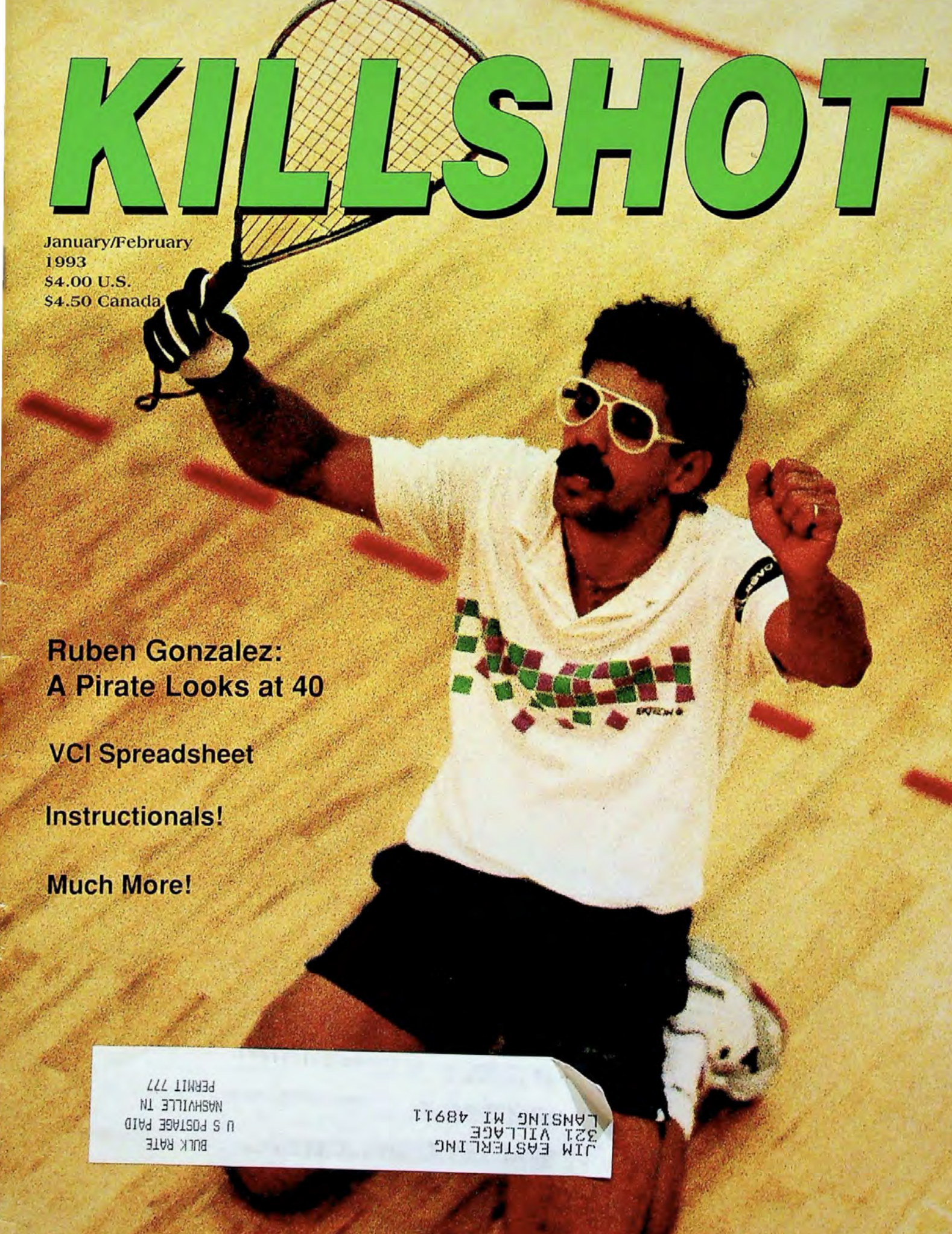


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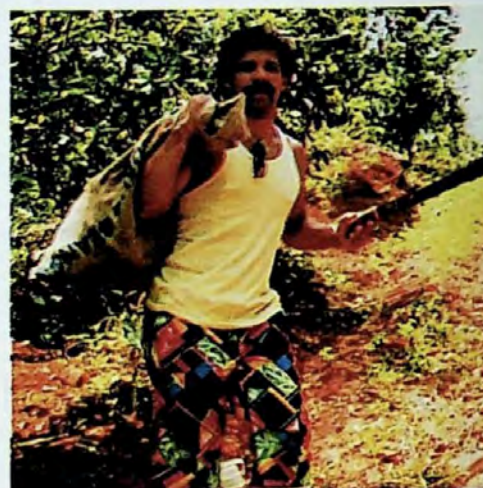
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Cover: Ruben Gonzalez
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SHORT SERVES

The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated...

Retired? -- no. Taking some time off? -- yeah. Marty Hogan has announced he has not retired from professional racquetball (September/October *Short Serves*) but is taking some time off. He still plans to play some events and will continue to be visible in the racquetball world.

RT
ACQUET
3



Aloha, Egan.

Egan Inoue, former world champion, top eight touring pro, and one of the best-loved figures in the game has announced his retirement from regular touring. Citing his continuing difficulties from his 1991 knee injury, Inoue felt that unless he could demand 100% from his body, he would never be satisfied with his play. Part owner of E Force Sports and one of racquetball's first super-power servers, Inoue has achieved success both on and off the court. Inoue plans to still actively participate in various sports, as well as involve himself more heavily in the growth of E Force. Inoue resides in Honolulu with his wife Alice.

Basically, Gregg

Be sure to catch the new Gregg Peck's Basics feature in this issue! In an effort to solve some common training problems, former national champion Gregg Peck has designed a series of instructional features matching movements from day-to-day activities to the proper racquetball techniques they simulate. It seems only fitting to see Gregg in a racquetball publication since he was ranked among the top pro players in the early and mid eighties.



...and returns

Bye, Bye, Brian.

If you've noticed Southern California's Brian Hawkes missing from recent professional events, it's not because he has been captured by aliens. Hawkes has however been captured by the corporate executives. Lured by stability of life off the road, Hawkes has accepted a position in investment banking.

A strong contender on the tour, Hawkes' most recent pro win was in 1991 in Toronto. He is best known for his domination of the outdoor game for most of recent history.



Hello, Lauren

In a year of transition for the WPRA, Miami's Lauren Sheprow-Echegaray will step in as the new executive director. Filling the position vacated by Philadelphia's Molly O'Brien, Sheprow-Echegaray brings experience in marketing and experience in pro racquetball. The executive director's position is responsible for the development of the tour schedule, and work with sponsors and host facilities.



Aloha, Woody

E Force Sports recently announced the signing of Jacksonville's Woody Clouse to their professional advisory staff. A diplomatic yet sometimes controversial figure on the IRT, Clouse has already used his new equipment to upset Mike Yellen in three games in his first outing in E Force colors in Chicago. Sharp, thoughtful play and tremendous athletic talent have kept Clouse in the IRT top 16 for some time, and made him the dominant BIRAK IT player for several years. If Chicago is any indication, we can all watch for some big wins this year from Clouse.



SHORT SERVES

Re-Signs

Terri Graham, player promotions manager at Ektelon has announced that racquetball professionals Ruben Gonzalez, Michelle (Gilman) Gould and Andy Roberts have all signed new long-term contracts.

"We're thrilled to have Ruben, Michelle, and Andy continue their relationship with Ektelon," said Graham. "As the leader in racquetball, Ektelon is proud to be associated with three of the leading players in the sport."

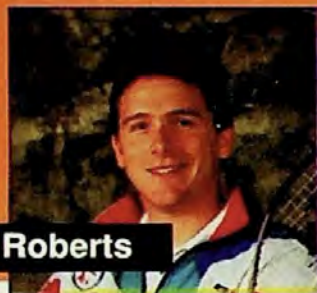
Michelle Gould



Ruben Gonzalez



Andy Roberts



Norm Blum's

Passing Shots

No Respect

The AARA officials were worried. Their worst nightmares were about to come true—a televised match to a national audience that was going to be a blowout. They envisioned a 20-minute match and all those folks in cable land falling asleep with their channel converters on their laps. Not!

Underdogs Mary Lyons and Susan Morgan-Pfahler, who happen to be from the hometown of this columnist, won the AARA's national doubles open championship in Phoenix, defeating heavy favorites Jackie Paraiso-Gibson and Joy Paraiso-McKenzie.

"The TV folks were worried. They had all this air time scheduled and they thought the match would be over in record time," Lyons said. "We actually saved the AARA money. Because we hit the ball so slow, they didn't have to use slow motion." The Lyons/Morgan-Pfahler team won in two straight games, 15-13, 15-13 for their

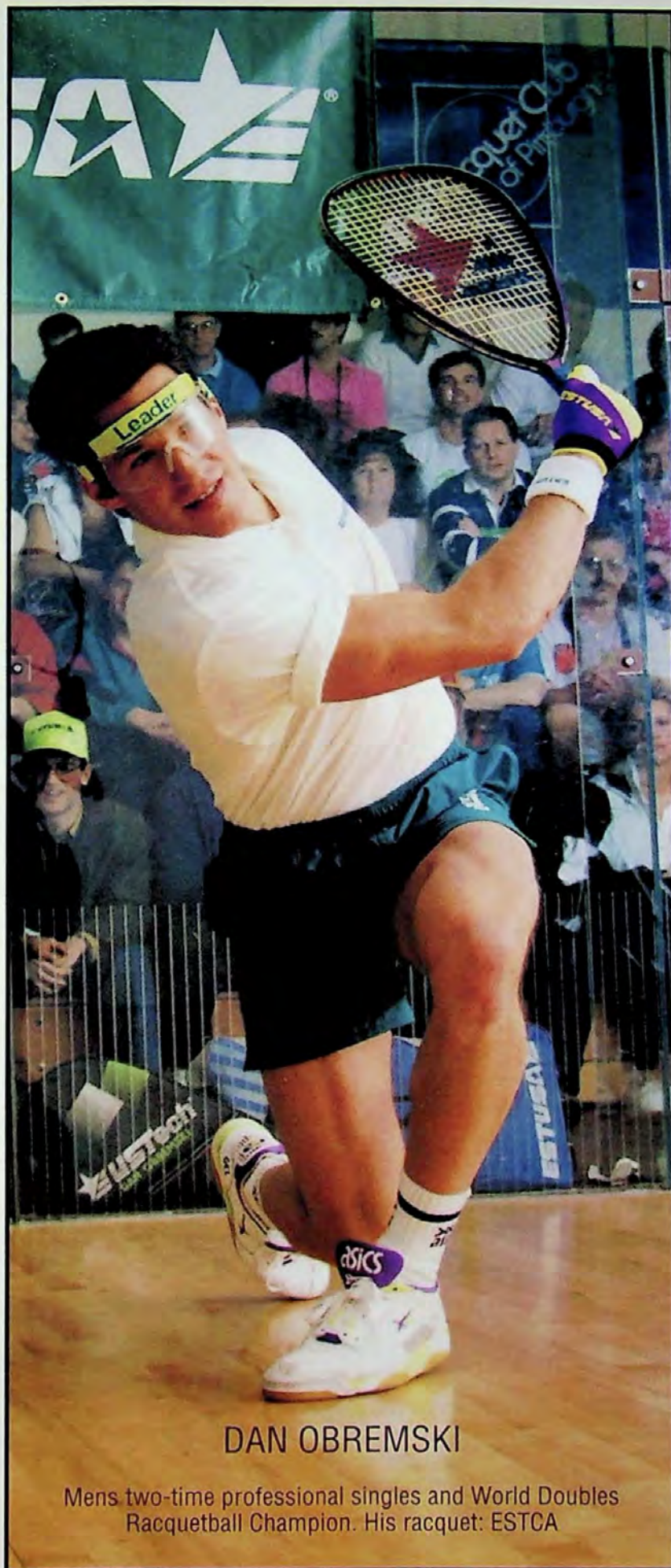
first national championship.

