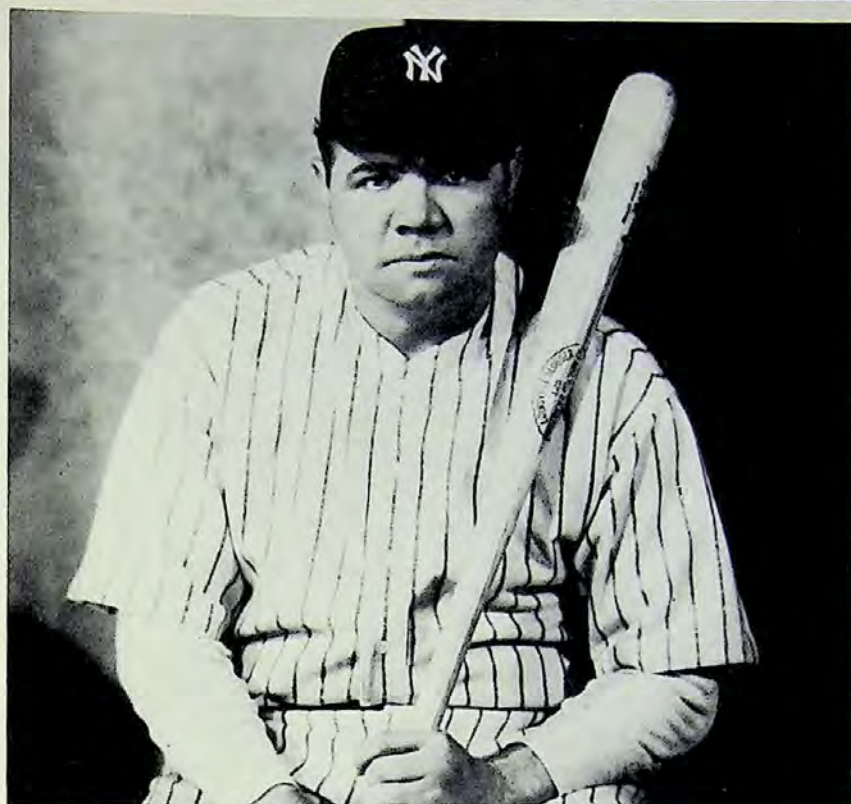
Editor's note: The truth must finally come out. Hogan's series is being ghost written by a monkey we found wandering the streets in Los Angeles one day last year. We gave him a typewriter and told him to write anything he wanted.

NO SEX

I buy magazines based on the amount of sex I can find between the covers. I picked up yours in hopes of finding a nude centerfold of one of those attractive actresses you put on the cover. But no such luck. I won't buy another copy until you get your act together and "think smut."

Larry Flaunt
Garbage Magazine
Sin City, Calif.

PLAYERS



The National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. offers the first known racquetball photo. Babe Ruth took this bat to a local YMCA and started hitting baseballs against the wall. The YMCA general manager then kicked him out for "making such a racket." The next day the general manager did the same thing himself and called the game "Racket-Ball."

COLLEGE COURTS

WESTERN CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY

The nine courts at Western Campbell University in Newport Beach, Calif. have not been used in the three years they have been around.

"Most of the courts are full of spider webs now," said Milton Sweat, assistant to the assistant intramural director at good old We C U. "We even turned one court into a jail. When someone in the school gets punished, we tie him up in a straight jacket and put him in court nine. He starts climbing those white walls pretty fast."

As far as Sweat can figure, the reason for the courts lack of use is ego. We C U is a party school, and all 7,500 students must pass a "cool" test before getting in. The "cool" test includes information on what kind of car is driven, how much alcohol can be consumed on a given night

and a checklist on how many pairs of designer jeans a student has in his or her closet.

"The students here want to be seen," says Sweat. "Everything they do is for the purpose of being seen. They don't want to go in some secluded court for exercise without the possibility of being seen."

Sweat says that in his three years at the school, he has had only one player sign up for his racquetball class. "Do you know what classes fill up first? Suntanning I and Advanced Suntanning," says Sweat. "The one guy I had sign up became a national champion but he was so pale, that he was kicked out of school on a popular vote."

So what will happen to the nine courts? "I think that we will take the roofs off eight of them and turn them into tanning lounges. Eventually they will add some sand and a hot dog stand and form a class in 'How To Act At The Beach.'"

INSTRUCTION

How to Avoid the Backhand

BY JIM DAVENPORT

How many times have you heard it? "The backhand is the strongest and most natural stroke in racquetball. The backhand wrist snap offers more power than the forehand. The long backhand follow-through produces more accuracy. The fuller body turn of the backhand allows the gluteus maximus to exert more pucker power, and so forth.

Just between us hackers, though, haven't you begun to suspect that the power of positive thinking is being stretched too far? One player in two has the peripheral vision to be able to twist into a backhand windup and still see the ball. One in three has the upper body coordination to develop a full shoulder turn. One in five has a wrist which will properly snap (without injury) in the backhand direction, and one in seven has the speed to be able to routinely set up in the contorted backhand windup. Statistically, that adds up to one player in 210 who has all the abilities required to develop a rifle from the backhand side.

And so just who is it that keeps telling us how simple it all is? The top-level tournament players and the pros, that's who. It's the McKays, Hardings, Hogans, Pecks who tell us—every one a card-carrying member of that elite one in 210. These folks couldn't make a bad backhand swing even if they tried.

By now, you're probably willing to admit that the possibility of a socially acceptable backhand for the struggling masses ranges from dim to remote. But don't despair, because the point of this article is that all hope is not gone. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIT A BACKHAND.** Your fellow troopers down in the trenches have been developing a revolutionary set of alternatives:

1. The bread and butter shot of backhand avoidance is the *suspended forehand* (also known as the spiderman maneuver). If a shot is hit to your backhand side and is not too close to the side wall, you should spring feet first into the side wall approximately three feet above the floor, so that your legs are tucked against the wall in a powerful coil. Some players like to use their free hand for additional bracing against the floor or side wall. After making a forehand slap stroke, you will be able to spring instantly off the wall to a favorable mid-court position. When properly executed, this stroke is unmatched for sheer exuberance, and is almost guaranteed to draw a small crowd of observers, or loud applause.

2. *The offensive shot into the back wall* offers other new possibilities for most players. Hitting shots into the back wall was formerly



Who says you need a good backhand to play quality racquetball? Not so. You can try the "suspended forehand" in which you start climbing the side walls in an effort to avoid hitting that stupid backhand.

considered only as a last desperate defense, thus, this technique was never taught or practiced. But note how these shots add

another dimension to backhand avoidance. When there is no time to set up for a proper suspended forehand, train yourself to whirl

Rx FOR WINNING

Exercises for Couples

and slap a forehand into the back wall. This shot is particularly effective when your opponent is in a back-court position, since he will chet around enough to make contact with him and at least give you a dead ball hinder. Some of the more advanced students of this method can occasionally enhance the shock effect by deliberately whiffing a short backhand stroke before turning and slamming the forehand into the back wall. (Avoid playing against these guys.)

3. *The bunt* can be used for wallpaper balls on your backhand side. Simply throw yourself against the side wall and block the ball with the racquet held flat against your torso. The exact racquet position is not particularly critical, but the ideal result is a soft garbage shot that dies in the near front corner. Even if that doesn't work out, the resulting setup will be so fat that your opponent will probably blow it in over-eager disbelief. As a last resort, you can always fake an elbow injury caused by your collision with the side wall. In C class ball your opponent will normally be sympathetic enough to replay the point—at least at first.

4. *The automatic hinder* is employed any time (and every time) your opponent is on the backhand side of the court and has the unmitigated gall to attempt a down-the-line passing shot to your backhand. Do *not* go for the ball. As soon as the ball comes off the front wall, leap into your opponent with a flying body block and scream, "HINDER" as you both crash off the side wall. As long as you begin your move soon enough, you can claim that you misjudged the angle of the ball off the wall.

If you employ all four of these tactics faithfully and with grim vigor, your opponent will eventually be very hesitant to hit anything at all to your backhand side and risk the resulting mayhem. He may, in fact, even become reluctant to step onto the backhand half of the court. At this point you've got him. In addition to avoiding the backhand stroke yourself, you can now hit lazy but intimidating cross-court shots to his backhand for the rest of the match.

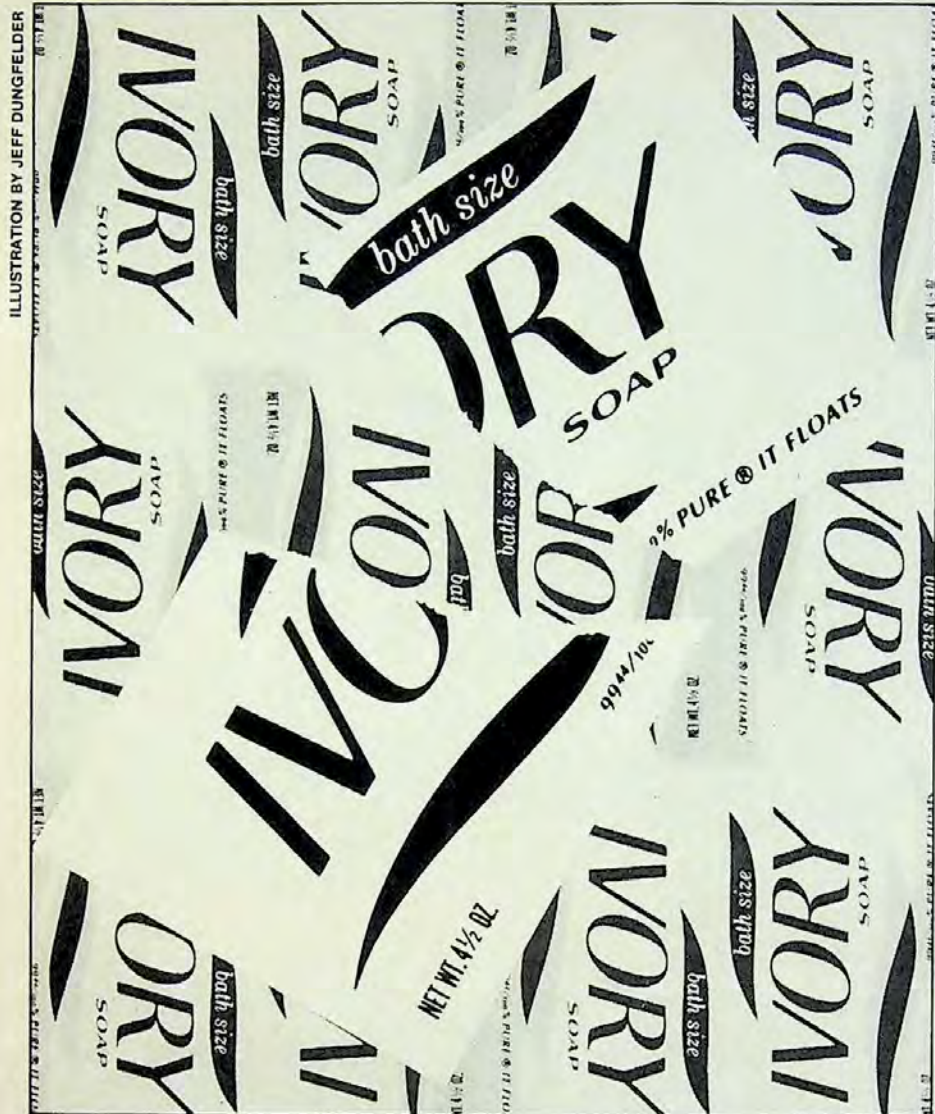
These techniques are so effective that you will seldom find an opponent who is willing to play you more than once, but that's a small price to pay when you consider the rewards of a fully integrated program of backhand avoidance. So let's be honest now. Most of us already have some semblance of these shots left over from our earlier days on the court. Just dust them off, polish them up, and put this approach to work for you. All you've got to lose is your backhand.



Top: To stretch the thigh and groin, have your partner stand on your leg while pulling your head in the other direction. This is also a good exercise for vocal control. Bottom: A good exercise for the lower back finds your partner using the left knee to "push" the back into proper alignment. Note how the knee and the arm are bent. If pain develops, break arm.

"COURTS OF SIN"

BY STEVEN L. STERN



PAUL: No... it's Nancy.

DAVID: Your Nancy? What's the story?

PAUL: (stands, begins to pace) Last night I called Nancy at her apartment. She sounded a little funny—distracted, you know? I asked her what the matter was. She says nothing's the matter. I asked her what she was doing. She said she had a friend over. Playing Scrabble, she says. I asked her which friend it was. She says Susan.

DAVID: So what's the problem?

PAUL: (stops pacing, half-smiles) When I called...

DAVID: Yeah?

PAUL: ... I was with Susan...

FADE TO BLACK

[Break for commercials: pantyhose, mouthwash, and hemorrhoid ointment]

SCENE 2

Sweaty Walls Racquet Club—Women's locker room, same evening.

NANCY is practicing stretching exercises as SUSAN enters the locker room.

SUSAN: (big smile) Hi there, Teach! Going to put me through my paces tonight?

NANCY: (coolly) Sure.

SUSAN: (changing into her red leotard) How was your day?

NANCY: It was all right.

SUSAN: How's Paul?

NANCY: (stops exercising, looks at Susan) Why do you ask?

SUSAN: (defensive) No reason. Just making conversation.

NANCY: (holding her gaze) I'll bet.

SUSAN: What's that supposed to mean?

NANCY: It means I think you know damn well how Paul is. It means I think you and Paul have gotten to know each other... intimately.

SUSAN: Aerobics must be straining your brain cells, Teach. I've never even been on the same racquetball court with Paul.

NANCY: It's not a *court* I'm suggesting you've been playing on.

SUSAN: (avoiding her eyes) I won't even dignify such drivel with a response. It's crazy. You've been watching too many soap operas. I don't know who you got such a notion from but—

NANCY: (interrupting) Paul called me last night. (NANCY waits for a reaction, but SUSAN keeps her face turned away) He sounded guilty as hell. He told me the reason he's had to work late so often is that the case involving Gem Chemical Company has become a legal nightmare. And you know what? I would have believed him too. Except for one thing. Paul's associate—my ex-lover—mentioned to me that that case was settled *last month*, after the chief witness turned up in a trash compactor.

SETTING

Sweaty Walls Racquet Club

CHARACTERS

DAVID—blond, about 29, athletic and handsome playboy type; a stockbroker and club racquetball champion.

PAUL—dark hair, 32, tall and wiry; a lawyer. DAVID and PAUL play racquetball together once a week. DAVID usually wins.

NANCY—brunette, 25, attractive; the aerobics instructor at Sweaty Walls; has been dating PAUL for more than a year.

SUSAN—light hair, late 20s, very sexy; an advertising copywriter.

NANCY and SUSAN recently became friends through the aerobics class NANCY teaches. However, NANCY is now convinced that SUSAN is trying to steal PAUL from her.

SCENE 1

Sweaty Walls Racquet Club men's locker room, early evening.

PAUL is sitting on a locker room bench, still in his street clothes, staring down at his feet. He looks dejected. DAVID enters, all smiles.

DAVID: Hey, guy! What's doing? Did you get a look at that new girl behind the counter? I swear, she could melt the elastic in my shorts.

PAUL: (quiet, preoccupied) Oh, hi Dave.

DAVID: So, what's with the tragic face? You're not even changed yet. What're you waiting for? (DAVID pauses but PAUL doesn't say anything) You look terrible. Rough day, or what?

PAUL: (looking down again) Yeah.

DAVID: Yeah, what? Did you lose a big court case?

SUSAN: (voice a little unsteady now) So what's this got to do with me?

NANCY reaches into her locker and takes out a gold bracelet. She dangles it in front of **SUSAN**'s eyes.

SUSAN: (grabs the bracelet) My bracelet! I've been looking everywhere for it! Where did you—(stops talking, backs up a step)

NANCY: Where do you think I found it, Little Miss Innocent? Under Paul's bed, right next to his torn sneakers, smelly socks, and sweaty headband...

FADE TO BLACK

[Break for commercials: denture creme, foot deodorant, and instant mashed potatoes]

SCENE 3

Corridor connecting the men's and women's locker rooms, same evening, 10 minutes later.

DAVID and **PAUL** come out of the men's locker room heading toward their racquetball court. Both are neatly dressed and carry expensive racquets.

NANCY and **SUSAN** leave the women's locker room on their way to the exercise room. **SUSAN**'s leotard is considerably more revealing than **NANCY**'s.

Both twosomes are engaged in conversation until they meet in the corridor. They all stop dead in their tracks.

PAUL: (caught off guard) Nancy...

NANCY: (equally off guard) Paul...

SUSAN: (very uncomfortable) Uh, hi.

DAVID: Hi, Nancy. (he turns to **SUSAN** and looks directly at her cleavage) Well... hel-lo there! I don't think we've met. I'm Dave. (he extends his hand)

SUSAN: (doesn't know which way to look) I'm Susan. (She shakes hands with David, has some difficulty getting her hand back)

DAVID: (shoots a glance at **PAUL**) Uh... hi, Susan. Nice to meet you. (leering) Love your outfit.

PAUL: (nervous) Hello, Susan.

SUSAN: (weak smile) Hi.

There is an awkward silence. Then everyone starts speaking at once. Instantly they all stop. Another pause.

NANCY: (acid tone) Well, isn't this cozy. Maybe we should all get a Wallyball court.

DAVID: (still lost in Susan's leotard) Hey, that's a terrific idea.

Everyone glares at him.

DAVID: On the other hand, maybe not.

PAUL: Nancy, we have to talk.

NANCY: (icily) What about? The Gem Chemical Company case?

SUSAN: (trying to get away) Well, I'd better go limber up.

DAVID: You look limber enough to me.

PAUL: (annoyed at David) Will you turn it off a while, Dave? Gimme a break, huh?

DAVID: A tad touchy, aren't we?

NANCY: Maybe Paul can help you limber up, Susan. He's very good at stretching things. Like the truth.

NANCY storms off, brushing **SUSAN** and **PAUL** aside.

PAUL: Nancy, wait! Let me explain.

PAUL follows her, leaving **SUSAN** and **DAVID** standing in the corridor. Just then the bell rings, signaling the beginning of the new court hour.

DAVID: (watches **PAUL** walk away then turns to **SUSAN**) Looks like I've lost my racquetball partner. (smiles suggestively at her) Do you... play?

SUSAN looks at him... and smiles.

FADE TO BLACK

[Break for commercials: disposable diapers, toilet bowl cleaner, and cat food]

SCENE 4

Another part of the club, same evening, five minutes later.

PAUL and **NANCY** are in the midst of a heated discussion.

NANCY: How long has this been going on, you two-faced rodent? How long have you been sleeping with her?

PAUL: Nancy, please, listen to me. It just... you know, happened.

NANCY: No, I don't know. What happened? Did she rape you? Has she been forcing you to bring her back to your apartment?

PAUL: Please listen. It doesn't mean anything. I love you.

NANCY: (furious) Love? That's a laugh. You love being a lawyer. You love playing racquetball with that oversexed jockstrap friend of yours. You love pepperoni pizza. You don't love me. I'm just a little diversion for those nights when you can't get a court reservation. I'm just a side dish for you. (she turns away, then immediately whirls back) You know, I can't believe this! After all the things I've done for you.

PAUL: (tries to embrace her) Aw, babe, you're not a side dish for me. You're my main course.

