

# RACQUETBALL



## NATIONAL CHAMPIONS CROWNED



IN THIS ISSUE:

**MEET THE MILITARY RACQUETBALL FEDERATION**

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U.S. Racquetball Association

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## ON THE COVER

US Team Qualifying Singles Champions Jake Bredenbeck & Kelani Lawrence. *Photo by KSphotography*

## STAFF

Mike Wedel - Executive Director  
Renée Isherwood - Director of Events & Operations  
Bailee Jackson - Membership Coordinator

## SUBMISSIONS

Racquetball Magazine welcomes submissions from our members and readers. Propose article ideas by email to: [magazine@usaracquetball.com](mailto:magazine@usaracquetball.com). All submissions are subject to editing.

## EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Aimee Ruiz | ABR Communications  
[aimee@abrcomm.com](mailto:aimee@abrcomm.com)

## PUBLISHER

USA Racquetball  
1651 Mesa Avenue  
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Action at the USAR Intercollegiate Championship

*Photo By KSphotography*

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Ashaway | NMRA



## USA RACQUETBALL MISSION STATEMENT

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

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## BREAKING NEWS PAN AM GAMES

### USA RACQUETBALL NAMES 2019 US PAN AMERICAN GAMES TEAM!

USA Racquetball recently announced the participation of five U.S. Team athletes in the Pan American Games to be competed in Lima, Peru, August 2-10, 2019. This is the most prestigious competition in Racquetball as a Pan American Sport under the USOC.

Jake Bredenbeck, Rocky Carson, Charlie Pratt, Kelani Lawrence, and Rhonda Rajsich will travel to Peru in late July. The support staff will be Head Coach Dave Ellis, Assistant Coach Debra Tisinger-Moore, Athletic Trainer Brent Huff, and Team Leader Renée Isherwood.

The Pan American Games Lima 2019, to be held for the first time in Peru, will welcome 6,700 athletes who will participate in 39 sports and 61 disciplines over 17 days of competition and ceremonies. Visit [www.lima2019.pe](http://www.lima2019.pe) for more information on the Games.

In Racquetball, 60 athletes (30 men and 30 women) from 15 countries will compete in singles and doubles in both individual and team formats. Daily results will be found at [www.internationalracquetball.com](http://www.internationalracquetball.com), and U.S. Team results will be available on USA Racquetball's website and Facebook page as well.

"The IRF Board of Directors and tournament staff congratulate and welcome the U.S. Delegation to Peru for the Pan American Games," said IRF President Osvaldo Maggi. "We wish them luck and a great experience representing their country on the World stage."

To follow Team USA visit: <http://www.teamusa.org/>



FROM THE  
Executive Director

By Mike Wedel

## National Headquarters

# **Six Months... ON THE JOB**

My first six months as USA Racquetball's Executive Director have passed with lightning speed. It's a good time to update you, our members, on what we have been doing to grow our sport.

As you know, I was on the USA Racquetball Board of Directors for several years in several roles, so I entered into this position with full knowledge of what I was about to tackle. The Board, the Staff, and I have ideas and plans to make changes in the operations of USA Racquetball. As much as we want everything to be perfectly in place right now, it does require time and patience to effect improvement and forward momentum.

I have been asked a lot recently, "How are you liking the new job?" and "How is it going?" Well, it's going great! A lot of the work we have done is behind the scenes and not yet visible to the membership. Here's an update on some of the things we are working on to keep racquetball moving in the right direction.

- The USA Racquetball office is now located at the Penrose House property in Colorado Springs. The address is 1651 Mesa Avenue, Columbine Cottage, Colorado Springs, CO 80906. This new location is well-suited for our operation and is adjacent to several other national sports governing bodies (NGBs). This encourages sharing of ideas, knowledge, and resources. The new office location reduces overhead costs, like rent and utilities.
- Bailee Jackson joined our staff this year as a Membership Coordinator. She has done great job of jumping in to learn her new role and help our members. I have received positive feedback from members who have had the opportunity to interact with Bailee either on the phone or at some of our national championships. If you have any questions regarding your membership, tournaments, leagues, etc., just give Bailee a call. She will be glad to assist.
- Renée Gundolff... Wait, it's not Gundolff any more, it's Isherwood! Yes, Renée got married on April 25. If you see her, please congratulate her (and husband Chadwick) on their marriage. Renée was promoted to Director of Events and Operations. She is also taking the role of Team Leader for the upcoming XVIII Pan American Games in Lima, Peru. This is a big responsibility, and we have full confidence that Renée will do a great job supporting Team USA.
- We are working to make sure USA Racquetball and all associated mandated parties are compliant with SafeSport requirements as directed by U.S. Congress. SafeSport training and certification is an initiative we are required to tackle as an organization. However, infinitely more important than "a task to be completed" is that it allows us to work with SafeSport to ensure we are doing all we can to protect our athletes—children and adults alike.
- The 2019 USA Racquetball Junior Olympic Championship, June 19-23 in Portland, Oregon, wrapped up our current Championship season. The staff worked hard to put together this year's national events. These Championships were a bit of a challenge since the team was new in their roles, and I commend them for their dedication and hard work.
- With the 2020 National Championships heavily into the planning stages, we are excited about what USA Racquetball has in store. New locations for some of our events will certainly bring renewed excitement. For example, Louisiana State University (LSU) will be the site of the 2020 Inter-collegiate Championship. It will be a new and fun experience visiting Baton Rouge. Keep an eye out for announcements involving National Singles and the other events as well.
- I am excited about the collaboration going on to bring the World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) and USA Racquetball communities closer together. This will allow us to infuse both the outdoor and indoor games with new and exciting possibilities. Many of you who play indoor have already fallen in love with outdoor racquetball. If you haven't tried it, you must! And, the outdoor game is a great way to introduce new people to the sport as most courts are accessible at no or low cost. Here are some of the big outdoor tournaments coming up:

2019 Outdoor Racquetball Championships, Presented by Pro Kennex, 7/11-14/2019, Marina Park, Huntington Beach, California

2019 3WallBall World Championships, 9/25-29/2019, at the Stratosphere Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada

2020 Beach Bash, Presented by Splathead, 3/19-3/22/2019, Hollywood Beach, Florida

The Board of Directors, the Staff, and I are all working to strengthen USA Racquetball from the inside out, to leverage efficiencies so that we can put our efforts and funds into growing racquetball. If you have any questions or comments, I invite you to email me at [mwedel@usaracquetball.com](mailto:mwedel@usaracquetball.com). I sincerely welcome your input.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Dan Whitley

# Board of Directors Update

Recently the Board of Directors held our annual in-person meeting at the National Singles Championship in Denver, Colorado. We welcomed two new Board members onto our team. They might be new to the Board, but they should be familiar to the racquetball community.



**Steve Czarnecki**, who was executive director for USA Racquetball from 2013-2016, is currently the executive director for El Pomar Youth Sports Park in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Prior to those experiences, Steve managed charitable programs for the United States Golf Association for 13 years. Steve was appointed to the Board to complete the appointment that Mike Wedel vacated when he became executive director. Steve will also serve as treasurer on the Board of Directors.

**Stewart Solomon** has held professional leadership positions within the Biotech Pharmaceutical sphere and currently resides in the Boston area managing a Quality Assurance team. Stewart has experience managing events in the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas and most recently has hosted/streamed LPRT events in Boston for the last three years. Stewart has been appointed to a two-year term and is excited to use his experiences and passion for the sport to help impact all levels of racquetball.

Steve and Stewart will be working alongside our returning Board members that include our Athlete Representatives Michelle De La Rosa, Jose Diaz, and Aimee Ruiz, along with Joel Barshaw, Thurman Brooks, Scott Fish, Mike Kiedrowski, Cheryl Kirk, Joanne Pomodoro, Terry Rogers, and Cindy Tilbury. At present, we are working with Executive Director Mike Wedel to create a new strategic plan for USA Racquetball. There is a lot to be excited about!

I especially want to thank Jonathan Clay for his three years as a member and officer on the USA Racquetball Board of Directors. It's been great having Jonathan on the Board for his perspective and passion; he really cares about our sport. Jonathan, thanks for everything you have done and continue to do for Racquetball!

### THE SUN IS OUT... GO PLAY OUTDOOR RACQUETBALL!



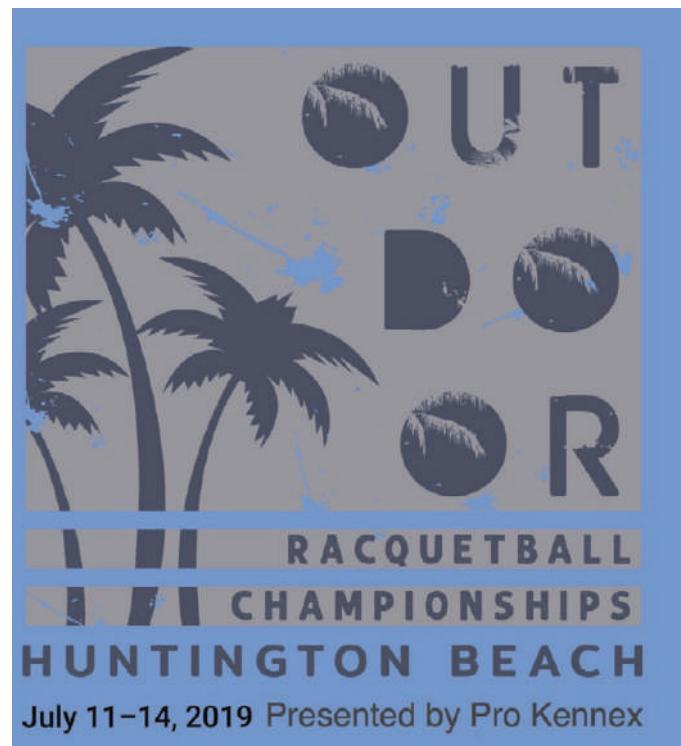
Over 18 months ago, USA Racquetball purchased World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR). Candidly, it has taken too long for us to get rolling on providing WOR the proper support. We have now made WOR a priority and things are changing for the better. We are not looking to modify the culture of WOR (it's so dynamic and awesome). Instead, the goal is

to spread the word and help introduce it to more people. Outdoor courts make introducing the sport to new players easy and serve as one of the best platforms to grow the game. It's summer, go outside and play racquetball!

Earlier this year as part of the outdoor racquetball initiative, a WOR Leadership Council was formed. It includes the following Regional WOR Directors: Michelle De La Rosa, Ben Goldenberg, Carrie Hoeft, Vic Leibofsky, Greg Lewerenz, and Geoff Osberg. This is an all-star team! This amazing group is working hard to improve so many outdoor components that include integration with USA Racquetball staff; visibility on USAR's website; increased outdoor national championship support; enhanced membership and event support for WOR event directors; and re-engagement with the WOR Committee. Thank you to the council members for your time and efforts.

USA Racquetball/WOR is working to establish broader recognition and more support for each of the WOR Outdoor National Championship Events. Mark your calendars and try to attend these events. I had never been before and had the pleasure to be in Las Vegas last September for the 3WallBall Championships. I was so impressed by the inclusive WOR culture and competition. What a fun event for everyone! The next event on the schedule is the Outdoor Championships in Huntington Beach, California, July 11-14th. You should really do yourself a favor and enter or at least make it a point to check it out!

For more information on WOR events and outdoor racquetball stories and history, check out the WOR website at [www.worldoutdoorracquetball.net](http://www.worldoutdoorracquetball.net).





# ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE CAN RAISE MORE THAN **\$30,000** FOR THE TEAMS!

**S**upport the U.S. Adult and Junior National Teams with a tax-deductible contribution today. Your support is vital to the players and coaches as they prepare to represent the United States in international competition. Funds are primarily used for travel expenses, entry fees, and training.

Donations of \$100 or more, made in 2018 to the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, *will be matched* by the group of generous Team Benefactors at right, who have each pledged up to \$2,500 to support the cause. With your support, the USA Racquetball family can raise more than \$30,000 for your U.S. National Teams!

*Under the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, donations will be used to support direct travel costs of U.S. Junior and Adult National Team Members.*

*To become a benefactor for the 2018 Team USA Challenge, please contact USA Racquetball at 719-635-5396.*

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# CSU-Pueblo Crowned Overall Team Champion

2019 USAR National Intercollegiate Championship  
Presented by Penn and Visit Tempe

**Penn**  
tempe  
arizona  
Tourism Office

By Brittany Clark  
Photos By KSphotography



The 2019 USA Racquetball National Intercollegiate Championship presented by Penn and Visit Tempe was held April 3-6 in Tempe, Arizona, at the ASU Sun Devil Fitness Complex. The venue features eleven courts with glass back walls and a show court with glass back and side walls. There were 178 athletes from 26 schools across the country competing for points and the titles of National Intercollegiate Champions. The Fitness Complex staff assisted by supplying ice, towels, and other items to support players throughout the course of the event.

The Championship was set in Olympic format, i.e., players were placed in Divisions #1 through #6 for singles and #1 through #3 for doubles, based on their school rankings. As the competition unfolded, players stayed in the Gold division or dropped down to Blue, Red, or White divisions based on which rounds they won/lost. Team points and medals were awarded in each of the rounds, so every match had an impact on the overall team standings. The camaraderie was palpable throughout the championship and continued until the last point of the last match was scored!

Teams earned 1st place in both the Division I and Division II categories for Overall Team, Men's Team, and Women's Team. There were some changes in the top spots this year as Colorado State University-Pueblo was awarded 1st for Division I Overall Team and Women's Team. Overall Team Division I runner-up was Oregon State, and third place went to Brigham Young University (BYU). The Division I Men's Team standings were Oregon State, BYU, and CSU-Pueblo. The Women's Team runner-up was Oregon State with BYU coming in third.

The Division II champions for all three team categories included some repeat champions and some new ones as well. In the Overall Team division, Baldwin Wallace took the top spot, followed by Logan University and Bryant University. The Men's Team finishers were Logan University, then Bryant University followed by Mercy University. The Women's Team division champions were Baldwin Wallace, followed by Bryant University and Clarkson University.

In the Men's #1 Gold Division, Erik Garcia from CSU-Pueblo captured the #1 seed as a result of his 2018 National title over Alejandro Almada from the University of Texas. Both made it to the semifinals matches but met new competitors vs. the previous year. Almada played



Overall Team Champions Colorado State University-Pueblo  
Right: Women's #1 Singles Champion Hollie Scott



Men's #1 Singles and #1 Doubles Champion Erik Garcia (R) &  
Men's #1 Singles Runner-Up Alejandro Almada

Jeremy Dixon of Baldwin Wallace University. Almada displayed his quickness by defeating Dixon, 15-2, 15-5. Garcia took on Jacob Matthews from East Carolina and proved why he was the Champion in 2018 by defeating Matthews, 15-3, 15-7, thereby advancing to the finals.

