

National Racquetball®

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**WORKING OUT
AT WORK**

**READERS' RACQUET
SURVEY RESULTS**

**BRETT HARNETT
COMES BACK
IN DAVISON**

'IT SKIPPED.'

**GONZALEZ SHOWS
HIS METAL IN
ARLINGTON**

STORY ON PAGE 13



**1986 RACQUET
GUIDE**

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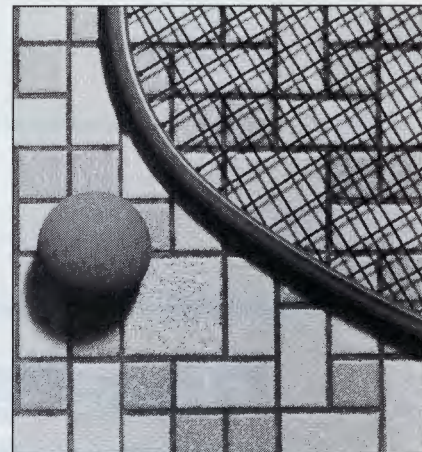
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On the Cover: Drew Stoddard took this photo of #6 ranked pro Ruben Gonzalez whose outstanding sportmanship made him a hero at the Arlington, Virginia, RMA pro stop. The story is on page 13.

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FIRST SERVE

By Chuck Leve



Diversification And The Growth Of Racquetball

There are many racquetball purists who seem to think that the continuing diversification trend in the "racquetball" club business is somehow bad for racquetball.

These awkward-thinking people (I recognize what I used to be) attempt to make the case that as owners add more and more of the latest "fitness" equipment to their club, that the emphasis on racquetball is diminished, and thus, the interest in our sport among the members of that club is also diminished.

The bottom line is that racquetball, like any other business investment in this capitalistic society of ours, is entirely a case of supply and demand. When there were relatively few courts and a great demand for them, additional courts were built.

As these courts were built (mostly from 1974 through 1980) many of the builders/owners refused to heed the warning of those who had seen the cyclical nature of other sports, other industries. Simply put, the warning was: *Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Someday the racquetball "boom" will end. It has to, and then, where will you be?*

But many of us back then saw only unlimited growth in the future. We were oblivious to the outside world. We made up numbers and then believed them.

And when the recession of the early 80's slowed everything down, racquetball was easy prey. By then we had court clubs bumping into each other in an industry beset with absentee ownership, poor management, insufficient site analysis and most of all, no expansion capabilities.

Of course, these were the clubs that were hurt most, and plenty of them went out of business. It was only through the emergence of the "fitness boom" in 1982 that the club owners were able to see a ray of hope for a business that originally was going to send their grandchildren to Yale and now was close to costing them their homes.

As clubs took out courts (and incidentally, tennis clubs are doing the same thing) and added other activities, it was totally due to a desire to increase memberships, i.e., to save their business. By bringing into the club people who wanted to run, swim, bodybuild, do aerobics or watch a big screen tv, these clubs have actually done a great service to racquetball by exposing the sport to millions of people who would otherwise never have seen it.

In my opinion this diversification of facilities is largely responsible for racquetball being able to not only hold onto its number of players during the past five years, but for the sport to actually show growth since 1980—something that *has* occurred, *is* a fact, and yet, is rarely cited in dissertations about the sport.

Every statistical survey or research study from the A.C. Nielson Company to manufacturer's internal industry data shows that there are more players today than five years ago; more than three years ago; more than a year ago. Our rate of growth is not astronomical, to be sure, and it could stand some improvement. But growth is growth, and our current growth (approximately four to eight percent) is solid, normal growth in this stage of our cycle.

All this stuff about diversification being bad for racquetball is a lot of bunk. Diversification is nothing new. Before the first racquetball court was ever built, racquetball was born in the YMCA's and the JCC's of our country—facilities that always have and continue to pride themselves in offering a full spectrum of athletic amenities.

In fact, it was these other activities that first brought the people into the Y's and J's giving them the opportunity to see racquetball, try it, like it, and create the demand for more courts.

I feel badly for those clubs that didn't make it during the evolution from racquetball clubs to "multi-recreational" clubs. But I'll tell you this: you'll find a lot more racquetball players at a healthy, profitable, multi-recreational club than you will at a boarded up, out-of-business racquetball club.

And who ever mandated that the club owners were the people to whom the responsibility of promoting racquetball should fall? To my way of thinking, they did their part by providing the facilities at a reasonable price in a friendly atmosphere.

In golf, it's not up to the clubs to promote the sport. In tennis, it's not up to the clubs to promote the sport. In bowling, it's not up to the alleys to promote the sport. Why should we expect the club owners in racquetball to have to accept that burden?

If racquetball is going to see a significant increase in its rate of growth, it will be when the sport gains a strong, forceful, dynamic leadership.

Until then, we're all going to scramble. □

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you would like to write a letter to the Editor, please send your comments to: Letters to the Editor, National Racquetball, 4350 DiPaolo Center/Dearlove Road, Glenview, IL, 60025. All correspondence becomes the property of National Racquetball and will not be returned.

Debate Over New Oversized Racquets

There has been considerable discussion at the Racquetball Club where I play concerning the use of the new racquet by Ektelon—The Macro Maxum oversized.

Many players feel this racquet gives your opponent an unfair advantage. I have heard that the racquet is sanctioned for play both in the pro-circuit and has been approved for an additional year by the A.A.R.A.

I am sure that many other players across the country have mixed feelings about this racquet. Would it be possible for your magazine to do an article on the oversized racquet. Do any pros use it on the circuit? Which pros sponsor the racquet? What are the feelings about these oversized racquets among the pros? Perhaps you could conduct a survey and solicit opinions about the oversized racquet from subscribers to your magazine and from clubhouses across the country?

Richard Gouin
Wichita, KS

All your suggestions are excellent ones. In this issue we have an article about the oversized racquets on the pro circuit on page 21. —Ed.

Enforce Eyeguard Rule Or Make Leadership Accountable

I played in the Pro-Am in Stockton and again I saw juniors playing without eyeguards. In fact, I played a junior who only put on eyeguards after I challenged his age. He played his next two matches without them.

I have never seen the rule enforced even though state and regional directors were watching the juniors. I know one past junior regional director who didn't know the rule existed!

It is because the lack of enforcement of the rule and other failures of the A.A.R.A. and the California A.R.A. to function properly that I feel the leadership needs to be changed or to be held accountable for their errors, their fail-

ures to act, and their lack of knowledge of the rules.

It is my hope that a junior does sustain an eye injury in a sanctioned tournament (but not a severe injury) and everyone involved is sued. I'd testify for the parents.

The rule should be mandatory for everyone no matter what the age. In addition, glass eyeguards should be banned for obvious reasons.

Tom Peterson
Oakland, CA

Amateur Article On The Mark

I'd like to thank Drew for writing the October 1985 article on "The Amateur Question, Again". I think the article really hit the bottom line and I have copied that article and distributed it to every AARA doubter that I could find. Thanks for the explanation.

Scott Winters
Costa Mesa, CA

Praise For The RMA

Hello from the YMCA in Pleasant Hill, CA. We are die-hard followers of pro racquetball and want to thank you for your outstanding coverage. We were impressed by the first RMA stop in Stockton. Both the players and the club were well organized and pulled off a spectacular event which is further testament to the quality of this new governing body for the pros.

Also, I am a teaching pro at this facility and many of us, including my students, benefit from the health and pro tips featured in National Racquetball. Keep up the good work!

Del Villanueva
Concord, CA

Up-To-Date Rules of Racquetball

I was wondering if it would be possible to print an up-to-date copy of official racquetball rules. The rule book that I have is from a manufacturer and has a lot of proposed rule changes. I

would like to know if any of these rules are in effect.

I really enjoy reading about racquetball. I only wish there was more racquetball on television! Could you please list a schedule of up-coming events to be televised?

Maurice Ralston
Rockford, IL

An official amateur rule book may be obtained by sending \$1.00 to AARA, 815 N. Weber Street, Colorado Springs, CO, 80903. For an official men's pro rulebook, one is in the works. Call Drew Stoddard, RMA Commissioner at 702-826-6037 for more information.

As for televised coverage, call ESPN at 203-584-8477 ext 383 for up-coming televised events. —Ed.

Desperate For Taped Pro Matches

I am desperate to see pro racquetball. I live in western Kentucky and we're not what you would call a hot-bed of racquetball. The only pro matches I've seen were on ESPN and I am sure you are familiar with their "coverage" of the sport.

Anyway, my question is whether there is any possible way I can rent or buy past pro matches that have been filmed or taped by ESPN or anyone, for that matter. Money is no problem.

Greg Martin
Symsonia, KY

You'd think by now someone would be taping the big tournaments for people like you who don't have a chance to be there. Rumors abound of individuals who have taped some of the great pro match-ups for their own enjoyment, but no one on our staff knows who has what. Your best bet is contacting ESPN regarding their own shows. You can call ESPN at 203-584-8477 ext 383 for more information. Other than that, we can only appeal to our readers to send in information regarding private tapes of pro matches. —Ed.

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SHORT LINES

Short Lines features personal stories of racquetball pros, celebrities, and industry leaders. Short Lines is about the special performances of racquetball people around the world, their personal bests and their personal sides.

Marriott - Rice Wedding



Janell Marriott, #6 women's pro of all time, with new hubby, Billy Rice in New York

Janell Marriott ended last season as the WPRA's number six player. She was also ranked as the sixth best player of all time in our September issue. Another major personal accomplishment occurred this summer, however, when she married fiance Billy Rice on July

27, in Salt Lake City, UT.

Rice, who hails from Long Island, NY, is a sporting goods manufacturer's representative with Minahane & Associates.

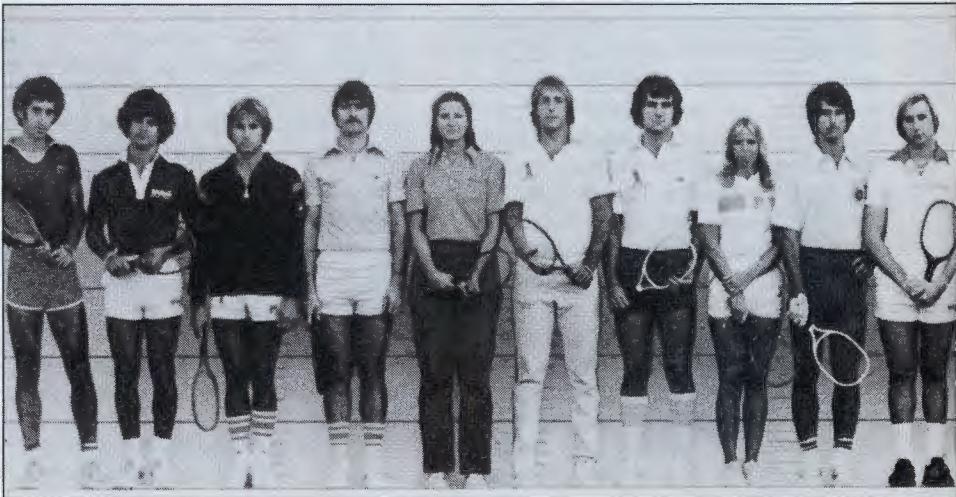
"I told her to keep playing on the pro tour because I'm pretty crazy over sports myself," explains Rice. "I'm involved in a football coaching program with kids. That takes me out of the house a lot, too."

The reception plans for the couple were a bit more complicated than their amicable lifestyle, however. The couple had two receptions, one for Janell's relatives and friends in Salt Lake City, and one for Billy's relatives and buddies in New York.

Former pro Kathy Williams was at the Salt Lake City reception and current pro Bonnie Stoll showed up in New York. Between receptions, the couple honeymooned in Scandanavia. □

Adams Against Arthritis

After sweeping racquetball's first Triple Crown at the end of the WPRA season last spring, Lynn Adams did not take a vacation. Instead, she toured the country speaking on behalf of the UpJohn Corporation. Adams has rheumatoid arthritis and is also one of the spokespersons for the National Arthritis Foundation. Upon completing that tour, she went out on the road again to conduct a series of racquetball clinics to promote the sport she loves





Adams stomping for arthritis

to play so well.

When asked by the NR staff how everything was going, she simply replied, "I'm definitely tired," and began laughing. Adams claims that inspite of all of her promotional work, she intends to be tougher than ever before when this year's WPRA tour begins again. □

Three's Company

There's a new product at DP these days.



D.P.'s Greg Eveland with New Product

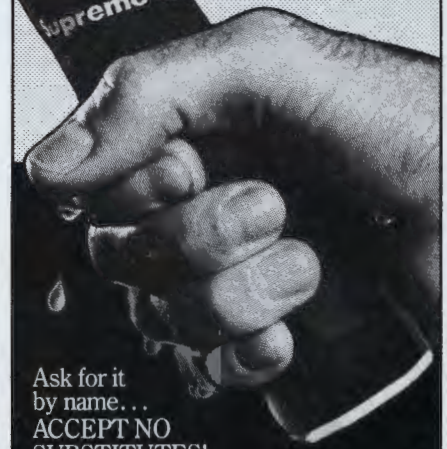
Her name is **Marion Kate Eveland**. Born to parents **Greg and Dawn Eveland** on Sept. 16, Kate weighed only 4 lbs. 13 oz., arriving about a month and one half earlier than her November scheduled birth. In spite of this, she's doing well and is in perfect health. Greg is Diversified Products' Racquet Sports and Games Product Manager. Right now though, Greg is most excited about his new product at home. □



Happy Holidays From Us To You May all your shots be winners, on the court and in your glasses this holiday season. Here's to your game and your health.

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Short Lines Quiz - A Blast From The Past

Who are these players? The **first person** to correctly name the most pros in this vintage photo and send it in to us will get a **free Omega Boron/Graphite "Starfighter" racquet**. Send your answers to National Racquetball, Short Lines Quiz, 4350 DiPaolo Center/Dearlove Road, Glenview, IL 60025. We'll publish the answers in our February issue. □



Bret's Back . . . Again

Harnett stops Price in \$15,000 Michigan Pro/Am

by Drew Stoddard

Bret Harnett beamed as he reached over to shake tournament director Jim Hiser's hand following the awards ceremony on the exhibition court where he had just played. Proudly clutching a check for \$5,075 in his right hand he said, "Jim, I'm back!". He thought for a second and then added, "...again." Bret was indeed back...again.

