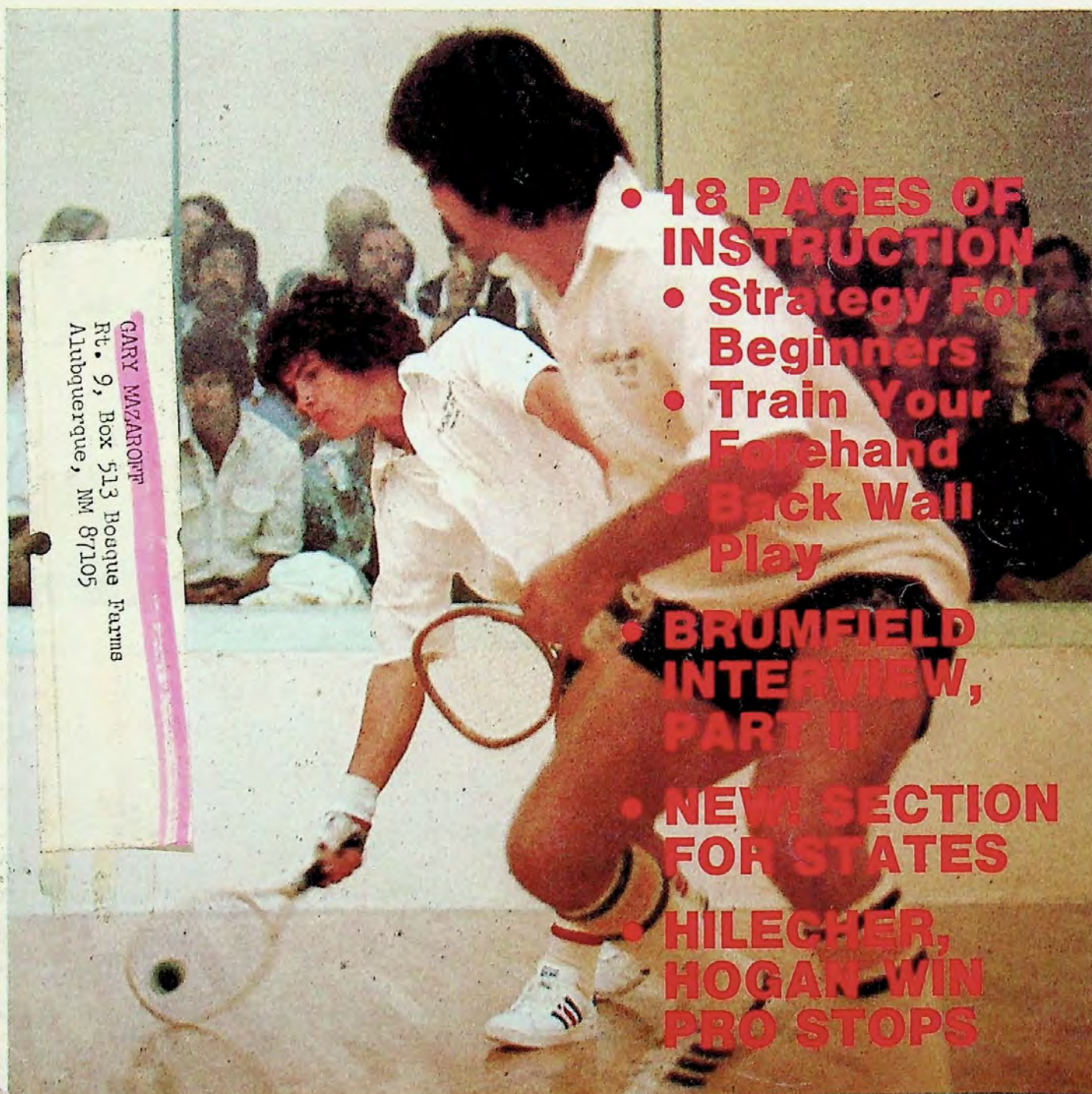


National Racquetball

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 6 • \$1.00 • NOVEMBER, 1976

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE U.S. RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION



- 18 PAGES OF INSTRUCTION
- Strategy For Beginners
- Train Your Forehand
- Back Wall Play

• BRUMFIELD INTERVIEW, PART II

• NEW! SECTION FOR STATES

• HILECHER, HOGAN WIN PRO STOPS

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National Racquetball

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 6 • \$1.00 • NOVEMBER, 1976

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On The Cover . . .

Marty Hogan goes for the deep court kill enroute to his first tour win in Edmonton, Alberta. Full details on page 43.

— photo by Jerry Hilecher

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Court Clubs, Good For Racquetball . . .

Seems like those who pioneered the Court Club idea are becoming increasingly alarmed at the sudden mushrooming of these facilities throughout America. And this is easy to understand. It is hard to keep their success a secret. When clubs add more courts, then expand into adjoining communities and neighboring cities, it certainly becomes evident that a business opportunity is at hand. To assume, at this early date, that the market is saturated, is the height of folly.

There are going to be many, many more clubs. Although we have been involved in over 300 new facilities in one way or another, we do not feel the surface has even been scratched. There will be thousands more. They will appear in every city and hamlet. They will serve the rich and the poor, the meek and the mighty.

Have you ever wondered what brought this phenomenon about? Simplicity. Nothing could be more fundamental than bouncing a ball against a wall with your hands or, to make it even more intriguing, by adding a racquet. You can play alone, or one on one, or two on two. Can't do that with baseball, football, or hockey, and these are very popular sports. What's more, if you don't have a physique when you begin, you WILL when you finish. You can become proficient in a matter of weeks. Simple, wouldn't you say?

Since our life style is changing every day, and man now has more free time, there will be more demand than ever for facilities to occupy these leisure hours. Even unions are talking about four day weeks, so why should anyone doubt that Court Clubs will mushroom everywhere?

Our greatest assets are the sophisticated Athletic Clubs, the exclusive Golf Clubs, and the expensive Racquet Clubs. Most of these rule out the family of modest means. As long as the Court Clubs maintain a popular program at a popular price, they have no cause for alarm. Medium income families make the Court Clubs progress and prosper, and the only way they can fail is by pricing themselves out of the market.

True, other problems can defeat a club. Excessive investment plus bad management ensures a long, uphill struggle. Unless you are capable of providing the highest caliber of play for the largest number of people, consistent with the fairest amount of profit, plan on a rough time. The court business is just like any other good business . . . highly competitive.

Do you realize that the conventional clubs, by restrictive membership and prohibitive costs, have handed you the recreation business on a silver platter? Never in history was there a better time for a modest community Court Club that is simply planned and economically run. Never in history has there been a sport so thoroughly enjoyed by so many people as the court sports. The timing couldn't be better . . . plenty of people with plenty of time. To say nothing of desire.

I can't foresee any problem for any Court Club that promotes even on a modest basis. There are a thousand ways to generate traffic, and we know them all. If you think you have a problem, let us share some of our ideas



with you. Here in Chicago, the club owners meet every month to exchange ideas and help each other. If you belong to both our State and National organization, this information is yours for the asking. After all, it's in our own best interests that you thrive.

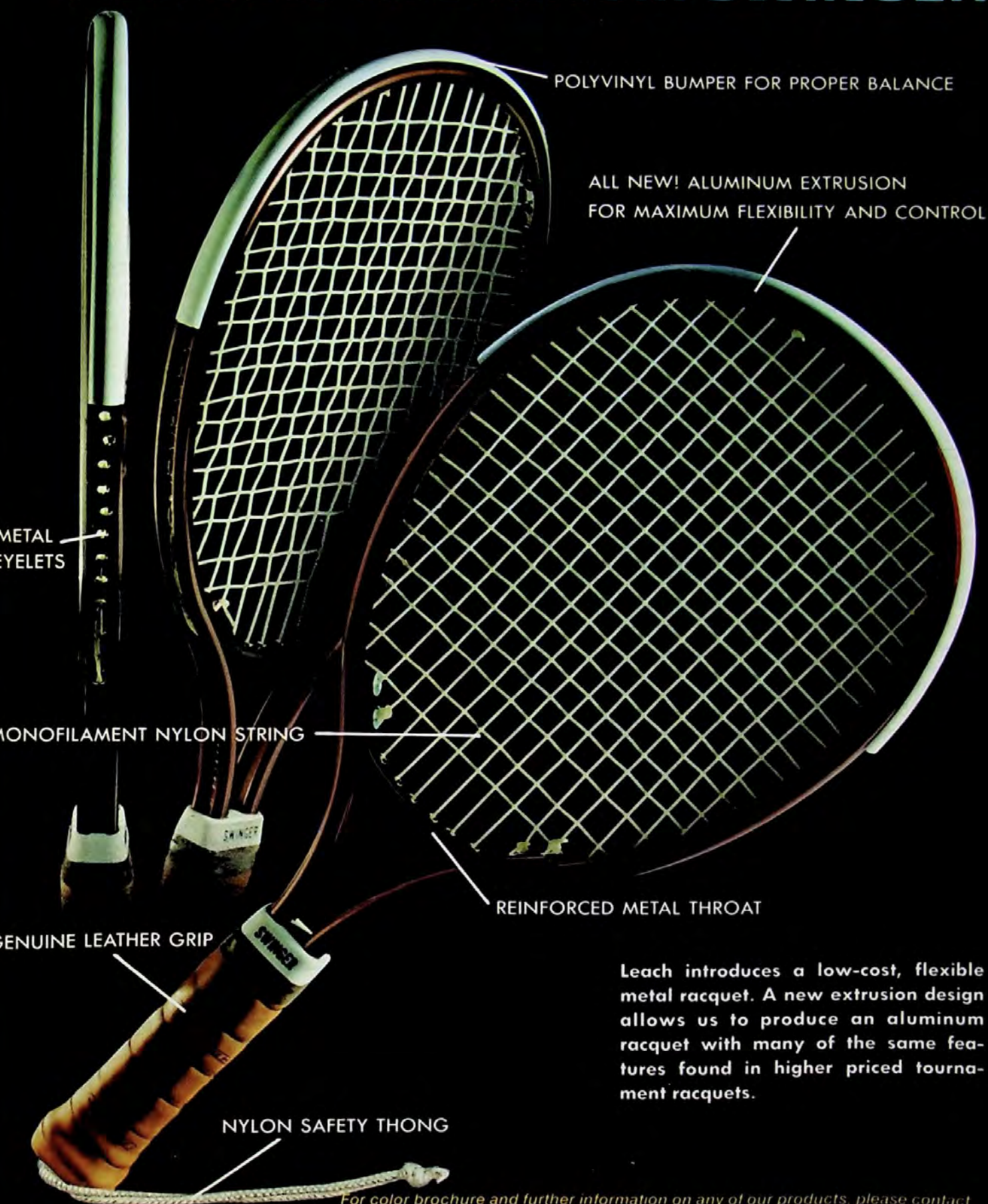
When you realize that we are involved each year in 62 National events, 30 Handball and 32 Racquetball, you have to believe that we know most of the answers. The first thing we'll tell you is that success won't come from suffocating competition. It will come only from upgrading your own operation. That might mean a whole new program or some new leadership or even re-financing. In any event, we'll give you the best advice we can, based on having run some 3,000 tournaments plus having played regularly for 50 years . . . 20 of them as a club owner. If experience will help you, come and get it . . . ●

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Bob Kendler

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What Goes Up, Must . . .



There are two much-trodden axioms in sport both of which are over-used by journalist types like myself. The first is *"it's harder to stay on top than to reach it."* The second is *"success breeds complacency,"* i.e., *"the rich are not hungry."*

The above "rules" apply to many champions in sport, champions as diverse in background as are the fields in which they labor.

Champions or championship teams which have fallen to these axioms over the years include Arnold Palmer, Stan Smith, Billie Jean King, Mohammed Ali (to some extent), the Boston Red Sox of 1975 and currently the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Despite the many differences between the competitors named, all either could not, or barely could stay on top of their sport, no matter the reasons, once the pinnacle was reached.

It appears the same has happened to racquetball's perennial national champion, 28-year-old Charlie Brumfield.

For the first time in his career, Brumfield has played in three consecutive professional tournaments and won none of them. Certainly, given the increasingly competitive abilities of his rivals, this is no signal to push the panic button. In fact, virtually every player on tour would gladly switch his performance with Brumfield's last three, which have earned Charlie over \$2,000.

Yet the developments of Sacramento, Edmonton, and Burlington on the Seamco-Leach pro tour are alarming to many Brumfield backers and fans. Not only has he not won a start yet this season, he has had some near-losses

in matches that never would have even gone three games a year ago. So what gives with the champ?

Charlie's problems are two-fold, as I see them, one segment physical, the other (and most important) mental.

The lively balls used in today's professional racquetball matches make Brumfield's control and percentage style of play more difficult than ever. He misses shots he never missed before, and he allows his opponents shots he never allowed previously.

But physically, the only glaring weakness that has shown up in Brumfield's game this year is that which was his strongest point last season, — the serve.

In 1975-76 Brumfield was able to turn the serve into a devastating offensive weapon. Opponents would cringe when "The Brum" would turn and address the crack just behind the short line. Invariably his next serve would either ace or near-ace at that exact crotch, with the receiver scrambling just to get his strings on it.

This year his missed cracks are no longer near-aces, — they have become set-ups for opponents. The lively ball pops out to center-left court and receivers, playing slightly closer to the service zone than a year ago, are jumping on the shot and driving blistering down-the-line passes past the champ.

Since Labor Day I've seen Hilecher, Zeitman, Hogan, and Strandemo all do it. The fact that Strandemo, a control player in the Brumfield mold, conquered Charlie recently (the first time in almost two years), proves that control can still win. To prove the point, Strandemo is having his finest season ever to-date.

This all leads to the mental problems confronting a champion who some press releases boast *"made \$75,000 in prize money, royalties, clinics and other appearances last year."*

The added quality and quantity of new players, driven by hunger with over \$100,000 of Leach and Seamco monies dangling in front of them, no longer care who Brumfield is.

The day is gone when Charlie Brumfield can just show up and win.

The mental edge has left his game. Is he complacent? I think so. Has the desire left the greatest player of all time? Somewhat. The difference is this, Brumfield no longer is only feared, he also fears.

He fears the power players, the Hogans, Zeitmans and Hilechers. The only thing he fears more than power is glass and the combination of power plus glass have signalled to some the beginning of the end of the Brumfield era.

I don't buy it, — yet. I do feel Brumfield and his game are down, but not out. He overtrained this summer, and entered the season weak. The young Turks entered the season strong, yet lean, eager to feast on the meat that Brumfield has belched in their faces the past few seasons.

However, if Brumfield cannot possess the mental dominance that has marked his career, then he becomes just another shotmaker. And he knows himself that there are better shotmakers around.

To come back this season, and there is plenty of time with eight N.R.C. stops from January to June, he must go back to what won him more titles than any player in racquetball's history. He must

Continued on page 8



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Promotion: Our Middle Name

The big racquetball season of 1976-77 is in full swing as of this writing and I'd like to take just a few minutes to tell all of our readers how ecstatic I am at the great progress that has been made so far this year.

Close to 800 entries have been involved in our first three pro-am stops on the Seamco-Leach Pro Tour and each tournament has outdone the next. Our two male winners Jerry Hilecher and Marty Hogan, and our seemingly unbeatable Peggy Steding have performed remarkably well making each event exciting to the end.

Our hosts, Wall Street, The Court Club, Edmonton, and The Court Club, Burlington each put on fantastic tournaments, on which all of racquetball can reflect proudly.

In Vermont, full galleries of 500 or more crowded the courts for three straight days and nights; hospitality was superb; radio, television and newspapers took an active role, finally, and players, fans and sponsors surely got their money's worth.

The pro-am concept, with amateurs and professionals, male and female alike competing in a variety of divisions has proven the most successful major tournament format to date.

Each tournament site has shown that glass walls, whether front (Wall Street), back (Edmonton), or side (Burlington) can be a money-maker and a thrilling addition to any Court Club.

The pro circuit gives our organizations a much needed opportunity to sit down and talk with state representatives from the region, which we have done, to iron out problems, answer questions, and

generally help the U.S.R.A. become more involved in helping to promote racquetball in every area on every level.

Promotion. It's really the name of the game, and our main duty. We promote racquetball for the good of all players. The fact that racquetball does not any longer raise quizzical looks from most people is a tribute to the promotion done over the past few years.

Newspapers are more willing than ever, not only to print tournament scores, but to actually cover the events. A good example of the far-reaching impact of racquetball right now was reporters from the *New York Times*, *Boston Herald* and *Tennis Magazine* covering the Vermont tournament.

This is the essence of promotion—the print and electronic media. Television spots at all our major events is now a reality, with the only big push left being network coverage of one or more stops along the tour.

Recently in Chicago, a benefit pro-am for the Chicago Heart Association received good publicity, and the local CBS outlet WBBM-TV did a 15 minute segment of their popular *Two on 2* series to cover the court sports.

National magazines like *Time* and in-flight airline publications are running racquetball and racquetball-related articles.

We're doing our best to do the job from the National office in co-operation with our sponsors, their public relations



departments and the media. We still need your help locally to continue to spread the gospel of racquetball. Be sure to alert your local media at tournament time, for the publication of scores, stories and pictures about our favorite sport.

Promotion is the name of the game. And every single person who picks up a racquet and bangs that green or black ball around a court is a racquetball promoter. Let the media know that they're not doing racquetball a favor by publicizing it, - they're doing the favor for the millions of potential racquetballers who have not yet had the chance to enhance their lives, with healthy, fun-filled hours that racquetball brings. ●

What Goes Up, Must . . .

Continued from page 6

practice again, and I feel, change his serve. He must re-create that "artificial hatred" of his opponents, within the rules of course. He must call on his much-maligned pride and ego to once again hate to lose.

If Charlie Brumfield only once accepts \$1,000 second place money as good enough, he will never again be good enough to capture the national title.

And that would be a shame, for he has been a great champion, one who has worked long and hard for the sport as well as himself. He has become a legend in his own time. Racquetball needs a champion like Brumfield, especially as we enter the adolescence of our sport.

Whether Brumfield will regain his championship form I don't know. But this I do know, — "it's harder to stay on top . . ." ●

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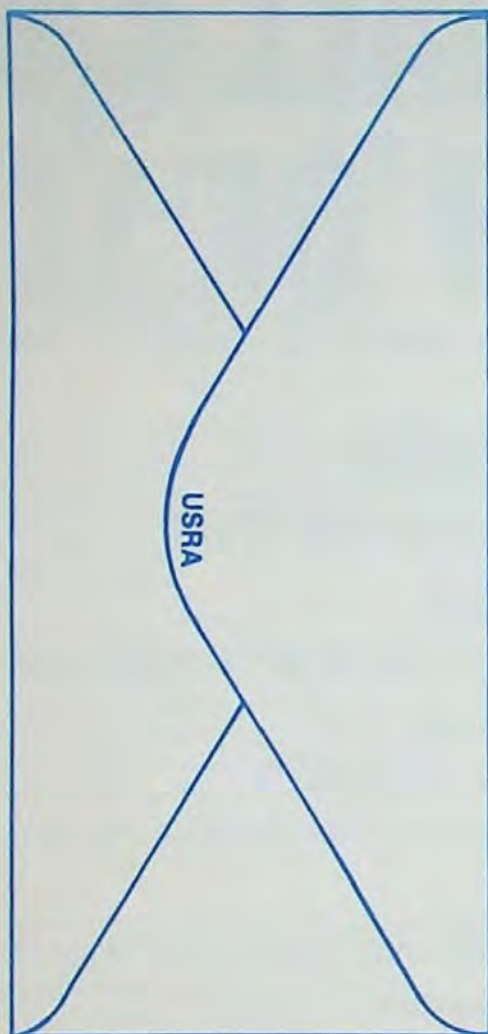
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LETTERS



Bravo Mr. Kendler!

On behalf of all women who play racquetball professionally and on an amateur basis, we want to thank you for last issue's article and your efforts concerning prize money for women competing in racquetball.

Women are the key to the growth and survival of racquetball. Who has turned this game into a family sport? Who fills the courts during the day to keep our sport growing and prospering? Who do court clubs appeal to when they open? **WOMEN!**

You're right, this is 1976 and to take money away from the Women's Pro Tour is a slap in the face to every woman who plays or promotes racquetball.

The NRC has been fair to women players thanks to the efforts of yourself, Chuck Leve and Joe Ardito. It's good to know that things will get better.

Thanks for being a liberated man!

Jean Sauser
Sue Carow
Bev Franks

(Three women who have played, promoted and taught racquetball in the Chicagoland Area for the last 4 years)

Dear Editor:

There are many fine reasons for wearing eye protection.

Racquetballers are aware of what they are,—but must we always have well-meaning "Big Brothers" passing rules to protect us? You have buzzed my car to death and screwed up my cycle, now you insist on sticking your nose into my favorite sport. On many occasions I do wear my seat belt, helmet or protective glasses, but please, allow me to *make* the decision instead of making me a violator.

Charlie Miller
Waukesha, Wisc.

Dear Terry (Fancher):

Enclosed you will find Nevada's Declaration of Affiliation. The Las Vegas Racquetball Association voted unanimously to become a State Chapter of the USRA.

We plan to change our legal entity's name to the Nevada Racquetball Association. We will make provisions in the By-Laws for local associations to be formed as their needs and desires arise.

Unfortunately, the only other city in the State that has courts is Reno. I plan to be there for a few days in October, and will encourage them to form an association under our new State Chapter of the USRA.

We are flattered that you would have other associations contact us on such matters as how to form a club, gain members, hold tournaments, give clinics and, above all, show a profit doing all of these things. For a non-profit corporation, we are fortunate to have remained in the black. Our success can only be attributed to the enthusiasm generated by our membership and the willingness of many of them to put in many hours preparing and holding tournaments.

If we can be of any help to any of your members, please have them give us a call. I sincerely believe that one important factor necessary to the future success of racquetball is reciprocity with the membership. Your organization, through the selfless efforts of Chuck Leve, Joe Ardito, yourself, and others, has contributed a great deal to our success. As a result, we will always feel indebted to you good folks, and always willing to return the favor.

Also enclosed is a list of 57 new members.

I've also sent the draw sheets from the last tournament which, by the way, netted a profit of approximately \$500.00

Dan Seaton,
Las Vegas

Dear Chuck:

Each magazine issue that has been published by your organization has emphasized the importance of racquetball officiating. The articles have been professional in every respect. Certainly they were informative and you were quite dogmatic in your presentation of situations and applicable rules.

Racquetball is a professional game with professional players, but completely lacking in professional officiating. It is a beautiful sport with truly skilled athletes as participants. The contest requires physical strength, stamina, speed and skill. Why don't you add the necessary ingredient to complete the proper attitude and atmosphere in the promotion of this sport? And that is paid professional officiating personnel.

It appears that in the eyes of the participants, the referee can only be 50 per cent right on many decisions that he renders. However, in such a vulnerable position, the referee must still make constant judgments and arrive at instantaneous conclusions throughout the match. Is there any professional sport where players referee their own matches? If there is, that sport has to be open to altercation and consternation. Officials must pass a neutral attitude and discipline themselves to be decisive and unbiased in calling a match.

Racquetball has advanced in almost every phase of the game since that initial pro-am in Houston, Texas in 1973. I can vividly recall the splendid sportsmanship and exemplary court behavior by all participants. It was my pleasure to officiate over half of the "pro" matches including the championship contest. At the moment, the actual game playing is in dire need of control.

The addition of linesmen has certainly proved to be an outstanding asset in improving the officiating. Eliminating the players as referees is also a needed change. Designated officials to properly conduct the sport and cause conformity amongst the participants to the required standards and rules must

be mandatory. It is undeniably inherent to any sport to follow the rules of the game,—otherwise the game is not a sport. Qualified personnel concentrating on the officiating aspect of the game will bring uniformity to it. Uniformity gives rise to consistency in how the game action proceeds and eliminates any confusion between the player and the referee. It is best for racquetball and racquetball deserves the best.

Irv Zeitman
Louisville, Ky.

Dear Sirs:

Non-winners became winners at Four Flags! The Four Flags Court Club of Niles, Illinois recently held an open doubles tournament and I for one, felt that even though we didn't do well, we non-winners came out winners.

For the nominal entrance fee my partner and I had the chance to play in several games, meet some very nice people and witness matches by players who play racquetball as the game should be played. Also included was a very nice sit-down lunch, a hospitality room serving continuously, a seminar on refereeing plus door prizes donated by local merchants.

When tournaments such as this one held at Four Flags are conducted in such a expeditious manner, everyone has to come out a winner.

My congratulations to John Van Der Wel and the Four Flags staff for what I felt was a super job well done.

Dick Ruske
Glenview, Ill.

Dear Terry (Fancher):

Enclosed is a copy of my letter to Dr. Chuck Hanna, our state representative from California, affording my services as local representative from the Los Angeles area.

As you are most likely aware, L.A. is merely beginning to realize the benefits from our great sport. We have a tremendous population in our area, and one which definitely is in need of a self-motivating, physical fitness oriented activity. You and I both know the many, many tremendous benefits racquetball has to offer the youngsters, out-of-shape businessmen, and the future athletes of our population. Many people overlook the valuable sociological impact this great sport can have in so many ways. I can think of no other activity that has given so much to "man"!

Terry, I applaud you on your dynamic and professional effort in presenting our sport with a truly meritorious and factual historical document. Also coming from the physical education profession, and having written a thesis in kinesiology, I can appreciate the scope of your task, and the professionalism in which it was presented.

I extend to you and your staff a perpetual invitation to the hospitality of our Club.

You're doing a great job and my sincere support is always here.

Jim Bird
Woodland Hills, Cal.

Back Wall Play

Editor's Note — The following article and four subsequent articles are excerpted from Steve Keeley's recent publication, *The Complete Book Of Racquetball*. The book, endorsed by the U.S. Racquetball Association, is published by D.B.I. Books, Inc., 540 Frontage Rd., Northfield, Illinois 60093. *The Complete Book Of Racquetball* sells for \$7.95 and in our opinion is the finest instructional manual on racquetball published to date. This segment is from chapter eight: Back Wall Play.

A unique situation, which is especially indigenous to our four-walled court sport, occurs when the racquetball rebounds off the back wall. This is the only time during the course of a rally that the ball travels *with* the racquet's swing toward the front wall. Such a situation begets *power*. In scientific jargon the summation of the ball's force vector plus the racquet's force vector yields a more powerful—and, as will be seen, an easier—shot than is possible in any other instance. Even to the non-physicist racquetman, back wall play should become a strong point in his game.

Assuming one's swing is in tip-top form, the secret here is the *footwork*. The addition of proper footwork to a satisfactory stroke nets a skillful back wall play. The strokes utilized in playing the ball off the back court wall are the same ones as described in Ken Wong's recent article on the forehand. You should have these model swings down pat before putting into practice this article's instruction.

By the way of brief review, estimate where the ball will be when you are going to strike it, position yourself appropriately next to this estimated point of contact (body parallel to the side wall you are facing), prepare with the backswing in a ready position while you are stationing yourself, as the ball rebounds past you from posterior and into the hitting zone—let 'er rip. This description assumes you have ample time to get back, set and wait for the rebounding sphere.

However, in some cases you will find yourself frantically pursuing a drive hit past you toward the back court. Then the above steps will apply; you just have to modify them by performing

more than one step at a time at an increased rate such that the result is a smooth execution of back wall play. Though it may sound difficult, it is nothing a little practice cannot overcome.

Many players are able to solidly contact the ball off the back wall, but here their expertise terminates. What kind of shot should be used off the back wall? The shot selection is unlimited. Provided you make good racquet contact, you can try any shot that you could equally well attempt from the same position on the court were you taking the ball straight off the front wall. (An exception to this would be on a "soft" rebound that drops very close to the back wall.) Choose from a kill, drive, ceiling ball or any of the variety of shots outlined in previous chapters. The *smart* shot selection is limited, as will soon be touched upon.

Footwork: This is a major nemesis of all court-dwelling bipeds. When it is stated back wall play requires special footwork, what actually is meant is that the player's body must be moving correctly. In other words, the feet-containing-tennies must at all times (on back wall play) locomote the racquet-wielding carcass in the same direction as that of the sphere. So, as the ball courses from front court toward the back wall, the player's movement should be in the same direction as the ball's. And as the racquetball strikes the back wall and reverses direction, now carrying toward the front wall, the player's direction change and movement must be likewise. Now, with player and ball advancing in harmony toward front court, the human half of



this united movement makes the forehand or backhand stroke. In a summarizing statement, one must closely follow the ball with his body as well as his eyes.

Now that the reader has assimilated the basic groundwork for back wall play—realizing that footwork and momentum are the keys to its success—we are primed to issue an important addition to our explanation. There are *two* ways to play the ball on a rebound off the back wall. The first is the stop-and-step method and the second the jog-and-hit method. Both of these are acceptable, both are used by

the game's elite pros, and both are consistent with our written rule of momentum: The player's physical motion must be direction-congruent with that of the rubber orb.

The *stop-and-step method* is fairly self-descriptive. Coordinate the following explanation with figure 1. The player trails the ball back to the back wall, then stops and plants himself in set-up preparatory position as the sphere strikes the rear wall. As the ball rebounds off the plaster and subsequently arches forward and floorward, the player *steps into* it (as per a normal stroke) and contacts it in the proper position. This "proper position" for ball contact is once again just off the "biggie" toe of the lead foot

for the backhand, or just off the heel of the lead foot for the forehand. If the shot is intended to be a kill, the ball should be struck at an elevation of no higher than the knees. If it is to be a drive, then the height of racquetball collision should be knee to waist high.