The finals match was exciting from beginning to end. Almada challenged Garcia by taking the match to a tiebreaker, but Garcia emerged as champion, 15-5, 6-15, 11-5. The singles finalists met again in the finals match of Men's #1 Doubles, as Garcia and Lukas Le paired up to take on Almada and Jerry Yang. This was another exciting match, and the CSU-Pueblo men (Garcia/Le) came out on top, 15-4, 15-12.

The Women's #1 Gold division featured familiar faces from previous years. The #1 seed went to Carla Muñoz, the defending champion from the past three years. Erika Manilla was the #2 seed after her second-place finish in 2018.

In the semifinal match featuring Hollie Scott from the University of Washington vs. Manilla representing Northern Arizona University, each demonstrated why she is a top contender in the sport. Scott ended up defeating Manilla, 15-9, 15-4. The other semifinal match, between Muñoz (CSU-Pueblo) and Melania Sauma (Arizona State University), had a similar outcome with Muñoz advancing after a win of 15-3, 15-8.

In the final, Muñoz was not able to defend her Women's #1 Gold title as Scott took the honors, 15-2, 15-8. The Women's #1 Doubles division was claimed by Brenda Laime and Adriana Riveros from CSU-Pueblo in their win over Lexi York and Natalie Lorati from Oregon State University.

Congratulations to Erik Garcia and Hollie Scott for earning appointments to the U.S. National Team.

A big thank you to our food sponsors Daily Jam, Hungry Howie's, and Waldo's BBQ. Again, we thank the ASU Sun Devil Fitness Complex staff for their support throughout the entire week!

## Susan Hendricks ... Age Is Just a Number

Arizona State University (ASU) Undergrad Susan Hendricks accomplished something that not many women have accomplished at the age of 64 – the title of Collegiate All American! Susan won the silver medal in the Women's #3 Gold Singles, which awarded her All American status. When Susan was asked about her accomplishment, she wanted to recognize the people who helped her achieve her silver medal at the 2019 USAR Intercollegiate Championship:



Photo Courtesy of Susan Hendricks

Zac Norton - An ASU engineering student who was her doubles partner in local tournaments and her sparring partner during singles practice for most weeks last Spring semester.

Barry Hendricks - Susan's husband of 23 years. Barry is a 22x World and National Champion and is the one responsible for bringing Susan back to racquetball after a 10-year hiatus.

Darrin Schenck - A longtime friend and coach over the years. Darrin played on the pro tour for a while, wrote a book about racquetball, and serves as ASU Head Coach.

Danny Kusch - A personal trainer and longtime friend, Danny is a pillar of strength for the ASU team. He designed specific weight training ideas and drills for the team.

Jim Barrett - A friend from 40 years ago who introduced Susan to racquetball. Jim serves as Assistant Coach for ASU's team.

Susan also wants to give kudos to the entire ASU team who made her feel welcome and to Jim Winterton for his time, dedication, and efforts to assist with form, serves, and warm-ups. "I hope my story can be an inspiration to others about how much people matter when it comes to goals; surrounding oneself with those who are kind, generous, and brilliant; and how the sky should be our only limit when it comes to achieving things outside of our vision!"

# 2019 NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

## Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ · April 3 - 6

### TEAM COMPETITION

#### Overall Team Division I

1. CSU - Pueblo
2. Oregon State University
3. Brigham Young University

#### Men's Team Division I

1. Oregon State University
2. Brigham Young University
3. CSU - Pueblo

#### Women's Team Division I

1. CSU - Pueblo
2. Oregon State University
3. Brigham Young University

#### Overall Team Division II

1. Baldwin Wallace
2. Logan University
3. Bryan University

#### Men's Team Division II

1. Logan University
2. Bryant University
3. Mercy University

#### Women's Team Division II

1. Baldwin University
2. Bryant University
3. Clarkson University

### MEN'S SINGLES

#### Champion:

#1	Erik Garcia
#2	Lukas Le
#3	Joey Lee
#4	Ryan Chin
#5	Jordan Ellsworth
#6	Spencer Bankhead

### WOMEN'S SINGLES

#### Champion:

#1	Hollie Scott
#2	Adriana Riveros
#3	Brenda Laime
#4	Autumn Lewis
#5	Chloe Durrans
#6	Jessica Hyland

### MEN'S DOUBLES

#### Champions:

#1	Lukas Le/Erik Garcia
#2	Jordan Ellsworth/Nicolas Smith
#3	Lincoln Cluff/Spencer Bankhead

### WOMEN'S DOUBLES

#### Champions:

#1	Brenda Laime/Adriana Riveros
#2	Kayla Day/Carla Muñoz
#3	Brooke Johnson/Danielle Barrett

### 2019 COLLEGIATE ALL AMERICANS

#### Men's

Alejandro Almada  
Nakia Armendariz  
Spencer Bankhead  
Zachary Brown  
Nathan Buring  
Ryan Chin  
Lincoln Cluff  
Jace Darrow  
Jeremy Dixon  
Jordan Ellsworth  
Erik Garcia  
Daniel Herrera  
Erik Holman  
Jarrod Kassuba  
Lukas Le  
Joey Lee  
Tyler Loescher  
Jacob Matthews  
Jacob Mink  
Ryan Moon  
Jeremy Ruggiero  
Matt Schneider  
Ethan Slutsky  
Nicolas Smith  
Jerry Yang

Danielle Barrett  
Lisa Bassett  
Krystal Bowen  
Kayla Day  
Chloe Durrans  
Carley Gomez  
Jenna Heaton  
Susan Hendricks  
Claire Hooker  
Leena Hwang  
Jessica Hyland  
Maryann Jacobs  
Brooke Johnson  
Brenda Laime  
Autumn Lewis  
Natalie Lorati  
Samantha Lovett  
Erika Manilla  
Carla Muñoz  
Madison Myers  
Adriana Riveros  
Elena Robles  
Melania Sauma  
Hollie Scott  
Ashley Smith  
Aleena Villareal  
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Photo By KSphotography



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# Intercollegiate Racquetball 101

By Richard Krinsky w. James L. Hiser | Colorado State University – Pueblo

Aspiring junior athletes in many sports often dream about collegiate and professional sport careers. My two sons played collegiate soccer many years ago. Had they dreamed about playing collegiate racquetball, their athletic experience would have been markedly dissimilar. Soccer is both a collegiate club and a varsity sport on college campuses, whereas racquetball is a collegiate club sport only. Soccer, as a varsity sport, is recognized and governed by collegiate sport federations like the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Collegiate racquetball is governed by the United States Racquetball Association (USA Racquetball).

## Rules and Regulations

Collegiate varsity coaches will tell you they are shackled by extensive rules and regulations governing their sport. The NCAA rulebook is voluminous, and regulations exist for all aspects of each sport's recruitment and competition. For example, the NCAA specifies the maximum number of athletic scholarships that can be awarded for each sport. They specify minimum high school course standards and minimum college grade point averages for continued eligibility. Student-athletes not meeting these standards are deemed ineligible for varsity competition. The NCAA specifies how many hours athletes train and the maximum number of dates for competitions. Team and individual eligibility for national competitions is specified, and athletic status like "All American" is awarded to selected athletes after every sport season.

In contrast, club sports tend to be loosely organized and do not entail the same level of rigor in their rules and regulations. For example, the NCAA makes clear distinctions between amateur and professional athletic statuses. Many current intercollegiate racquetball players would be regarded as professionals merely because they receive merchandise from athletic companies and would, therefore, be deemed ineligible for varsity competitions under their existing regulations (but eligible to compete, however, in intercollegiate competitions under USA Racquetball regulations).

Jim Hiser is currently reviewing the rules for intercollegiate eligibility. Currently, USA Racquetball rules stipulate that students must be enrolled full-time in their respective colleges or universities to compete in the intercollegiate national tournament. Current rules specify that eligibility extends to participation in four tournaments; no time frame or age requirements limit that participation. Eligibility rules relating to minimum GPA standards and to satisfactory progress towards a degree are not specified. More will be written about that issue in the summary section of this article.

## Funding

Athletic departments fund NCAA sports. Budgets are submitted and approved. It is well known that the cost for some sports like NCAA football and basketball extend into the millions of dollars. It is not unusual for coaches' salaries to far surpass that of university presidents. On the other hand, club sports are usually not eligible to receive monies awarded from athletics. Clubs are often

funded through student fee governing boards. Funding is normally provided for very limited travel and equipment. Successful club sports raise money extramurally through fundraising events, private donors, and out-of-pocket expenses paid by participants.

## Administration

Varsity sports hire full-time head coaches and assistant coaches to manage their respective athletic programs. These coaches regularly recruit players, conduct practices, and schedule competitive events within their respective leagues. Coaches engage in fundraising and are held accountable for athletic win-loss records and the general behavior of their recruits both on and off the field. In contrast, club sports often have unininvolved faculty



sponsors. Student club participants set up practice schedules, attempt to engage in fundraising activities, etc. Continuation of the club is directly related to faculty volunteers and to student involvement. Successful club programs occur when people (faculty and students) commit to establishing a competitive program.

## Athletic Commitment and Responsibilities

The commitment and responsibility of athletes even at the NCAA Division II level is huge. Athletes usually participate in formal training programs throughout the year. Competition schedules are made, and varsity athletes are obligated to participate on those dates. Athletics take precedence over academics. Athletic demands often preclude athletes from pursuing more rigorous lab-based curricula that are not forgiving of student absence. In club sports, however, scheduling of events and practice schedules are usually flexible. The most common racquetball activity across collegiate club programs is recreational play among team members. Next would be team participation in local and regional tournaments. Some teams may schedule league matches between schools. In most instances, participation is voluntary. Academics take precedence over athletics. Tourna-

ment deadline decisions can be made and often reversed at the last minute. Currently, a collegiate club program does not need to qualify for the collegiate nationals. For many programs, that is their only racquetball competition of the year.

### Athletic Scholarships

Much confusion exists regarding scholarships (aka awards). Receiving an athletic award does not necessarily mean a “full ride.” Most varsity athletes receive partial support for tuition, room and board, and books. Given that support is partial, one must do the math to figure out the monetary value of sport participation. Surprisingly, many college athletes receive remuneration below minimum wage. Student-athletes borrow thousands of dollars to supplement athletic awards. Also, athletic scholarships are awarded on a year-by-year basis. The college scholarship hangs over the athlete’s head. What a coach gives can be withdrawn. It is easy to imagine that the demands and pressure placed on athletes under these circumstances yield detrimental results like burnout and depression.



### Play for Pay

As previously mentioned, athletic scholarship awards in club sports are rare. What is unique, and enviable, is that while club sport racquetball players may need to pay their own way to tournaments, they can “play for pay” in those events, i.e., earn prize money. For example, recruited players from USC/CSU-Pueblo have been playing in the pro/open divisions of pro-stop tournaments for over 25 years. We believe that “playing for pay” will become progressively more important, compared to the pursuit of traditional affiliations with existing collegiate sports federations in the future. The big job for club federations that promote “play for pay” will be primarily in raising money and in figuring out strategies for implementation.

### Summary

Everyone in racquetball would like to see more activity at the junior and collegiate levels of the sport. Currently, courts on many college campuses have been converted to other activities because of a lack of use. When new collegiate recreation centers are built and old centers are remodeled, racquetball courts are

either omitted or dramatically reduced. There has been a cultural shift in the popularity of racquet sports in America.

*What can be done to reverse this downward trend?* Several out-of-the-box solutions come to mind. First, racquetball, as a lifetime sport, needs to capitalize on the benefits of exercise and fitness that accrue to people who engage in that activity. It can be argued that a lifetime sport like racquetball should be introduced during the middle and high school years. The problem is that courts are nonexistent in middle and high school gymnasiums and in most local Boys & Girls Clubs. Many pre- and post-adolescents do not have access to courts in private facilities. Courts belong in schools where more young people can have access to them. It should be noted that the sport of squash would in the past join with racquetball in promoting the construction of moveable-wall courts in older and newer facilities in both urban and suburban neighborhoods. Future national policies relating to the promotion of lifetime fitness may change the landscape of sport in America.

Second, support federations that promote “play for pay” collegiate racquetball events. The IRT and LPRT could promote collegiate racquetball by including a collegiate draw in their professional events. The scheduling of these events could occur so that participants miss only one day of school rather than three. Strict NCAA-type eligibility rules and guidelines will need to be created to ensure student-athletes maintain a credible GPA and show progress towards a degree. The void created by absence of athletic scholarships can be partially filled by monies won in collegiate tournaments. The success of “play for pay” programs will be directly related to the amount of prize money that is awarded. Jim Hiser recently promoted a major doubles tournament in Denver with proceeds going towards collegiate racquetball scholarships and the establishing of new collegiate programs.

Increasing the interest and the promotion of the sport of racquetball will require effort from all parties concerned. This is not the time to be divisive in pursuit of narrow racquetball interests. Previous old traditional ideas and strategies did not work well even when the cultural popularity of the sport was high. The good news is that racquetball courts are still available, the game is always fun and relatively safe to play, and participants can enjoy the health benefits of the sport throughout their lifetimes. People who have an interest in racquetball must understand that we are all in this together, and by pooling our resources and creativity we may be able to develop some new and cost-effective ways to market this great sport into the future.



CSU-Pueblo Players Brenda Laime, Lukas Le (above), and Carla Muñoz (right) at the recent Intercollegiate National Championships

# Pan American Racquetball Championships (PARC)

## Barranquilla, Colombia

### April 13-20, 2019

Article & Photos By Cheryl Kirk  
U.S. Team Leader

Barranquilla, Colombia, a seaport on the Caribbean Sea at the northwestern tip of South America, offers weather in the high 80's with high humidity pretty much all year 'round. Most members of the Team USA Delegation were on the ground there by Wednesday evening, April 10. Thursday and Friday of the first week were spent in practices, meetings, and getting acclimated to their home-away-from-home for the next 10 days.

## SETTING THE STAGE

### COUNTRIES CONGREGATE

U.S. Team members competed here in singles and doubles against fourteen other countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

### LAY OF THE LAND

Fifty-five athletes (30 men/25 women) competed on four courts over seven days of competition.