NANCY: (pushes him away) Don't "babe" me, you two-timing slug. This is the thanks I get? When Dave hit you in the nose with the ball that time, who applied the bandage that stopped the bleeding? Me, that's who! When your sister got arrested, who bailed her out? Me! When you and your father were kidnapped by Arab terrorists, who was it who delivered the ransom money? When your mother got pregnant and you couldn't find the guy who did it, who was it who discovered the love note written on the back of the Boy Scout manual? Me, me, me! And after all that, you have the nerve to cheat on me with that

cheap, pumpkin-breasted bed thrasher?

PAUL: Nancy, please calm down. You're getting all bent out of shape over nothing.

NANCY: (really shouting now) *Nothing!* You call this nothing? You slimy low-life! I'll show you what's bent out of shape. Gimme that racquet—

NANCY grabs the racquet from **PAUL**'s hand and swings it at his head. He ducks, and it crashes against the wall. **PAUL** wrestles it from her grasp.

PAUL: Have you gone nuts? I just had this racquet restrung. (**NANCY** tries to grab it again, but **PAUL** manages to hold onto it this time) It was only a *fling*, Nancy. No big deal. Calm down, will you!

NANCY: (backs away, lowers her voice) I'll calm down. Oh, I'll calm down. You think you can get away with this, huh? My two ex-husbands tried the same stunt. I taught them a lesson. A *good* lesson. We'll see who has the last laugh. (glares at him) Tell me, Mr. Attorney, do you think anyone at Gem Chemical Company would be interested in knowing how you *really* obtained those incriminating files?

PAUL: (startled) What... do you mean? What do you intend to do?

NANCY: (fiendish grin) You'll see... *babe*... you'll see...

FADE TO BLACK

[Break for commercials: toothpaste, peanut butter, dish detergent, and laxative]

SCENE 5

Parking lot of Sweaty Walls Racquet Club—later that same evening.

SUSAN and **DAVID**, both in street clothes, are sitting in **DAVID**'s new, black Jaguar.

SUSAN: I'm not sure I feel right about this.

DAVID: About what? We've both been stood up, haven't we? Your aerobics' teacher and my racquetball partner are off somewhere rubbing salt into each other's wounds. What could be more appropriate than our having a drink together?

SUSAN: (after a pause) I don't think I like you very much.

DAVID: (smiles at her) Does that really matter?

SUSAN: (meets his eyes) It will tomorrow.

DAVID: And tonight?

SUSAN: No.

DAVID starts the car.

DAVID: Anyway, what's the difference? No one has to know we're together.

They drive off. Out from the shadows steps **TONY**—**SUSAN**'s former lover—a racquetball pro, alcoholic, and convicted child molester whom everyone had thought died in a tragic sauna explosion a year ago. There is murder in his eyes...

FADE TO BLACK

INSTRUCTION

Shot Selection Strategy

BY STEVE KEELEY



Under the ball height theory, Steve Keeley says that if the ball is below the knees go for the kill, if it is between the knees and waist, try a passing shot, and if it is above the waist go to the ceiling.

The main skill which separates the intermediate from the advanced player in racquetball is shot selection. The intermediate typically has solid strokes and serves, and is able to hit all the important shots. Normally, however, the intermediate doesn't know *when* to hit these shots. He frequently hits a pass when he should go for the kill, or he hits to the ceiling when he should go for the pass. This then is the essence of shot selection: knowing when to hit the proper shot during the rally.

I often illustrate the significance of shot selection at my clinics in a novel way. I challenge any student to a game in which I play with my "wrong" (left) hand. A natural righty, I've nonetheless hit enough left-handed strokes over the years to have attained about a "B" level of physical skills. By physical skills I mean that if you watched me drop and hit a few forehands, backhands and serves, you'd probably guess that I was about a "B" rated player. But this simple observation leaves out an equally important aspect of racquetball: mental skills. Though I go on the court as a "B" league physical southpaw, I also take with me a pro player mind. That is, I play a top-notch cerebral game, knowing when to hit the right shot at the right time, despite my wrong-handedness. Thus, I am a pro head set upon a "B" body, and this averages out to an "open" player. I trounce most of my clinic students.

Whatever hand you use, there are a number of ways to explain shot selection strategies, ranging from the simple to the fairly detailed. Perhaps the most logical approach would be for you to begin with what seems the easiest to assimilate and then progress to the more complicated. Note that the following are shot selection theories, not truths. Try out each idea and then select the one or ones that work best for you. I don't believe that one particular theory which holds for one player will necessarily hold for another. If Charlie Brumfield followed Marty Hogan's shot selection concept of blast the ball as hard and low as possible on every shot, Brumfield would instantly regress to a novice player. Similarly, if Hogan tried to adhere to Brumfield's shot selection technique of picking the most logical shot on each set-up according to the multiple variables of relative court position, game score, who served, relative player fatigue, etc., Hogan would short circuit his brain within three rallies and start climbing the walls. Besides trying out and selecting your personal favorite shot selection theory or theories, I encourage you to experiment with the various proposals which I'm about to lay down. Mold my strategies as you will, or combine them, or create your own. Be aware that racquetball theories haven't been around since day one. Somebody at some time had to concoct the strategies. Most of what you are about to read I came up with from endless trial and error. You have the power to do the same.

Let's examine individually the following theories of shot selection: 1) the offensive theory of play, 2) the ball height technique, 3) the two-shot shot selection, 4) the relative court position theory, and 5) the who's serving hypothesis.

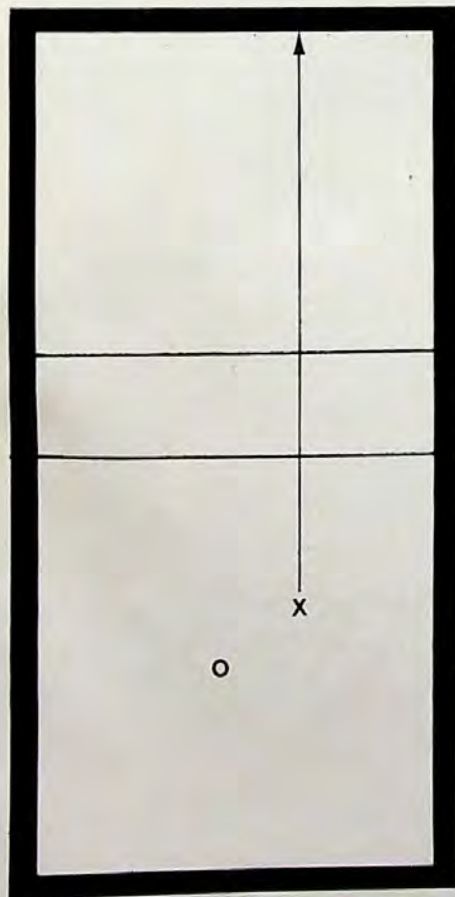
I first proposed the *offensive theory of play* in the early 1970s when our game's ball was slower and the game style was a runner's sweat-fest rather than a cerebral match-up. Bluntly, most players back then were oatmeal above the eyebrows when it came to know-how on the court. Their strategy consisted mainly of hitting the ball where the other guy wasn't. That is, if the opponent was in right deep court, the proper shot was hit low into the front corner. If the opponent was in right deep court, the proper shot was to hit low into the front corner. If the opponent was in left front court, the definitive shot was a pass or ceiling ball into the right rear corner. This simple strategy worked well enough for most players in that era (and it still works well among novice players), but I soon discovered that by thinking a tad on the court I could literally waltz with no sweat through tournaments. I did this by playing as *offensively* as my physical skills allowed.

The offensive theory of play has three parts. First part: Whenever you can, take the most offensive shot possible. That means kill the ball. I admit that the phrase "whenever you can" is a rather subjective view, but remember that the top players of old (and most novices in any era) played the game more by

Editor's note: First in a series of articles.

"feel" than by analysis. We didn't have instructors, textbooks or magazine articles to guide us, and we hadn't consciously broken down game strategy by dissecting shot angles, ball spin, court position and so forth. Rather, we considered these sundry factors only in our subconscious minds as we rallied, and then somehow our arms hit the most logical shot. This whole idea amazes me, in retrospect, because nowadays I approach the game more analytically and less intuitively. You also can play by feel, and do so successfully all the way up into the pro ranks. That is, when it seems right to hit an offensive shot during a rally, be sure to adhere to part one of the offensive theory of play and go for the most offensive shot available—the kill.

Second part: If it doesn't feel right in a particular instance to go for a kill—and only when it doesn't feel right—then you should hit the second most offensive shot available in our game. This is a pass. Again, the specific



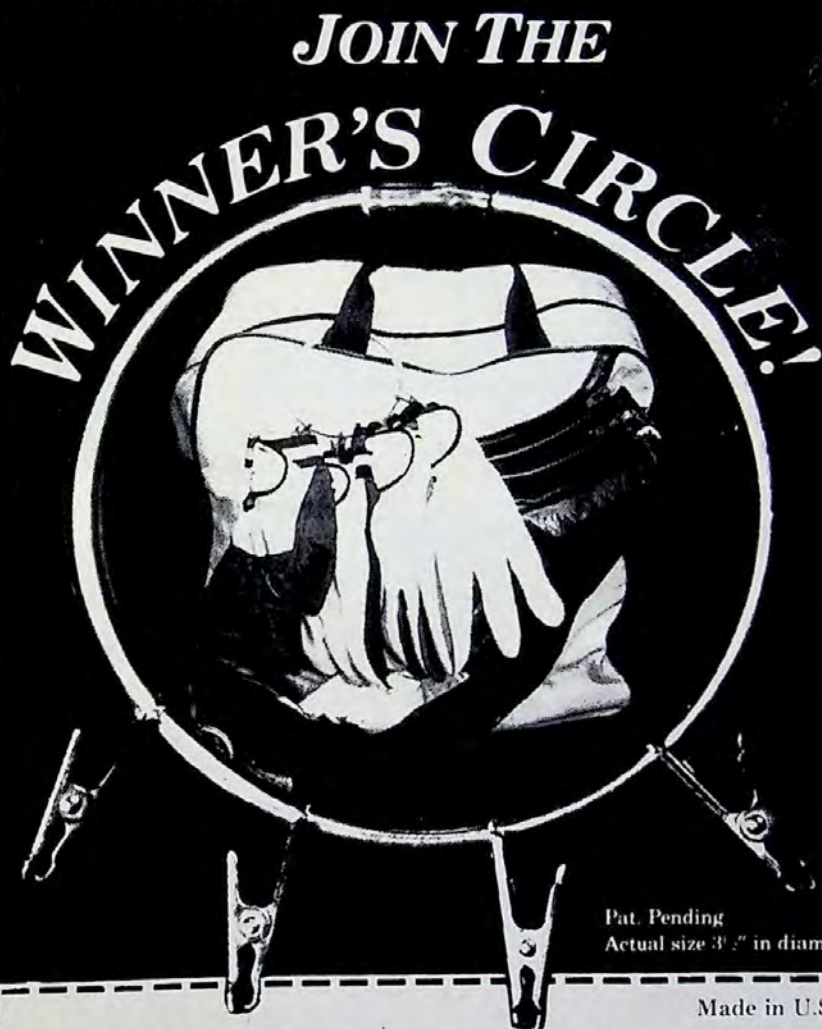
When talking about court position, Keeley says that a player should always go for a kill if your opponent is behind you.

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INSTRUCTION

time to forego a kill in favor of a pass is pretty much subjective according to this theory, but properly so. The details of pass placement are beyond the theoretical nature of this article, but I would be remiss if I didn't include a couple of comments on the old dependable pass shot. In general, passes should go, as we used to say, "where the other guy ain't." If you're on the left side of the court, as is your opponent, hit a cross-court pass to the right, and so on. Most top players avoid forehand down-the-line passes. If you want to hit up-and-down the right side wall, make it a straight-in kill. The most effective all-around pass is the backhand down-the-line drive. This ball runs along the left side wall past the opponent for a "wallpaper shot" which clings to the plaster all the way to deep court. But—and this is the warning—your backhand wallpaper pass must not rebound off the back wall for a set-up. Almost a decade ago, I stated that the first player to master the down-the-line backhand drive would be the next national champ. To my knowledge, only two players of national caliber have mastered the shot. One, Victor Niederhoffer, took up the game at too old an age to become champ. The other, Marty Hogan, did indeed become racquetball's top dog.

Part three of the offensive theory of play: If it doesn't feel right to hit either a kill or a pass—and only when it doesn't feel right—go for a defensive shot. In these days of the lively ball, the only logical defensive shot among better players is the ceiling ball. Again, I won't delve into the details of the ceiling game except to say that you should keep in mind that the prime objective of ceiling play is not to place the ball to your opponent's backhand, but rather to neutralize a weak court position by forcing your rival into deep court where he must handle a chest high or higher shot. Of course, go ahead and hit the ceiling shot to the backhand side if there is no risk of a mis-hit. Some of the typical foul-ups in this area include miscalculating the angle and having the ball pop off the side wall in three-quarter court for a set-up, under-hitting the ball and again providing a three-quarter court set-up, or—and this is very common with a lively ball—over-hitting and having the ball rebound off the back wall for a routine plum.

The offensive theory of play may sound complicated initially, but it is a very effective means of programming your mind to play offensively. The more conservative player who hides behind an impotent array of defensive shots may win at the lower skill levels, but he severely limits his progress in the game. Offense is the name of the game among advanced players. Go for the kill when you can.

Ball Height Technique

The ball height technique and the ensuing theories are less detailed, but don't laugh off

their simplicity. For example, I still use the ball height gimmick in a couple of instances. I use it in a game when things aren't going my way strategically and I need to fall back on a proven fundamental. And, I utilize it when I'm up against an impetuous opponent (usually a flailing young shooter) who can be beaten with steady play, leaving my impatient rival to make the mistakes.

If the ball is presented to you during the rally at knee height or lower, go for a kill. If the ball is knee to waist high, hit a pass. If the ball is waist high or above, go to the ceiling. I'm talking about *any* shot you could possibly take during the rally. All you have to think about is the height of the ball. Consider a few common serve returns, for example. If a served ball rebounds off the back wall and you can let it drop to knee height, do so and hit a kill. If the serve isn't going to come off the back wall, take it after the bounce and—contacting it knee to waist high—hit a pass. Finally, if the serve is hit high and soft enough such that after its bounce you're forced to make contact above your waist, go up to the ceiling. Give the ball height technique a try for at least one game. All you have to do is become a racquet wielding robot programmed to execute shot selection solely according to ball height. You may be surprised at the results.

Two-Shot Selection

Next is the two-shot selection. It is so simple and ingenious that I wish I had invented it, but a fellow named Victor Spear first proposed the idea in an innocuous looking book titled *How to Win at Racquetball*. Spear observed that professional players hit only one of two shots during serious matches: kills or ceiling balls. No messing around with fancy Z-balls, around-the-wall balls or even the bread-and-butter passes. Spear didn't detail exactly when the pros hit a kill as opposed to a ceiling ball, but anyone who has observed Hogan, Dave Peck or Jerry Hilecher in action knows that these guys grudgingly go to the ceiling only when out of position with the ball chest high or above. The pros play gorilla ball, hitting hard and low at every opportunity. Note that Spear's two-shot shot selection is similar to my preceding ball height strategy, except his theory does not allow for passes when the ball is knee to waist high. Be aware that the better the player, the higher the percentage of kills relative to pass attempts. And the less skilled the player, the higher the percentage of passes relative to kill attempts.

Relative Court Position

The relative court position theory is a nifty guide for the beginning to intermediate player who wants to play a thinking game without having to think much. This concept deals specifically with set-ups—with shots that are

The most attractive feature of the relative court position theory is its simplicity. In fact, you know enough from reading the preceding paragraph to put it into execution in your next practice game. Moreover, this court position concept is especially strategic if at present you are not overly confident in your

Who's Serving?

The final theory is the who's serving hypothesis. This is based on a scoring system in which only the server can score points. According to this hypothesis, when you are the server you should go for the riskier offensive shots such as kills and passes, as opposed to passes and ceiling balls. This is because, as the server, if you miss the kill or pass attempt, you lose only the serve. On the contrary, when you are the receiver you should think about more conservative shot selection. You should hit a pass in lieu of a kill, a ceiling ball instead of a pass. The rationale here is that a mis-hit kill or low-percentage overhead attempt usually means an immediate loss of point when you're the receiver. The only times

That completes my five theories of shot selection. In closing, realize that the best strategy or combinations of strategies for a particular player depends mainly on skill level. In general, the beginner (playing against a beginner) fares well with the ball height technique or the relative court position theory. The intermediate (playing against an intermediate) succeeds using the offensive theory of play or the ball height technique. And the advanced (playing against an advanced player) should consider using the ball height technique or the two-shot selection. In other words, as your skill increases, your strategy becomes more offensive.



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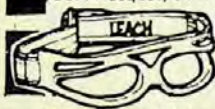
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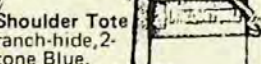
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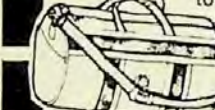
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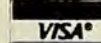
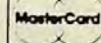


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INSTRUCTION

Special Situations

BY VICTOR I. SPEAR

What do you do when your opponent has a set up?

You know that feeling you get when you've just attempted a kill shot which comes up high, and rebounds back to your opponent knee-high at mid-court?

You know that feeling you get when you've just attempted a routine ceiling shot which completely misses the ceiling, and rebounds off the back wall to the service area for a set-up?

You know that feeling you get when you've just attempted a ceiling shot to the left corner which hits the left wall at mid-court, and rebounds toward the center for a set-up?

What do you do? If you are like most players, you get angry with yourself, utter a few colorful words of disgust, and just stand there. This adds up to as much value as might be derived from leaving the court (which you probably also considered briefly).

But why surrender? The ball is still in play, and as long as it remains in play, there is at least a glimmer of hope. Stop and think about it for a few seconds. Isn't there anything you can do, other than throwing a body block or praying for divine intervention, that might get you back into the point? I've been forced to analyze this situation because I've been in this position so many times. Believe it or not, it's not completely hopeless. There is one and only one thing you can do: Take away your opponent's best shot!

Just before he strikes the ball, make an all out charge toward the natural corner target of his kill shot, whether he sees you or not. Show yourself to him. Force him to try to make a perfect shot. Admittedly, you take yourself far out of position by this early move, but you have nothing to lose. He may pass you on the other side, and you are left standing there with egg on your face. But your position was hopeless, anyway. By making the premature move you might be saved three different ways:

1. You may be able to retrieve a kill shot that you never had a chance to reach otherwise.
2. You may intimidate your opponent to take his eye off the ball, and hit it into the floor as a direct result of your distracting move.
3. The cross-court pass, which is the correct shot against your premature move, may be hit too high, giving you a chance to save it off the back wall.

The above move at least gives you some chance in a position where you have none. At the very least, it's better than doing nothing at

all. It's worth a try. What other options do you have? The next time your opponent is poised, licking his chops, for a set-up kill shot, make a sudden dash for his near corner. Then have a good chuckle as you watch him either blow the kill shot or hit a poor passing shot instead.

Back Wall Save

When you have just been the victim of a well-executed passing shot, you have only one hope left—a lunge hit into the back wall with enough force to reach the front wall before the next bounce. The heads-up player will use this shot only in desperation, because the result will usually be another set-up for the opponent. The only thing accomplished is that it keeps you alive a few seconds longer. It forces your opponent to hit one more shot, leaving open the possibility that he might hit a poor one.