Lyons, 34, and Morgan-Pfahler, 37, now become the elder statesmen of the US National team and their first request might concern child care. "We have three kids between us. Maybe they'll let us bring our kids on the road trips. No one probably wanted to see us win. We don't represent racquetball the way it's played now. Most people believe that power players always beat control players. During our match when Susan missed a shot my advice to her was not to hit the ball so hard. People call our win an upset, but while we haven't been national champs, we have been among the top finishers since 1983.

Potpourri

Here I was minding my own business at a racquetball tournament when this lady starts quizzing me about racquets. Before I could point her in the right direction to a knowledgeable person she says: "Mike, I hear you know a lot about this game." It suddenly dawned on me that I was wearing a golf shirt which had Mike Yellen's name on the back of it. I can't understand how she got confused. My stomach doesn't protrude as much as Mike's.





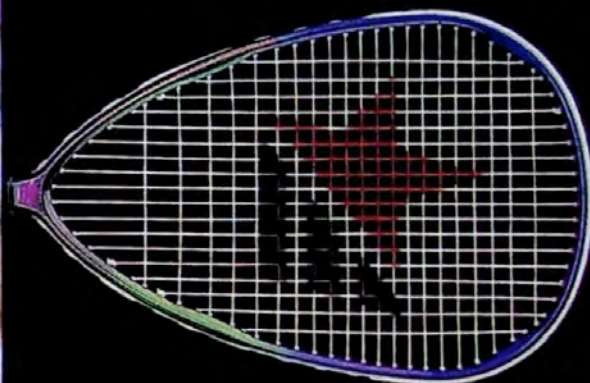
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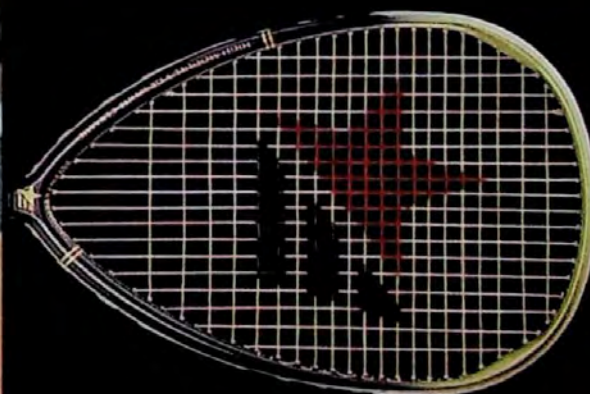
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Just Like in the Story

Sometimes Red Riding Hood, Sometimes the Wolf

Most of the time I just stagger through life blindly so engrossed in what could be that I sometimes don't catch on to what really is. And, though idealistically setting your sights on a future dream is fine, just getting through the day is the real accomplishment.

What really gets me into trouble though is my mouth, or maybe its my ears. Or, maybe its just the way we tend to do things around here. At least I'm gradually learning that you can't do business on a national scale in the high-tech nineties the same way you could in a small town in the 1950's. Problem is I fully intend to carry out whatever I say I'm going to. That's okay, but the real

problem is I fully expect everyone else to do the same. Just like that little girl with the luminous eyes in the story I look trustingly into every situation.

But before I claim wide-eyed innocence in every situation I should admit that there are a few people who would prefer to think of me as the wolf.

There's the guy in Florida who thought we wanted to take his subscription money and wasn't impressed with the time we were taking to settle his account. Actually he didn't call me a wolf; he called me a two-faced schmoozer. He did, however, say he would probably buy a copy of the magazine on the newsstand if I could figure

out what a newsstand was. He also said a couple of things I can't print. I'm working on the newsstand concept.

Then there are a couple of guys we've dealt with that look at me and say "What big eyes you have, grandma." Seems what I hear and what they say don't always jive.

At any rate I miss the days when you could do more business on a handshake and less with a signed and resigned re-faxed fax. You can be sure, though, that I'm learning you have to sign in blood for anything to stick.

And, by the way, what do you have in the basket, little girl?

--S.Q.

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A Pain in the Arm

Tennis Elbow and what to do about it.

By Dr. Kelly G. Worth,
D.C., D.A.B.C.I.

For many professional and amateur racquetball players, Lateral Epicondylitis or as most know it, "Tennis Elbow", is a common enemy. Approximately 78% (and rising) of racquetball players will sometime in their sporting career acquire elbow pain of some kind, and even more prevalent in part-time athletes.

The name tennis elbow derives from the historical fact that this ailment frequently occurs in someone who plays tennis before becoming well conditioned. Current statistics, however, show that any athlete who uses some unusual exertion involving a grip of the hand with lateral play of the wrist is susceptible to possible injury. This of course would include all racquet sports but not exclude baseball, golf, and others.

The pain or discomfort usually starts in the lateral or outside portion of the elbow, sometimes on the medial side aggravated by gripping and rotating. It is certain that any one powerful wrong movement could cause injury, however, the majority of the time repeated micro-trauma is the culprit. Other factors involved causing tennis elbow are:

A. Strain or muscle pull of the wrist extensor muscles which attach to the lateral epicondyle of the elbow joint.

B. Direct trauma or injury from impact to the lateral epicondyle bone of the elbow joint causing bony contusion

C. Injury by hyper-extending the elbow joint too far, causing micro-tearing of the tendon sheath

D. Use of certain racquets have also been found to cause pain in certain players due to the dispersement of weight being detrimental to the players biomechanics.

"Approximately 78% (and rising) of racquetball players will sometime in their sporting career acquire elbow pain of some kind..."

Although most cases of tennis elbow or elbow pain is usually associated to some sort of trauma, there is always the possibility of referred pain. In many cases patients with misaligned cervical vertebrae in the lower portion of their spine would receive referred pain down their arm to the elbow joint and sometimes to the wrist and hand. Carpal-Tunnel syndrome will also refer pain up into the elbow on different occasions.

Many chiropractic sports physicians believe that in patients with tennis elbow there is always involvement of the lower cerviothoracic plexus. This area is where all the important nerves exit the cervical

spine and travel down the upper extremity. The main nerves are the median, ulnar, and radial nerve. Since the nerves are the electrical pathways of pain and sensation it is easy to understand how pinched nerves or nerve interference in any part of the spine can refer such pain down these complicated nerve pathways mimicking true tennis elbow symptoms.

Unfortunately, this is where problems arise. More often than not, the athlete will jump the gun and receive improper treatment (cortisone shots, medication, and even certain therapy) when other undetermined factors are actually involved. This is only a letdown to the athlete who is only trying to get better. Proper diagnosis is a must in tennis elbow patients and finding the exact cause certainly is important in order to properly treat the problem.

Most athletes believe that the first choice of treatment is to go to the orthopedist. In some cases this is necessary conservative treatment in the initial stages should not be overlooked. Depending on the condition of the injury, diagnosis and severity of pain is how one picks care. One place to seek initial care is with a Doctor of Chiropractic. He is suited for proper evaluation of the condition and will be able to detect any outside problems other than the elbow joint such as cervical spine misalignments. If this conservative approach does not help then other methods of treatment might be needed. Most chiropractic doctors will work very closely with orthopedic

medical doctors and will refer when necessary.

A suggested measure of care is:

A. Chiropractic evaluation of injury. A Chiropractic Physician who specializes in sports injuries and works closely with Orthopaedists and Physical Therapists can probably be found in your area.

B. Spinal adjustment is needed. If the problem is misalignment in the neck or upper back then properly adjusting this can sometimes give instant relief.

C. Proper therapy to include cross-friction massage at tendon attachments, long-axial massage to break p chronic existing adhesions which do not allow proper blood flow to the extensor muscles. Proper massage techniques will allow adhesions and scar tissue to be broken up, making proper blood flow through the afflicted area to help flush out toxins. Other modes of therapy such as muscle stimulation, diathermy (heat), ice massage, all will benefit recovery.

D. Ultimately, the best treatment is rest and in severe cases, a splint that fixes the wrist in slight dorsiflexion with the elbow at 90 degrees if needed.

Regular treatment should dismiss the problem in 8-12 weeks unless something has been overlooked, or it is a rather severe

case. If you do not respond to treatment, it is time to look into other areas.

"More often than not, the athlete will jump the gun and receive improper treatment..."

Medication/Cortisone shots: This treatment must be given by an Orthopedist. Proper medication will be utilized for pain and inflammation as well as corticoid injections in different areas of the elbow joint. For some athletes this type of treatment gives dramatic results. However, there are side effects from cortisone that you may not be willing to risk such as arthritis and osteoporosis.

Another factor frequently overlooked is that of vitamins and minerals. Most athletes will deplete themselves of every mineral and vitamin in their bodies and assume that they will get it all back from proper food intake. This is a serious misconception. Every person, particularly athletes,

not only need proper protein, fat, and carbohydrate intake for the regrowth of damaged muscular tissue, but vitamins and minerals too. The body of an athlete is in a much higher demand for these supplements. Consult your nearest nutrition/health food store for help.

Finally, if you have tried every mean s available and you still are having pain in your elbow, the solution might be in the racquet you are using. All racquets are different and you should find the one which is adequate for your anatomical, biomechanical make-up. Vibrasorbs or elbow braces will usually alleviate the problem but in extreme circumstances a totally different racquet could be the answer.

Although "Tennis Elbow" is widely used throughout as a general self diagnosis, you should consult a professional to receive the proper diagnosis and treatment. An athlete can go months, sometimes years with elbow pain because of improper care only to find it was something simple. Do not just simply wait for pain to go away, pain is a good indication that something is not right. Consult a health care professional.



Dr. Kelly G. Worth practices in Southern California and is the husband of WPRP President, Dee Ferreira-Worth.

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HOME COURT

news from the hood

Washington Racquetball Association CAC Holiday Open

More than 100 racquetball players of all levels from pro to novice gathered in Kirkland, Washington, December 2-6 at the Columbia Athletic Club Holiday Open. Matches ran from Wednesday through Sunday with endless rounds of competitive play and an array of exciting matches for spectators and players to view.

The Columbia Athletic Club, a beautiful well-kept club, has a front desk staff who went out of their way to make the tournament a success.

Winners

Men's Open

1. Dan Hardan
2. Eric Lane
3. Rob Herman

Women's Open/A

1. Wanda Collins
2. Carlahn Gayda
3. Ramona DiBiasi

Men's A

1. Eric Hanson
2. Scott Cossette
3. Exequiel Soltero

Men's B

1. Mark French
2. Ty Bowman

Women's B

1. Dianne Pratt
2. Raynita Santiago

The Beer That Made Ohio Famous

In the 1980's when racquetball was reportedly on the decline, a young Ohio player-entrepreneur named Doug Ganim envisioned a first-class, professionally conducted tournament series, and the Coors Light Racquetball Series was born. Today the Coors Light is recognized as one of the best organized and best attended regional series. Ganim has gone on to see the series through to its current status, serves as a marketing consultant for several industry manufacturers, has racked up three world doubles titles, and holds the positions of Ohio Racquetball Association president, and AARA board member. A tight tournament team, and support from the title sponsor, Cincinnati Bell Long Distance, Head Racquetball and Cybex combine to host the popular series. With recent events at Columbus' Westerville Athletic Club, and at Euclid's Gene Weiss Racquettime, Coors Lights are again stirring up excitement in the 1992 - 1993 season.