### TEAM USA

#### Athletes

David (aka Bobby) Horn, California: #1 Singles  
Charlie Pratt, Oregon: #2 Singles

Jake Bredenbeck, Minnesota/Mauro Daniel Rojas, California:  
Doubles

Rhonda Rajsich, Arizona: #1 Singles  
Kelani Bailey Lawrence, Virginia: #2 Singles  
Kelani Bailey Lawrence/Sheryl Lotts, Ohio: Doubles

#### Staff

Dave Ellis, California -- Head Coach  
Jim Durham, California -- Assistant Coach  
Brent Huff, Illinois/Arizona -- Team Trainer  
Cheryl Kirk, Illinois -- Team Leader



### Round Robin Preliminary Rounds (Saturday/Sunday/Monday)

This was a qualifying event for the Pan American Games in August, so every match counted toward enhancing each country's prospects for numbers of athletes allowed to compete in Lima and in what seeding positions. In Colombia, as with all PARC and IRF events, three days of round robins/pool play were competed in order to seed the main draws commencing on Wednesday and culminating with finals on Saturday.

### The Main Event (Wednesday–Saturday)

After the free day on Tuesday and as the rest of the second week unfolded, winners in the main draws advanced while losers moved to the appropriate dropdowns to compete to populate places 5–8, 9–12, etc.

### Saturday -- Wrapping it Up

After a total of six long days of competition, finals matches in the main divisions as well as the dropdown competitions netted results that were recognized at the end of the day on Saturday.

### Awards

Medals stands were set up in Court #1 soon after the last match, and the awards ceremony got underway. Medals were awarded to those who placed first, second, and third (in IRF events, both semifinal places receive bronze medals). Teams placing first through fourth place received trophies.

### Players' Party

On Saturday evening, a great closing party was hosted by the Local Organizing Committee at the New Orleans Bourbon Street Restaurant & Bar that went into the early hours of Sunday morning. There were lots of photos and selfies, music, and dancing. Midway through the evening, as is the tradition at IRF/PARC events, countries had the opportunity to thank the Local Organizing Committee. On behalf of the US Team and US Junior Team, Cheryl and Bobby presented a thank-you card and a donation to Juan Manuel Gutierrez (aka Gutty) for the Colombian Racquetball Federation's Junior program.

To view the event blogs and photos, visit:

<https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/Features/2019/April/11/2019-Pan-American-Championships-Daily-Blogs>

Team USA



## PARC RESULTS

Congratulations to all of the countries who competed in the Pan American Racquetball Championships! The USA was third in the Men's Team competition (actually, tied with Mexico for second, but third after a tiebreaking rule was applied) and came in third in the Overall Team standings as well. We're really proud of the effort everyone put in to play their hearts out and support each other throughout the event.

# RESULTS

## US TEAM RESULTS

Charlie Pratt - Silver

## INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

### Men's Team

- 1 - Bolivia
- 2 - Mexico
- 3 - **USA (tied for second in points)**
- 4 - Costa Rica

### Women's Team

- 1 - Mexico
- 2 - Argentina
- 3 - Colombia
- 4 - Bolivia

### Overall Team

- 1 - Mexico
- 2 - Bolivia
- 3 - **USA**
- 4 - Argentina

### Division Winners

- Men's Singles -- Carlos Keller (Bolivia)
- Women's Singles -- Paola Longoria (Mexico)
- Men's Doubles -- Conrrado Moscoso/Carlos Keller (Bolivia)
- Women's Doubles -- Samantha Salas/Paola Longoria (Mexico)

To view the preliminary rounds and the main draws for all of the divisions, visit [www.internationalracquetball.com](http://www.internationalracquetball.com) and click on Results.

Above: A packed house watching the matches  
Right: Charlie Pratt on the medals stand



## Thank You from TEAM USA!

The US Team Delegation wishes to deliver our gratitude to those who made this event so truly memorable:

The Local Organizing Committee, headed by Juan Manuel Gutiérrez, for hosting this very successful event.

The tournament staff (Gustavo Farell, Gary Mazaroff, Mauro Grandio Buzeleh, Pablo Berriel, and Maria De Los Ángeles Sarria), and the referees from five countries who were on hand to provide a quality experience for the players.

Pablo Fajre and Tim Baghurst for bringing many hours of live streaming of quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals action.

Bruno Semino, Racquetball Sport Manager for the XVIII Pan American Games in Lima this summer. He was a positive and energetic presence, and we think it's great that he was in Colombia observing the PARC event.

USAR Official Apparel Sponsor Rollout Racquetball (Jonathan Clay) -- the US Team looked great in the Rollout 2019 Team USA apparel line. Go to <http://wearrollout.com> to order what the team wears!

Renée (Gundolff) Isherwood and Leo Vasquez for their behind-the-scenes assistance.

# Kelani & Jake Dig Deep for Gold in Denver

*Lawrence and Bredenbeck Defeat the Altitude and a Strong Field of Contenders*

By Cheryl Kirk



**Penn**

The 2019 USA Racquetball National Singles Championships presented by Penn were held at the Highlands Ranch Recreation Center at Northridge in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, near Denver. Nearly 200 players from across the country competed for national titles in both skill and age group categories, with 470 matches competed during the five-day competition. In the U.S. Team Qualifying divisions, the action intensified as players competed for spots on the 2019-20 U.S. Adult Racquetball Team, some of whom would be representing the United States at the 2019 Pan American Games in Lima, Peru. This event represented 50% of the total points in qualifying for the 2019-20 U.S. Adult Racquetball Team with the top four point earners achieving the coveted designations.

Roof work scheduled at the club on Friday caught us unaware, but everyone handled it admirably and by Saturday it was only a (noisy) memory. Weather was even more of a shocker. A significant amount of snow (on May 20th!) greeted early arrivals on Monday and Tuesday. It was gone by mid-week but continued chilly and rainy for a day or so before morphing into the beautiful Colorado weather one would expect in late May. But...Mother Nature played another joke just in time for departures by introducing a hailstorm that

caused significant ground delays at the airport for travelers trying to get home Sunday night. This is sometimes the price we pay for racquetball, and we wouldn't change it for the world, right? Gives us something to talk about...

## **The Race for the 2019-2020 U.S. National Team – Part Three**

The Women's U.S. Team Qualifying division was populated with nine of the top players from across the United States competing for the final points available in the Race for Team USA, and the Men's U.S. Team Qualifying division saw 18 players ready to compete for not only the National Championship title but the four coveted U.S. National Team Singles spots on the 2018-19 U.S. Adult National Team.

Excellent streaming coverage was provided by Leo Vasquez & Friends. Notably, US Team Head Coach Dave Ellis spent a lot of time in commentary and repartee with Leo. An impromptu fundraising effort materialized during the Women's Team Qualifying match that brought in an astounding \$3,000 for the US Team.



**Women's Singles Runner-Up Hollie Scott and Champion Kelani Lawrence  
Men's Singles Champion Jake Bredenbeck and Runner-Up David Horn**

Photo by KSphotography

Dave Ellis went the extra mile and contributed recaps of the Men's and Women's Semifinals and Finals to this article:

### SEMIFINAL ACTION ON SATURDAY

"The Team Qualifying consisted of four semifinals. First up were Hollie Scott and Cheryl Gudinas. Cheryl, at 53 years of age, was hoping to win her 9th USAR National Championship. Hollie dominated the first game with her serves, many of them precise drives to the right hand corner. Towards the middle of the game, Cheryl scored five points in a row with drive Z's to Hollie's backhand. On the next serve, Hollie ran around were backhand and hit the return with her forehand for a clear winner. After that it was all Hollie as she continued to hit aces or elicit weak returns from Cheryl. Hollie won the first 15-7, and followed that up with a 15-1 victory.

"The next semifinal pitted Charlie Pratt against David Bobby Horn, and what a contest it was! The rallies were long and consisted of many good quality shots, diving gets, frequent appeals, and numerous lead changes. Both players had several game point possibilities before Bobby hit an ace to the left corner to win the first game 15-14. In the second game, Charlie was able to gain momentum with some consistency and gain a big lead. Bobby fought hard and made a run towards the end of the game before Charlie hit a near corner kill shot in the front left corner, 15-10. The tiebreaker was competitive at first before Bobby put together a series of points and ended up winning, 11-7.

"Our third semifinal found Rhonda Rajsich and Kelani Lawrence battling it out for a ticket to the finals. Both ladies are tremendously athletic. The game was back and forth throughout. Kelani had several game points that she didn't convert while Rhonda was chipping away at her lead. Finally, Coach Malia called a time out, and Kelani set up left of center and serve the ball into the right hand corner for a game-winning ace, 15-13. The second game saw Kelani working her way to an 8-0 lead, and it looked like curtains for the defending champ. Rhonda got a sideout, went to the service box, and scored 7 straight points with perfect drives into the backhand corner. She continued on and won the second game 15-9. In the tiebreaker, Kelani was not to be denied and closed out the match with an 11-4 victory.

"Jake Bredenbeck and Adam Manilla were set for our fourth semifinal. As always, there is a period of adaptation for Jake's opponent as he works to withstand Jake's tremendous power, which was amplified by the 5,900 foot altitude at Highlands Ranch. Jake wins the first game 15-12. In the second game, Adam played with composure and was able to take balls that Jake was leaving off the back wall and hit winners into the corners. Adam took the second, 15-7. In the tiebreaker, Jake played soundly and dominated the contest, winning by a score of 11-5."

### SUNDAY FINALS!

"After Saturday's exciting semifinals, the crowd gathered in eager anticipation for the Sunday noon finals. The first final featured Kelani Lawrence vs. Hollie Scott, and this edge-of-your-seat match did not disappoint anyone. Kelani jumped out to a 7-0 lead, but



**Adam Manilla keeps his eye on the ball**  
Photo By KSphotography

then Hollie started chipping away. From there on, there were many lead changes with neither lady building a significant advantage. Hollie was ending rallies nicely with tight pinches and good side wall/front wall splat shots. Kelani appeared to feel the pressure and began rushing shots a bit towards the end of the first game. Hollie closed it out 15-12. The second game saw Kelani sharpening her shots and Hollie's consistency fading just a bit. The first part of the game was back and forth. At 6-5, Kelani went on a tear and scored eight consecutive points. At 14-6, Hollie scored two points before Kelani took the game, 15-8. The tiebreaker was good competition at its best. The ladies were battling with maximum effort. Kelani led 9-7, and then Hollie scored three in a row to earn a match point, which she didn't then convert. Kelani pushed it to 10-10 and then won the match with a perfect serve to the left side. The national championship was hers.

"The men's game was quite the opposite. Jake Bredenbeck played better than this author had ever seen him play. Throughout the match, he controlled his awesome power with passes that did not reach the back wall and even hitting a few ceiling balls now and then. Jake's warp speed serves were well placed, and Bobby Horn found himself on the defensive throughout most of the rallies. Jake's pinches were accurate, and he is to be congratulated for winning the National Championship in such a convincing fashion, with scores of 15-1, 15-1. Bobby undoubtedly felt the effects of the tough semifinal the day before vs. Charlie Pratt. Jake had a tough tiebreaker semifinal vs. Adam Manilla the day before as well. Jake showed that he has progressed and that he is realizing that 'trying harder' doesn't mean 'hitting the ball harder.'"

Congratulations to Kelani Lawrence on her first National Singles title and to Jake Bredenbeck on his third (won in 2014 and 2015). Fans who missed the U.S. Team Qualifying action can go to [www.usaracquetball.com](http://www.usaracquetball.com) and catch up by clicking on the banner link "Click to watch archived Championship matches."



This event is more than the U.S. Team Qualifying divisions alone, with amateur players traveling from as far away as Hawaii to participate in a number of skill and age group divisions and to vie for one (or more) of the valued USA Racquetball National Championship medals. In fact, players from 35 states competed in 41 amateur divisions—33 singles plus 8 “unofficial” doubles divisions for some extra court time. USA Racquetball was especially happy to include the Men’s Heroes (public service) division and Juniors 12 & Under. Kudos to everyone on well-played matches all week!

Results included 8th seed Ben Baron (Arizona) as the winner of Men’s Open, and Cassi Lee (New York) took the gold in Women’s Open. Jeff Stark (California) went to work and won both Men’s 40+ and Men’s 45+. Doug Ganim (Ohio) defeated Keith Minor (Illinois) in Men’s 50+. Minor also went to the finals in the Men’s 45+, losing to Stark in a tiebreaker. Visit [bit.ly/2019NationalSingles](http://bit.ly/2019NationalSingles) for a complete look at results in Denver!



USA Racquetball appreciates the support of our generous sponsors: Penn, Gearbox, KWM Guterman, Rollout Racquetball, Ashworth Awards, Ashaway, Health I.Q., RockTape, Intermodal Interventions, Red Iron Brand Solutions, Parry’s Pizzeria & Bar, and Raising Cane’s.

Much gratitude goes to the USAR contractors who helped our players enjoy their experience and supported the staff in so many ways: Otto Dietrich, Dave Gundolff, Linda Gundolff, Kevin Savory, and Leo Vasquez. Volunteers included Terry Rogers, Jack Hughes, Geoff Peters, Lily Caldwell, Thea Mattfeldt and family, and Pam Kalap.

Hey, let's do this again next year!

**Top Left: Players Arriving to Check In**

**Middle Left: Stringer Extraordinaire Brent Walters**

Photos by Leo R. Vasquez

**Below: Ladies Night Out**

Photo by KSphotography



## A Special Evening in Denver

On Saturday night of the National Singles Championship, the 2019 USA Racquetball Annual Awards and Hall of Fame Ceremony celebrated those who achieved and contributed in 2018 both on and off the court.

Executive Director Mike Wedel announced the recipients, and each came forward for photos and awards:

Presidential Award: Brian Ancheta (Oregon)

Joe Sobek Outstanding Contribution Award: Jim and Dianne Easterling (Michigan)

John Halverson Fair Play Award: Michael Stephens (Michigan) and Lincoln Cluff (Oregon and Brigham Young University)

Female Athlete of the Year Award: Rhonda Rajsich (Arizona)

Male Athlete of the Year Award: Charlie Pratt (Oregon)

Peggy Steding Female Age Group Award: Cindy Tilbury (California)

Bud Muehleisen Male Age Group Award: Frank Taddonio (Arizona)

The main event of the night, naturally, was the induction of two legends into the USA Racquetball Hall of Fame: Malia Kamahoahoah Bailey and Cheryl Gudinas. Eight Hall of Famers were on hand to welcome Malia and Cheryl into their distinguished group: Fran Davis, Otto Dietrich, Doug Ganim, Tim Hansen, Jim Hiser, Cliff Swain, Debra Tisinger-Moore, and Jim Winterton.