This shot should never be chosen if there is any chance to getting your racquet on the ball for a half decent shot directly forward to the front wall. It should be hit only as a last resort. One of the common errors seen in this regard is when a player with a poor backhand uses this shot on a good serve in the left corner, hitting a forehand stroke into the back wall. This is going to some extreme to avoid hitting a difficult backhand stroke. It makes the coach want to put his hands over his eyes.

Front Wall Charge

We usually think of a kill shot as a shot that is chosen out of several alternatives. There are a few instances, however, when a kill shot is not a shot of choice but a shot of necessity (i.e., the only possible shot left for him to hit, a desperation shot).

Example. You've just hit a ceiling shot to the left corner. The shot is hit with almost perfect depth, but the other player elects not to hit it in the air. Instead, he waits to hit it off the back wall. When that ball hits the back wall, he will have no other option but to hit a kill shot just before it hits the floor.

Example. You've just executed a well placed Z-serve to the left corner which has hit the side wall and taken a nosedive toward the back wall with a lot of downspin. Because of the depth of the serve, your opponent would have been wise to hit this one before it hit the side wall, or at least, before it hit the back wall, but he has done neither. After it hits the back wall, the only thing he has left is a desperation, scrape-the-floor kill shot.

Now, in each of these examples you have a split second to see what is developing. You know which shot he will hit before he hits it. One step behind the service line is no longer the best position.

Editor's note: This is reprinted from How To Win At Racquetball, by Victor I. Spear, M.D., Camelot Towers, Rockford, Ill., 1976.

Whenever your opponent is in big trouble in the back court, move up toward his near corner.

You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. By being alert, you have a two step jump to protect yourself against the desperation slop-shot kill. He has no chance of executing a cross-court pass from that position, so there is very little risk. And you just might save yourself the agony of losing a point to a lucky

In summary, don't just stand there and admire a well-placed shot that gives your opponent trouble. move up and protect yourself against a low percentage, miracle return. It doesn't cost you any more than about two steps of effort. As a general rule, any ceiling ball that is allowed to go by without being hit in the air is most likely to result in a kill shot attempt off the back wall. As long as you know this, a forward position is clearly indicated, so as to give you a better chance to retrieve it, even if it is well executed.

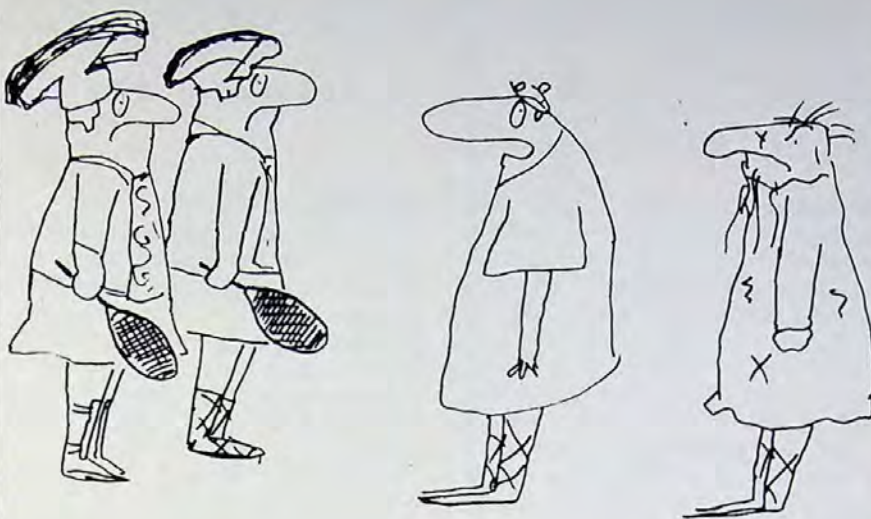
Missed Ceiling Shot

I have a "new" shot to discuss. I would like to say that I invented this shot by sheer intellect, but the truth of the matter is that I just stumbled over it by hitting a lot of bad shots. In golf, it is well known that the resulting position can be much worse after missing a shot just a little, than would be the case after missing it a lot. For example, the golfer may be better off after slicing a ball clear into the next fairway than he would be slicing it just as far as the trees and rough between the two fairways. This new tactic was derived out of hitting a terrible shot.

Almost invariably, when you miss the ceiling on an attempted ceiling shot, you've given your opponent a set-up. The ball rebounds off the back wall far up the court, he follows the ball forward until it drops to the ideal striking level, and then he snuffs you out any of six different ways.

Now follow this closely: If you hit a high, hard shot off the front wall close to the ceiling, but not touching it, the ball will come off the back wall with enough force to carry the other player all the way to the front wall without dropping below the waist. What began as an apparent set-up has turned into a trap. He is hopelessly out of position, and the ball is still too high to hit a kill shot or drop shot. His only hope is to go to the ceiling and try to re-group.

I don't recommend this shot as an integral part of your offensive strategy. It is not a shot you want to use very often. In fact, three times in a single match may be too often. There are too many variables to contend with, and the margin for error too great. But it certainly is worth an occasional try, for surprise effect, if nothing else.



"Could you two knock off the ceiling shots until Michelangelo finishes his mural?"

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The Elements of Good Footwork

BY BRAD KRUGER

I know a player who does a couple of quick stretches and then hurriedly moves onto the racquetball court for his pre-game warm-up. He stands in one of the court's rear corners, plants his feet in one permanent position and proceeds to drop and hit about 50 different shots. Each time, he bounces the ball, wallops it, picks it up, bounces it, and creams it again. Routinely he hits a combination of the most awesome, mind-boggling shots ever to be seen within the confines of a racquetball court. If ever there was a truly impeccable racquetball player, he would appear to be it.

But come game-time, when the ball starts carooming off the walls at various speeds and angles, the story-line takes a drastic plunge for the worse. This player takes on the appearance of an old codger stricken by acute rigor mortis of the knees. His shots are anything but decent.

Why? It seems that he has spent most of his practice time working on drop and hit drills. Thus, when confronted by a moving ball, he becomes confused and disoriented because he lacks the knowledge and ability to properly set-up and execute his shots when the ball is moving. In short, his footwork stinks.

It seems that an epidemic of lethargic footwork has swept the nation. There are thousands of players of this type throughout the courts of North America unknowingly suffering from this ghastly problem. Racquetball enthusiasts, in their endless search for shot proficiency, have neglected developing the component of footwork, thinking it would take care of itself. Well, it won't.

Good footwork would be greatly simplified if there was one set of governing rules that would work well for everyone. Unfortunately, no such set of rules exists. No two pros, no matter how similar their game styles and patterns of movement, have the same footwork. Some generalities can be made, however, to indicate what the composition of good footwork is.

Racquetball's history has shown repeatedly that the difference between Joe Pro and Harold Hacker is the quality of footwork. The pro player has almost always positioned himself properly to hit even the strangest of shots while the amateur can mess up when hitting even the easiest of plums. The pro has simply spent more time on the court developing his footwork and, therefore, has trained himself to react and move quickly to execute each shot at a higher level of proficiency. Our goal is to develop the quality of proper footwork, thus enabling us to properly set-up and hit every ball with maximum efficiency.

The Stance

Let's start with an analysis of the basic stance, for it is from this position that we move to hit every ball. A good stance should enable the player to react and move immediately to any point on the court while maintaining a relatively stable point of balance. This is accomplished by being bouncy on the balls of the feet, with the feet spread about shoulder width apart. The knees should be bent slightly and the back should be relatively upright.

The bounciness gained from being on the balls of the feet will stop one from becoming sluggishly inert on the court. The knees and back work together as one, forming a natural weight distributor. The more one bends from the waist, the deeper the knees should bend to compensate for the shift in the body's center of gravity. The more upright the back, the less the knees will have to bend. The ultimate point of convergence between the knees and back will enable any player to move quickly while maintaining the necessary balance.

Balance is the key point. Employing the forementioned factors, the player should be stable enough to withstand the turbulent gusts of a gyrating pass-shot, and yet not so stable that his movement is restricted.

The easiest way to develop this pinnacle of balance is with the help of a practice partner. Assume the stance you most commonly employ in an actual game situation. Then have your partner give you a slight shove. If you are sent flying, pick yourself up and adjust your stance. This time bend deeper from the knees, thus adding more stability to your stance. Try again. You should be able to withstand a slight shove, yet a "shoulder-check" should send you flying.

Remember, however, that there is also a point where one can be too stable. Cementing your feet to the floor will definitely give you a solid base, but it is to no avail if you remain immobile while your opponent's shots go whizzing by for winners.

Lateral Movement

The top pros all seem to possess a super-human quality which enables them to charge sidelong in one direction, turn on a dime, and sprint off the other way. Novices attempting this usually end up flat on their backs nursing rolled ankles or, at least, are seen hobbling out the court door under the influence of a severely bruised body. The novices have developed the control to stop their feet at will, but are still experiencing difficulty in stopping their momentous body mass as well. Moving rapidly, from side to side, comes natural to

some, but to most, a great deal of work is required.

To develop this ability, first assume the basic stance. To move to the left, let your body weight come down on your right foot and then spring off of this foot, moving to the left. The reverse holds true for moving to the right side of the court. Let your body weight come down on the left foot and then spring off this same foot, moving to the right.

Concentrate on keeping the feet about shoulder width apart. If they are too far apart, unnecessary stress will be placed on the knees and the thrust generated from this portion of the body will be minimized. Any closer together and you'll fall over like dead timber.

The problem, however, usually does not occur when one tries to move but rather when one tries to stop moving. It is easily solved by implementing the concept of the knees, back, and center of gravity relationship, as mentioned in the stance section. Simply stated, when you want to stop your feet, you must pace the stop to coincide with the bending of the knees and back. If you miscue, you will fall over.

Perfection, here, is gained only through repetitive practice on the court. Concentration on moving in both sideways directions with an emphasis on the relationship between back, knees, and the center of gravity.

Hyper-Activity

Seldom will you ever see a good player walking during the course of a rally. In fact, the sight of anybody actually sauntering around the court at a sluggard's pace is enough to make even the lowliest advocate of proper footwork gasp in utter disgust. Walking is a slow, conservative, flat-footed mode of transport and should be saved for the eight-hour work day or long-distance nature hikes. It has no place on the racquetball court.

Good players are almost always in continual motion. Their feet seldom stop moving. They will bounce, weave, skip, hop, and, if necessary, perform a complete array of distorted dance variations when moving in for the hit or jostling about for better court position. They remain bouncy on the balls of their feet. This is very important.

The bouncy player is prepared for a number of things. He is ready to react immediately to any of his opponent's unexpected shots. He is also prepared for any of racquetball's constantly occurring "freak" balls which bound out, against all normality, at frustratingly obscure angles.

The sport of boxing best illustrates the virtues of bounciness. The best boxers are almost always bouncy on the balls of their feet. A small hop can move the boxer into an offensive position to throw the crunch punch, or it can help the boxer elude his opponent's punches by pulling him out of his opponent's reach, into a defensive position.

The same holds true for racquetball except, in this case, the opponent is the blue ball. A simple hop, then, will pull you away from the ball trying to jam you in the mid-section, or it can push you towards the ball that is trying to elude your racquet.

When bouncing, however, the feet should never leave the floor by more than a few inches. The reason is explained in the noted "reaction but no traction" theory. Your opponent hits a pass shot, but you're caught in mid-air. You see where the shot is going and make an attempt to chase it down, but your feet merely spin, and the shot goes for a winner. Had you been in contact with the ground instead of off it you might have been able to return it.

the front foot, contact with the ball is made. Generally, your shoulders will be facing the right side wall, with the feet spaced about shoulder width apart. If the left foot steps too far to the right, your weight will be moving sideways, away from the intended target, and you'll lose the natural power. If the lead foot is too far to the left, you'll end up facing the front wall with little, if any, weight transference (and thus, natural power) at all.

The backhand procedure for footwork is almost the reverse of the forehand. In this case, the right foot steps towards the intended target just before impact. Again, cause and effect generally stand true. If you move your right foot too far to the left, you will have blocked yourself from hitting with power, because your weight transference is sideways, not forward. If the lead foot is too far to the right, again you'll be facing the front wall and lacking weight transference.

Anticipating the ball's time in flight is the most important and most difficult task of the momentum building step. If you step too soon, you will find yourself off balance and

"Seldom will you see a good player walking during the course of a rally."

Step of Momentum

Recent claims from pros indicate that power in racquetball comes from shooting from the hip with the weight placed over the rear foot. This has left the topic of natural power long forgotten. Natural power is generated through the transfer of weight from the rear foot to the lead foot.

In their developing years, every pro on the pro tour has gone through the ritualistic training of stepping into the ball and transferring their weight forward from the rear foot. There are times you'll see a pro shooting off of his or her rear foot, but it is usually because they didn't have time to adjust their stance so as to step into the ball.

Here's how the transfer of weight is done. If the ball is coming to the forehand side, your left foot steps directly towards the intended target on the wall, just prior to the moment of impact. As the weight starts to come down on

reaching for the ball. If you step too late, the ball will either whiz past for a winner or you'll find it implanted in your navel. If the step is improperly timed, the natural power associated with the step will be nil. Constant play or practice is the best and easiest way to develop the skill of anticipating the time of the ball's flight.

Of course, in preparation to take this step of momentum, the player must move a step or two back from the anticipated point of contact. This will leave him room to take his step into the right position, transferring his weight at the right time.

The objective is to learn the above techniques so well that they become embedded in your subconscious. You don't want to think about doing something. You want to do it automatically. This will enable you to focus 100 percent concentration on the point being played.

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Gospel According to the Pros

Rita Hoff on **wallpaper shots**: "In returning a wallpaper shot, it is best to make a defensive return to keep the ball in play. Your racquet should be parallel to the side wall so that the side of the frame is touching the wall. Make sure your racquet is in line with the flight of the ball, one or two feet behind the ball. Point of contact should occur when the ball is at head or shoulder level. Face the side wall and use a scraping motion. This should not be a full swing."

Bonnie Stoll on **ceiling shots**: "Different altitudes can effect the bounce of a ball. A ceiling shot in Denver reacts much differently than a ceiling shot hit in New York City. Before your match, practice ceiling shots to see how high they bounce and how far back they will go with your normal swing."

Editor's note: The following quotes were taken from past issues of Racquetball Illustrated.

Lynn Adams on **saving shots**: "The key is mobility. Don't plant yourself like a big oak tree and wait for the ball to shoot by you. Size up the situation and move to it."

Marty Hogan on **spin**: "Ball spin is sometimes helpful but not in the tennis sense. I never purposely try to use spin for any advantage because it's more trouble than it's worth. A racquetball just doesn't react like a tennis ball. But if I'm jammed and the ball gets behind me, I'll come over the ball from behind my right hip and put it into a corner or down the line. The purpose of top spin is not deception but protection and control."

Karin Walton-Trent on **lob serves**: "The lob works well as a second serve, especially if you are tired or are trying to slow the game down. This is particularly applicable for a woman playing against a man. I won a men's B tournament by lobbing my opponents to death. The trick is to get the serve to die in the back corner. You can do this by lifting the ball gently rather than actually striking it hard."

Mike Yellen on **use of the passing game**: "The pass is an end run around your opponent. Your goal is to get the ball past him and leave him scrambling like a man chasing a bug. By moving your opponent from side to side, he will probably spend the match working a lot harder than you. That can mean the crucial difference when it comes time to play a tiebreaker."

Dr. Bud Muehleisen on the **tempo of your swing**: "Whenever you lose control of a shot, reduce the power of your swing for the time being. Lower the tempo of your swing until you can control the ball. Give your maximum stroke a rating of 10. Figure your ideal tempo range at a seven or eight."

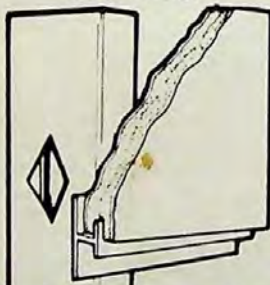
Jack Reznik on **back wall play**: "Turn or pivot in the same direction the ball is traveling. Begin the backswing simultaneously with the turn or pivot. Transfer your body weight first to the rear foot and then to the lead foot. The swing takes place simultaneously with the last step. Keep your eye on the ball."



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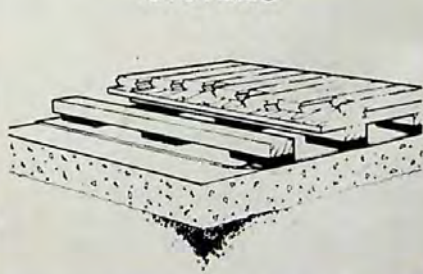
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Janell Marriott on **wrist snap for serving**: "Wrist snap is important. By using your wrist to change serves, you can keep the same serving motion but still fool your opponent. Normal wrist snap will produce a normal drive serve down the left wall. Extra wrist snap will result in the ball heading cross court on a reverse Z serve to the right corner and less snap will put a slice on the ball on a drive serve down the right wall."



Shannon Wright on **watching the ball**: "Many players catch a glimpse of the ball coming off the front wall and wonder why they mishit shots. Watching the ball means picking its flight up as soon as possible after your opponent's shot and then looking at it right up to the moment it hits your strings."



Dave Peck on **momentum**: "Do not let up on your opponent. He will gain momentum in direct proportion to how fast you lose yours. If you serve five straight aces, go for a sixth like it was the final point of a match. Don't relax. Finish it off. Begin to smell blood early and get tougher."



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How Not to Lose a Match

BY MARTY HOGAN

When giving pointers on strategy, racquetball instructors usually emphasize how to win and seldom discuss how matches are lost. But understanding how matches are lost is important and could be the key to winning more matches in that you will learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of yourself and your opponent.

One time, I saw a match in which Player A had won the first game and was ahead 18-4 in game two. Then came a turn around and suddenly Player B won game two and then the tie breaker. One small change could have prevented Player A from losing the match. In another match, two players were tied at 10-10. But before you knew it, the score was 21-10. A close match had changed dramatically in a span of a few minutes.

If players would learn how to recognize losing situations and make corrections accordingly, the two situations above and hundreds more like them would occur less frequently. I firmly believe that a great player never loses a match. The other player must win it.

There are numerous ways to lose a match but the most common deal with court surface, the ball, the referee, the crowd, tightness, lack of strategy plan, losing momentum, losing your cool, running out of gas, or frustration stemming from personal problems.

But seldom is the situation as bleak as it appears. There often is a key which will get you out of the dark dungeon that you've entered. You just have to know where to look and what to expect. Of course, the top players have looked into those places and mentally recorded what they've seen. But it takes thousands of hours of on-court experience to get to where they are. I am going to share some of these insights with you so that you will know what to expect, but in the end, you will still have to do your own looking and interpret what you see in terms of your own abilities and the abilities of your competition.

Perhaps you lack tournament experience. You can play in 100 tournaments a year and still, in a sense, lack tournament experience. You have to consider the quality of the tournaments that you enter. If every tournament is a breeze, and you stay in your own little area without ever venturing out to see what else is around you, the very first tough tournament will probably put you in the same boat with a poor novice playing in his first tournament. In fact, it could be worse for you because you might not be able to cope with pressure from unfamiliar shot patterns, rules, and opponents.

A tournament adds a whole new dimension to your game because you're laying

everything on the line and your opponent is going to do everything he can to keep you from winning. As the competition gets stiffer, the psychologist and game situations presented to you will be more diverse. There is nothing you can do at tournament time if you lack tournament experience. You must have handled this prior to the tournament. I suggest that you plan your tournament schedule so that you expose yourself progressively to better and better competition a step at a time. That means find a comfortable level of tournament competition and play at it while occasionally signing up for tougher tournaments. This approach also applies to practice matches. But don't choose competition totally out of your league because you won't gain anything except discouragement.