The crucial factor here is *where* the player stops and plants his ground grabbers to await the rebound off the back wall. You can obviously either overestimate, underestimate or accurately estimate the setting-up distance from the back wall. This precise stopping and setting up point must be close enough to the rear wall

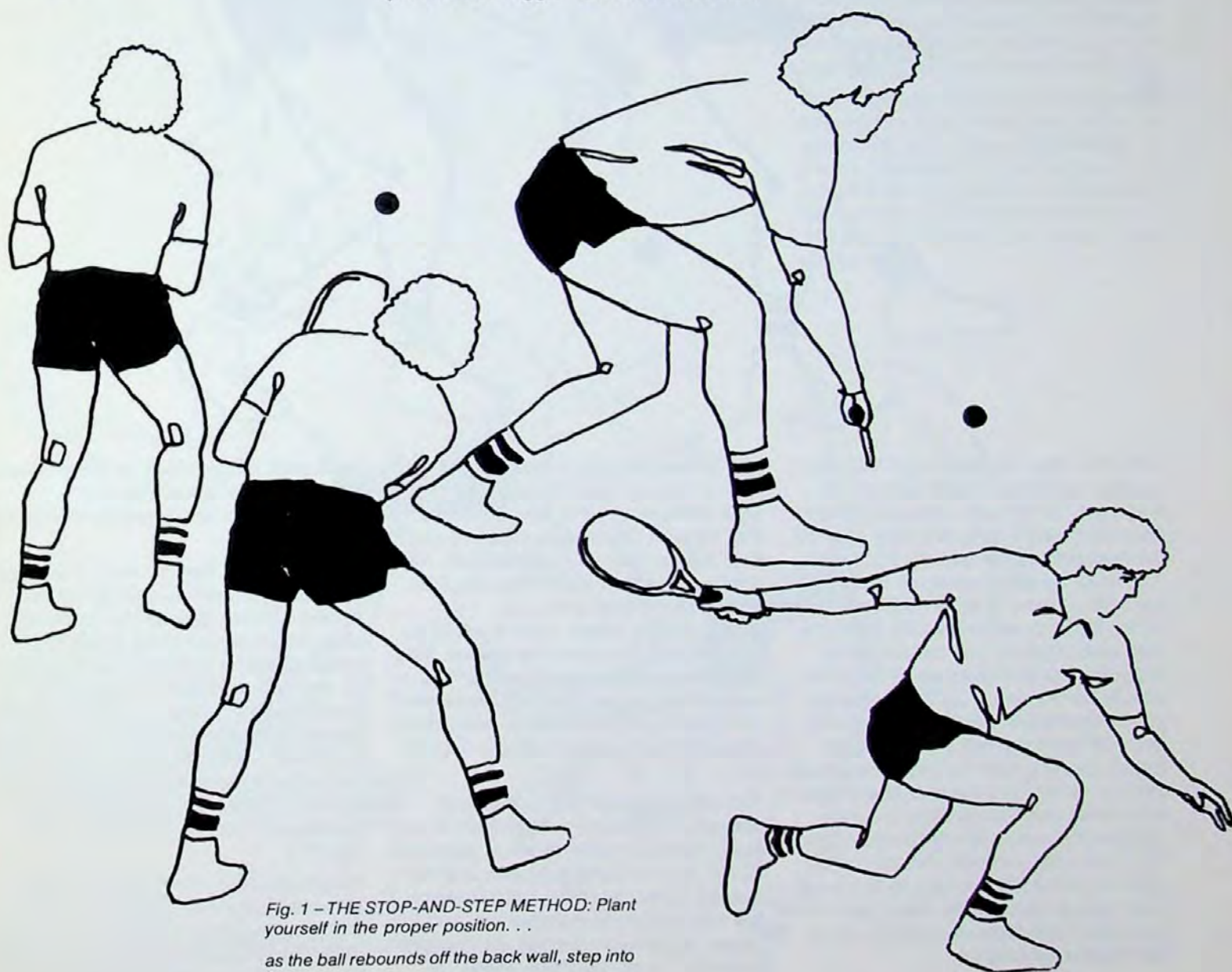


Fig. 1 – THE STOP-AND-STEP METHOD: Plant yourself in the proper position. . .

as the ball rebounds off the back wall, step into it. . .

the stroke begins as the ball drops. . .

contact it at ankle to knee high and off the lead foot.

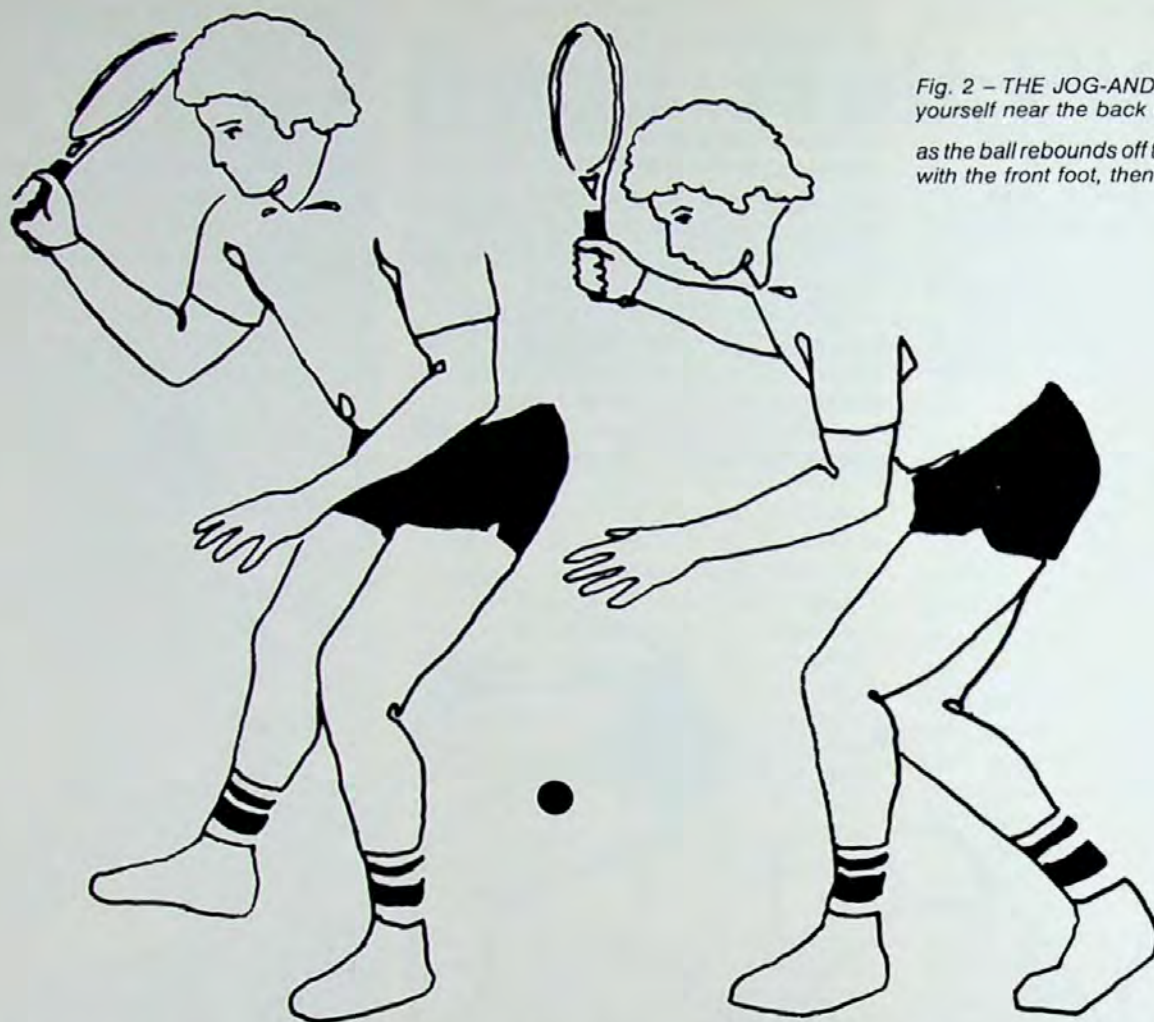


Fig. 2 – THE JOG-AND-HIT METHOD: Plant yourself near the back wall. . .

as the ball rebounds off the back wall, "jog step" with the front foot, then the rear foot. . .

such that *after* stepping into the ball, racquet contact is made just off the lead foot. To be sure, this sometimes necessitates planting the back foot on the floor right at the wall-floor juncture. The most frequent error, of which at least 90 percent of all greenhorns are victim to, is to set up *too far* from the rear wall. That is, you will probably tippytoe back and plant your treads too anterior in the court. In this instance you no doubt will step past the ball with the healthy front foot stride into the swing, causing the racquet to contact the ball much too posterior to the lead foot. With surprisingly little practice (relative to other court techniques) the stop-and-step method should come quickly. Just track the ball to the back wall, set up camp in the ideal place in rear court and then confidently issue the controlled wallop.

The alternative approach to back wall play is the *jog-and-hit method*. This style differs from the stop-and-step in that instead of planting yourself and then taking one step into the ball, this newly presented technique requires you to take more than one step—usually three—into the ball as you prepare to make the stroke. This three-step shuffle is termed the "jog" in our nomenclature and this movement could also be descriptively named the stop-and-three-step method. (Figure 2.)

The advantage of the jog-and-hit (stop-and-three-step) approach is that more forward momentum is garnered as the player multi-steps into and then swings at the ball. Try both routines; the differences in momentum, and the power imparted to the ball, will become apparent. Also the three steps (as opposed to one) allow for position adjustment as the jog is executed. If you misjudge the ball's rebound off the

back wall, it is possible to compensate for the distance miscalculation by lengthening or shortening the length of the steps.

In summation, the jog-and-hit involves retreating at approximately equal speed with the ball to the back wall, stopping and reversing direction, three-stepping forward and swinging as the last step with the lead foot is tread. For the forehand, the three-step begins with the left foot, followed by a right and then a final left step into the ball with the simultaneous swing. The rights and lefts are interchanged for *backhands* off the back wall. See figure 3.

Which method is superior? Neither. Brumfield and Strandemo invariably utilize the stop-and-step motion, while Serot and this author unconsciously fall into the jog-and-hit routine whenever presented with a back wall shot. However, there are some occasions



when one style is more suitable than the other. On a ball which rebounds very gently off the back wall (for example on a well-hit lob serve that has glanced off the side wall, hit the floor and then barely come off the rear wall) the stop-and-step approach is advantageous. This is because a soft rebound off the back wall does not carry far enough out into the court to allow the player the distance-consuming three steps. On the other hand, it is far more feasible to employ the jog-and-hit method on a ball which ricochets fairly hard off the back wall. By way of example, a down-the-line drive which rebounds quickly and high off the rear court wall provides enough distance to require more than just one step into the ball. Indeed, in such a case an ad-libbed five-step jog routine might have to be suddenly employed to make the play.

Give both approaches to back wall returns fair trials. Study sequences in figures 2 and 3, taken at different angles from figure 1, for further comparison. Choose the means which feels more comfortable and which permits your footsies to remain more tangle-free.

Fig. 3 – FOREHAND BACK WALL PLAY. This is the jog-and-hit method.

then step with the normal lead foot into the ball... and make the sock-high stroke off the lead foot.

Fig. 4—Improper back-pedal retreat to the back wall.



Fig. 5—Improper turn-around retreat to the back wall.

Speaking of two left feet—the *retreat* after an opponent's ball into back court is a neat piece of footwork in itself. This backward pursuit should be somewhat graceful, must cover a good deal of hardwood real estate and, of course, preferably should not involve tripping. An uncoordinated weekend hacker frantically chasing down a passed ball often makes for haphazard and hilarious locomotion. Somehow the shoelaces or the floor cracks always get underfoot, causing the stumblebum retreat to be neither graceful, distance-covering nor performed in an entirely upright position. The correct

way to pursue such a ball is not with a back-pedal (see figure 4) nor with the turn-around-and-sprint (see figure 5). These two means do not permit the player to *visually* follow the ball throughout its total flight course. Proper posterior retreat is depicted in figure 6.

The *sideways shuffle* is the best method. This movement is analogous to the lateral movement of a basketball player. As the rubber sphere whizzes past you at mid-court, you must immediately turn 90 degrees to face

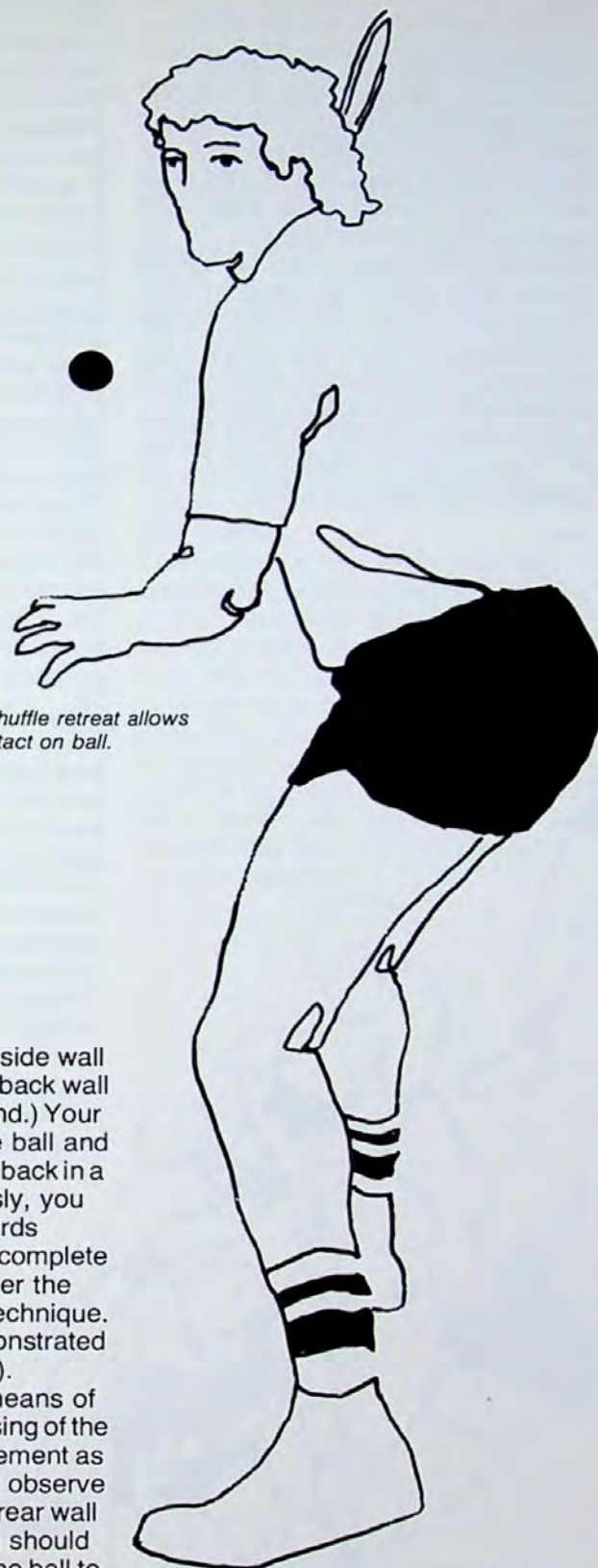


Fig. 6 – The sideways-shuffle retreat allows movement plus eye contact on ball.

the side wall. (Face the right side wall for a forehand coming off the back wall and left side wall for a backhand.) Your eyeballs are still glued to the ball and your racquet is already drawn back in a ready position. Simultaneously, you must side-pedal in a backwards direction and then smoothly complete the shuffling motion with either the stop-and-step or jog-and-hit technique. The sideways shuffle is demonstrated in figure 6 (for the backhand).

Utilization of this sideways means of retreat (avoiding excess crossing of the legs) enhances graceful movement as well as enabling the player to observe the ball as it rebounds off the rear wall onto his racquet strings. You should control the ball; do not allow the ball to control you.

Back Wall Drills

It was mentioned earlier that stroke plus footwork yields proficient back wall play. Since the reader is presumed adept in the art of forehand and backhand strokes, it remains only to add and practice the magic footwork. Most newcomers to the game find it difficult to believe their progress after drilling on the following four exercises only a few times.

Exercise 1: Shadow play. Like a shadow boxer, the devoted racquetteer does not require an opponent to practice against. Begin facing the front wall about 3 feet behind the short line in the center of the court. Now *pretend* Charlie Brumfield has just lobbed the ball over your head into the rear forehand corner. Turn sideways so you are facing the right side wall, draw back your court weapon into the forehand ready position and retreat posteriorly with a sideways shuffle of the footsies. Pursue and watch that imaginary ball as though it were really a Brumfield lob. Stop *within 3 feet* of the back wall and step forward (or three-step forward, depending on which method you are practicing) into the phantom sphere. Now swing with confidence, for this is one time you cannot miss. Repeat this exercise until satisfied. Obviously, here we are emphasizing the critical footwork factor. Do not forego this drill simply because a crowd of gawkers gathers to stare with uniform raised eyebrows at the kid with the flappy feet in a make-believe world. If they knew you were jousting with Charlie Brumfield, their looks would change from incredulous to admiring.

Exercise 2: Toss and hit. Witness any of the pro superstars warming up for a match, and you will no doubt observe ball after ball being rolled off the front wall using this and the following two exercises. In this particular routine, the player commences by standing facing the right side wall about 5 feet from the rear court barrier. With racquet in confident ready position, toss the ball into the back wall about 5 feet up. As it

rebounds to the floor and forward, move anteriorly along with it, utilizing either the stop-and-step or jog-and-hit method to perform this movement. As the racquetball descends into the knee level or below hitting range, smite a kill or drive shot. Remember, it is imperative that you contact the ball off the lead foot. (Since we are using the forehand at present this would be the left appendage for a righthander.) Do not be content with even a flat roll-off unless the proper footwork and point of contact during the stroke have been strictly adhered to. Note figure 7 (backhand is demonstrated).



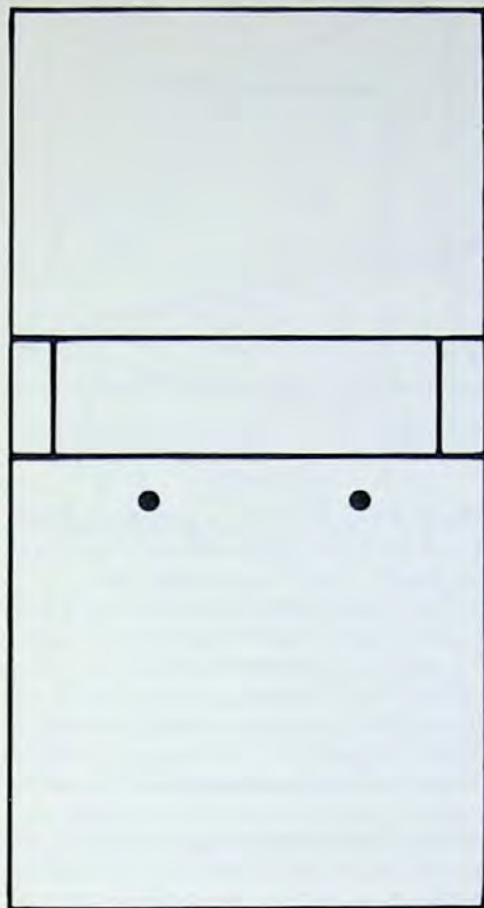
Fig. 7 - EXERCISE 2: Toss and Hit.

Exercise 3: Hard set and hit. When speaking of back wall play, it is soon discovered through court encounter that there are basically two types of back wall rebounds which occur, each demanding specific concentration of technique in separate areas. Therefore, both kinds must be practiced. That is, back wall setups may be in either the form of *hard* or *soft* rebounds. This drill emphasizes the hard, the next exercise the soft.

Start in the position shown in figure 8, about 4 feet from the right side wall and 3 feet posterior to the service box. As in Exercise One, the rationale behind this initial positioning near the short line is to force the player to develop the compulsory footwork entailed in ideal back wall play. Too many individuals feign accomplishing Exercise One, Three and Four with a starting point within a few feet of the back wall. Wrong, wrong, wrong. These would-be practicers are either hopelessly lazy or just ignorant of what back wall movement in an actual game situation consists of.

Now that the reader has been convinced to initially idle his tennies 3 feet behind the service box, give yourself a set-up off the front wall which rebounds moderately *hard* off the rear wall. In other words, the ball should be driven firmly into the front wall such that after the bounce on the floor there is a big rebound off the posterior plaster. This rebound may carry 4 to 7 feet toward forecourt. Now is your chance to star in the picture-perfect rollout scene without the pressure of observers or an opponent. When the ball whizzes past your body from the front court, you must side-shuffle after

Fig. 8 - This diagram is included to emphasize the importance of the proper starting positions for the forehand (right) and backhand (left) back wall set-up practice drills.



it toward the back wall as described previously (racquet is cocked back in ready position), stop and reverse direction in the appropriate position near the rear wall, then step or three-step into the rebounding vulcanized orb and clout it with purpose. You did it? Commendable, for a debut performance without audience.

Exercise 4: Soft set and hit.

Everything for this exercise—the beginning position, side-shuffling, etc.—is the same as with the previous one, with one important exception. The rebound off the back wall here is to be a soft, rapidly dropping one rather than the harder ricochet involved in the earlier drill. Imagine a fresh mud pie rebounding off a concrete wall, and you get the exaggerated idea of the proper soft set-up. To attain this type of rebound, simply lob the ball high and gently into the front wall. Since the bounce off the back wall does not carry out very far, you will discover it helps to retreat from the starting position to a stop (direction-reversing) point within 3 feet of the rear court wall. Then execute the kill or drive shot as before. Exercise Four is more difficult than number Three, so do not expect as immediate gratification.

The preceding four exercises have been for the forehand stroke. Only after all four have been repeated to self-satisfaction should the same exact drills with the *backhand* be executed. As in all the solo practice routines presented you will no doubt make frustrating small mistakes at first; here again, a critical observer (a friend or fellow player) can upgrade dramatically the productivity of your practice sessions.

Common Back Wall Errors

There are three common errors which nag the inexperienced hacker who is undertaking back wall play for the first time. Be highly self-critical to the point of introspective masochism in back wall play and see if you are not falling into one of these every-day traps. The first two pitfalls deal with the point of contact of racquet and ball, while the last is hinted at in the most often uttered adage since Homo sapiens first jumped down from the trees and began toying with spherical objects.

Recall that the proper point of contact for the forehand is out and away from the lead foot's heel, while clobbering time with the backhand ideally transpires in an area off the lead foot's toes. Most court neophytes do not fall back (side-shuffle) far enough on back wall play. They take a few begrudging steps in the direction of rear court, set up and swing—off balance. This is because their point of contact is invariably *too far posterior*. (Figure 9) Predictably, the ball slices off the racquet strings and glances into the side wall. Be sure you are retreating to a point close enough to the back wall so

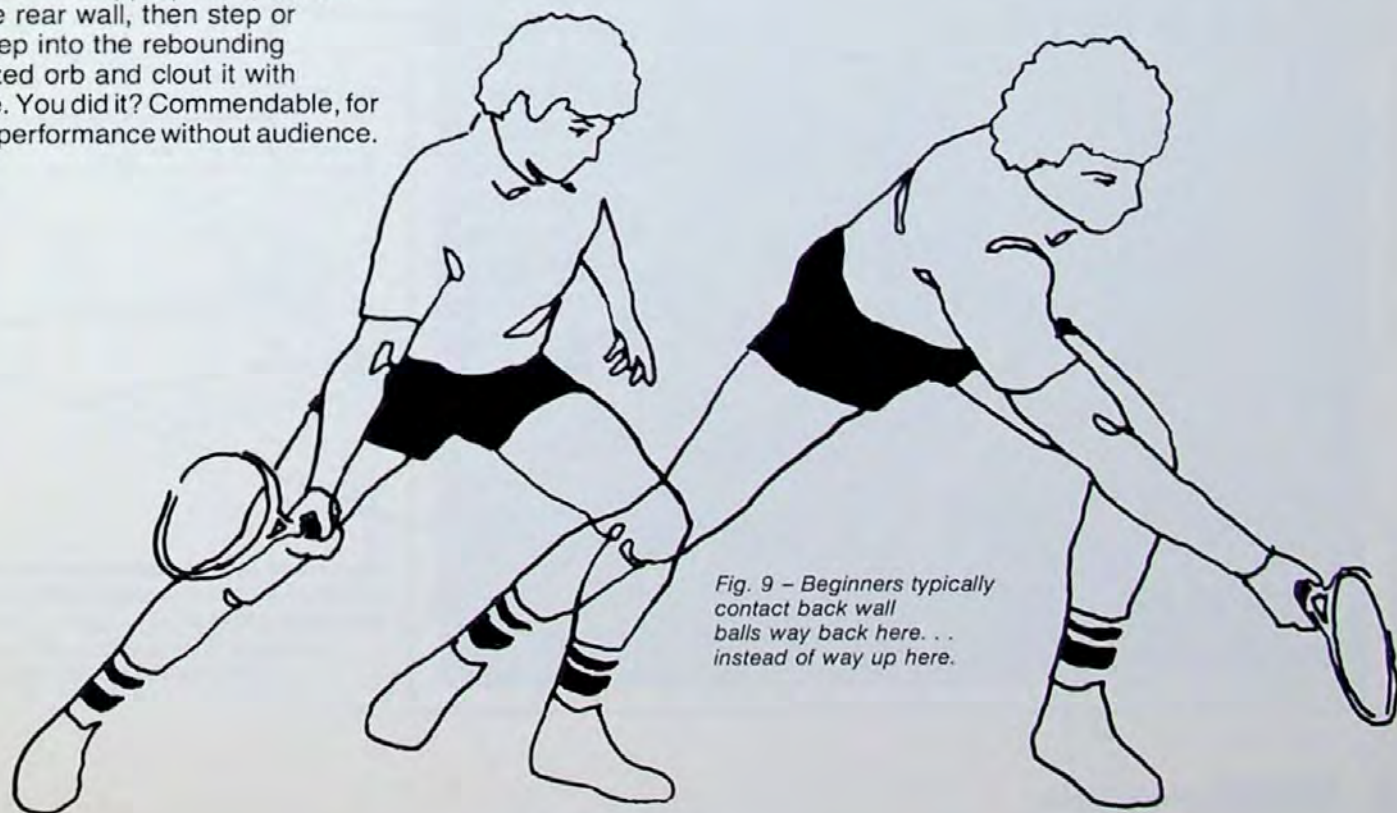


Fig. 9 - Beginners typically contact back wall balls way back here. . . instead of way up here.

that when you step into the swing you do not stride past the ball. Sometimes, as emphasized previously, it is necessary to begin your stop-and-step or jog-and-hit right at the back wall to assure proper point of contact.

The second major error among newcomers to the realm of freak and tweak balls is not stepping into the ball correctly on back wall play. If you have planted your perspiring carcass in the proper plot to await the back wall rebound, then you have allowed yourself enough room to take a *very healthy step* (or three-step) along with your downswing. A complete body weight transfer from rear to front foot during the stroke ensures that you have indeed stationed yourself correctly for the downswing. If you find yourself hitting the ball with the majority of your weight still on the back foot, then either your point of planting is too far anterior or you are not taking that momentum-generating giant step into the ball.

Finally, there is an almost universal tendency to *not* watch the ball during back wall play. Concentrate with total focus on the sphere during its flight, bounce, rebound and string contact—see if your back wall game does not improve vastly by simply observing the oldest of sports maxims: *"Watch the ball."*

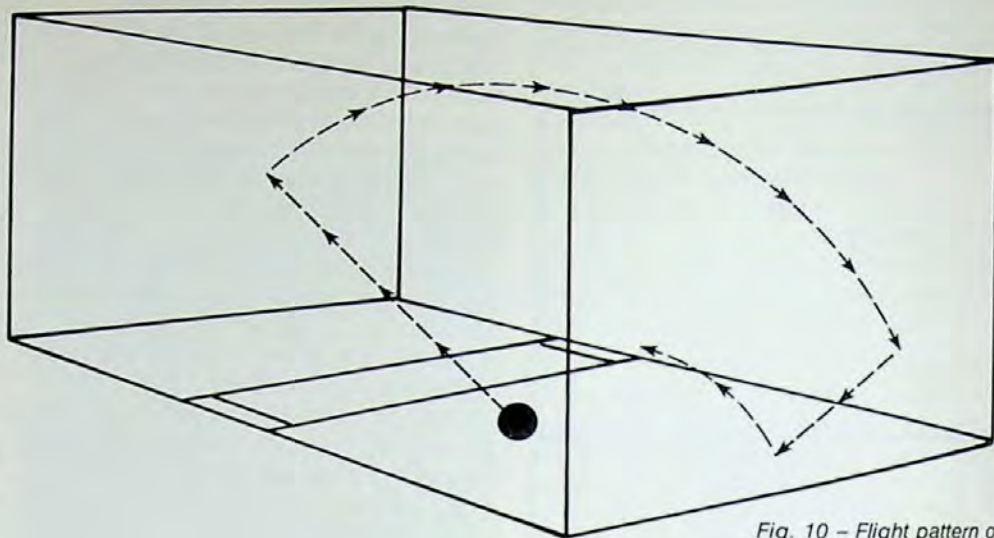


Fig. 10 – Flight pattern of front wall to back wall shot

Back Wall Variations

A variation of the off-the-back-wall shot occurs when a solidly smacked ball hits high and hard on the front wall, arches straight to the rear wall without bouncing in between on the floor, and rebounds off the back court wall far into the front court before finally descending, striking the floor and thus finally coming to within hitting range. (Figure 10) When this happens, some heavy duty scrambling is called for. Shuffle rapidly after the ball into the front court as it caroms past you off the rear wall. Have your racquet bobbing along in constant ready position as you advance anteriorly and as the ball drops into striking distance make an offensive shot.

Once in a great while, a gorilla-man will send a well-clouted ball into the court heavens where it performs the following aerial gymnastics: Front wall to back wall to floor to front wall. That is, the ogre's bash strikes the front wall a second time before you even have an opportunity to poke at the speeding sphere (figure 11). Although the ball has hit the front wall *twice*, it is perfectly legal to wait and play it on its second rebound off the front court wall, as long as you hit it prior to its second bounce on the floor. In this rare instance of the "double-front-wall ball," it is usually most strategic to "dump" the ball into either corner with a light caress.

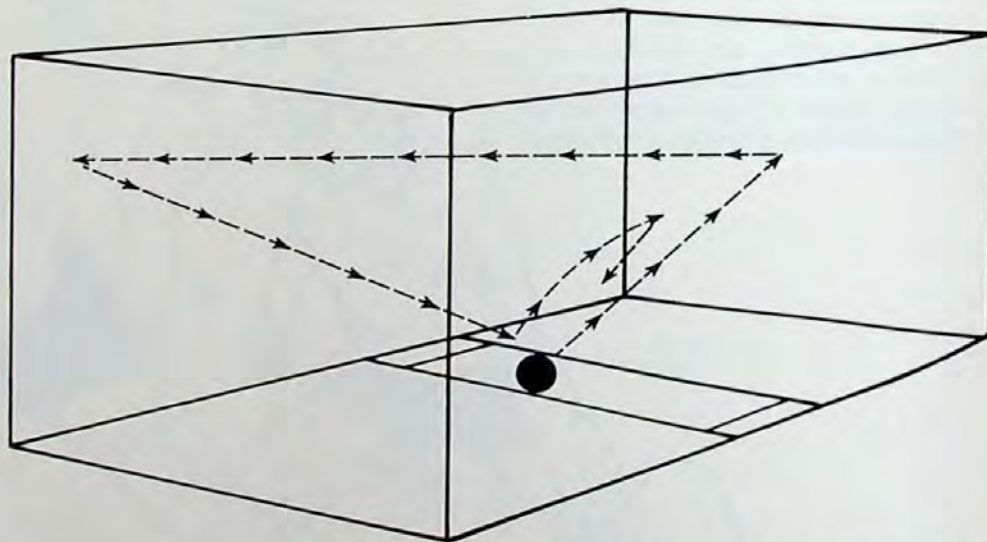


Fig. 11 – A very lively ball may be struck so hard it hits the front wall twice before taking a second bounce to the floor.