Anyone who has attended a Hall of Fame induction knows that it is a solemn and inspiring experience, and this ceremony was no exception. In keeping with tradition, Jim Hiser created videos set to music that portrayed the lives of both women via photos from their childhoods forward. Malia (introduced by Mildred Gwinn and with daughter Kelani by her side) and Cheryl (introduced by Kelley Beane and with her parents Pat and Bill in the audience) delivered heartfelt words of gratitude for those who have made a difference in their lives.

USA Racquetball is pleased and proud to have both of these accomplished athletes take their well-deserved places in the Hall of Fame. Visit <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-racquetball/programs/hall-of-fame> to view the entire impressive list of inductees.



Top: Mildred Gwinn, Malia Bailey, and Dan Whitley

Above: Kelley Beane, Cheryl Gudinas, and Dan Whitley

Below: Dan Whitley, Jim Easterling, Dianne Easterling, Frank Taddonio, Michael Stephens, Brian Ancheta, Cindy Tilbury, Charlie Pratt, and Rhonda Rajsich

Photos by KSphotography



# 2019 NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS | RESULTS

## Highlands Ranch Recreation Center, Highlands Ranch, CO · May 22 - 26

### WOMEN'S

Division	Champion	Runner-Up
Team Qualifying	Kelani Lawrence	Hollie Scott
Open	Cassi Lee	Annie Roberts
45+	CJ Herceg	Unchallenged
55+	Cindy Tilbury	Janet Tyler
60+	Cindy Tilbury	Unchallenged
65+	Cheryl Conrad	Joanne Pomodoro
70+	Shirley Parsons	Unchallenged
75+	Mildred Gwinn	Marquita Molina
Elite	Jessica Chen	Nicole Cordova
A	Madeline Gauch	Kathy Stellema
B	Ysabel Espinoza	Lucy Jirik
C	Rachel Washam	Vera Allen
40+ A	Nancy Davis	Unchallenged
50+ Elite	Sheila Champion	Unchallenged
50+ A	Mary Jane Caltagirone	Unchallenged
60+ A	Cheryl Kirk	Denise Mayfield
60+ B	Lucy Jirik	Unchallenged
70+ A	Cheryl Conrad	Marquita Molina
70+ B	Denise Mayfield	Unchallenged

### JUNIORS

Division	Champion	Runner-Up
12 and Under	London Townsend	Thea Mattfeldt



Kelani Bailey Lawrence and Malia Bailey  
Photo by Cheryl Kirk



David "Bobby" Horn: post-game interview on Facebook Live

Photo By Leo R. Vasquez

### MEN'S

Division	Champion	Runner-Up
Team Qualifying	Jake Bredenbeck	David Horn
Open	Ben Baron	Anthony Martin
30+	Brent Walters	Anthony Martin
35+	Brent Walters	Derek Izzi
40+	Jeff Stark	Matt Fontana
45+	Jeff Stark	Keith Minor
50+	Doug Ganim	Keith Minor
55+	Brian Phillips	Paul Morse
60+	James Jones	Jim Durham
65+	Frank Taddonio	John Vohland
70+	Michael Stephens	Ed Krest
75+	Wayne Thornton	Bruce Hollander
Heroes 40+/50+	Chuck Osborn	Tevita Taufa
Elite	Luis Martinez	Nick Blanchard
A	Benjamin Horner	Adam Wyatt
B	Vikram Pathrojuthri	Laine Anderson
C	Herminio Nevarez	Mark Daniels
D	Michael Durbin	London Townsend
24- Elite	Timmy Hansen	Benjamin Horner
40+ Elite	Enrique Rios Loaiza	Dominic Maestas
25+ Elite	C J Sanders	Unchallenged
50+ Elite	Steve Strahler	Lee Beckwith
60+ Elite	Jim Decater	Allen Berliner
25+ A	Jacob Eggemeyer	Derek Schaeffer
40+ A	Brian Ancheta	Mark Townsend
50+ A	Gonzalo Castillo	Randy Martin
60+ A	P.J. Williams	Jim Barrett
70+ A	James Bixler	Ed Mooney
Heroes A	Donnel Valdez	Glenn Carlson
25+ B	Kreg Flowers	Tejas Veer
30+ B	Nick Ierardi	David Hinson
40+ B	Andy Schmidt	Charlie Paraiso
50+ B	Sherwyn Phillip	Vidyanand Kalap
70+ B	Michael Gessner	Philip Gaerlan
Heroes B	Phillip Gaerlan	Unchallenged
40+ C	Don Lundberg	Daniel Powell
50+ C	Larry Prince Jr.	Daniel Powell
24- C	Daniel Busekrus	Unchallenged
60+ B	Mark Ashland	Jonny Pinto
60+ C	Jack Morgenroth	Unchallenged
30+ C	Andrew Blasquez	Michael Durbin
25+ C	Brandon Hopkins	Unchallenged
70+ C	Jack Morgenroth	Unchallenged

# The Race for the 2019-2020 U.S. National Team Has Concluded



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



The third and final qualification event for the 2019-20 U.S. National Team is in the books with the conclusion of the National Singles Team Qualifying division at the National Singles Championship.

The UnitedHealthcare US OPEN comprises 20 percent of the Team Qualification process, with a Team Qualifying Singles Division held at National Doubles contributing 30 percent and the National Singles Team Qualifying Division comprising the remaining 50 percent.

## U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings Top 4 Men

STANDING	PLAYER	SINGLES DIVISION						TOTAL POINTS
		US OPEN IRT DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%	NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	
1	Jake Bredenbeck	10	2	30	9	100	50	61
2	David Horn	5	1	60	18	80	40	59
3	Charlie Pratt	10	2	80	24	60	30	56
4	Rocky Carson	60	12	100	30	0	0	42

## U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings Top 4 Women

STANDING	PLAYER	SINGLES DIVISION						TOTAL POINTS
		US OPEN LPRT DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%	NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	
1	Kelani Lawrence	5	1	80	24	100	50	75
2	Rhonda Rajsich	30	6	100	30	60	30	66
3	Hollie Scott	5	1	60	18	80	40	59
4	Cheryl Gudinas	0	0	0	0	60	30	30

The qualification process for doubles teams continues to be based on the Team Qualifying Doubles Division at National Doubles:

**U.S. National Team – Men's Doubles**  
Rocky Carson / Charlie Pratt -- 1st  
Jake Bredenbeck / Jose Diaz -- 2nd

**U.S. National Team – Women's Doubles**  
Michelle De La Rosa / Danielle Maddux -- 1st  
Rhonda Rajsich / Sheryl Lotts -- 2nd

**Congratulations to the 2019-2020 US National Team!**



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Giza Dreams Sheets



# 24TH ANNIVERSARY PREVIEW

By Doug Ganim  
Photos By KSphotography

**I**t's hard to believe it has been 24 years, but the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships is approaching! UnitedHealthcare is back as our Title Sponsor as we make plans to celebrate our 24th anniversary, October 2-6, 2019. This means the event is going to be bigger and better than ever! The purpose of this special preview is to give you an idea of what to expect at this year's tourney.

**Amateur Draws** Amateur matches will be played at two venues—Life Time Fitness Target Center and Life Time Fitness Fridley. The University of Minnesota Rec. Center will be used on Thursday only. No consolation divisions will be offered—except in the Heroes Divisions—due to the huge draw and lack of available court time. The competition will be excellent in all of the divisions offered as we welcome competitors from all over the world. The top four finishers in each division will receive oversized US OPEN medals that weigh about one pound each! Divisions are offered for every age and skill level in both singles and doubles. Back for 2019 is the addition of five Centurion Doubles divisions (you and your partner's ages must add up to at least 100)! New for 2019 is the addition of Super-Centurion Open/Elite Doubles (ages adding up to 120+).

**Pro Match Tickets** There is no better place in the world to watch pro racquetball than at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships. First of all, every top player in the world on the IRT and LPRT will be in Minneapolis. For the true racquetball enthusiast, this means incredible matches to watch right from the Round of 32. Second, all pro match courts are professionally wired for sound so spectators can hear every grunt, groan, and under-the-breath comment throughout every match of the tournament. The ball sounds like a missile being shot off, so be sure to bring your earplugs if you have sensitive "flappers." Third, all of the featured pro matches take place on the breathtaking portable stadium

racquetball court. This engineering marvel has four walls made of crystal clear Lucite acrylic that is optically correct (no tinting, blurring, or bending of light) and beautiful to behold. The Lucite materials are butted up against each other with Lucite "fins" providing the support. Even the "L" brackets are made of Lucite, so the result is a seamless visual experience that makes you feel like you are right in the court with the players. The stadium seats about 1,400 fans, and ticket sales are always brisk. Your best bet is to purchase a Preferred Ticket Package that includes all sessions. This is by far the best value (\$139 for spectators, \$99 for players). For those who want the full VIP treatment, consider purchasing a courtside Gold Box. Cost is \$2,800 and includes four seats with All-Access credentials. Individual seats can be purchased for \$800 if inventory is available. Call (614) 890-6073 to check availability.

**Parties, Parties, and More Parties!** One of the things the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is best known for is the evening social functions. For those who have attended in previous years, you can expect more of the same starting with the free admission Pro-Am Doubles for Charity on Wednesday evening; the fun "Late Night Players Gathering" at the Marriott City Center Lobby Bar on Thursday evening; the Players "Meet and Greet" Party on Friday evening at CityWorks; and the largest bash of the year, the Saturday evening Party With the Pro's at the hot downtown nightclub The Pourhouse (restricted to age 21 and over).

**Back for 2019!** The main host facility and nerve center for the US OPEN is Life Time Fitness Target Center. They have completed an amazing \$17 million renovation of the club featuring all new five-star locker rooms, new restaurant and bar, new four-star spa/salon, new swimming pool, and complete high-end face lift to all other areas of the club. In short, the main club is now one of the finest athletic clubs in the entire world! Second, we will again feature an 8,000 square foot carpeted US OPEN Players Village



complete with the Industry Trade Show, cash bar/concessions, US OPEN Souvenir Booth featuring logo items you can only buy at the US OPEN, and table tennis (where it is not uncommon to see the top pro's battling for US OPEN ping-pong bragging rights). Third, to commemorate this historic occasion, a limited edition 24th Anniversary microfiber tournament shirt and four-color Souvenir Program will be included in the registration package. Lastly, to honor our brave service members and public servants, we will again feature singles Heroes Divisions for both men and women. Current and retired military, police, fire, and EMT professionals will be eligible to participate.

**Can't play in the event?** If there is no way you can play in the tournament, consider coming in just for the weekend to be an enthusiastic spectator. The pro singles quarterfinals are Friday afternoon; pro doubles semifinals Friday evening; Players "Meet and Greet" Party at CityWorks Friday evening; the pro singles semifinals/pro doubles finals Saturday; the Grand Gala "Party with the Pro's" Saturday evening; and the pro singles finals are on Sunday. Just those three days will be an incredible experience and should not be missed. Buy your tickets NOW and book your hotel!

**No way to attend the event this year?** If you absolutely can't make it to this year's tournament, even as a weekend spectator, then the last resort is to follow the action from home. To help make this easier we will transform our website— [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com)—into a computer "window" to look in on the action at the tournament. Plans include offering live amateur division results posting, up-to-the-minute pro match results, digital photography from throughout the event, streaming video of select pro matches via the IRT, and web-radio voice interviews with top pros as well as play-by-play voice streaming of the quarters, semis, and finals. Special thanks to our computer guru and web-master Steve Kowalski for spearheading this ambitious project.

**THE PRO's!** As always, the focal point of the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN are the pro players and the incredible entertainment they provide as each player quests for the coveted US OPEN title. Anyone on tour will tell you that the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is the one title everyone wants to win, so every match yields players at 120% effort. Back for 2019 will be the exhilarating Pro Doubles divisions. Nothing in all of sports compares to the high flying fast-paced action that racquetball pro doubles delivers. It was the talk of the tournament at last year's event with many "down to the wire" thrilling matches. You won't want to miss the return of pro doubles at the US OPEN in 2019!

## TIPS FOR ATTENDING

**Tip #1: ENTER EARLY!** The event is expected to completely sell out this year. At 760 players, we cap the draw and start turning people away. Don't get shut out! Enter today at [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com)

**Tip #2: ORDER TICKETS NOW!** You must have a ticket to view any of the pro matches, and although the Stadium Court seats over 1,400, the event is always a sell-out from the quarterfinals on. No-shows can free up some session tickets at the door, but it's risky to wait. By far, the best deal is to purchase a Preferred Ticket Package for unlimited viewing for ALL pro matches for the entire week. This guarantees you a back wall bleacher seat, but remember, ticket packages are sold ONLY in advance! Cost is \$139 for non-players and just \$99 for players for the entire week!

**Tip #3: ENTER TWO OR THREE EVENTS.** Court time restrictions (and the large draw) do not allow us to offer consolation divisions, so we strongly recommend that you enter two divisions so that you are guaranteed at least two matches. Although players are limited to just two divisions, there are a couple of exceptions. First, if you would like to play "up" into the Men's or Women's Pro draw (perhaps just for the experience), you can still play in two amateur divisions for a total of three events. Second, if at least one of your divisions is doubles, you can play in any third event you choose. For these two exceptions only, a third event is permitted.

**Tip #4: STAY AT THE HOST HOTELS.** Check the entry form for the official list of host hotels. With the event in a downtown setting, area hotels are quite expensive. However, we have negotiated some great deals with our three downtown host hotels (Marriott City Center, Hampton Inn & Suites, and the Normandy Inn), and we have a large number of rooms blocked for our group. All three hotels are walking distance to the Life Time Fitness Target Center. These hotels will fill up VERY fast, so call to book your room immediately. In addition, we have two suburban hotels with free parking (SpringHill Suites and Country Inn & Suites). These hotels are ideal for players driving in for the event.

**Tip #5: BRING NICE CLOTHES AND YOUR DANCING SHOES!** One of the really fun parts of attending the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is experiencing the many evening social activities offered, especially the Grand Gala – The Party with the Pro's. Racquetball or casual attire is not allowed at this bash, so "dress to impress" will be the rule!