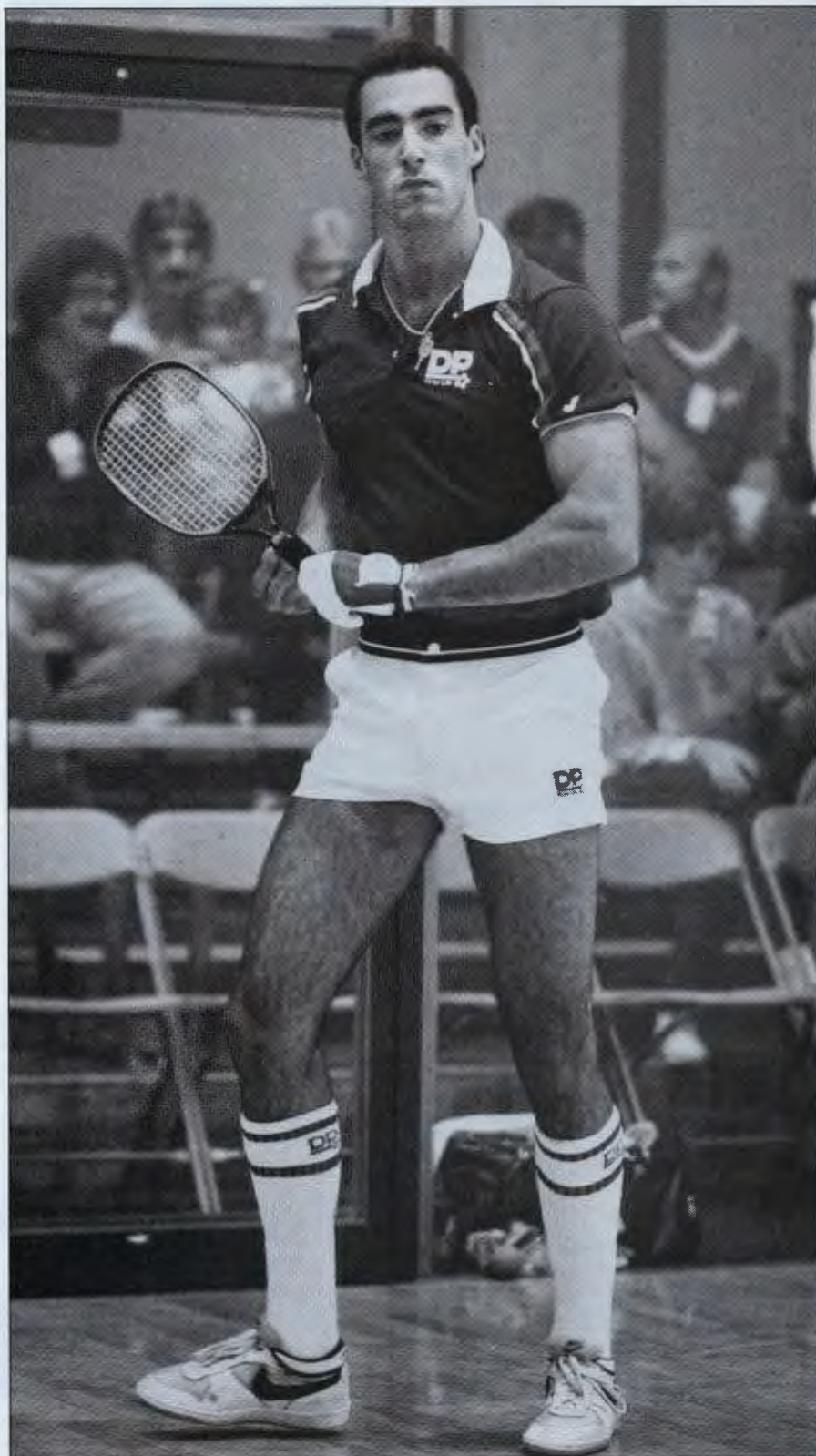
In fact, at an age which barely makes him a legal adult in most states, Bret Harnett of Las Vegas, Nevada, has already had more comebacks than Billy Martin.

After being absent from the winner's circle for 14 months, Harnett won the fourth ranking pro stop of his career by holding off the determined challenge of Gerry Price in the pro final to win the second stop of the 1985-86 RMA Pro Tour—the \$15,000 Bud Light Pro Am at the Davison Racquet Club in Davison, Michigan, September 18-22. It was Bret's first victory since the 1984 Ektelon Nationals, and it was one that did not come easily: he was forced to climb back from a two-game deficit to steal the title from Price in a breathtaking five-gamer, 10-11, 5-11, 11-0, 11-4, 11-8.

In his six years as a professional, Bret has become something of an anomaly on the men's tour. Long recognized as one of the most naturally-gifted athletes to ever play racquetball, he is one of those rare competitors for whom there exists no middle ground. On a given day he can lose to a player of half his own ability, or he can knock over top-seeds in rapid succession like so many falling dominoes.

Consider his record thus far this season. In Stockton he fell in the first round to Jim Cascio, ranked #22 on the men's computer at the time. Ten days later in Davison he proceeded to take out seventh-ranked Ruben Gonzalez in the round-of-16, fourth-ranked Gregg Peck in the quarterfinals, and then blew into the finals with a chilling semifinal knockout of number one Marty Hogan, 11-4, 5-11, 11-9, 11-1. Those are heavy dominoes.

The box scores of his victory over Hogan made startlingly clear how devastating Harnett can be when he finds his range. After splitting the first



'Harnett proceeded to take out seventh-ranked Ruben Gonzalez in the round-of-16, fourth-ranked Gregg Peck in the quarterfinals, and then blew into the finals with a chilling semifinal knockout of number one Marty Hogan. Those are heavy dominoes.'

two games, Hogan moved to a 9-0 lead in game three and then watched helplessly as Bret turned up the fire and scored 22 straight points to Hogan's one!

Of course, in a five-round tournament even Bret Harnett isn't capable of eliminating everyone in the top ten. That took a little assistance from 21-year-old Gerry Price of Castro Valley, California. Ironically, Price nearly dropped out of the competition in Davison because of tendonitis in his right elbow, opting only at the last minute to play in hopes of surviving a round or two to support his #7 ranking.

Everyone should have so much pain. Price breezed into the semifinals without losing a single game, leaving in his wake defending national champion and second-seeded Mike Yellen who was competing in his first event of the season. Price, who has an impressive record against the right-handed Michigan native, beat Yellen soundly in the quarterfinals, 11-10, 11-1, 11-8.

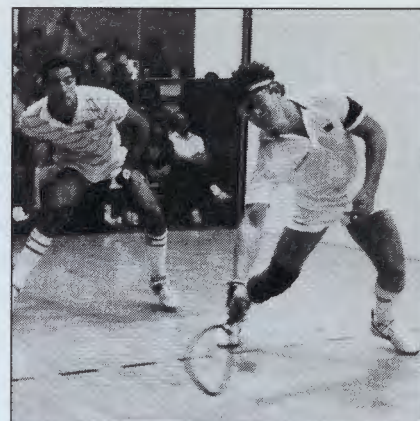
For Yellen it was a fairly typical early-season performance. He has started each of the last three seasons slowly, as if intentionally trying to reach full speed only by February or March. Considering his three consecutive national championships, it's hard to argue with the strategy.

In the semifinals, Price faced one of the few players on the tour he had never beaten in a ranking tournament—his best friend and ex-roommate Scott Oliver. Relying on the same backhand pinch-kill that had destroyed Yellen in the previous round, Price beat Oliver for the first time in three tries, 4-11, 11-9, 11-1, 11-6. The win sent Gerry into the finals for only the second time in his four-year pro career.

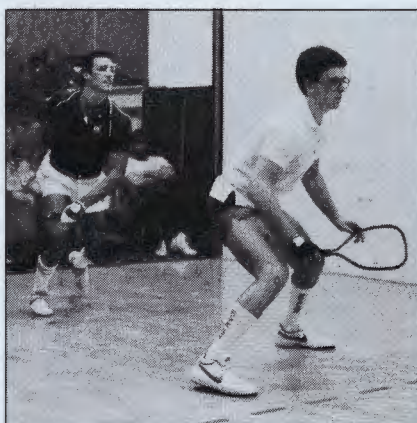
Only one game of the five-game final between Harnett and Price was close. Gerry broke a 10-10 tie to win game one, and then slipped by Harnett with ease in game two, 11-5. But Bret came



It took Harnett five games to put out 1985 D.P. champ Gregg Peck in the quarters



Hogan fell to Harnett in four games in the semis



Price took two straight games from Harnett in the final...



but Harnett took center court and blasted out three games to win

into the third game ready to play, and his thundering left-handed drive serves and kill shots quickly reduced Price's confidence to rubble. Only in the final moments of the match was Gerry able to tighten the score at all, but Bret's momentum was never seriously threatened as he swept three straight games to win the match, 11-0, 11-4, 11-8.

Harnett's victory in Davison made him only the eighth professional player to ever win four ranking tournaments—five of those players are still competing on the men's tour.

Young Jack Newman of Chicago brought to an end what had been pro racquetball's longest standing record with a stunning upset of third-seeded Jerry Hilecher in the round-of-32. The five-game match was one of the closest on record—8-11, 11-5, 10-11, 11-10, 11-10—and it marked the first time since the pro tour was born in 1973 that Hilecher had been eliminated in the first round of competition.

Fifth-ranked Cliff Swain suffered his second early round defeat in as many tournaments when he fell to Scott



Scott Oliver kept Price jumping in the semis but lost in four games to Price

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Oliver in the round-of-16, 11-8, 1-11, 11-8, 1-11, 11-5. It was a thrilling contest that became part of one of the more interesting moments of the competition in Davison. As Oliver and Swain battled on court one, another five-game heart-stopper was taking place on the other side of the left wall where David Gross was in the process of eliminating Jack Newman. As the crowd behind the adjacent glass back walls strained to watch both matches, Oliver and Gross each stepped into the service box to score their respective match points at precisely the same moment. Only minor heart-stoppages were reported by spectators.

Sixteen-year-old Andy Gross, the youngest player on the men's tour, came within inches of his biggest upset ever before falling to Gregg Peck in the second round, 3-11, 0-11, 11-6, 11-10, 11-4. Gross simply destroyed Peck in the first two games, and served twice at match point in game four. It was the second time Gross had pushed the powerful Peck to the brink of defeat, having lost a nearly identical contest in Pleasanton last December.

Clearly, Andy and his brother David—often called "the clone brothers"—because their game-styles mirror that of their mentor Marty Hogan—are both on the verge of making big waves on the men's tour. Only Marty Hogan and Bret Harnett have survived as an entire generation of pure power players approaches extinction. If the torch of the power game is going to be passed, it will undoubtedly be the Gross brothers who proudly carry it into the next decade.

The 1985 Bud Light Open was the eighth incarnation of a tournament that has become an institution among both professionals and amateurs. The event not only serves as Michigan's only annual pro tour stop, but is also the premier gathering for the members of the Michigan Amateur Racquetball Association. Jim Hiser—the Peter Uberroth of Michigan racquetball—is the originator, organizer, and tournament director of the Bud Light Open which was sponsored this year by Bud Light, Ektelon, and Penn Racquetball. □

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DAVISON, MI.
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Eagle d. Chappell; Amatulli d. Blankenship;
Ganim d. Hall; Cole d. Atwell; Anthony d.

Meloche; Jones d. Hodges; Morrison d. Anderson; Wilhelm d. Harder; Plazak d. Magnoli; Ceresia d. Chermiside; Nichols d. Dutcher; Sell d. Eagle; Fox d. Amatulli; Ganim d. Cole; Navarro d. Anthony; Jones d. Griffith; Wilhelm d. Morrison; Ceresia d. Plazak; Negrete d. Nichols.

Round of 32:

M.Hogan d. H.Jones; 11-4, 11-6, 10-11, 11-4
M.Ray d. J.Egerman; 11-2, 11-9, 3-11, 11-4
D.Peck d. R.Navarro; 11-7, 11-6, 11-8
D.Cohen d. D.Green; 8-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-2
R.Gonzalez d. D.Negrete; 11-8, 11-2, 11-1
B.Harnett d. J.Nolan; 9-11, 11-9, 11-1, 11-3
A.Gross d. B.Wilhelm; 11-2, 11-8, 11-5
G.Peck d. B.Sell; 11-6, 11-0, 5-11, 8-11, 11-5
J.Newman d. J.Hilecher; 8-11, 11-5, 10-11, 11-10, 11-10
D.Gross d. M.Ceresia; 11-7, 11-6, 11-7
S.Oliver d. M.Levine; 11-2, 10-11, 11-2, 11-5
C.Swain d. A.Roberts; 5-11, 11-6, 11-10, 11-2
G.Price d. L.Fox; 11-1, 11-8, 11-9
D.Ganim d. C.Bryman; 9-11, 11-10, 11-10, 4-11, 11-8
J.Cascio d. D.Obremski; 11-6, 11-3, 11-4
M.Yellen d. S.Lerner; 11-5, 11-4, 11-4

Round of 16:

Hogan d. Ray; 11-3, 11-4, 11-8
D.Peck d. Cohen; 4-11, 11-5, 11-2, 11-2
Harnett d. Gonzalez; 11-7, 10-11, 11-7, 11-2
G.Peck d. A.Gross; 3-11, 0-11, 11-6, 11-10, 11-4
D.Gross d. Newman; 4-11, 11-9, 11-6, 9-11, 11-8
Oliver d. Swain; 11-8, 1-11, 11-8, 1-11, 11-5
Price d. Ganim; 11-4, 11-3, 11-8
Yellen d. Cascio; 11-10, 4-11, 11-7, 11-4

Quarterfinals:

Hogan d. D.Peck; 11-4, 11-6, 7-11, 11-5
Harnett d. G.Peck; 5-11, 11-10, 8-11, 11-10, 11-5
Oliver d. D.Gross; 11-6, 11-9, 11-1
Price d. Yellen; 11-10, 11-1, 11-8

Semifinals:

Harnett d. Hogan; 11-4, 5-11, 11-9, 11-1
Price d. Oliver; 4-11, 11-9, 11-1, 11-6

Finals:

Harnett d. Price; 10-11, 5-11, 11-0, 11-4, 11-8



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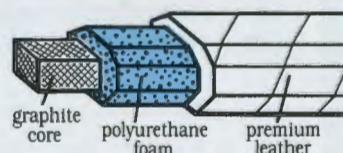
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Stirring Up Trouble In Doubles

Playing Doubles to Win – Part II

by Lou Fabian & Gene Grapes

Many players believe the secret to winning most rallies rests on your ability to determine your opponent's position and your execution of specific shots to defeat that position (See Table 1). A player can only be considered advanced when he has mastered all the shots shown below and uses them at the proper time during a match. An easy rule for the beginning player is to angle shots because the opponents tend to cover straight returns more easily.