I've heard many players say, "Man, I just got blown out; I just couldn't get my timing down." This often happens at the local level. Players play at one club with the same kind of ball and the same racquet week after week. They spend a lot of time picking just the right ball and sometimes haggle with the court attendant about not being put on their favorite court. They don't realize that what they've done is practiced under conditions which are almost entirely different from what they will encounter under tournament conditions. Not only that, but they haven't learned to adjust to a different environment. I wouldn't go so far as to say that you should go out of your way to find a dead or super ball or find the worst playing conditions possible, but you certainly shouldn't be too picky about conditions, or you'll never learn to adjust to changing condition.

About two weeks before a tournament, you should play with the tournament ball. But even then, you may not be reproducing the tournament conditions because changes in the court surface, lighting and humidity also can have a dramatic effect on play. All you should try to do is reduce the number of variables. If possible, you should play a few games on different tournament courts a day or two before the tournament. But don't be surprised if the courts still seem different during the tournament because when 200 players gather around, they can produce a lot of body heat which changes the playing conditions. Finally, rotate between at least two racquets instead of sticking to one favorite racquet. I've seen players go from superstars to novices after breaking the strings or frame of their favorite racquet, then losing confidence with another. But make sure the grips of your two racquets are pretty similar.

When you finally get on the court to warm

up for your match, remember the priorities which I have preached in past articles: weight shift, wrist snap, and shot flexibility. Work on these aspects of the stroke during warmup to get your shot range tuned to the court conditions. By the end of the warmup, you should be able to "feel" the court and the ball. Practice hitting quick release shots, too.

Another "loser" is the player with no game plan. You ask him "How did he beat you?" and he responds, "Gee, I'm not sure." During a match you should be able to figure out your opponent's best and worst shots, his best and worst serves, his type of game (power or control), his degree of shot flexibility, his speed and endurance, and his maturity. Your beginning game plan should include setting up situations which test your assumptions about the player's style of play. If those assumptions are proven correct, you go on to part two of the game plan: attack him at his most vulnerable spots. If the assumptions are wrong and you have found different vulnerable spots, adjust the game plan accordingly and carry out the new attack plan. There is absolutely no time to develop a full game plan during the course of a match; you'll have enough trouble trying to breathe and contend with the elements.

Players who go into a match without a game plan are easy to spot. They are apprehensive and never mount a serious attack. Most likely, the match is very short because their opponent does have a game plan and finds and attacks their weak spots immediately.

Letting up or coasting is perhaps my greatest foible. It happens to all of us. When you're up 18-4, it's really tough to grit your teeth and play 100 percent. When you coast, you don't usually lose the match in a rain storm of kill shots. You are more likely to see your big lead erode away.

Most players figure all they have to do is get three lousy points, but once you lose the momentum it's hard to get it back. Even if you are lucky enough to get the needed three points, you'll probably get blasted in the next game because you've stopped scoring points.

This is definitely not the time to play defensively. You must play more aggressively. Perhaps change the pattern of play by cutting off lob serves, by shooting drive serves, and so forth—anything to change the tempo of the game and make yourself more aggressive. The time to start is not when it's 18-15, but much earlier. Even if you lose the game, your aggressive play should carry through the next game, thus allowing you to regain your momentum. If you had an 18-4 lead, you



probably are a better player. You must re-establish this fact firmly in your opponent's mind and regroove your stroke for offensive shots.

The most dramatic way to lose a match is by losing your cool, and then go into an uncontrollable rage. Mind you, I said uncontrollable rage. The master of the controllable rage was Charlie Brumfield. He would go into a rage whenever he got far behind. Either his opponent would quit with a whimper because he didn't want to have anything to do with a madman, or go into an uncontrollable rage because he would get frustrated by what he thought was just an act to get the upper hand. When you go out of control, your face gets flush, your heartbeat goes up, and you scream unintelligible nonsense at the crowd, the referee, and your opponent. You should play without inner emotion. You must keep control of yourself and your surroundings during a match. If you lose that control, you

can lose 10 or 15 points in a matter of minutes because your judgment becomes impaired and you can't process the information coming at you fast enough. You must be able to make quick decisions. On bad calls, you should make it known that you think it is a bad call but accept it as just something that happens during the course of a match. You cannot dwell on one little instance. If the number of bad calls gets to be more than three, I would look for a new referee or linesman. But there's no reason to go beserk. If you like to entertain the crowd and you know that you won't get ejected from the match, go into a controlled rage if you want to blow off steam. But you'd better be a good actor as well as a congenial person because you could get a bad reputation which will hurt you more than help you in the long run.

Life would be easy if matches were painless. But everyone runs out of gas at one time or another. It might happen because you're just out of condition. Or it might be a marathon match lasting two or three hours. Whatever the reason, the worst response is to hit passing shots and play defensively. Try some ceiling shots to slow the pace down until you can get your second wind. Use lob serves and take as much time as is legally possible between points. But for heavens sake, stay away from the pass shot as much as possible, especially cross court shots. Although it may seem safer to go to cross court passing shots which have a greater margin for error, you are only prolonging your eventual defeat. Cross courts only make you run more. Once you catch your breath with a few ceiling ball rallies, start looking for kill shot opportunities so that you can end the point as soon as possible. If you still have enough strength, hit some drive serves. If your opponent is as tired as you, and you've been practicing your drive serves, you should be able to get some quick, easy aces or near aces. Vary your serves and shots, but always try to be more offensive. You want to avoid long rallies. At this point in the match, one of you will probably hit the "brick wall" that marathon runners get when they just can't deliver any more energy to their muscles to sustain running. Hitting cross court pass shots only increases your chance of hitting this wall. You should make your opponent bend down as much as possible. If he's tired, even if he gets to the ball, he will not hit an effective shot. Don't prolong the match. Go for the kill.

Another way to lose is when your opponent is hitting every shot in the book, and you're just chasing the ball on every rally. In this situation, you have to figure out why you are

being outgunned. It may be that you are too apprehensive and defensive in your shot selection. Or you haven't tried all avenues of attack. I've seen some matches where one player is hopelessly behind when suddenly he finds the other player's Achilles heel. I once saw a player win 21-18 by hitting 17 straight Z serves to the forehand after he found out that his opponent couldn't handle the serve.

Going to the ceiling slows down the game to give you time to think and recover. However, if you decide that your opponent is way out of your league, then you should go for broke. Ceiling shots and pass shots won't do anything but eventually produce setups for your opponent. Hit enough ceiling and pass shots to allow yourself time to set up, but then go for the bottom board as soon as possible. If you lose 21-0, you lose 21-0. But at least you tried the only game plan that had a chance of winning.

Finally, the most frequent cause for losing a match is apprehension. There can be many reasons why a player gets apprehensive. I've mentioned some already. But whatever the cause, there is only one way to get out of the doldrums: hit out at the ball. Change your shot patterns and attack the ball. For example, cut off all soft serves either by taking them out of the air or short hopping them. Go to a pure power game. Try to get your opponent out of his groove. Even if you don't get a bunch of winners, you'll force your opponent to change his game plan and the shots that he takes. In this new foreign situation, you might find that you are now out-gunning him. Or, if you return to your original game plan, you may find that your opponent can't find the same rhythm he had before changing his game plan. Hit harder and lower. What you may find is that you were pushing the ball or killing the ball from knee high instead of ankle high.

But all of these remedies cannot be learned in the heat of a tournament match. They must be instinctive by the time you step onto the tournament court. That's why you must try these responses in practice sessions. If they don't occur, you may be playing practice matches which are too easy. Move up to some tougher competition once in a while. A practice match is the time to experiment.

Whenever you lose, you should ask yourself why and think of things to try differently next time. Build up a storehouse of potential avenues of attack. Only in this way can you acquire the experience to turn your game around.

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Twenty Questions: STEVE KEELEY



1. RBI: How did you get involved in racquetball?

SK: In September of 1967, I started school at Michigan State. The first guy I saw play was my guru, Al Mouradian. I went into the intramural building and looked down on court one and there was this guy with this Buddha belly in these dirty white gym clothes and dark glasses. He had a motorcycle helmet full of paddleballs and he was doing a drop-and-hit drill. Al became my guru. In my years at Michigan State, he was the only guy I lost to, and he was the only guy who psyched me out when we played. I saw this was the sport for me because it was an individual sport. I'm kind of a hermit in life and in sports and it was a sport where I could go up and practice by myself like crazy. I would go on these back courts at Michigan State with no viewing gallery and establish one spot on the court right next to the right side wall and then I would drop and hit hundreds of shots from the same spot. That spot became my whole game strategy for my first few months of paddleball. Whenever I got a setup at that spot, it was a dead kill shot. Gradually I developed other spots for my forehand and backhand. My transition to racquetball came after I played Charlie Brumfield in the paddleball nationals in 1970. (Editor's note: Keeley won the national paddleball singles championships four times.) After the tournament, Brumfield came out to live with me for the summer in Michigan. I had never heard of racquetball before. He got me on the horn to Bud Muehleisen, who told me how racquetball was going to be the coming big sport. I thought we (Brumfield and I) were going to be playing paddleball all summer but Brumfield talked me into playing racquetball the whole summer. That's when we invented some new shots.

2. RBI: What kind of new shots? Was the strategy different?

SK: To us we invented them but they had been used previously in handball. The ceiling shot, for example. People used it but not like Charlie and I used it. In the early '70s when he was ranked first and I was ranked third, we had the best ceiling games in the country. The whole game back then was a slower ball, a garbage or half-lob serve, which evolved into a ceiling rally. Charlie and I could out-ceiling-ball anybody in the game. It was routine. My only strategy in those days was to hit ceiling balls to the guy, wait for a setup, and put away forehands in the forehand corner and backhands in the backhand corner. I never had to think about the game. That strategy was good enough to keep me at the top behind my nemesis Brumfield for three or four years. I never won the Nationals. I always lost to Charlie—in the semis twice and the finals once. Paddleball was kind of a secondary sport now because I could see where racquetball was going. There was a little bit more glamour and money in racquetball.

3. RBI: Did you think of making a career out of professional racquetball?

SK: I graduated from veterinarian school in

December 1971 and immediately moved out of Michigan to San Diego, Calif. I still had intentions of being a vet but they didn't offer the boards (qualifying exams) until June. I had arrived in San Diego in January. By the time the vet boards had come around, I had been teaching racquetball. Then all the top racquetball players came out there and before you know it, we had a pro tour.

4. RBI: You never really made it in racquetball as you did in paddleball, right?

SK: I understood paddleball a lot more than racquetball. I enjoyed paddleball because it was a thinking sport. It was more of a control game. It was as much a battle of the wits as it was a battle physically. It was like chess. You hit a couple of shots to set up a final shot. In racquetball, especially with the lively ball, you had to blast every shot. I never enjoyed the game of racquetball, and for me it was a dumb sport. The only reason I played it was for the workout and for the glamour and for the money.

5. RBI: Describe the differences as you see them between paddleball and racquetball.

SK: Paddleball and racquetball are played on the same court. They use the same rules. The ball in paddleball is much more dead. It has a little hole in it. When you hit it, it squashes down a little bit. In paddleball you don't have a ceiling ball. You don't have a Z ball because the ball just won't carry. Instead of a ceiling ball you hit a lob. The paddle is a little shorter and is not strung. It has a solid wooden face. It involves a little bit more strength in the swing. Paddleball is self-limiting because it takes coordination, strength, dedication to learning the strategy whereas racquetball is a great game for the masses. You can go in there and learn the game quickly. After a week of practice, you are in there having fun. I don't know of any other sport you can do that.

6. RBI: Let's talk a little about your individualism—wearing shirts inside out, wearing different color shoes, etc. How did those things start and why?

SK: I've just done things that seem natural to me. I'm very pragmatic. I do what works. And apparently it carries over to my dress. I started wearing shirts inside out just because it seemed normal. Some people say I'm an eccentric and do things just to be weird but that isn't true. The things I do such as carrying around this calendar with me, or carrying a flashlight in my pocket with me, or always having a pair of scissors in my pocket or rubber bands around my wrist, those things are natural to me. I'm autonomous. I do what I think rather than what other people think is right. The inside-out shirt I came to realize later was something I was doing to assert my individuality. As far as the tennis shoes, that happened in the Salt Lake City Nationals in 1971. I sprained my left ankle badly the week prior to the tournament. I was playing Ron Rubenstein in the quarters and was favoring this left ankle and I turned the other one real bad. The new sprain was so bad, I had to

borrow somebody's high top tennis shoe to finish the match. So I had a low-cut black shoe on the left and a high-top white one on the right. I just thought it was kind of nice to have two different color shoes, and I began wearing shoes like that ever since. It may be a little eccentric, I don't know. Maybe in that case at the time I was trying to be a little weird or draw attention to myself.

7. RBI: What is your philosophy on life?

SK: I guess it would be to gather data and knowledge and while doing it have a good time. Hopefully, in good time, I can impart some of that data and knowledge in other people.

8. RBI: What do you do these days to make a living? You are not on the pro tour any longer, so there is no income to speak of from the pro racquetball.

SK: I've really taken a year off to do things outside of racquetball, so I really had no income coming in to speak of. To get back on my feet financially and to survive, I set up a series of racquetball clinics in Washington, Idaho, Oregon and California. I'm also doing a little writing. But I really don't make a lot off that. There are two ways to live financially. You can either make a lot of money and spend much or you cannot make much money and don't spend much. I don't spend very much. I also am co-owner of a half dozen rental houses in Michigan, so we make a little bit on those.

9. RBI: Do you still play in regional tournaments here and there to try and pick up a few extra bucks?

SK: Yeah, I played in one last year in Ohio. I didn't have any money to get down there—just enough for bus fare. I knew I could pick up a quick check. I took the bus into Cincinnati and the tournament was about 50 miles from there. I got off the bus but there was no connecting bus at that time of the night. I took my knapsack and went out and hitchhiked. I walked a couple of miles but there weren't any cars coming by, so I crashed out in the weeds by the side of the road. I woke up and it was raining on me. Not only that, but I found out I was sleeping in poison ivy. I started walking and found this building with an overhang. I was so tired I just slept there. I got about three hours of sleep, then hitched the next morning to the tournament. I got beat in the semis but I made a little money. I used the money for bus fare to Salt Lake City where I was doing a clinic.

10. RBI: We understand you are now working on a book. Could you give us some details?

SK: I met this 21-year-old guy in Salt Lake City who has quite a background in insane asylums, jails and orphanages and a very bad, bad past—so bad that I went to a publisher and they were interested in doing a book on this guy. That's how I got involved in hanging out at the Los Angeles County Jail and bumming around skid row in Los Angeles, researching his background. I'm going to do a book on this guy but I need to

STEVE KEELEY

go back to the places he used to live to verify everything. He's back in jail now for possession of stolen goods. Before that, he was on *That's Incredible*. He moves things. He's a telekinetic. He makes a living by stealing things. That may sound strange but you have to experience the things he did to understand how stealing for him and for his brothers and sisters was the only way to survive. I won't bore you with the details of his life but if I had gone through what he had gone through, I might be in his same position.

11. RBI: Let's talk about your fondness for animals, especially your affection for dogs and tarantulas.

SK: I've always had this rapport with animals. I live with four dogs in a garage in Michigan. I live in the back half of the garage. The front half is where the dogs hang out. They have their own personal dog house. They live better than I do. The dog houses are insulated with wall-to-wall carpeting.

There's Max, my 175-pound Great Dane, then my two Dobermans—Corn and Flake—and Weiner, a little mixed mutt. As for the tarantulas, that started when I was in San Diego. With the fast-paced life of Southern California, I needed to get away once in awhile, so I would go to the desert and camp out. One day it was about 100 degrees out, so I waited until dusk to do my daily running. I was running along this road and my right foot comes down on this big, black hairy thing which I later identified as a tarantula. I am fascinated with critters, especially strange looking ones. I did a quick run back to camp, got a paper bag and ran back to the tarantula and prodded him into the bag. I named him Terry. Then I found two more and I named them Thomas and Theodore. I had these visions of getting a whole bunch of them but those were the only three I found. I built this 10-unit tarantula hotel with a screen on top. Then I added Harold. Harold was a fake one I would bring out and spring on unsuspecting people.

12. RBI: Tell us about the time you hopped a freight train with hobos to Los Angeles.

SK: When I met this guy in Salt Lake—the one I'm writing the book on—I could appreciate more of what people go through. But I'm the type of guy who is very thorough. I can't do anything half-assed. I have to research everything. I always wanted to hop a freight train cross-country. It had always been one of my fantasies. I always wanted to know what these people go through. I just know that you can't read about it or watch it on television and really know what it's like. You can't know what it feels like for Marty Hogan to win his first national championship unless you have won your first club championship and worked very hard to get to it. So I went off to be a hobo for a week or so. This was in July of 1981. I snuck aboard a train and met a bunch of hobos en route and learned about their way of life. I'd like to do that for a whole summer

sometime but the only way I could do that would be to find a hobo guru whom I could travel with. A lot of these hobo jungles are dangerous. Anyway, these guys are completely happy. They are a different breed. They wouldn't have it any other way. They think "normal" people are crazy and "normal" people think they are crazy. They enjoy the simple things in life. You really can't learn everything about hobos in one week but at least I got a taste of it.

13. RBI: What happened when you got to Los Angeles' skid row?

SK: That was very beneficial to me. It taught me how these guys live. You won't find any greater charity than on skid row. These guys don't have anything but if they do happen to have half a bottle of wine or a half of hamburger, they'll share it with you. So I started living at the missions around there.

14. RBI: But why would you want to do it? Can you make a book out of it? An article? There has to be some reason for doing it?

SK: I did it to learn. It was a personal learning experience—to gather data, knowledge. I do these things simply for the experience. For me that's enough. I would still be happy if it never appeared in *Racquetball Illustrated* or it never got written up anywhere. But I admit that it does make good material when being interviewed.

15. RBI: Outside of writing the book, riding with hobos and giving racquetball clinics, what do you do? Do you follow politics? Read the newspapers? Go to the ballet? See a football game? Or what?

SK: I quit reading newspapers, watching TV and listening to the radio at least 10 years ago. It's mostly bad news. I guess you can call it apathy. But it just doesn't concern me. I'm not concerned with politics. I don't know who the vice president is. I don't know who the governor of my state (Michigan) is. For some reason I identify with a different sort of people—the bums, hobos, people in the insane asylums. I don't read newspapers. When the news comes on the radio, I turn it off. I don't follow sports. I don't know who played in the Super Bowl.

16. RBI: Tell us about your bike riding experiences. Didn't you ride a bike to compete in a tournament?

SK: I rode my bike from San Diego to Michigan with a stop at the St. Louis Nationals in 1974. I was obviously spastic when I got to the tournament, and I lost to Craig McCoy. When I was about 15 miles from my home in Haslett (outside of East Lansing), I had to stop. I had no major mishaps in the previous 24 days but I contracted a 24-hour virus that last day. I was disoriented. I couldn't read the road signs. I passed out on somebody's front lawn and this guy came along and asked me if I was okay. He got me to a phone and I suffered the chagrin of having to call my mom

to pick me up. But a couple of days later when I was feeling better, I went back to the spot I had fallen on the front lawn and rode my bike the rest of the way home.