**Tip #6: LAST FLIGHT OUT ON SUNDAY.** Make sure you book the very latest flight you can to head home on Sunday. The Men's Pro final is the last match of the tournament, and you won't want to miss it! A packed house, booming music, laser light show introductions, and video cameras make this an experience like no other in the sport. The match usually ends around 2:30 pm, so any evening flight will do. Can't get a late flight out? Consider going home Monday morning. It will be worth it!

**Tip #7: FLYING IN -- NO RENTAL CAR NEEDED!** From the Minneapolis airport you can take the city's clean light rail directly into downtown Minneapolis and right to the Target Center (only 22 minutes). Cost is just \$1.75. Two of the three clubs we are using (including the main club where all the pro matches are played) are downtown and so are the three host hotels. All downtown hotels and clubs are walking distance from each other. For the Life Time Fitness Moore Lake club, we will offer a free shuttle every 20 minutes from the Target Center (club is only 17 minutes away). If you are driving in for the event, parking is going to cost you daily in downtown Minneapolis. If you have a car, try the SpringHill Suites in St. Louis Park or the Country Inn & Suites near Fridley for free parking.

**Tip #8: CONSIDER BUYING A GOLD BOX SEAT FOR THE WEEK (\$800)** and treat yourself to the ultimate US OPEN experience. Rubbing elbows with all the top pros in the Pro/Gold Lounge and having the most comfortable/best view seat in the house is worth the price alone. Throw in the all-you-can-eat food and drink for the week and it becomes a no-brainer! Visit [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPENTickets.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPENTickets.com) to reserve your spot today.

# 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN IRT PREVIEW

By Doug Ganim

Photos by KSphotography



Always the highlight of the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, the IRT draw in both singles and doubles will undoubtedly deliver another memorable year for racquetball fans throughout the world. More than ever, young stars and wily tour veterans will be gunning for the coveted US OPEN title.

**Kane Waselenchuk (1:3 odds)** – The chances of Kane not winning the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN are slimmer than slim. Every time he steps foot on the portable court, his game rises to ridiculous levels. Not only does he win all his matches each year, but he often breezes through rounds with barely a sweat. Of course, an upset is always possible but highly unlikely with Kane. With that being said, Alvaro Beltran did recently beat Kane in a Tier 1 pro stop, so that is not someone “The King” would like to see on his side of the draw. However, beating Kane at a regular pro stop and beating him at the US OPEN on the portable stadium court are two very different things. If you want to see the game played at a level never before seen, pull up a seat for any of Kane’s matches and enjoy the show. What he does on a racquetball court is truly incredible!

**Rocky Carson (7:1 odds)** – Rocky Carson will have to get through some very tough rounds to even reach the finals in 2019 as everyone is gunning for him. For most, beating Kane seems impossible, but picking off Rocky is something most of the top 10 pro’s feel they could do. In fact, many of them have beat Rocky during the past 24 months at least once. However, Rocky usually plays well at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN and will be a tough match for anyone not named Kane. He has a reasonable chance to reach the finals, but it would take a Herculean effort for him to upset Kane and win the tournament. Rocky is the oldest player in the top 50 and is currently ranked #2, which is amazing in and of itself. Never count out “The Rock”!

**Alejandro Landa (7:1 odds)** – No player on tour has risen faster than Landa during the past 24 months. At the time of this writing, he has captured four Tier 1 events and risen to the rank of #3 in the world with a multi-month stint ranked at #1 while Kane was out with an injury. His secret weapon is he “fears nobody” when he steps on the racquetball court. He competes for one reason and one reason only—TO WIN. He is fast, strong, and can catch fire at any moment. Recent success has given him even more confidence, so I would not be surprised to see Landa in the finals at this year’s US OPEN. If you have not yet seen him play, get ready to experience Landa’s flat rollout show!



**Andree Parrilla (9:1 odds)** – Without a doubt, Andree is the hottest young player in the world. He came from nowhere all the way to #4 in the IRT rankings and must be considered the front-runner for taking over the future IRT crown. His game style is fearless with speed we have rarely seen on tour. Unless his opponent rolls out the ball, Andree will get it back in play. In addition to amazing racquetball skills, Andree has a keen understanding that he is also there to entertain. His wild sense of style and confident attitude is infectious, and his fan base is growing everyday. At some point a young male pro is going to do the impossible and beat Kane to win their first US OPEN title. I’ll bet that, when that finally happens, it may well be Andree who does it. Could it possibly be this year? You may have the chance to witness history!

**Alvaro Beltran (10:1 odds)** – Beltran is always tough for anyone, including the top-ranked players. He has reached the Champion’s Circle four times in Tier 1 events, but this is really an amazingly low total for a player ranked so high for so many years. Lower-ranked players have upset Beltran more times than he would like over the last 24 months. It will take a lot of effort for Alvaro to win the title, and I wonder how much he will have left in the tank for the weekend if he succeeds, especially since he will be playing pro doubles as well. His “ace in the hole” will be the hundreds of Mexican, Cen-

tral and South American fans who will be pulling for him every step of the way. Listen for the “Vamos Beltran!” chants and the Davis Cup-like atmosphere every time he takes to the court. As for Kane, Beltran may be the only player in the draw who KNOWS he can beat him.

**Daniel De La Rosa (12:1 odds)** – De La Rosa is a top-ranked star on the IRT but has not yet reached his true potential. Most believed he was the heir apparent to the IRT throne years ago when he skyrocketed quickly to #3. During the past year, he has slipped a bit as he struggles to find the motivation to put the needed work in while juggling a busy family and work life outside of racquetball. However, De La Rosa’s pure athleticism and willingness to “dive like Croft” after every ball makes him extremely dangerous, and I give him a good chance to reach the finals in 2019 if he is on the opposite side of the draw from Kane. When it comes to pure racquet skills and talent, he is a true magician on a racquetball court and always worth the price of admission.

#### PLAYERS TO WATCH:

**Samuel Murray** – The latest prodigy from the country of Canada, Sam Murray has suddenly become an extremely solid player on tour. He gives the top players trouble, but even more impressive is that he rarely loses to players ranked below him. Just charting his steep performance curve, you must extrapolate that his next stop is in the winner’s circle at an IRT Tier 1 event. Perhaps it could be the US OPEN!

**Rodrigo Montoya** – He is the next Beltran from Mexico and has already made his presence felt, including winning the last IRF World Championship and moving in to the top 10 on the IRT rankings. The sky is the limit for this young superstar, and he is also an amazing doubles player!

**Charlie Pratt** – After years as the IRT ref and a somewhat middling level pro player, Pratt has recently found the fountain of youth and taken a major leap forward with his game. Coupled with his years of experience and newfound confidence, Pratt is a threat to beat anyone not named Kane on tour. I wouldn’t be shocked to see Pratt in the semifinals at the US OPEN, and the finals is not out of the question. Also look for him to be in the hunt in the doubles draw as well.

**Mario Mercado** – Another hot young star, Mario has been working his way up the rankings in recent years. He has a big game, but he is such a nice guy that I wonder if he can transform himself into the mean monster it will take to knock off the “best of the best” at the US OPEN. Note to Mario: It’s time to get nasty!

**Alex Cardona/Bobby Horn/Mario Mercado/Jose Diaz/Jake Bredenbeck/Sebastian Franco/Javier Mar/Daniel Rojas/Adam Manilla/Nicholas Riffel** – There is an incredible list of young and tough players in the pipeline on the IRT. The players in this group in particular have each upset higher-ranked players in the last 12 months. This shows me they are each capable and ready for the top ranks.

**IRT Pro Doubles** – It is difficult to write an accurate preview for this division since we often don’t know who is playing with whom until a week or two prior to the tourney. The two top teams will be Kane/Croft and Beltran/De La Rosa; however, there are virtually twelve other teams capable of winning the title. NEW FOR 2019—The prize money in singles and doubles has been adjusted to put even more emphasis on doubles. Look for EVERYONE to be in the doubles draw, and you can bet your last dollar there WILL be upsets. Nothing in all of sports compares to watching top pro level racquetball doubles!

The men of the IRT are ready to let it fly at the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN. Get your seat early for the greatest show in sports and ENJOY!



#### Attending the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN as a VIP!

A very limited number of four-person courtside luxury GOLD BOXES/SEATS still remain for the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN. The cost is \$2,800 and includes four GOLD All-Access Credentials to the event. Single seats can be purchased for \$800 while supplies last. In addition to enjoying the pro matches from your private and comfortable courtside GOLD BOX/SEAT, All-Access Gold Credential holders have unlimited access to the exclusive Pro/GOLD Lounge throughout the event featuring five-star catering (continental breakfast, lunch, and dinner), all day fruit and snacks, desserts, and beverages (beer, soda, juices, water, champagne, and wine) during all hours. Event sponsors, top-ranked men and women pro players, and GOLD BOX holders are the only VIPs permitted in the lounge. Treat yourself to the ultimate racquetball experience and reserve your GOLD BOX/SEAT today!

If you are interested, please call (614) 890-6073 to check for current availability right away or visit [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN-tickets.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN-tickets.com) now to reserve your spot.

# 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN LPRT PREVIEW

By Doug Ganim

Photos by KSphotography



**T**he 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships are upon us, and once again the women's pro singles and doubles competition will crown a champion. The odds-on favorite in singles will be World No.1 Paola Longoria from Mexico who will attempt to win her tenth US OPEN championship. However, there has been some major movement in the Top 8 rankings with lots of young new faces lining up to challenge Paola, in addition to the re-emergence of a couple of veteran champions.

It's hard to believe that Longoria could actually get better, but that is exactly what has happened in the last year with a 100% undefeated record in LPRT events (crazy!). She not only wins nearly every match she plays on tour, but many matches are an absolute beat-down. Much like Kane, her chances of NOT winning the US OPEN are slim; however, some players have pushed her into fifth-game tiebreakers of late.

**Paola Longoria (1:3 odds)** – Longoria, the No. 1 player in the world, is the defending US OPEN Champion as well as the 2008, 2011-2018 Champion. She has delivered yet another set of sensational performances during the LPRT 2018-19 season, finishing at the top by a wide margin. She also captured the #1 year-end ranking for the tenth time and was named the UNIVISION Athlete of the Year for all of Mexico (any sport!). Unless someone has elevated their game during the off-season and is prepared for a career-defining performance, look for Paola to take another step towards racquetball immortality and raise another US OPEN Championship trophy. *La Princesa no le será negado otro triunfo.*

**Frédérique Lambert (13:1 odds)** – Lambert has been on tour for several years and has been an incredibly consistent performer. At the time of this writing, she is the #8 ranked player in the world and does have an outside shot at pulling off the upset of Longoria. The reason I say this is, she HAS NO FEAR! She plays with both intensity and joy and possesses the athletic skills to win any event she enters. Canada has not had a top-ranked women's pro player since Christie Van Hees back in the early '90's. Frédérique is a Canadian wonder! And even more amazing, she did all this while attending medical school FULL TIME! Congrats to the recent graduate! Smart and talented: a combination you can never count out!

**Rhonda Rajsich (10:1 odds)** – Despite her slide in the rankings to #5, this former #1 has one thing that nobody else in the current field does (other than Longoria): the title of US OPEN Champion. A former four-time US OPEN Champion (2003, 2007, 2009, 2010), Rajsich continues to amaze fans with spectacular dives and shots that are jaw dropping. When it comes to the US OPEN, experience on the stadium court and under the bright lights matters, so much so that in the last 23 years, only seven women players have been crowned Champion. Rhonda has the championship pedigree and the desire to win. Further, she recently pushed Longoria to the edge in a major Tier 1 event, and for this reason alone I give her reasonable odds to win the crown. Having personally known Rhonda for all of her career, I have come to learn that with her, age has nothing to do with outcome. Every time I think she is sliding away, she shows back up with an amazing performance. No more "Doubting Thomas" for me! I BELIEVE.

**Natalia Mendez (7:1 odds)** – Mendez, the latest superstar from Argentina, has risen faster up the rankings than any other player on tour. At the time of this writing, she is the #6 ranked player in the world. She has a powerful game and represents the top of the class of up-and-coming new young players on tour. One advantage Natalia has over some other top-ranked players when it comes to a possible Longoria upset is that she has less scar tissue than others. What I mean is, she has not endured years and years of Paola beatings that can often leave scars difficult to get past. At some point, there is going to be a new US OPEN Champion, and I would put Natalia on the short list of players who have a shot to take over the mantle. Upsets happen. Maybe 2019 will be the year Natalia shocks the world and wins it all! There is no question she has the game. Oh...and pairing with Maria Jose Vargas in doubles, I'd look for her to make a run for the crown in that division as well. Did I mention she recently graduated from law school while playing the tour full time? Amazing, Natalia!

**Alexandra Herrera (11:1)** – Another skyrocketing young player from Mexico, Alexandra has burst in to the top rankings in the last three years. She is the only left-hander in the Top 8 and therefore has a potential edge over the competition. Even Longoria has very little experience against lefties. At the time of this writing, Herrera's ranking is #4 in the world. It is pretty clear that Mexico is in a great position to dominate professional women's racquetball for years to come!

**Samantha Salas (4:1)** – She is back, and in a BIG way, all the way up to the #2 ranking. With no signs of any ill effects from her multiple shoulder issues and surgery, Samantha Salas is on a mission to reach the top. Having had a historic 2018 US OPEN performance—finishing second in singles and first in doubles—this experience on the biggest stage will come in handy now as she tries to capture her first US OPEN singles crown. The only problem is that her game does not match up well against Longoria, but she has pushed her to the limit recently. Nobody will work harder in the off-season to close the gap on Longoria. I love her fearless passion on the court. She is not out there to make friends. She is out there to kick some butt!

**Maria Jose Vargas (4:1)** – One of the most exciting women's players to watch on tour is back! Vargas has been largely absent from tour for most of the prior two years but re-emerged for the full 2018-19 season. She quickly ascended up the rankings and finished the season as the #3 player in the world. Along the way, she captured her first Grand Slam singles (and doubles)



title in Bolivia. The fact that she has recently been in the winner's circle; has a monster drive serve; has competed well against Longoria in the past; and has the power to hurt everyone in the field, I am giving her an excellent chance to make the finals and even win it all. Put her on your "must watch" list of LPRT pros!

#### PLAYERS TO WATCH:

**Cristina Amaya/Adriana Riveros** – Two more South American wonders, Cristina and Adriana both hail from Colombia, and both have mad skills on the court. They each lack experience in knocking off the very top players, but they certainly have the talent. Sooner or later, one or both of them will find their way into the winner's circle.

**Brenda Laime/Yazmine Sabja** – These two young superstars from Bolivia are on the rise and are already in the top 15. Look for both of these pros to be in the Top 10 very soon!