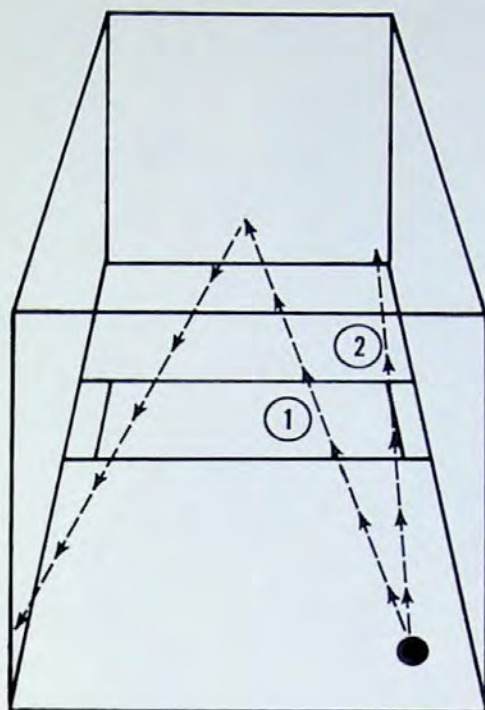


Fig. 12 – Two normal options for a forehand back wall set-up: 1) cross-court drive or 2) right corner kill.

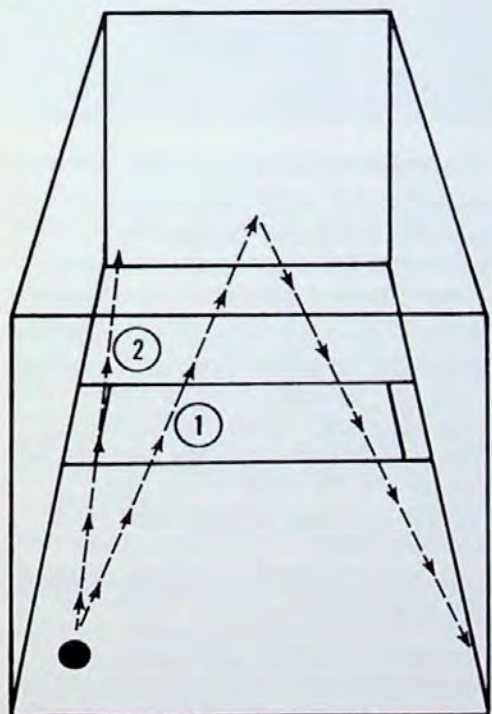


Fig. 13 – The backhand back wall options are the same as for the forehand. In addition, a backhand down-the-line pass may be attempted.

Shot Selection Off Back Wall

We have only nebulously hinted at what kind of shot to make when returning a ball off the back wall. Among better players this repertoire of shots is limited to *two*, under normal circumstances. The first is a *kill* and the second a *drive*, either down-the-line or cross-court. Note figures 12 and 13. Therefore, when the reader labors tenaciously through the four back wall exercises presented, it will be advantageous to get into the habit of employing one of these two offensive shots. It was pointed out in this chapter's introductory comments that a unique situation unfolds when one takes a rebound off the back wall in that the ball is traveling *with* the direction of one's racquet swing. Therefore, a threatening thrust, in the form of either a drive or kill, is a very sound stratagem. ●

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Training Your Forehand

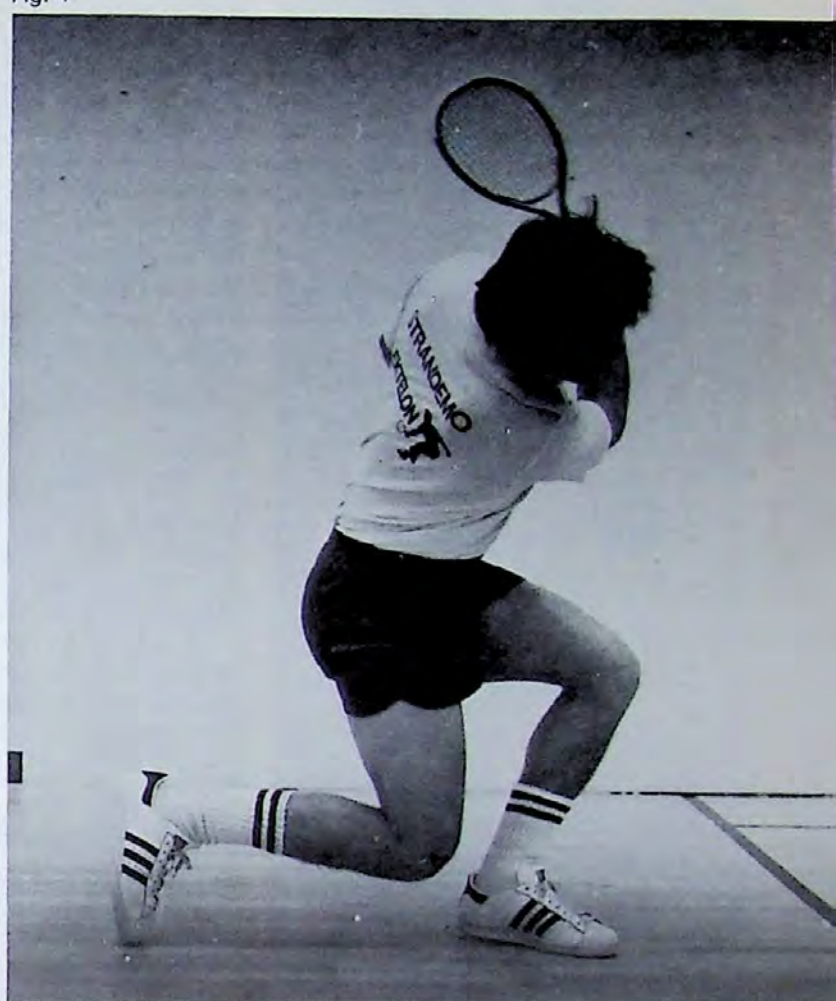
The forehand swing is, literally, a snap. Henry Aaron would appreciate a properly executed racquetball forehand. So would Jack Nicklaus. They know the power of the wrist.

But first, position. In order to strike any sort of ball properly, one must assume a sound "athletic" position: feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent, weight evenly but intently (toward, but not up on, the balls of the feet) distributed, back straight and head level and still.

Champions in many sports have set up like that a million times.

Adapting this basic stance to racquetball begins with carrying of the racquet. As in tennis, it is important to get the racquet back quickly, and this is most easily done if the racquet is carried at the waist, generally pointed

Fig. 3 Fig. 4



forward. The low carrying also facilitates the cocking of the wrist, which is the key to the entire stroke.

As the ball approaches the forehand side, (Figures 1-4) the body rotates until it is at right angles with the front wall. The racquet is brought back and up, to head height, and the wrist cocks to form an angle with the top of the forearm. It looks like a golf backswing, but not so pronounced, because of the bent elbow.

The swing begins with a short stride forward, the foot pointed in the direction you want to hit the ball. The front thigh flexes strongly, preparing to push forward. The racquet starts forward and down, and the hips torque, as in a golf swing, to the front.

The wrist, still cocked, rotates down

slightly, into a laid-back position, so that the angle now is along the back of the forearm.

The wrist remains cocked and the elbow bent as the forearm is "pulled" through the stroke, until contact is made with the ball, at a point even with the front foot. The wrist snaps with power at the point of contact, and the velocity should carry the racquet in its follow-through arc to a position next to your left ear.

The momentum should pull the trailing leg forward in a dance type slide.

As you practice, remember that the stroke's power is delivered by front-leg drive, hip torque and, mainly, the snap of the wrist. The exercise techniques illustrated on the following pages

duplicate the parts of the stroke's motion while isolating and developing the muscle groups which provide the power.

The exercises were developed for me by Phil Tyne of San Diego, who has conditioned athletes for such diverse pursuits as professional football, Olympic swimming and professional cycling. He also is the demonstrator in these sequences.

Wall Pulley

The wall pulley machine allows you to practice the form of the shot with 15 to 40 pounds of resistance. It is a good warmup for the exercises to follow, since it affects all the muscle groups that will be isolated later. But it is more than a warmup, and can be used to strengthen the muscles in the chest and shoulders.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Follow the form of the actual stroke as closely as possible. Use a light enough weight to complete three sets of 15 repetitions. The important function of this exercise is form, not the resistance. Pull the handle through a complete range of motion, from the top of the backswing (Fig. 5) through the approach to the ball (Fig. 6—note how the wrist remains cocked) and into the follow-through (Fig. 7).

Concentrate on shifting your weight to the leading leg, and pull with your pectoral (chest-to-shoulder) muscles as you twist and pull through the shot.

Supine Laterals

To isolate and strengthen the pectorals, go through a routine called "supine laterals." To start, use a light weight, 15-25 pounds, in each hand.

Lie flat on a bench and hold the weights, arms fully extended, above your chest. Keeping your back flat on the bench, lower the weights, laterally (Fig. 8 & 9) and bend the elbows slightly. Return to the starting position. Concentrate on pulling the weight across the chest just as you would pull the racquet. Do three sets of 10 repetitions.

Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Wrist-Forearm Series

Much of the power and control in the forehand is developed in the wrist and forearm. Three different isolation exercises are used to strengthen this musculature.

The first (Fig. 10, 11 and 12) is called the "Zotman curls." The forearm is isolated by support for the other hand behind the elbow joint (Fig. 10). A standard curl begins the exercise. At the top of the curl, rotate the wrist so that you are looking at the knuckles of your thumb (Fig. 11). The weight is slowly lowered toward the opposite elbow until it is even with that elbow. Reverse the motion until you are back in the starting position.

Use a light weight—about 15 pounds—and do three sets of 15 reps, or until you feel a burning sensation in your forearm.



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

The Zotman curls are followed by two exercises to strengthen the wrist.

For the first, isolate the wrist by kneeling and resting the forearm on a bench. Hold a 12 to 15 pound weight over the edge of the bench, the barbell perpendicular to the floor (Fig. 13). Then alternately flex and extend the wrist (Fig. 14), one flex and extension being one repetition. Do two sets of 20.



Fig. 15

The same isolation technique is used for the second wrist exercise, but the barbell is now held parallel to the bench, palm upward. Allow the weight, again 12-15 pounds, to roll to the ends of your fingers, so that it is cradled opposite the third knuckles (Fig. 15). Then curl the fingers, bringing the barbell back to the palm, and then flex the wrist (Fig. 16). Return to the starting position. Do three sets of 12. ●



Fig. 16



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Basic Strategies For Beginners

If you are a beginner at the game of racquetball, or have played for only a short period of time, this article is written for you. It has been the experience of many teaching professionals that new players, men, women or children, who take either group or private lessons at a club, YMCA or other facility start to acquire needed fundamentals of the game right from the beginning. Conversely, players who participate in the sport for a period of months without instruction have a very difficult time in trying to correct bad habits. In short, it makes sense to start learning correct techniques from the onset of play rather than having to readjust poorly learned techniques later.

Hitting the Ball Cross-court

One concept which can be helpful is to hit the ball cross-court while actually rallying with an opponent. This practice is essential in preventing the ball from going straight to the back wall and rebounding into center court, making it easy for your playing partner to return the ball. (See Fig. 1 & 2)

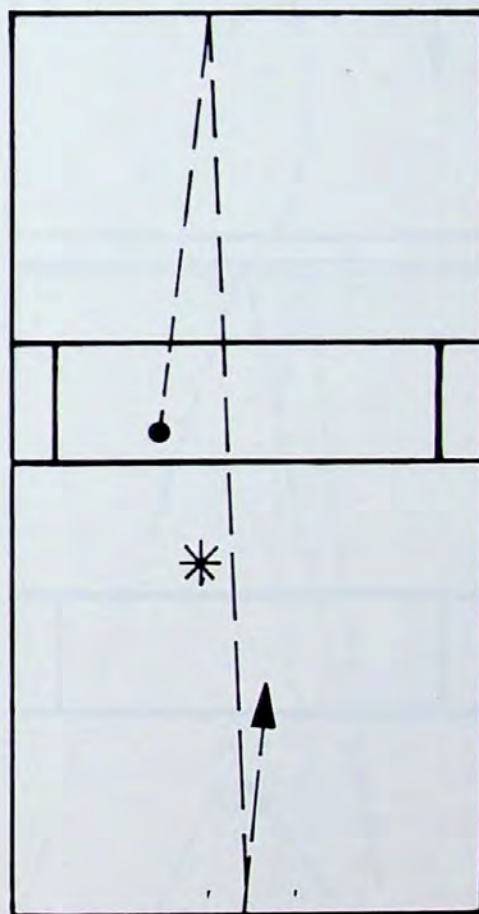


Fig. 1. – Avoid frequent back wall set-ups.

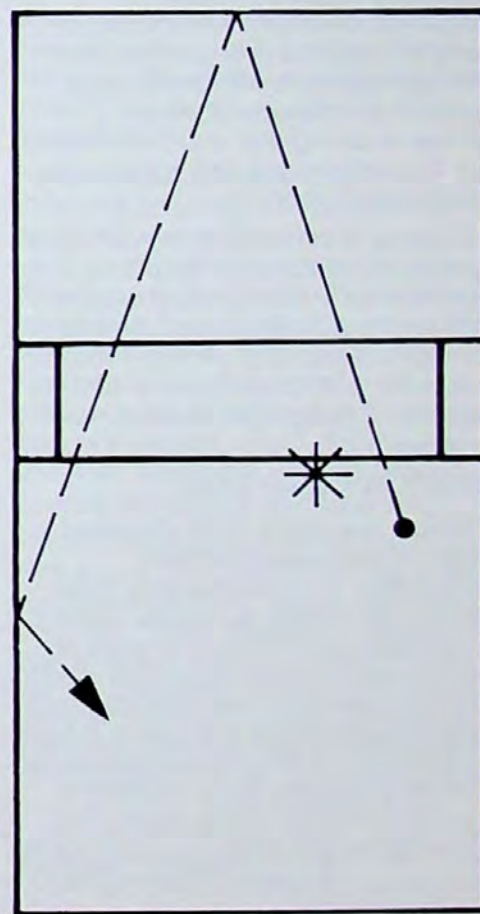


Fig. 2 – Stroke the ball cross-court, –away from your opponent.

Fig. 3. – Backhand down-the-line pass.

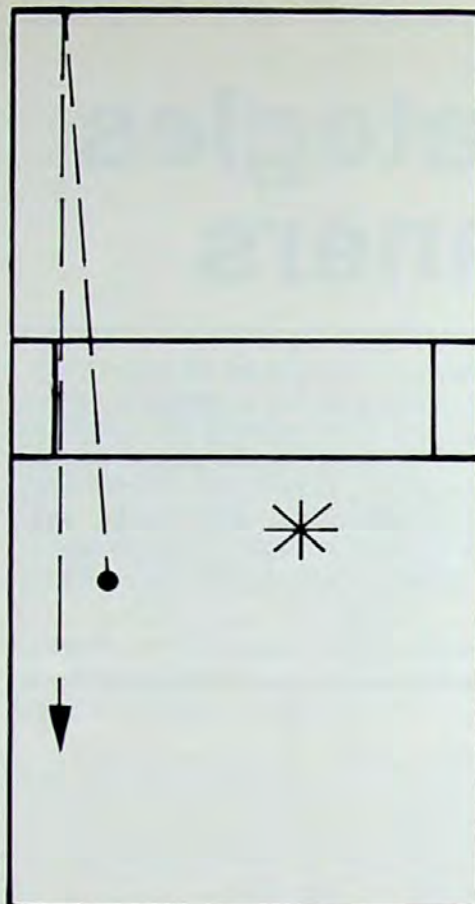
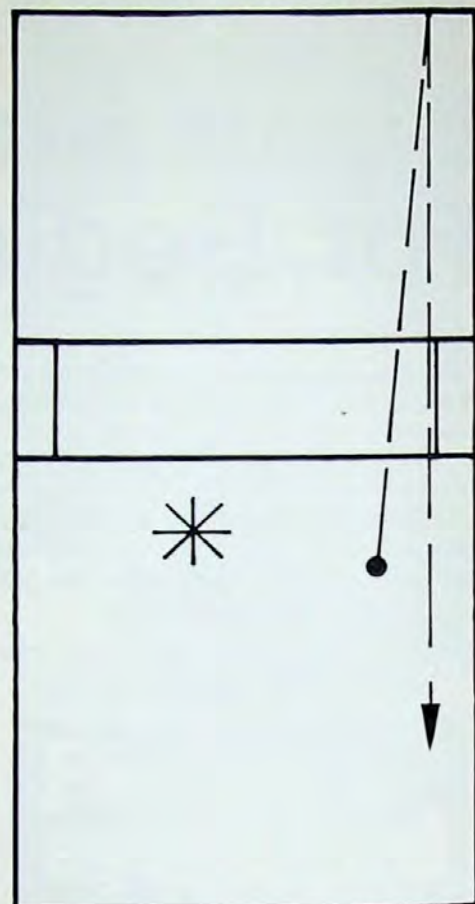


Fig. 3. – Forehand down-the-line pass.



Hitting the ball cross-court forces your opponent out of center court position and allows you to take it over. If your opponent is out of position near either side wall, hit the ball along the opposite side wall (See Fig. 3).

Hit Away From Your Opponent

A key point in volleying at all levels of play is to hit the ball away from your opponent. Many beginners are conscious of only hitting the ball to keep it in play. As your ability to return the ball increases with time, make yourself more aware of where your partner is during play and force him to run the furthest possible distance to retrieve your shot.

Do not try to hit the ball *through* your opponent, hit it *around* him. This is a common error even among excellent players. In racquetball, players seem to be able to react fast enough in many instances and return balls hit back at them even though they are handcuffed or rushed.

Return To Center Court

Perhaps the single most important factor in racquetball is court positioning. In observing any good player, this quality is usually evident. The player should make a move to center court as soon as he has struck the ball, keeping in mind that he must give his partner time and space enough to execute a return shot and not hinder the other player's vision. Getting a feeling for the flow and pace of the game will help in timing the move back to center court position. (See Fig 4 & 5)

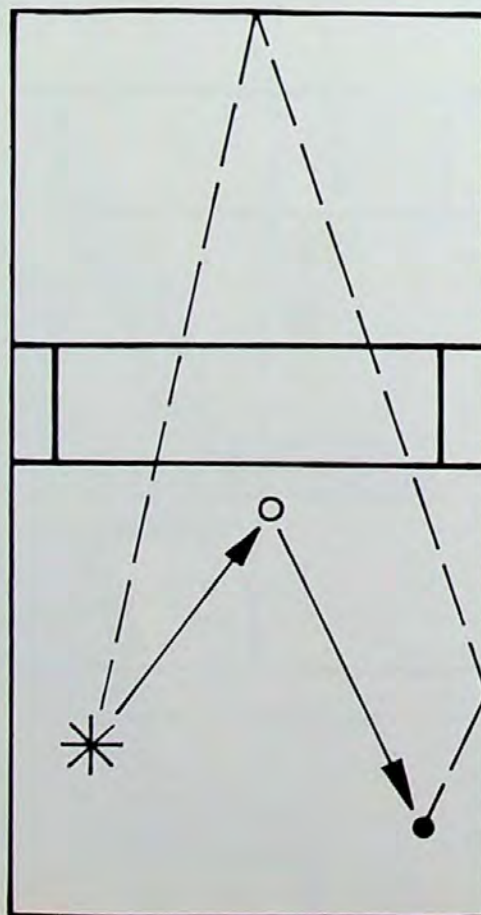


Fig. 4. – Return to center court after the ball is hit.

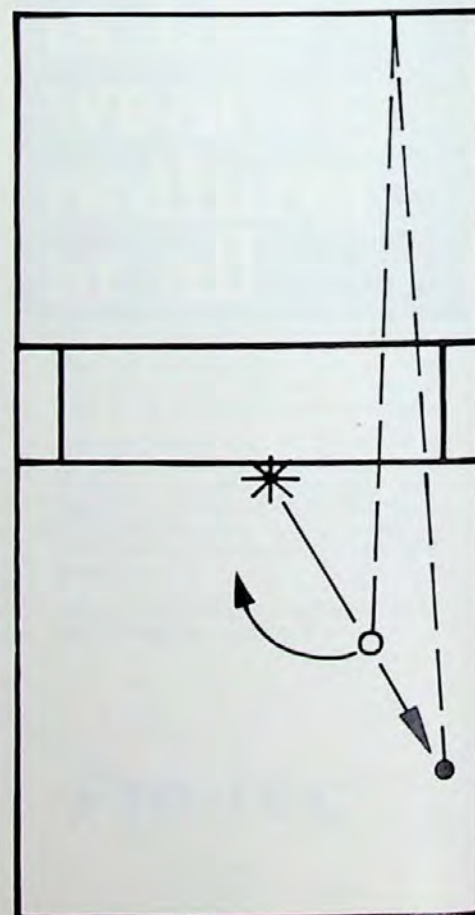
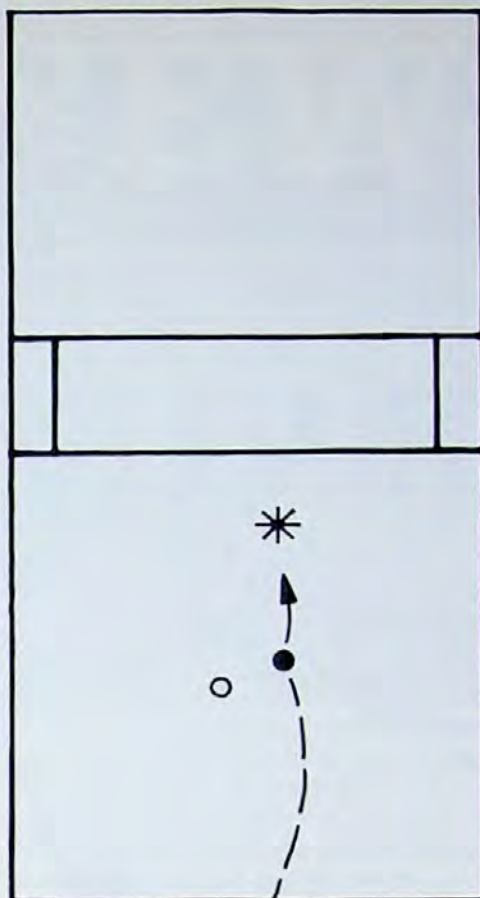


Fig. 5. – As your partner races to retrieve your shot, quickly move out of his path and return to center court.

Fig. 6. — Player has a back wall set up and his partner is locked in center court in the line of fire. Player X must move.



Maintaining Center Court Position

Another point to remember is that a ball returned to you in center court can be quickly played out of the air (on the fly) rather than playing the ball off the back wall or letting it pass you by. This will prevent a hasty retreat from good court position and allow you to maintain the center. When a player is forced to constantly retrieve; a proportionate increase in fatigue will take place. When a ball comes within racquet reach and you are basically in a set position—cut it off. Your partner will again be forced to react quickly.

Watching The Ball

Another very important aspect of racquetball play is focusing attention on the ball. (notice photos of professionals in this issue). This is a tricky subject because in watching the ball there is always a chance of being struck by it. To relieve this anxiety players are encouraged to wear either protective eye guards, glasses, or frames. In my opinion, watching the ball will help prevent being struck by the racquet because a player realizes only by watching the ball that he is out of range of his opponent's swing and can react accordingly.

A common occurrence for beginners is to stare blindly at the front wall, positioned in center court while the ball is rebounding straight at the player off the back wall. His opponent usually is following the ball and does not realize that the ball or racquet will strike his partner if he takes a full swing. The result—one player is struck by the racquet or the ball or both. (See Fig. 6)

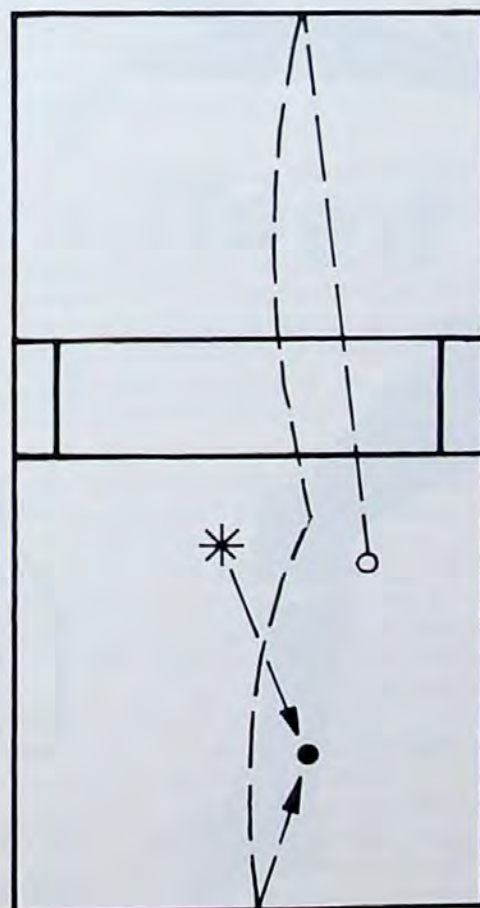


Fig. 7. — Track the ball back, keeping it at arm's length from the body, allow the ball to drop to waist height before swinging.

Serve to the Backhand

Most novice racquetball players should put the ball in play by serving to their opponent's backhand. The more accurate the placement of the serve, the more likely there will be a weak service return. Many new players come to the service zone, do not look back to see where their opponent is standing, and serve too quickly. As a result, they are not ready for the service return and lose the serve again quickly. There is also a tendency to serve often to the opponent's forehand, usually the stronger side.

Serving requires gathering your thoughts, pausing, deciding where the next serve should be placed, watching your opponent before serving, and then serving primarily to the receiver's backhand; this is normally where the weakest returns occur. I can recall numerous occasions where two players went through an entire game and one partner would never realize that their opponent was left-handed.

Playing the Ball off the Back Wall

When your opponent's shot is hit with a firm stroke and there is no time to cut the ball off on the fly, a back wall shot is required. Three important aspects of this shot included 1) tracking the ball back to the back wall and not waiting for the ball to come to you 2) keeping the ball away from the body on the rebound off the back wall and 3) letting the ball drop to about waist height on the rebound off the back wall before swinging. (See Fig. 7) ●

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USRA

**UNITED STATES
RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION**

4101 DEMPSTER STREET
SKOKIE, ILLINOIS 60076

STATE NEWS

Welcome to the inaugural state news section of *National Racquetball*. This is another step in forming the USRA and our magazine into a functional association dedicated to amateur racquetball. The first step was to affiliate with state and local associations, and others include obtaining Seamco balls for tournaments, sending out membership cards and other information.

The addition of this section is of great importance to our continuing development and growth of racquetball. In the past, before the inclusion of the state amateur program, primarily exciting news of the professional tour was covered as well as the regular sectionalized features of the magazine. The professional news will always be of special interest but there is a need to report events and stories at a more grass roots level—where the amateur player has an opportunity to air suggestions, report news items, inform other amateurs how to administer more effective local and state organizations, and how to keep tournaments in the black. In short, anything that will be of interest or assistance to other amateurs.

At our headquarters over the past few months, the expansion of the scope of our activities has been literally amazing. The pro tour has expanded; the states have been included; the national juniors promises to provide a wonderful time and produce a wealth of new talent; the magazine is widening its horizons; there is interest in adding racquetball clubs in Western Europe, the Far East and South America. The pace of the growth of the sport is staggering but we are striving to keep affairs in order and growing pains minimal.

The addition of this section dedicated to the states is also in conjunction with the increase in the quantity of instructional material, which is evident to anyone who has read our magazine



over the past few issues. Instructional material is a premium item and is important in the new evolution and trends which often quickly change racquetball strategy and performance factors. This added emphasis on instruction, aids the beginner in most cases, though hardly neglects the intermediate or tournament players. It is not limited to any one level, and we all never know enough about our game.

The new state section will not take the place of the tournament results section of *National Racquetball* nor will it greatly change the sectionalized approach to the magazine. It is more a new avenue for information for those who wish to contribute or make people in their particular state or the country aware of actions or ideas.

This leads me to stress the real crux of this matter which is *participation* from this day forward by state and local clubs. This section will only be as effective as the players and officers wish it to be. Send me news items about your clubs. Let us know how you administer leagues, how a profit may be made with an amateur tournament, how you publish your monthly newsletter. Do not forget to include tournament results, and action photographs or other photographs of interest. If an organization feels the need to let something be known let this new section be the vehicle to provide this news.

Another very important aspect of our new state affiliate program is provided largely in co-operation with the professional tour. The tour is divided seasonally into regional divisions of the country. Each time we have a pro stop we encourage state chairmen or a state official to attend a USRA meeting so that everyone can meet informally, express ideas, and exchange information. Our staff was delighted with the results of such an event in Burlington, Vermont, recently where our New England representatives met with Joe Ardito and myself as our guests for a USRA breakfast. This serves as our face-to-face link with the people who do so much at the state level on behalf of racquetball.

We are always more than happy to meet new people who are interested in getting a local or state association started. In our travels with the pro tour, we wish to encourage people to introduce themselves to our staff and voice their ideas and opinions to us.

Along with our state programs, the new *National Racquetball* subscription renewal policy will include a new format. This new plan will ensure that the state association will profit as result of each subscription renewal or each new member.

That's right, each subscription to *National Racquetball* will result in a direct payment to the state association. In past years, a USRA subscription was \$8, it is now \$5. However, the \$3 is still all that the USRA will receive—the other \$2 will go directly to the state. How can this be done? By sending your subscription renewal or new subscription directly to your state chairman who will forward it directly on to us.