Tips to Win the Rally

1. Develop a short, quick swing.
2. Watch the ball until you have made contact. However, form a line of direction in your mind, as to where you want the ball to go.
3. Let the ball drop for a kill shot. The side of your racquet may scrape the floor.
4. Move to a defensive position if your partner has a set up. This will allow an excellent coverage position if the rally continues. If you
- are there first, your opponent will have to work harder for good court position.
5. Anytime you reach to the left for a backhand shot from the right side, your partner has time to make a better shot with his forehand. In addition, the angle of the ball will usually give your partner an easier shot.
6. Watch the opponent on the opposite side. You have the responsibility to cover his shot.
7. Anticipate that every ball will come to you.
8. If the ball comes directly at you in front court you must make a quick decision on which way to jump. Always move out of the way of the weaker shotmaker. This movement takes the stronger opponent away from play.
9. Stay off the side walls during play.
10. Morale will improve if you protect your partner on the court. For ex-

ample, if your partner is stranded in the front court, hit a ceiling ball to give him an opportunity to move back to safety.

11. Do not attempt soft shots unless both opponents are in back court.
12. Back off when you play a blaster.
13. Move up next to your opponents when they have a set up. You want them to see you to increase the pressure. Do not, however, interfere with the shot.
14. When alone in a front court rally against both your opponents, hit a defensive shot. Then recover your normal position.
15. Let shoulder-high balls go to the back wall. This will force your opponents to move out of the way. Often an easy set up will result.
16. Cover your shot as well as your partner's shot. Follow your kill or pinch shot to the front wall.

TABLE 1

YOUR POSITION ABOUT TO HIT THE BALL	YOUR OPPONENT'S POSITION			
		FRONT COURT	MIDDLE COURT	BACK COURT
	FRONT COURT	Down the Line V Pass	Corner Kill Z-Ball Reverse Pinch	Pinch Shot Straight Kill Reverse Pinch Corner Kill
	MIDDLE COURT	V Pass Down the Line	V Pass Straight Kill Pinch Shot Reverse Pinch Corner Kill	Straight Kill Pinch Shot Reverse Pinch Fly Kill Corner Kill
	BACK COURT	V Pass Down the Line Ceiling Ball Around-the-Wall Ball	V Pass Ceiling Ball Pinch Shot	Straight Kill Pinch Shot Reverse Pinch Overhead Drive

Strategy to Defeat the Opponents

The team that controls center court is the team that wins. When a team is caught in the back court, the front court team can easily cover kill shots. Most points in doubles are scored on kill shots because two people can easily cover their half of the court.

The front court team has better visibility. Vision is extremely important in doubles since play is so quick. The team in the back court has to pick out the ball through the four legs and four arms of their opponents in front court.

Playing the right side in a righty-righty combination requires much more patience than playing the left. Your primary responsibility is to position yourself and move to discourage shots in the right front corner. Try to force play deep and over to the left side. Your partner will have plenty of time to set up then and work for a forehand offensive opportunity.

The mortal sin of right side play is stealing your partner's forehand with a backhand shot. Do not, however, consider yourself a defensive player or you will be pounded into submission by the opponents. Think offense!

One partner usually feels more comfortable and plays better in front court in most experienced doubles teams. You can attack this team by serving to the front court opponent. If the front court opponent has to return the serve it will be much more difficult for him to move into the front court. If your opponents use this tactic against your team:

1. Hit a ceiling ball to give yourself time to move into the front court.
2. Take an aggressive service return position. Inch up in the court and volley the serve return past one opponent.
3. Alert your partner to take an extra step into the center to close up the zone. This will give you protection to move up front later.

The best tactic for defeating the center court strategy and winning the match is the isolation theory. Top flight doubles, when played properly, is really two against one.

If you are unfamiliar with your opponents, assume that the weaker will play the right side. This applies to two rightys and the lefty-righty combination. Go after the right side opponent in the case of two leftys. You must stay with your strategy though, for the entire first game. If you win, continue with that strategy. If you lose, reverse the point of attack.

Remember, an opponent denied shots for long periods of time will

become rusty and cold. Timing will not be nearly as sharp when the ball drifts into his hitting zone. Eventually the isolated player will become desperate to hit the ball. He will have a tendency to encroach on his partner's territory. A breakdown in teamwork will result since neither opponent will know who is going to take what.

Morale will also slump because the partner encroached upon will begin to feel inadequate. In addition, the player hitting all the shots may start making overly aggressive shots and give up easy points. The disenchanted teammate will now encroach even more to help out, only completing the demise of the teamwork.

The only effective defense against the isolation theory is to hit the ball so that it becomes very difficult to keep in one particular area of the court. For example, use overhead drives, around-the-wall balls, and Z-balls rather than sticking with the ceiling ball.

A ceiling ball rally is the easiest method of keeping the ball to one person. However, it takes tremendous poise and skill to take a well hit overhead drive, around-the-wall ball, or Z-ball coming into your body and do anything more than just hit it.

'Attack their backhands, attack the weaker opponent, attack the defensive player, serve to the front court opponent to reverse their favorite position, and isolate the hot player or scorer.'

As you plan a strategy to defeat the opponents keep these things in mind: attack their backhands, attack the weaker opponent, attack the defensive player, serve to the front court opponent to reverse their favorite position, and isolate the hot player or scorer.

The Will to Win

The will to win requires much more than drive and hustle. You must have poise, confidence, the ability to communicate, and willingness to learn to play doubles correctly. When you have mastered these areas you will be playing championship doubles and truly understand the will to win. □

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'The General' Crosses The Potomac

Hogan won the battle, but Gonzalez was the hero

by Drew Stoddard

Okay, maybe at 28-years-old the victories don't come as convincingly as they did at a time when he won 21 pro tournaments in a row. There's a little less flair in the process, and a lot more competition along the way, but still Marty Hogan has a way of winning big tournaments even when he has to hang on by his fingernails to do it.

Hogan's latest victory—notch number 55 on his racquet for those who keep track of such things—came in the third stop of the 1985-86 RMA Pro Tour, the \$15,000 Orangina/Head Pro-Am at the Crystal Racquet and Health Club in Arlington, Virginia, October 2-6. The win was Hogan's second of the season, and thrust him far into the lead as the number-one-ranked player in the men's game.

It was one of the hardest-fought titles Marty has ever earned. After barely surviving two down-to-the-wire matches in the round-of-32 and quarterfinals, Hogan was stretched to the limit by surprise finalist Ruben Gonzalez of Staten Island, New York, before finally, prevailing, 8-11, 10-11, 11-7, 11-2, 11-8. The marathon battle matched two of the best retrievers in the game, and was easily the most breathtaking final thus far this season.

The match was capped with one of the most stunning displays of sportsmanship ever seen on the men's tour. With Hogan serving at match point and Gonzalez trailing by only two, Ruben ended a furious rally with a mid-court forehand kill, called good by referee Corey Brysman. Instead of stepping up to serve, however, Gonzalez overturned the call himself saying the shot had skipped and offered his hand to Hogan in congratulations. It was a courageous act which cost Gonzalez the only real shot he has ever had at winning a major tour event.

Both Hogan and Gonzalez had to scramble just to get their chance to play in the title match. Every pro who entered Arlington, it seemed, had come ready to play.

In the first round on Thursday morn-



Marty Hogan wins #55

ing Hogan found himself locked in a tiebreaker with young Doug Ganim of Ohio, from whom he barely escaped with an 11-8 fifth-game win. In the quarterfinals, he quickly fell behind eighth-ranked Gerry Price two games to none before winning again in five. Then came the semifinals and Gregg Peck, to whom Hogan lost at the DP Nationals in June. While he took the rematch in four games—11-7, 10-11, 11-8, 11-6—it was by no means an easy win.

Gonzalez, meanwhile, was fighting

his way with his oversized racquet through Ben Koltun, Doug Cohen, and Mike Ray before coming up against every pro's nightmare—Cliff Swain—in the semifinals. That match, played before a packed house on Saturday night, was a barn-burner pitting Swain's rocket drive serves against Gonzalez's unequalled diving ability. In just under three hours of play, Ruben took the match from the powerful young left-hander, 10-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-1, 11-7. The win increased Ruben's edge in the matchup to 3-0, keeping him one of the



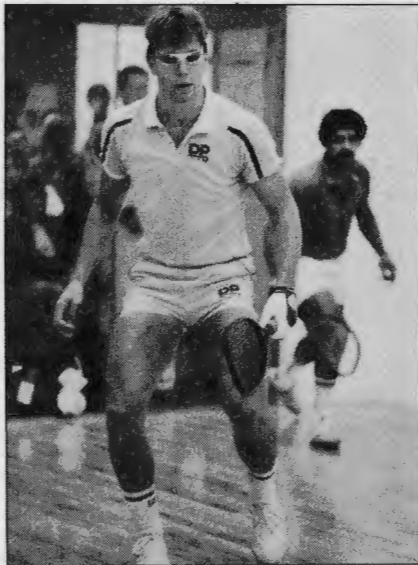
The Moment Of Truth: Gonzales, "It skipped..."



Gonzalez gives his hand and the match to Hogan...



Hogan shows Gonzalez they're both winners.



Big Mike Ray, a lefty from Georgia, crushed national champ Mike Yellen in the 16's before falling to Ruben in the quarters

few players Swain has never beaten in a tour stop.

There weren't many in Arlington who gave Gonzalez even the slightest chance of threatening Hogan in Sunday afternoon's final. Prior to Arlington, Ruben—who at age 33 is the oldest player on the men's tour—had never really come close to doing that. But once the match was underway it was quickly obvious that on this day Ruben was determined to either win or leave his soul on the court trying.

Knowing that Hogan plays best when his opponent is trying to match him for power, Gonzalez hit everything mid-speed and then moved quickly to re-kill anything Hogan left up. Marty's tim-

ing went haywire as he pressed to speed up the rallies and almost before the crowd had settled in to watch the great Hogan perform, Ruben had taken the first two games 11-8, 11-10. Hogan's shots were rising, and Ruben was gobbling them up like Pac-Man.

Marty turned his attention to two things: hitting the mark with his serves to lock Gonzalez in back court, and retrieving like there was no tomorrow. He did both, and the crowd was treated to a diving exhibition that surpassed anything that has been seen in years. Hogan took the next two games 11-7, 11-2, scoring game point in the fourth game on a poached ceiling ball that sent the house into hysterics.

The tiebreaker remained close all the way to 8-all, before Hogan inched his way to a fragile 10-8 lead. It was then, with Hogan serving his second match point, after a rally that included a combined seven diving saves, that Ruben came face to face with the greatest opponent of all—his own conscience. He stood in center court, stared quietly for a moment at his friend Jack Newman sitting behind the back glass wall, and realized that the dream of his life would have to wait until another day. He turned to Marty, smiled, and offered his hand.

"It skipped," said Ruben later, "and that was the only thing that really mattered. I don't think anybody else saw it, but I thought 'If I'm going to win it, I'm going to win it the right way; there will be another time'.

"I felt like I was back in my younger days, I felt so good. Mentally, I was really psyched for it. After the first two

games I knew he was coming back, but the only way he was going to beat me was to roll everything out. I was there, but he made the right shots on the last three points."

Asked how he felt following the loss he replied, "I'm so sore."

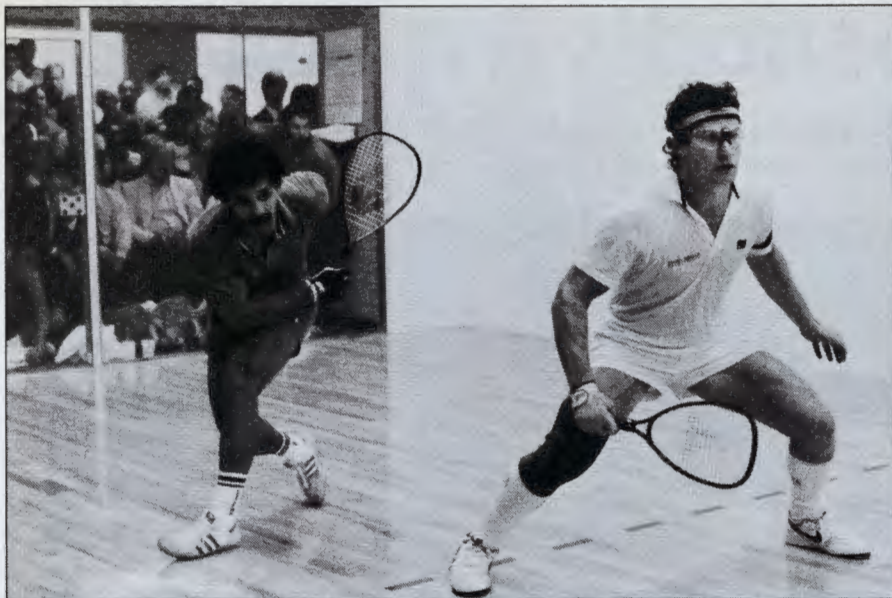
I just want to say that I'm extremely sore too," Hogan concurred. "This tournament has been very difficult for me. It's the hardest I've had to work in a very long time."

Marty then made a rather startling prediction: "At the beginning of the year I decided it was time for me to change my whole attitude toward the game. I'm going to predict now that I will win ten pro tournaments by the end of the year."