**Erika Manilla/Hollie Scott** – These two players represent the best of the young up-and-comers from the United States. They have amazing talent and have proven to give top players on tour lots of trouble in early rounds. For those rooting for an American comeback in the top ranks of the LPRT, these ladies will be the cornerstones of your betting ticket for years to come.

**LPRT Pro Doubles** -- It is nearly impossible to predict who will play with whom for this division and therefore difficult to preview. However, it is fair to assume that defending champs Longoria and Salas will play together again and therefore will be the odds-on favorite to win. Vargas and Mendez will likely team up, which would be an incredible final if both teams made it through. However, as most folks know, doubles is wildly unpredictable and upsets are the norm. Look for many fireworks in every round of the LPRT doubles at the US OPEN.

The LPRT is deeper and more exciting than at any time in the last 20 years. It is truly an international affair with five different countries represented in the Top 10 rankings (at the time of this writing). These ladies are incredible athletes and playing racquetball at an extremely high level. Make sure you catch as many LPRT matches as you can at the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN!



## PRO-AM DOUBLES FOR CHARITY



Want to treat yourself to an incredible racquetball experience while at the same time supporting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital? On Wednesday evening at the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, 32 lucky amateurs will team up with the top stars on the IRT and LPRT for a special Pro-Am Doubles event. A \$325 donation gets you into the draw until 32 commitments are received. The evening features free food and beverages, an autographed racquet from your pro partner, and a complimentary photo as well. All of the proceeds will be donated to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Although this event has sold out each of the last 23 years, at the time of this writing there are still a handful of spots left. If you are interested in participating, register now at [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com) and enter the tournament—Pro-Am Doubles is listed under the Order Additional Items section—or call (614) 890-6073 and register over the phone.





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# Giving Lessons

## And Creating Income

By Fran Davis, USAR-IP Master Professional

As a USAR-IP Instructor/Advanced Instructor or a Professional Instructor, you are certified to teach. If you look at any other sports like tennis, golf, baseball, basketball, etc. people wouldn't think of "not" taking a lesson(s) to improve their game.

The problem most racquetball players have is they are self-taught. Also, when they begin to play the sport, they rely on their athleticism and generally pick up the game rather easily and quickly. Unfortunately, because they are not fundamentally sound, their athleticism only carries them so far. Their game becomes stale with no more improvement or growth like in the beginning. This is when frustration sets in.

We as USAR-IP Instructors need to remember that "Knowledge is Power," and that is the message we need to share with our league players, tournament players, and recreational players. You want to urge your players to become educated so that they can become students of the game. Teach them to analyze and understand why they won or lost a match so they can continue to use the things that are working and change the things that are not working.

Below are some different types of lessons you can offer. Based on the area in which you live, develop a fee structure. Don't give them away at no charge unless you have an arrangement with the club to conduct, for example, a free introductory one-hour clinic once a month or once a quarter. Then you can use that to filter people into the below types of lessons.

1 Private Lessons - One-on-one lessons to work on stroke mechanics, court position, shot selection, shots of the game, serves/relocation after the serve, return of serves, game plans/strategies, etc., based on their level and needs.

2 Semi-Private Lessons - Two people of equal skill level taking lessons together to work on some of the same aspects as above.

3 Group Lessons - Four or more students of similar skill levels taking lessons together to work on similar objectives.

4 One Evening, or Half a Day, or One Day Clinics - A set number of hours to cover a particular topic(s) with time built in for instruction, drilling/playing/critiquing, and clinic summarization.

5 Video Lessons - This can be one-on-one or semi-private for perhaps 90 minutes with students of similar skill levels:

- a. Film them in a game for 20 minutes.
- b. Stop and analyze the video for 30 minutes, pointing out problem areas along with what they are doing well.
- c. Address the corrections and solutions one area at a time for 40 minutes, but this portion may require additional lessons if a number of areas needing improvement have been identified. Avoid the pitfall of attempting to cover all of the topics at once.
- d. As they say, "A picture is worth a thousand words." The camera doesn't lie, and you can show them so much!

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**" ... several sanctioning bodies have experimented with this revised rule ... "**

By Otto Dietrich, USA Racquetball National Rules Commissioner

When I was a much younger man, I entered a regional tournament where pressurized balls were being introduced to the game. As expected, those balls did make the sport much more exciting and a lot faster, so much so that my opponent hit a shot so hard that it traveled from the front wall directly to the back wall, bounced off the floor near the Service Zone and then hit the front wall *a second time* before I could react to it.

I stood watching this, not sure what to do. Was that legal? Who won the rally, if anyone? The referee – a Masters Champion named Earl Dixon – explained that I had lost the rally because it was my turn to hit the ball and I failed to do that before it bounced on the floor a second time. Years later, after answering that same question many times, I added that simple concept to the USAR Rulebook as Rule 3.13(e). Why not take a moment to look it up for yourself. You do have a copy of the Rulebook saved on your smartphone, right? Here are some rules and refereeing questions and answers about racquetball that I have addressed lately:

**Steve P. wrote:** I play at an LA Fitness with a clear back wall which runs to the 20-foot ceiling. The rear glass is constructed with panels that are 12 feet high and on top 8 feet to the ceiling.

- 1) If a ball in play is hit in the upper 8-foot section, is it still in play?
- 2) It seems that when the ball is hit directly off the front wall and goes directly to the upper 8-foot wall section (without hitting the floor) it many times will then hit the floor and within the one bounce hit the front wall again without hitting the floor a second time. If the ball is in play after hitting the upper section, must I hit the ball before it strikes the front wall for a second time?

**I responded:** Although the back wall may be constructed of obviously different ma-

terials, if they all produce a fairly similar rebound of the ball and are also located the same basic distance from the front wall (i.e., 40 feet), then they are both considered in play and considered part of the basic court. The seam between may be a court hinder especially if it produces an untypical rebound and affects the rally in some way. This is covered in Rule 2.1 and 2.1(a) as well as in Rule 3.14(a)1.

Regarding your second question, that was the first real question I ever had about the game back in 1974 as I recall. See Rule 3.13(e) for this one. The ball stays in play until it touches the floor a second time.

**I replied with:** In the current amateur (USAR) game, neither the server nor the server's non-serving partner can depart from the Service Zone until the served ball crosses the Short Line. But the Men Pros (IRT) have modified their rules to permit them to go anywhere once the ball is struck by the server. The IRF (International Racquetball Federation) has also changed their rules to provide for the same earlier departure from the Service Zone. As far as the Women Pros (LPRT) they currently follow almost all of the USAR's rules including the requirement to remain in the Service Zone until the served ball crosses the Short Line.



Photo By Geoff Thomsen



**Mike L. asked:** I've been following the Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT) for some time. Somehow or other I started receiving their games online and thoroughly enjoy them. One thing I see, though, bothers me. On lob serves, the server frequently leaves the service box before the ball reaches the short line. Is that not still an infraction?

**Tim S. sent me this:** In doubles, if the server serves the ball behind him to the middle of the court, one receiver has a perfect view while the other may be screened. Is it a screen?

**Here is what I told him:** Okay, so if I assume that the server is right-handed and

## DO YOU HAVE

### A RULES/REFEREEING QUESTION?

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

## Always Play by the Rules

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

he serves a forehand drive serve from the far-right side of the Service Zone that passes "rather close" (let's define that as being less than a racquet's length) to his back (which is facing the center of the court), then it "could" be a screen serve. However, for the reason that you cited, it also just might NOT be a screen serve, i.e., it could be argued that he does have a rather "perfect view" of the ball -- at least from about as soon as the ball touches the front wall until the ball enters the returner's hitting zone. Thus, depending on the clothes the server is wearing (how loose, what color they are compared to the ball), the receiver's sight of the ball just might be slightly obscured.

So, it is not an open-and-shut case. The visibility factor is a key, but the surprise nature of such a different type of serve would make me (as the ref) somewhat inclined to downplay the "closeness" as being the reason for the receiver's trouble in returning the ball.

Remember that the screen serve rule has three basic components -- the receiver putting himself in a proper position to see the serve, the ball passing "close" to the server or his partner, and that "closeness" impairing the receiver's ability to see and return the serve.

Now you have the tools and my input, so you make the call! It's often a matter of judgment.

In a subsequent email I added that in doubles, both players can try to return the ball and thus either can be hindered in their attempt to do so. That being said, it is also rather unsportsmanlike for a player who is not really trying to return the ball to *claim* that he, or claim for his partner that he, was hindered especially if that partner doesn't think that he was. Of course, the relative positioning of both the server and the receivers can also make a difference in the call as well.



Women's #1 Singles at the recent USA Racquetball National Collegiate Championship  
Melania Sauma versus Lexi York  
Nathan Buring and Michael Goodman battling it out on the left side in Men's #1 Doubles  
Photos by KSphotography

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# CONTINUING THE Making of a Champion



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

**L**et's continue "Making You a Champion" using the core principles of "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" as you build your championship racquetball game one assessment at a time.

In this issue I am going to discuss "How to Prepare for the US OPEN," a topic people ask me about all the time. Let's see what Rocky Carson and Paola Longoria will do to aggressively prepare for their tournament...

Rocky and Paola have had very successful seasons thus far, holding solid as the #2 IRT Pro Player and #1 LPRT Pro Player, respectively.

Rocky and Paola will both take time off in June when their pro seasons are over to regroup and recover physically and mentally from the long season they both had. In July, they will begin the following regimen based on the assessments we use as the basis for their (and your!) training.

## Racquetball Skills

Drilling 1-2 days per week the first month, then 2-3 days per week the second and third months, adjusting accordingly-

*Both Rocky and Paola have their own specific shots, serves, returns of serve, etc., they will drill in to sharpen their championship game based on review of their games live and in our video analysis sessions.*

Playing 1-2 days per week the first month, then 2-3 days per week the second and third months, adjusting accordingly-

*Playing will keep their game sharp for the tournament as we are within three months of the event. The games now will vary with people slightly below their level to sharpen their skills they are working on, through the toughest of competition in their area (NOT playing ANY of their competitors) to work on their skills for the tournament. Lastly, within three weeks of their event, they are playing "tournament-tough games."*

## Conditioning Skills

Footwork drills 1-2 days per week the first month, then 2 days per week the second and third months, adjusting accordingly-

*Using the ladder, cones, star drills, step-ups, crossover lunges, etc., working on getting to the ball more effectively and efficiently.*

Core training 1-2 days per week the first month, then 2-3 days per week core training/weight training the second and third months, adjusting accordingly-

*These non-hitting training drills are going to make them explode to the ball faster and get them in position quicker to allow them to rip the ball, generating a tremendous amount of power with consistency being the "name of the game."*

## Mental Toughness Skills

"Visualization" is the #1 mental toughness tool for rehearsing techniques and game strategies. Rocky and Paola believe in it wholeheartedly and will continue to increase both the number of times per day/week as well as the number of minutes per session. A guideline here is 5-7 days per week.

"Affirmations" are positive personal statements that you will add to your images of what you want to create on the court. For example, *I feel great today! I am a quick, talented, and fearless player!* These sentences imprint the positive images even deeper. These affirmations bring the future



Rocky Carson & Fran Davis  
Photo Courtesy of Fran Davis

into the now. Your mind will believe whatever you put in it as long as your belief system agrees. Therefore, put what you want in your mind, and remove what you don't want. Guideline: 7 days per week.

All of the players I coach, from the professionals like Rocky Carson and Paola Longoria to my amateurs, know just how important it is to learn "How to Prepare for the US OPEN" or for that matter, any major event in their area. It starts by utilizing the above components of your training regimen.

Their records speak for themselves. Rocky and Paola have both been National Champions, World Champions, and Pan American Champions in their respective countries for years, and they have both attained US OPEN titles as well.

In the next issue, I will continue to provide you the tools to build your Championship Racquetball Game so you too can be ready to become the champion you always dreamed of becoming. Rocky and Paola and all my athletes' Championship Racquetball Games stem from their focus on all three sides of the triangle so they can develop into top competitors. Without a shadow of a doubt, they know just how important it is to do the work. They are living proof it works, and their titles exemplify it.

**Fran Davis** coaches Paola Longoria (8X #1 LPRT, 5X World Champion, 4X Pan American Champion, 8X US Open Champion), Rocky Carson (#2 IRT, 5X World Champion, 2X Pan American Champion, US OPEN Champion), and juniors Jordan Cooperrider (9X Junior National Champion and USA Junior National Team), Wayne Antone (4X Junior National Champion and USA Junior National Team), and Mitchell Turner (3X Junior National Championship and USA Junior National Team). Fran's other credentials include Hall of Fame 2004, Woman of the Year 2009, former US Team National Coach, and Master Professional (USAR-IP).

# Championship Racquetball

*If you want to play like a champion, turn to the champions!*

## Camps

- 13+ Hours of Instruction and Court Time
- Physical and Mental aspects of the game
- Lectures/Playing/Critiquing
- Video Tape Analysis / Play the Pro
- Camp Manual/ T-Shirt / Penn Racquetballs

## Coaching

- One on One Training
- Video Analysis w/Voice Over
- Training Schedules / Drilling Sessions
- Assist in Reaching Your Goals

## Books

- Core Principles discussed
- Advance your skills, tactics and toughness for a winning game

## Video

- Learn to vary serves / returns
- Learn the perfect strokes
- Improve shot selection/court position
- Game plans/Strategies a must

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

Jason Mannino  
#1 Pro Player 2003

Rocky Carson  
#1 Pro Player 2008 & 2018

## Fran's Credentials

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

## Jason's Credentials

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

## 2019 Camp Schedule: Weekend Training Camps

May 31-June 2	San Francisco, CA
September 6-8	Boston, MA
September 27-29	Minneapolis, MN
Fall TBD	Feasterville, PA (Philadelphia, PA area)
October TBD	Portland, OR
November 8-10	Fullerton, CA (So. CA)
TBD	Chicago, IL
TBD	Dallas, TX
TBD	Davie, FL
TBD	Indiana
TBD	Hawaii
TBD	Maryland/Virginia

## Week Long Training Camps

TBD SOUTHERN, CA CAMP (w/Rocky Carson...Intermediate to Advanced Camp)
TBD MEXICO (w/Paola Longoria . . .Intermediate to Advanced Camp)
Contact me for Dates/Locations as well as bring a camp to YOUR City/State



Fran Davis - A Healthy Racquet, Inc.  
1037 NE 65th St. #343  
Seattle, WA 98115  
Phone: 206-522-FRAN (3726)  
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Presented by  
featuring Fran Davis and Jason Mannino



# Meet The Military Racquetball Federation



By Terry Rogers  
Photos Courtesy of the MRF

The Military Racquetball Federation (MRF) officially began in March 2009, inspired by Lt. Commander (US Navy Ret) Steven Harper's vision of finding a way to bring racquetball to service members on bases in the United States and abroad. Staffed and operated exclusively by volunteers, the MRF is a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible organization.