Our recent policy has been to have all state representatives encourage their state association members to encourage their friends to join the USRA as well. This was a sound idea but it has been difficult to implement. Our new policy ensures that all new or

existing members will automatically support both associations as well as provide a base of operations at both levels. In addition to state and national membership, all new members will be issued a green USRA membership card which are provided to all state chairmen.

Instead of having to divide our efforts

into two separate sectors we are combining our subscription efforts with the states to allow a financial base in their behalf. So all members, we encourage you to promote our magazine on your behalf as well as ours. Our support is your support as we work to benefit each other and have the game of racquetball prosper at all levels.

Women Get Involved

One very important aspect concerning state associations which will ensure their future success is the permanent involvement of women in the governing body of our state affiliates.

Unlike many sports, future growth of racquetball is largely dependent upon how well the ladies are introduced to our relatively new sport. Ask any court club owner the importance of women in relation to the over-all success of their facility.

Women's participation in the Chicago area for instance, amounts to 50 per cent of total play in the area. This serves as an excellent example why the women should be represented with their respective state directors. Their voice should be heard for the

overseeing of women's leagues, clubs and tournaments. Their desire to organize, participate and be active in racquetball in general is equal to or greater than that of the men.

The U.S.R.A. stresses and encourages women to make contact with their various state chairmen to secure a representative. Organize and be heard at your club as well as state-wide. All USRA state affiliates are encouraged to include a women's open division in their state singles and doubles tournaments. Where the number of players are greater, a women's B, C and novice division should also be offered for play.

More and more women's clubs across the country are requesting that male

players offer instructional clinics for beginners as well as their more advanced players. For information on how to organize such classes contact Terry Fancher at the U.S.R.A. There is a sincere desire to learn to play racquetball and understand the basics. It is up to interested individuals and respected players to see that this type of instruction is made available to the ladies.

Referee's clinics are an excellent means to provide experience for female referees, doubles instruction offers a way for players of varying ability to compete for fun together. Keeping racquetball a family game contributes to happy and active players of both sexes.

Mississippi R-B Assn. Off To Flying Start

Racquetball is on the rise in Mississippi and the newly-created, U.S.R.A.-affiliated Mississippi Racquetball Association has taken the initiative in promoting it.

A group of interested and active racquetballers in Starkville followed the guidelines outlined by the U.S.R.A. to charter the organization. The elected officers who now have the responsibility to enforce and carry out the charter's Constitution and By-laws are: Emmett Kohler, president; Willie Daniel, Vice-president; C. T. Carley, secretary; Frank Bonner, treasurer; and Van Royal, director of leagues.

Eight trustees were also elected: Perry Mullen, Donnie Ray, Steve Langston, Dick DeNovellis, Phil Rutledge, Donovan Horn, Larry Jones and Jack Forbus.

Mississippi residents and players who are seeking further information on what's happening in your state, should contact C. T. Carley at the address listed in this issue.



Officers of the U.S.R.A.-affiliated Mississippi Racquetball Association (l. to r.): Emmett Kohler, president; C. T. Carley, secretary; Frank Bonner, treasurer; and Willie Daniel, vice-president.

3 More States Join U.S.R.A.

Missouri, Rhode Island and Massachusetts,—welcome to the U.S.R.A.!

With the addition of these three state affiliates, the number of U.S.R.A. state organizations has now reached 30, 60% of our goal of all 50 states.

"We're extremely pleased with the progress of our state program," said Terry Fancher, U.S.R.A. National Executive Co-ordinator. "We are in constant communication with the state organizations in order to help them do as much as possible for racquetball in their area."

If your state is not represented in the list of affiliates in this issue, and you wish to become involved, please contact Terry Fancher at U.S.R.A. headquarters.

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Connecticut

George & Gerri Rudysz
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New Britain 06051
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Miami 33166
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Idaho Falls 83401
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Handicap Tourney

The first Annual Invitational Handicap Racquetball Tournament was held at the Evanston, Ill. Court Club over the Labor Day weekend with Jim Harper defeating Lee Duda in the finals 31-27.

It was decided to attempt something a little different in the way of tournaments, so a handicap point spread was devised in which we tried to equalize all entries. We invited our women's team, A and B players, and a large number of novice players and handicapped them according to their playing ability on the basis of a thirty-one point game.

The secret behind handicapping entries successfully was to invite only players whose ability was known and had been observed by the Evanston Court Club staff. The point spread in a few situations was as high as twenty-seven points. The player giving the points was allowed to serve and in most matches the point spread proved equitable for all entries.

We wanted to host a fun tournament in which all levels of playing proficiency could participate and this successfully proved to be that type of tournament.

The final results were as follows: Jim Harper (first) 31 points — Lee Duda (second) 27 points. Joe Penkrot (third) 31 points — Bob Goodman (fourth) 29 points. Consolation finalists were Art Broder, 31 points — Sue Kleinman, 29 points.

Lee Duda

Help New York City

All New York City area racquetball players are urged to contact Stephen Mandell, 245 East 19th St., Apt. 9M, New York, NY 10003. If a bloc of players can be assembled, courts for play may be made available. Please respond so we can enjoy our sport in the nation's largest, untapped market.



Payment For Articles

Do you know a better way to teach a particular phase of racquetball? Have you experienced something first hand within our sport that you would want to share with the entire nation? Taken any good pictures of racquetball lately? Have any health tips that could help somebody's game?

If you possess or are capable of writing any of the above, *National Racquetball* will be happy to accept contributions from our readers. Payment will be made, on publication at the following rates:

\$200 for Instructional Articles.

Contributions must be specific, well documented with drawings or photographs, on a particular phase of our sport and how to improve it. Potential contributors should read any of Ken Wong's instructional series (November, 1975, January, March, 1976) as a good example. Minimum length: 2,000 words.

\$200 for First Person Articles.

Contributions must be actual, true, original unpublished story about something that happened to you or you witnessed within racquetball. It can be humorous, dramatic or just plain interesting. Potential contributors should read David Northcutt's *A Game With Charlie Brumfield* (May, 1976) as a good example. Minimum length: 1,000 words.

\$200 for Health Articles. Contributions must be factual, documented and related to how to improve or maintain your health in or with racquetball. Articles dealing with diet, conditioning, safety, cardio-vascular improvement, or psychological areas are particularly desirable. Dr. P.E. Allsen's *Racquetball Increases Cardiovascular Fitness* (March, 1976) is a good example. Minimum length: 750 words.

\$50 for pictures, cartoons or drawings. The material may be dramatic, humorous, or singularly interesting. It must be original and unpublished. Regular tournament photos, unless containing an unusually high degree of originality will not be considered. All photos must be black-and-white glossy, and any cartoons or drawings must be camera ready.

The contributor's name and address and the date the contribution is sent should be on all items. Compositions must be type-written, double spaced, and are subject to revision, alteration, correction or rejection by the editor. **CONTRIBUTIONS CANNOT BE ACKNOWLEDGED OR RETURNED.**

Please address contributions to The Editor *National Racquetball*, 4101 Dempster Street, Skokie, Illinois 60076 •



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Prize Money

**Official N.R.C. Women's Ranking
(as of 10-31-76)**

1. Peggy Steding, Odessa, Tex.
2. Janell Marriott, Salt Lake City
3. Shannon Wright, Dallas
4. Kathy Williams, Hazel Park, Mich.
5. Jennifer Harding, Portland, Ore.
6. Sue Carow, Glenview, Ill.
7. Jean Sauser, Northbrook, Ill.
8. Jan Campbell, San Diego
9. Camille McCarthy, Indianapolis
10. Sarah Green, Memphis
11. Jan Pasternak, St. Louis
12. Bette Weed, San Diego

**Official N.R.C. Men's
Player Ranking
(as of 10-31-76)**

1. Charlie Brumfield
San Diego
2. Marty Hogan
St. Louis
3. Steve Strandemo
San Diego
4. Jerry Hilecher
St. Louis
5. Davey Bledsoe
San Diego
6. Steve Keeley
San Diego
7. Mike Zeitman
Memphis
8. Richard Wagner
San Diego
9. Steve Serot
San Diego
10. Bill Schmidtke
Minneapolis
11. Jeff Bowman
San Diego
12. Ben Koltun
St. Louis
13. Wayne Bowes
Edmonton
14. Craig McCoy
Riverside, Cal.
15. Jay Jones
Los Angeles
16. Ken Wong
St. Louis
17. John Lynch
Urbana, Ill.
18. Paul Ikier
Minneapolis

**1976-77 N.R.C. Women's Prize Money
(as of 10-31-76)**

Rank	Player	Prize Money
1.	Peggy Steding, Odessa, Tex.	\$2,400
2.	Janell Marriott, Salt Lake City	1,000
3. (tie)	Shannon Wright, Dallas	600
	Kathy Williams, Hazel Park, Mich.	600
5.	Jennifer Harding, Portland, Ore.	300
6. (tie)	Sue Carow, Glenview, Ill.	200
	Bette Weed, San Diego	200
8. (tie)	Jean Sauser, Northbrook, Ill.	100
	Jan Campbell, San Diego	100
	Sarah Green, Memphis	100
	Camille McCarthy, Indianapolis	100

**1976-77 N.R.C. Men's Prize Money Earnings
(as of 10-31-76)**

Rank	Player	Prize Money
1.	Marty Hogan, St. Louis	\$5,000
2.	Jerry Hilecher, St. Louis	2,550
3. (tie)	Charlie Brumfield, San Diego	2,050
	Steve Strandemo, San Diego	2,050
5.	Davey Bledsoe, San Diego	1,175
6. (tie)	Richard Wagner, San Diego	900
	Mike Zeitman, Memphis	900
8. (tie)	Bill Schmidtke, Minneapolis	375
	Ben Koltun, St. Louis	375
10. (tie)	John Lynch, Urbana, Ill.	300
	Steve Serot, San Diego	300
12.	Wayne Bowes, Edmonton	275
13.	Jay Jones, Los Angeles	250
14. (tie)	Steve Keeley, San Diego	200
	Craig McCoy, Riverside, Cal.	200
	Steve Mondry, San Diego	200
	Ken Wong, St. Louis	200

One Player Who Saw The Ball

It, was Jerry Hilecher, whose booming serve and intense concentration led him to victory in the first tournament ever played on a court with front wall glass.



Hilecher shows the hustle and determination that leads to victory. Here a diving get saves a point in the finals.

SEAMCO 
LEACH 

N.R.C. PRO TOUR

1

Sacramento

The 1976-77 Seamco-Leach Professional Racquetball Tour got off to an unexpected start Labor Day weekend when 22-year-old Jerry Hilecher captured the \$2,000 first place award at Wall Street in Sacramento, California.

With the first front wall glass court complementing his booming drive serves, Hilecher eliminated the game's two foremost players, National Champion Charlie Brumfield in the



Hogan moves in to cut off this cross-court backhand attempt by Hilecher in the finals.



semi-finals and youthful Marty Hogan in the championship match.

Brumfield succumbed in an excellent and thrilling encounter 20-21, 21-12, 11-4, while Hogan, attempting to utilize his own power serves, fell 21-10, 7-21, 11-4.

As expected, the front wall glass was the topic of conversation and controversy. The hard hitters loved it, the control players hated it.

"I don't see what's so hard about it," said Hilecher, "we're used to glass in the other walls, and it's the same for everybody. It's the price we're going to have to pay for more exposure."

"It's ridiculous," said Brumfield. "I couldn't see the ball."

Besides the glass and Hilecher, other dramatic stories unfolded in Sacramento, one being the play of former amateur National Champion Jay Jones. In the round of 16 the television stunt man eliminated third seeded Steve Keeley 6-21, 21-16, 11-7 and then almost did it again, this time to Steve Strandemo in the quarters. But Strandy had a bit too much for Jones and slid by 19-21, 21-6, 11-6.

In the women's professional division, Peggy Steding made news, not because she won, that's hardly news, but because she's healthy again, and that means trouble for her foes.

Completely recovered from the pinched nerve that almost cost her her National title last June, Peggy dominated the female field as only she can, taking the title from her constant nemesis, Shannon Wright by the convincing scores of 21-9, 21-9.

But the story of Sacramento was Hilecher, the recent University of Missouri graduate, who became only the seventh player in history to win on the N.R.C. tour, now in its fourth year.

"Everyone talked about the glass," said the lithe St. Louisian, "but I was



Center court position on a set-up against Brumfield got Hilecher this point as Brum moves in to cover.

playing well, too. If I wasn't, Hogan would have taken me. He hits just as hard as I do."

It was a well-played final, much to the pleasure of the full house gallery at Wall Street, an attractive 11-court racquetball/handball court club.

Hogan, serving first in game one bolted to a 3-0 lead, but was held for three innings on three as Hilecher tied the game at 4 and took the lead for good at 9-8. From there Jerry ran 8 points over the next three innings to gain an insurmountable 16-8 lead. Hogan tried to come back with two points to 10-16, but Hilecher continued to apply the pressure and ran the game out.

Any serve hit hard was effective on the "Main Street" court, but three specifically were used by both players. Drives hit down either line tended to freeze the receiver for that all important split second, as did hard Z serves to the forehand side, which utilized a glass window pane in the left side wall, along with the glass front wall.

It didn't take Hogan long to catch on in the second game as he tallied 8

consecutive points in his first time in the service. In fact, Hilecher never got into the game as Marty, another of the many players raised on the St. Louis J.C.C.A. courts, ran his lead to 14-2, 17-4 and finally closed out 21-7.

Despite all the talk of glass and serves, Hogan had only six aces in the first two games and Hilecher managed just three. Admittedly, many serves were near-aces accounting for weak returns and quick points on re-kills.

The tie-breaker was worth \$1,000 as the loser would take home that amount, the winner double. The serve changed three times before a point was scored, and Hogan did it with two in the fourth inning. But when Hilecher got up to serve again, it was as if the thumb was pulled out of the dike. Eight times he put points up on the board and although Hogan held there, it was too late. Two more notches were all Marty could manage, and Hilecher captured the title 11-4.

As good as the championship match was, the semi-final encounter between Hilecher and number one seed Brumfield was even better. Jerry truly showed his intestinal fortitude after

blowing a 16-3 lead in game one, yet still managing to come back and take the match from Brum in three.

Again it was a hot streak in the mini-game that took Hilecher to his win. Brumfield was able to scratch out a point each time in, in the first two frames, but Hilecher got tough in the third, tallying 7 in that inning. Brumfield held on, reached four the next time around, but it was Jerry's tournament and both players knew it at this juncture. The final was 11-4.

Hogan and Strandemo, surviving his scare from Jones, had a superb three game match in the bottom bracket semi-final. There was no way Strandemo was in the first game, trailing 2-9 quickly, then 10-18. But at this point Hogan began some questionable on-the-court-antics, in effect he broke his own concentration, and Strandemo, who carries concentration as his long suit, saw his opening and took it. In three innings it was 18-all, and Hogan never did regain



The ecstasy of victory in instant-replay. Hilecher over Hogan and Brumfield.



Hogan blasts a backhand down the left wall as Strandemo struggles to get out of the way in the semi-finals.

his touch as Strandy played good, percentage racquetball to a 21-18 win.

Game two began as did game one, with Hogan bolting to 6-0 and 10-1 advantages. The real battle of this game, however, came at 12-5, where both players stalled for three innings. Holding Hogan with a lead is tough enough, but Strandemo was unable to put up any of his own, and Hogan upped his lead to 15-7. Even a technical foul couldn't slow Marty as he coasted to a 21-11 win.

The tie-breaker was all Hogan. After three innings he held a 9-0 advantage, despite time-outs by Strandemo at 4 and 7. Steve avoided the donut with a point in the fourth, and then Marty put it away, 11-1.

In the women's final, it was Steding at her best. Playing as though she truly wanted to silence her critics (they say she's "too old" to be winning), the 40-year-old Texan was surely on her game.

Her power and shooting, completely overwhelmed Shannon's control and ceiling game. Peggy had the gallery shaking their heads in amazement as she constantly used the fly-kill effectively, an almost impossible shot, most thought, on front wall glass.

"What glass?" asked Peg.

Wright never got going in either contest, and those who came to see how a 40-year-old can constantly conquer players half her age, saw it right before their own eyes. With much greater mobility than in the Nationals, Peggy did not need to shoot her famous overhead, although there were enough interspersed with her other excellent shots to keep Shannon off balance.

Kathy Williams was a valiant foe for Steding in the upper bracket semi-finals, managing to push Peg in the second game. But as usual, the champ had too much for the challenger and Steding was never in much trouble as she took the 21-8, 21-15 match.

In the bottom bracket, Wright had her hands full with Janell Marriott. Shannon took game one 21-15, but Janell, who is strong, hits the ball hard, and has excellent serves, stuck it out in the second and came away with a 21-17 win.

The tie-breaker was soon over. Marriott, obviously fatigued, never got

Determination is all over her face as the muscles respond for Steding in her match with Williams.

started and Wright came out strong, with the outcome 11-0 for Shannon.

The men's quarter-finals had only the Strandemo-Jones battle go three. It was an ugly match, with a multitude of hinders, avoidable hinders (some called, some not) and plenty of hit-by-the-ball hinders. It was not good racquetball, it was certainly not sportsmanlike racquetball and fortunately, it was early enough in the day, so not too many people saw it. Those who did were disgusted.

For the record, once again, Strandemo out-muscled Jones 19-21, 21-6, 11-6 with many of the spectators wondering why they hadn't put a tent over that circus.

In other quarter-final action the play was better, a true indication of what pro racquetball should be, although a verbal altercation between Hogan and Wagner, caused Hogan to be the unfavorite of the crowd for the remainder of the tournament.

Hogan captured that match 21-20, 21-13 in a sometimes well-played contest. Also in the quarters, Brumfield downed Davey Bledsoe 21-9, 21-3, completely outclassing his Leach teammate; and Hilecher stopped Mike Zeitman 21-10, 21-19, coming from way behind in the second game.

NOTES OF THE TOURNAMENT. . .

The round of 16 is becoming tougher and tougher at each pro stop. Witness some 16's losers: Keeley, Serot, McCoy, Bowman. . . Prize money breakdown was \$100 for each of the 16's losers, \$500 to the semi's losers, \$1,000 to second and \$2,000 to first place. Quarter-finals losers played a doubles match for \$100 over their base prize money of \$250. In it, Zeitman-Bledsoe topped Jones-Wagner. . . Thanks to Wall Street manager Steve Harris, and owners Bill Beichley and Greg Flessing for their help. . . Up-and-comer John Lynch giving Hilecher all he could handle in the 16's 21-15, 21-18, look for John in the future. . . Nice to see Seamco's Art Orloski, Rick Isaacson and Darvel Prouty in attendance. . . Ladies received total purse of \$2,000, highest outside of the Nationals and upped \$1,500 from a year ago. ●



Steding shows how to get down low on the ball as she shoots the right corner against Wright in the ladies finals.

Pro Results Women (First Round): Bette Weed def. Donna Noguchi 21-8, 21-14; Sue Carow def. Linda Siau 21-9, 21-7; Kathy Williams def. Christie Manley 21-4, 21-4; Janell Mariott def. Gina Villa (forfeit); Jennifer Harding def. Alicia Moore 21-16, 21-16; Jan Campbell def. Mary Ludwig 21-2, 21-10; Shannon Wright def. Nancy Sonnenburg 21-1, 21-2.

(Quarter-finals): Peggy Steding def. Weed 21-6, 21-7; Williams def. Carow 21-14, 21-8; Marriott def. Harding 21-20, 21-11; Wright def. Campbell 19-21, 21-12, 11-3.

(Semi-finals): Steding def. Williams 21-8, 21-15; Wright def. Marriott 21-15, 17-21, 11-0.

(Championship): Steding def. Wright 21-9, 21-9.

Pro Results Men (First Round): Terry Fancher def. Randy Floyd 21-4, 21-12; Hank Weiss def. Steve Pulliam 21-15, 21-16; David Bush def. Terry Atkins 21-12, 21-12; James Doyle def. Skip Beattie 21-5, 21-8; Ken Wong def. Terry Fowler 21-2 21-12; Bill Thurman def. Willie Luntao 21-16, 21-5; Ron Sakinawa def. Peter Blatman 21-13, 21-7; David Matthews def. Price Thomas 16-21, 21-18, 11-9; Hank Marcus def. Tom O'Connor 16-21, 21-3, 11-2; Gordon Drysdale def. Mark Dimura 21-0, 21-5; Mike Mjehovich def. Morgan Sayes 5-21, 21-15, 11-4.

(Second Round): Charlie Brumfield def. Bill Russell 21-6, 21-4; Steve Mondry def. Lindsay Myers (injury default); Dave Bledsoe def. Fancher 21-16, 21-16; Jeff Bowman def. Weiss 21-2, 21-14; Jerry Hilecher def. Bush 21-7, 21-2; John Lynch def. Doyle 21-10, 21-8; Wong Def. Steve Dunn 21-3, 21-10; Mike Zeitman def. Gary Bright 21-5, 21-5; Steve Keeley def. Mike Dziedzic 21-6, 21-2; Jay Jones def. Thurman 21-19, 21-12; Steve Serot def. Sakinawa 21-5, 21-3; Steve Strandemo def. Matthews 21-7,

21-10; Craig McCoy def. Marcus 21-7, 21-12; Richard Wagner def. Drysdale 21-4, 21-3; Bill Dunn def. Mjehovich 21-9, 21-17; Marty Hogan def. Bruce McCormick 21-1, 21-1.

(Third Round): Brumfield def. Mondry 21-4, 21-3; Bledsoe def. Bowman 21-14, 18-21, 11-6; Hilecher def. Lynch 21-15, 21-18; Zeitman def. Wong 21-15, 19-21, 11-5; Jones def. Keeley 6-21, 21-16, 11-7; Strandemo def. Serot 21-6, 21-7; Wagner def. McCoy 21-12, 21-3; Hogan def. S. Dunn 21-13, 21-12.

(Quarter-finals): Brumfield def. Bledsoe 21-9, 21-3; Hilecher def. Zeitman 21-10, 21-19; Strandemo def. Jones 19-21, 21-6, 11-6; Hogan def. Wagner 21-20, 21-13.

(Semi-finals): Hilecher def. Brumfield 20-21, 21-12, 11-4; Hogan def. Strandemo 18-21, 21-11, 11-1.

(Championship): Hilecher def. Hogan 21-10, 7-21, 11-4.

The doubles exhibition for quarter-finalists was a crowd pleaser, although not a player pleaser. Here the front wall glass syndrome doesn't seem to bother (l. to r.) Zeitman, Jones, and Bledsoe, but Wagner (far r.) never sees the sphere as it is about to go between his legs.



Marriott goes after another Wright ceiling ball in the ladies semi-finals. But who would have believed a donut in the tie-breaker?



Big men on Wall Street (l. to r.) Bill Beichley, Steve Harris, Greg Flessing.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

LEACH
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N.R.C. PRO TOUR

2

Edmonton

They Barely Made Him Sweat

With his super-power shots and photon serves, last year's runner-up is making waves about being number one this year.

Marty Hogan, the 18-year-old heir apparent to Charlie Brumfield's number one spot, captured the second stop on the Seamco-Leach pro tour, September 23-26 at the Court Club in Edmonton, Alberta.

Hogan, who has the ability to completely outclass his opponents, including Brumfield, was never pushed in his first N.R.C. victory of the season. He lost nary a game en route to one of the easiest pro victories in the N.R.C.'s history.

The championship match victim was the dogged Steve Strandemo, an upset winner over Brumfield in the semi-finals. Against Hogan, Strandemo started fast but as soon as the hard-hitting St. Louisian cranked up his serves, the match was over.

Finding a ball slightly slower than the usual tournament batch, Strandemo was able to race to a 7-0 lead and hold

on at 10-4 before the ball broke. Ball number two, approved by both players as was ball one, was more to Hogan's liking.

Five of Marty's next 10 points were aces as bullet-like blasts into the deep left corner left Strandemo on the ground in retrieving attempts. It took Hogan only two innings to tie the count at 10 and from there it was only a matter of time.

Strandy hung on, but even time outs late in the game could not interrupt the Hogan momentum as Marty went on to a 21-17 win.

Game two was all Hogan, despite the fanatical urging by the partisan Canadian fans, hoping to see a three-gamer. Marty ran seven straight from 8-5 to 15-5 to put the game out of reach by the eighth inning. He coasted

from there primarily on the strength of his six aces to take the win and \$2,000 first place victory.

The two best matches of the tournament, however, both involved Brumfield, the struggling National Champion. Hit by illness due primarily to overtraining over the summer, Brumfield has yet to hit his groove on the 1976-77 tour. Strandemo is playing superbly, easily the best ball of his career and the two engaged in a classic match in the semi's.

In game one, neither player could gain an edge early, although Strandemo was able to bolt from 9-9 to a 13-9 lead. From there he was at his toughest, enlarging the advantage to 17-10, before Brumfield mounted his anticipated comeback.

Charlie managed to make it close, inching back to 17-18, before Strandemo scored three times, twice on Brumfield errors off the serve, for a 20-17, and finally 21-18 victory.

Everything that went right for Strandemo in game one went wrong for

him in game two. He got behind early at 2-8 and was forced to call his second time out at 4-12, his third, in desperation at 17-6. It was a frustrating game for Steve, who was hit with two technical fouls early by referee Chuck Leve. The final score was 21-7.

So into the tie-breaker they went, and the 11 pointer, once assuring Brumfield at his best, was not the case this Saturday evening.

In the third inning Strandemo broke a 1-0 lead into a 6-0 margin by tallying five times before Charlie could regain service. They came in and went out three times without scoring until Strandy broke loose and got over the hump with an ace to the forehand corner. Later point eight came on a Brumfield avoidable hinder and the final was 11-3.

The bottom bracket semi-final was no contest. Hogan, who can psychologically dominate opponents, dominated Davey Bledsoe 21-5, 21-9. Blasting the green sphere almost



Steve Strandemo, playing top notch ball, questions a call by the referee. Technical foul problems didn't stop him from topping Brumfield in the semi's.



A dejected Brumfield sips a refreshment after dropping his match against Strandemo. The Brum is having trouble putting it together this season.

indiscriminately, Hogan's pace was faster than Bledsoe could handle and the scores showed exactly that.

The best quarter-final match was Brumfield's three-game win over Mike Zeitman, playing his best ball in years. Zeitman, now residing in Memphis, was playing power racquetball, taking a page from the Hogan book on how to blast your way to victory.

The first game was close throughout, until Brumfield, on the strength of three late aces broke a 15-13 lead and captured game one 21-14.

Game two was a beauty, as Zeitman, down 9-13 came back with four to tie, and three more unanswered points to take a 16-13 advantage. Brumfield tied at 16, they tied at 17 until Zeitman with a flurry of kills and power strokes took the game 21-17.

Unfortunately for "Zit", he could never get untracked in the tie-breaker and

time outs at 5-1 and 7-1 couldn't stop the Brumfield express, which ended 11-1.

Strandemo had no trouble with Wayne Bowes, manager and pro at the Court Club, who had upset Richard Wagner in the round of 16. Bowes, despite the 99.9% support of the gallery, never could mount a serious threat against Strandemo. Scores were 21-8, 21-6.

Bledsoe eliminated Sacramento winner Jerry Hilecher in his quarter-final match in a good one, 21-18, 21-19. Hilecher, as is his custom, was hot and cold, seeming to try and turn it on and off as the match went on. However, Davey played solid ball, and when it got to the short strokes Hilecher could not turn it on once again.

The final quarter-final match found Hogan toying with the aging Bill Schmidtke 21-9, 21-17, in match that was not as close as the scores indicate. In game two Hogan had a 10 and 12 point lead, eased up and Schmidtke managed to get back to 17, with Hogan, however, having control at all times.



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In the Ladies professional bracket, Peggy Steding made it two in a row this season and six straight this year as she topped the improving Janell Marriott 13-21, 21-2, 11-8 for the \$800 first place prize.

The match went in extremes, with Marriott, who is hot and cold, but lately more and more on the hot side, bolting to a 10-1 lead in game one. Using power serves and rolling kill shots, Janell survived a late comeback attempt by the champ to secure her 21-13 win.

Game two was the opposite. Steding started fast and never let up, coasting after a while to a 21-2 win.

The tie-breaker was a real thriller. Marriott had the match won with an 8-6 lead, but the tough Steding came back again. At 10-8 the rally lasted 15 shots each with Marriott finally leaving a backhand corner kill a little bit high and Steding re-killing straight into the left corner. It was on of the most exciting championship ladies matches in some time, and most importantly, signalled to the racquetball world that Marriott is a force to be reckoned with.

In the ladies semi-finals, Steding was at her dominant best in stopping Jennifer Harding 21-5, 21-4 in the upper bracket. Jenny just doesn't have the strength to stay with the powerful drives and fly kills that has marked Peggy's game over the years.

In the lower bracket, however, Kathy Williams was giving Marriott all she wanted. Her usual first game jitters lost her that encounter early, as Marriott, herself a fast starter, walked away with an error-filled 21-5 win.

Game two found Kathy with her composure and Marriott without her control, and the result was a predictable 21-11 Williams victory, forcing the tie-breaker.

The 11 pointer was all Marriott, serving well, shooting the weak returns and dominating in all areas, for her 11-3 win.

The men's round of 16 had some interesting matches, many of which may have had some insight to the future. Two of the youngest pros, both

rookies, almost snuck into the quarters with near-victories over more experienced opponents.

Ben Koltun, the 17-year-old St. Louis schoolboy, drew Strandemo and gave the wily veteran all he wanted in this match. First game went to Koltun who came back from an 18-20 deficit to eek out a 21-20 win.

Moving with the fluidity and ease that is his trademark, Koltun fearlessly gave Strandemo fits. The ability to shoot on the run, especially with his forehand, makes Koltun an opponent not to be taken lightly. Strandemo had to work hard for his second game, 21-16 win.

The tie-breaker was 11-4, as experience and conditioning paid off for Strandemo, with the mental and physical strain of two tough games more than Koltun could handle.

In the lower bracket, John Lynch, University of Illinois senior with a power game, took Davey Bledsoe in their first



Peggy Steding, who made it three in a row on this year's tour, here sets up for a forehand off the back wall against Janell Marriott in the finals.

game 21-14. Drive serves and back wall kills are the mark of the younger players, and they certainly are in Lynch's repertoire.

Bledsoe re-grouped and came back with a 21-8 second game to force the tie-breaker. Lynch quickly established a 5-0 lead and held on to 8-5, before Bledsoe turned it on and came back for an 11-8 win.