Were Hogan to make good on that prediction, the current season would be his best since 1981. To do it Hogan would need to win eight of the eleven RMA Tour stops that remain. That would be difficult in any season. But today, with so many players capable of reaching the winner's circle, that challenge is gargantuan.

Big left-hander Mike Ray of Athens, Georgia, has been sending ripples through the pro draw in recent tournaments, but in Arlington he sent shock waves. In the round-of-16 Ray handed defending national champion Mike Yellen his second early-round defeat in as many tournaments with a surprisingly swift 11-8-4-11, 11-8, 11-4 upset. The win moved Ray's ranking to 13th, and dropped Yellen's point total to within easy striking distance of #3 Gregg Peck.

Scott Oliver prevented six-ranked Bret Harnett from repeating his Davison



Gonzalez powders a forehand with his new oversized racquet in the finals



John Egerman fought his way to the quarters against Cliff Swain with his new mid-sized racquet

victory by dominating the left-hander in the second round, 8-11, 11-3, 11-8, 11-5. Oliver has never lost to Harnett in tour play.

John Egerman of Boise, Idaho, earned his first quarterfinal in nearly a year when he upset Jim Cascio in the round-of-32, and fourth-ranked Jerry Hilecher in the round-of-16, 11-10, 11-7, 11-8. Egerman, who was once the most decorated junior player in the game, continued to play unusually sharp racquetball despite falling to Cliff Swain in the quarters, 7-11, 11-10, 11-4, 11-2.

1982 national champion Dave Peck did his best to take pro racquetball back into the dark ages during his 11-1, 7-11, 4-11, 11-8, 11-7 loss to Swain in the second round. Bringing back memories of a by-gone era when the pro tour was the domain of the boorish, Peck completely lost control, verbally abusing (and occasionally threatening) nearly everyone in sight. One spectator who had spent much of the day collecting autographs of the pro players in her tour program left the match in disgust saying, "I don't want his autograph."

The spectacle gave Peck the distinction of being the first player to be disciplined under the RMA Code of Conduct: he was fined and suspended by the RMA from tour competition for a yet-to-be-determined period in the future.

To be sure, Peck's dilemma is a tough one; once considered the most dominant player on the tour, he has never fully recovered from an injury to his right leg in 1983 and now has difficulty getting through the early rounds. But in today's games, so does everyone—



Greg Peck's semifinal finish against Hogan puts him within striking distance of overtaking Mike Yellen for the #2 spot in the rankings

including Hogan. Peck's game is still remarkably sound; unfortunately, few notice because his performance is so often overshadowed by his behavior.

The Orangina/Head Pro Am marked the first time a major men's tour stop has been held in Arlington, a city just across the Potomac from Washington D.C. The Crystal Racquet and Health Club is located in a stunning multi-level business community known as Crystal City, which sits directly across the freeway from the Pentagon. In fact, at various times throughout the event the crowd of spectators was dotted with unidentifiable, but obviously impor-



Cliff Swain lost a thriller to Gonzalez in the semifinals

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The Gonzalez ballet—"retrieving like there was no tomorrow"

tant, high-level military uniforms.

The tournament and its unusual location were widely praised by the pro players. In his first attempt at running a major men's tour stop, tournament director Judd Grosshans and his staff of over 45 put together what could easily become a flagship event in future seasons. Grosshans reportedly spent nine full months organizing the tournament, and the preparation was evident in every detail down to the slick blue blazers that were worn by all tournament officials.

The Arlington event was sponsored by Orangina (a new beverage being marketed nationally by 7-UP), Head Racquet Sports, and Penn Racquetball. □

**ORANGINA/HEAD PRO AM
CRYSTAL RACQUET &
HEALTH CLUB
ARLINGTON, VA
OCTOBER 2-6, 1985**

Qualifying Rounds:

Cole d. Blankenship; Roberts d. Lopez; White d. Davis; Cole d. Simmonette; Koltun d. Nichols; Morrison d. Plazak; Clark d. Fairbairn; Wilhelm d. Roberts; Remen d. Withers; Grosshans d. Gerue; Plotkin d. White.

Round of 32:

M.Hogan d. D.Ganim; 11-7, 4-11, 11-5, 11-8
E.Andrews d. J.Nolan; 11-7, 11-2, 9-11, 11-4
D.Gross d. E.Remen; 11-10, 11-4, 11-6
G.Price d. J.Newman; 11-2, 11-1, 11-2
B.Harnett d. M.Morrison; 11-4, 11-6, 11-0
S.Oliver d. S.Clark; 11-6, 11-1, 11-0
C.Brysmen d. M.Plotkin; 11-9, 11-3, 11-8
G.Peck d. D.Obremski; 11-8, 11-7, 11-1
J.Hilecher d. M.Levine; 0-11, 11-2, 11-8, 11-8
J.Egerman d. J.Cascio; 11-8, 11-9, 11-8
D.Peck d. J.Grosshans; 11-4, 11-6, 11-7
C.Swain d. C.Cole; 11-0, 11-2, 11-8
R.Gonzalez d. B.Koltun; 11-5, 11-6, 9-11, 11-9
D.Cohen d. W.Snead; 11-5, 11-7, 10-11, 11-0
M.Ray d. A.Gross; 11-3, 11-9, 5-11, 11-8
M. Yellen d. B.Wilhelm; 11-1, 11-1, 11-6

Round of 16:

Hogan d. Andrews; 7-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-3
Price d. D.Gross; 11-3, 11-10, 11-6
Oliver d. Harnett; 8-11, 11-3, 11-8, 11-5
G. Peck d. Brysman; 11-3, 3-11, 11-3, 11-9
Egerman d. Hilecher; 11-10, 11-7, 11-8
Swain d. D.Peck; 11-1, 7-11, 4-11, 11-8, 11-7
Gonzalez d. Cohen; 11-4, 11-4, 11-9
Ray d. Yellen; 11-8, 4-11, 11-8, 11-4

Quarterfinals:

Hogan d. Price; 10-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-5, 11-5
G.Peck d. Oliver; 11-4, 10-11, 11-6, 11-5
Swain D. Egerman; 7-11, 11-10, 11-4, 11-2
Gonzalez d. Ray; 11-7, 9-11, 11-2, 11-8

Semifinals:

Hogan d. G.Peck; 11-7, 10-11, 11-8, 11-6
Gonzalez d. Swain; 10-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-1, 11-7

Finals:

Hogan d. Gonzalez; 8-11, 10-11, 11-7, 11-2, 11-8

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by Charlie Garfinkel



Charlie Garfinkel, winner of 14 national titles, writes each month on his 'spot' theory of racquetball play that can get you out of a 'bad spot' and put your opponent 'on the spot'.

I have seen the incredibly talented Marty Hogan play many professional tournaments since he burst on the scene in 1974. Yet, after reading the September issue of *National Racquetball*, I was still taken aback by the awesome record he has compiled during his career.

He has won 53 professional racquetball tournaments—37 more than the legendary Charlie Brumfield, and 40 more than the extremely gifted Mike Yellen. Even more impressive is the fact that entering the 1985-86 season, Hogan had won 369 matches out of a possible 418—an amazing 88.3% winning percentage—almost nine wins out of every 10 matches played. Is it any wonder that Hogan is unanimously recognized as the greatest player to have ever stepped on the court?

Hogan's serve, of course, was, and still is, one of the most feared in the game. Often traveling at over 140 mph, his drive serve often completely mesmerizes his opponents. In addition to the serve traveling at an incredible speed, the ball rarely hits a side wall, often, bouncing two or three times before it hits the back wall. And Marty's serve to the right side is often as effective as his serve to his opponent's backhand.

Another trademark of Hogan's game is his uncanny ability to roll out shots that he hits from chest or shoulder height. Although this type of shot will frequently demoralize an opponent, it isn't recommended for B and C players. Simply stated, B and C players don't have the expertise or the wrist snap to execute a kill shot from this height.

However, many B and C players can emulate different shots that Hogan shoots into the left corner of the front wall. Naturally, you won't be able to produce the power that Marty does. But if you hit the shots correctly, you will still win many points.

'Another trademark of Hogan's game is his uncanny ability to roll out shots that he hits from chest or shoulder height.'

A shot that Hogan scores with many times is a shot that usually gives B and C players great difficulty, even though it appears relatively easy. If its any consolation, this shot also gives more advanced players problems.

I'm talking about the shot in which the ball hits high on the front wall, carries to the back wall, and then bounces towards the front wall. By the time you catch up to the ball, you're often well past the service line.

Most B and C players try a variety of returns against this shot—to no avail. They may try to hit the ball as hard as they can, often leading to an outright skipped ball. Or they may even hit themselves with the ball coming off the front wall.

Another tactic that a B or C player may use is to try to "dump" (hit softly) the ball to the front wall. Because your opponent is directly behind you, any shot that is even slightly up, will easily be returned by him and blasted past you.

Therefore, assuming that the ball has been hit down the left side of the court, (Diagram 1) observe the shot that Hogan hits so well. You'll notice that he is hitting a hard backhand pinch shot into the left corner, as low as possible. This is an excellent choice as his opponent is stationed directly behind him. And due to his opponent's court position, Hogan's shot is blocked from view until it breaks sharply off the front wall away from his opponent.

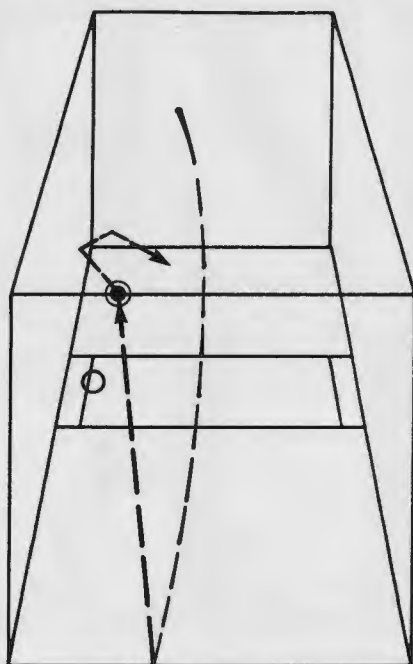


Diagram 1

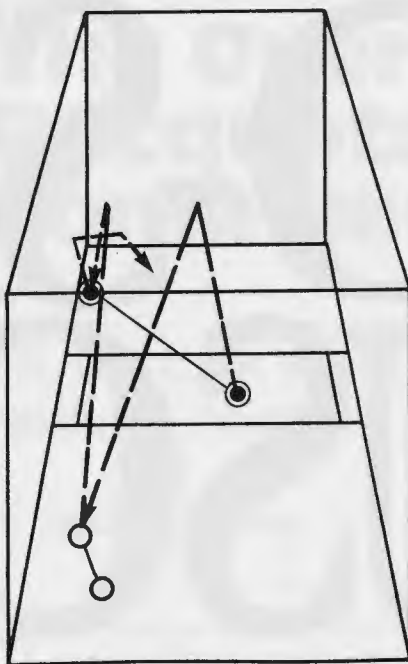


Diagram 2

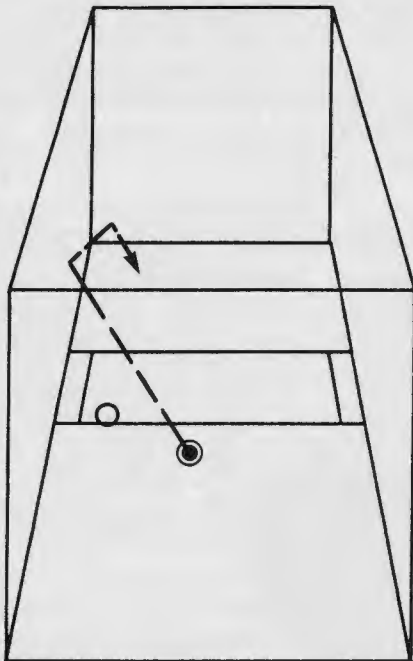


Diagram 3

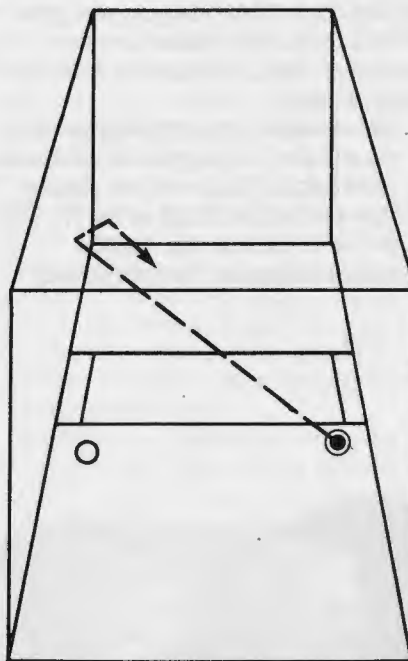


Diagram 4

'When Marty has a setup on his backhand in the front court after serving, he hits the left hand corner as low as possible.'

When Marty has a setup on his backhand in the front court after serving, he hits the left hand corner as low as possible (**Diagram 2**). His opponent is stationed so deeply in back court, that he has no chance to return the ball.

Another of Hogan's favorite ploys is to shoot a forehand pinch shot past an opponent, into the left corner (**Diagram 3**). He especially loves to do this when his opponent is stationed at the short line, and Marty's about five feet behind him in the center of the court. The change of direction of this shot should result in many unanswered points for the B and C players.

Finally, Hogan likes a shot that is a favorite of mine. And with practice, most players at the B and C level, will find it relatively easy to hit. When Hogan's opponent is near the left side wall, and he's stationed near the right side wall, he'll often hit a forehand reverse corner kill (**Diagram 4**). Again, the ball is hit as low as possible.

Of course, you and I can't play at the level that Hogan does. But, it's a good feeling to know that *Spot Racquetball* will help us hit some of the same shots that racquetball's most famous player hits. □



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The Oversize Racquets Get Some Respect

Oh, Oh. Look who's playing with the big racquets now!

by Jason Holloman

When Ektelon announced their two radical oversized racquets—the Maxum and Contra—in June of 1984, there followed a predictable amount of skepticism within the ever-conservative racquetball industry. Some quickly predicted that appearance-conscious club players would never abandon their sleek \$200 composite frames for an aluminum racquet which, at first glance, looked not unlike a tightly-strung fishing net frame. The more thoughtful critics pointed out that, although the oversized concept had proved wildly successful in tennis, a larger hitting surface actually created more disadvantages than benefits in the enclosed space of a racquetball court.