17. RBI: What do you think of the pro tour today compared to the days when you were playing on it?

SK: Before the racquetball pro tour started in 1973 we got around any way we could. I would hitchhike to a tournament or we would cram all the guys into a car and live off the hospitality room. We would stuff our jackets with sandwiches and fruit. We would either stay at people's homes or at the club. And if we couldn't work out something, we would find someplace else to stay. I remember one tournament at the YMCA in Cleveland. I didn't have any place to stay and I didn't have much money, so I went out and got a hamburger and on the way out of the YMCA, I stuck a paper clip in the back door, so I could get back in. I snuck back in and it was completely dark. I felt my way up some stairs. I went into this room, felt for a light switch and ended up sleeping on a couch. The next morning the janitor came in and told me I had just spent the night in the girls' john. But I ended up winning the tournament. From those days, we started the pro tour and there was enough money in it for us to travel by plane. I was sponsored by Leach Industries. From there it went the way it was expected to go—more money and bigger sponsors and everything just got going faster. It wasn't a personal experience for me any longer. You were a robot going from tournament to tournament. But today's amateur is experiencing what I





went through. There are a lot of young Keeleys out there. They have to hitchhike to tournaments and sneak apples into their jacket and sandwiches into their gym bags and sleep on their friends' floors. They don't have any money because they are going to college and they aren't sponsored yet. But if I were a young player today, I would be disappointed, because with the (invitation) pro tour setup today, it would be difficult to break into the top 12. In other words, these young players are suffering for nothing, and that has to be discouraging for them, and some of them will probably go on to some other sport.

18. RBI: What about the changes in the pro game—the emergence of the power game and the virtual elimination of the control game?

SK: The whole game has evolved around the evolution of the ball. When we started out in the early '70s, if you hit a ceiling shot as hard as you could, it still wouldn't reach the back wall. We would keep balls in the sauna just so they would get a little lively for the game. That ball dictated a slow game—soft serves, passes, controlled shots. From 1974 to '76 was the era of the superball where if you tapped the ball, it would sail over the back wall. It was ludicrous, mindless, and it gave rise to a new breed of player. Players nowadays are all fire hydrants, whereas in the old days, they were tall and lanky. In the old days, the players were analytical thinkers. Today,

they are impetuous. The superball tamed down a little after 1976 and nowadays there are so many balls and so many tournaments that I couldn't tell you what the standard ball is, and I don't know which way the game is moving.

19. RBI: What do you recommend for somebody who is just taking up the game of racquetball?

SK: Beginning players should definitely play with a slower ball. You can practice your strokes with it. You can't practice your strokes with a lively ball because the ball is moving too fast. A beginner can also practice strategy with a slow ball. You need that extra split second to bring your consciousness into play, rather than have the whole game played with your unconscious or subconscious. In the pro game today, there is really no strategy. All you do today is hit the ball hard as low as you can at first opportunity.

20. RBI: If the faster ball did not come into play, would someone such as Marty Hogan still have dominated?

SK: Marty Hogan would still be up there because he is such a talented athlete. He has so much going for him physically and mentally. I don't mean to say that these new players aren't strong mentally because they are. That's what separates the top amateurs from the pros. I'm not criticizing today's players. It's just a different game.



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DIFFERENT STROKES

Whether swimming in the Nile River or hitting on a racquetball court in "dead" New York City, Diana Nyad is one of those athletes with a taste for success.

BY BARRY JANOFF

To become a successful swimmer, you don't just add water and stir. It starts as a dream and ends up as a conquest. In between, you fight one-on-one with mother nature who is telling you to take it easy and forget about all that hard work.

So it was with long-distance swimmer Diana Nyad, and so it is today as she prepares for another swim, and so it will be tomorrow whether she is in the water, on the racquetball court in an open tournament, or working out for a fitness book.

"The whole thing in a nutshell is that all I did for 10 years—from age 10 to 19—was swim," she says. "My sole aim was to enter the 1968 Olympics as a sprint swimmer. When I didn't make it (to the Olympics), I spent the next 12 years as a long distance swimmer. During that time I also went to school—I have a degree in comparative literature—and was teaching, writing and developing in other areas. And for the past two years, much of my time has been devoted to my commentator's job at ABC Sports.

"I have been successful because of my skills. But I also have been lucky—lucky to have gotten certain breaks and lucky to have people who supported me, family and friends, in particular."

As unaffected as she may sound, Nyad admits that there have been great struggles along the way. Her quest for the Olympics was cut short when, two years before the 1968 Games, she contracted a heart disease known as viral endocarditis. In bed for four months, her training routine, and potential Olympic greatness, ended.

As expected, she was crushed by the event. But the disappointment went deeper than losing an opportunity to compete under a world-class spotlight. "When I knew I would miss the 1968 Olympics I was bitter," recalls Nyad. "Swimming is a methodical, trying sport; a swimmer aims for specific goals. When all my goals were dropped, I became depressed. I went to college, but I didn't know who I was or what I wanted to be.

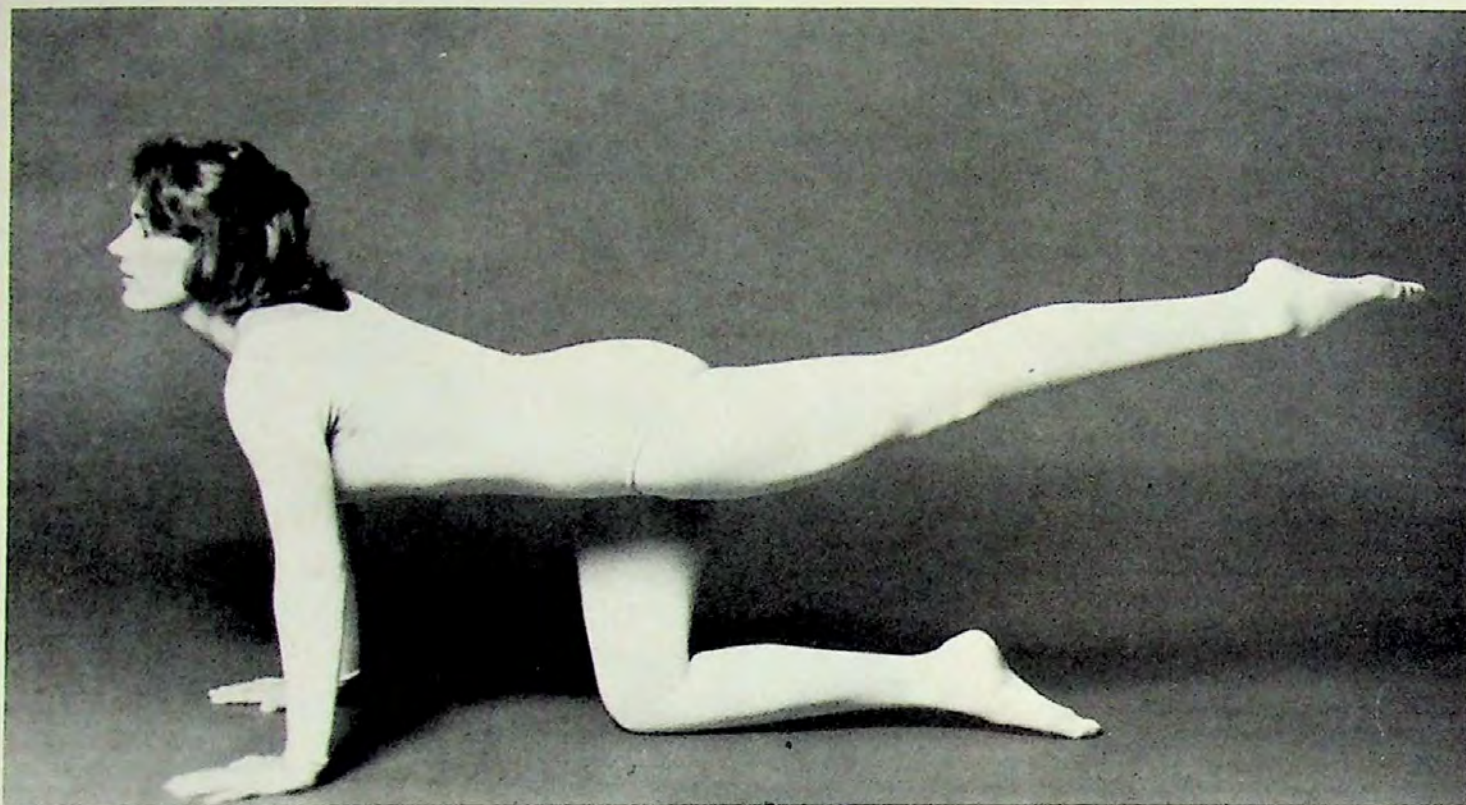
"It was," she says, "a bad period in my life."

At Illinois' Lake Forest College, though, she found new goals and new directions. Although born in New York, her family—her father is Greek, her mother French—moved to Ft. Lauderdale when she was three, and, as Diana puts it, "It was natural, living in Florida, that I would spend a lot of time in the water." So when a friend introduced her to long-distance swimming, her goals were renewed.

"Almost immediately I found pride in what I



DIFFERENT STROKES



could accomplish," she says. "I liked the competitiveness of the sport, and I took pride in beating great swimmers and great bodies of water." The former were those athletes who toured the pro long-distance swimming circuit in such locales as Europe, Australia, Egypt and Argentina. The latter included such successful solo endeavors as a 22-mile swim in the Nile; a 32-mile swim off the coast of Mexico; a swim of 25 miles in the Suez Canal; a 50-mile swim from the Great Barrier Reef to Australia; a North Sea swim of 67 miles; a north-to-south swim of Lake Ontario; a record Bimini-to-Jupiter, Florida swim of 89 miles; and a 28-mile swim around Manhattan (New York) in 1975 that she figures may have been the most important journey of her career.

"The Manhattan swim was shorter than many of the others, but afterwards there was an awareness on the part of the press and public of who I was. They began to know me and to understand more about me."

What the press and public began to know was a multi-faceted woman. Beyond her athletic skills they found a Phi Beta Kappa graduate; a woman with a masters degree from New York University who spoke fluent French, Russian and German; an author (her autobiography, *Other Shores*, was published in 1978) and a contributor to such publications as *Redbook*, *Ms*, *Esquire*, and *Quest*. She is an authoritative lecturer whose speaking time is very much in demand.

And beyond her feats as a swimmer, the press and public became aware of a woman accomplished in other athletic areas: she took up squash in 1978 ("It is a great one-on-one sport") and in 1980 she made the com-



"Racquetball players are my kind of people," says Diana Nyad. "They are down to earth. And most of them are interested in fitness."



petitive switch to racquetball. It was then that she became interested in fitness and co-authored a book with Candice Lyle Hogan titled, *Diana Nyad's Basic Training For Women*, published in late 1981. Nyad travels to some of the WPR events but she must be classified as a good open player, not yet at the pro level.

"Two weeks after I played my first game of racquetball I entered a tournament in Pelham, New York and won it," she remembers with a marked touch of pride in her voice. "I really took to it."

"I'm not a great player, but I am a decent one. I can't beat the pro players but I work out with them. They like to play with me because they know I'll give them a tough, competitive game."

Nyad ties in racquetball with her fitness book, devoting space to explaining how racquetball and other sports are beneficial to a program of complete fitness and exercise. "Racquetball players are my kind of people. They are down to earth. And most of them are interested in fitness," she says.

"I like to play two-and-a-half to three hours a day when I can, working it into my overall fitness and exercise program. When I'm out of New York on business (at home in Manhattan, where she maintains an uptown apartment, she is a regular at the Racquetball Fifth Avenue Club) I can just show up at a club and the people set me up for free. I'm willing to pay but I have never had to."

"The amount of time I play varies with my schedule. Southern California is a great area because you can play all day and all night. And I've had some great games at the Oahu Athletic Club in Hawaii. New Jersey and Long Island are big racquetball areas, as well, although personally I feel that New York City is dead as far as racquetball is concerned."

However, the Big Apple can't be as void of racquetball as South Africa, where, she relates, "I spent six weeks without finding a court."

Given her penchant for setting and achieving goals, it follows that Nyad has set some goals for racquetball. "It may not sound like much, but I'd like to be a regular on the pro tour. I didn't start playing until I was 30 (she's now 32), which can be a limiting factor. But I'd like to be ranked nationally—not high, but in the rankings."

But racquetball may have to take a back seat for the time being. Nyad is currently training for a 100-mile Sea of Japan swim this year, and, of course, she has a job with ABC.

ABC Sports initially scouted her during her marathon swimming days. "The Manhattan swim really brought me to their attention," she says. "They were watching me, just as they watch and are aware of everything and everyone in sports." She also had a week-long stint as hostess on the network's national *Good Morning, America* show and she also did some work with Howard Cosell for his sports journalism show.

"Ten years ago I wouldn't have been offered this job," she admits. "But ABC Sports was looking for an articulate woman with an athletic background. Times have changed, and they (ABC management) were more receptive to my abilities and capabilities than they would have been in the past."

She will probably be part of the ABC team of announcers that will cover the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. "I want to be there, and ABC wants me to be there. I probably will cover men's and women's swimming, rowing, archery, volleyball and track & field."

"My future is in television—I'm involved in my own exercise show on cable TV, in addition to my full-time job at the network—but I also want to continue to do adventuresome, difficult and physically challenging things."

With all that she has accomplished and has yet to accomplish mentally and physically, this attractive, creative, and diverse woman has just one request for those who someday will put her achievements into perspective. "When the time comes, I want to be remembered as an intelligent athlete."

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TO CHEER OR NOT TO CHEER

BY RICK DAVIS



Do male pros from Ektelon and DP Leach root for their teammates or is it every man for himself?

Professional tennis had made an attempt to bring the team concept into tournament play. We're not talking about Team Tennis here. We're talking about a group of players playing under the same banner, who practice, travel and yes, even root for players on the their own team in tournament competition. Although the concept is a new one, and it's success cannot be judged yet, there is little likelihood it will carry over into men's professional racquetball.

In January, 1980, the Peugeot-Rossignol Corporation announced it had formed a team of tournament players with a common coach,

Bob Brett. The intent was to have its players training under the watchful eye of one person in an effort to improve the performances of the players and, of course, to increase the exposure of the corporation's name. In racquetball, most of the players are sponsored by either DP Leach or Ektelon (Head is a distant third in numbers) but the camaraderie does not seem to extend into tournament play.

"I just want to win," says Craig McCoy, who is sponsored by DP Leach. "I don't care who I'm playing, close friend or whatever... Leach player, Ektelon player, it doesn't matter." Dave

Fleetwood, an Ektelon product, agrees with McCoy: "When you take the court for a match, it's war," he says.

It seems obvious that when a player is on the court, he will not give away a game to a "teammate" much like Cuba allegedly used to do against the Soviet Union in Olympic basketball competition. But what happens when pros are in the stands watching fellow pros?

"There isn't any cheering or hand clapping for any player, per se," says Mike Yellen, who is sponsored by Ektelon. "You might applaud a great shot but any personal rooting is kept

to yourself. But there's certainly no obligation placed on Ektelon players by the company to root for other Ektelon players in a match."

Ektelon vice president Norm Peck, who monitors the conduct of Ektelon's players, explains his company's policy: "When one of our players is matched against one from another company, it's all right to root for our player but it's not mandatory. But whatever response our player makes, it should be within the boundaries of good sportsmanship. We never encourage our players to root against another player or do anything that would have a negative impact on an opponent."

Ektelon's top two players are Yellen and Dave Peck. Although there is no noticeable animosity between the two, one player says, "It is the best rivalry today in professional racquetball." Why? "From what I can see," says the player, "they absolutely hate to lose to each other."

It seems then that the sponsorship "team" is only a team for promotional purposes. Once the players are placed on a tournament bracket, the team is replaced by whatever is best for the individual.

What seems to determine the cheering by fellow pros is friendship. "Heck, I'm better friends with Dave Peck and (Steve) Strandemo (Head) and a couple of the others than I am with some of the Leach players," says four-time national champion Marty Hogan, the quarterback in the DP Leach stable of players. "Team loyalty is one thing when you're playing an exhibition or are part of a sponsor's promotion. But on the court, it can cause more of a problem because everyone wants to be top dog in the stable."

Hogan recalls his rookie days when he wasn't so sure DP Leach was the right sponsor for him. "Back then, Leach had Charlie Brumfield, Steve Keeley and Steve Serot," recalls Hogan. "They were all right there at the top and some people were telling me to sign with Ektelon because I would get more exposure."

Ektelon gave some thought about three years ago to holding a late summer training camp for its players to condition them for the upcoming season. "I liked the idea because it would have been more organized and more complete than just working out at a couple of clubs with whomever came in town. But it never happened, I suppose because of the cost involved," says Fleetwood.

Hogan believes pre-season training as a team would not be in his best interests. "The tour is a win-lose situation. I have to try to win for myself and so does everyone else. But more so for me because I think some of the other players would benefit from finding out some of the things I do in training."

Several of the tour players have coaches who work with them on a regular basis. Others rely on suggestions from their peers. "I don't offer advice to the other players," says Yellen. "Usually, a player knows what his strategy should be against a particular player. It's not for me to tell him something different to do."

Egerman and Hawkins, two young lions on

the tour who came through the junior ranks together, are sponsored by Ektelon and frequently compare notes or critique each other's matches. "We're good friends and we room together at tournaments, so it's easy to make suggestions to each other," says Egerman. "We even talk things over sometimes during a match when the other one is playing," adds Hawkins.

For others, the camaraderie is fine to a point, but, as DP Leach's Don Thomas says, "It's not good to get too close to other players. They could capitalize on a mental weakness if they know you too well. Most of us get along well, but you can see the barrier some guys put up."

In fact, some players don't even care who is playing after they get off the court. "I very seldom stick around after I've played," says Yellen.

Peck says he enjoys watching exciting matchups. "However I never watch a match if I have to play one myself later the same day. Watching a match affects my concentration. It drains me emotionally and then I'm flat when my turn comes later."

Dave can be forgiven for being the only player on the Catalina Pro tour who flat-out, overtly roots for one particular player—and a DP Leach one at that. You see, Dave's brother Gregg is also on the tour.

"They root for each other because they're very close," explains Jerry Day, the agent for the Peck brothers. "Fortunately, they've only had to play each other once. Dave won, but the sad part was it happened the week after Gregg had knocked off Marty in Omaha. He showed up in Chicago, thinking he was ready and able to beat anyone. Then in the second round, he runs into his brother."

If there is anyone the players seem to root against, it's Hogan. "I wouldn't call it rooting, but it's safe to say the rest of the players would like to see Marty get knocked off for two reasons," says Norm Peck. "One, it's natural to root for the underdog, which you are when you're playing Hogan. Number two, seeing Hogan lose gives the rest a better chance of winning the tournament."

In the end, it seems that tournament racquetball is an individual sport, and that it will be awhile before pro racquetball players develop an "all-for-one-and-one-for-all" team approach much like the Peugeot-Rossignol team has done with some professional tennis players. When it comes to promotion, however, that is a different story. "When we are doing a promotion, the winning-losing thing becomes less important," says Thomas. "Then we're concerned with reaching the audience." "My playing career is my own," says Strandemo. "But I do my best to hold up my end of the bargain (with Head). I want my company to reach its marketing goals."

And the team concept can actually be taken one step further. The unification of all players in a combined effort to market the sport of racquetball to the general public. "My attitude is different during an exhibition," says Hogan, "because the objective is to display racquetball to its fullest as a spectator sport."

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RELAXATION FOR RACQUETBALL

Part Two—Beating The Anxiety Game

BY ROBERT L. MORASKY, PH.D.