Look for either or both Koltun and Lynch to break into the quarters soon.

Other top names not reaching the quarters were fourth seed Richard Wagner, who due to school commitments was forced to fly all day, de-plane, drive directly to the club, and play Bowes, whose game was on. The result was a routine win for the underdog.

Steve Serot, whose game is way down from a year ago, was also given the routiner by Zeitman 21-14, 21-12; Schmidtke bested Craig McCoy 21-12, 21-20 in the only other decent match of the round.

NOTES OF THE TOURNAMENT . . .

Our thanks to Wayne Bowes, Howie Rankin, John Kempo, Ken Wilson and all the other fine racquetballers in Edmonton who helped make the tournament run so well . . . Seamco's Rick Isaacson took in his second event in a row . . . New clubs in Canada the topic of much conversation, looks like Edmonton may get another one or two, Winnipeg's also soon to open one . . . Kempo put on the usual top flight party at his lovely home after the finals Sunday afternoon, all enjoyed the eat and drink . . . Also our thanks to Ruth Wilson for all her help with customs. ●

Hogan Wins In Vermont

Just under the deadline are the results from the Leach-Seamco Pro Tour stop in Burlington, Vermont October 14-17. The tourney was won by Marty Hogan, his second consecutive victory in the men's division. Peggy Steding made it three in a row in the women's bracket.

Championship round losers were Charlie Brumfield, who has yet to win this season and Janell Marriott, who for the second straight tournament took Steding to three games before bowing.

In the semi-finals of the men's bracket, Hogan topped Steve Strandemo, while Brumfield stopped Richard Wagner. Ben Koltun, the 17-year-old rookie from St. Louis reached the quarters, as did Mike Zeitman, Jerry Hilecher and Davey Bledsoe.

Semi-final losers in the ladies pro tournament were Kathy Williams (to Steding) and Shannon Wright (to Marriott).

Full results, plus scores and pictures will be in the January issue of the *National Racquetball*.

Pro Results Men (First Round): Wes Hadikin def. Terry Fancher 21-8, 17-21, 11-10; Wayne Bowes def. Cliff Dawson 21-4, 21-4; Steve Mondry def. Don Thomas 21-13, 21-7; Steve Chase def. Doug White 21-3, 21-5.

(Second Round): Charlie Brumfield def. Hadikin 21-11, 21-9; Mike Zeitman def. Steve Serot 21-14, 21-12; Steve Strandemo def. Ben Koltun 20-21, 21-16, 11-4; Bowes def. Richard Wagner 21-11, 21-16; Jerry Hilecher def. Mondry 21-5, 21-9; Davey Bledsoe def. John Lynch 14-21, 21-8, 11-8; Bill Schmidtke def. Craig McCoy 21-12, 21-20; Marty Hogan def. Chase 21-5, 21-13.

(Quarter-finals): Brumfield def. Zeitman 21-14, 17-21, 11-1; Strandemo def. Bowes 21-8, 21-6; Bledsoe def. Hilecher 21-18, 21-19; Hogan def. Schmidtke 21-9, 21-17.

(Semi-finals): Strandemo def. Brumfield 21-18, 7-21, 11-3; Hogan def. Bledsoe 21-5, 21-9.

(Championship): Hogan def. Strandemo 21-17, 21-14.

Pro Results Women (Quarter-finals): Jennifer Harding def. Bette Weed 13-21, 21-6, 11-3; Kathy Williams def. Susan Khan 21-6, 21-9; Janell Marriott def. Linda Forcade 21-8, 21-5.

(Semi-finals): Peggy Steding def. Harding 21-5, 21-4; Marriott def. Williams 21-5, 11-21, 11-3.

(Championship): Steding def. Marriott 13-21, 21-2, 11-8.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Military

The second annual military "All Services Racquetball Tournament", held at the Naval Support Activity Los Angeles-Long Beach, Long Beach, California, 23-26 September exemplified that racquetball is ever growing in popularity, with 60 entrants in the intermediate and novice categories.

The number one and two seeds were defeated early, thus allowing third seeded, EO2 Kirk Hayward, 1975 consolation winner from Port Hueneme to continue into the finals. SSGT Terry Burgert, Marine Corps Air Station El Toro defeated SGT George Ohlinger, Marine Corps Base, Twenty-nine Palms, California to get into the finals. The first game was bouncing back and forth for 15 minutes, till Hayward started rolling them out. Burgert's game slowly dissolved while Hayward was killing everything he could get his racquet on, with scores 21-11 and 21-17, to capture the 1st place trophy and racquet.

DPCM John Paulette (retired), Naval Training Center, San Diego defeating LtCol Henry Storch, Los Angeles Air Force Station (21-19, 8-21, 21-15) placed third in intermediate singles.

An upset in the intermediate doubles found Port Hueneme's Kirk Hayward and HMC Steve Clark fighting hard to maintain last years title. Clark struck with injury in the second game was unable to continue and forfeited the third game and match to Major Gary Meyer and partner MSGT John Ewadinger, Marine Corps Base, Twenty-nine Palms. The reclassified team of SGT George Ohlinger and MSGT Richard Lopez, Marine Corps Base, Twenty-nine Palms fought through the consolation bracket to defeat Long Beach's hopefuls Lt. Joe Cohen, USS John Paul Jones and SA Rick Cundiff, USS Bronstein for third place.

An excellent match in the novice singles ended with Cpl Duane England, Marine Corps Base, Twenty-nine Palms over Lt Larry Dixon, Camp Pendleton dentist 21-19 and 21-12. Lt Tom Hoffman, Naval Undersea Center, Long Beach pulled up for third.

The team of England and Major John Stocking, Marine Corps Base, Twenty-nine Palms edged DT1 Skip Wheeler and DT2 Jim Dickinson, Naval Regional Dental Clinic, Long Beach 21-14 and 21-19 for first place in novice doubles. USCGC Burton Island's SS3 Henderson and MK3 Cartwright captured third.

Great thanks to Special Services Department, Vince White, Carl Crown and all others for assisting in this event.

G. R. Allen

New Mexico

Carlsbad, N.M.

The Rio Pecos Tennis Shop hosted the first annual Carlsbad (New Mexico) Singles tournament July 10-11 and tournament chairman Charles Jurva captured the double elimination title.

Jurva topped Rich Hill 21-15, 21-12 in the finals, after defeating Hill in the winner's bracket 16-21, 21-6, 21-17. Hill then went to the loser's bracket which he won to earn another shot at Jurva.

Lanny Roberts placed third in the tournament which had 21 entrants.



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Michigan

Racquettime of Livonia, Michigan held its annual September Open the weekend of the 17th, 18th and 19th, drawing 154 men and women from the greater metropolitan Detroit area. Champions were crowned in each of three divisions: Men's Open with 58 entries, Men's "B" with a full field 64, and Women's Open with a record entry of 32 participants.

In the Men's open, top seeded Gil Schmitt was upset and finished third losing to Tom Brownlee of Brighton in the semifinals 7-21, 21-7, 11-7. Sixteen-year-old Mike Yellen of Southfield captured the title 21-20, 21-13 over runner-up Brownlee. Dan McLaughlin, former National Paddleball Champion in 1972-74, finished fourth.

The future in the pro ranks really looks promising for the fast rising young Yellen. Mike finished first in a recent tournament held in Troy, Michigan and before that finished third last June in a tournament held in Warren, Michigan. A natural rivalry seems to have developed between Yellen and McLaughlin, two of this area's finest players. They have met in three tournaments in the past four months, with Dan winning 21-18, 21-11 in Warren, Mike defeating Dan 6-21, 21-7, 11-10 in Troy, and Mike defeating Dan again in Livonia 21-12, 21-10.

Fred Lewerenz, Tom Carpenter, Mark Wiegand, Robert Barr, Ed Barter and Jim Easterling, all top players in this tournament, will be joining Schmitt, Yellen, Brownlee, McLaughlin and possibly Fred Wiegand, Jim Santino, and Bill Gottlieb in a "Super 16" invitational tournament to be held

during the last week in October at the Southfield Athletic Club. That tournament will determine the top order of ranking players in Michigan.

The Women's Open drew the largest field of entries ever in local tournaments and will attest to the great interest and growth in Women's Racquetball in the metro-Detroit area.

Pat Krise, the top seeded defending champion, was dethroned by nationally ranked and current Michigan State Paddleball Champion Teri Davis 21-19, and 21-2. Teri defeated Patty Pattyn 21-5, 21-10 in the quarterfinals, and then beat Irene Ackerman 21-14, 21-9 in the semifinals. Krise met and defeated April Cummins 21-11, 21-12 in the quarterfinals, and Judy Huhta 21-13, 21-15 in the semifinals before the showdown with Davis. Irene Ackerman finished third 21-11, 21-7 over fourth place finisher Judy Huhta.

The Men's "B" tournament had many fine players and matches and a few surprises as well. Alex LeVeque, a relative unknown before the tournament, emerged the champion by defeating top seeded Eldon VanSpybrook in the finals 6-21, 21-18, 11-5. LeVeque and VanSpybrook had lots of stiff competition along the way. LeVeque met Jim Amick in the quarterfinals, and while winning 15-21, 21-10, 11-1, these games were tough and were real crowd pleasers.

VanSpybrook in the second round defeated a determined Jim Burton 21-17, 5-21, 11-3, and in the round of 16 met and defeated Bill Csatori in a good match 21-19, 12-21, 11-3. John Schweichart finished third by defeating Jeff Sohikian, fourth place, 21-6, 21-17. LeVeque topped Schweichart 21-11, 21-18 in the semifinals and VanSpybrook defeated Sohikian in the other semi in exciting and close games 21-18, 21-18.

TOURNAMENT NOTES . . .

Many thanks to all of the friends of Livonia Racquettime. Although they are too numerous to mention individually, they were very helpful with suggestions that contributed greatly to the tournament's success. We hope that everyone had a good time. Special thanks must go to Irene Ackerman and Allen Stortz, our Co-Floor Managers, for their efficiency in getting nearly all of the approximately 237 matches off on schedule.

Now that the tournament is over, much experience and knowledge has been gained to make future tournaments more pleasurable and enjoyable for players and spectators alike. One important factor necessary in making any tournament a successful venture is a need for volunteers, especially referees. Nearly all top players feel that referees are important for their matches and appreciate having them and rightfully so — won't you keep this in mind in future tournaments that you participate in and volunteer your services? Thank you.

Joe Charette



Ladies champion Teri Davis with a backhand kill against third place finisher Irene Ackerman in their semi-final match won by Davis 21-14, 21-9.

California

If the third annual Queen Mary Tournament was missing anything this year, then whatever it may have been probably wasn't worth having anyway.

A record field of 479 jammed the Long Beach Athletic Club to duel for championships at stake in 14 divisions. Charlie Brumfield tangled with Rich Wagner in a special exhibition. Three-game matches? How about an amazing 105?

Conducting the tournament was an immediate challenge for general manager Russ Welsh and his five partners who took over the club's operation on Aug. 5—the first day of action. The gifted floor maestro—Al Gracio—ramrodded activity like a pro, which he certainly is in his specialty, and dedicated volunteers banded together harmoniously to insure success.

Bill Strom, executive director of MacArthur Park YMCA and one who has run a number of tournaments, declared in a letter immediately after the extravaganza: "... (it) was one of the best managed I have seen."

Tommy Horn, who progressed to the semifinals in men's novice singles, praised it, too, labeling it "by far the most enjoyable" he has ever been involved in, either as a player or spectator.

A packed gallery picked up valuable pointers from Brumfield and Wagner. Charlie loosened up in the first game en route to a 21-17 victory, then outclassed his younger opponent and showed why he is five-time—and current—national titlist, administering a sound 21-7 spanking.

Fourth seeded Joel Scheinbaum struggled to the men's open singles championship by nipping Ian Fleishman, 21-6, 20-21, 11-5. Other than an opening round breeze over Ken Fleming, all of Scheinbaum's outings went three games.

His most trying test came in the semis when he labored to eliminate Tony Marti. The unheralded Marti knocked off top seed Al Portune in an exciting twin 21-20 duel, then forced Scheinbaum to the limits before bowing, 21-18, 11-21, 21-17.

Don Berberet was involved in three tri-sets during his five times on the floor. The last, 17-21, 21-16, 21-19, provided him with the crown in B singles, an event that produced a rarity when the leading four seeds were bounced in the second frame.

Pete Cook put in a lot of playing time before conquering Dale McCarthy, 21-18, 21-8 in C singles. A large number of hopefuls had to "play in" to the field of 64 who eventually waged warfare in the marathon event. Cook's main hurdle came in the third round when he found himself paired with dangerous Gonzalo Duran, the No. one seed. He was up to the occasion, however, and escaped with a 21-17, 21-19 triumph.

Master's singles followed the handicappers' form as top seeded Earle Castle met the No. 2 selection, Bill Armstrong, in the title showdown. Castle fell behind immediately, 12-21, but rallied to claim the trophy with 21-7, 21-18 victories. He then teamed with Kal Gladstone, whom he had ousted in singles, 15-21, 21-20, 21-17 to sew up master's doubles honors, 21-16, 21-3.

Jay DuBose gunned down Scott Holtz, 21-20, 21-15 in junior singles for first place. One-half of the first-round advancements were made via forfeit, including one awarded to Holtz. DuBose knocked off Rich Harris for openers, 21-10, 21-11, then pummeled Tim Johnson, 21-10, 21-13, and drilled Carrie Martin, 21-10, 21-16.

Men's novice singles attracted a draw of 64, and when the smoke cleared, Mando Yepes was in command of a championship 21-7, 21-15 win over Bill Hund.

Second seeded Patti Berneathy emerged as women's open singles champ when she defeated Ruth Knudsen, 21-20, 21-13. Knudsen pulled a stunner in semi-finals when she upset No. one rated Bette Weed, 21-10, 21-16. Weed was struck by lightning again in the battle for third place, falling to Judy Clemens, 16-21, 21-8, 21-5.

Kansas City

Kansas City's first junior racquetball tournament was held August 13-15 at the Allendale Racquetball Club. Thirty entries from throughout the area participated in three divisions. Although many of the entrants had been playing less than six months, the matches were well played and the competition keen.

Eric Danner rolled over all the opposition in the 18-under division. Kenny Cooper finished second, giving Danner his toughest match, although losing, 21-3, 21-7. Kenny Milburn took third.

The 15-under division was won by the youngest entrant in the division, 13-year old Bobby Zago. Young Zago displayed a well-rounded game with all the shots necessary to become a top player in the near future. Tom Crick fell, 21-1, 21-20, in the finals, capturing second place. Brad Scott took third, and the consolation was won by Mike Riley.

Chris Fuchs powered his way to the top in the 12-under division, beating Matt Lombardi 21-11, 21-17 in the finals. David Dod edged out Jo Villanueva for third place. Jo wasn't bothered by the fact that she was the youngest player and the only girl to enter, as she breezed through her first two matches before losing to Fuch and Dod. Jeff Kivett won a close three-gamer from Tommy Cox to take the consolation.

The sportsmanship of the players and parents was outstanding throughout the tournament. Few of the players had ever refereed before, but the attitude of all the participants—even in the close matches—made it easy and enjoyable for the players who wished to learn to referee. Because of the enthusiasm generated by this tournament, junior racquetball is off to a good start in Kansas City, and the entries in next year's tournament will almost surely double.

Bo Champagne

Illinois

Joe Wirkus of Madison, Wisconsin, a wizard at winning tie-breakers, held on despite injuries to win the 1976 Midwest Amateur Invitational Racquetball Tournament October 1-3 at the Court House in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Wirkus, the top seed, doggedly worked his way to the title although he had received several stitches in the head and a sprained finger in an earlier match as a result of a vicious collision with a side wall. He defeated Terry Fancher, Northbrook, Illinois in the finals in a long match, giving Fancher an "inside-the-tiebreaker doughnut" 11-4. After trailing 0-4, Wirkus scored 11 straight points.

Both players had played strongly throughout the tournament and had survived tough semi-final matches. Wirkus had held on in the second game to defeat Charlie Rish of the University of Illinois 9-21, 21-19, 11-3 as Rish's booming serves and remarkable forehands were almost enough to pull the upset. Fancher had a strange match with Gil Schmitt, of Ann Arbor, Michigan in an old rivalry 3-21, 21-6, 11-7, in which neither player broke a sweat until the tie-breaker.

This tournament has always been sparked by upsets in the past. Last year's quarter-final losers included Ben Koltun, Jeff Bowman, and John Lynch who are now all pros. This year was no exception. Early round surprises were Bob Deuster, Des Plaines, Illinois over John Treichler, Northbrook 21-18, 21-11 and Paul Franks, Northbrook winning over Dr. Fred Lewerenz,

Detroit, 15-21, 21-9, 11-4. In the round of 16 the 20-year-old Deuster continued his excellent play to upset third-seed Gary Stephens, Memphis 21-20, 17-21, 11-9, while 18-year-old Steve Sulli, Elmhurst, Illinois was cheered by local fans while defeating Bill Gottlieb, Lansing, Michigan 21-15, 21-18.

In the women's bracket, Bev Franks, Northbrook, the top seed, defeated second seeded Pat Schmidt, Milwaukee 21-15, 21-6 for the victory. Schmidt gave way to Bev's surge late in the first game and the second game was no contest. Franks breezed through the entire tournament winning over Carol Armstrong, Mt. Prospect, Illinois in the semi-finals top bracket while Schmidt had beaten Barb Halperin, St. Louis in the bottom bracket 21-4, 21-7. Armstrong won third place by forfeit.

The tournament served notice of things to come marked by the outstanding play of the two young players, Deuster and Sulli, who both advanced to the quarter-finals before losing. Deuster played well in losing to Schmitt 16-21, 21-12, 11-6 while Sulli lapsed in his match against Fancher 21-4, 21-11. Other quarter-final matches saw Wirkus win over Scott Hemphill, Chicago 21-6, 21-10 and Rish get by Galen Johnson, Green Bay 21-11, 21-10.

The youth movement in the men's division was echoed by Wirkus who stated *"the most amazing thing I find at tournaments is the fact that when we come back into the court between*

games, there are eight-year-old children madly batting the ball around having a great time."

Ron Johnson, Indianapolis, after an upset loss to Tom Street, Elk Grove, Ill., came back to win the consolation championship over Glen Withrow, Hoffman Estates, Illinois in three games. Women's consolation was won by Mary Plauche, Evanston over Judy Huhta, Detroit.

Tournament chairman Fred Blaess, president of the USRA affiliate Illinois Racquetball Association and manager of the Court House supervised his usual superb tournament and provided players with personalized bags, tournament shirts, and a tasty hospitality buffet.

The finals was a heated match between two long-time friends who always play intensely against each other and this was no exception. In game one Fancher was perhaps a little more fresh than Wirkus and Terry held onto an early 14-9 lead to win 21-17.

Game two followed the same pattern in reverse as Wirkus fought to an early lead as the frantic pace was starting to show on both players performance. Joe went on to win and split the games at one each by the score of 21-16.

The tie-breaker had two tired players return to the court and at 4-6 with Fancher serving, he bounced the ball off his racquet after the score had been called. *"Side-out"* ruled referee Fred Blaess. Fancher exploded and never regained his composure, hitting the next three balls into the floor and eventually losing 11-4. *I thought Terry was going to crawl straight up the back wall, after that call,"* said Blaess later.

For many players, this was their first big tournament of the season and some were noticeably off their game but all seemed to have an enjoyable time. Special thanks goes to Tom Street and Alan Shetzer, who sponsored the tournament, John Hay, George Nelson, Jan Frisch, and Jan Lavey for prizes, assistance, and hospitality.



San Antonio

Don Nelson and Alan Ferguson, 5th and 4th ranked on San Antonio's Turtle Creek Country Club (TCCC) racquetball ladder, became the surprise winners of the 1976 TCCC Member's Racquetball Doubles Championship recently.

The 3rd seeded team became champions when the team of Dick Cramer (Club Racquetball Singles Champion and City Handball Singles and Doubles Champion) and Richard Masling defaulted in the finals. Second seeded Rinaldo Gonzalez (City Racquetball Singles Champion) and Jerry Friesen had defaulted in the 1st round due to scheduling problems. Third place went to Leslie Pfeiffer and Clint Esler. Kelly Rankin and Chris Morris were the consolation winners.

The champions received engraved bicentennial pewter "1776" mugs.

New York Paddleball

In the face of 10-6 and 9-3 deficits in both games, the cool, experienced precision team of Nancy Obert (r.) and Lois Cohen conquered hardhitting Iris Ashe and Iris Kitton in the Paddleball Players Association one wall doubles championship 15-11, 15-10 in New York City.

Nancy brought it together in the second game with a combination of two straight right line passes, a cross-court left liner, a shovel re-kill and finally a soft shot on the long line.

Lois was brilliant throughout, constantly keeping the ball moving and her opponents on the run.

Two weeks later Lois demolished her opponents to win the singles title.



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The Successful Court Club Manager

"A successful racquetball club manager must combine business management, athletic ability and personal charm in a highly professional manner in order to assure each member enjoys the club each time it is used," says Rod Delson, general manager of the Supreme Court Sports Center of Van Nuys, California.

Delson also believes three ingredients are essential in the profile of the professional club manager:

- 1) the professional manager must be business-oriented first and a player second;
- 2) he must be sensitive to all types of players, especially the recreational players;
- 3) he must display a winning personality directed toward the club as a whole.

One of the biggest myths about racquetball management is that the manager must be a top-notch racquetball player. A professional manager, according to Delson, should be a strong B or C player to allow him to have enough expertise to instruct and inspire novice and intermediate players.

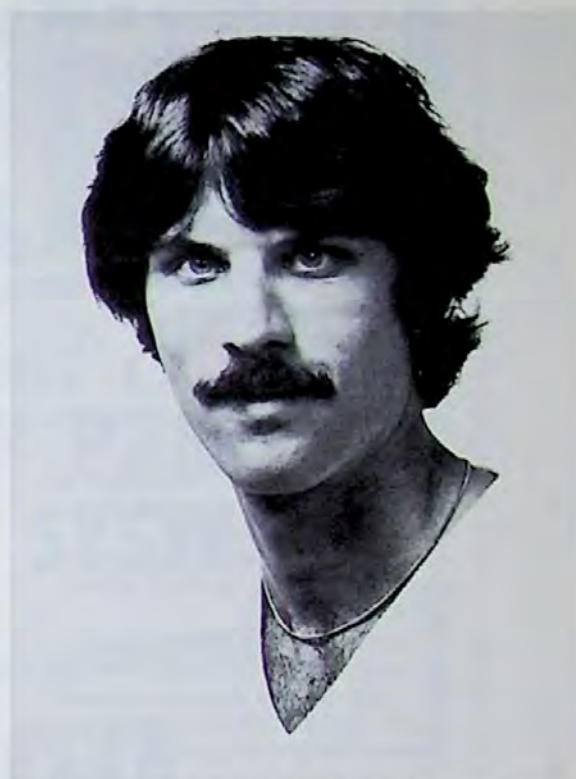
The second area of expertise important for the professional manager is the ability to relate to and focus on the recreational player rather than the tournament player.

"It is definitely an asset for a club to have good players, but the club's success and profitability will depend on businessmen and women who desire a good workout and want to play two or three hours a week," Delson said. *"A tournament player will often seek special privileges and tend to dominate precious court time. The goal should be to sell racquetball to the person who desires a good workout, a good time and a pleasant club atmosphere."*

The third skill a professional manager must possess is a sense of humor and a warm personality. Delson believes the vast majority of people come to a club for two basic reasons: first, a good workout; and second, relaxing in a pleasant atmosphere.

"Since most of our members work a typical 9 to 5 job, when they come to us, it's for a good time," he says. *"Members seek a facility which is well run and has planned programming. Equally important, we find an atmosphere of low-key socializing must be apparent. A casual aura of good humor and friendliness allows people, who previously had negative attitudes toward competitive athletic activities, to have an easy and desirable entrance to racquetball."*

"Aside from having a well designed facility," Delson concludes, *"the club personnel are the key to long-term success. The management team at Supreme Court believes that care must be spent in selecting personnel in order to maintain a quality racquetball athletic club."* ●



Rod Delson, general manager, Supreme Court Sports Center, Van Nuys, California.

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FEATURE

Kendler unveils plan for new national headquarters

From: Lake Forest-Lake Bluff News-Advertiser
August 12, 1976

By Sarah C. Heatwole
(Staff Writer)

Although the city's plans for an indoor racquet facility have proven economically unfeasible, Robert Kendler feels there is a need and a desire to Lake Forest sufficient to support a similar sports facility.

Recognizing the growing popularity of racquetball, Kendler bases his idea on the cost revenue advantages of building a court club versus a tennis facility.

In an informal discussion with the plan commission Monday night Kendler outlined a proposal for a court club and clustered condominium development at Saddle Run. Saddle Run, a 134-acre vacant parcel at the southeast corner of Westleigh and Rte. 41 has been owned by Kendler for over 10 years.

The property is zoned R-4 (one acre single family residential) but Kendler said, "Frankly, the density along side us, the highways, the railroad lines and the drainage ditch, do not contribute one iota to an outstanding development. Nevertheless, I am confident that we can make Saddle Run something of a showcase."

Kendler noted the recent trend in planned community developments which by incorporating "recreational amenities have made high home costs tolerable."

In his preliminary considerations, Kendler proposes a court club building with approximately 16 racquetball-handball courts. This building would be the core of a sports complex set on about five to 10 acres which would include indoor and outdoor pools, and outdoor tennis courts.

Analyzing the land site, Kendler says, "We could weave this sports core together with walking nature trails, bicycle paths, and running tracks. The area along the Skokie ditch could

become an arboretum. The court club and a highway planting screen would shield the sound and sight from the west and north, while the arboretum would provide relief from the drainage ditch on the east."

Kendler proposes to put this all together "with single family, detached cluster condominium homes that would provide all the exterior maintenance as well as the club privileges."

As president of both the United States Handball and Racquetball Associations, Kendler envisions his Saddle Run Sports Complex as the international home of handball and racquetball. Planning an all-glass court as a television stage for both handball racquetball, he suggests hosting national championships in both sports and developing a Lake Forest championship team.

Although this court club concept would be a commercial enterprise, Kendler sees it as "no different than the Lake Forest Club, the Bath and Tennis, the Winter Club, Onwentsia, Knollwood or Old Elm Clubs. They are all wonderful for the community and so will we be."

Kendler aired his ideas Monday night in the hopes of learning the plan commission's reaction to such a proposal. "Unless I can have the entire community and this commission's whole-hearted cooperation, I want no part of it," he said.

Should Kendler decide to proceed with his proposal, he would seek a special use permit under the planned unit development provision of the zoning code. This provision was written into the zoning code in 1974 after consultations with Barton, Aschmann and Assoc. on the possible uses and zoning classifications for the vacant land along the Skokie corridor. ●

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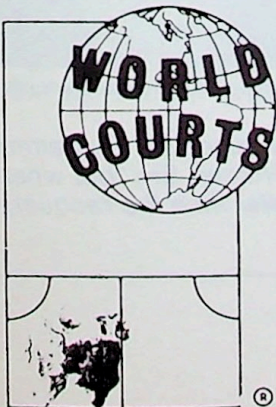
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COURT CLUBS • BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Part of the younger set of future champions pose for instruction at the Four Wall Courts summer school.



C.R. (Chuck, Jr.) Wurzer takes after his "old man."



Club Manager Runs Kids R-B School

Chuck Wurzer, manager and professional at Four Wall Courts, an eight court, court club in Buffalo, New York ran a summer school for youngsters aged 8-21 this past summer. The program attracted over 100 kids, necessitating two different sessions for the attractive program.

The school was free, and available only to the children of Four Wall Courts members. It was a two week program with one-half hour of lessons and an hour of practicing and playing three mornings a week.

"I found this the ideal framework," said Wurzer. "They were eager learners and completed everything I wanted to teach them within this time period."

The success of the summer program has led Four Wall Courts to open another session, this time for any players in the 8-21 age categories in Western New York.

"I personally don't think enough is done in the United States to encourage our youth to play and become proficient at racquetball," said Wurzer.

After the school was over, the "graduates" were given courts at



Club manager/pro Chuck Wurzer spreads the gospel to a group of the older students.

reduced rates to encourage them to keep playing. Mini-tournaments were also found to be high interest developers.

Wurzer, a former nationally-ranked doubles player, is now working on the second generation of top Wurzer players. C.R. (Chuck, Jr.) Wurzer, now four-years-old, is pressing his dad on the court.

"He's not ready for tournaments," smiled Wurzer. Sr., "but when he grows taller than the racquet, look out."

FORT WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA

It's full steam ahead on construction of the Fort Washington Racquetball Club, the largest privately owned facility in the Philadelphia area devoted exclusively to racquetball and handball.

Slated to open this winter, the club will feature 10 courts, sauna and steam facilities, observation deck and lounge, child care area and pro shop. Four of the ten courts will have glass back walls for easy viewing.

According to club president, Mark Smith, *"The Philadelphia suburbs are ready for racquetball, and we're bringing the sport here in a big way."*

Area racquetball players have in the past been limited to playing on handball courts at local Y's and on squash courts, but Smith hopes to remedy the situation.