While Ektelon claims that early sales of their "macro" frames have actually exceeded expectations, rival racquet manufacturers have publicly tended to doubt that claim. Whatever the true sales figures are, the oversize racquet has been at least successful enough in the marketplace to prompt other racquet producers to explore their own oversize designs. In June of this year Head introduced four racquet frames designated as "mid-sized" with less radical dimensions than the Ektelon macro, but considerably larger than a standard frame.

In the midst of claims and counter-claims about the playing effectiveness of oversized racquets, one point has been clear since their introduction: if the oversized concept was to ever receive wide-scale acceptance in the sport, it would first have to be used successfully in professional competition, just as the Prince was made respectable by its use in pro tennis.

Now the critics of the oversized frame are going to have to take a careful



24% of the top 25 pros use oversized racquets. Ruben Gonzalez went to the finals with his oversized racquet in Arlington.

second look. At the first stop of the 1985-86 RMA men's tour in Stockton, California, six of the top 25 ranked players entered the competition with oversized racquets. More importantly, they played startlingly well; four of them reached the quarterfinals, two the semifinals, and one—Jerry Hilecher—took second.

In terms of sheer racquet size, the most visible of the six players is fifth-seeded Ruben Gonzalez. Using a newly-designed composite oversized frame called the Toron Graphite, made by Ektelon, Gonzalez reached the semi finals at the Stockton stop and the finals at the third stop in Arlington, VA. Both times he was stopped by eventual winner Marty Hogan.

The other five at the Stockton stop—Hilecher, Doug Cohen, John Egerman, Jim Cascio, and Sean Moskwa—all used Head's new mid-sized designs. In fact, the racquets were so new that all but Cohen's were undecorated prototypes. Cohen and Cascio both made the quarterfinals where they fell to Hogan and Gregg Peck, respectively.

The impressions of those players about the playing characteristics of their oversized racquets were surprisingly similar.

"I've been working with it for about two months now," said Gonzalez, "and I feel great hitting with it. With the CBK I got about the same speed, but with this racquet I can take an easier swing at the ball and move it much faster. My drive down the line is better, my backhand pinch is definitely better. The tension of the racquet really helps, because if you mis-hit just a little bit the racquet still carries the ball well. That seems to be the biggest difference."

"I've only been playing with it for about two weeks," said Hilecher just prior to his final match with Hogan. "It usually takes me a long time to adjust to anything, but I feel like I'm adjusted now. I'm hitting most shots the same way I did with my other racquet."

"What I really notice most is the larger sweet spot, particularly on my backhand where I tend to hit high on the racquet face anyway. When you hit the ball flat with the mid-size, the ball comes off real strong. I don't really swing full-speed with my backhand that often, but I notice I'm hitting more splats from that side which to me means I'm hitting with more power. Also, when I'm on the run and just pushing the ball, it really comes off the racquet much harder and more solid."

One of the genuine concerns about the new racquet frames at the time they were introduced was whether they would radically alter the game itself, specifically whether their increased hitting surface would translate into even more power in an already power-dominated game. Most now agree that any changes due to the new racquet size are subtle. Still, there does seem to be some increase in power, at least for some.

"I'm not sure if it gives me more power," observed Gonzalez, "but it does seem to give me a little more. It gives me more confidence to go out and swing away at the ball. You certainly get the impression of more power. This thing is strung at over 50lbs., and it sounds like a tennis racquet when you hit the ball—you feel like you have more power."

'At the first stop of the RMA men's tour six of the top 25 ranked players entered the competition with oversized racquets.'



Jerry Hilecher found a backhand with his mid-sized racquet

'You certainly get the impression of more power. This thing is strung at over 50lbs., and it sounds like a tennis racquet when you hit the ball.'

Hilecher's assessment was similar: "I'm really not sure about the power—it seems like it does hit harder. I've got a radar gun and I'm going to check it against my old racquet. But I noticed my passing shots against Gregg (Peck) were getting by him better than usual. I'm sure they had more speed. I also see it in my ceiling ball. I can't quite get the touch—I keep hitting it too hard. And like I said, the splat; you have to hit the ball hard to get it to splat, and I'm hitting a lot more splats with this racquet."

A number of the early users of the oversized Ektelon racquets complained they had a difficult time keeping the ball from rising, particularly on low kill-shot attempts. Hilecher noted the same problem with the mid-size:

"I definitely had a problem keeping the ball down until this tournament. I think the reason the ball rises with the oversize is that when you first use it, you have a tendency to overswing to compensate for the larger size, and that makes the ball rise. Once I relaxed and started letting the racquet do the work, that problem went away. The other thing is getting used to the weight; even though it's bigger it's quite a bit lighter than my older racquet so it's really easy to overswing."

One observer of the competition in Stockton, RMA commissioner Drew Stoddard, had another view of the rising-ball problem:

"I've played quite a bit with the oversized racquet, and the ball definitely tends to rise, particularly when you get tired. I don't know why it happens, but after watching the pros play with it, I believe that may be an advantage. I've felt for a long time that many great players lose because they skip so many balls late in the match. But these guys with the oversized racquets didn't do that; when they mis-hit it, the ball went up. It still wasn't a great shot, but it did keep them in the rally."

Another problem cited by the pros who competed with the oversize racquet in Stockton was adjusting to the increased length and width of the frame.

"The main area where I have trouble," says Gonzalez, "is digging the ball out of the rear corners. That isn't really a problem with the racquet, it's just a matter of me getting used to the increased size. The other thing I need to work on is play up front—pinches. I can't whip this racquet quite as fast for some reason, so I have to work on my timing up there. I find myself using a lot more down the line shots."

That so many pros showed up in Stockton with the new racquets was hardly a coincidence. Almost certainly the players who used them did so at the request of sponsors who are eager to gain a foothold in what they view as a vast new market. Still, pro players tend to be fanatics about not switching racquets. And each of the six players clearly felt their performance was at least as good as with their previous racquet, and a few even acknowledged modest improvement.

"When the oversized racquets first came out," observed Stoddard, "I think we all assumed that they would be successful only with beginning and medium club players. We knew that one of the pros would eventually use one, but the question was always 'Can anyone survive in the pros using one of these things?' These guys not only survived, they played very well. I don't know that anybody proved that an oversized racquet actually improves your game, but they certainly proved it doesn't hurt it."

After taking the oversized racquet into the finals of its tournament debut Hilecher concluded, "What people say about the racquet—the increased sweet spot, the larger size—the principles are all there. Now it's just a matter seeing if it's true. Obviously, I'm in the finals; I think that says a lot for the racquet." □

A black and white photograph of a racquetball and a racquet on a tiled floor. The racquetball is in the lower left, and the racquet is in the upper right, with its head and strings visible. The floor is made of square tiles.

National Racquetball Magazine's New Racquet Guide

Here they are! Twenty-two new racquets for 1986 from AMF Head, Diversified Products Company, Ektelon, Mega, Omega, Pre-Kennex, Spalding, Voil Sports, and Wilson. Some of these racquets are so new, they may not be immediately available to you, so call up the manufacturer for more information concerning a racquet you are curious about. A listing of their telephone numbers appears on page 30.

Also in our New Racquet Guide, there is a special report on the current composite racquet craze with

in-depth information on why these new racquets are so good and so expensive. It's good reading with excellent facts about the construction and performance of all types of racquets.

Right along side the pictures of the new racquets and the article about racquets is the results of our *Tell Us About Your Racquet* survey. Many of you will be surprised or, at least, your suspicions will be confirmed about *Who buys What and How Often*. Interesting stuff!



HIGH TECH PERFORMANCE WITHOUT THE SKY HIGH PRICES.

To some, performance outweighs prestige. To that, no-nonsense breed of player, Spalding offers a selection of innovative racquets that are unsurpassed in playability.

The New Comp Pro 235™ racquet is a prime example. Its state-of-the-art graphite composite construction features a fully legal oversize head for a dramatically larger sweetspot and an exceptionally maneuverable weight of only 235 grams!

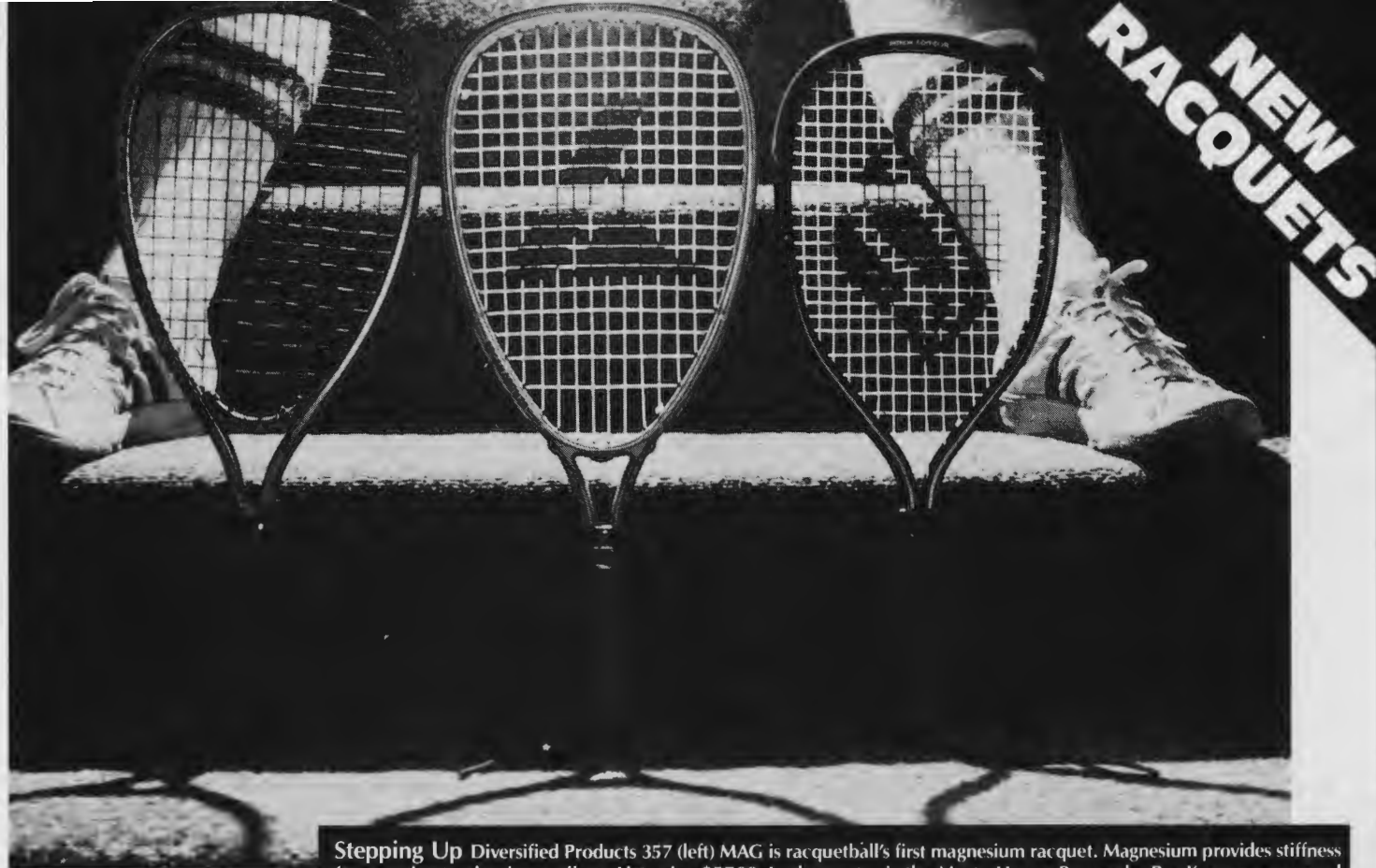
The New Spalding Intimidator® racquet is no less a

performer. Formed from an advanced aluminum alloy, its streamlined tubular configuration allows lightning quick racquet control. And the Intimidator's throatless wish-bone design produces increased power and control that you will be able to feel on your first kill.

Whether it be for the novice or the pro, only Spalding offers a full line of high quality racquets with the looks, the feel and all the performance features you're looking for.

Ask to try a Spalding demo today!





Stepping Up Diversified Products 357 (left) MAG is racquetball's first magnesium racquet. Magnesium provides stiffness far superior to aluminum alloys. List price \$57.00. In the center is the Marty Hogan Bronze by Pro-Kennex composed of 60% graphite and 40% fiberglass. Designed for those who want to step-up to the performance of graphite. List price \$55.00. Ektelon's Comp Jr. is an excellent first step for your young racquetball player. 230 grams light with a special small grip. Aluminum. List Price \$24.95.

Special Report: The Composite Craze

Premium-priced composite racquets have taken over the racquetball market: Are they worth the price?

There was a time when racquetball was touted as "the sport of the masses" because it could be played so inexpensively; all you needed was a ball and racquet, and you could get both for about the price of a good meal at a good restaurant.

Unfortunately, things are no longer quite that simple. An active tournament player today can easily carry \$500 worth of racquets in his designer gym bag, only to find at the next tournament that his equipment is embarrassingly outdated.

In the last 15 years the number of racquets available to the average player has mushroomed from 2 to nearly 100, with retail prices that now range from \$18 to \$200. Buying a racquet today can be a terribly frustrating and costly experience, particularly for the new player. So little good information is available about racquet design and performance that most players are never able to adequately answer for themselves the three big questions: "Is there really a difference in the way racquets play?"; "Why are some so much more expensive than others?"; and, "Will a more expensive racquet really help my game?"