1992 Men's Open winners include: Brian Jorganson at Westerville, and Jimmy Floyd at Racquettime. Other singles division winners include: Bob Snyder, Rob Swindell, Jim Wray, Rick Lovsin, Craig Hartner, Ken Lesler, Chad Biedel, Ed Christian, Jeff Ely, Dave Kovanda, Rodney Engram, Jeff Hodgkinson, Dominic Palmieri, Larry Hylkema, Mark Koch, Dan Alt, Wally Bekesz, Donna Myers, Val Springer, Robin Daabelt, Janda Samara, Joy Reider, Deidra Miller, Yiji Star, Teresa Irion, Jane Kirchoff, Phillip Hammond, Chris Kovanda, and Jason Lassic.



Ganim

Ektelon Signs as Title Sponsor for New Jersey Super Series

The **Ektelon Super Series**, which consists of 15 amateur-level racquetball tournaments, began in September with the Fall Kick Off at King's Court in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. The series has continued with at least one tournament per month. Future events will include the *GSRA State Singles Championships* March 5-7 and the *AARA Ektelon Adult Regional Championships* in April. The open finals of the regional is scheduled to be tele-

vised. The Series will conclude with a grand finale event, *The Tournament of Champions* in August.

Prize money is guaranteed at all **Ektelon Super Series** tournaments with prizes in every division. For more information about specific events contact Lisa Gaertner at the Garden State Racquetball Association. (201) 444-0859

And it's more fun than doing homework

Where do tomorrow's Drew Kachtiks and Michelle Goulds come from? The answer is simple. They come from club juniors programs where someone has taken the time to instill not only the skills and fundamentals but also the love and enthusiasm of the game.

One such program is underway at the Landmark Club in Dallas. The Grass Roots Juniors Program is open to kids ages seven to twelve and meets every Monday at 4:30. Is there a better way to spend those after school hours?

IRT touring pro Aaron Katz directs the program and is assisted by Scott Davis. Their goal is to bring as many kids as possible to the Junior Nationals in Baltimore in June.

It makes sense why so many top players come from Texas.

Scott Davis, left, Aaron Katz, right, and The Grass Roots Juniors.



Revising Tradition

*Tiger Tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*
---Blake

Practice makes preference long before perfection makes its appearance. Systematic overpractice of one side produces imbalances that become habitual and translate into unilateral overdependency. The impressive performance of the overpracticed side diverts attention from the neglected side so that player and spectator lose awareness of the tremendous capabilities that await development. This misdirection is now exposed. This disconnection of one side from the mainstream of activity is the focus of attack in the rules, rackets and conduct of competition in the new sport called BI RAK IT. Bilateral capabilities sharpened by competition in a format that encourages extended personal development is the basis for a new definition of the word "awesome".

BI RAK ITa fearful symmetry.



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L

ETTERS

I just received today's mail, and I was thrilled to see the 6th edition of **KILLSHOT**.

I am so glad that you guys are not quitters, that I am sending a check for \$16.95 to extend my subscription, and then I am going to sit down and read your magazine from cover to cover. Added to my previous subscription, I guess that gives me a three (3) year subscription. I am looking forward to it.

Racquetball needs a magazine like **KILLSHOT**, and I want you to be successful.

C. Joyce III
Silver Spring, MD

I don't want any refund or adjustment on my subscription. After my two year subscription is up, I'll send for another two years. Some of us don't get to see all racquetball equipment except in your magazine. I buy from **KILLSHOT**.

Also, I like Strandemo's, Davis & Hastings' instruction. Keep it up.
R. Rayl
Wellington, KS

Thank you for making it possible to read about racquetball in an impressive magazine. Even though your magazine has had its problems, I for one, think that all the people who loved your magazine when it was free ought to get their own subscriptions and I wish they would give me my old **KILLSHOT** issues back. Furthermore, I think that all the readers who cry and complain about **KILLSHOT** remind me of the players who yell about refs but never try to solve the problem by volunteering to ref themselves. I also wish they would quit wasting your page and my time. Let us all pull together to bring racquetball the credit it deserves.

Grant Giles
Georgia State Racquetball Board
Community Rep

It has recently come to my attention that you are again publishing issues of **KILLSHOT**. As I have paid for a year subscription before all those free and delayed issues started coming out, I would like to continue to receive the publication. I have not been receiving them, probably because of my change of address.

Please make the appropriate changes and send me the last two issues which I have not received. Thank you very much for your cooperation and good luck keeping the ball "rolling"
M. Davis
Tampa, FL

Boy, are we glad to find you. The P.O. will not forward bulk mail so the only way we can get magazines to you is if you let us know where you are. We've been mailing them ... wonder who's been reading them?

I have enclosed a check for \$16.95 for a one-year subscription to **KILLSHOT**. I'm looking forward to receiving the January/February issue! Thank you for all of your help.

P.S. I think the content/information in your magazine is excellent. Be sure to maintain the quality. That is the winning formula.
C. Kaiser
Grand Rapids, MI

I note, with some concern, your decision to go from a monthly to a whenever. Not that you've been publishing with anything that may be considered a "regular" schedule...but such is the condition with neophytes.

My concern, since I did not see mention of it, is what happens to my 3 year subscription to a monthly magazine. At the rate you are publishing, I can see its conversion to a life-time subscription a possibility.

Kindly advise me of your intent in this regard.
W. Baum
Fairfield, CT

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STRANDEMO
ON RACQUETBALL



Offensive Shot Selection

Part II

By Steve Strandemo

From the previous article I hope you have been cutting off a lot of balls in zone 3 and successfully scoring in those situations. Also, I hope when your opponents have been playing defense in zone 2, that you have made them pay for that positioning by successfully passing them to both sides of the court. We are now ready to add three different offensive positions to conclude this offensive shot selection strategy.

Photo 1

This offensive shot will occur many times in the course of all your matches and tournaments. From the photo it appears obvious that the best and easiest shot is a kill down the right wall; a couple of factors come into play that sometimes alter this obvious shot selection. First, it often happens when both players are hitting aggressively and holding their zone 2-3 positions that they get anxious when they're about to

hit and end up hitting early and driving the ball back crosscourt. That does not mean

they lose the rally with that shot; it just seems their opponent always gets the ball back and the rally continues. Whereas, if they had the patience to wait on the shot they could have driven the ball down the right wall and the point is over. The second factor that comes into play is that hundreds of players are scared to death to hit to their opponent's forehand no matter how obvious the shot selection looks. A player must learn to hit to the *open court*. Unfortunately, many players have been trained to always hit to their opponent's backhand side; no matter what.

Photo 2

The information and advice to photo 2 is identical to photo 1 but notice from the photo that ball contact with your open-stanced backhand is made a little more forward in your stance (more between your left and right foot).



Photo 1



Above; Photo 2; Above Right: Photo 3

Photo 3

This photo shows a similar situation to photo 1 but here the offensive player is hitting from much deeper on the court. The shot selection should be the same; going down the right wall is by far the best shot. A couple of problems often arise. Sometimes the offensive player will make ball contact too far to the right on the front wall and the ball caroms off the right wall back into zone 3. Another problem arises when the offensive player feels he has to flat kill this shot and ends up shipping in way too many potential points.

My suggestion for this situation is to hit the ball very straight to the front wall and aim up about a foot on the front wall to give your shot some realistic margin of error.

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A Pirate Looks at 40

By Clay Walker



When Ruben Gonzalez was running with the Harlem Blues as a street-smart teenager in New York City's Spanish Harlem, he never thought he'd see his 40th birthday. Had he remained there he probably would not have. Many of his old friends and rivals have ended up on drugs, in prison, or dead, and Gonzalez believes that dumb luck has had as much to do with his escape out of his former world of gang fights and roof tag as his racquetball prowess.

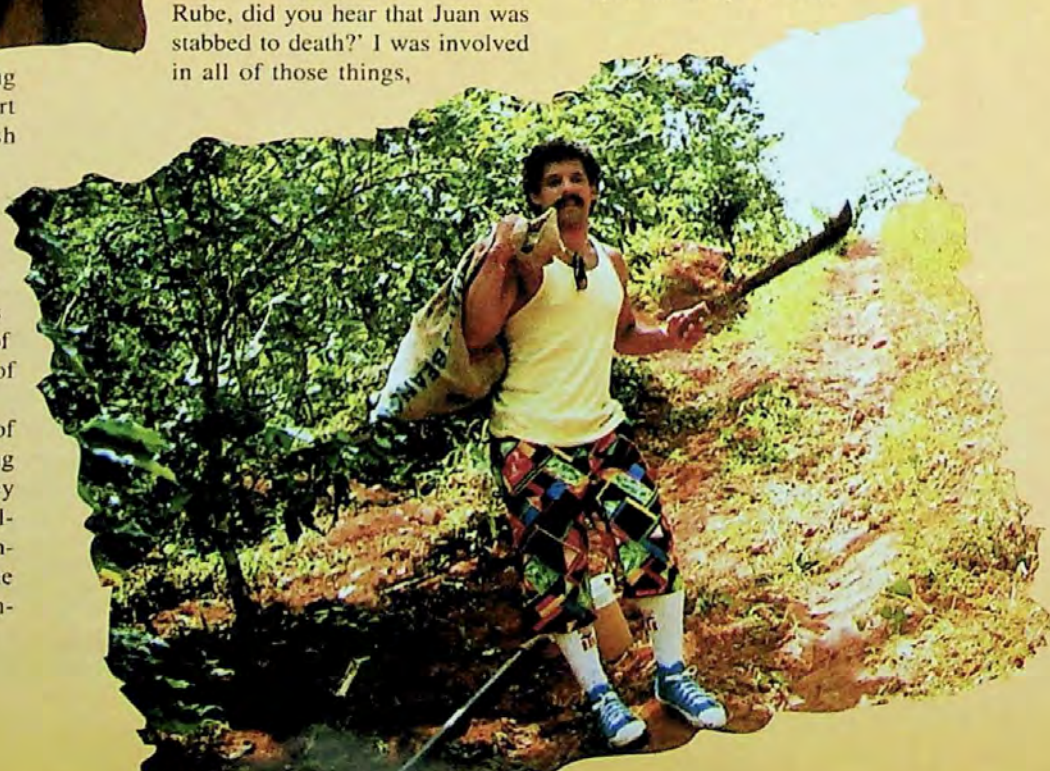
Gonzalez saw more than his share of stabbings, clubbings, and, at times, young lives fade into the darkness of an alley awaiting six stories below due to an ill-advised escape route during a roof tag contest. But Gonzalez found relief from the ghetto's violence on the nearby gray con-

crete handball courts. It was there that Gonzalez began to discover the self-esteem of victory and that defeat did not always result in a trip to the emergency room or the morgue.

"We all got hurt, we all got stabbed, we all got beat up," Gonzalez remembers. "Later on in my life I would go back and someone would say, 'Ya know Rube, Bobby's in prison,' or 'Hey Rube, did you hear that Juan was stabbed to death?' I was involved in all of those things,

but I was able to escape through handball."

Today racquetball is Gonzalez' passion. He has reached his 40th year, fathered four children, and achieved wealth and respect on the professional racquetball tour. But he will never truly escape Spanish Harlem, nor does he have such desires. With each tournament victory and each display of sportsmanship (he has been voted three MPRA Sportsmanship Awards



by his peers), Gonzalez reminds the predominantly white, upper-middle class that rules racquetball that people from his world can handle success with dignity and class in any atmosphere if given the opportunity.

Gonzalez' first opportunity appeared in the form of Russ Mannino who was in awe of his competitor's quickness and toughness as Gonzalez was dominating area handball

claimed a few local tournament victories and fell in love with the sport.