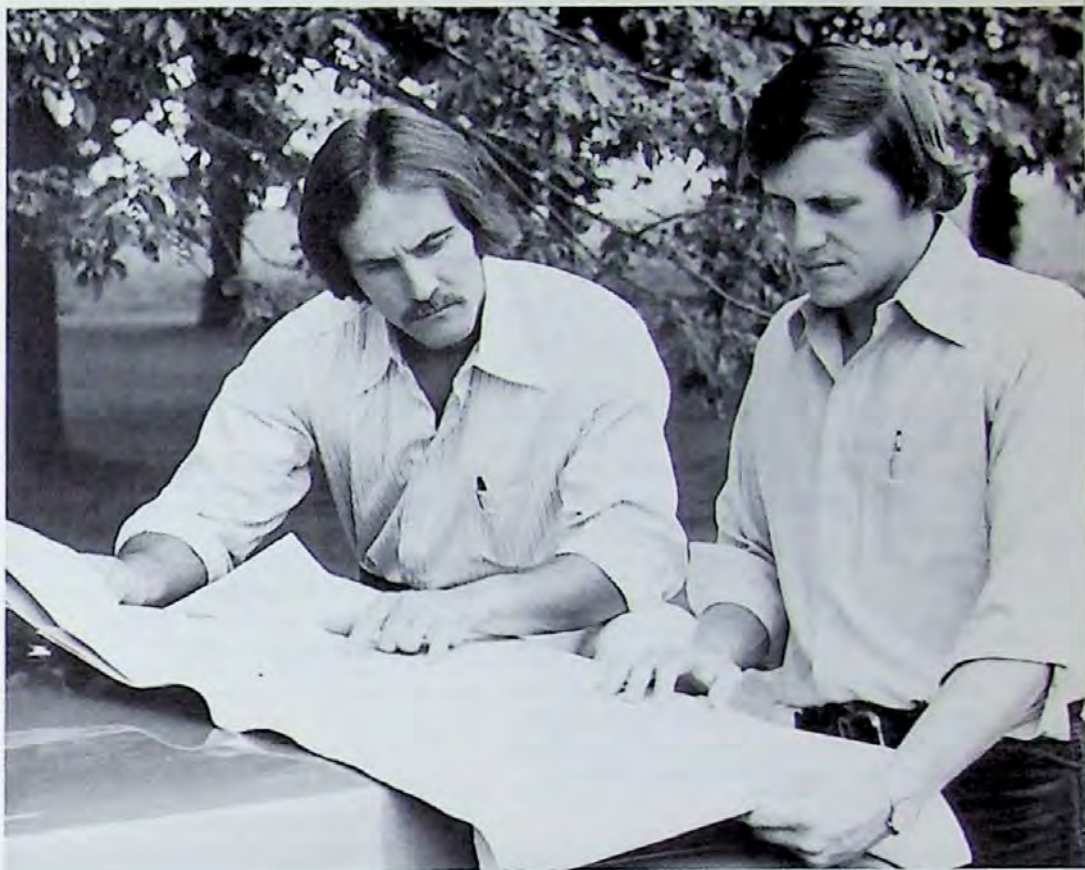
"In many cases," he says, *"we've found that people have been introduced to racquetball in other areas of the country, have taken a liking to it, but are unable to find an appropriate place to play when they return home."*

Smith himself was an enthusiastic squash player who became acquainted with racquetball only in recent years. He believes that many other racquet sports players will share his enthusiasm for racquetball but anticipates that many future club members will be people who at this point haven't even heard of the sport.

"Our job is to get the word out," he says. *"Racquetball is a sport that appeals to everybody—men, women children, whole families. We want to talk about a game that can help people stay in shape, a game that's easy to learn and yet can be as challenging as you want it to be."*

He and his partners are counting on the club's location to draw a large number of potential players. *"We're directly across from an industrial park, we're located at the intersection of two major*

Fort Washington Racquetball Club takes shape. Club Vice-President Geoffrey Smith (left) and President Mark Smith (right) study blueprints at the club site.



arteries, and within a quarter mile are two motels—a Holiday Inn and a Sheraton. On top of that, the club is located in Montgomery County, one of the most affluent areas of Pennsylvania."

Smith adds that despite the club's high-traffic location, it has an almost idyllic setting. Situated on a two acre lot, the club site is bordered by full-grown trees, many of which have been re-planted at great expense rather than being plowed under by bull dozers.

"We've made an extra effort to create a really good club in an attractive setting. And we're extremely confident that racquetball is going to catch on in the Philadelphia area. In fact, we've even designed the club so that we can add ten courts without altering the integrity of our surroundings."

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN

The world's largest Racquetball center is now open in Southfield, Michigan. Boasting 30 regulation-size courts, the Southfield Racquetime Center is not only the largest of its kind, it is one of the most splendidly equipped.

Southfield Racquetime Center is one of the few in the country with glass-walled courts. These two exhibition courts have glass walls on three sides for maximum audience participation. These courts will prove invaluable for tournaments, Racquetball clinics and training sessions.

The sheer bulk of the Center conceals masses of men and women's lockers, saunas, showers and lounge areas. There are card rooms for relaxation,, a nursery, a retail shopping area and mall, a Pro shop and plenty of parking space.

Southfield Racquetime Center is located at 26400 W. Twelve Mile, just east of Northwestern Highway. It is ideally situated, with access to major highways and expressway, for players throughout the entire Metropolitan Detroit area.

Players who want the availability of court space without wishing to incur the costs and obligations of a private club will be pleased to learn that there are no memberships at the Southfield Racquetime Center.

The arrival of this new giant in the City of Southfield will do a lot to meet the needs for more court space.

With the kind of facilities the Southfield Racquetime Center has, it's destined to become the site of national tournaments, clinics and promotions. Presently the real stronghold for professional racquetball players is San Diego.

Racquetball, which is played indoors year around, knows no seasonal limitations and has become the number one racquet sport in the country. (This despite competition from such racquet sports as tennis, paddleball, squash, etc.)

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Southfield Racquetime Center, outside view.



Southfield Racquetime Center, championship court.



Photos by Tom Ploch

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Racquetball, the fastest-growing all-family sport in the U.S., will be introduced in Huntington Beach early in January with the opening of Racquetfun, Inc. at Brookhurst Avenue and Hamilton Street.

The facility, which will cost three-quarters of a million dollars, will be a private club, with 10 air conditioned racquetball courts, a spacious lounge, and a full-staffed child care center with indoor and outdoor play facilities for youngsters through seven years old.

The new Huntington Beach racquetball club is the first in a series to be built by Racquetfun, Inc., a Costa Mesa-based company, throughout the U.S. and overseas. The company is headed by George (Bud) Godfrey, a co-owner of Sports & Leisure International Ltd., which is also headquartered in Costa Mesa.

"Racquetball, which is played on a handball-sized court with hardwood floors and hard-surfaced walls using

short-handled racquets and a rubber ball, is the fastest growing sport in the country today," Godfrey says.

"The ease with which this newest sport can be learned, the fact that highly developed skills and professional instruction aren't required to play it well, and its appeal to all ages indicates that it will continue its rapid acceptance as a new form of healthful, year-round family recreation."

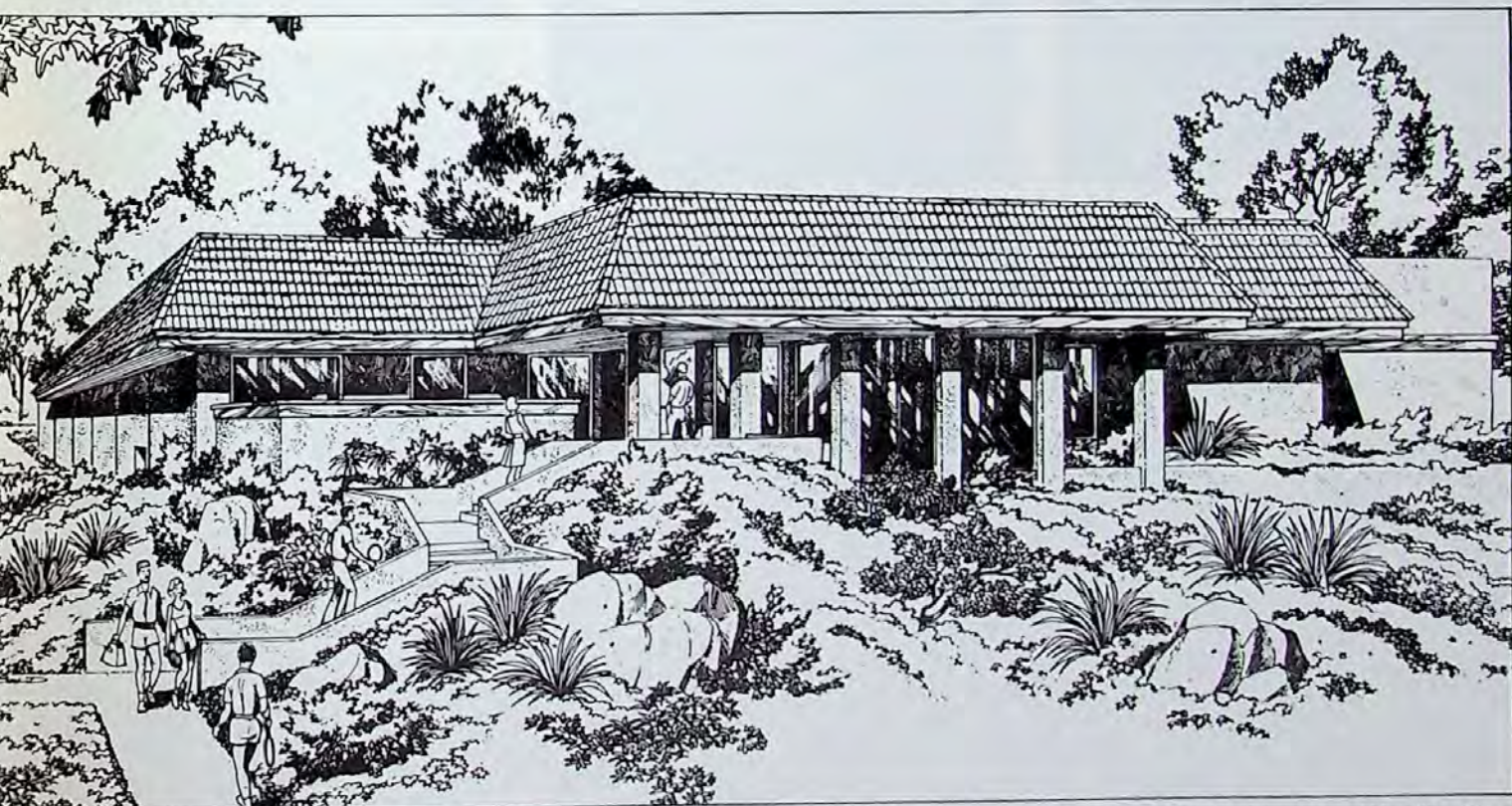
Godfrey pointed out that racquetball leagues have become very popular and said that Racquetfun, Inc. will offer league play in both day and evening hours.

The new club will be managed by Mel Amerman of Costa Mesa, a longtime handball/racquetball competitor and a tournament official. *"Membership fees will be nominal at the new club,"* he said. *"Racquetfun, Inc. will be a sports club where women may play during the day while their children are carefully supervised."*

Active programs for all members of the family will be offered for league play, clinics, and tournaments. Group instruction will also be available. Private parties may be arranged on weekends for members and their guests. The club will emphasize fun and participation for the whole family.

The club will offer clean, carpeted locker rooms with whirlpool baths and saunas, overnight laundry service at nominal fees, and low-cost rental lockers. The entire facility will be air conditioned and there will be a light refreshment area adjoining the spectator lounge. Courts will be open from 6 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturdays and 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays.

One of the 10 courts will be glass-walled for viewing exhibition games, Amerman noted. Manor & Ellison, San Diego, are architects for the new club and Paul Box of Alco Corporation, San Diego, is the general contractor.



RACQUETBALL COMES TO HUNTINGTON BEACH - The 1600 sq. ft. building for Racquetfun, Inc., being constructed at the corner of Hamilton Street and Brookhurst Avenue, will house ten racquetball/handball courts and various private club facilities.

For information on memberships, Amerman may be reached at (714) 963-0864.

DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS

The successful opening of O'Hare Racquet House took place March 22, 1976. Conveniently located near the Northwest and Tri-State Tollways at 951 E. Touhy Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois, the Club is easily accessible to the suburban traffic hub serving Des Plaines, Park Ridge, Schiller Park, Elk Grove and many other local communities, plus the downtown Chicago flow serviced by the world's busiest airport, O'Hare. This area is within a 5-mile radius of thousands of airline industry people, hotels, and restaurants. The large attractive office buildings adjacent to the Club have provided the harried businessmen and women a club compleat within minutes of their job. Special group and company membership rates are as pleasing to the checkbook as the beautifully-appointed club interior is to the eye.



O'Hare Racquet House's large membership has prompted Ray S. Ruscitti and Kinney L. Johnson, General Partners, to build club number two. The Thorndale Racquet House (opening in November) is located at 1220 Mark Street, Bensenville, Illinois. The same successful combination of fulfilling both the social and athletic needs of its members is promised. Memberships are to be reciprocal at both clubs. Sites for other clubs are being considered in Hinsdale, Hillside, Franklin Park and Bolingbrook.



O'Hare Racquet House has appointed Sue Carow to be head pro and racquetball manager of the 8-court facility in Des Plaines, Illinois. Fast-growing is Carow's reputation as one of the most personable and dedicated racquetball instructors in the country. Her reputation as a superior player is long recognized. For the past three years, Sue has finished #1 in Illinois and in the top 8 in the nation. She is the 1976 National Doubles title-holder. O'Hare Racquet House is located at 951 E. Touhy Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois.



The main entrance level of the Club leads to a luxurious-appointed lounge and television room with a mezzanine overlooking the eight air-conditioned regulation courts. Adjacent to the lounge is a snack area and an activity area to enjoy the popular electronic pub games or a backgammon challenge. Also located on the main level is the supervised nursery so popular with the women and a pro shop carrying a full line of racquetball and handball equipment, apparel and accessories.

VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

The nearby residential area is presently the prime promotional target of O'Hare's Racquetball Pro-Manager, Sue Carow. Sue (Illinois State Women's Champion and 1976 National Doubles Title-holder) is developing a program at O'Hare to afford the best instructional youth plan in the country. A comprehensive course for women follows a popular free clinic to introduce the game. The club features the following for men and women in all playing categories: group and individual lessons, league play and ladder challenge boards. Tournaments are to be scheduled for the near future.



Appointments of Ron Botchan as club pro and Rod Delson as general manager of the Supreme Court Sports Center, Van Nuys, was announced today (9/14) by actor Wayne Rogers and Lewis N. Wolff, of Wolff-Seson Development Company, principals in the project.

Located adjacent to the Van Nuys Airport at 7030 Hayvenhurst Avenue, the Supreme Court Sports Center will be one of the nation's largest athletic clubs with 12 air-conditioned racquetball/handball courts, steam room, sauna, jacuzzi, locker rooms, snack bar and pro shop.

Botchan, a "Small College All-American" in football at Occidental College, played linebacker for the San Diego Chargers and Houston Oilers before a knee injury forced his retirement. He became head coach in football and baseball at North Hollywood High School and is now a professor in physical education at Los Angeles City College. Botchan also wrote the curriculum in racquetball for the Los Angeles Community College District.

Delson was formerly manager of the Supreme Court Sports Center located at Park Center Plaza in San Jose, also built by Wolff-Seson Development Company.

Also announced to the management team were Steve Lubarsky, manager; Lon Catis, member services/pro shop; and Sandy Timpson, member services and exercise/dance instructor.

Information about membership may be obtained by contacting Sandy at Supreme Court Sports Center sales office, 7061 Hayvenhurst Avenue, Van Nuys, 91406; (213) 988-5500.



The lower level of the facility houses the men and women's individual fully carpeted locker and shower areas with private sauna and whirlpool baths. Earth-tone colors of brown and beige are used throughout the plush locker rooms featuring all the necessary amenities on and around the large vanity tops.

Also on the lower court level is an important area in these health-conscious days. A well-equipped exercise room is provided for the members to be utilized as a warm-up area before a match or as a set-up for trimming and slimming. The Universal gym is constantly in use, demonstrating the members' appreciation for the total "health club" concept.



The Supreme Court, Van Nuys, California has a formidable group of managers/owners. Left to right are Steve Lubarsky, manager; actor Wayne Rogers of television fame, co-owner; Rod Delson, general manager.

LOMBARD, ILLINOIS

A new luxury racquetball and handball club will open in Lombard, Illinois this winter. The Glass Court is located at 830 E. Roosevelt Rd., one half mile west of Westmore and Meyers.

When construction is complete the Glass Court will offer the ultimate in racquetball/handball facilities in accomodating the country's fastest growing sport. The Glass Court has been designed to provide anyone from

the beginner to the professional superior playing courts, comfortable surroundings and professional, courteous service at attractive prices.

Facilities offered at the Glass Court include twelve air-conditioned courts. One all-glass court is custom designed, surrounded by a spectator stadium with a seating capacity of over 300.

This main court will be the center of the N.R.C. pro tour matches next April with the capability of TV broadcast origination. Three other glass courts surround the Wall Bangle lounge. The exhibition courts offer an excellent view of court play as you enjoy your favorite drink and sandwich while relaxing with friends in front of the large, double-walled fireplace.

For those members who like to try their skill on the popular electronic games, there will be several, placed conveniently throughout the lounge and lobby.

Also located on the main level is the supervised nursery where the future Glass Court members will be cared for while the moms get their exercise.

The exclusive Glass Court pro shop will carry a full line of racquetball and handball equipment, apparel, and accessories.

The lower level of the facility houses the men's and women's fully carpeted locker and shower areas. Each offers private sauna and whirlpool baths, fully equipped exercise rooms, water-pic massaging showers and private dressing stalls.

Some of the services Glass Court members will enjoy are free towel service, and the availability of a limited number of permanent lockers. A complete lesson program directed toward players of all ages and abilities, plus a full schedule of leagues, teams and challenge ladders will also be available.

Members will be able to take advantage of the supervised exercise programs and most important, all members will have a first choice on stadium seats for exhibition and pro tournament matches.

For further information contact The Glass Court, Box 292, Lombard, Illinois 60148.



Owners of the Glass Court (l. to r.) John Kostick, George Smith, Ronald Hankin, Ronald Janowski, Gregory Smith, Claude Ohra, Ms. Camille Rupp, Mr. and Mrs. George Hawkins, Not pictured is club pro Dan Bertolucci.

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST. The Newport Beach Sporting House, located at Bristol and Jamboree Boulevards, will be the largest private athletic health club in California. Scheduled for completion in December of 1976, the new \$3 million club has separate facilities for both men and women. Features include a 25-meter olympic swimming pool, sand volleyball courts, more than 5,000 square feet of exercise and circuit training weight rooms, 16 indoor championship racquetball/handball courts, an outdoor jogging track with sequential pacing lights and a quarter million dollar Medical Fitness Evaluation Center. For information regarding the limited number of special-rate pre-opening memberships, contact The Sporting House Membership Office at 3931 MacArthur Boulevard, Suite 106, Newport Beach, by calling (714) 752-0565.



The Newport Beach Sporting House, the largest private athletic health club in California, has sold over 50 percent of its limited number of memberships ... more than 60 days prior to the grand opening. The first block of the club's charter memberships were sold out in a record 90 days and the 500 family memberships are now 80 percent subscribed. The new club is located at Bristol and Jamboree Boulevards in Newport Beach.

"Membership sales for the past six months have far surpassed all expectations," commented Walter Flood, Membership Sales Director, *"Over 900 memberships have been sold and at the current rate the club will be completely sold out before the grand opening in December."*

Over 20 corporations and groups of employees have purchased memberships, including: Coldwell Banker Real Estate, Air California, Martin Aviation, Fluor Corporation, Orange County Professional Association, Sky Park Medical Group, Lee Sammis Company, Grubb & Ellis Real Estate, California Gas Appliance Sales, Albert G. Ruben & Co., Helm &

Chabafy Asc., Alison Mortgage Investment Trust, Bank of Newport, Quinlan Insurance, John Martin Co., Pension Administration Group, Kenneth Leventhal & Co., and RNM Architects.

The Sporting House offers its members a wide range of features, including 16 indoor championship racquetball/handball courts with full-time professional instructors and the lowest member-to-court ratio in the area.

The Sporting House is also the only exclusive, private club in the area with separate facilities for both men and women and over 5,000 sq. ft. of exercise and circuit training weight rooms, a 25-meter olympic pool, sand volleyball courts, and a one-tenth mile jogging track with sequential pacing lights.

The Sporting House also includes a quarter million dollar Medical Fitness Evaluation Center, staffed by medical specialists and equipped with the most sophisticated and advanced testing hardware in the United States.

The Director of the Newport Beach Sporting House, Chuck Coker, is a former coach of U.S. track teams competing in Europe and was an advisor to the Olympic Games in Japan. He will supervise all individual exercise and fitness programs in addition to managing the three million dollar club.

Additional information on memberships in The Sporting House can be obtained by calling Walter Flood, Membership Sales Director, or members of his sales staff at (714) 752-0565.



Architect Robert Friedman, center, and co-managers Donald Snyder, left, and Bernard Weinstein break ground for the 12-court SkyHarbor Court Club racquetball center in Highland Park, Illinois.

That little rubber ball will sparkle under spectacular lighting at SkyHarbor Court Club's new racquetball center, which will open in late December in Highland Park, Illinois, on the east side of Skokie highway, just north of Half Day road.

Architect and investor Robert L. Friedman said the seven metallic vapor fixtures in each of the club's 12 courts "will provide the highest possible level of lighting for racquetball play." Friedman used the same lighting system in SkyHarbor's Northbrook, Illinois, facility.

The 20,225 square foot building is located on a 2.2 acre site. Completely air conditioned, the club will house a large lounge with viewing of two courts through glass walls, a complete pro shop, an equipped nursery, a snack and party room, carpeted men's and women's locker rooms and separate men's and women's saunas and whirlpools.

In contrast to the vibrant purple, orange and blue color scheme of SkyHarbor's Northbrook facility, the new racquetball center will be done in more "earthy" tones, according to interior designer Leandra Duran. SkyHarbor's Highland Park club is on a wooded parcel of land, which designer Duran is emphasizing inside with neutrals accented by oranges, rusts and spectrum yellows and "a lot of live greenery."

Like SkyHarbor in Northbrook, the Highland Park center will offer a full program of private lessons, classes, clinics and league play (both traveling and intraclub) for men, women and children. Membership in Northbrook or Highland Park will entitle a player to use either facility.

SkyHarbor has been operating in Northbrook since September, 1975, and recently expanded from nine to 12 courts. Co-managers are Donald Snyder and Bernard Weinstein. Other investors are Robert Bernstein, Joseph Scher and Avery Stone.



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ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Outside view of West James Courts, number two.



West James Courts second facility opened Labor Day weekend near Lilac and I-270 in Bellefontaine Neighbors. Over 3,000 people turned out during Open House Saturday and Sunday.

It offers six indoor tennis courts and six handball/racquetball courts; each area temperature controlled for year-round comfort.

Open to the public, West James has the "Country Club" atmosphere *without* dues or membership. Players rent courts by the hour, and divide the cost among their group.

Children's Lounge, known as "Snappy's Parlor" is continuously monitored by closed circuit TV.

Carpeted dressing and locker rooms adjoin the shower areas.

Players browse through the Pro Shop for the finest equipment and wearing

apparel available in the St. Louis area. Or, enjoy a steak or cool drink in the observation lounge overlooking all the tennis and racquetball courts.

About the tennis courts: six championship courts have the ultimate indirect lighting, which is completely shadowless. There are no hot spots to lose the ball in. The surface is an acrylic material specially designed for tennis.

About the racquetball courts: the walls are concrete block construction plastered smooth for perfect bounce. The recessed lighting system is the brightest and best in the area. The hardwood maple floors are similar to a gymnasium.

Resident Tennis Professional and Director of Activities will be Bill Bell. Bell is one of the few Registered Teaching Professionals in the area. He brings 55 years of tennis teaching experience to Bellefontaine Neighbors.

Leagues for tennis and racquetball are currently being formed. Ladies prefer leagues during the day. The housewife can burn up 1000 calories, have her children supervised in the nursery and have a lot of fun for as little as \$1.50 per week.

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

The Long Beach Athletic Club has taken on a new look. A six-person combine assumed ownership of the plush facility Aug. 5 after purchasing it from Ben Agajanian, its founder and executive director until its sale.

Russ Welsh, one of the new proprietors, has been installed as general manager of the complex. He is ably assisted by working partners Ed Kelly and Homer Messer. Kelly is well known on the west coast where he serves as area handball commissioner, and Messer served as pro shop operator until a few months prior to the transfer of title.

Other investors are vice presidents Sam Breuklander, Mike Donnelly and Danny Fromdahl.

Welsh, native of Long Beach, a Utah State University graduate and holder of a master's degree in physical education, outlined some of the short- and long-range goals of LBAC:

"Our immediate desire is to strengthen morale of present members, and to assure them that we are vitally concerned with dispensing goodwill. We will actively seek more women members, and establish youth programs. It is our hope, also, to implement a day care center."

Over an extended period, Welsh expressed optimism over greater emphasis on social aspects, and



expanding facilities to include a swimming pool on the premises.

"We would like to increase membership to 1,000, and we believe this is a realistic figure if we provide those services that appeal to individuals now affiliated with the club or who may be members in the future," Welsh concluded.

ATHLETIC CLUB: (l. to r.) Ed Kelly, Vice President, Board of Directors; Danny Fromdahl, President; Homer Messer, Manager; Russ Welsh, General Manager; Sam Breuklander, Comptroller; Mike Donnelly, Vice President.

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St. ANDREWS COURT • 393-2233



The state of Iowa finally has its' first private racquetball facility, St. Andrews Court in Cedar Rapids. Pictured in front of the office building - racquetball club combination with Chamber of Commerce representatives, are Jim Dyer (far left), John Rosenberg (3rd from left), owner-builders, and club pro, Tom Sweeney (far right).

Built near the fairway of St. Andrews golf course, the racquetball club has offices on the ground and upper floors and a beautiful three-court facility below ground. The customary carpeted lounge and locker rooms are complemented with bloc-bonded air-conditioned courts with ample galleries and partial glass back walls on court one.

A full-line pro shop, walk-in jacuzzi, and professional racquetball program will result in Iowa's first and finest club facility. Plans exist for a second adjoining office building with at least three more courts, including a tournament glass sidewall.

Club pro, Tom Sweeney, stated that "we will offer a soundly-designed program for recreational, as well as competitive racquetballers."

St. Andrews is scheduled to open in November with a round-robin senior's tournament, clinics, films, and one-on-one instruction.

Located at 1930 St. Andrews, N.E., the club number is either 393-0108 or 393-2233.

It never rains in California - only in Oregon! It is only natural that a racquetball-handball facility should be built in Eugene, Oregon, the heart of the wet Willamette Valley. The proposed sports center, Court Sports I, is now under construction and scheduled to be opened on February 1, 1977. The center will be the first of its kind in Eugene, home of the University of Oregon "Fighting Ducks".

The idea for the facility was conceived in October, 1975 when Reed Fitkin and Robert McNutt, general partners of Court Sports I, met in Cupertino, California with Don Jackson. Jackson, a former manager of the Eugene Country Club, is now a partner in

Supreme Court I Sports Center. The general consensus reached was that *"the availability of courts in the Eugene area was woefully lacking. Therefore, there was never a question as to the potential success of such a facility. It was just a matter of putting the financing together."* Consequently, McNutt and Fitkin have relied heavily on Don Jackson in designing and preparing for the operation of the club.

Court Sports I, located at 2510 Oakmont Way in Eugene will cost in excess of \$500,000 and have eight (8) courts, a nursery, weightroom, pro-shop, saunas and whirlpools in both the men's and women's locker-rooms, and a lounge

overlooking one of the courts, which will have a glass back wall. The 13,000 square foot, tilt-up concrete building was designed by Darrell Smith of Balzhiser, Longwood, Smith, Paul & Anderson of Eugene and is being built by Ordell Construction Co.

"As far as we are concerned, our court construction will be of the best materials the present state of technology has to offer," McNutt said. *"Precision Courts is supplying and installing the complete court-system, floors inclusive."*

Financing for the project is being obtained from a limited partnership, which secured a substantial loan from



Groundbreaking for Court Sports I, Eugene, Oregon. (L. to r.): Chris McNutt, Mike McNutt (limited partner), Reed Fitkin (owner/developer), Les Anderson (Mayor, City of Eugene), Robert McNutt (owner/developer), Don Mason (Executive Director, Eugene Chamber of Commerce), Don Jackson (consulting partner).

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN

a local savings and loan association.

One of the limited partners of note is Tim Stokes, former University of Oregon football standout and currently starting offensive tackle for the Washington Redskins. Stokes' interest in racquetball came as a result of a knee injury sustained in the early part of the 1975-76 pro-season. During the past summer he took up racquetball and found it to be an integral part of his rehabilitation program. He is now an avid player, both during and after the football season.

Management of the club will be in the hands of Fitkin and McNutt. They will be hiring a teaching pro who will be responsible for developing an active internal program for members. There will be free clinics, private and group lessons, in-house tournaments, and a divisional challenge ladder system. Fitkin has a Masters degree from the University of Colorado, with professional management experience in finance, personnel and real estate. In addition to being an active handball and racquetball player for over 12 years, Fitkin has been involved nationally as a swim coach for both college and younger age groups. A graduate from the University of Oregon, Bob McNutt has been actively involved in construction and ranching.

The Court Sports I facility will be open for both members and non-members, the former paying monthly dues, and the latter on an hourly fee basis. Members will have better court reservation privileges. It is anticipated that 35% to 40% of the court play in racquetball will be by women. In addition, strong emphasis will be given towards developing a Junior's Program in both handball and racquetball.

Fitkin indicates that Court Sports I has already started receiving requests for membership prior to construction.



Racquetball Courts of Farmington, one of the nation's largest Handball/Racquetball facilities, has just opened at 34200 West Nine Mile Road in Farmington, Michigan, a western suburb of Detroit. Conveniently located just off Interstate 96 at the Farmington Road-Livonia exit, it is easily accessible to travelers.

Racquetball Courts of Farmington, featuring 22 deluxe, regulation courts was previously a Frito-Lay potato storage warehouse. Art Swanson, owner and local building contractor, purchased the dingy building on April 1, 1976 and 5 months later opened for public use the sparkling, remodeled facility. At recent ceremonies, the City of Farmington presented it's

Beautification Award for outstanding achievement to Racquetball Courts of Farmington.

The 31,476 square feet Recreation Complex features all the finest amenities including a tournament court with glass back wall and electronic scoreboard, balcony viewing for all 22 courts, spacious lounge areas and pro shop. Other features are an exercise room with Universal Gym, carpeted locker rooms, men's and women's saunas, and child care center.

No membership fees are charged and the facility is open to the public from 6:00 A.M. until midnight, seven days a week.

Second Court Club Directory

The second annual directory of all operating racquetball/handball clubs (with or without tennis) will be published in the March, 1977 issue of *National Racquetball*.

The editors of *National Racquetball* wish to make this list as comprehensive as possible. Any court club owners or managers should send us the following information, which will be published free of charge:

Club Name - Club Manager's Name - Club Address - City - Zip - Club Phone Number - Number of Courts (racquetball/handball only) - Any proposed clubs.

Deadline for this information is February 1, 1977. To ensure the accuracy of our information on your club, please send in the above information.

Thank you.

National Racquetball

EXTRA!