The MRF is dedicated to promoting racquetball programs and events for our service members, both active duty and veterans, here and abroad, including support of events for our troops in war zones. For instance, events have been conducted on forward deployment bases in Afghanistan and Qatar as well as on bases in the United States (see side box).

## RACQUETBALL REHABILITATION CLINICS

As the MRF has evolved, so has Steven's vision. He expanded the depth of the organization by introducing racquetball to veterans and wounded service members as a means of rehabilitation. This came to fruition in 2011 with the creation of the MRF's Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinics (RRCs).

Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinics are conducted in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs Adaptive Sports Event program located in Washington, D.C. Their purpose is to provide veterans with opportunities for health and healing through adaptive sports and therapeutic art programs. These specialized rehabilitation events aim to optimize veterans' independence, community engagement, well-being, and quality of life.

Wounded service members are provided with an activity they may have never been introduced to via eight-week RRCs conducted throughout the United States. This program's focus is the use of adaptive racquetball as rehabilitation for physical and mental challenges suffered from combat. Volunteers from our racquetball family work directly with veterans suffering from PTS (Post Traumatic Stress), TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), and combat injuries.

Training veterans from the grassroots level is a concept that has made an impact nationwide within the veteran community. The MRF collaborates with Veteran Administration recreation therapists, community-based organizations, and racquetball facilities. Volunteer racquetball instructors to promote healing and fellowship through sport. We have received numerous support letters from caregivers and case managers highlighting how they have seen positive change in the veterans they serve.

The MRF has worked to make inroads toward having racquetball counted as one of the sports competed in a number of events offered to active and adaptive service members, including the Warrior Games – United States Air Force Academy, Tampa and Colorado Springs; Air Force Wounded Warrior Competitive Sports Trials – Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas; Valor Games Midwest – Chicago; and National Veterans Wheelchair Games – Dallas/Salt Lake City/Louisville.



## SPECIAL EVENTS

Historically, some innovative ideas have been used to showcase racquetball to the military community. One of the first initiatives was launched in November 2008 when an outdoor court was set up on the flight deck of the USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) docked at the San Diego Naval Base and then again on the beach in Virginia Beach, Virginia, in collaboration with the USO. In both instances, racquetball was introduced to active and injured service members and their families.

The MRF was invited to take part in the 3WallBall Championships in 2013 and has continued this affiliation to date. We will be participating in the 10th Anniversary event this year with a continuation of the ever-popular ProAm Doubles and our Adaptive Division (wheelchair and able-bodied players), open to those who have graduated from any of the MRF's eight-week clinics.

The MRF hosts the MRF National Championships each year for all active and retired service members. Formerly held at the San Diego Naval Base, we moved the venue last year to Ft. Hood in Killeen, Texas, under the leadership of MRF Texas Liaison and Tournament Director JoAnna Reyes. The 2019 event will be held August 9-11.

To learn more about the Military Racquetball Federation, visit <http://www.militaryracquetball.com> or its Facebook page at Military Racquetball. Donations are gratefully accepted at those sites so that the MRF can continue to support U.S. active and veteran service members.



## MRF Activities U.S. Military Base Locations

Fort Belvoir (WTB) – Fort Belvoir, Virginia  
Fort Bliss (WTB) – El Paso, Texas  
Fort Hood (WTB) – Killeen, Texas  
Joint Base Andrews AFB – Washington, D.C.  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord – Seattle, Washington  
Las Vegas VAMC – Las Vegas, Nevada  
Lipscomb University Student Athletic Center – Nashville, Tennessee  
MCVET/Baltimore VAMC – Baltimore, Maryland  
Navy Trials – North Island Naval Air Station – San Diego, California  
Offutt AFB – Omaha, Nebraska  
Pelham Bay Park – Bronx, New York  
Phoenix VAMC – Phoenix, Arizona  
Prescott VAMC – Prescott, Arizona  
Richmond VAMC – Richmond, Virginia  
Riverview Park VA Medical Center – Augusta, Georgia  
United States Air Force Academy – Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Veterans on the Rise (VOTR) Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling – Washington, D.C.  
Veteran's Village (VVSD) – San Diego, California  
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center – Bethesda, MD

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## MRF AFFILIATES



# The IRT Experience In Bolivia



*I asked Thomas Carter, one of the Tour's up-and-coming stars, to write of his daily experiences in Cochabamba, Bolivia, at the exciting joint IRT/LPRT event, the Open Bolivia American Iris 2019. It was a remarkable journey. Keep in mind that Cochabamba is not easy to reach. The attendees encountered travel challenges as well as the 8,500-foot elevation and huge hometown crowds, but the Bolivian hosts provided an astonishing tournament and player experience that everyone enjoyed immensely. I am thrilled for Bolivia that Conrado Moscoso won Men's Pro Singles, and he and his Bolivian partner Roland Keller won the Men's Pro Doubles. We look forward to this being an annual event.*

Now, let's hear from Thomas...

## Wednesday, March 27th

Today is Day Two of our trip. Matches started at 11:00 a.m. and continued through 7:00 p.m. The draw in this tournament is deep, and there are a lot of South American players entered that we don't usually see on the IRT. Combined with the altitude of a little over 8,000 feet, it made for some entertaining matchups early on. The ball was flying. In my first match, I played Gustavo Medrano Michel, a lefty from Tarija, Bolivia. He played tough, but I was able to win in two games. After that, I went back to the hotel for a little bit to rest, then back to the club for my next match. I played Carlos Keller, one of Bolivia's top players. I ended up losing in a tiebreaker. Honestly, I'm disappointed with my results. But looking back, it was still a cool experience. The seats were packed, and the

fans were very into the match. It made for an exciting atmosphere.

After all the matches ended, we went back to the hotel to shower up and head to dinner with the tournament sponsors. We had dinner at Kansas Grill & Bar, which is a nice restaurant here in Cochabamba. After we ate, the tournament organizers spoke for a bit. They were speaking in Spanish, but from what I gathered, they were talking about how much effort they've put into the tournament and how glad they are to have the IRT here in Bolivia. I know I can speak for all the players when I say we're excited to be here and we really appreciate the great hospitality they are providing.

## Thursday, March 28th

Thursday was a great day of racquetball with a lot of exciting matches. The day did start out a little rough with a power outage at the club right before matches were scheduled to begin. The power outage delayed the first match by about 30 minutes or so, but once the power came back on, fans were treated to a lot of great racquetball throughout the day. Today I helped Dean Baer commentate on the live stream, which gave me a front row seat for the action. The Round of 16 featured a lot of full-time touring IRT pros as well as some talented players we don't get to see as often, such as Carlos

Keller and Conrado Moscoso. These two are definitely fan favorites here in Bolivia. Both of them were able to win today and advance to the quarterfinals. Fans were packed in and cheering very loudly throughout their matches, and when they won, the crowd went nuts. It made for a great atmosphere in the club.

After the last Round of 16 match, I headed back to the hotel and hung out there for the rest of the day. We are staying at Hotel Cochabamba, which is a really nice hotel here in the city. The rooms are comfortable, the staff is accommodating and friendly, and the hotel has a courtyard complete with a pool and everything. On top of that, the hotel has a great breakfast every morning. The breakfast includes eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes, fruit, and a lot more. Anyone who knows me knows I love my food, so this is a massive plus for me.

## Friday, March 29th

Friday gave us a lot of high-quality matches in both doubles and singles. The day started off with the doubles quarterfinals. One of the first matches of the day might have also been one of the most exciting, with Jake Bredenbeck and Bobby Horn taking on Conrado Moscoso and Roland Keller. The ball was flying around that court. Even though it was only a quarterfinal matchup, that match

had the feel and intensity of a final. Moscoso and Keller ended up winning in a tiebreaker. It was fun to watch. That match set the tone for the day, as there were lots of great matches to follow in both the singles quarterfinals and also doubles semifinals.

Outside of the all the great racquetball action here in Bolivia, I'm also enjoying getting to experience what Cochabamba has to offer. One of the things I'm enjoying the most is their food. Not only is the food delicious, but it's also incredibly reasonably priced. You can get a very good meal at a restaurant for somewhere between \$5 and \$10 US dollars. Since I've been here, I've tried a couple of traditional Bolivian meals. Two of my favorites so far are silpancho and pique. Silpancho is a plate that has a rice and potato base with a thin layer of beef on top. It is topped off with an egg, onions, tomatoes, and green peppers. Pique is a bowl of beef, french fries, onions, tomatoes, and peppers. All of that is mixed together in a tasty broth. Both of these dishes are very good!

### Saturday, March 30th

Saturday was our last full day here in Cochabamba. There were some excellent matches throughout the day. In singles, Rocky Carson advanced to the finals by defeating Mario Mercado on his home court in a tiebreaker. In the other semifinal, Conrrado Moscoso took out Alvaro Beltran to earn his spot in the finals. In the doubles final, Conrrado Moscoso and Roland Keller took down Rocky and his partner Felipe Camacho in two tight games to earn their first IRT doubles title. The crowd was pumped.

I spent most of the day exploring the city. It was nice to get a chance to see a bit of Cochabamba. Some of the places I visited included the mountainside, el Cristo de la Concordia, and also the house of Simón Patiño. Patiño was a Bolivian industrialist in the early 1900's who was one of the wealthiest people in the world at the time. He earned his fortune from mining and is well known for doing a lot of good things for Bolivia and the city of Cochabamba. It was nice to learn a little about Bolivian history and also to see more of Cochabamba.

The night ended with a fun party at the house of the main sponsor. It was a great way to end our last evening in Bolivia.

### Sunday, March 31st

Our week in Bolivia ended with an exciting final. Rocky Carson took on Conrrado Moscoso in a great match. Conrrado started out on fire in the first game, taking a quick 6-0 lead. Rocky called a time out, got back on the court, and completely turned the game around. Moscoso didn't score another point after that, with Rocky winning the first game 15-6. Game two was back and forth. Both players battled to 14-14 before Conrrado squeaked out the win to send the match to a tiebreaker. From there, it was all Moscoso, who took control of the tiebreaker and won 11-2 for his first IRT singles title.

Now we have a long trip back home. Our flight leaves at 8:30 p.m., we have a layover in Santa Cruz, then we arrive in Miami around 6:00 in the morning. From there we all head our separate ways. It's been a great experience here in Bolivia. The fans were awesome and the tournament officials took great care of us. I know I can speak for all the players when I say, "Thank you, Cochabamba, for your hospitality." We really enjoyed it here and hope to be back in the future.



# LPRT - 2019 Started in Grand Slam Fashion

By T.J. Baumbaugh

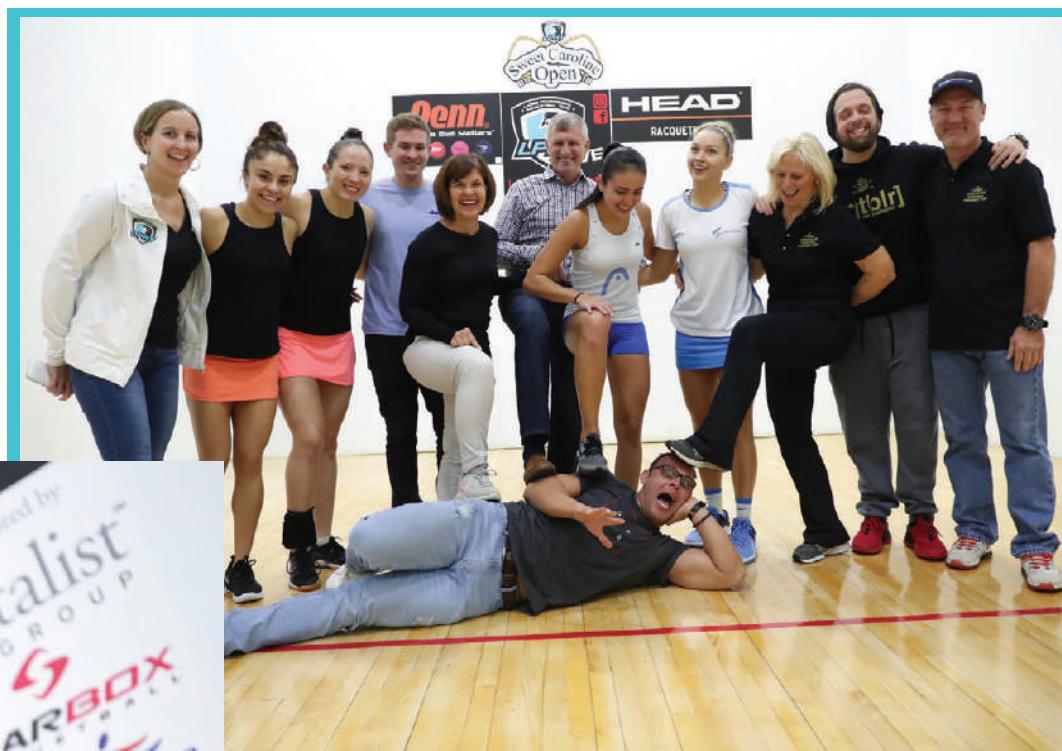


The LPRT was fortunate to start the calendar year off with two very special events. We traveled from South Carolina to South America to showcase the world's most talented racquetball players. The women of the LPRT were greeted by generous support and hospitality in both vibrant locations.

For our first Grand Slam of 2019, the LPRT was invited back to Greenville, South Carolina, for the "Sweet Caroline Open." This was our third trip to Greenville, and we were amazed that it could get any better. The event started with a fundraising banquet at the Swain Family Vineyard that was held, this year, to raise money for "SWITCH." SWITCH is an organization with a mission to end human trafficking and sexual exploitation in South Carolina (switchsc.org). We learned what an epidemic human trafficking has become as SWITCH representatives educated the attendees. For example, every 30 seconds another person becomes a victim of human trafficking. LPRT player María Renée Rodríguez spoke about her friend from Guatemala who fell victim to human trafficking. It was a powerful evening, and the LPRT was grateful to be the spotlight for an even bigger cause.