Most people have an idea about the nature of anxiety, but it's often difficult to communicate their individual understanding. In the context of performance relaxation for racquetball—the subject we began discussing last month—anxiety is that feeling of tightness in the pit of your stomach, or the constriction in your chest that shortens your breath, or the wetness that seems to come to your hands in the middle of play.

The actual discomfort associated with anxiety is not the only problem for racquetball players, although it should be enough to stimulate anybody to learn how to avoid it through relaxation. The main concern, however, is what it does to your game. Under conditions of anxiety, your normal movements become jerky and stiff. It becomes difficult to control the force used to make movements; hence, you either pull up and use less power than necessary or you overpower your movements. Also, under conditions of anxiety it becomes difficult to focus your attention or to concentrate for any length of time.

What is happening to cause such aversive internal reactions? It is not useful for our purposes to explain in detail the mental and biochemical processes taking place during anxiety, but it is important to recognize that (1) anxiety is similar to fear in its biochemical nature; (2) that it begins with a perception; and (3) that it need not have a rational basis.

Let's consider these statements one at a time and discuss their implications for you as a racquetball player. First, fear is an extremely useful emotion that has helped human beings successfully flee threats and therefore survive as a species. But it isn't beneficial often to racquetball players because survival is typically not at stake on the racquetball court. If a threat were present on the racquetball court, fear would help you escape. But in actuality, you need to reduce the effects of fear on your ability to move and think. Second, fear/anxiety is an internal response that will only occur when you perceive a threatening situation or a situation associated with threat. An opponent who intentionally hits you with the ball is a threat. An opponent on the tournament chart is a different type of threat,



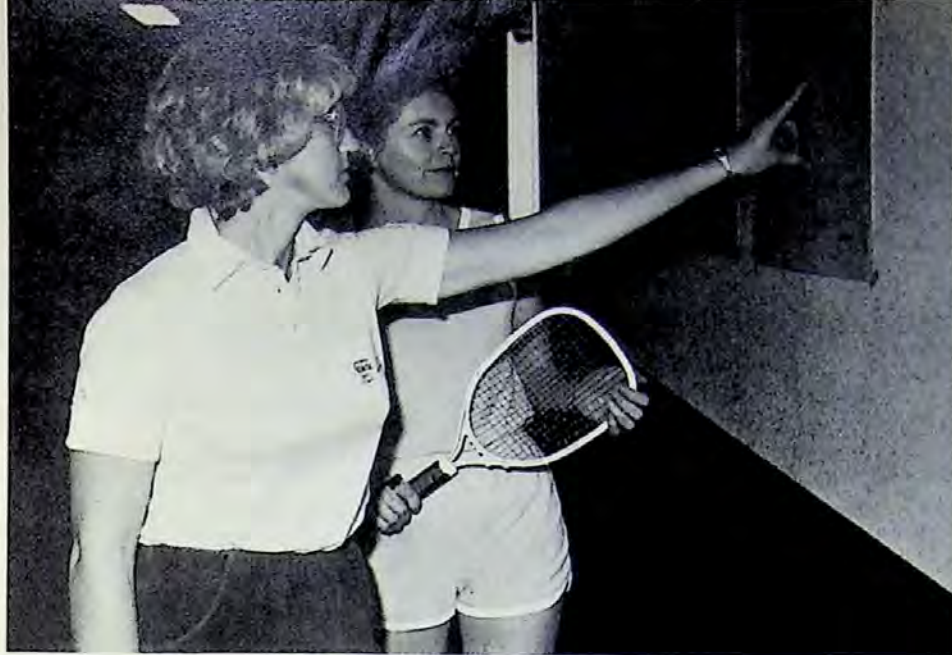
Meeting an opponent for the first time and going on a court can produce a stressful situation for some players.

and both can promote a fear response in you. Thirdly, fear/anxiety need not be a logical, rational response. It is obvious that the presence of someone's name is hardly a threat, yet it often promotes anxiety.

The fact that anxiety is sometimes not rational has important implications for racquetball players who experience it and would like to reduce its effects. Namely, you can't talk yourself out of it. Regardless of what you say to yourself, the anxiety will still be there because your arguments to yourself will be

based on logic—rational thinking—and that won't work. (Don't try irrational arguments—they don't work either.) The problem is that the emotional response called anxiety or fear is often a conditioned response. By "conditioned" we mean that the anxiety responses you feel before and during racquetball competition were learned at sometime in your development and very likely you were unaware that such learning was taking place. Through the process of conditioning you wind up being sensitive to certain situations

Editor's note: The author is an instructor in the psychology department at Montana State University. This is the second of a four-part series.



Another stressful situation involves signing up for a tournament and checking the draw sheet to see who the opponent is.

that don't affect other people at all—and vice versa. But precisely because that sensitivity was learned, it can be unlearned. Your sensitivity to some anxiety-producing situations can be reduced. That is the purpose of systematic desensitization.

Systematic desensitization is a therapeutic technique used originally by psychologists to help clients deal with phobias. It has been used increasingly by laymen to reduce the anxiety associated with stressful situations such as visiting the dentist, taking an exam, confronting an unreasonable boss and performing in competitive sports such as racquetball.

The notion behind systematic desensitization, as you will use it with performance relaxation for racquetball, is that anxiety and relaxation are incompatible responses; that is, your body can't be responding to fear and be relaxed at the same time. But if you clearly imagine an anxiety-producing situation associated with racquetball and at the same time relax your mind and body, then you will learn to be relaxed in those situations that you are imagining. The entire process requires skill and patience on your part. Performance relaxation can help you with the skill part; the motivation to practice will have to come from you.

The primary skill you will need is the ability to relax your muscles and clear your mind. If you have mastered the basic relaxation techniques described last month, then you should be able to relax sufficiently to begin systematic desensitization sessions. Another necessary skill is the ability to imagine various situations associated with racquetball competition. You will have to imagine them as fully as possible using the same senses of sight, touch, hearing and smell. But before you can solve a problem, you need to identify it. Below is a list of potential anxiety-related situations.

1. Trying to make a decision whether or not to enter a tournament.

2. Choosing an opponent on the challenge ladder and thinking about calling him/her.

3. Actually calling an opponent and setting a time and date for the challenge match.

4. Filling out the tournament entry form and mailing it or dropping it off at the court club.

5. Remembering (at odd moments) or thinking about your upcoming game.

6. Looking at the tournament bracket and identifying the players in your class.

7. Telling a friend about your upcoming challenge or tournament game (or even casual game).

8. Getting ready to go to the court club on the day of your match.

9. Arriving at the facility where you will play (driving into the parking lot, seeing the entrance to the building, etc.).

10. Entering the building (going through the doors, meeting other players, entering the lobby, hearing the sounds of a game in progress).

11. Checking in (getting a towel, finding which court you will play on, bantering with the joker in the pro shop).

12. Changing in the locker room (putting on your racquetball gear, smelling the odors—pleasant or otherwise—of the locker room, sensing the warmth and humidity, seeing other players changing).

13. Stretching and loosening up—off the court.

14. Meeting your opponent.

15. Standing and waiting outside the court for your time to go on (hearing the crack of the ball meeting racquet and wall, hearing the screech of shoe soles on the wood floor).

16. Warming up on the court (seeing your opponent practice backhand and forehand kill shots with seemingly unbelievable speed and power while feeling your own apparent awkwardness and stiffness).

17. Waiting for the first serve to come to you.

18. Preparing to make your first serve.

19. Waiting for the serve when your opponent is making a run on you (he/she has just scored five points in a row and has the momentum).

20. Trying to maintain a one-point lead.

21. Trying to gain a lead after trading serves several times with the score tied.

22. Beginning the second game.

23. Beginning a tie-breaker.

24. Playing with a hurry-up opponent or one who calls every infraction (and some that don't exist).

Not all of the events on the list will be anxiety-producing for you. You should be concerned with only those items that seem to have the greatest impact on you. If you know of a situation that causes you anxiety and isn't on the list, then add it to the list. Now, you need to arrange your selected list in order from those that cause least anxiety at the top to those that cause most anxiety at the bottom. This ordered list becomes your hierarchy of anxiety-producing events. Your systematic desensitization practice will begin with those at the top of the list, that is, those that cause you the least anxiety. As you learn to be less sensitive to a situation, you go on to the next on the list and so on to the bottom of the list.

Once you have a hierarchy of situations upon which to work, you are ready to begin an actual desensitization session. Here are the steps you should follow:

1. Relax completely—go through your entire deep muscle relaxation routine.

2. Imagine the situation from your hierarchy that is still giving you problems.

3. Sense the anxiety that you feel even while imagining the situation.

4. Relax completely again—clear your mind—and let your muscles go back to the state of complete relaxation they were in at Step one.

Here is a sample script of what a psychologist would say to a racquetball player while guiding him/her through the exercise:

"You should be completely relaxed now. All of your muscles should feel heavy, warm and relaxed. Your mind should be free of distracting thoughts. . . (pause). Now, let's imagine that you are in the locker room at the club and you are getting ready for a challenge game. . . (pause). Picture in your mind the locker room from where you usually get dressed. Imagine it just as if you were there. Picture the carpeting. . . the color of the lockers. . . the size and style of the lockers. See other people down the row of lockers. Notice what they are doing. . . hear their conversation. . . smell the usual odor that is in the locker room. . . sense the humidity from the showers and the sauna. . . feel the bench that you are sitting on. Picture clearly your actions as you change to play racquetball. You will be playing in a half hour or so. Sense the anxiety that you feel at that time. Be aware of the feelings in your chest. . . stomach. . . shoulders. . . and hands. Feel that tension. . . Now, relax completely. . . clear your mind. . . make it go blank. . . relax your muscles again to feel like you did a few minutes ago. . . get completely relaxed again."

An exercise such as this will take from a minute to a minute and a half to complete.

RELAXATION FOR RACQUETBALL

(You can see that a number of pauses are appropriate.) If strong feelings of anxiety appear much sooner than that, then cut the exercise short and go to the relaxation portion before finishing the imagination part.

These exercises are not meant to increase your tolerance for the unpleasant feelings of anxiety. The idea is to replace feelings of anxiety with relaxation as soon as you feel them at an uncomfortable or mildly noticeable level. Eventually, you will not experience any anxiety at the thought of the previously anxiety-producing situation (such as being in the locker room before your match)—and that is the condition you want to develop. If you can clearly imagine yourself in anxiety-producing situations, and stay completely relaxed, then you will begin to experience much less anxiety in the actual situation.

The carry-over to actual situations will not occur immediately nor will it happen all at once. If you successfully practice desensitization techniques three times a week, you could expect to experience some carry-over within three weeks to a month. At first you will notice that you were a little less anxious about today's game than you usually are—it will probably occur after the game when you have a moment to reflect upon it. Then, with each succeeding game you will experience less anxiety than previously, and be better

able to overcome the anxiety that does occur.

There are a few things to keep in mind about systematic desensitization exercises as you do them. First of all, don't overdo it by using too many situations in one session or by forcing yourself to confront situations in which you can't control your tension. Imagining a situation four or five times during a session is sufficient practice to achieve results in a reasonable amount of time. If you find that you quickly desensitize to a situation in a session, say by the third time you imagine it, then go on to the next situation on your hierarchy. Regardless of how many situations you imagine during a single session, it is vital that you maintain complete control over your thoughts and your level of relaxation. It is imperative that you be able to relax your muscles and clear your mind of anxiety-producing thoughts at the moment that you sense anxiety occurring. If you find that thoughts about a situation and the accompanying anxiety remain after you wish to turn them off, then you either need to select a situation from your hierarchy that is less anxiety-producing or you need to practice and master the relaxation techniques more than you have.

Even with very good control over their level of relaxation, some people have difficulty clearly and consistently imagining a situation.

This is where a psychologist comes in handy. He/she can guide you through the situation just as was done in the script above. Be your own psychologist—make audio tapes that you can use to guide yourself through an exercise. It is not hard to do, it will work quite well, and it's relatively inexpensive. If doing it yourself isn't your style, there are standardized sets of tapes available or a professional behavioral psychologist will probably be glad to help you.

Systematic desensitization, as it is used in performance relaxation for racquetball, brings together modern psychological theory and methodology to achieve ends for racquetball players that have been pursued by athletes in the Far East for hundreds of years. Practitioners of the martial arts work diligently to achieve a state of relaxation and intense concentration during competition. Fear and anxiety have no place in these arts. You will find that it need not have any place in your racquetball play either. Once you learn to control your anxiety, you will discover that you can play with great intensity—yet be relaxed—and that you can have quick, fluid movements—yet not be tense—and that you can make that little blue ball the only object of your attention. However, as with the martial arts, mastery comes only through hard work and persistence.

R



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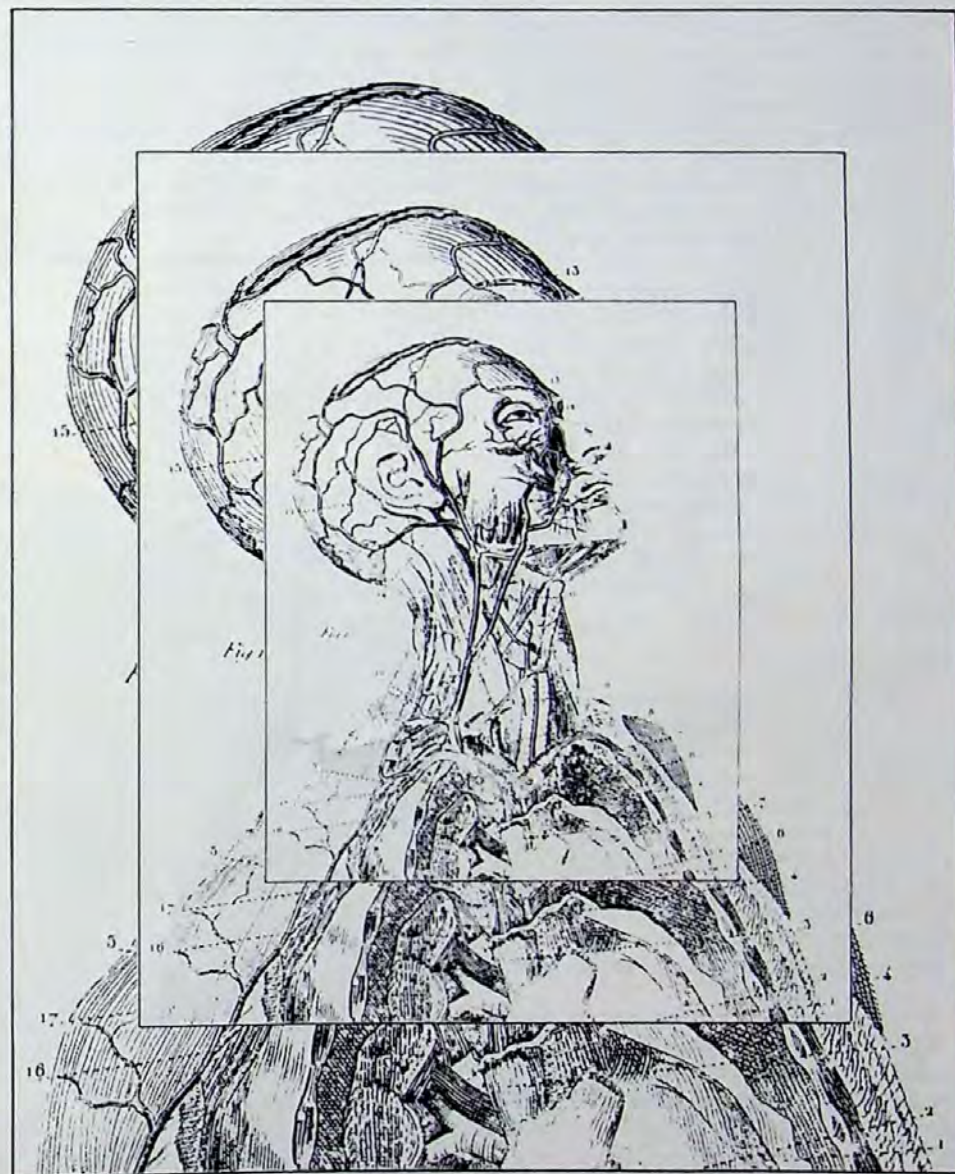
How the Mind Affects the Body

BY GAY HENDRICKS AND
JON CARLSON

Visualization procedures are hardly new. The summoning and holding of certain images in the mind for examination and exploration can be traced to ancient Egypt, to shaman rituals from many cultures, the various schools of yoga and meditation, the Oriental martial arts, and to classical hypnosis. The notion of mental imagery, visualization, seeing with the mind's eye, or inner vision (or whatever one chooses to call the introspective process accompanied by visual images) has an extraordinarily rich history in both psychology and medicine. Forming the basis for study in the first psychological laboratory established by Wundt in 1879, the scientific analysis of content of the mind seemed to be an appropriate area of research for the fledgling discipline as psychologists attempted to objectify the nebulous arena of the imagination. Early results being neither pragmatic nor interpretable, psychologists turned to the analysis of behavior as their focus, dismissing the more phenomenological aspects once again as grist for the theologians and philosophers.

Jacobsen's work had a pronounced effect on our understanding of the physiological ramifications of mental imagery. His research has indicated that during imagery there is measurable tension in the part of the body involved in the visualization. Tension appears for example, in the muscles of the eye during visual imagery, the muscles of speech during subvocal thought, and in the leg muscles when one imagines running.

The physiological effects of the mental imagery process have also been documented by Schultz and Luthe in their compilation of 2,400 studies on the use of autogenic therapy. This therapeutic technique involves visualization and relaxation procedures within a highly structured framework. Changes accompanying the procedures include alterations in body temperature, blood sugar, blood pressure, white blood cell count, and brain wave patterns. However, as many of these changes occur naturally by relaxation alone, the relationship between visualization and relaxation and the relative contribution of



each to the end result is still unclear.

In recent years, biofeedback research has demonstrated that individuals can learn to control various physiological functions through appropriate visualization. Relief from pain, warming or cooling of parts of the body, control of blood flow, and muscular relaxation can all be mastered through biofeedback training. Simply hoping to raise the tempera-

ture of your hands will probably have no effect. But if you visualize yourself standing in front of a fireplace warming your hands, or imagine yourself in a hot tub, their temperature may change quickly.

Internal processes influence performance; their purposeful direction and control can expand one's skills and enjoyment. Many athletes become aware of the inner conflicts

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ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF DUNGFELDER

that affect their performance. In the long run it is not enough for athletes to be aware of their inner conflicts: They must change the way visualization and definition occurs. The resolution of an internal conflict is more important than a mere solution; steroids remove pain; sedatives offer a solution to anxiety; refusing to schedule difficult opponents offers a solution to an unpleasant encounter. But in none of these cases has the actual problem been solved.

Superficial solutions are easily conceived, prescribed, and used in athletics. These allow one to perform on a short-term basis, but they usually have the side effects of further injury to the existing problem and/or the development of new symptoms.

Imagery is defined as "mental pictures that have organized themselves into some kind of pattern." During the image-making process, people react to the world they see and, like artists in the act of painting a picture, give organization and meaning to these images. For every movement, every muscle, every injury, we have a mental picture of what is to be done or is occurring. For permanent change to take place images must be modified or expanded: For the runner whose finishing kick is always weak, the golfer who can never shoot well on a certain hole, the weight lifter who believes 400 pounds is the maximum, a review of their reality is in order. An image change can bring about an actual change in performance.

Mind Training

A primary focus of the centering approach to athletics is the mastery of procedures for individual awareness. Combining centering, visualization, and guided imagery deepens one's inner contact while sitting or moving. These processes, when combined with a physical training routine, open pathways for the simultaneous experience of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions within. This unified approach to athletic experience will develop greater athletic potential and enjoyment.