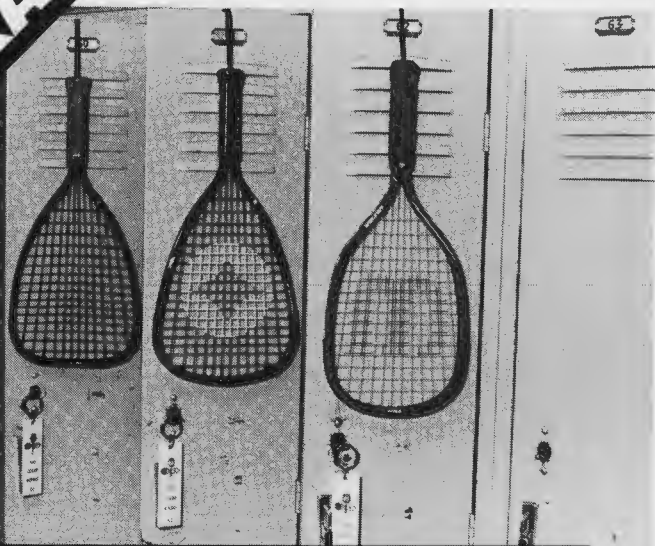
Until recently racquet buyers had four variables to consider: performance, appearance, durability, and price. In June of 1984 Ektelon added yet another variable by introducing a line of "macro" or oversized racquets with much larger hitting surfaces than standard frames. Head has since followed suit with their line of "mid-size" designs. No doubt additional "developments" are even lurking in the wings.

In today's "sport of the masses" it clearly helps to have a college education and a strong balance sheet. (Volvos are optional.)

A Little History

The evolution from the original sawed-off tennis racquet to today's high-tech wonders began when Bud Muehleisen won the 1969 IRA Nationals with a Dayton steel racquet, a design that used steel strings and was quickly banned. The following year Muehleisen repeated the victory with a silver aluminum frame that had been designed and built for him by Bud Held, the founder of Ektelon. The "Bud Muehleisen" quickly became the standard within the sport—the extruded

NEW RACQUETS



Hanging Tough Ultra tough Kevlar is used in Wilson's Ultra racquet (right) Graphite and Kevlar construction with added Boron fibers for maximum strength and stiffness. 235 grams. List price \$110.00. Spalding's Comp Pro 235 (center) weighs in at 235 grams with an 80% graphite, 20% fiberglass, hand-laid, uni-directional, continuous fiber frame. Intermediate to advanced play. List price \$69.95. On the left is Voit Sports XTE 3000 injection molded graphite racquet made for durability and consistent performance. 245 grams. One year limited warranty. List price \$27.00.

The Composite Craze . . .

aluminum frame was strong, light, and relatively easy to produce. A series of similar designs followed.

In 1971, Charlie Brumfield competed in the Nationals with another new racquet design, an injection-molded plastic racquet produced by Bud Leach. The "Swinger" was the first of many molded racquets that put Leach Industries in the forefront of racquet production in the mid 1970's. Among the more famous molded racquets from Leach was the white "Little Bandido" that was used by Marty Hogan during his furious charge to the top in the pro game.

For the next eight years, most of the racquets that were introduced were based on one of the two designs. The industry divided into two camps: Ektelon promoted aluminum because of its durability and lack of vibration; Leach touted plastic for its flexibility, resistance to deformation, and low price. Both groups prospered, but feverishly searched for some new material that would combine the best characteristics of the two prevailing designs.

In the spring of 1979, Ektelon introduced the "Composite 250G", a racquet which rewrote the book on racquet design. The sleek black frame was the brainchild of Ray Mortvedt, Ektelon's newly acquired Director of Engineering and a specialist in graphite and composite construction. Borrowing on his experience in the aircraft industry, Mortvedt created a hand-laid continuous-fiber graphite/fiberglass frame that was incredibly strong, moderately flexible, and very light—250 grams. The "250G" was an immediate sensation and rapidly became the racquet of choice for serious tournament players.

Leach followed soon after with the "Marty Hogan Graphite 240", a racquet which was radically stiff, and at 240 grams was by far the lightest that had ever been produced.

A New Generation Of Bright Ideas On the far left is Ektelon's Optima Graphite. Continuous graphite structural layers, solid graphite core. Stiff and 240 grams light. List price \$130.00. The Ektelon Aris Graphite (second from left) has a Kevlar core plus continuous graphite structural layers and a new larger frame design. 240 grams. List price \$175.00. Diversified Products Graphite USA (second from right) is constructed of 100% graphite for an extra firm frame, special graphite strings. List price \$130.00. On the right is D.P.'s Graphite 10K racquets constructed of a graphite and fiberglass wrap. It weighs in at 245 grams. List price \$80.00.



In the years since, numerous racquet manufacturers have worked to refine their own versions of the original composite design. Long strides in the techniques of handling some of the most exotic materials known to man have resulted in such esoteric models as the Ektelon "CBK" and the DP "Boron/Graphite". While there has been some experimentation with materials such as steel, wood, fiberglass, titanium, etc., and most companies continue to produce some aluminum and plastic frames, the racquet market today is virtually dominated by the hand-laid composite.

Composite racquets have solved many of the problems of racquet design, but they have also created a new dilemma for the potential buyer—expense. The average retail price of today's most popular models is around \$150, or nearly ten times the cost of a low end plastic type. Why have the prices gone up so fast?

The Human Factor

The answer, of course, lies in the term "hand-laid". The "hand" is attached to a human, and manual labor is expensive.

The process of producing both aluminum and plastic racquets is quite simple. Forming an aluminum frame involves bending a single piece of extruded tubing around a pattern, riveting a throat-piece, drilling holes, attaching the handle, and stringing the frame. Because the metal is basically pliable, the process is relatively easy. Plastic racquets are even easier: a molten material is injected by machine into a "dye", the material is cooled, and the frame and handle are complete in a single step. Both processes can be highly automated and are capable of producing frames with astonishing speed—in the case of plastic, one every 45 seconds.

Composite frames, however, are a different story. The materials used in their construction—graphite, boron, Kevlar, etc.—are not only expensive, but their tremendous tensile strength and highly volatile nature require that every step of the manufacturing process be performed by hand. One prominent manufacturer estimates that hand-laid composites cost 3 to 15 times as much as aluminum frames in materials, and 10 to 20 times as much in labor.

Continued to page 30

The Space-Age Ingredients

Boron:

Current price - \$200/lb.
Tensile strength - 500,000psi
(one of the strongest materials known).
Tensile modulus* - 58,000,000psi
(nearly twice that of steel).
Density is slightly less than aluminum.

Graphite (Carbon):

Current price - \$50/lb.
Tensile modulus* - 50,000,000psi+
Half the weight of aluminum.
Twice the strength of steel.
The 60-by-15 foot payload-

bay doors on the space-shuttle Columbia are constructed entirely of graphite.

Kevlar:

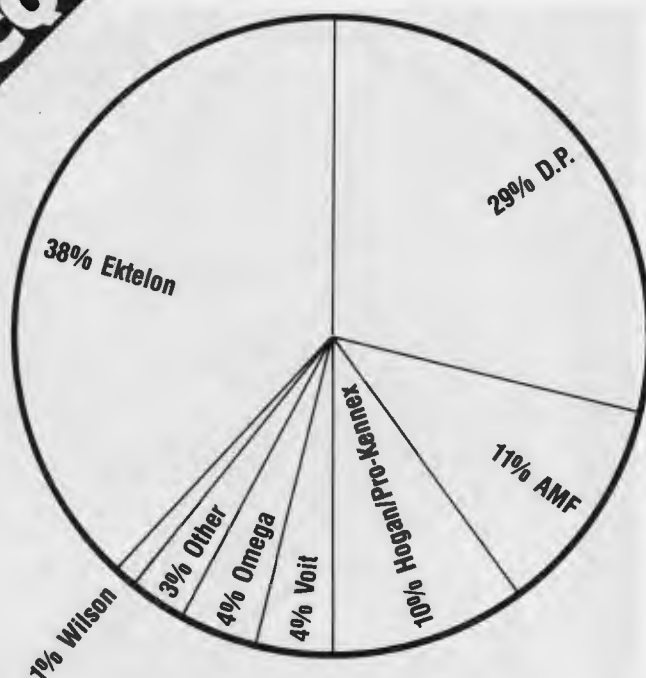
Current price - \$300/lb.
Tensile strength - equal to that of boron, but with only half the weight.
Kevlar is so strong that it is used to make bullet-proof vests, and is the primary material in the new military helmets that are capable of stopping a high-speed .30 caliber bullet fired from a distance of 24 inches.

*Modulus is the term for stiffness.



Is Bigger Better? At the top is Ektelon's Macro Toron Graphite. 50% more hitting surface than a standard racquet on an ultra thin frame of continuous graphite layers with a Kevlar core. 245 grams. List price \$150.00. Second from top is Mega Products International's new entry onto the oversized market with their Equalizer GZ 1000. Constructed of Graphite with a graphite core and a 50% larger hitting surface. 245 grams. List price N/A. AMF Head's Mid-sized "top-of-the-line" Radial racquet (3rd from top) has a 27% larger hitting surface than regular racquets but with the same length as regular racquets. Graphite, boron, kevlar and fiberglass construction. Special racquet case. List price \$110.00. Pictured at the bottom of the photo is AMF Head's Spectrum mid-sized racquet with a 27% larger hitting surface, graphite and kevlar construction and special racquet case. List price \$95.00.

NEW RACQUETS



Question #5: What is the name of the firm that manufactures your racquet?

Racquet Survey Results

Question #1: How often do you play racquetball? 76% *play three or more times a week*—18% *play two times a week*, and 6% *play one time a week or less*.

Question #2: What is your playing level? 47% *said they were intermediate players*, 31% *were advanced players*, 16% *were open players*, 4% *were beginners*, 2% *were professional players*.

Question #3: How many racquets do you own? 40% *own two racquets*, 33% *own three racquets*, 16% *own four or more racquets* and 11% *own one racquet*.

Question #4: What kind of racquet do you usually play with? 72% *Graphite*, 16% *Aluminum*, 5% *Fiberglass*, 2% *Steel* and 5% *Other*.

Question #6: Have you restrung your racquet in the past 12 months? 56% *have restrung their racquets in the last year*.

Question #7: How many racquetball racquets did you buy in the last 12 months? 43% *purchased one racquet last year*, 26% *purchased two racquets*, 10% *purchased three racquets* and 21% *did not buy a racquet last year*.

Question #8: What was the cost of the last racquet you bought? 30% *paid \$61 to \$100*, 30% *paid \$101 to \$150*, 20% *paid \$41 to \$60*, 11% *paid \$151 or more*, 7% *paid \$21-40* and 2% *paid \$20 or less*.

Oversized Delights AMF Head's mid-sized Laser (far left) has a graphite reinforced throat, 27% more hitting area than a standard racquet face. Designed for intermediate to advanced players. List price \$70.00. AMF Head's new aluminum extruded mid-sized Sprint (second from left) offers the choice of the new size for the advancing player. List price \$36.00. Ektelon's Macro Victra racquet is designed of aluminum alloy for oversized performance for the recreational player. 255 grams. List price \$34.95. Omega's new Big Shot (far right) weighs in at a light 245 grams and features Omega's exclusive Mad Raq stringing for added power and control plus a racquet face with 50% more hitting area than a standard racquet. Constructed of tubular extruded aluminum with a limited one year warranty. List price \$54.00.



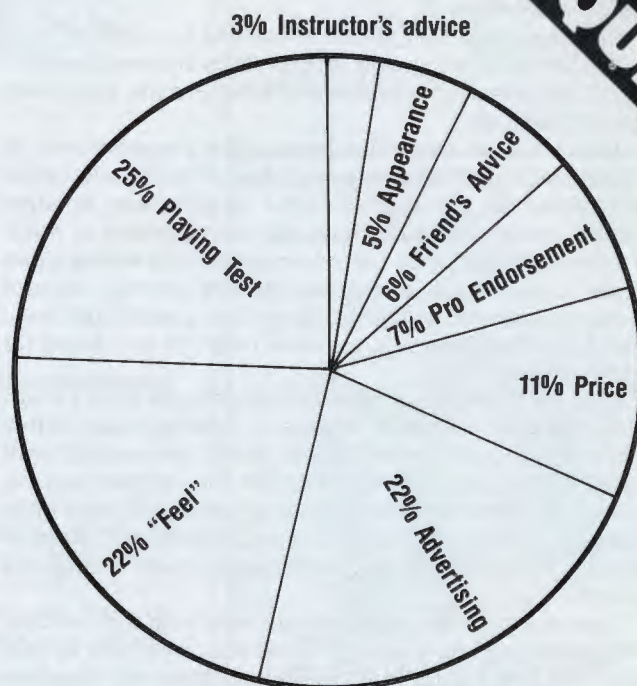
Question #10: What do you like most about the racquet you're using now? 22% liked their racquet's Control, 20% Power, 18% Weight, 15% Balance, 14% Grip, 7% "Sweet Spot", 2% Appearance and 2% liked Other particulars. (Average of 1st, 2nd and 3rd preferences)

Question #11: Where did you purchase your last racquetball racquet? 33% bought their last racquet at their local club, 29% at a sporting goods store, 18% through mail order, 9% at a discount store, 2% at their YMCA/JCC and 9% from other sources.

Question #12: What do you dislike about the racquet you're now using? 21% disliked the Grip of their racquet, 7% Power, 6% "Sweet Spot", 5% Balance, 4% Appearance, 3% Control, 1% Weight, 45% had no dislikes about their racquet; and 8% Other.

Question #13: Are you male or female? 77% male and 23% female.