Mannino and Lou DeSantis had opened a racquetball club so Gonzalez asked for a job that would allow him to learn the angles of a four-

prompted DeSantis to furnish a nearby apartment and another

tournaments. Mannino persuaded Gonzalez to try a sport that was catching on in the affluent Staten Island area. After suffering a trouncing in his first tournament, Gonzalez decided this stranger known as defeat wasn't for him. But his pride kept him from returning to professional handball having failed to master the sport of racquetball. With a little practice Gonzalez

walled sport. But the two-hour commute from his home in the Bronx to Staten Island Gonzalez had suffered through several times a week as a casual player would not be practical on an everyday basis. Far too poor to afford a move to the Island, Gonzalez' potential and enthusiasm

friend provided a used refrigerator. Gonzalez could now abandon his habit of practicing his swing on his apartment building's rooftop and pounding shot after shot on the concrete three-wall handball courts. In between stints of registering guests and folding towels, he practiced. He was already in his mid-20's, but Gonzalez soon made it to the pro tour.

"I'm on top because I was committed to being a great racquetball player,"





Gonzalez says of his current standing in the sport. And he has stayed on top because he knows how far it is from the bottom. At 40, he is still the fourth-ranked player in the nation and has already chalked up a victory and second-place finish this year.

"Last season, I thought if he finished in the top eight he'd do well," IRT Commissioner Hank Marcus said. "Now, I think it's possible that he could be Number One. People say it's a sign that a player's career is ending when he's old and in a slump, whereas a younger player is simply in a slump. If he doesn't reach Number One, it will be because someone is a better player, not because he's 40. At this point it's definitely not out of the realm of possibility."

His handball upbringing has definitely shaped Gonzalez' racquetball style. Having grown up playing a game with no back wall, he frequently fly-kills balls and his strong wrists and superb form have helped

him develop an awesome forehand reverse kill.

On the court, Gonzalez is known to call his own skips after getting favorable calls from an official. If he feels an official has unfairly ruled against him, Gonzalez seldom reacts with more than a harsh glance. Still, the intensity that made him a handball legend in New York and enabled him to negotiate the dangers of the streets also makes him stand out on the tour.

It just

stands to reason that someone who has survived so many scrapes and close calls in life wouldn't back down from a few cuts and bruises from diving onto a wooden floor.

"Believe me, I know how lucky I am. A lot of us who were in gangs had the ability to play pro sports, but some of us weren't as lucky," he said. "I remember one night when six of us were in a park and all of a sudden we were surrounded by about twenty guys from another gang carrying bats. A friend of mine named Tony, who was a great pitcher with a ton of promise got hit right across his face. I got hit in the back and managed to get up and get away. I think another guy got hit in the leg and got away. The point is that we all got out of there with just a few cuts except Tony. It could have very easily been me."

As a teenager Gonzalez faced tests other than gang warfare. America was less than the land of opportunity for his father so, in 1967, the family moved back to Puerto Rico. At only fifteen, Gonzalez

stayed behind. He was to live with his grandmother, but her home was merely a place to sleep. Gonzalez' home was the streets.

"I got hit in the back and managed to get up and get away."

"I was already forced into the role of a survivor so I think my staying here was harder for my family than me. When my parents told me we were moving to Puerto Rico I said no way. When you grow up in that environment your friends become your family. They were my protectors. They protected me and I protected them," he said.

Gonzalez faced another test at age 20. When his girlfriend told him she was pregnant, Gonzalez was true to his parents' views on responsibility and he was wed. But Gonzalez refused to abandon his dreams of professional handball. "She wanted me to look for a higher-paying job and I told her that I was going to be a star handball player and she had to be patient," he says of his marital problems. One of the things life on the streets fails to fully teach its young is compromise. The marriage lasted less than a year.

Only a few months passed and Gonzalez was married again. This marriage, however, is still alive. Ruben and Uby Gonzalez have three children: Eddie, 17; Jarett, 16; and Rubi Alexandra, 3. While Gonzalez has found peace of mind in bringing up a family in an environment he could only imagine as a boy, he has always been drawn back to the old neighborhood by his first born son, Ruben, Jr. "To be honest, my relationship with him isn't what I'd like it to be," Gonzalez admits, adding that bitterness between him and his ex-wife has made it difficult to be close to his eldest son. "I understand her feelings. She sees the kind of life I have now and it's got to be tough because we couldn't make it through the early years. But I've tried to have a good relationship with my son. It just hasn't always been easy under the circumstances."

It is ironic that Gonzalez is so much at home around the air-conditioned, carpeted clubs in which he does his business. Most of the touring pros are white and have only read of street gangs and drug dealers.

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Still, they have accepted Gonzalez. In fact, he is a favorite among them.

"They're always asking me to tell them stories about growing up so they're definitely a little curious," Gonzalez said. "When I tell them some of the things I've done or seen when I was younger they can't believe it."

"He definitely doesn't fit the image of what people think of when you mention a professional racquetball player," Marcus says. "In essence, racquetball is like tennis
i n

image. I think the person who deserves credit for that is Ruben. He has programs to give something to the lower-income kids. He goes out of his way to tell his story and to be a role model."

While a quiet person by nature, Gonzalez admittedly enjoys the limelight he labored so hard to achieve. He expects respect but makes it a point not to intimidate fans. He is a tireless autograph signer and a prized spokesman for racquetball manufacturers because of his looks and easy demeanor. No one has ever left a racquetball match discussing an obscene outburst when Ruben Gonzalez is playing.

His unassuming personality has created an unlikely friendship with Mike Ray, a top player with whom Gonzalez plays doubles and rooms on the road. Ray comes from a southern, middle-class family. The only thing the pair have in common is a love for privacy.

"Ruben's personality provides the sport with a good image. He's a very laid-back and quiet guy. In fact, I always hesitate in telling people too much about Ruben because he is so private," Ray said.

Gonzalez isn't quite as reluctant to discuss personal issues as Ray. In fact, at times he can't say enough about his friend.

"It's strange because we do have completely different backgrounds, but Mike and I just hit it off," he says. "We are both quiet and respect each other's privacy. But it's more than just that. He's my friend, my family. I don't

know how to put into words how much his friendship has meant to me."

Ray is among the believers Gonzalez' age will not stand in the way of his quest for the top ranking. Gonzalez



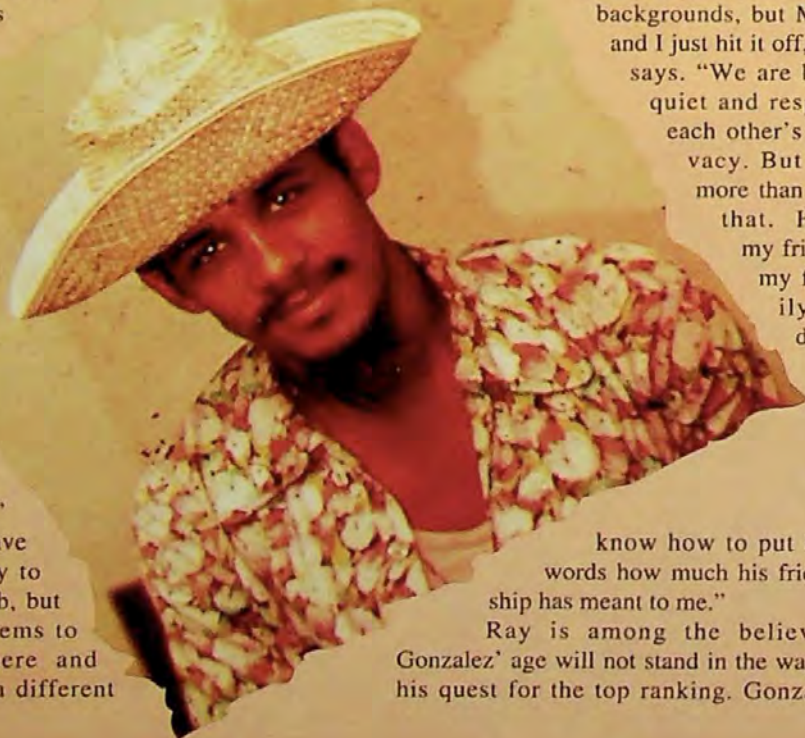
won his first professional match in 1988. He also upset five-time champion Mike Yellen to win the National Championship

"When I tell them some of the things I've done...they can't believe it."

that same year, becoming the oldest player to do so. While he hasn't ever been known as a dominant force on the tour, he has remained one of the most consistent players. He is also the most experienced -- if not in the sport, in life -- among the premiere players. The next oldest top ten player is a mere 28 and with every win Gonzalez establishes a new mark in endurance.

Gonzalez' road out of the ghetto of his youth has been unique to say the least. It is also a road that always leads him home. "I came from the ghetto. I don't want to act like I'm in the ghetto when I am working, but I do want to stay down to earth," he says. "I don't need the limo or the hotel suite. I'm still one of the people. I don't regret anything about being poor or in the gangs. That's what made me successful -- knowing how to survive."

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VCI Spreadsheet

IRT

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2. Andy Roberts (2)
Memphis, Tennessee
3. Cliff Swain (8)
Braintree, Massachusetts
4. Drew Kachtik (5T)
Dallas, Texas
5. Ruben Gonzalez (4)
Staten Island, New York
6. Tim Doyle (5T)
Huntington Beach, California
7. Jack Newman (7)
Des Plaines, Illinois
- 8T. Bret Harnett (10)
Las Vegas, Nevada
- 8T. Tim Sweeney (13)
Chicago, Illinois
10. Mike Guidry (12)
Dallas, Texas
- 11T. Woody Clouse (14)
Jacksonville, Florida
- 11T. Dan Obremski (9)
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
13. Dave Johnson (11)
Huntington Beach, California
14. Mike Ceresia (16)
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- 15T. Jason Krickorian
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- 15T. Todd O'Neil
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- 1. Mike Ray
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The featured state in the next issue
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New Jersey



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Play It Again, Sam

**With Their Second Wins of the Season,
Roberts, Swain, and Ray Prove Unstoppable
--As Time Goes By**

Photos by Robert Lipareli

Chicago
Roberts: Cool Breeze in Windy City
By Ralph Kusche

Other tournaments may open the Chicago racquetball season; but it is never in earnest until it is time for the Head Halloween Classic at the suburban Woodfield Racquet Club. This is the one

for which players prepare over the summer, since it regularly draws large numbers of the best from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota as well as Illinois. The Woodfield club is home not only to pro players Dave and John Negrete, but also IRT pros, past national amateur champions

and world inter-collegiate champions Jack Newman and Tim Sweeney. The warmth of the Woodfield club in the chilly October winds, the hospitality of Dave Negrete, the amazing abilities of the pros and cash awards for most of the age divisions make this tournament the favorite gathering of the year for Midwestern players.

As the 32's opened in Chicago, there would be few surprises in store. A delay at the airport in southern California caused #11 seed Dave Johnson to miss the opening round and valuable Chicago ranking points. Local



favorite John Negrete might have had #4 seed Ruben Gonzalez on the ropes if he had been able to convert his two game points in the first game. Negrete's near-perfect backhand splats found Gonzalez in disbelief. In the only match pairing closely ranked players, Canadian National Champion Mike Ceresia captured the win in four over Texan Todd O'Neil. In all

Andy Roberts

9-11, 11-9, 2-11, 11-3, 11-6

Mike Ray

SEMIS

Ray d. Kachtik

11-13, 11-3, 5-11, 11-4, 11-3

Roberts d. Clouse

12-10, 11-9, 11-3

QUARTERS

Ray d. Swain

11-8, 6-11, 13-11, 11-2

Kachtik d. Gonzalez

11-6, 6-11, 14-12, 11-8

Clouse d. Harripersad

11-8, 14-16, 11-5, 7-11, 11-9

Roberts d. Harnett

3-11, 11-5, 11-4, 9-11, 11-4

SIXTEENS

Ray d. Ceresia

11-2, 11-5, 7-11, 11-7

Swain d. Obremski

11-9, 6-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-9

Kachtik d. Guidry

11-4, 8-11, 11-3, 11-5

Gonzalez d. Sweeney

11-8, 11-4, 11-8

Clouse d. Yellen

5-11, 11-6, 11-1, 11-6

Harripersad d. Doyle

11-8, 9-11, 4-11, 13-11, 11-8

Harnett d. Newman

11-3, 11-7, 11-6

Roberts d. Krickorian

11-1, 11-4, 11-6

Chicago



other cases, every higher seed won his opening match. It was a feat best enjoyed while it lasted.