Football players such as O.J. Simpson report that they made important gains in their own style through the use of mental concentration. Fran Tarkenton maintains that the physical act of passing the ball is the easiest part in the game.

Golfer Jack Nicklaus gives this a handy label. He calls it "going to the movies." He says that he imagines each shot from start to finish before he actually makes it—mentally setting up, swinging, hitting the ball, seeing it take off, land, roll to a stop. Ben Hogan thought that golf was 20 percent physical and 80 percent mental.

In a recent radio interview, Chris Evert Lloyd was asked how she practiced for a championship tennis match. She stated that

in addition to actual practice she carefully and painstakingly rehearses every significant detail of a match in her mind's eye. She thinks about the opponent's style and form, and any maneuvers that person may make during the match. Tim Gallwey's *Inner Tennis* develops an entire training program based upon a mental rather than physical approach to tennis.

Many athletes use mental rehearsal procedures as a means of improving their learning speed and performance. Basketball's Peter Maravich has said that he mentally replays entire games in his head. Eastern European gymnastics and diving coaches will often have their team members mentally rehearse an entire series of moves before competition as Pat McCormick, a United States diving champion, has done.

"You fool your mind in order to do certain things."

Weight lifters mentally picture their lift just before the actual attempt. When they stand in front of the bar and close their eyes they are lifting it mentally. And if they can't lift the bar mentally, then they won't be able to do it all. Arnold Schwarzenegger uses visualization as a part of his training. "When I train the biceps, I picture huge mountains, much bigger than the biceps can ever be—just these enormous things. You do something to the mind: You fool your mind in order to do certain things. I know my biceps aren't mountains—although they may look like miniature mountains! But thinking that they are gets my body to respond."

The United States Olympic biathlon team has adopted mental rehearsal in preparation for their event. Deep breathing exercises are followed by a verbalization of each tiny detail of the event while they picture it mentally, and finally they review each step mentally without any verbal direction. The repetition of the mental pictures is tremendously important so they will become completely automatic. A member of the team, Lyle Nelson, first pictures the Rock of Gibraltar and then sees himself similarly steady before he sets off on his course.

Jean-Claude Killy, the United States Olympic slalom racing team, and other world class skiers use visualization to help impress on themselves the course they will be skiing. These mental dress rehearsals review every rise, hairpin, and dropoff on course; on the day of the actual race there aren't any sur-

prises. Gallwey and Kriegel have developed an entire approach to skiing using this form of mind-body awareness.

Skeet and trapshooters have found these procedures helpful. Though they have only eight-tenths of a second to sight the target, their growing ability to concentrate their minds and bodies makes it seem as though they have plenty of time to aim and fire.

Some Soviet boxers do a 10-minute mind program before going into the ring so they have no tensions and their nerves are ready for very rapid reactions. Young Soviet divers, who become nervous or even panicky before a diving competition, are now using mind calming to restore confidence and visualization to prompt their bodies to make the best dive.

In fact there is hardly a sport where athletes haven't attempted to use mental imagery to rehearse performance, identify a problem, heal an injury, or learn a new technique or routine. In spite of the fairly common application of various types of imagery in sports relatively little has been done to examine scientifically the effects of these procedures. Some athletes appear to find them extremely helpful and others find them a waste of time and feel that they interfere with their performance. But failure is most likely a result of inappropriate utilization rather than an inadequacy in the procedures themselves.

A number of investigators have proposed that the use of imagery can enhance athletic performance. This involves covertly rehearsing a task with positive consequences for the specific intent of learning and has been labeled "mental practice." A rigorous review of the literature reported over 75 investigations that supported the efficacy of mental practice. While Corbin thinks that more rigorously controlled experiments are now in order he concludes that there seems to be little doubt that mental practice positively affects performance. Covert reinforcement following the imagining of the successful performance of an athletic event should enhance performance.

Imagery requires the athlete to switch focus from the physical to the mental. But in addition to the mental imagery most athletes can also recall and rehearse the kinesthetic cues (body feelings) that accompany the activity. In fact it is particularly important to be able to develop awareness of the bodily sensations that accompany a given activity if the visual and kinesthetic cues are to be recalled. The sensation of sounds and smells, from the roar of the engines in racing, the grunts and shouts in football, the quick crunch of skis in icy snow to the smell of sawdust, rosin, and popcorn, can be recreated mentally.

Benefits of Imagery

Through the regular use of imagery, visuali-

zation, and rehearsal, the following results can and have been obtained:

1. Imagery and visualization develop the necessary level of *competitive tension*. Those athletes who need to psych themselves up visualize themselves in and rehearse the competitive situation; those who need to relax (decrease tension and stress) imagine some peaceful and calming scene.
2. Imagery *physically* improves precision of movement, economizes energy expenditure, and controls posture. According to French doctors Boon, Davion, and Macquet, *psychological* mind training improves concentration and attention and enhances perception. It improves rapport with teammates and coaches. After competitions medical tests showed speeded-up recuperation, permitting athletes to run and perform in repeated trials. Relief from pain and muscle contraction caused by exertion was also reported.
3. Visualization increases awareness of body position and movement through rehearsal for divers, swimmers, and gymnasts.
4. Use of imagery increases performance (bowling scores increase; golf scores drop; amount of weight bench pressed increases).

The process also helps to find flaws and isolate mistakes.

5. Visualization and mental rehearsal improve speed and quality of learning simple and complex motor skills. One study found that mental practice at shooting free throws was as effective as actual practice in improving performance.
6. Use of imagery increases awareness; restores energy (a process used by the Soviets and East Germans called psychic self-regulation); increases understanding and modification of memories, images of the body, and body density; and promotes recovery and relaxation.
7. Visualization increases self-discovery and helps to make changes in other areas of life.
8. Mental rehearsal keeps motivation high and helps sustain zest for training and daily practice.
9. Use of imagery eases anxieties or psychological blocks, such as fear of failure or injury, nervousness, lack of concentration, anger at teammates, decline in performance when an opponent gets ahead.
10. Visualization enables memory increase for large amounts of information necessary in

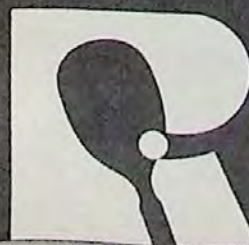
most sports. This occurs because the mind sees in images and not in details.

11. Mental rehearsal prevents injuries, enhances the immune system, effects motivation for healthy recovery, expedites the healing process of injury.
12. Use of imagery heightens enjoyment of activity.
13. Visualization decreases fear. Most fear comes from a feeling of no control.
14. Use of imagery changes beliefs and attitudes as symbols and images are modified.
15. Mental rehearsal allows accurate analysis of the technical aspects of performance; it teaches cues and where to focus during the athletic contest.
16. Visualization enables escape from uncomfortable situations and distracts one from anxiety-producing situations.
17. Visualization provides a tool to promote self-awareness and understanding.
18. Use of imagery aids in self-regulation, self-assessment, self-control, and biofeedback.
19. Mental rehearsal offers a vehicle to tap new energy sources.



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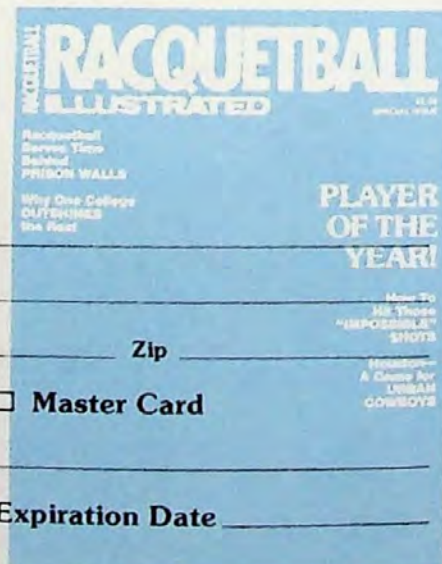
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BELTLINE RACQUET AND FITNESS CENTER Moorhead, Minnesota

In Moorhead, Minn., where much of the year temperatures are well below freezing, business couldn't be better at The Beltline Racquet and Fitness Center.

"The more snow we have, the more people come in to play racquetball," says Chip Lyslow, club manager. "When temperatures get so cold, people are forced to participate in indoor activities and we're finding that more and more people are choosing to spend that time with a racquetball racquet in their hand."

Located on the North Dakota-Minnesota border, Beltline is the only racquetball club in Moorhead. Since the club's opening in July of 1979, more than 2,500 members have taken advantage of 12 racquetball courts, Nautilus equipment, whirlpools, saunas and aerobic classes.

"Our theory is more towards the total fitness concept while still featuring racquetball," says Lyslow.

Members look forward to the local Shield's Hardware Tournament in which points are accumulated by the competing area clubs during three tournaments in a

two-month period (November through January). Beltline walked away with the first place traveling trophy award this year.

The club's clientele includes university students from the three nearby colleges—Moorhead State University, Concordia College and North Dakota State University in nearby Fargo.

Membership fees are \$30 for initiation plus \$104 yearly. Members must also pay for court time.

THE COURT HOUSE West Palm Beach, Florida

Baseball hall-of-famer Hank Aaron and golf pro Jack Nicklaus have one thing in common. They both play racquetball at The Court House in West Palm Beach, Fla.

The club's clientele in this affluent Florida town feel like a family. "It's a small club and people feel at home," says Tammy Jannelli, club manager. "People have been here since the club opened (five years ago) and everyone knows everyone. It's like a family. You don't get lost in the crowd."

Three miles from the Atlantic Coast, The Court House has more than 2,000

members who enjoy access to seven racquetball courts, Nautilus equipment, whirlpools, steam baths and a snack bar.

Pinball games, backgammon, dart tournaments and volleyball nights are also part of the benefits offered. During the dart tournaments, special pitchers of \$2 beer are sold to members.

Membership fees include a \$350 yearly tab for use of all facilities. For use of the racquetball facilities without the rest, the yearly fee \$150.

LAS VEGAS RACQUETBALL CLUB Las Vegas, Nevada

In the city that never closes, The Las Vegas Racquetball Club is no different—it's also open 24 hours a day.

Because Las Vegas attracts the best in entertainment, the club also gets a few entertainers dropping by. Singer Marlene Ricci, who sometimes opens the show for Frank Sinatra, and comedian Joe Telligrino regularly drop by the courts. Telligrino, who opens for the Village People, also works as a bartender in the evenings at the club. "He tries out his new material at the bar," says Tom Essa, club manager. "It's good for him and it's good for us too."

Pros Shannon Wright and Bret Harnett live in Las Vegas and sometimes give free clinics and demonstrations to the members. During these exhibitions, the club springs for free beer and sandwiches.

Members (over 2,000) look forward to an annual multiple sclerosis charity tournament. Last September, The Coors/KMJJ/KLUC Racquetball Shootout raised over \$2,000 for the charity. More than 250 members participated. The event featured free LaCoste shirts, beer, food and trophies.

According to Essa, the atmosphere at the club is social as well. "It's more of a family atmosphere," he says. "But we have a lot of social activities."

Along with a variety of tournaments, the club also offers snow ski and water ski trips and discount beer and pizza parties during football season.

Available to members are 12 racquetball courts, saunas, steam rooms, coed jacuzzis, video movies, aerobic classes, martial arts classes, pool tables, ping pong tables, one basketball court, a Universal weightroom, Wallyba bar and lounge.

Initiation fee for individual membership is \$100 plus \$35 monthly dues. Family initiation fee is \$150 plus \$60 a month.

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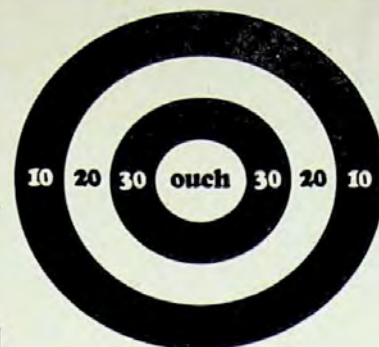
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COLLEGE COURTS



Clemson's Fike Recreation Center.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Although most students at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina come from rural areas which have not been exposed to racquetball, once they get a taste, they're hooked.

"I wish we had 20 more courts," says Jim Pope, assistant director of intramurals, referring to the overuse of the 10 campus racquetball courts. "Racquetball is that popular. We're open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and just about every time that can be reserved is reserved."

Fees accumulated from the 40-member racquetball club are often allocated to promising club players to offset expenses when competing in private racquetball tournaments in the area.

Primarily an engineering and agricultural studies campus, for the past two years Clemson has hosted the South Carolina State Championships held in February.

Many members of the Clemson football team also spend time on the racquetball courts during the off season. Clemson defeated Nebraska in the 1982 Orange Bowl and wound up ranked number one in the country.

Two football brothers who graduated from Clemson—Jeff Bostic, a center for the Washington Redskins, and Joe Bostic, a guard for the St. Louis Cardinals—still find time to return to their alma mater for a game of racquetball. Another well-known alumnus, Jim Stuckey, defensive lineman for the 1982 Super Bowl champion San Francisco 49ers, also returns to the Clemson racquetball courts during pro football's off-season.

Top student players are Ed Gartner, intramural racquetball champion for the past three semesters, and Mark Jaxheimer.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Surprisingly, it was less than a year ago when racquetball made its debut at New York University (NYU) in New York City.

Five racquetball courts were installed in an \$18 million sports and recreation center last September. Until then there were no racquetball facilities on the 43,000-student campus, the largest private university in the world.

Also included in the new center is an Olympic-size swimming pool, scuba diving tanks, saunas, weight room, wrestling room, five basketball courts, six roof-top tennis courts, fencing facilities, a game room, lounge and a one-sixth of a mile outdoor running track.

According to Jack Pickett, NYU's associate director of athletics, intramural and recreation, and coach of the wrestling team, racquetball is included in the training program for wrestlers.

"It's good conditioning" says Pickett. "Racquetball is also good for weight control."

Racquetball courts in background of NYU's new rec center.



A racquetball club and league is currently in the planning stages for the new school year beginning in September.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

Racquetball enthusiasts at the University of Texas at El Paso are lucky to have a high-ranked professional player who can show them how it's done. Dave Peck, one of the top three players on the men's pro racquetball tour, studied at the university before temporarily giving up his academic activities to turn pro. Fortunately for the university, Peck hasn't forgotten his alma mater and occasionally returns for racquetball exhibitions.

The 16,000-student campus has access to eight indoor racquetball courts and six outdoor three-wall courts. Four of the indoor courts were added last summer to minimize overcrowding.

Primarily an engineering, pre-med and business campus, students at Texas El Paso spend most of their outside-class time jogging and playing racquetball. "More people play racquetball and jog than anything else," says Bob Geske, intramural director. "Students here aren't inclined to participate in team-oriented sports. Most students are individually motivated."

Geske describes the 38-member racquetball club as being more a social than competitively motivated group. In fact, no trophies are awarded when Texas El Paso competes with other university clubs such as Texas Tech, New Mexico State and New Mexico University.

Geske says that the team doesn't travel much because UTEP is relatively isolated. "We're closer to Los Angeles than we are to Houston," he jokes.

Top men players on campus are Javier Sufle, Bill Barron and Jaime Herrera. The top woman player is Shiela Fennel.



TOURNAMENTS



Marci Greer gets ready to execute a backhand shot against Lynn Adams in semifinals of Holiday Classic in Lafayette, La. Adams defeated Greer and went on to beat Shannon Wright in the finals. Opposite page: Peggy Gardner hits shot into the back wall in semifinal matchup against Wright.

HOLIDAY CLASSIC BY GUY RIALS

There was a time not so very long ago in the short racquetball life of Lynn Adams when a head-to-head match with Shannon Wright would have had predictable results. Game, set, and match to Wright.

Over the last year, however, the wheels of fortune have turned for Adams and Wright.

In 1981, after several years of frustration, the 24-year-old Adams defeated Wright four times in Women's Professional Racquetball Association (WPRA) competition.

Now, after the WPRA's initial stop on the 1982 tour, Adams has made it clear that the results may still be predictable when she and Wright tangle. But from now on, make it game, set, and match to Adams.

Adams overcame a 10-4 third set tiebreaker deficit to rally and take on a 0-3, 3-0, 15-11 thriller over Wright in the finals of \$20,000 Holiday Classic at Red Lerille's Health and Racquet Club in Lafayette, La.

The victory in the first of eight WPRA stops was worth \$3,000 to Adams while Wright, the all-time leading money winner in women's professional racquetball, pocketed \$1,750. The \$20,000 purse was larger than any offered on the WPRA 1981 tournament schedule.

It took Wright only 25 minutes to breeze to an 11-8, 11-8, 11-6 first set and it looked as if she was on her way to another title.

Adams never really got into the first set and later admitted to some unpleasant thoughts. "I was scared. I was real tentative at the start of the match. I told myself after the first set that there was nothing to be scared of. I know that if I relax, I can play racquetball."

Relax, and play racquetball, is exactly what Adams proceeded to do. Serving three aces in the first game of the second set, Adams raced to a 5-1 lead on her way to an 11-4 win. Following that were 11-8, 13-11 games.

"I felt confident going into the tiebreaker," said Adams. "I knew that I had played well in the second set. I felt momentum was on my side."

Any thoughts of momentum Adams had were quickly crushed by a flurry of shots that saw Wright at her peak and supported the general acceptance that she possesses the finest off-the-wall shot in women's professional racquetball.

Wright consistently took balls off the back glass and ripped them for kill shots, passing shots off the forehand and backhand sides, and tight, unreturnable pinches to build a 10-4 lead.

"Was I really down 10-4?" asked Adams after the match. "You know, I never felt like I was going to lose."

A backhand kill made it 10-5, two Wright skips took it to 10-7, and then Wright scored her last point on a patented back wall kill for 11-7 before Adams put on a sizzling display of her own.

Eight straight points came for Adams on a variety of kills, passes, and pinches that had Wright looking skyward for help.

No help was forthcoming, however, and when Wright skipped an easy backhand at match point, Adams had her third professional victory.

"I never used to beat Shannon," Adams said. "I always fell back on saying it was my inexperience. She was at the top and I was coming up."

Wright, by her own admission, had a mental letdown after the 3-0 first set. "I was

ready to quit right then," she said. "I don't think that I tried hard enough in the second set."

"In the tiebreaker, I just shouldn't have let my lead slip away," she added. "I can't put my finger on it. But I've been at the top for so long, I'll be back."

Neither Adams nor Wright had a difficult time getting into the finals as Adams stopped Beth Crawley, 3-0, 3-1; Canadian champ Heather Stupp, 3-0, 3-1; St. Louis bartender Rita Hoff, 3-2, 3-1; and tournament organizer Marci Greer of San Antonio, 3-0, 3-0, in one semifinal.

Wright disposed of Mary Dee and Kippi Bishop by identical 3-0, 3-0 scores before struggling to a 3-0, 1-3, 15-11 win over Miami's Brenda Poe in the quarterfinals. Wright beat fifth-seeded Peggy Gardner of San Diego, 3-0, 3-1, in the other semifinal.

Three of the top eight seeds were beaten in the first round. Sixth seeded Laura Martino, seventh seeded Linda Prefontaine, and eighth seeded Francine Davis all bit the dust in their opening matches.

Host of the tournament, former Mr. America, Red Lerille, was pleased with the overall success of the tournament. "I don't think I've ever had a tournament of any kind where I didn't have at least one squabble. But this week, everything went off perfectly and that's a tribute to everyone associated with the WPRA," said Lerille.