General News

Seamco Announces Promotions and Transfers

Seamco Sporting Goods Company has announced a number of appointments and relocations of key personnel.

Mr. Albert J. Mackie assumed the position of president of Seamco in December 1975. He was formerly with another division of Dart Industries.

Seamco's national sales manager, Robert E. Coate, has relocated his headquarters to the company's corporate offices in La Grange, Georgia. His former office was in Huntington Beach, California.

Fred Isaacson has been appointed sales supervisor for the western United States. In that capacity, he will work with sales representative organizations throughout the West. Isaacson, who has been with Seamco for seven years, was formerly sales representative in Washington, Oregon and Montana.

Key Seamco personnel (l. to r.) Ed Decker, Art Orloski, President Al Mackie, National Sales Manager Bob Coate, and Fred (Rick) Isaacson.



Edwin F. Decker has been promoted from senior salesman to sales supervisor for the Southeast. He has been with Seamco for twenty years.

The new regional sales manager for the Midwest is Arthur J. Orloski. He will supervise

Seamco salesmen and Seamco sales representative organizations in his territory.

Seamco Sporting Goods, formerly the Seamless Rubber Company, is the world's foremost producer of racquetballs for that rapidly growing sport and is widely

recognized for the excellence of its other sports equipment including footballs, basketballs, volleyballs, handballs, paddleballs, squash balls, soccer balls, water polo balls, even playground, "4-square" and tether balls.

New Ranking System Works For Pro Tour

The N.R.C. has instituted a complex, yet accurate system of ranking the top 20-25 players in the nation who take part on the Seamco-Leach Pro Tour. The system, which has been programmed to keep an up-to-date ranking of these players, will be used to seed competitors on the professional tour this season.

The ranking system combines a number of factors the sum of which gives a current ranking. The need for such a system has been widespread for some time, since the draw for major tournaments should not be made, but rather make itself.

The purpose of seeding players in events is, theoretically, to separate the known quality players in such a way, so as to have these players meet in the later rounds. In doing so, the tournament then determines a true winner, it builds to a climax, and the matches are more enjoyable for the fans.

In order to achieve these goals, whatever system the N.R.C. decided to implement must be sure to reflect the current playing standards of each player. The system also must reward players who have consistently done well over a long period of time, while at the same time,

not making the task of breaking into a good seed overwhelmingly difficult for new players.

Another consideration is that players who are forced to miss tournaments due to injury or illness must not be so severely handicapped (if at all) that upon their return the draw is stacked against them. On the other hand, those players who support the N.R.C. program by attending each event, should not be "hindered" by one or two poor performances along the way.

But the most important reason for an all-encompassing method of ranking is to satisfy the players. It is unfair when the best players in the world are at the mercy of one or more individuals, no matter who they are or how honest. With so many players playing for different manufacturers, it became a necessity for the draw to be made in a manner that alleviated any and all fears of prejudice or tampering by those doing the draw.

The system referred to above is actually a method of ranking the top players at any particular time. Certain factors are taken into account and when added together collectively rank the players cur-

rently. The order of rank then becomes the order of seed for the next N.R.C. stop. In the event of a player not attending a tournament, each player below him moves up one notch.

The five criteria are 1) *Last season's results plus this year*; 2) *Percentage of victories of matches played*; 3) *Average points earned per tournament* ("points" are awarded 10 for 1st, 7 for 2nd, 5 for semi-final loss; 3 for quarter-final loss; 1 for round of 16 loss); 4) *Total number of points per tournament*; and 5) *Total prize money earned*.

Of the above criteria, numbers two, three, four and five are based on the last five N.R.C. events only, a revolving system. In this way, the draw more accurately will reflect the current playing ability of each player.

Criteria number one includes within it each of the other four criteria to date. The reason for using last year's results is to reward outstanding play over a long period of time. As more events are concluded this season and added into last year's totals, last year's results become progressively less important.

At the end of this current season, last season will be drop-

ped and the final results of this year will become last year's results for next year (*who's on first?*).

Of the four remaining criteria, numbers two and three are averages, which will not hurt a player who misses an event. Criteria four and five are cumulative, so a player who does not compete will be slightly hurt in these categories.

The important thing to remember, however, is that each criteria is worth in itself 20% of the total on which the ranking is figured. This, undoubtedly is a much superior method than last year, when the N.R.C. draws were based solely on the most previous tournament.

If all this is a bunch of gibberish, don't worry. Actually it only affects a few people within our sport. However, draws and rankings are done all across the nation, in every state for every tournament. Perhaps some of the guidelines used for the pros will prove helpful in working our way toward organization in amateur draws, instead of the imbalance and inconsistency that now exists.

By the way, in case of a tie, the tournament is cancelled. (*Not really!*)

Tie-Breaker Forces New Rule

The popular and successful 11 point tie-breaker has had enough impact on players throughout the nation to necessitate a new rule which immediately becomes official for all N.R.C. or U.S.R.A. sanctioned events:

"In any match in which the first two games are won by opposing players or teams,

the first server in the third game tie-breaker shall be the player or team that scored the most total points in the first two games.

"In the event of equal points being scored in the first two games, a new coin flip shall take place prior to the third game tie-breaker, with the

winner of the coin toss serving first."

The primary reason for this new rule is that due to the immense importance of beginning the tie-breaker on the plus side, the serve takes on even more importance than usual.

A player knowing he will

serve automatically in the tie-breaker, tends (it has been proven) to give up in the second game if the opponent gets a big lead and he or she has won the first game. After seeing the negative effect this occurrence has on spectators the new rule was warranted.

World Record

Twenty-eight year old Bob Ellis, the number one racquetball player in San Antonio, Texas, has successfully completed his attempt to break Bill Holden's pending record for the most consecutive hours of racquetball play. Bill Holden, from Los Angeles, played for forty hours and seventeen minutes.

Bob Ellis, beginning at Noon, August 31, and completing at 2:05 P.M., September 2.

played 150 games losing only two against 107 different opponents. He smashed the pending record by approximately ten hours.

Bob Ellis, a training instructor at Lackland Air Force Base and a teaching pro at the Racquetball & Handball Club of San Antonio, where the record was broken, helped raise over \$1,100.00 for Muscular Dystrophy in accomplishing his feat.



Racquetball: What Is It?

Racquetball is only an exciting, sporting game; Whether two, three, or four play, it remains the same.

Drop the ball, swish your hand a deadly serve; Opponent awaits its flight, with unsteady nerve.

There it goes, bouncing, traveling, hitting every wall; And here I move side to side, only to fall.

Once again, you slam that

round-colored pill; Manipulating your agile body for a booming kill.

Ceiling shot, back, hugging tight and high; Moving, twisting, returning ball with pleasant sigh.

Slamming it hard for a sizzling, zooming pass; Swiftly, it rolls off the smooth glass.

Run, run, until I stop for rest. "Point," he says, with over-

whelming zest.

Come in close, cover the front fast;

Can't make it finish; defeated at last.

Tough, hard battle for final point.

Shake hands; sweating, farewell this joint.

Up the stairs; tired, fatigued, and weak.

Love it, even in defeat; see you next week.

STRETCHING, written by Bob Anderson, illustrated by Jean Anderson. P.O. Box 1002, Englewood, Colorado 80110. \$6.50 per book and 50 cents for postage and handling per order . . . Colorado residents add 22¢ state sales tax.

The limitations of any potential tournament racquetballer are mainly based on his flexibility and reflexes. Simply, some of us can quickly move about the court, position to stroke the ball low, adroit side to side and backward movement . . . others just can't maneuver as well and this in the main separates the A's from the C's.

Anderson does a fine job in outlining with illustrations exercises that can improve flexibility.

"There is an undeniable fact that movement is good for

one's life. It helps in relaxing, coping with one's inner frustrations, gives feelings of well-being, and helps keep us trim and fit. Movement is a natural part of our total being. Take it away and see what happens—obesity, lack of energy, irritability, depression, and lack of self-confidence."

Anderson points out that flexibility is just one of the by-products of stretching. We must learn to stretch before and after activity, but to learn to stretch properly it is necessary to relax and this is the key . . . in so doing you will develop your own routines to suit your particular needs at any given time. It must be approached on an individual basis.

In discussing the perennial problem of many racquetballers—the back—of

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For Sale—two-story red brick, four bedroom house with air conditioned four-wall racquetball court. Write: Tom Gallen, 701 11th St., W., Bradenton, FL. 33505.

course, the physician should be consulted for testing to see exactly where the problem lies . . . in a good percentage of cases the problems can be alleviated with proper activity, stretching, good posture, and muscular strength.

"Exercise, not over-eating, or eating bad food, and getting good rest are very aspects of life, yet we seldom put them all together in action. Once the basics are put together life is full of well-being."

There is much in this book that can be of assistance to us all if only applied regularly.

FOOD FOR SPORT by Dr. Nathan J. Smith, Bull Publishing Company, P.O. Box 208, Palo Alto, Calif. 94302.

One of the things I gained

from this work was in connection with jet lag. Many of us have taken cross-country trips, and had to play in a tournament match an hour or two after arrival. There is a definite dehydration that takes place during such trips and while the traveler may not feel thirsty there is a need for liquid replacement.

Usually in our modern American diet we get enough vitamins, which function primarily as regulators, governing the hundreds of biochemical reactions involved in organ function, growth and energy metabolism. Needs of an active athlete are generally no greater than those of the most sedentary individual as they do not contribute significantly to body structure nor are they a direct source of body energy. Vitamin B may

be considered an exception since it is required in proportion to carbohydrate intake (and very active athletes as a group may be expected to eat more carbohydrate).

"Excess protein, particularly animal protein, should be avoided. Foods such as meat, whole milk, eggs, and most cheeses may contain, in addition to their complement of high quality animal protein, an almost equal amount of saturated animal fat. Such animal protein foods tend to be expensive, and they may lead to dietary habits which are undesirable because of the accompanying high fat content. In addition, they can contribute to an immediate handicap to athletic performance because of their adverse effect on body hydration."

Contrary to popular belief, athletes do not need proteins, vitamins, or minerals in exceptional amounts.

Just as in playing the game, mental has much to do with any food intake prior to the "big match". If the player feels that a big breakfast will give him strength then perhaps it will actually not hinder him . . . it is pointed out, however, that no meals be skipped, plenty of fluid intake, especially non-carbonated citrus drinks.

In total the book covers all phases of nutrition, with rules of conduct eating for those over 25, and then over that 40-age level, with many valuable suggested readings and reference works.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

1976-77 U.S.R.A. - N.R.C. Calendar Of Events

December

2-3-4-5 Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.,
Courtrooms,
Leach-Seamco Pro Tour.
Events (all singles): Men's
Pro, Ladies Pro, Amateur
Open, Amateur Women's
Open. Write: Bruno
Cerchai, The Courtrooms,
940 N.W. Terrace, Ft.
Lauderdale, FL 33311.

10-11-12 Palm Beach Gardens,
Fla., North Branch
Y.M.C.A., Y.M.C.A.
Holiday Classic. Events
(singles): Men's Novice,
Men's B, Men's Master's,
Women's Open. Events
(doubles): Master's.
Phone: Rick Willits,
305-627-2576.

11-12 Falmouth, Maine, Down
East Court Club, *Maine
Closed Racquetball
Jamboree*. Events (all
singles): Men's A, B, C,
Novice, Juniors, Seniors,
Ladies A, B, Novice.
Events (doubles): Men's
Open, Ladies Open.
Phone: Kevin York,
207-781-4281.

10-11-12 Overland Park, Kansas,
Johnson County
Y.M.C.A., *Sunset Open
Racquetball Tournament*.
Events (all singles): Men's
Open, Men's B, Women's
Open. Phone: Ron York,
816-861-8624.

1976-77 Seamco-Leach Pro Tour

Date	Facility	City
December 2-5, 1976	The Courtrooms	Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
January 13-16, 1977	Tropicana Hotel	Las Vegas, Nevada
February 10-13, 1977	Downtown Y.M.C.A.	Houston, Texas
March 5-8, 1977	Denver Sporting House	Denver, Colorado
March 24-27, 1977	Univ. of Tennessee	Chattanooga, Tennessee
April 16-19, 1977	Racquettime Center	Southfield, Michigan
April 30-May 3, 1977	The Glass Court	Lombard, Illinois
May 14-17, 1977	Courtside	Peoria, Illinois
June 4-11, 1977	Atlas Health Club	San Diego, California

January

7-8-9 Champaign, Ill., University
of Illinois, *Illini Open
Singles Tournament*.
Events (all singles): Men's
Open, Women's Open,
Men's Seniors, Men's
Masters. Write Don Webb,
295 Natural Resource
Bldg., University of Illinois,
Urbana, IL 61801.

7-8-9 Racquetball Courts of
Farmington. Farmington,
Michigan Racquetball
Potatoe Open. 34200
Nine Mile Road. Men's
Open. Men's B. Women's
Open. Call Art Swanson
312-474-1313.

13-14-
15-16 Las Vegas, Nev.,
Tropicana Hotel,
*Seamco-Leach Pro Tour
and Nevada State Open*.
Events (all singles): Men's
Pro, Women's Pro,
Amateur Open, Women's
Amateur Open, Seniors,
Masters, Men's B, Men's
C, Women's B. Write: Dan
Seaton, 3727 Centennial
Circle, Las Vegas, Nev.
89121 or phone
702-451-5952.

21-22-23 Starkville, Miss., Willie
Daniel Athletic Club,
*Mississippi State (closed)
Championships*. Events
(all singles): Men's Open,
Men's Seniors. Write: Dr.
Frank Bonner, Mississippi
Racquetball Assn., Box
906, Starkville, MS 39759.

28-29-30 West Allis, Wisc., The
Racquetball Club,
*Wisconsin State Singles
Championships*. Events
(all singles): Men's Open,
Men's B, Men's Seniors,
Men's Masters, Men's
Golden Master's, Juniors,
Women's Open, Women's
B. Phone: Bob Keenan,
414-784-1580.



Eight U.S.R.A. Regionals Set

Due to the great number of players and the large size of tournaments the past year, the U.S.R.A. has expanded the number of regional sites from four to eight. Yes, eight sites located as centrally as possible in the various regions.

Seven of the eight sites are ready to go March 31-April 3 in Flamouth, Maine, Toledo, Milwaukee, Lincoln, Nebraska, Dallas, Portland, Oregon and Las Vegas. The Southeast site will be named in the January issue. Most states will have completed their state championships by this date and will be ready for competition.

The highlight of all the tournaments will be the provision of round-trip air fair to the nationals in San Diego, June 4-11 for the men and women's open division champions. Of course all brackets of play will be provided for at the tournaments.

The boundaries for the regionals are not hard and fast. Players are encouraged to play at the designated site within their region but if another site is closer or more convenient they may play in an adjacent region, with permission from U.S.R.A. headquarters.

Remember, the USRA regionals are open to amateurs only — those players who have accepted \$500 or more in prize money over the past 12 calendar months are *not* eligible.

Further information regarding the tournaments will be announced in the

January issue of *National Racquetball*. Do not contact host clubs for information until January of 1977. The areas are as follows:

North East

(Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Eastern New York, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Eastern Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia). Down East Court Club, 170 U.S. Route #1, Falmouth, Maine 04105.

Mid-East

(Western New York, Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Lower Michigan, West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky). Supreme Court, 5580 Monroe, Sylvania Ohio (Toledo area) 43560.

Southwest

(Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama). Site to be announced in January issue.

Central

(Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Manitoba, Ontario). The Racquetball Club, 1939 South 108 Street, West Allis, Wisconsin (Milwaukee area) 53227.

South Central

(Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, Western Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Western Kentucky). Stern's Health Club, 5919 Forest Lane, Dallas, Texas 75230.

Southeast

(New Mexico, Arizona, Hawaii, Southern California, Southern Nevada, Western Colorado, Utah, Western Texas). Paul McDermott, Physical Education Center, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 4505 South Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109.

Midwest

(North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Eastern Colorado). Sports Courts, 222 North 44th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68503.

Northwest

(Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Northern California, Northern Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon). Cornell Court Club, 13939 West Cornell Road, Portland, Oregon 97229.

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For The Dentist

The First National Dental Handball-Racquetball Tournament will be held in conjunction with the June-in-January Miami Winter Meeting, Jan. 23-26, 1977.

Robert J. Gorall, D.D.S., Chairman, MWM Handball-Racquetball Tournament, 2 SE 13th St., Miami, FL. 33131.

Many have asked about our National Juniors Tournament this season, specifically, sites and dates! Well, we've got the biggest extravaganza in racquetball's history planned for the juniors.

The tournament will be during the upcoming summer, in a midwest location. That's all we can tell you right now, but you can all look forward to full details and entry forms in our January issue of *National Racquetball*.

The juniors is our most favorite program, and kids, fear not, we've got a tournament in store for you that will top them all.

Charlie Brumfield

NATIONAL RACQUETBALL INTERVIEW

Dear Reader:

This is Part II of our *National Racquetball* Interview with current national champion Charlie Brumfield. As you undoubtedly noticed in Part I, Brumfield has no hesitancy when it comes to verbalizing his opinions on any subject relevant to racquetball.

The taping for this interview took place in the summer between the Leach-Seamco National Championships last June and the opening of the current Seamco-Leach pro season. Since then many unusual things have happened.

The tour is three stops old and Brumfield has yet to win an event. This has never occurred before in pro racquetball history. The strong emergence of Marty Hogan and Jerry Hilecher have dominated the first quarter of the season.

But with eight tour stops from January to June, 1977, look for Brumfield to be at his best as we count down to the National Championships again next year.

Part II of the Brumfield interview picks up where we left off last issue. This time around with the Brum we concentrate more on the personal side of racquetball's champ, emphasizing the emotional and psychological pressures that occupy a champion.

As avid racquetballers, you know that much more goes into a match than just shotmaking. You know too, that you often can play as much on your opponent's personality as you do his physical weaknesses. Brumfield is the game's master at this, and he explains vividly the hows and whys of mental domination on the court.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of this interview was the series of questions dealing with Brumfield after retirement. Will he take his lumps after his best days are over? What will he do to combat increasing age? Does he plan to continue in racquetball, practice law, or both?

All of these questions, and many more, are answered in the following page. We at *National Racquetball* hope the Brumfield interview has made interesting reading for you.

Chuck Leve
Editor

PART II

Leve: *What kind of a mental edge do you think you need to play at your peak performance?*

Brumfield: I think in order for a player to utilize all his physical and mental credentials, he has to place himself artificially in the same type of mental frame-work as a mother would if she saw her baby trapped between the wheels of a truck. In a case like that she is able to generate enormous strength far above what she ordinarily can on the basis of adrenalin flow. That's when I play my absolute finest ball, when I can generate the type of anger or what I can call "ruthlessness," an artificial hatred of my opponent that I build up to the point where it gives me maximum energy and keeps me the most alert. Yet it does not interfere with my performance by allowing actual anger to enter the game. Actually, I'm very rarely angry on the court. I don't think I ever have been.

Leve: *What goes through your mind in situations when you know you are not playing to the best of your ability and your opponent is playing well?*

Brumfield: It is a tricky decision you have to make at that point. You have to decide whether your game plan is wrong or in the alternative, whether or not you are executing the game plan as it should be executed. The old adage is "never change a winning game plan".

Leve: *That's not always true, though is it?*

Brumfield: If you're losing, the opposite of that is "always change a losing game plan," but you should not change a losing game plan if in effect it is a winning game plan if executed properly. This assumes you feel you can concentrate more and can better execute that particular game plan on that particular day.

Let's say I go in to play Hogan for instance, and I am going to use a game

plan of wide angle balls around him, moving him, and trying to tire him. But he starts winning. The question is, is that game plan incorrect or am I failing to hit the proper shot when the shot opportunity arises? If I am not hitting the pass well, can I change that in the course of the game by setting up deeper or holding my racquet better or by getting my feet into position quicker? Now, if I don't think I can, then I have to make an adjustment in the game plan itself, such as, shooting two shots earlier in the course of the rally to alleviate his bombing with the ball if I give him four or five opportunities in one rally.

That is one thing that is very difficult to do and I've missed on that several times. I couldn't determine whether or not I was going to improve in my hitting of the ball or whether I should junk the game plan completely and go to an entirely different style. At no time did I ever determine that my game plan was wrong last season. What I have determined is that I wasn't hitting the ball properly and I kept expecting my execution ratio to improve and it never did. Time ran out on me.

Leve: *Do you do much teaching?*

Brumfield: Very little. However, I am beginning to teach a lot more with the advent of National Racquetball Clinic, Inc. I enjoy teaching people who have the potential to be an A player, although not necessarily the competence of an A player. I enjoy teaching people with whom I can move into the sophisticated level of the game.

I want a player who has the credentials or ability physically and mentally to become A or lower pro level. I think I am the only person who can help another pro player. And that is what I enjoy. I don't enjoy as much molding a beginning player and watching him improve.

Leve: *Why not?*

Brumfield: Because I don't teach simply for the fun of improvement. I love to discuss sophisticated areas of the game. I do it a lot. I talk to my friends who are knowledgeable racquetball players on intricate little minutia that might mean one point over the course of a 10 match period. That's the kind of a thing I like to improve. Obviously, that's more applicable to a professional or semi-professional type players who can already hit the forehand, backhand, overhead and knows how to run and cover. Taking a person from scratch and teaching him the forehand and backhand, I can do probably better than anyone else but it is not as much of a challenge to me because a lot of other people can teach the same thing. Whereas, no one can teach things that they don't understand, namely, the points that I've gone into that no one else has yet.

Leve: *Do you have any words of encouragement for the many young kids who are just starting to get into racquetball?*

Brumfield: Racquetball in the next five years will be the largest participational sport in the country and there is going to be a lot of opportunity for any one who continues to become associated with it, especially if they can improve to the professional level. As far as giving them tips on how to improve their game, my advice is to learn to hit the ball hard from both sides. But hard without effort. And the way to do that is when you are young to hit the ball hard with effort and gradually sophisticate your swing. Without the development of power, a player is always handicapped by the fact that he cannot generate offense from certain positions in the court. That's probably the only disability I'm under right now. The school of thought when I was learning to play was control first. Consequently, I do not generate tremendous amounts of power from the real awkward positions like some of the young



"I think any championship quality athlete, if he reaches the top in his given profession, is driven by his ego . . ."

players do. I have to out-think them. If I had power in addition to my thinking, coverage, and mental games, it would make me two or three points tougher. When we get down to the final analysis over the course of the season, a few points a game can be a critical margin.

Leve: *Are tournaments fun for you?*

Brumfield: Yes, tournaments are fun. They are like a vacation in comparison to my practice session. When I practice my objective is to get tired and struggle as much as I can. In a tournament, my objective is to avoid that as much as possible. So I can go to a tournament and never really suffer pain like I do every day in practice. Plus, I can inflict it on my opponent because I'm better prepared—he's the one that has to do the suffering. In addition, I've gone so often to that point of exhaustion or the brink of fatigue in my practice sessions and regimented workouts that what little effort I have to do in the course of a normal tournament doesn't affect me much.

Leve: *You're famous for playing the gallery. Why are the fans so important to you?*

Brumfield: I operate and play the gallery as would a conductor an orchestra, you've seen me do it over the years. It is an essential element in the psychological movement of the match itself. By controlling the pace of the match and the response of the gallery I can get my opponent to begin to feel inadequate, if not in his racquetball game, at least in his ability to rapport with the audience. You would be surprised how many players are egocentric to the point they consider themselves to be phenomenal not only in racquetball, but also in other areas. This really affects them. When they begin to feel awkward, they concentrate less on racquetball and more on how they can make me look as stupid as I'm making

them look. Most people can't carry it off quite as gracefully as I can and they begin to look boorish as opposed to entertaining the spectators.

Leve: *About the only other guy who can do it effectively is Strandemo. Do you agree?*

Brumfield: Well Strandemo has his own style of play. I would commend Strandemo for his control of the pace of the match. He is one of the best I have ever seen. I don't think he controls the gallery. I think he has to play his own style and the very fact that he plays a colorful retrieving hustling style, makes him noticeable to the gallery. But I don't think by his commentary or by the use of his quips he can make the other player look less sophisticated in the eyes of the gallery.

Leve: *Strandemo sometimes comes off as the real villain.*

Brumfield: Often he does. Especially, now that he is trying to win more on the mental area of the game. Before he was winning on strictly out-slugging and out-conditioning his opponent.

Leve: *Would you like to see some pro doubles on some of the tour stops?*

Brumfield: I think my doubles game is far superior to my singles. I think doubles is a very exciting game. Refereeing would have to take major steps forward if this were to be done on a professional hard hitting, all out level.

Leve: *Who would you team with?*

Brumfield: Serot. He and I were the national champions in 1973. The average points scored against us that year was five. And that was through the entire tournament. We're virtually unbeatable because both of us are too big and strong to be muscled and too quick to be out-finessed.

Doubles suits me more because it is much more a game of mental discipline and like they say in basketball—"playing without the ball." A lot of people in racquetball are fine

professionals simply because when they hit the ball they are so good. I think what has allowed me to be good consistently is the fact that when I'm not hitting the ball I'm also doing the right things, be it positioning, preparation for the stroke, setting up quicker, this type of thing, moving to the right spot under extreme coverage circumstances. This type of thing that really goes on in doubles because not only is the opposing side hitting the ball half the time, but your partner is hitting the ball a good bit of the time, also. So you have really got to position yourself to take maximum advantage of your shot execution abilities.

Leve: *Many people call you an egomaniac. Do you have any response to that?*

Brumfield: I think that any championship quality athlete, if he reaches the top in his given profession, is driven by his ego. That's the only thing that can force me to work as hard as I do. It certainly wouldn't be a dollar amount. It has to be a desire to excel and prove, at least to yourself, that you are the very best. I have proven that to myself. However, I'm not philanthropic enough to stop there. I want everyone else to realize that I'm the best too, at least among the people that are participating in racquetball now. We talked last issue about how I felt not receiving the exposure of a Willie Mays or Jack Nicholas in the major sports. I mentioned that I wasn't too upset by this. However, I am upset by the fact that people who are into racquetball now, who read *National Racquetball Magazine*, and who are very much a part of the sport that I love and compete in, these people do not know what my records are and how much I have over-shadowed the cumulative records of all the other players combined. If we matched records, I'd match my records with the other top 15 players in the top 16, and it will show that I have won more titles than all of them put together. I don't think people realize this and I don't think that makes me an egomaniac. It simply means that I have

worked very, very hard—much harder than any one else to maintain the position I have and I want to see the fruits of my labor recognized both in title and recognition of the people I care about.

Leve: *Back in '69, '70, '71 even '72, did you ever envision pro racquetball becoming a reality?*

Brumfield: At that time I knew racquetball would become very popular simply because the game was so easy to play and many people were flocking to it. As early as '73 we began to see the widespread growth of court construction. Until the court construction started to grow, no I didn't see pro racquetball coming about.

Leve: *When the N.R.C. was formed and said there would be tournaments for money, what was your reaction?*

Brumfield: I thought it was an absolute "plum." Originally the N.R.C. came out with a program that was optimistic. We would play 16 tournaments, at \$5,000 a stop. A lot of people were saying I was going to win every tournament. I felt I would have an excellent season, that I would win 75% of the tournaments. At that time I was clearly superior to anyone else playing the game. So I thought I would earn \$20,000 a year, and I was thinking of quitting law school and concentrating on racquetball at that time.

Leve: *What are your primary responsibilities for Leach Industries?*

Brumfield: Leach Industries utilizes me to represent racquetball in all areas where they need someone who can both play and present an intelligent voice for the growth of the game, for the quality, and the various mechanical parts of Leach racquets or talk about the future of the game. Any time they need someone to go before the media, where they can get very valuable commercial contact with the general public at an inexpensive price. Namely, the price being me—the most knowledgeable and vocal person in

racquetball on their staff. It is very difficult to get the media, especially the national media to discuss anyone other than the top player in a sport that is young and growing like racquetball.

Before they signed me, Leach was always fighting to come up with an angle whereby they could talk about Serot or Keeley, when they never did anything. Fortunately, the leagues were split so that they could write up that Serot won Livonia, or Keeley won Vancouver, whatever the situation. This was because the tournaments were diluted to the point where they could win. When the two tours came together, Leach Industries was very disappointed to see that their players could no longer place in the top position. Consequently, it was a real advantage for them to sign me, because the media could now focus on the top player in the game, instead of talking to someone in diapers who says "yea, I can hit the ball real hard, man" and that's it.

Leve: *Why was it so difficult for you to gain personal recognition before signing with Leach?*

Brumfield: The organization at Leach Industries is much more conducive to the promotion of myself, for instance, with the Charlie Brumfield racquet line in both aluminum and fiberglass. Now with my previous company there was no way that type of thing could be promoted because I didn't have the genius of Charlie Drake (Leach general manager) and Leach's publicity department behind me. In addition, the advertising dollars, the tournament budget dollars, and very importantly, the cooperation of the N.R.C. management also helped.

Leve: *What is your over-view of the progress of the N.R.C. and pro racquetball over the last few years?*

Brumfield: Well, I think it is amazing, given the present status of spectator participation, that you have been able

to generate the type of money you have behind the N.R.C. and U.S.R.A. You are soundly financed right now.

It was a very imaginative approach to interest the major manufacturers in utilizing the pro tour as a means of advertising, despite the fact that we are yet to get real national exposure. I see from that, the possibility of the same type of approach with identical management going out and recruiting 15 or 20 times as much backing. When the sport goes big-time, which it should within the next few years with national television exposure. I think that the N.R.C. has done a lot of very fine things, starting from a rocky beginning when the national media didn't even know what racquetball was. Now we're getting the front page in New York, Chicago and L. A. and this is the type of thing that early on is very tough. The N.R.C. has really stuck with it and gone through tough times. I think now you are in a position where you can move forward forcibly and talk to potential sponsors like Coca Cola or Budweiser, because that's where the money has to come from to make the sport big-time quickly.

Leve: *With almost 20 pro tournaments this season as opposed to 10 last year, what will this mean, not only in fatigue, but also your business commitments?*

Brumfield: It can't do anything but help my tournament showings. I can begin to do what Jack Nichlaus does, pick the sites that I feel are most conducive to me winning. In addition, it puts my appearance at a premium. Where I show will be the tournaments that are considered the most difficult to win as long as I remain the top player in the game. Just as when Nichlaus shows a tournament field is considered much stronger, and the gallery participation is normally much stronger.