The round of sixteen brought about the upsets the crowd passionately awaited. Only three of the top eight seeds won in this round. Those three were Ray, Roberts,

and Gonzalez. Top seeds Ray and Roberts won quickly in three. Fans anticipated the victories, but not the speed with which they occurred. Crowd favorites Newman and Sweeney were taken out in three merciless games by Bret Harnett and Gonzalez. The biased Chicago crowd could be of little

Opposite: Roberts regroups during a time-out.

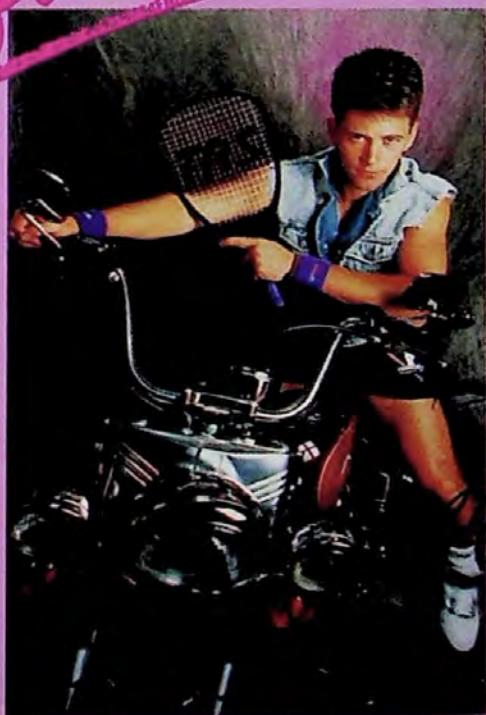
Left: Swain effectively moves Obremski around the court for a win at Chicago's Woodfield Racquet Club

help. Cliff Swain, the #8 seed and Dan Obremski the #9 battled a tough get-and-go five game blaster before Swain claimed the win. Doubles partners Drew Kachtik and Mike Guidry faced off with Kachtik winning in four.

The two matches that got the most crowd attention were Mike Yellen vs. Woody Clouse and Tim Doyle vs. Roger Harriersad. Having just switched to the new E Force racquet, Clouse surprised every one with his ability to get Yellen's well-placed passes and to rekill his left-ups with a deft touch in the front court. After a first game loss, #14 seed Clouse took the next three in a convincing fashion. Canadian national team star and former intercollegiate champion Harriersad used his long reach and never-say-die attitude to post the upset against #5 seed Doyle. Despite breaking a string and having to

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By TRS



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Canadian National Team's Roger Harripersad lunges for a get in a strong showing in Chicago.

borrow a Strobe in game four, he overcame four match points for the 16 - 14 win. The extended two point win rule was a crowd-pleaser. Harripersad carried his momentum into game five for the win over last year's Chicago winner.

In the quarters, Kachtik played a par-

ticularly strong first game against Gonzalez. Kachtik jumped to a quick 8 - 2 lead by rolling out numerous backhand splats (his best shot of the day). Time and again he went to the same well for winners. After trading the first two, each man served three times for the win in game three.

Finally, Kachtik's backhand splat ended the rally for the 14 - 12 Kachtik win. Down 7 - 4 in the fourth, Kachtik refused to give up. A full horizontal stretch for a terrific get resulted in a skip for Gonzalez that would bring an end to an intense and very physical match. Kachtik walked with a victory in this battle of an ongoing war.

Against Clouse, Harripersad continued to amaze. In game two, he was able to hang tough through one game point for a 16 - 14 win. Plagued by broken strings, Harripersad suffered through two more breaks in this match. Clouse was a man on fire in Chicago as he ripped ball after ball with incredible precision. A clean roll taken off a slightly long Harripersad ceiling ball brought Clouse the win and a berth in the semi's.

Against Roberts, Harnett took an overwhelming 10 - 0 lead out of the blocks before posting a decisive victory. In games two and three, Roberts changed the pace with off-speed kills for near reversals of

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Harnett hits the deck as Newman moves in to position.

the first game. Harnett fought savagely enough in game four for the win and a chance at the match in the fifth. In the breaker Roberts proved too intense as he stretched for the early 7 - 2 lead that made the difference for the win.

Swain's best effort against Ray in Chicago was a game two comeback from 0 - 5 for the win. Ray kept squandering big leads, letting a 10 - 2 lead in game three become 10 - 10 before finishing Swain in the extended game. As Ray saw his 6 - 1 lead begin to slip away in the deciding game four, he went to a slice serve to Swain's forehand to close it out in quick fashion. Ray's "between-the-legs back-hand rollout" from 38 feet won the spectators' award for the best-of-show.

Although Roberts opened the semi's with a win in three over Clouse, the match began much closer than it looked on paper. The extended game one could have gone either way. In game two, controver-



sial calls seemed the norm. One Clouse serve called short was overturned on the appeal to give Clouse the ace. Roberts protested that the serve had only been unreturnable because he had stopped play with the short call. The ensuing replay on the decision of commissioner Hank Marcus

took the final wind from Clouse's sails.

The Ray / Kachtik match was a see-saw five-game. Falling behind in game five because of numerous skips and poor shot selection, Kachtik lost his composure and began to self-destruct. Ray kept on the pressure for the convincing win with an

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SEMIS

Swain d. Roberts
11-6, 11-3, 11-2
Newman d. Ray
11-6, 11-8, 11-5

Cliff Swain

11-4, 11-5, 11-4

Jack Newman

QUARTERS

Roberts d. Sweeney
11-3, 11-6, 11-2
Swain d. Clouse
11-10, 11-3, 11-4
Newman d. Gonzalez
11-7, 9-11, 12-10, 6-11, 12-10
Ray d. Doyle
11-13, 11-6, 11-6, 11-7

SIXTEENS

Roberts d. Ceresia
11-4, 11-6, 11-3
Sweeney d. Yellen
8-11, 8-11, 11-5, 11-5, 11-7
Swain d. Katz
11-8, 11-0, 11-9
Clouse d. Paraiso
11-5, 11-2, 11-10
Gonzalez d. Obremski
11-8, 11-6, 3-11, 11-7
Newman d. Harnett
5-11, 11-9, 8-11, 11-8, 11-4
Doyle d. Guidry
11-5, 11-9, 9-11, 11-6
Ray d. Krickorian
11-8, 11-5, 11-2

Riverside, California

intense display of emotional determination.

In the final, Roberts absolutely dominated game one and the beginning of game two. Ray rebounded for wins in two and three. At 4 - 9 in game four, Roberts' side-out seemed to win back momentum. Surviving four game points for the win in game four, Roberts burned up game five playing his best ball of the season. His decisive 11 - 2 win brought him the number one ranking and the first place check.

Riverside, California Swain Untouchable on the West Coast by Ralph Kusche

Each year autumn brings the International Racquetball Tour back into the traditional hotbed of racquetball, Southern California. An hour east of Los Angeles, Riverside's Tournament House is home to many of California's finest such as Steve Lerner and Jeff Conine, as well as greats from the past, Rich Wagoner and Craig McCoy. The rabid crowds, industry



Above: Woody Clouse in a moment of jubilation.

Below: Kachtik goes airborne in Baltimore.

Below right: Ray and Roberts battling in the final in Baltimore.

VIP's, a handful of WPRA pros including Toni Bevelock make Riverside truly festive in mid November. With the level of play, the terrific location, and tremendous hospitality, it is well worth building time into your calendar for this one.

Unlike Chicago, numerous upsets in

the round 32 in Riverside seemed like a replay of last year's event. A qualifier in this event, San Diego's Joey Paraiso looked more like a regular touring pro as he neatly took out Kachtik in four. Katz made another appearance on his abbreviated tour schedule and quickly upset Californian Johnson in three short games. Jason



Krickorian has improved his game enough to pass the first round stumbling block with several appearances this season in the round of sixteen, a current number fifteen ranking, and big win in Riverside against Texas' Todd O'Neil. Another qualifier, Adam Karp looked tough carving out several opportunities against #2 seed Ray before Ray won in four.

The highlight of the round of sixteen was the Sweeney vs. Yellen match-up. Yellen took the first two games, controlling the pace as most everything Sweeney tried had little success. Sweeney, however, proved in Memphis against Harnett that he is the kind of player that can turn things around from two games down. Somehow, Sweeney managed to pass Yellen enough to win games three and four before falling behind a smoking Yellen in game five. Determined to go down fighting, Sweeney found the range on his awesome drive serves and quickly scored ten points. A controversial call at 10 - 6 regarding the new professional "out-of-court" ruling was no salvation for Yellen as Sweeney grabbed the win, 11 - 6.

Another tough five-gamer in the sixteens was Newman vs. Harnett. In Chicago, Harnett steamrolled Newman on home turf in three. At first, Riverside appeared to be a repeat performance. Newman, however, showed what years of experience can do as he made all the necessary adjustments to combat Harnett's power. Newman used some extremely tight, well-placed, and well-paced half lobs to keep Harnett from setting up by games

four and five. In the rallies, Newman cut off the ball early and found a rhythm hitting behind a charging Harnett to capture his first victory over Harnett in five.

Gonzalez, with a muscle hyperextension in the rib cage area won in four over Obremski with a damaged shoulder that has caused lack-luster play all season. Doyle and Swain blew past the Texas contingent of Guidry and Katz in three games each. Clouse stopped the upset king Paraiso in his tracks in a quick three. The top seeds, Roberts and Ray easily won in three.

Newman and Gonzalez met in the quarters after just having conducted a camp at the host club the previous weekend. Gonzalez, obviously still suffering the effects of injury, took some big risks that he would not have otherwise. Shooting for accuracy instead of power, Gonzalez held tough. Newman grabbed the lead with two unbelievable backhand splat rollouts at 10 - 10 in game three. Gonzalez took game four after a series of four consecutive diving gets that ended in a backhand rollout at 6 - 7. Going back and forth, Newman tied things up at 10 - 10 in game five, with a straight kill off a left-up shot. Two more backhand winners gave him the match. To Newman's credit, he wisely chose smart play over shooting for seemingly easy winners against the disadvantaged Gonzalez.