The top player from the 1981 tour, Heather McKay, missed the Holiday Classic due to filming commitments in Australia. Her absence did not tarnish the victory for Adams.

"You never know what would have happened if Heather had been there," surmised Adams. "But I'm pleased to open the season with this kind of win."

PHOTOS BY JAY FAGOT



RESULTS:

Round of 32 (Seeded players in parenthesis)

Lynn Adams (1) def. Beth Crawley, 3-0, 3-1; Heather Stupp def. Terri Gilreath, 1-3, 3-0, 15-13; Rita Hoff def. Bonnie Stoll, 0-3, 3-1, 15-7; Susie Dugan def. Linda Prefontaine (7), 3-2, 2-3, 15-14; Marci Greer (3) def. Brenda Young, 3-0, 3-0; Barbara Faulkinberry def. Betsy Koza, 3-2, 3-1; Jennifer Harding def. Jean Sauser, 3-1, 3-1; Stacey Fletcher def. Laura Martino (6), 3-2, 3-0; Peggy Gardner (5) def. Martha McDonald, 3-0, 3-2; Vicki Panzeri def. Melanie Taylor, 3-0, 3-1; Caryn McKinney def. Barbara Maltby, 0-3, 3-1, 15-10; Karen Walton-Trent (4) def. Liz Alvarado, forfeit; Joyce Jackson def. Francine Davis (8), 3-1, 3-1; Brenda Poe def. Janell Marriott, 3-2, 3-0; Kippi Bishop def. Peggy Steding, 3-0, 3-1; Shannon Wright (2) def. Mary Dee, 3-0, 3-0.

Round of 16

Adams def. Stupp, 3-0, 3-1; Hoff def. Dugan, 3-2, 3-1; Greer def. Faulkinberry, 3-1, 3-0; Harding def. Fletcher, 3-0, 3-0; Gardner def. Panzeri, 3-2, 1-3, 15-14; McKinney def. Trent, 3-0, 3-1; Poe def. Jackson, 3-1, 3-0; Wright def. Bishop, 3-0, 3-0.

Quarterfinals

Adams def. Hoff, 3-2, 3-1; Greer def.

Harding, 3-1, 3-0; Gardner def. McKinney, 3-2, 3-1; Wright def. Poe, 3-0, 1-3, 15-11.

Semifinals

Adams def. Greer, 3-0, 3-0; Wright def. Gardner, 3-0, 3-1.

Finals

Adams (\$3,000) def. Wright (\$1,750), 0-3, 3-0, 15-11.

CATALINA PRO-AM BY CAROL HOGAN

Racquetball fans finally got the exciting duel match they'd been waiting for when Dave Peck defeated four-time defending national champion Marty Hogan, 3-11, 7-11, 11-1, 11-8, in the \$20,000 Catalina Pro-Am Racquetball Classic at the Honolulu Club in Honolulu, Hawaii. Peck had an easy road to the finals. Hogan didn't.

In the quarterfinal round of the tournament, Hogan was almost beat by unknown Peter Britos, 21, of Honolulu, a non-touring amateur and an instructor at the Oahu Athletic Club. Britos upset Rich Wagner to gain his quarterfinal slot and a capacity (pro-Britos) crowd came to watch him face Hogan.

Hogan won the first two games, 11-6, 11-7 before Britos made his move.

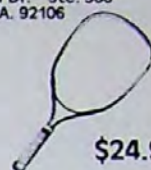
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TOURNAMENTS



Dave Peck goes diving for a shot and comes up empty in finals against Marty Hogan in Catalina Pro-Am in Hawaii.

PHOTOS BY MILO MUSLIN

"Get the Haole," cried the audience. Haole is a Hawaiian word for "outsider" or person from the Mainland. Britos needed that. Coming back from an 0-7 deficit, he beat Hogan 11-10 in the third game. The fourth game was also tight, but Britos showed more confidence and led 10-8. As Hogan prepared to serve, he grinned, "Here I come." But Britos took back the serve, turned to the capacity crowd with upraised arms to summon their support and made his final point, tying the match at two games each.

Then Hogan decided to put Britos away. With four consecutive aces in game five, he took the fast route to an 11-1 victory.

"My hand started cramping and I just couldn't hold my racquet any more. That hasn't ever happened before," said Britos.

Did Hogan's on-court comments bother him?

"No, they amped me up," Britos replied. "I want Marty again."

"I knew he was gonna be nervous, which he was," said Hogan. "I took it easy and let him make mistakes. In the last game I don't think he was ready for those aces. He really played an excellent game but he didn't have me too worried. I was pretty confident I could win that fifth game."

Meanwhile, Peck defeated Don Thomas, Mike Yellen beat Scott Hawkins and Bret Harnett ousted Jerry Hilecher in other quarterfinal matches.

When Peck landed in Honolulu he had the flu. Nonetheless, he took two straight games from Yellen in a semifinal match that had both players crashing around the sweat-slick court and bouncing off the walls like Brahma bulls.

Next up was the Hogan-Harnett match. It



Peck consoles Hogan after winning and thanks the crowd. Peck collected \$5,500 for his win.



A rare glimpse of Hogan: defeated. Marty picked up a \$3,500 paycheck for his runnerup finish.

started fast and got faster. The slick floor proved a real dilemma for both players but after four games it was two apiece with each player scoring the same number of points.

At one point when Harnett came from behind to catch Hogan, Marty called time out, tossed his racquet down, jumped on it, threw off his goggles and shouted, "I can't play." The crowd loved it.

Everyone was tense, including John Hogan, Marty's father, who flew into town to watch his son play. After two and a half hours, Hogan defeated Harnett, 11-6 in the last game.

"That was an excellent match," said Hogan. "Bret is without a doubt one of the top three players in the country. I lost my concentration in the first two games. I was playing very hard throughout the entire match trying to keep the pressure on him. For his young age, he's a real competitor. His composure was very good and I look forward to playing him a lot more in the future."

In the finals, Hogan began the attack on Peck right away, taking control early and

throwing in a few aces for good measure. Hogan won the first two, 11-3, 11-7.

"After the first two games I thought I was history, Peck said.

But Peck won the third game easily, 11-1. "I gotta work on concentration. I'm simply not maintaining the concentration I should and I'm getting very frustrated with myself," said Hogan.

Peck won the next game, 11-8, and led 4-3 and 10-8 in the last game before scoring the final point.

"It was a good match, a very good competitive match," said Hogan. "I made a couple of very important errors that cost me the match. Instead of taking a good shot I hit a couple of flashy shots that threw my game off a little bit. I think I was in control until the last half of the match, but on the last couple of points, I just didn't cash in."

"In the last game I just said 'screw it,'" said Peck afterwards. "I started getting my second wind at six or seven so I thought 'what the hell, I might as well go for it.' If you play conservative against him in the fifth game, he blows you out of the court"

RESULTS:

First Round

Peter Britos def. Rich Wagner, 5-11, 11-7, 11-10, 11-5; Bret Harnett def. Craig McCoy, 10-11, 11-10, 11-5, 11-2; Jerry Hilecher def. John Britos, 11-7, 11-8, 11-1; Dave Peck def. John Egerman, 4-11, 11-3, 11-10, 11-1; Don Thomas def. Steve Strandemo, 11-2, 6-11, 11-4, 11-9; Scott Hawkins def. Randy Lau, 11-6, 1-11, 11-3, 11-6; Mike Yellen def. Joe Decker, 11-3, 11-10, 11-5; Marty Hogan def. Gregg Peck, 11-7, 11-10, 11-9.

Quarterfinals

Hogan def. Britos, 11-6, 11-7, 10-11, 8-11, 11-1; Harnett def. Hilecher, 11-9, 11-4, 11-4; Peck def. Thomas, 11-8, 11-6, 11-3; Yellen def. Hawkins, 11-6, 11-6, 8-11, 11-10.

Semifinals

Hogan def. Harnett, 10-11, 9-11, 11-10, 11-9, 11-6; Peck def. Yellen, 11-3, 11-7, 11-3.

Finals

Peck (\$5,500) def. Hogan (\$3,500) 3-11, 7-11, 11-1, 11-8, 11-8.

CELEBRITY GALLERY

Melanie Chartoff

BY RHONDA WILSON

To the attractive newscaster on the late night comedy show *Fridays*, racquetball would undoubtedly seem a threat to her controlled, poised image. Besides, her nice clothes might get wrinkled. And little seven-year-old Amy, who is totally victimized by her older brother's pranks, would much rather use the racquet against her sinister sibling's noggin. But unlike the above characters portrayed by comedienne/actress Melanie Chartoff on ABC's answer to *Saturday Night Live*, Chartoff approaches the game with a whimsical earnestness.

"One boring summer a friend of mine and I decided to try racquetball," she recalls. "We just laughed the whole time because the ball ricocheted off the walls and so did we. The first six months or so I played just to laugh. Then I decided I wanted to get better at it, so I started taking lessons. But still I play it mostly for fun."

Perhaps the most recognizable of the *Fridays* cast, the 30-year-old Chartoff finds racquetball excellent therapy for her grueling six-day-a-week work schedule. "I have different reasons for playing racquetball," she says. "Sometimes I'll play if I'm very angry. Sometimes I'll just want to hit I don't have a heritage and upbringing where it is permissible to hit. So this is a wonderful way of getting out that kind of energy for me."

"One of the reasons I like racquetball is I'm trying to get a lot of frustration out without having to look at my adversary," she says. "I like playing against a white wall. There's something about the game symbolically that says you're not hitting hard to hurt another person. You're hitting hard to feel your own strength in a situation rather than looking over a tennis net at somebody and trying to hit the ball and make them miss it. I know the truth of the game is that I'm playing against myself. That's why I love it so much."

Even when traveling around the country to promote *Fridays*, Chartoff always manages to get to a racquetball club. "I went to Hawaii to do some public relations work for the show and I played racquetball with a guy in Honolulu. In almost every town I go to I will inquire about their racquetball facilities. It's a great way to meet people in a strange town."

Along with her fascination with racquetball, Chartoff has discovered Nautilus. "It's interesting to work where there are almost all men and to see how hard men work physically," she says. "It's something that women are not encouraged to do, so I'm glad I'm doing it because for me it's pushing off a lot of those needs to be dainty and protected. Racquetball does the same sort of thing—pushing



through that image problem of the frail, vulnerable woman."

Taking control of her health, Chartoff maintains her trim appearance by sticking to a strict diet. She eats lots of steamed vegetables, chicken, fish, turkey and fruit. She stays away from additives, preservatives, sugar, and flour.

"I was very sloppy about my diet most of my life until about eight years ago and I got very sick, hypoglycemic, run down and weak. Now, I feel best when I stay on this diet."

Chartoff was star struck by show business at an early age. At 12, she was captivated by a

performance at the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Conn., her hometown. "An actor was walking through the audience doing a monologue and at one point he touched my head and said part of his monologue to me," she remembers. "He stuck me right into the theater at that moment. It was like I became part of his whole illusion. I was just spellbound."

That incident proved to be the impetus for her career. Not long after that, Chartoff auditioned for a musical play, *Threepenny Opera*, at Yale University and got the part. From then on her sights were set on acting.



Melanie Chartoff: "There's something about the game symbolically that says you're not hitting hard to hurt another person. The truth of the game is that I'm playing against myself."



During her college years at Adelphi University, Chartoff performed in and directed school plays. Off campus, she directed several television productions. After obtaining her degree in theater arts, she moved to New York City to follow her dream. Her first jobs were as a freelance production assistant in commercials. She stayed in the Big Apple for five years and performed in some Broadway shows, off-Broadway shows and off-off-Broadway shows. She also began getting roles in commercials and soap operas until she started earning a steady income.

Four years ago, Chartoff moved to the West Coast, "to get out of a relationship." There, she joined some friends who were also beginning to make new lives for themselves in Los Angeles. The prestigious William Morris Agency, who had spotted and signed her in New York, got her spots on television series such as *Wonder Woman*, *The Tony Randall Show*, the short-lived *Richie Brockelman: Private Eye* and later she worked as a regular on the *Everyday Show*. She also guest starred in a feature film television story on the tragic life of comedian Freddie Prinze, *Can You Hear The Laughter*, and a Paramount film, *American Hot Wax*, before landing a part as one of the regulars on the live comedy show, *Fridays*. She had to audition for several hours before they offered her the part.

Although working in front of a live audience is nothing new to Chartoff (she had plenty of experience on Broadway), performing to a live national television audience is another story. "The largest live audience I ever played previous to this was maybe 800, 900 people," she says. "Now I play to three million people and it's very exciting. It's definitely like a life or death situation every night for all of us. You have to go for it."

"Going for it," however, has included its share of the unexpected. One sketch involved Chartoff in some stage fighting with Maryedith Burrell and Brandis Kemp, two other actresses on the show. "We did a lot of stunt work in preparation," she says. "It required hitting and falling down. And in Maryedith's zeal—I guess to make the scene work because of the high tension we operate at—when it came time to punch me, she actually did punch me. It was a total accident but she broke my tooth and cracked my jaw. I had to go to the hospital. It's incredible that after two years of doing the show, that's about the only major mishap."

However, that doesn't seem to be the case in the "Friday Edition" newscast. Mistakes are almost unavoidable since Chartoff is handed the script at the last minute. She doesn't have

time to rehearse the newscast. "They're taking things off the UPI (United Press International) machine right at the very last minute," she says. "So I make a lot of stumbles in the news and recover by either slapping myself around or saying, 'Oh so what.' It happens a great deal."

Describing herself as "not really a joke teller," Chartoff says she has adapted to comedy like a trouser. She has a considerable amount of input into the show's written material. In fact, she has the option of passing up a skit if she disagrees with the content. "Generally they know what not to put me in," she says. "There was a piece about police brutality which was really making a comment on police brutality. I was supposed to play a sweet young thing who is reaching for a raffle ticket to prove that she was not at the scene of the crime and gets riddled with machine gun bullets. I refused to do it. Someone else did it but then the whole scene got scrapped."

"I have this real thing about violence. And in such a violent time we are living I think that the less attention we call to violence the better. Even though we're making light about how silly it is, we're still calling attention to it."

She will also occasionally write for the show but she admits the writers don't always agree with her taste in comedy. Because the men on the show outnumber the women four to one, Chartoff thinks most of the material contains a "definite male sensibility." "Things that the women present that we may think are hilarious, they just don't get," she says. "So of course the women's material will generally be negated. It's unfortunate that the show is out of balance."

One piece she wrote that did get on the air was a skit on women's liberation, a subject to which Chartoff gives strong support. The viewer response to the segment was overwhelming. "I played a woman's libber who was dealing with the likes of Betty Friedan (author of the *Feminine Mystique*) and Jane Fonda on the phone," she says. "Then when her husband comes home they get into a baby talk session. 'What did you do today, honey?' the husband asked. Then I replied in baby talk, 'I talked to Betty Friedan and Jane Fonda.' Then the husband mimics me, 'You did!'"

Approving letters and phone calls followed from men and women. "It went over very well because here we are talking women's lib and then in our relationships we're just little dependent girls," she says.

The skit's success prompted Chartoff to write a continuation. This time facing opposi-

CELEBRITY GALLERY



book, *Nancy*, and I've read a lot of articles about her so I feel that I understand her," she says. "It doesn't take too much make-up or voice work. She's actually very young looking and her voice is very similar to mine only she's far more proper in her diction and articulation. She's a very grande dame. She was an actress in films before she married Ronald. She was trained the same way I was in her diction and execution."

As a result of her comedic impression, impressionist Rich Little asked Chartoff to play Nancy Reagan on his new album, *The First Family Rides Again*. The album is produced by the same people who did the Kennedy *First Family* album which was such a success in the '60s.

Chartoff is committed to *Fridays* for another three years. When the show is over she would like to go back to the stage again. "I really miss doing more intensive work," she says. "It's a different kind of thing that you throw together in a week than you do when working on something for a while."

In the meantime, Chartoff devotes much of her time studying another part of the business. "I'm working with a singing teacher on songs that I'm writing with a composer friend of mine."

In any direction her career might lead, Chartoff would like to use her medium to contribute to public awareness. "I try to remember that I am equal and I can feel compassionately the needs of other people," she says. "Sometimes the most important thing that you can do is be yourself."

R

tion from Nancy Reagan and Phyllis Shaffley, Chartoff argued that the ERA must be included in the constitution. But when she comes home she has to deal with a husband who can only relate to her as a sexual object. "I was pointing out that in a relationship, women's politics subsides and this is where the problem lies. Even in one's private relationship with a man, one has to hang on to one's independence and identity."

"I've never really been political but I'm starting to feel the Equal Rights Amendment issue pretty emotionally," she says. "I'm really disappointed that it hasn't passed. I know the awareness of women's needs for knowing they're equal has increased but it should be in the book."

She is also hoping the writers will allow her Amy character to obtain revenge against her older brother instead of continually falling prey to his menacing whims. "I hope that the male writers will write a sequence in which I am the victor instead of the victim in which my dolls somehow win out over the soldier dolls because that's the battle I have in my own life," she says. "I hope it manifests itself in my character."

Critics of *Fridays* claim the writing on the show attracts only an adolescent following. Chartoff on the other hand, thinks the audience has gradually grown. "I think our first season we were guilty of aiming for adolescents," she says. "I think that we have restructured now and I think our appeal has matured. We appeal to 11 and younger but I've also gotten fan mail from people 50 years and older. I think it's pretty balanced out."

Chartoff is quick to point out many differences between *Fridays* and its NBC counterpart, *Saturday Night Live*. "We're all going through the same thing which is satire and human interest comedy but our points of view are different," she says. "I think we do more

physical comedy than they do. I think our show is a real potpourri. Where *Saturday Night Live* is written for the talent, *Fridays* is more a writer's show. It caters to the styles of each writer. We do a little sophisticated comedy, a little slapstick and political satire depending on what the writer's specialty is."

The skills of political satire invariably include Chartoff. Her imitation of the first lady, Nancy Reagan, complements actor/comedian John Roark's fine impression of Ronald Reagan.

What does it take to portray the president's wife?

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Melanie Chartoff in her role as a newscaster on the ABC late-night show *Fridays*.

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CARTOON BY MARK LASKY

THE NEXT SHOT

Our May issue offers an interesting lineup of stories:

THE EYES HAVE IT

A special eyeguard section and a story on how to improve your visualization.

INSTRUCTION

Marty Hogan, Steve Keeley and Craig McCoy offer tips for intermediate players.

THE ANATOMY OF A CLINIC

The Federal Way (Wash.) Athletic Club brought in nine pros in a three-month span for its members. Here is an interesting report on one of those sessions.

WPRA NATIONALS PREVIEW

Can Heather McKay make it three in a row?

THE OUTCASTS

How did the players not invited on the Catalina men's tour make out this season?

PLUS:

Coverage of the men's pro stop from Oregon and the WPRA event from Seattle, a feature on former touring pro Steve Serot and color coverage of the celebrity-filled Racquetball Illustrated Player of the Year Party.



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maintain consistent power throughout a match.

Our new racquet is also incredibly well balanced, because of a unique "step-down" frame feature modeled after True Temper's world famous golf shaft.

All in all, this is one super racquet. One that's good enough to wear the name of four-time Nationals champion, Marty Hogan.

So look for the Marty Hogan Steel at your favorite pro shop or retailer, add it to your arsenal, and we guarantee the balance of power will swing your way. Your Hogan Steel will make opponents think your power shot is traveling faster than a speeding bullet.

DP LEACH
Fit for Life 