The Sweet Caroline was Paola Longoria's 95th tour win. Longoria (Mexico) worked her way through the draw and into the final dropping only one game in the semifinals to María Jose Vargas (Argentina). Longoria faced off against finalist Samantha Salas Solis (Mexico), winning in three straight. To reach the final, Salas pulled out a five-gamer in the semis over Nancy Enriquez (Mexico), winning 11-8 in the tiebreaker. Longoria and Salas paired up to earn the event's doubles title, besting Vargas and partner Natalia Mendez (Argentina) in a two-game final.

Thank you to Mary and David Swain, Ob Hospitalist Group, Lynette Froehlich, Jerry J. Jossey, Russ Bruns, and all the many volunteers who put on this successful Greenville event. From the banquet to the VIP/hydration room, to the great food and music all weekend, the Sweet Caroline was a raving success. Thank you to Sportsclub Fitness & Wellness for hosting again this year. Also, a special thank you to our MC for the weekend, Abraham Pena, who brought plenty of energy and fun to the Sportsclub.



Above: ProAm Sponsor Doubles in South Carolina  
Left: Paola Longoria, Sweet Caroline Women's Pro Singles Champion  
Photos by Restring Magazine



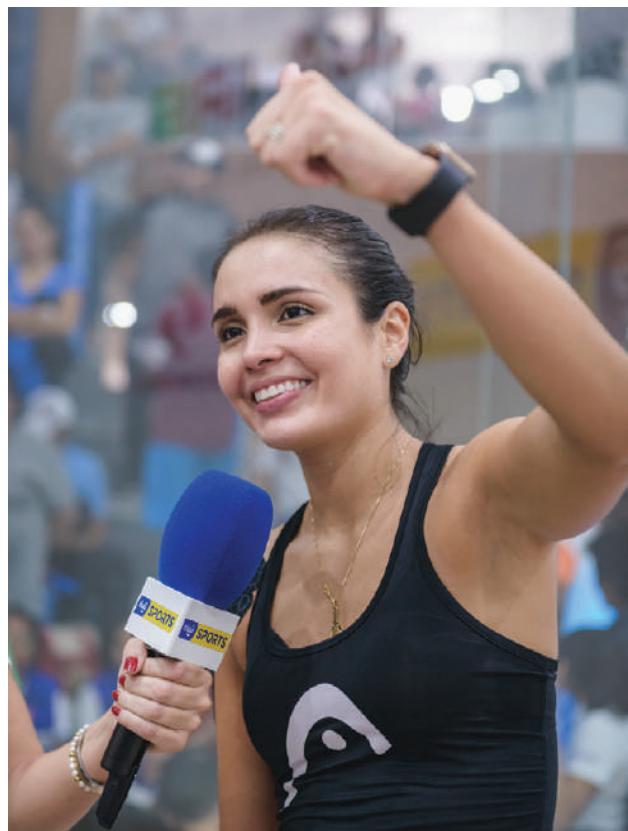
Cochabamba, Bolivia, was the destination for our second grand slam. This was the first time that the pro tours (LPRT and IRT) competed in Bolivia. This premier event, hosted by American Iris Paper Company, was a remarkable tournament for both professional and amateur players, as well as a full house of ticket-purchasing fans.

The Open Bolivia American Iris started with opening ceremonies at La Plaza de las Banderas. A few speeches, pro player introductions, a band, and then an array of fireworks set the tone for the entire event—truly a celebration! Early round matches began Wednesday morning while the pro and sponsor VIP room was opened. Wednesday ended with a special pro player, sponsor, and organizer dinner at, of all places, the Kansas Grill & Bar. On Thursday and Friday, Club Municipal de Racquetball SARCO was full of energy while both amateurs and professionals battled to get to the finals in their respective divisions. Fans packed the stadium bleachers on Saturday to watch and cheer for both the LPRT and IRT singles semifinals and then the pro doubles finals. Following the matches on Saturday there was a big party—again a celebration—with great food, a band, and a bar, hosted by our generous sponsors. The amateur matches concluded Sunday morning, and the stage was set for the LPRT and IRT pro finals that afternoon.

In the LPRT singles draw, we saw four 5-game matches all go to 11-9 in the tiebreakers. Champion Maria Jose Vargas played three of those matches. She was crowned the winner of the first-ever Open Bolivia American Iris after defeating Samantha Salas Solis in a two-hour final. Semifinalists were junior player Angelica Barrios (Bolivia) and Alexandra Herrera (Mexico). The #1 ranked LPRT player Paola Longoria missed the event due to a shoulder injury. In the Saturday evening doubles final, the #3-seeded team of Vargas and Mendez upset the #1 seeded team of Salas and partner Rhonda Rajsich (USA). Doubles semifinalists were the #2 seeded team of Herrera and Enriquez and the #5 seeded team of Brenda Laime (Colombia) and Masiel Rivera (USA).

Our sincere thank you goes to LPRT player Yazmine Sabja and her husband Nikolas Dajbura, owners of American Iris, for their vision and creation of the Open Bolivia event. Their generosity and efforts to make this a successful event was greatly appreciated by the 357 participants and the thousands of fans. Thank you to Joe Lama for your organization and translation assistance. Thank you to the many sponsors and volunteers and organizers who helped to run the event so smoothly. There was always someone close by and eager to help us out. A big shout out and thank you to the title sponsors who made the event possible: American Iris, Tigo Sports, Penn, and Gearbox.

For event recaps, thousands of photos, the LPRT rankings, event schedule and more, check out our website at [LPRTour.com](http://LPRTour.com).



Top: Women's Pro Singles Champion Maria Jose Vargas  
Above: A packed crowd for the Women's Pro Singles finals  
Photos By Open Bolivia American Iris



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175

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# CALENDAR of EVENTS

For the latest in USA Racquetball Sanctioned Events, visit [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com)

\*Denotes World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) Sanctioned Event

Date	Event	City	State	Location	Email
July 6 - 7	'MO MONEY Modesto Shootout, by PK Nor Cal	Modesto	CA	In-Shape Sport: Modesto	ellistyle@comcast.net
July 11 - 14	Mississippi Blues Classic	Flowood	MS	University Wellness Center	mslakelandracquetball@gmail.com
July 11 - 14	Outdoor Championships Presented by PK	Huntington Beach	CA	Marina Park	geoff25@icloud.com
July 13	Court Sport Diva - "It's a Girl Thing?!"	Round Rock	TX	Clay Madsen Recreation Center	prostopracquetsports@gmail.com
July 19	Indiana State Doubles Tournament	Schererville	IN	Franciscan Health Fitness Centers	jody.ashley@yahoo.com
July 19 - 21	Rocky Mountain State Games	Colorado Springs	CO	Downtown YMCA	hiserj@me.com
July 19 - 21	Life Time Tournament Series	Austin	TX	Life Time Fitness - South Austin	jlmprok@yahoo.com
July 20 - 21	Georgia Games	Atlanta	GA	Recreation ATL	info@recreationatl.com
July 20 - 21	ETCASA Shootout	Longview	TX	Parkway Fitness	mccoymitchell11@yahoo.com
July 26 - 27	Sunflower State Games Tournament	Topeka	KS	Downtown Topeka YMCA	lisacarlton55@gmail.com
July 26 - 28	Matadors of Merced Shootout	Merced	CA	In-Shape Sport: Yosemite Ave	ellistyle@comcast.net
July 26 - 28	Summerfest Open	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim and Fitness	dhhall@aol.com
July 26 - 28	NC Racquet Up for the Red	Goldsboro	NC	Goldsboro YMCA	ericnew@hotmail.com
July 27	Can U Stand the Heat 15	St. Clair Shores	MI	St. Clair Shores Outdoor	racketboat1@gmail.com
July 27 - 28	Hot Tamale	San Antonio	TX	Thousand Oaks Family YMCA	td@alamoracquetball.org
July 25 - 29	Elite Camp	Centennial	CO	Life Time Fitness	dennis@drdracquetball.com
July 31 - Aug 4	State Games of America 2019	Lynchburg	VA	Liberty University	racquetball@liberty.edu
August 3 - 4	Lodi Summer Sizzler Shootout	Lodi	CA	Twin Arbors Sports Club	ellistyle@comcast.net
August 9 -11	2019 MRF Military National Championships	Killeen	TX	Abrams Physical Fitness Center	prostopracquetsports@gmail.com
August 9 -11	WindyCity3WallBrawl	Chicago	IL	Rainbow Beach	worldofracquetball@gmail.com
August 10	Rally in the Region	Schererville	IN	Franciscan Health Fitness Centers	summerracquetball@gmail.com
August 10	Michigan Senior Olympics 2019 Summer	Warren	MI	Warren Racquet Club	ccvanhoose@comcast.net
August 10	New Smyrna Beach 40+ Doubles Shootout	N. Smyrna Beach	FL	27th Ave Park	scott@appsbar.com
August 16 - 18	2019 50th Florida State Doubles	Davie	FL	David Posnak JCC	info@florida-racquetball.org
August 17 - 18	Sugarland 2019 Summer Shootout	Sugar Land	TX	Sweetwater Country Club	jackyang747@gmail.com
August 24 - 25	RYDF Summer 2019 Fun-Raiser	Alameda	CA	Marina Square Athletic Club	rballchick@gmail.com
August 27 - 31	35th IRF World Senior Championships	Albuquerque	NM	Midtown Sports & Wellness	gmampro@gmail.com
September 5 - 8	2019 Atlanta Open	Atlanta	GA	Recreation ATL	info@recreationatl.com
September 20 - 22	2019 NC Fall Classic Championships	Charlotte	NC	YMCA - Dowd	ericnew@hotmail.com
September 25 - 29	3WallBall World Championship	Las Vegas	NV	Stratosphere Hotel Casino	peggine.tellez@gmail.com
September 28 - 29	Sam Houston Open Racquetball Tournament	Huntsville	TX	Sam Houston State University	houstonopentournament@gmail.com

# IN REMEMBRANCE



## Cody Scott

"Wyoming racquetball player Cody Scott, 18, passed away on May 12, 2019, following a car accident. Cody was almost ready to graduate from high school and was involved in many activities and sports. We in the racquetball community have watched Cody grow up over the years, hone his racquetball skills, and compete in many local and national tournaments. We will greatly miss his enthusiasm and passion for the sport and his friendship off the courts. The Rawlins Family Recreation Center plans to honor Cody during their February 2020 tournament, and the Wyoming Racquetball Association will be donating in Cody's memory to USAR Junior Racquetball. Condolences may be sent to the Scott Family at 1227 Weaver Street, Rawlins, WY 82301. A full obituary, memorial video, and method for sending online tributes may be found at the following site: <http://bit.ly/2KFcDQK>." -- Janice Vosika, President, Wyoming Racquetball Association



## Ivan Bruner

"Supreme Court (Health and Fitness) founder Ivan Bruner passed away on Monday June 3, 2019 from complications from a broken hip he suffered in a fall two weeks previously. Ivan has been a fixture at Supreme since the club's inception and was instrumental in the growth of the sport of racquetball not only in Madison (Wisconsin) but on a national scale as well. Check out his Hall of Fame plaque in our racquetball area, and you will gain an appreciation for his amazing accomplishments. Most members at Supreme know him as an inspiration on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and putting your best foot forward each and every day. His smile and positive spirit will be what I miss most and the legacy he left us with stands as a testament to his hard work and dedication to living life to its fullest. Rest in peace, Ivan." -- Howie Grigg

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By Steve Crandall

Vice President, Ashaway Sales & Marketing

## Ashaway Renews Cliff Swain Sponsorship

Continuing its long player sponsorship tradition, Ashaway Racket Strings today announced the renewal of legendary superstar Cliff Swain's sponsorship contract. "Sponsored players are our best ambassadors," said Steve Crandall, Ashaway Vice President.

A well-known figure to many racquetball fans, Cliff retired from the IRT several years ago after the winningest career in racquetball history. Now a much-sought-after coach, he continues to stay active in doubles and outdoor racquetball. He is also very active with youth leagues, clinics, and instruction. In 2014, Cliff introduced his own Cliff Swain Signature Series racquets, which are strung with Ashaway strings. After playing with Ashaway PowerKill® 17 for years, Cliff just recently switched to the new PU-based multifilament nylon MultiKill® 17.

We wish Cliff the best of luck as he competes at the at the upcoming US OPEN Championships!



Photo & Article By Cindy Tilbury,  
NMRA President

## NMRA Visits San Antonio

The NMRA is excited to hold our events in two brand new cities in 2019. We just returned home from sunny San Antonio, Texas, and are busily planning our first tournament in Lombard, Illinois.

Recently, our Board made some decisions that enable players to easily join our special group. We dropped entry fees to \$85 and \$25 for the first and second divisions. We had 40 first-time NMRA players in Texas at the Thousand Oaks YMCA and San Antonio College, many of whom were from the surrounding area. We enjoyed great tournament report card reviews on the competition and hospitality (food!), so we believe we are providing even better value than before!

Another great decision we made was to invite all 80+ players to compete for free! We just love them so much and appreciate their dedication to our sport. We want the NMRA to be their home. We had hearty 80+ divisions for the guys and expect them to join us in June in Chicago.

We held a fundraiser for Coach (and NMRA player) Sandy Long's Junior Team Texas players at our Friday night banquet. Sandy donates many hours to teaching the kids, so we were honored to support her efforts to help them travel to and compete in national junior competitions.

Brand new to NMRA was our live-streaming of Saturday matches. Jeffrey Thompson of [www.dailyracquetball.com](http://www.dailyracquetball.com) drove down from Austin to help live-stream a few 80+ men's matches, a ladies' doubles match, and the Men's 50+ Doubles playoff matches. Those matches and more are at [bit.ly/NMRA2019\\_SanAntonio](http://bit.ly/NMRA2019_SanAntonio). We hope to gain new players from the 10,000 viewers we had watching the live-streamed matches--amazing! (Search [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) for archived matches, too.)

We have our work cut out for us to top this last event, but we will do our best, June 27–30, in Lombard, Illinois (near Chicago) at the Glass Court Swim & Fitness. Tournament information is available on our [www.nmra.info](http://www.nmra.info) website, and 40+ players can register online on [www.r2sports.com](http://www.r2sports.com). Contact me at [cindy.tilbury@att.net](mailto:cindy.tilbury@att.net) if you are 80+ and would like to enter for free!

Plan to join us in Atlanta the first week of December for doubles-only divisions. We will continue to look for great opportunities to keep our loyal players happy. We hope you are one of them!



Dotti White & Gary Durbin Mixed 60+ Runners-Up



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**Rocky Carson**