A controversial hinder in game one gave Doyle a sideout against Ray at 10 - 11 that he converted to a 13 - 11 win. When Ray becomes animated over a call, rest assured that it's questionable at best. Ray, one of the most composed players



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SEMIS		Mike Ray 9-11, 11-9, 2-11, 11-3, 11-6
Roberts d. Kachtik 12-10, 11-6, 11-4 Ray d. Swain 9-11, 11-2, 11-6, 11-6		Andy Roberts
SIXTEENS		QUARTERS
Roberts d. Krickorian 11-9, 7-11, 11-6, 11-7 Yellen d. Sweeney 11-3, 11-1, 11-0 Kachtik d. Clouse 11-4, 11-8, 1-11, 11-7 Obremski d. Gonzalez 5-11, 7-11, 11-3, 11-7, 11-8 Swain d. Johnson 11-13, 12-10, 11-7, 9-11, 11-6 Guidry d. Newman 1-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-6 Doyle d. Simonette 11-9, 11-4, 9-11, 8-11, 11-5 Ray d. Ceresia 11-5, 11-5, 8-11, 11-7		Roberts d. Yellen 12-10, 11-6, 8-11, 11-1 Kachtik d. Obremski 8-11, 7-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-2 Swain d. Guidry 11-6, 11-8, 11-5 Ray d. Doyle 11-5, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9
		Baltimore

ever, used this energy to turn up the heat on Doyle in the next two for 11-6 wins. With a similar finish in game four, Ray's mental toughness and consistency proved victorious on this day.

was a match-up of controlled power, cat-and-mouse racquetball. Ray went to his trademark "slice" serves in game two but to no avail. Newman seemed to do no wrong with consistent winners and some tough

Sweeney started hesitantly against Roberts, confused whether to short hop Roberts lobs, or wait and take them to the ceiling. Roberts was up 9-0 before Sweeney first scored. Games two and three were no different as a cold Sweeney faced a hot Roberts who looked as if he could do no wrong in this match as he scored match point on a chest-high rollout from center court.

Newman's famous backhand and a couple of crisp cross courts brought him an early lead and game one victory against Ray. It

cracks for the upset in three straight.

Swain entered against Roberts playing a cut above right from the start. The only real suspense was whether Roberts could avoid a first game doughnut. He did not. Games two and three were only slightly better with scores of two and three. An obviously frustrated Roberts found himself in a ball throwing altercation as tempers flared after Roberts drilled Swain with a service return. The two thought better of it and ended the match a couple of points later without further outbreak.

In the final, Swain pressured Newman into numerous unforced errors. Playing like a man possessed, Swain's incredible reflexes and intensity could not be stopped. With an easy win in three, Swain had gone through the entire draw suffering only one loss, that at the hands of Louis Vogel in the round of 32. Swain announced after the victory that he is back with a vengeance after a brief hiatus and foray into pro tennis. Southern California has proved to be good to Swain, with numerous pro wins here in past seasons, an earlier victory this season in Los Angeles, and a title from the old days at the elite Ektelon Nationals.

Baltimore VW Credit Series Ray grabs his first VCI Win By Mark Henry

First there was Roberts in Dallas in January claiming the inaugural VCI event. Then Hogan took New York, and Swain took Los Angeles. This year, Gonzalez added his name to the prestigious list in Montreal. Now, Ray joins the group with a big victory in the VCI Series in Baltimore in late November.

One of the best spectator facilities in the nation, the Merrit Athletic club provides two side/back wall glass courts end to end which can be observed from any level in the vast facility. Hosting the event were the newly emerging promotional team of JAM Sports. Responsible for several major first class events this year, the group has become quite visible in the Northeastern U.S.

The only upset in the opening round

One and two seeds Ray and Roberts fought a tough five-game bout at Baltimore's Merrit Athletic Club.



was by Baltimore's own Dave Simonette against Harnett. Simonette is a former national team member, World Champion Memphis State team member, and former successful junior competitor. In one of the best matches of the tournament, Simonette and Harnett battled through five incredible games of grit and determination. Great court coverage and precise shot selection by both players provided an amazing show. In the end, Simonette claimed victory after an intense match with two extended games.

In the sixteens, Yellen found his revenge on Sweeney from Riverside by dispatching him in the blink of an eye in three with one doughnut. A less-than-recovered Obremski came back from two down to impose the same revenge on Gonzalez. Guidry forced a big upset against Newman. It was Doyle that ended Simonette's run but not without difficulty and five good games.

In four games, Roberts dispatched Yellen in a semi that seems like their 100th of the season. Swain never let Guidry get started by demolishing him in a quick

three. Ray was smooth as silk as he stayed in control and one step ahead against Doyle's shotgun blasts.

Surprisingly, the most excitement of the round came from the Kachtik vs. Obremski match. It was a return to Obremski's usual top-notch form in the first two games as he moved Kachtik well around the court for clear victories. It has been a disappointing opening season for Obremski due to a preseason training injury to his right shoulder. With the difficulty he encountered in his swing combined with a loss of valuable training time, Obremski has dropped from his usual top eight position. In this match, he displayed his typical championship form, complete with his usual hustle, diving gets, and smoking-gun serves. Unfortunately for Obremski, his two game lead was not a cushion against Kachtik. Kachtik's scrambling and amazing rekills are tailor made for a high speed, powerful opponent. Here it was Kachtik in five in a crowd favorite.

In the semis, Roberts gained the upper hand against Kachtik in the extended first

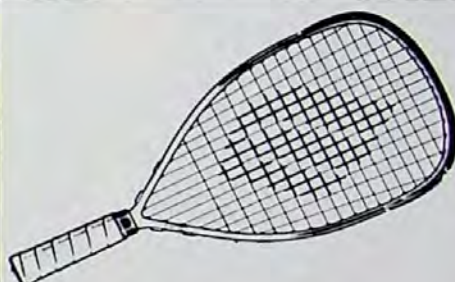
game and never let go. With careful reading and remarkable shooting, Roberts frustrated Kachtik in three games. Both playing great ball, Ray and Swain matched up in the other semi for a meeting of rivals from recent seasons past. Focussed and tough this year after last year's ups and downs, Ray stayed confident and authoritative for the win in four against one of the hottest players in today's game.

In the final, Roberts and Ray both started out hungry. Knowing as much about one another's style as any pair on the tour, these two pull no punches. There was no lack of intensity in the televised final as each man jockeyed for position and control. A textbook example of a well-planned agenda on the court, each man calculated every step and adjusted to every unexpected twist and turn. Roberts tried to revisit the form that captured the 1991 TransCoastal Grandnationals by taking Ray off balance with well timed power shots. Ray, however was ready to change the pace enough to force Roberts out of perfect set-ups then capitalize for the win.

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RAC213

Pros and Cons of Shot Selection

Racquetball's right way and wrong way

By Fran Davis & Stu Hastings

Taking the right shot at the right time can win or lose a match.. This is what we call *shot selection*. Many of us get into the heat of battle and don't think, we just "bang". We are often guilty of hitting the

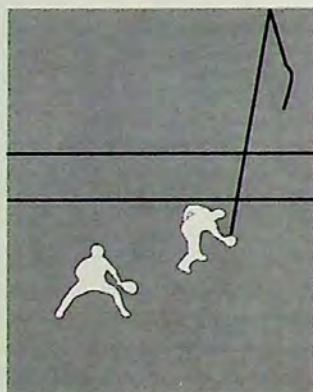
shot we like or the shot we feel comfortable with at the time as opposed to taking the appropriate shot that will win the point.

The formula that we developed and that we use at our camps to explain shot

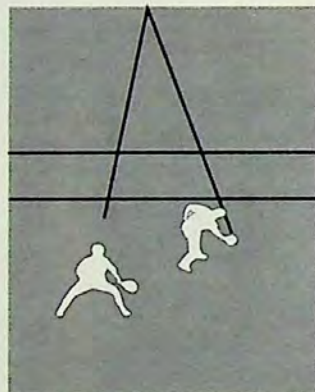
selection can be found in the box.

In addition to the formula three additional tips to keep in mind are:

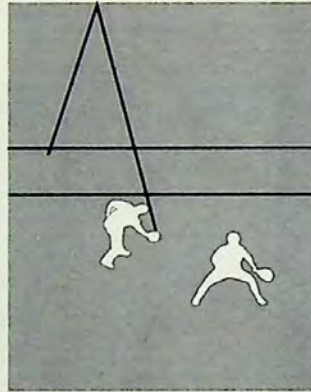
1) Where your opponent is *not*.



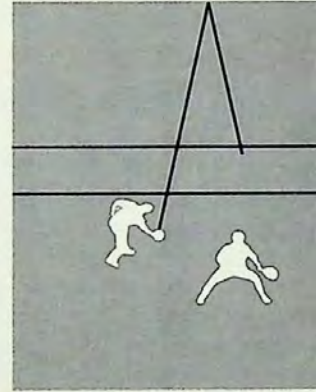
Pros



Cons



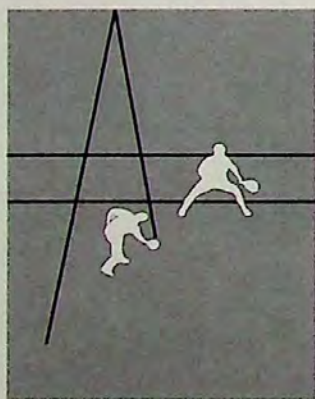
Pros



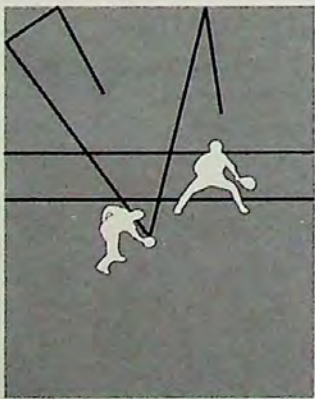
Cons

a.) If your opponent is on the left side of the court, hit to the right side not back at him (unless you are deliberately jamming him)

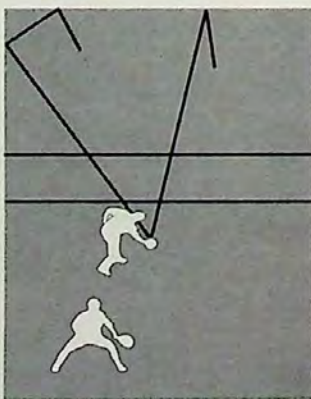
b.) If your opponent is on the right side of the court hit to the left side not back at her (unless you are deliberately jamming her)



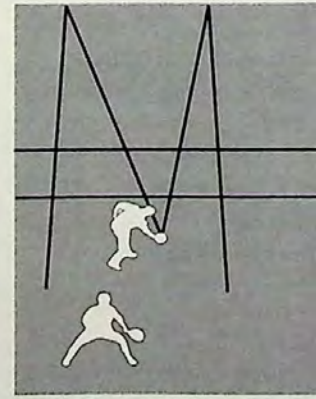
Pros



Cons



Pros



Cons

c.) If your opponent is up front, hit deep -- a pass or ceiling shot, not a kill or a pinch

d.) If your opponent is back hit up front -- a pinch or kill

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc}
 A & + & B & + & C & + & D & = & E \\
 \text{YOU} & & \text{BALL} & & \text{OPPONENT} & & \text{SCORE} & & \text{SHOT SELECTION}
 \end{array}$$

A- YOU. Your position on the court and your ability level

B- BALL. Height, speed, and angle of the ball coming at you

C- OPPONENT. Opponent's position (most important)

D- SCORE. Score of the game/match

E- SHOT SELECTION. What shot you should take

Add up all of these factors to determine a high percentage shot selection

2.) Try to keep your body between the ball and your opponent, to shade the ball more effectively

3.) Make your opponent run the furthest distance to get to the ball -- more time hitting on the run equals more errors

Shot selection, just like court position is a crucial part of the game. Do not take it lightly and feel that with your athletic abil-

ity and power you can roll the ball out or blow it by your opponent. Every time you hit a winner ask yourself, "If the ball was left up and returnable and I didn't roll it out could my opponent have returned it?" If the answer is yes, then you didn't take the right shot because you hit it right back to your opponent (unless it was a deliberate jam). The point of shot selection is if you hit the right shot at the right time you

will win more points more quickly and conserve energy. Instead of winning a match in two hours, 11-10 tiebreaker, with smarter shot selection the results of winning the match would be the same, but you would win in one hour two straight, 15-10, 15-11. Be more selective in your shots because you will see playing smarter is better than playing harder. Give it a try, it works.