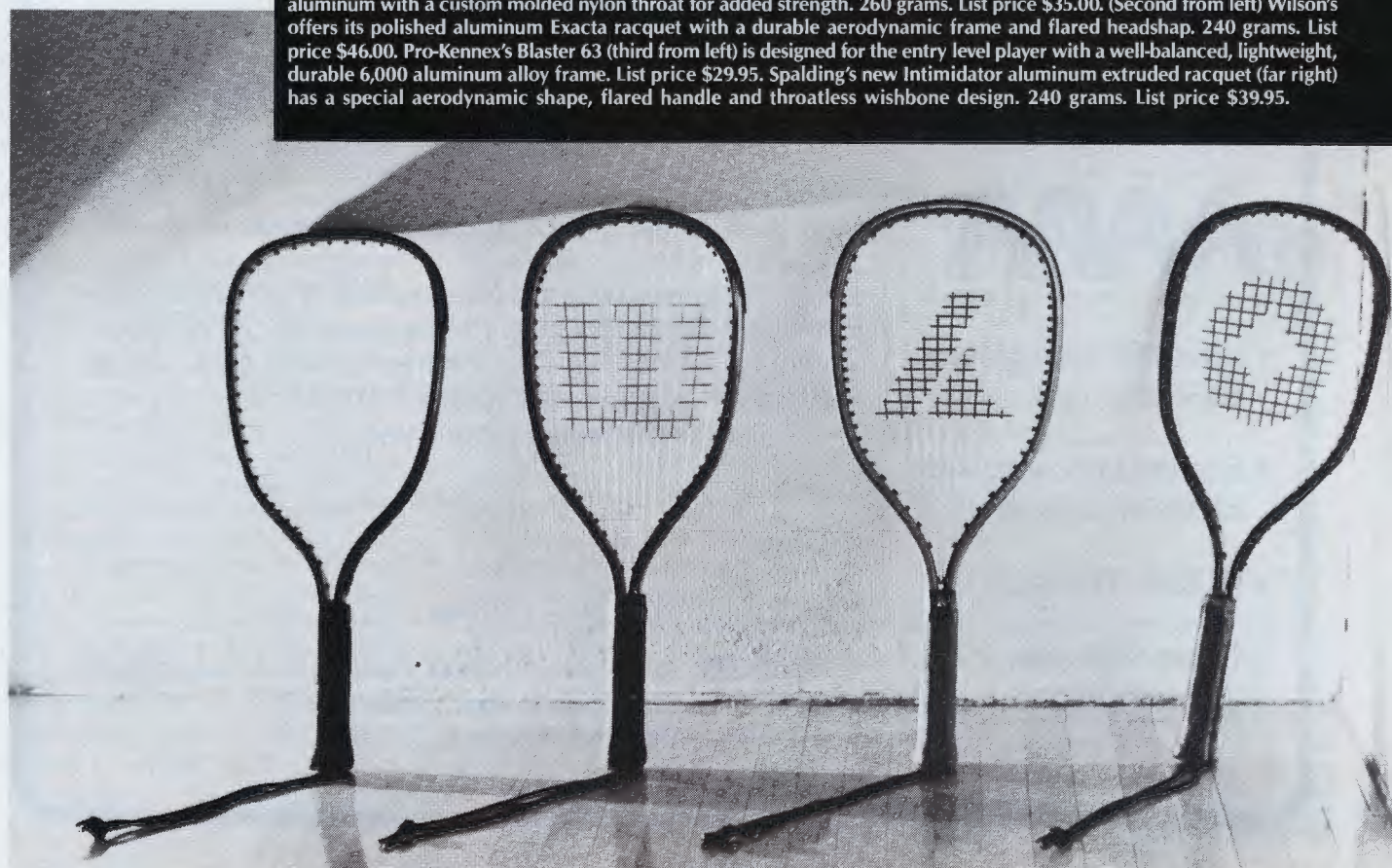
Question #14: What is your age? 41% are 25-35 years of age, 25% are 35-44, 13% are under 18, 12% are 45-54 and 9% are 18-24. □



(Average of 1st, 2nd and 3rd preferences)

Question #9: What will most likely influence your next racquet buying decision?

New Metal Racquets (Far left) D.P.'s Challenger II for the beginner and intermediate player is made of extruded aluminum with a custom molded nylon throat for added strength. 260 grams. List price \$35.00. (Second from left) Wilson's offers its polished aluminum Exacta racquet with a durable aerodynamic frame and flared headshap. 240 grams. List price \$46.00. Pro-Kennex's Blaster 63 (third from left) is designed for the entry level player with a well-balanced, lightweight, durable 6,000 aluminum alloy frame. List price \$29.95. Spalding's new Intimidator aluminum extruded racquet (far right) has a special aerodynamic shape, flared handle and throatless wishbone design. 240 grams. List price \$39.95.



The Composite Craze . . .

Continued from page 27

Describing the actual process of building a composite frame is difficult, both because the process varies between manufacturers, and because companies tend to be secretive about their specific methods.

They are called composites because they are constructed of a combination of materials (see sidebar). Continuous rolls of these materials are supplied to the manufacturer in either parallel, woven, or braided form, the most common of which is a woven "fabric". The frame is made by hand-rolling a particular combination of fabrics. Patterns are cut, oriented properly, saturated with resin, placed into a mold, and cured with heat. This process alone takes from 2½ to 5 hours for each frame.

After the frame has cured and cooled, it is still in very rough form and goes through a number of cleaning stages before the holes are drilled. (Drilling was one of the most difficult obstacles during the development of the original process; special machines had to be designed to slowly drill single holes through the extremely tough composite materials.) Handles are then affixed, frames are hand painted, hand strung, and gripped.

There are, of course, many variations in both the construction process and basic design. When done well, they all produce very light racquets with variable stiffness and incredible strength. How strong are they? Paul Roy of Aldila Inc., one of the first companies to manufacture graphite tennis racquets explains:

"We have this machine that shoots out balls at 100 miles per hour. A wooden racquet fatigues after it hits 5,000 balls. A metal racquet is good for up to 20,000. With the graphite

racquets we stopped testing after 150,000 shots. There wasn't the slightest sign of degradation?"

The Big Question

That they cost a manufacturer a great deal to produce is hardly a good enough reason for the average player to shell out big bucks for the pleasure of owning a hand-laid composite. Just because a Rolls Royce is hand made doesn't mean it will perform better than any other car—it's just made by hand. So, will a \$150 racquet make a difference in your game? By miles, no. Over the long run, probably yes.

For many years a debate raged among intermediate and advanced players about the characteristics of the ideal racquet-ball racquet. The answer to that has now been pretty well determined by the silent but unmistakable preferences of the everyday player who votes daily with his purchasing dollar: the ideal racquet is very light (235-245 grams), very stiff (nearly rigid), has no vibration, and is extremely durable. With the technology currently available, only a hand-laid composite racquet can satisfy those four requirements.

In fact, when trying to justify the purchase price of a premium racquet one need only look at the durability factor. It is not unusual to see club players today who are still using composite racquets they purchased five years ago. Regardless of their playing characteristics, it can be easy to justify the expense on that basis alone. □

Suppliers: AMF Head Racquets 609-799-9000 • D.P. Industries 205-749-9001 • Ektelon 619-560-0066 • Mega Racquets 303-986-0100 • Omega Racquets 913-888-0220 • Pro-Kennex (Marty Hogan Racquetball) 800-854-1908 • Spalding 413-536-1200 • Voit Sports 714-852-0255 • Wilson Sporting Goods 312-456-6100.

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OFF COURT FITNESS

By Jean Sauser



Out-Takes

Let's take a break from fitness. Do you ever wonder what goes on behind the scenes here at *National Racquetball*? Some funny things happen.

Asking The Champs

One of my first jobs here at National Racquetball was to interview Hogan and Yellen monthly for "Ask The Champ" and "Hogan's Way". I would call them with the questions our readers would send, take their answers over the phone and type up the columns. It was a job I thought would be drudgery, but it soon became my favorite part of the month when I discovered that both players have good senses of humor.

One reader, who had lost a close match to an inferior player while on vacation, asked Hogan what he would have done. Hogan said, "What the h--- are you doing playing racquetball on your vacation, anyway? I *never* ever play racquetball on my vacation. Tell this guy, he deserves to lose." From there, Hogan went on and answered the question sincerely and effortlessly.

Another time, I was casually joking around with Marty on the phone before getting to the business at hand.

"Before we get to the reader's questions today, I have a question for you," I said to Marty, setting him up. "Why have you never posed for Playgirl?"

"They sent me a letter once," Hogan informed me. "Ten thousand dollars to pose nude. But as my wife will tell you, the Champ is worth more than that!"

Mike Yellen had his share of funny lines that never reached print. Last winter, after an early round loss in one of the men's pro stops, I reached him by phone and said, "Well, 'Champ', how ya doin'?" To which Yellen replied, "Sorry, wrong number." We laughed.

Then, I read him the first question

from a reader who wanted advice on how to improve his weak backhand.

"He's asking Me?" Yellen laughed. "Tell him I don't know, and when he finds out, ask him to give me a lesson."

Sick Of Miss America

After Chuck Leve's interview with Miss America for our June issue, he left us behind to play racquetball for the rest of the afternoon. The next day, I woke up sick in bed with a terrible cold. It was Leve who answered the phone that morning when I called in sick.

"So, Miss America is an animal, huh?" Leve teased me.

"She is physically fit, that's for sure," I told him laughing. "In fact, we played for over two hours and every minute my cold got worse."

"Sauser, let's face facts," Leve continued. "All of this health-and-fitness take-care-of-yourself stuff has turned you into a wimp!"

Dead Weight

When we set out to reduce Terry Marker in the Fitness Section last January, I was a nervous wreck. I was afraid that he wouldn't adhere to his program to get the results we had promised our readers. In a humorous attempt to put my fears to rest, our fitness consultant, Jacque Hooper told me, "Well, if this doesn't work, we'll just give him some of those heavy-duty caffeinated Lose-Weight-Fast pills." I laughed and added, "Yeah, nobody can get down on us if he dies."

Far from being put downs, these inside stories and nicknames were our temporary terms of endearment as well as sources of comic relief from long days and deadline pressures stemming from a very busy sport that is alive and well in '85. There was never a dull moment, that's for sure. 1986 is looking better still! □

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ASHAWAY
RACKET STRINGS

MANUFACTURED
IN THE U.S.A.

IN THE CRACKS

By Tom Grobmisi

Slightly off-center humor by racquetball's resident out-patient.

Little People And Racquetball

Hi there, little people. This one's for you. In racquetball, we really like little people! I don't have to tell you what sports like basketball and football think of little guys. And a lot of other sports that pretend to like little people (like volleyball) are really insincere about it when you get right down to it.

Just listen to the players and fans when little people play those other sports. In racquetball, you never hear people say, "Yeah, you won, but you just beat a little guy." Nor do we go around gaffing at people when they lose to a shrimp.

And racquetball doesn't care *why* you're little. That's *your* business. What if it's because you just grew that way, or your mom and dad were itty-bitsy. Or you smoked or something. Or you're missing parts. Everyone who wins the rally gets the point in racquetball no matter how silly he looks.

Society is evolving, and in many ways, the future does not look too big for our impy friends. You see, we now have to be careful who we make fun of, and the list has gotten very, very small (no pun intended). We no longer can go around making fun of people's race, religion or nationality, and even jokes about fat wives, mean mother-in-laws, and stupid women in general have become no-no's. That doesn't leave people much to make fun of except for you stunted wimps.

But in the sport of racquetball, squashers (little folks) are treated equally and always will be. Even if you have to stand on a chair to kiss the pretty lady, you'll get your trophy and your t-shirt if you win.

Personally, I'm glad to see you little people playing. You're much easier to screen and hinder and I love hitting kill shots over your head. I love to hear the patter of your little feet and watch you scurry around the court. And if you don't think this article is intended for you, just remember—everybody's little someplace! □

Editor's note: We asked Tom to come up with a little something for a small space we had left over in this issue but he really came up short.

If you're going to play racquetball, you better have good hand and foot coordination.



If you're at all interested in racquetball, you probably know about us. Foot-Joy.

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Working Out At Work

Wouldn't it be great if you could 'get fit' instead of 'get fat' at work? One company found out how to do it.

by Jean Sauser

I imagine the Perfect Company Job. Good working conditions, good friends, day-care for children and a professionally run fitness center with health-care incentives to use it. Sounds like wishful thinking, doesn't it? But there is one company in the U.S. that has all of that and more—Fel Pro.

David Weinberg, Fel Pro's Vice President who gave *National Racquetball* the tour through Fel Pro, talked about his involvement with fitness.

"I was always working out at home," says Weinberg of his early days in business. "But with work and family, it was basically, start your workout at 10 p.m. at night. That was a killer. So when more and more information became available on fitness and the benefits of fitness for company employees, it made sense to me and I like the convenience factor."

It was in 1979 that Fel Pro's seven member committee decided that it was time to offer a total fitness program to their employees. So they built a fitness center within the company. It made a welcome addition to the already existent health, recreation and employee benefits programs that make Fel Pro one of the best places to work and play in America today.

The company, located in Skokie, IL., manufactures gaskets for engines as well as produces a chemical products line of sealants, adhesives, lubricants, and epoxy resins. It's 1700 employees are, for the most part, happy, healthy, productive, and seemingly always engaged in some form of health/fitness program, sports activity, or personal improvement program at the company when they aren't working for the company.

"This week's after work adventure is the maintenance division challenging the rubber division to a game of volleyball," explains one of the fitness center staff. "A lot of the employees play volleyball on the loading docks after work. There's always a volleyball tournament in the works here."

For racquetballers Craig Wells, Larry Carlson, Nick Marabelli, Dave Gran,



Larry Read helps out as the part-time fitness instructor at Fel-Pro where he is a supervisor in the chemical products lab

and Bob DeCore, working at Fel Pro and working out at Fel Pro is a company benefit they really like.

"Fel Pro's fitness program is super," says Wells. "It's so convenient to work out during my working day. Also, the

racquetball club we play at is two blocks away. Everything we need for racquetball and fitness is right here."

As for Vice President Weinberg, he says that he acquired his taste for health and fitness at the University of Arizona.

'The program helped me realize that fat, not body weight was the enemy. I feel quicker on the court, I hit the ball a little harder these days, and I want to beat everyone in sight!'

where he played a lot of racquetball. Upon graduation from college and going into the family business of Fel Pro, Weinberg took his healthy attitudes with him. When the fitness boom hit in the late seventies, a light went on in Weinberg's head. Work and working out—it sounded like a good idea.

Fel Pro did it right. They built a fitness center under the direction of exercise physiologist Sharon Chausow, and let her implement professionally supervised, personalized fitness programs to *all* employees who wished to participate.