I think the management decision to expand is a mistake. I think it is diluting too quickly what hasn't really been solidified. I think in order to establish national recognition, the first thing that has to go up is the organization and the prize money. What you are doing is that



"I love playing professionally and entertaining the crowd. I also want the gallery to see the highest quality racquetball possible . . ."

you are trying to go to your national media with a tournament every month and say "look guys, last year we were giving \$1,400 or \$1,500 for first place, this year we are giving the same," rather than saying, "look, we have elevated first place to \$5,000 now, next year it is going to be \$10,000. I also think it is a mistake to divert prize money to the women's division at this time. It has never been done in the sport until the men's division was solidly on its feet and the top 16 men in the nation were already earning a living. From my observations the spectators and the major media are primarily interested in the men's national champions and the top men professionals, secondarily the women's professionals. Nothing against women's professionals, they try and train as hard as anyone else but I think until one area of the tour is solidly financed, we should not try and start a five ring circus, until we can run one ring successfully.

Leve: How long do you think you will stay on top?

Brumfield: That's a matter of interest. There's a lot of talk, and it bothers me to tell you the truth. Every time some young player comes up and beats me a game or match you hear, "Charlie's over the hill and this guy is going to be the next King in two months, as soon as he gets his diapers off and learns how to mature."

I found it to be true and I think that the tournament credentials over the past few years bear this out, that many young players do not continue to improve. As a matter of fact most people do not improve but rather decline as they move into their early 20's.

Leve: Do you have any theories about why that's true?

Brumfield: Yes, I definitely do. First of all, kids focus almost all of their interest

on sports. As they become young adults there is much more of a tendency to dilute their interests with girls, school, social activities, business responsibilities, earning a living, etc. Anyone who works knows that racquetball takes up a hell of a lot of your time during the course of the day. Anytime you dilute yourself from a singular goal or objective, that objective becomes much more difficult to achieve.

The second point is that most people are in naturally good shape when they're young. That's because the body metabolizes most of its energy from the food intake in the growth of the person involved. As they become older, they have to work to stay in shape. That adds another element. As they enter their early 20's, these players must begin a regimented program to keep their bodies in shape, or else they'll get tired during the course of a tournament. Most players don't have the guts or the will power to do that, so they fall back in the pack.

The third reason is that most young players don't know what they're doing. They play strictly on ability. It's just like a young golfer, who steps up to a 15 foot putt and all he knows is that it's going in the hole. Once you play under pressure for a couple of years, you miss a few of those and begin to think about it. Things like, "how should I hold my wrist," and "am I lined up," become factors.

So now we've hit upon the one element that separates the great player from the one who falls back in the pack. The great player is the one who can analyze his game and correct it when it goes wrong. The guy who goes back in the pack is the guy who doesn't really know how to play racquetball, but is a great executor as long as his confidence remains high. When he loses some of his confidence, it's called "paralysis via analysis," he no longer can hit the bottom border, and he has to change his game completely if he wants to compete with the top players.

Serot, for example is a prime case. At one time he was the finest shotmaker in

—photo by Ray Thompson

the game. He could kill the ball from any position on the court. But he didn't know how to play racquetball. By racquetball I mean the knowledge of percentages, shot selection, maneuvering the flow of the game and other more sophisticated mental approaches to the game that many other nationally ranked players have used over the years.

Leve: *Is there anybody in the current crop of young players that you feel has the mental ability to inherit your throne in a few years?*

Brumfield: No.

Leve: *You couldn't have made yourself any clearer.*

Brumfield: I don't want to bad-mouth any of the players. The smartest player outside of myself with the physical ability to reach the top is Richie (Wagner), but I'm not sure he'll continue to develop. I think the players who today are anticipating taking over the throne, i.e., Marty (Hogan), Richie (Wagner) and (Steve) Serot are going to be struggling with me long enough to not only begin looking over their shoulders at young players, but they're going to be beaten by younger players before I ever retire.

I don't believe that any of today's players have the ability to defeat me consistently in the next five years. If they continue to improve their games a time will come when they will win their share against me. But I don't think the time will ever come when they go on the court against me and win 25 of 26 matches as I have with Serot.

Leve: *At what point, as you reach your early 30's, will you consider retiring?*

Brumfield: I won't play when I legitimately feel I can't win. My dilemma will be should I continue playing racquetball or should I do what Dave Freeman did in badminton, who retired after never losing a match competitively and never played again. I think I love the game too much to do that.



"There's not an athlete in the game with enough physical and mental credentials . . . to compensate for my . . . experience and confidence that has led to my 28 national titles . . ."

Leve: *Almost like Arnold Palmer?*

Brumfield: I don't think I can hang on like Palmer is doing. When I feel I can no longer win consistently, or at least honestly feel that I have a good chance of winning every tournament I enter, then I will quit playing competitively and take up foosball or I'll move to another dimension of the sport.

Leve: *Will you ever play seniors or masters?*

Brumfield: I will never do what Muehleisen did,—play in the masters just to win it. I'll move to the masters when I'm forced to move to the masters by 16 other professional players.

Leve: *Your upcoming book, what will it cover?*

Brumfield: It will be totally instructional. I'm working with Jeff Bairstow of *Tennis* magazine, who just completed a book with Pancho Gonzalez. Jeff's got a lot of good ideas about simplifying some of these items

we've discussed so that the average player can utilize them. It has nothing to do with anecdotes or personal history of me, although there will be five or six pages listing my titles.

Leve: *Do you ever get sick and tired of racquetball?*

Brumfield: No. I love to play. I love to win. Even if it's a practice game for a nickel,—I love to win. It doesn't necessarily have to be racquetball, it could be badminton, two-on-two basketball or golf. It's something about my personality, I never tire of being in competitive circumstances.

Leve: *What things don't you like about racquetball?*

Brumfield: One of the things that I hate most is that my playing career is occurring during such a state of transition. The equipment constantly

changes, and with it, as we mentioned last issue, my game style and preparation must also change.

Front wall glass, or any glass for that matter, also bothers me. I think glass walls actually impede the perfect play of racquetball. From an artistic standpoint, it's ridiculous.

Leve: *Don't you feel, though, that just by the fact that you have stayed on top through all these changes, that it re-inforces your claim to the best player in history?*

Brumfield: I don't question that. What I do question is, have I succeeded in conquering the lack of vision because of glass, or has everyone else dropped down to such a level, that even though I'm ineffective, I can still win? I think it's the latter. I certainly have never played well on glass, nor will I ever play well on glass. It is impossible to play well in a sport that requires hand-eye co-ordination when you cannot perfectly see the ball.

Leve: *But doesn't glass have to become a necessary sacrifice on the part of the players for the over-all good of the sport?*

Brumfield: Side wall and back wall glass, yes. I think front wall glass is going a bit too far. We're going to find this season, that the play is not really racquetball.

I don't care who it favors, control or hard hitters. My point is that if you put blinders on us, no matter who wins, it won't be as much fun to compete. There's nothing more frustrating than not being able to see the ball. How can you hit it, when you can't see it?

It is a necessary evil if we want to bring the game to the greatest number of spectators for their greatest enjoyment. But we as players also want to enjoy the game. I love playing professionally and entertaining the crowd. But I also want the gallery to see the highest quality racquetball possible.

I think eventually we will end up with some sort of two-way glass.

Leve: *What style of play will future champions use?*

Brumfield: I see us moving in the direction of shorter games, to the dictates of television. Maybe even shorter tie-breakers than the current 11 points. The shorter the game, the faster the ball, the more glass there is, all adds up to shorter rallies. That means two things. First of all, it will be impossible to play a consistent control game. That's because after four or five hits each you're going to miss or miss-hit the ball, or the shooter will kill it. Control will gradually evolve away.

The ace serve will become incredibly more important. Because the second serve is so easy to get in, you can serve any way you want to on the first serve with no worry at all. I think the serves will become so important that eventually it will force a rules change because we'll have such an infrequency of good rallies.

Therefore, I think the serve and shoot style of play will become more important, and that's poor. It's unfortunate that the fans of the future won't get to see the extended rallies, hustle and guts that have made the champions of the past so great. It's a problem that we who are in the sport for the sport's sake are going to have to take a good, hard look at in a year or two.

Leve: *What players do you consider a threat to you right now?*

Brumfield: The guys who can serve and shoot,—Hogan, Hilecher, Serot, Wagner. The people who play control aren't going to beat me. There's not an athlete in the game with enough physical and mental credentials to overshadow the experience that I have. No one is that much faster, that much stronger or that much smarter than me to compensate for my years of experience and confidence that has led to my 28 national titles.

Leve: *If you could change any rule in the game, what would it be?*

Brumfield: I don't think the rules are that bad, although I think they need to be re-worded in many instances.

The biggest problem in the game as I see it is inconsistency of court conditions due to altitudes, court surfaces and so on. It's just not the same game from town to town.

Leve: *What can we do to upgrade refereeing?*

Brumfield: I think every pro tournament should be preceded by a referee's clinic. Anybody who referees should go through this clinic, conducted by someone who knows the rules and can diagram situations.

I think eventually we're going to have to pay and travel the referees for the pro tour. We're not at that point yet, I know, but it is sorely needed and should be given top priority as you expand your budget.

When we do that, we'll be one more big step toward the class and professionalism that we all seek.

Let me clarify my statement on the rules. If there is one rule I could change it would be that players not be allowed to call anything on themselves.

Leve: *You're saying that if a player picks the ball up on two bounces and knows it, he shouldn't call it?*

Brumfield: That's right. No more than Jerry West would have called a foul on himself against the Boston Celtics in the N.B.A. championship game. The referees are there for that purpose.

The problem is the incompetence of the refereeing. That must be attacked by referee's clinics and by the head referee from the national office selecting competent referees from a list of qualified people.

In no other sport at any time have I ever seen anybody call anything on himself. It would be tantamount to an offensive lineman on the Oakland Raiders calling holding on himself in the Super Bowl. It would be ridiculous. In tennis, if a player reverses a referee's call it is considered an insult to the referee. The

same should be true in racquetball. The referee should call the game and it will even out over the course of the match.

The reason I say this is not because every other sport does it. Rather, I believe a lot of the animosity between players comes from players who call things on themselves and feel their opponent does not do so.

Leve: *Don't you think this would actually add to the problem?*

Brumfield: No,—once the responsibility is entirely on the referee, and the players know you can't correct a call even if you wanted to. You don't come crying to the other player, saying "are you going to admit to this or are you going to be a (expletive deleted) liar?" That's what it amounts to now.

I've left the court many times feeling I've been cheated by my opponent. Instead of letting it bother me, I should have just said, "well, the calls will even out." And they will as the refereeing improves. As it is now, dishonest players will always take advantage of honest players, and I hate to see that happen.

Leve: *Do you ever intend to practice law?*

Brumfield: I will practice law if I can get into a sports-oriented practice.

Leve: *Do you see yourself as a future agent for young racquetball stars?*

Brumfield: Perhaps. By the time racquetball gets to that stage, I certainly will know enough about the game and management to be beneficial in that capacity. I would like to become connected permanently with racquetball. I think it is becoming a tremendous growth sport in all facets. I've been a big part of it as a player and I'd like to continue to be a big part of it after my playing days are over. Maybe I'll continue with National Racquetball Clinics, or affiliate with the N.R.C. or be Leach Industries' good will ambassador.

Leve: *What does Charlie Brumfield do for relaxation?*

Brumfield: I don't relax too much. That's one thing about being on top,—you're always looking around to see who's chasing you. I live less of an easy-going life than a lot of people believe. I'm constantly thinking about how to maintain the top position because it's important to me now. It's a very major portion of my life.

Leve: *No hobbies?*

Brumfield: Everything I do is aimed at improving myself in racquetball, so to speak. Obviously, I have a reasonable social life, I enjoy listening to records and having a few beers with my friends. But when I go out and play basketball I'm thinking about how to improve my quadriceps for racquetball; when I play badminton it's to improve my overhead motion and stamina for racquetball; when I swim, it's not because I like to feel the waves flap against my body,—it's because I'm thinking about the third game with Marty Hogan. I want to be certain that my legs will stand up because I've done 50 more laps with the kick board than he has.

Leve: *Do you think you'll be able to psychologically handle the situation when you can no longer compete?*

Brumfield: I think so. Everyone who's into sports knows that eventually the body grows old and physically can't keep up with younger and stronger athletes. That's just a fact of life that everyone in sports has to accept no matter how great they are or were. I'm prepared to accept that.

I won't regret my retirement. Sure, everyone, especially athletes, wants to be eternally young. But it can't be done, so I'll play as long as I can enjoy it and have a reasonable chance at winning. When my time comes, I'll try and help other players enjoy the sport.

Leve: *You've spent many hours telling people that you've stayed on top so long due to your superior mental analysis of racquetball. Could it be that the prime age for our sport is between 17 and 23 and you're just an exception?*

Brumfield: I don't believe that's the case. I don't think there's one player over age 25 other than myself and Strandemo who trains for racquetball. Racquetball is like any other sport,—take tennis, badminton, any sport,—I don't know of one where the peak age isn't around 30.

The reason for that is experience goes a long way in compensating for any decay in the body. If you keep your body in shape it will continue to respond well until you're 30.

For example, I don't think racquetball is any more strenuous than say, basketball. But you'd have to agree that Oscar Robertson and Rick Barry and scores more were playing pretty good ball at age 30.

Unless the athlete is injured or fails to recognize that he has to eat and train differently than when he was 18, the prime age for racquetball can be well into the 30's.

Leve: *Do you think you'll be considered a good champion?*

Brumfield: I don't think you can ever say anything bad about how I've taken what I've had to work with and produced a superior racquetball record with it.

Leve: *Are you satisfied with your contribution to the sport, in general?*

Brumfield: If I was satisfied I'd never win another match. You have to have the objective I spoke of earlier, and you must always strive for that objective, which means you're not satisfied.

I think I'm going to be remembered like Ty Cobb is,—the guy who came in with spikes high and not everybody liked him. But he sure was a helluva player.

Leve: *You've said that the quality of racquetball play will improve*

—photo by Ray Thompson



“Dishonest players will always take advantage of honest players, and I hate to see that happen . . .”

tremendously when world class athletes begin playing. Would you expand on that?

Brumfield: There's always a lag between the time players begin making \$100,000 a year and the 10-year-old kid says I want to play that sport. It hasn't even happened in tennis yet.

When that happens to racquetball, you're going to have a completely different class of athlete in the game. They're going to be bigger, stronger, faster and smarter. And the game will change to accommodate them.

Leve: *Have you seen substantial improvement in women's racquetball?*

Brumfield: No. Well, I don't mean that exactly. There's been improvement, sure, over the past 10 years. But over the past few years, there's just more players playing the same caliber. Essentially, I think that's what's going to happen in men's racquetball.

For example, I don't think the Marty Hogan of today is any better than the

17-year-old Steve Serot was, in fact, I don't think he's as good. However, we've got 10 players like Marty Hogan coming up, instead of two such players five years ago. Five years from now we'll have 50. That doesn't mean anybody's better or worse than Marty Hogan. Look at golf,—there's 100 golfers capable of winning a tournament, technically.

That's the way it's going to become in racquetball when the dollars and youth programs dictate that racquetball becomes the kids first love instead of today's so-called major sports.

Leve: *You've been quoted as saying the reason you chose racquetball over law is that you'd rather “chase a ball around a court, than break your butt in a court room.” Do you hold by that statement?*

Brumfield: The real reason I chose racquetball over law for my career is that it's easier to decipher whether I've

done well or not. My record proves whether or not I'm a good racquetball player.

Let's say there's 500 or 1,000 attorneys in San Diego. Who knows who's better than the other? How can you compete? You can by money and power and big cars, etc. In racquetball it's much more demonstrable. I can say I won seven tournaments out of 10 this year, I won the national title, I am the best player in the entire world.

It all goes back to my objective, which really is proving that I can be the best at what I choose to do.

If I ever go into law, I would have the same objective, but it would be much harder to prove my achievement of that objective in my own eyes. There's no measuring stick like there is in athletics.

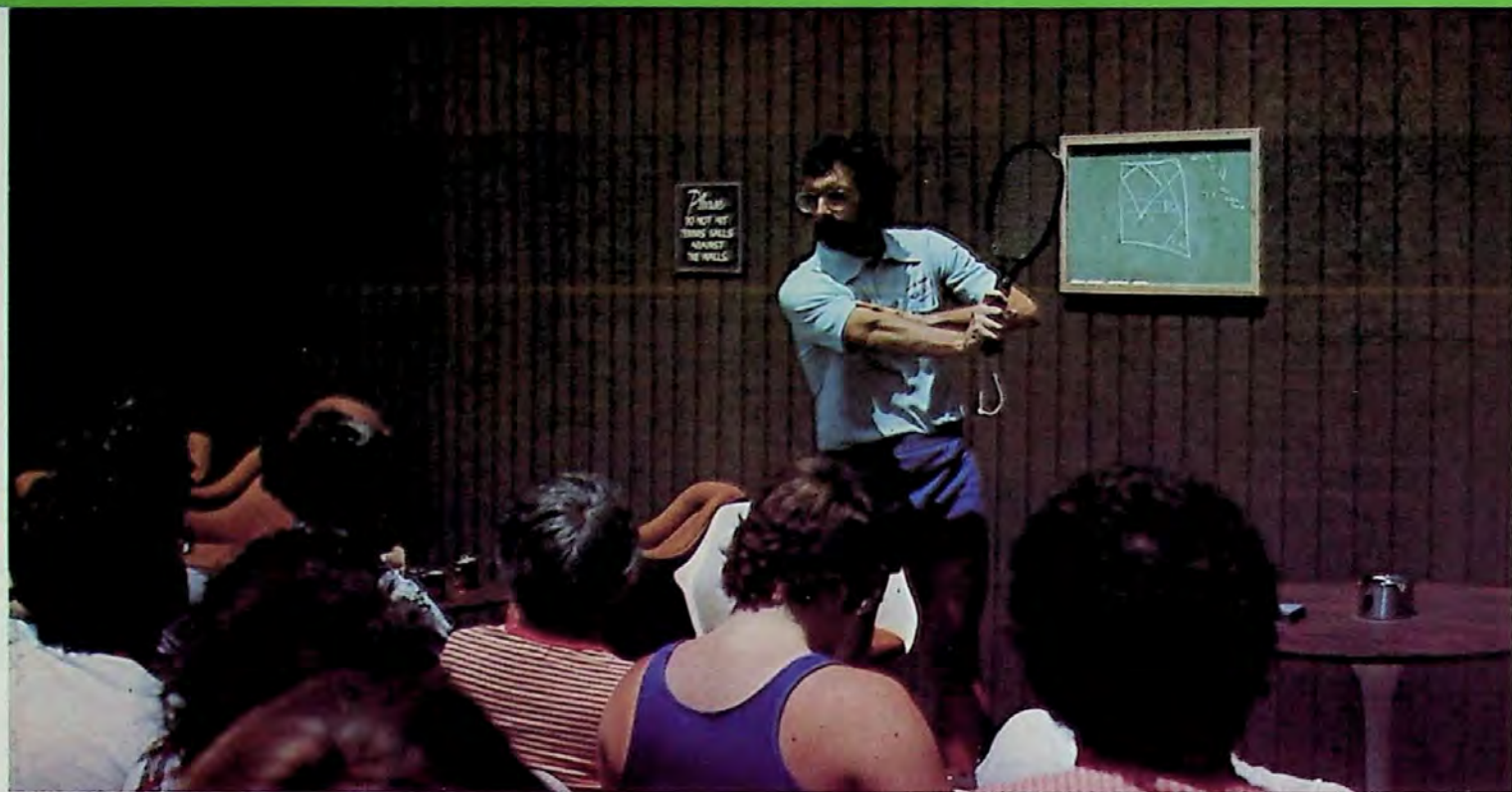
Leve: *Do you have any ambitions of great wealth?*

Brumfield: No. I'm not interested in wealth, I'm interested in achieving goals. I think that's what makes human beings happy. That's why the person making \$500 a month can be as happy or often happier than the person making \$1 million a month, assuming that he has defined his objectives and stretched to reach them.

I certainly have done this. It's not easy for me to win titles. I'm not as gifted as most of my opponents in certain facets of what we call athletics. But I've taken everything that I have and organized it in a mixture that has provided me with a lot of satisfaction by achieving my goals, expanding them, and achieving the new ones.

Leve: *With such strong competitive drives, what did you do in your younger, say high school years, to release these emotions?*

Brumfield: I played pick-up basketball. I went all-out in it, I elbowed people in the throat and everything. I shot golf and hustled people on the



“I think I’m going to be remembered like Ty Cobb is, — the guy who came in with his spikes high and not everybody liked him. But he sure was a helluva player . . .”

course. Whatever I did, I always did it competitively. And I enjoyed it. I don’t recommend it for everyone.

I think there’s a lot of professional racquetball players who don’t have the competitiveness to be national champion.

Leve: *Did you ever participate in organized athletics in high school?*

Brumfield: Golf. When I played I shot in the mid-70’s. Right now my handicap is infinite.

Leve: *That’s excellent for a high schooler. Why didn’t you stick with golf?*

Brumfield: I wasn’t good enough. In golf there’s no substitute for having extreme touch and distance control. I just didn’t have it. It’s like being a

musician,—you’ve got to be able to tell whether you’ve played a sharp or flat. If you can’t tell then there’s no use practicing, because you’ll never be a world class musician.

If you can’t putt, no matter how well the rest of your game, you’ll never be a world class golfer.

Racquetball is not as sophisticated as golf. You need fewer shots in order to be a champion. I felt from the beginning that if I worked hard I would be able to develop those shots to enable me to become a champion. This was my objective.

Leve: *How have your parents reacted to Charlie Brumfield, the racquetball pro?*

Brumfield: Five or six years ago my dad’s favorite phrase was, “quit bouncing the ball and do something.” He felt it was a frivolous pastime. As racquetball continued to grow he realized that I was an exception to the rule, that I would be able to earn a good living, gain recognition and achieve my personal goals.

They’re real enthusiastic about it now, but it’s been a gradual evolution over the past five years. Initially they didn’t realize that I’d be able to make more money in racquetball than I could in law.

Leve: *Is marriage in your future?*

Brumfield: I doubt if I’ll get married as long as I’m married to racquetball.

Leve: *Do you believe that diving for shots will eventually weed their way out of racquetball due to the injury risk?*

Brumfield: I think that diving is important. If I were being pressed as I was in the third game for the national title, and the ball is there and the only way to get it is to dive, then if you want to win, you'll do whatever is necessary to get it.

Some players over-dive. They get out of the habit of moving to the ball as efficiently as possible and they dive when they don't have to. I'm certainly not an advocate of that.

Nor am I an advocate of diving during the course of a game unless it is a very critical situation. Over a career the injury risk will cost you more tournaments than you will win.

Leve: *How do you feel about eye guards for safety?*

Brumfield: It's nearly impossible to legislate that kind of thing on the professional level. The more aggressive the player becomes, the more endangered he is. I've never seen an eye injury due to crowding. Usually, it's an inadvertent freak situation where the ball goes off at an unusual angle.

I will always wear some kind of protective frame. If I went to contact lenses, for example, I would still wear frames with no lenses, just to be sure I had the complete confidence to turn and watch the ball behind me.

Leve: *What is your current lifestyle?*

Brumfield: Materialistically, of course, I'm doing extremely well. I've got a very important decision coming up soon that will affect my play. That is how to move into the working areas of racquetball and still concentrate on playing.

Right now I have no responsibilities except to promote and play to the best of my ability. This leaves me free 24 hours a day to think and play racquetball. What I've got to do is time

my transition from playing to management to make sure that I'm not too late getting into management, yet not too early to deprive myself from those years on top that I could have had.

I made that decision three years ago, and it was the wrong decision. Fortunately, I was able to fight my way out of that position.

I think in the next five years there's going to be a lot of prize money and a lot of endorsement money up for grabs. I am willing to sacrifice myself mentally and physically to achieve that goal,—both for ego satisfaction and financial reward.

I don't want to lose contact with the fact that when you're 35-years-old you're not an old man, you've got 40 more years of working productivity. You've got to prepare the soil, so to speak, so you can move gracefully into your next life.

Leve: *Many of your Leach teammates and other players, for that matter have had highly critical things to say about you and your court antics. Do you think it's just sour grapes?*

Brumfield: I think it's frustration. I am the obstacle between them and their objectives. They don't quite know how to get rid of me. They haven't been able to get to the point where their games speak for themselves. They tend to boil inside and become resentful.

I mentioned Steve Keeley last issue. He's the most blatant example. He had the ability to win the national championship any one of the last seven years. I was always between him and his goal.

That's the real reason, and most of the players either don't or won't recognize it. Instead, they look for excuses why they resent me, like my behavior on the court, or my attitude toward them off the court.

I don't consider myself to be a snobbish champion. I'll even answer my closest competitor's questions about their games. But they think I'm trying to psyche them out. I mean, I offer someone a legitimate piece of advice, something that cost me 20,000 shots in practice, a ton of sweat and lost matches to learn, and people say, "Don't listen to him. Brumfield's trying to psyche you out." That's the type of attitude I resent. I wish the other players would recognize that I'm into racquetball for the same reasons they are. I win, but I'm certainly not holding my victories over them.

I think I talk equal to what I've earned, and that's it. I don't go beyond what I've done, nor do I flaunt in any way whatsoever. I kid around with the other players, but I've never intentionally hurt anybody's feelings, made them feel like they're not accomplishing anything, or belittled their efforts.

Leve: *Did you want to discuss your relationship with Leach Industries in any further detail?*

Brumfield: They've treated me more than fairly. As you know I came from a competitive company which I formed and for whatever reasons did not succeed. I think that I can really help Leach and they're doing more than their share to help me.

Three years ago, when I left Leach I was unaware of what the financial status was of their player promotions program. I wanted them to work me into the program faster than they reasonably could. I wanted more than the program could bear.

Leve: *Do you have any parting comments?*

Brumfield: What I want most to come out of this interview is to let the racquetball

—photo by Arthur Shay



public know what I've done and how much better I've done it than anyone else. Even though I've been the national champion four of the last five years, I don't think people realize how superior my over-all record is to any other player.

They don't know how many times I've won the nationals, how close I came when I didn't win, how many invitational titles, national doubles titles and other major victories. I won the national invitational singles title every year it was ever held. I won the national invitation doubles title every year it was held,—with different partners.

People tend to forget. A guy wins one tournament and all of a sudden people are talking about him in the same sentence as me. I don't think that's fair. That's one thing I can't fight with my game. I can only achieve a record greater than anyone else's. I can't prevent other people from dismissing my achievements or putting me over the hill.

I've worked very, very hard to reach my current plateau, and I'd just like it to be said so people can understand. ●

"A guy wins one tournament and all of a sudden they're talking about him in the same sentence as me. I don't think that's fair . . ."

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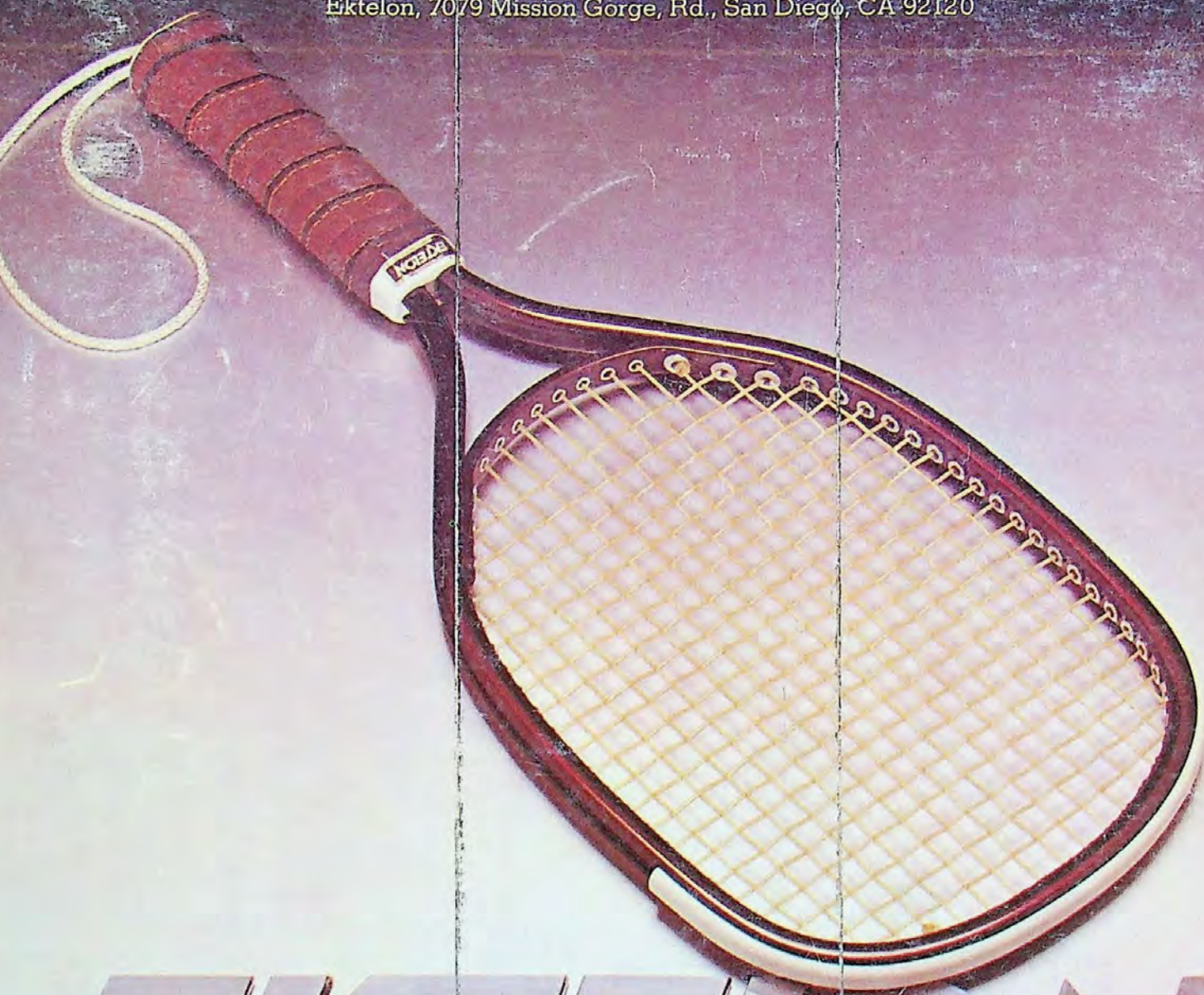
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