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The Serve as a Weapon:

The Smoking Gun of the Power Game

By Jack Newman

In the old west shoot outs, (at least the ones in the old movies) it was always the gunslinger with the best draw that lived to walk away. Some were fast, some were deceptive, and some were just unpredictable. The thing that they all had in common was a level of confidence in their ability to start the fight with a decided advantage. In racquetball, the "quick draw" that starts the fight is the serve. Just like the gunslingers, today's racquetball player needs strong serves he can execute with confidence.

Whether you are a "power player", a "control player" or somewhere in-between, it is vital that you realize that the serve in itself is a powerful weapon. Even at the club level, the player that can successfully blast his serves usually wins the match. You were probably taught early in

your racquetball career that the serve is important because it is your chance to play the ball from a perfect set-up, and because it is like an opening in chess that dictates the pattern for play that follows.

Just like the club level, in the matches on the International Racquetball Tour, the serve may be the determining factor in the outcome of the match. In three recent matches, the strong serve made all the difference.

In November in Riverside California, Cliff Swain re-asserted himself as one of the best servers in the history of the game. A racquetball prodigy, Cliff emerged as a teenager in the mid 1980's winning everything in sight. He combined a sharp mind, tremendous athletic ability, and amazing power packed into a small frame to storm

the pro tour. In the semi final in the top half of the draw, Cliff would face one of the best-schooled and most accomplished players on the tour, Andy Roberts. Andy had demolished him in New Orleans in August, so Cliff was primed for revenge. Cliff has a very deceptive service motion that disguises his shots very effectively. As a lefty, he confuses opponents even more and is able to drive serve very effectively against right-handers.

In Riverside, Cliff skillfully mixed powerful drives down both sides and Z's to the backhand to crush Andy in three straight. It was an awesome serving display that earned Cliff six aces in each game. Because of the power Cliff could generate and disguise so well, Andy's amazing anticipation was shattered. After many weak returns, Andy could only shrug

his shoulders and begin to regroup for the next event.

On the other side of the glass, I watched with interest as I would then face Cliff in the finals. I formulated a strategy right away to try to slow the pace and to be especially ready to return his serves to the best of my ability. I also figured there would be no way Cliff could serve as consistently as he had against Andy.

I was completely mistaken. Cliff continued his incredible serving to keep me off balance in every rally. He smoked me in three straight. I could only shrug my shoulders and get ready for the next event.

Farther into the depths of the power servers, is California's Tim Doyle. Tim's ballistic serves have become legend on the pro tour. While Tim's drives lack the deception Cliff achieves, they more than make up for it in sheer speed. When he is on a roll, Tim's serves are nearly impossible to return.

Probably the best defense against the shotgun serve belongs to Mike Ray. Mike's long strides and reach enable him to get balls that are out of play for most

Returning the Power Serve

To return the power serve you must have good footwork and a quick stroke, like Mike Ray. The big mistake most players make on a power drive serve is in trying to kill the ball when returning the serve in an off-balance position. This results in a skip.

other players. With short fast strokes, Mike uses precise passes to take advantage

of the server's far forward position.

Ray vs. Doyle has occurred twice this season, in Riverside and at the VCI Series event in Baltimore. Both times, Mike has come up a relatively easy winner in four games. The lesson to be learned here is that with proper strategy and timing, strong returns can be made even against the world's best power servers.

Mike is like the Jimmy Connors of our tour in that he can destroy the big servers. Without combining speed with deception, most of the blasters become frustrated against Mike once he adjusts to their pace.

It is extremely important that you develop a strong confident power serve as you climb the ranks. Since you have two serves to work with, you will be able to overpower most B and C players with aces. As you progress beyond this level, you will need to develop strong returns and good deception on your serves as well. As you can see, we not only teach this in our camps, but have to learn more and more subtleties constantly in our matches on the IRT.

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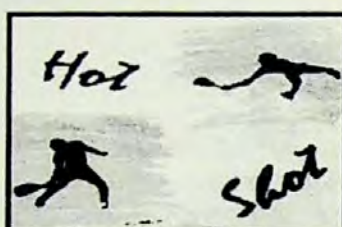
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Manchester, NH	Mar. 20 - 21	Roberts/Gonzalez	Minneapolis, MN	May 1 - 2	Newman/Roberts
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Professional Misconception

By Dee Ferreira-Worth

President, Women's Professional Racquetball Association

I began playing racquetball in the early 1970's at fire stations, since my stepfather was a fireman. I played all of the firefighters and their friends. It was years before I ever played another woman. In the late 1970's, the sport took off like wild fire, clubs sprung up like weeds and everyone who was *anyone* played the game.

At that time, I began to play in local tournaments. I subscribed to all of the Racquetball publications and every part of my life had racquetball in it.

Finally, in the mid 1980's I tried my hand at playing in the professional division any time a Pro Stop was local. I made it through qualifying every time, but would run up against someone like Lynn Adams or Marci Drexler in the round of 32. I never considered myself a

pro at this point and kept my distance from the "real" pros, even though I had been playing longer than most of them. In 1987, I made to the round of 16. I was ecstatic. I had beaten the number 18 ranked player in three games and felt that perhaps I could be right in there. However, even though I was a member of the WPRRA, played in the Pro Division on and off for years, I still did not venture out of my area to play any of the other stops throughout the country.

I received the entry forms in the mail and talked about going for years, but I just did not have the courage to go. The reason? FEAR. Oh, not of the game itself, but of what the other professional players would think of me. I just did not feel that I would be accepted or welcome

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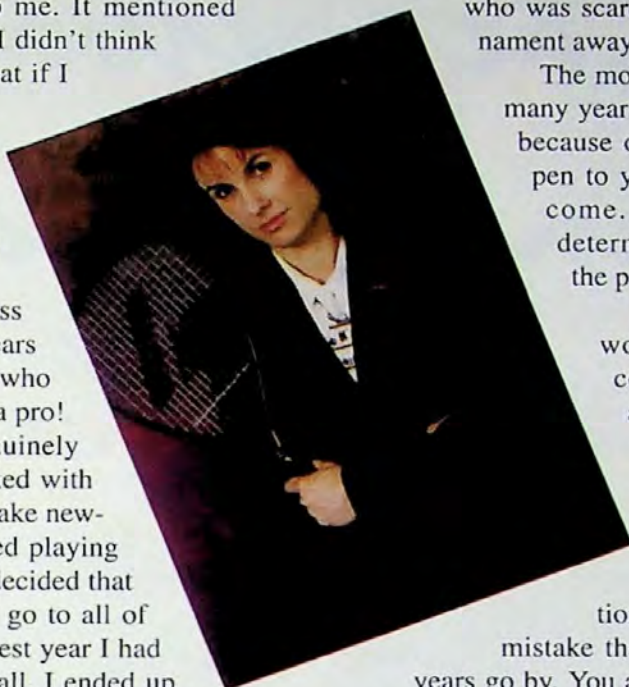
and that I might even be laughed at. The entry form would say something about Pro transportation from the airport, I didn't think it applied to me. It mentioned something about pro housing, again I didn't think I was included. Further, I believed that if I did go to any of these tournaments, no one would speak to me, that I would be completely alone in a strange city and that all of the women would ask me why I was wasting my time.

Finally, in 1991 I did go and guess what? I found out that all of these fears were untrue! I found out that anyone who enters the pro division is treated like a pro! I found out that there are some genuinely warm and wonderful women associated with the tour who go out of their way to make newcomers welcome. When I had finished playing the tournament in Atlanta in 1991, I decided that I had such a good time that I would go to all of the stops. 1991 turned out to be the best year I had ever had up to that point in racquetball. I ended up at the end of that season ranked 20, was voted to the

Board of Directors of the WPRA and had won the Sportsmanship Award. not bad for someone who was scared to even go to her first tournament away from home.

The moral of this story is that I let too many years go by not playing on the tour because of my fear. Don't let this happen to you. New people are very welcome. Anyone who has the guts, determination, and passion to play the pro division *is a pro*.

I know of many excellent women players throughout the country who I have played in amateur events that are perfect candidates for the pro tour. I truly believe that one of the reasons they don't play on the tour is because of some of the same misconceptions I had. Don't make the same mistake that I made. Don't let too many years go by. You are welcome on the tour. Come on, give it a try!



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Looks Can Kill...

Racquetball on the Road

A few tips for the not so accidental tourist

By Victor Block

Karen and Dick Goodman finish a day of sunbathing, swimming in the crystal clear sea and working out with a few games of racquetball. After closing a deal during a business trip to Minneapolis, Jim MacKay and his new client take to the courts. Lee Hockman and Marvin Elster split four games while their wives jog and enjoy a relaxing massage.

If these sound like everyday scenes, think again! They offer a hint of opportunities to play racquetball during business or vacation trips around the country and the world.

There is no longer any reason to leave behind your racquet and eyeguards when you take to the road. It is often possible to enjoy a few games of racquetball when traveling, including some pleasantly unexpected destinations.

Karen and Dick Goodman found Swept Away at Negril, Jamaica to be one of the most complete fitness facilities throughout the Caribbean. The all-inclusive couples resort has a pleasant outdoor conditioning area packed with state-of-the-art equipment, eight tennis courts, squash and two racquetball courts, plus a mininavy of boats and other waterborne vehicles.

Finding places to play racquetball during business travel is not as difficult as many people think. When planning a trip, Jim MacKay calls hotel chains (most have

a toll-free phone number) to ask if a property at his destination has courts, or an arrangement with a nearby health club. The Hyatt Regency Minneapolis, located in the heart of downtown, contains a full-service fitness club with an indoor swimming pool, four indoor tennis courts, and eight racquetball courts.

Among other Hyatt Regency properties with racquetball courts are hotels at Tampa International Airport, in Florida; Dearborn, Michigan; the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport; and Waikoloa Beach, Hawaii.

Combining a strong urge to play with plenty of perseverance, I also have discovered places to play racquetball in such far-flung destinations as Panama in Central America, Melbourne, and Sydney, Australia and Paris, France.

The most recent annual vacation shared by the Hockmans and Elsters was

aboard the S.S. Norway, which operates Eastern Caribbean cruises year-round. The ship, one of the largest afloat, boasts a mind-boggling array of facilities. They include three swimming pools, a jogging track, fitness room, basketball/volleyball court, casino, nightclub, and three dining areas.

There is even a racquetball court, of the outside, three-wall variety. Not perfect for highly competitive games, but good enough — considering that you are at sea — for some casual play or practice.

The list of places to play racquetball on the road continues. People traveling to the Poconos Mountains of Pennsylvania, one of the most popular honeymoon destinations in the country, may combine cross-court passes and pinch shots with other activities. Racquetball is available at Shawnee-on-Delaware and Split Rock Lodge.

Both games of chance and games of racquetball are available at Atlantic City and Las Vegas. In Atlantic City, Bally's has four rear-glass-wall courts and the Trump Regency has one court. The Las Vegas Athletic Club has seven courts, along with an array of spa and fitness equipment.

Skiers are finding that racquetball and snow mix at an ever-increasing number of destinations. For example, among places to play at major ski areas are the Mount

Cranmore Recreation Center near Mount Washington, New Hampshire; the Aspen Athletic Club in Colorado, and the Sunriver Racquet Club in the shadow of Mt. Bachelor, Oregon.

Sun and surf destinations also have jumped on the bandwagon. Among the growing number of Caribbean resorts with racquetball courts is La Cabana on Aruba. It also has squash and lighted tennis courts, a fitness center, and the largest casino in the area.

Combining a strong urge to play with plenty of perseverance, I also have discovered places to play racquetball in such far-flung destinations as Panama in Central America, Melbourne, and Sydney, Australia and Paris, France.

Being primarily an American game, it is much easier to find racquetball courts as you travel around the United States than once you leave our shores. But, wherever

Finding places to play racquetball during business travel is not as difficult as many people think.

you plan to go, at any time of year, check to find out if you will be able to play a few games.

Or, just toss a racquet, sneakers, and

eyeguards into your suitcase. You may be in for a pleasant surprise and some unexpected fun and exercise.

Want to know more?

Swept Away 1-809-957-4040

Hyatt Regency 1-800-233-1234

Nor. Caribbean Lines 1-800-327-7030

Shawnee on Del. 1-800-742-9633

Split Rock Lodge 1-800-255-7625

In addition to racquetball, the Spa at Bally's offers a wide range of fitness activities.





Boredom Removed

By **Hank Marcus**

Commissioner, International Racquetball Tour

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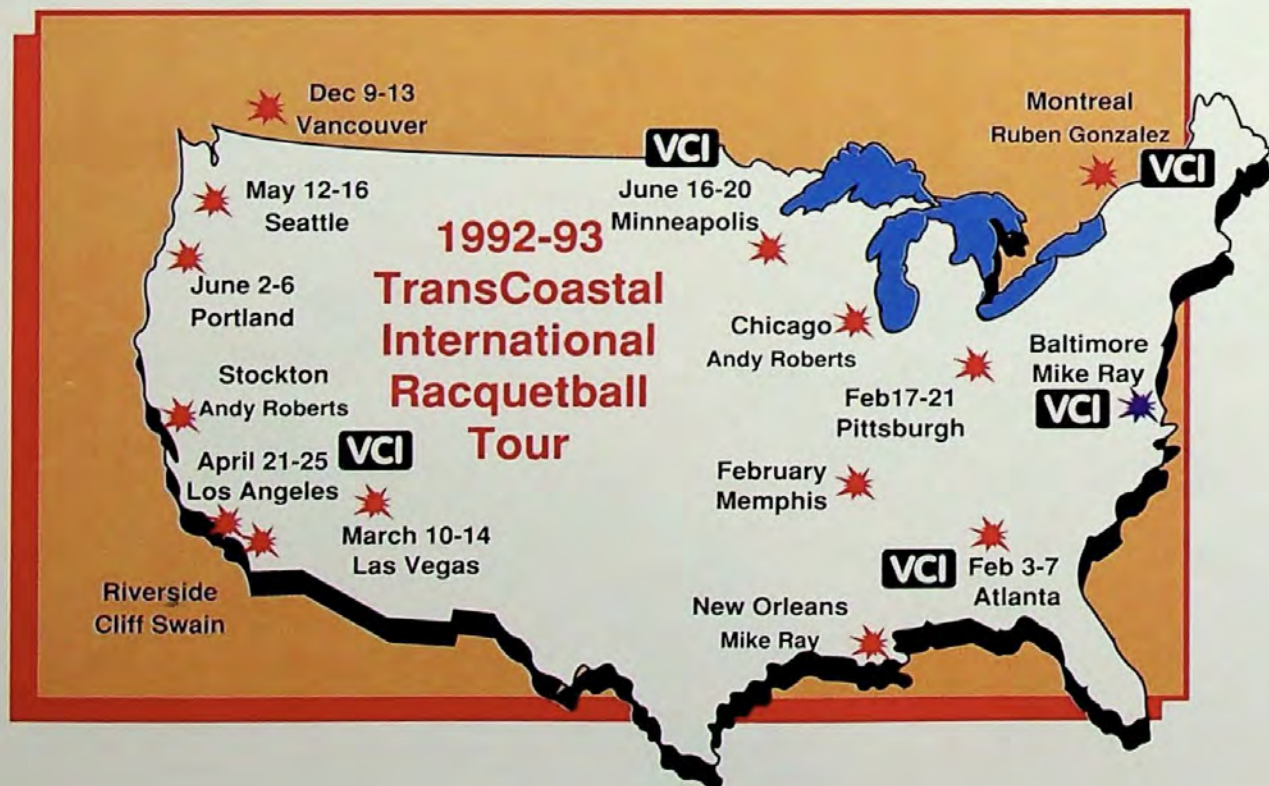
The Racquet Club of Pittsburgh
February 17 - 21

The Racquet Club of Memphis
February 24 - 28

Las Vegas' The Sporting House
March 10 - 14

Have you ever picked up a sports magazine with the same gusto with which you approach the game, only to find the writers toil on and on about insignificant details that have little or no bearing on your interests as a player or as a spectator? I am constantly amazed at the amount of useless information I find in many sports periodicals. I couldn't care less about the routine financing and politics that go on daily in the business of professional sports unless I am directly involved in the pro-

cess. Instead of wading through page after page of what this or that board approves or appropriates, I prefer to read more about the players themselves, and the how-to's that realistically improve my game. So now, in mid season, when it's necessary to convey some important information to you to help understand what's going on in the pro game, I promise to get right to the point. Here's the meaty stuff, with all the boredom removed.





Mike Ray gets a handshake from VW Credit Inc.'s John Horner prior to receiving his winner's share of the prize money in Baltimore.

have already been played in Canada, another is on the planning table, a stop in Mexico by summer is pending, and a stop in South America has been in the works for the past two seasons.

Where's Yellen?

You are correct, Mike Yellen's name is not on the *VCI Spreadsheet*. Mike has now chosen to play only a limited number of stops on this year's tour. Without playing

every stop, he would lose so many points, he would drop drastically in the standings to be seeded in a position well below his level of play. Because the seedings are so important in the outcome of a pro stop, this situation would always cause unfair advantages and disadvantages within the draw. To make it fair for everybody, Mike will hold no ranking, but play the number eight position in any event he plays.

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The products that get the official endorsement of the IRT for 1992 - 1993 are:

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BI RAK IT

What is it and who plays it? BI RAK IT is a new twist on our favorite sport. Simply put, it is racquetball played with a racquet in each hand. As you might expect, there are a few other differences (such as the absence of backhand shots and a smaller racquet in the dominant hand). The pros were introduced to the idea while in Jacksonville, Florida and have kept playing it ever since. In fact the IRT has designated BI RAK IT as the official cross training exercise of the tour. The workout is intense, the fun is terrific, and the coordination and bilateral development gained have far reaching benefits. Look for the BI RAK IT page in this **KILLSHOT** for more information and watch for the BI RAK IT event at the Atlanta pro stop. The IRT's own Woody Clouse has been the dominant player for some time, and Ruben Gonzalez is the defending National Champion.

ESPN

It is now official, the IRT will appear nationwide on ESPN this summer! Look for the final event of this year's *VW Credit Challenge Series* to be played in June as the first ESPN broadcast. Keep watching in **KILLSHOT** for broadcast times, and also for information about more Prime Network broadcasts! The demand for quality nationwide coverage of pro events is now tremendous. Since the early attempts at televising pro racquetball in the early 1980's, the pros have pumped up the level of play beyond belief. State-of-the-art production standards from Jerry McKinnis, one of the nation's finest sports producers, can now deliver the action to you in a better format than ever before. VW Credit Inc., ESPN, and the IRT may be the best alliance ever for bringing pro racquetball to the masses.

International

The International part of the IRT is the operative word this year as two stops

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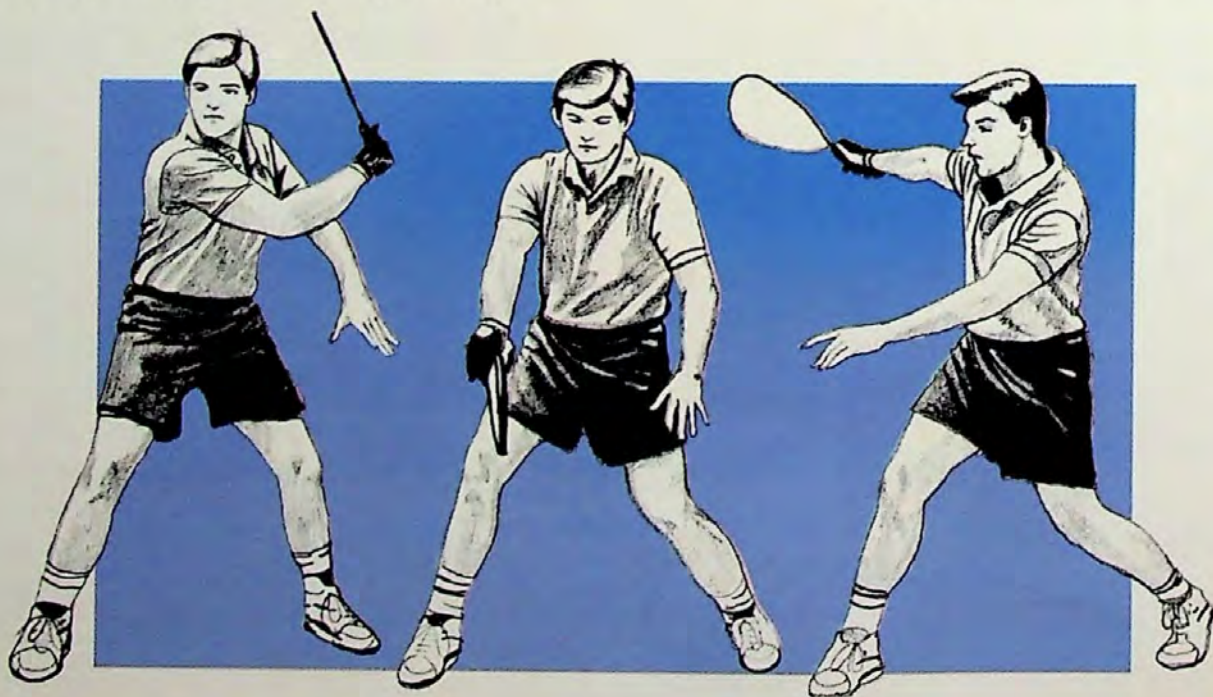


The backhand stroke can show improvement very quickly with three easy adjustments.

1. Check your ready position and make sure your arm is about chest level with your wrist set in a position so that you can look back into your strings.

2. As your motion starts and continues through to the contact point, concentrate on forcing your elbow to go out and around (just like throwing a frisbee). The ball must be away from your body to allow your stroke to take this preferred path.

3. After contact, make a point to follow through to the front wall, keeping your swing follow through parallel to the floor.



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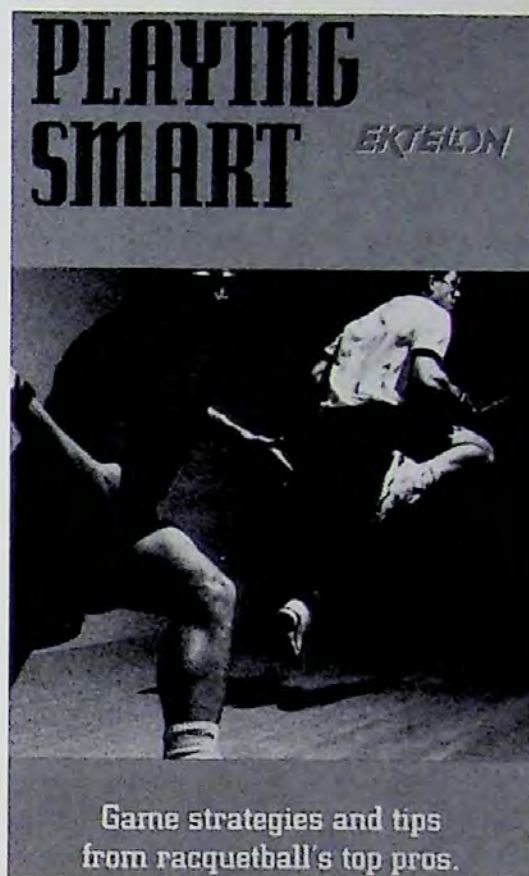


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