"The one thing we (the owners) learned clearly," emphasizes Weinberg, "is that there are two ways to do a fitness facility. One is off-the-cuff. Put a lot of barbells in a room and then allow your employees to go in unsupervised and wreck themselves. Insurance companies aren't too fond of that. The other is the decision we made, to make the center something that was professionally monitored. We decided to do our own fitness testing and give personalized fitness prescriptions instead."

"In fact, Sharon told us she wouldn't work for us unless that was the plan," remembers Weinberg. "We agreed with her. She bought all the equipment, set up the entire program and we put out the word at our annual Christmas meeting in 1981."

The program grew rapidly. That's when company racquetballers, Wells, Mirabelli, Carlson, Gran, and DeCore got involved. Already playing racquetball down the street and maintaining some level of fitness from home workouts they decided that a professionally supervised fitness program was at least a logical next step.

"I got into it right at the beginning," says Wells. "I feel better than ever. Basically, I do a lot of weight training. It's helped my game, my health and my appearance. It's a super program."

"I learned a lot about what good fitness goals are," adds Gran. "I used to think that if I lost weight, everything else would fall in line. The program helped me realize that fat, not body weight was the enemy. In fact, I only lost five pounds in the program, but I've gained muscle. I feel quicker on the court, I hit the ball a little harder these days, and I want to beat everyone in sight!"

Besides encouraging the racquetballers in extra-curricular activities outside of work at Fel Pro, the company built and maintains a recreational facility for employee use that's out in the country, some 40 miles from the factory, pro-

'Working at Fel Pro is indeed a racquetball player's dream.'



Fel-Pro has numerous activities for their employees. At the top is Dan Czernik, a product engineer and avid runner. In the center from left to right are Dave Gran, Nick Marabelli, Larry Carlson and Craig Wells who all know that the fitness program has helped their racquetball games. Bottom, fitness testing is first at Fel-Pro.

viding the "great escape".

"It's called *Triple R*," says Weinberg. "It's part of an overall philosophy we have here at Fel Pro. *Triple R* stands for rest, relaxation, and recreation. It's 250 acres of land, composed of a forest preserve and Olympic size pool. It has pavilions for picnics as well as facilities for basketball, volleyball, etc. Everyone gets out there at least once a year, for our company picnic. But it's open all year 'round to all of our employees."

Other programs offered at *Triple R* are a summer day camp for kids. In the winter, *Triple R* becomes a cross-country ski location. And daily, at the factory location, day care is provided for the children of all the employees.

The employee benefits at Fel Pro are too numerous to mention here, but the owners of Fel Pro are adamant about its philosophy concerning health, fitness, recreation, and how it contributes to a better employment situation for all concerned.

Efforts to make employees happier, healthier and more productive do not stop at fitness centers, sporting events, and recreational facilities, however. The employee cafeteria encourages a proper diet for everyone by offering a fitness special of the day.

"Our exercise technologists set up meeting times for nutrition counseling," says Weinberg. "Then the cafeteria coordinates by labeling the food for the employees. We tell them how many calories certain items have, their fat content, etc. We encourage them to eat with us versus going out."

Weinberg explains that the executive board is very happy about the numbers of employees enrolled in the various health, recreation, and fitness programs at Fel Pro.

"We don't try to force anyone into anything," he says. "We just offer them a wide variety of activities to get involved in. There are many routes to overall health and fitness here at Fel Pro."

Currently, there are a little over 400 people enrolled in the fitness center alone. An equal group use *Triple R* and at any given time, all of the employees get involved with something provided by the company to make them happier, healthier human beings.

"I've talked with many of the fitness center participants personally," says Weinberg getting back to his enthusiasm for the fitness program. "They say that their energy levels have increased tremendously. The racquetball players tell me that their games are better now that they've learned to condition properly for their sport."

Working at Fel Pro is indeed a racquetball player's dream, but interested parties need not apply. The turnover rate is so low that last year the job application files had to be purged.

"I can't tell you that our high employee retention rate is because of fitness or racquetball alone," says Weinberg. "It's because of the total picture."

With a absentee rate that is far below the norm and a productivity rate that is above the norm, it's obvious that working out at work as well as staying healthy on and around the job has created a win/win situation between the employees and owners of Fel Pro. □

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Boy! What A Girl!

Marci Drexler—From Baseball Belle to Racquetball Pro

by Jean Sauser

What do Tatum O'Neal and Marci Drexler have in common? Little League baseball as part of their professional backrounds. In the movie *Bad News Bears*, O'Neal played the female pitching star of an otherwise all boys Little League baseball team. In real life, Marci Drexler was one of the stars of a boys' Little League baseball team, that is, until she left baseball at age 16 to pursue a career in racquetball.

"My first experiences as an athlete involved playing Little League baseball from the time I was 12 until I was 16," says Drexler of her first competitive sport. "I got started in baseball when one of our neighbors who was coaching an all boys Little League team called the Astros, recognized my athletic ability and asked me to join the team."

Join the team she did, with full support of both parents who attended her games as well as her practices.

"They liked the fact that I was a baseball player a lot," says Drexler. The other parents (of the boys), didn't mind that there was a girl on the team until I started to get better and move up in the league. Then the mothers of some of the boys got mad because they saw it as me taking their sons' places."

As for the boys on her baseball team, Drexler explains that again, there was no problem until her real talent started to come out and she began to take certain positions on the field.

It was during her Little League years that her father suggested a game of racquetball. She immediately fell in love with the sport and so her dad arranged

for lessons. Playing both baseball and racquetball during her high school years and excelling at both, Drexler found herself faced with a difficult decision.

"I did want to eventually become a professional baseball player. But, I knew that it was going to be a hassle. What kept my hopes alive was a story I'd read about a girl who petitioned to play high school football. Finally, I decided that I didn't need to put up with what would inevitably be the legal hassle of being a female in men's baseball, so I decided to quit baseball. Besides, it was already conflicting with my amateur racquetball tournament schedule."

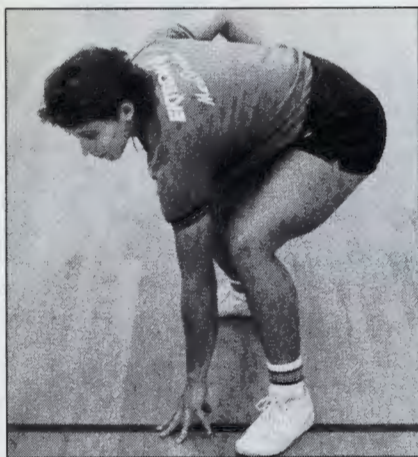
Dedicating herself to racquetball full time earned her a spot as a top ranking amateur by the time she reached her sixteenth birthday. She won the AARA Junior Nationals (age 18 yrs. and under). Upon starting to play pro events consistently beginning with the 1984-85 season, 20-year-old Drexler tore through enough pro tour veterans to finish the season with a number five ranking. She says it's her no nonsense attitude and total dedication to training as well as playing racquetball full time that catapulted her to the top of women's professional racquetball.

"I had a good season last season because that's when I started working out and eating right," says Drexler. "Before then, I used to just play and so I got tired all the time in tournaments. In fact, that was my main reason for losing, but back then, I didn't know it. Then I ran in to Theresa Nunn while playing tournaments here in Los Angeles. After narrowly beating her in one women's open event, she overheard me complaining that my stomach hurt to my friends in the hallway outside our court after the match. You see, we had made some milk shakes the night before with tons of ice cream, cookies and candy. I wasn't feeling too well, needless

'As for the boys on her baseball team, there was no problem until she began to take certain positions on the field.'



Marci Drexler, second from right on the bottom row, in her Little League gear.



To improve on her innate quickness and agility, Marci does court sprints

to say. Theresa was going through a fitness instructor certification program at the time and was shocked that I could eat so much junk food and still play so well. Any how, she started up a conversation with me about my training habits and my diet."

'I used to be on a diet that consisted of one word, anything!'

Nowadays, Drexler is training with free weights, executing court sprints on a regular basis, jumping rope for 15 minutes every day, and swimming on a

regular basis.

"Swimming gives me a good aerobic workout," she explains. "I tried running, but my knees began to hurt. With swimming, I don't have to worry about that because it's exercise that is joint protective."

On the nutrition side of things, Drexler has cleaned up her act, following a high energy diet that consists mainly of complex carbohydrates, balanced protein and limited fat.

"I used to be on a diet that consisted of one word, anything!" she laughs. "But nowadays it's no junk food, only high energy food. However, I still eat ice cream once a month."

Marci Drexler intends to stay in shape her whole life, but in the near future, her personal, as well as professional goals include unseating Lynn Adams from the number one spot on the pro tour. Admitting that she has a healthy respect for Adams on and off the court, she goes on to say that it doesn't mean that she intends to let Lynn psyche her out in future matches.

"I feel like I can eventually beat Lynn Adams," she states. "Right now, she's definitely got it over me mentally."

As one of the bright new talents on the Women's Pro Tour, it will be interesting to see some Drexler-Adams finals in future years. If Marci Drexler has anything to say about it, that's all we'll see. □

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Free-weight training builds the strength Marci needs to be on top in racquetball.

EXTRA

Important industry news that you should know about in the world of racquetball.



Dave Peck earns another first

Dave Peck Hit With Suspension/Fine

Former national champion Dave Peck became the first player to be penalized for court behavior under the new RMA Code of Conduct. Peck was fined and suspended for an incident which occurred during a round-of-16 match with Cliff Swain at the Arlington pro stop on October 3rd.

Peck was fined \$375 and suspended

for the month of December, preventing him from competing in the Gold River Winter Classic in Sacramento, California. The delayed suspension was given to allow Peck time to appeal the decision should he decide to do so, according to RMA Tour Commissioner, Drew Stoddard. □

Australian Racquetball Federation Formed

The Australian Championships were officially the first organized under the auspices of the Federation of Australian Racquetball. Their Federation planning has resulted because of the hard work of Michael Darcy, Richard Swindail, Peter Virgona and Martin Gailbreath. The sport welcomes the Federation as the organization and development body to the sport for Australia.

For more information contact: G.P.O., Box 2231T, Melbourne, Victoria 3001. □

Club Managers Award Scholarships and Grants

The Club Manager Association of America awarded nearly \$40,000 to fifteen colleges and twelve students on September 9th in Bethesda, MD. The awards are designed to aid students who have shown an express interest in the club management profession and to assist schools with their club management curricula.

Schools receiving awards will typically use them for courses involving the club management profession. In past

years, they have purchased books, teaching aids, training films and other audio/visual equipment. They have also used them to offset expenses of visiting lecturers. Each applying school must have an active CMMA student chapter.

The more than 3,500 members of CMAA are the managers of the nation's finest golf and country clubs, yacht clubs, tennis clubs, university and faculty clubs, city clubs, athletic clubs, military clubs, and fraternal clubs. □

Sports Computing Corp Signs International Contract

The Sports Computing Corporation, known for its ARHS rating system for the AARA, announced it has reached an agreement with an Ontario firm to market its standard computerized method for objectively measuring the performance of racquetball players in Canada. The exclusive agreement was signed by Pat McGlone, president of Sports Computing Corp., and Ian Barnes, president, Sport Data, Inc., an Ontario corporation. The program will be called Canadian Racquets Handicap System.

The American Racquetball Handicap System here in the U.S. and the Canadian Racquets Handicap System in Canada are in a position to become a catalyst for the sport in the same way golf had benefited from handicaps, stated McGlone.

For more information about the Sports Computing Corporation and the American Racquetball Handicap System, contact: Sports Computing Corp., 10237 Yellow Circle Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55343, 612-333-6621. □



Paul Peterson (left) and Pat McGlone (right) of Sports Computing Corporation, present Canadian Ian Barnes of Sports Data, Inc. with ARHS T-shirt after their companies' joint agreement

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1985-86 RMA MEN'S PRO RACQUETBALL TOUR

MASTER SEASON SCHEDULE

Aug. 24-Sept. 2, 1985

\$15,000 Open

West Lane Racquet Club
Stockton, CA

Winner: Marty Hogan
2nd: Jerry Hilecher

Sept. 18-22

\$15,000 Open

Davison Racquetball Open
Davison, MI

Winner: Bret Harnett
2nd: Gerry Price

Oct. 2-6, 1985

\$15,000 Open

Crystal Racquet & Health Club
Arlington, VA

Winner: Marty Hogan
2nd: Ruben Gonzalez

Oct. 16-20, 1985

\$15,000 Open

D'Lites Pro Racquetball Classic
Omaha, NE
Winners: TBA

Nov. 5-10

\$15,000 Open

MPact Texas Challenge
International Athletic Club
Dallas, TX

Racquetball Promotions
918-258-7518 (days)
918-258-2897 (nights)

Dec. 11-14

\$15,000 Open

Gold River Winter Classic
Gold River Racquet Club
2201 Gold Rush Drive
Gold River, CA 95670

Ed Martin
916-383-3070

Jan. 15-19, 1986

\$15,000 Open

Arizona Athletic Club
1425 West 14th Street
Tempe, AZ 85281
Jack Nolan
602-894-2281

Feb. 12-16

\$15,000 Open

Tulsa Open
Tulsa Racquetball/Aerobics Club
Racquetball Promotions
918-258-7518 (days)
918-258-2897 (nights)

Feb. 26-March 2

\$15,000 Open

Griffith Park Athletic Club
4925 S.W. Griffith Dr.
Beaverton, OR 97005
Devri Doty
503-644-3900

March 12-16

\$15,000 Open

Mid-Town Athletic Club
5400 Kennedy Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45213
Mike Sipes
513-351-3000

March 25-29

\$15,000 Open

Big C Athletic Club
1381 Galaxy Way
Concord, CA 94524
Tom Martin
415-634-3528

April 16-20

\$15,000 Open

Merritt Racquetball and
Fitness Center
Security, Baltimore, MD
RAMB - Dave Pivec
301-532-2250

April 30-May 4

\$22,000 Open

Ektelon National Championships
The Sports Gallery
2560 East Katella Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92806

May 14-18

\$15,000 Open

Rocky Mountain Health Club
1880 Westland Road
Cheyenne, WY 82001
Steve Galassini
307-634-8884

June 10-15

\$33,000 Open

DP National Championships
Site To Be Announced

FOR RMA TOUR INFORMATION

Drew Stoddard, Commissioner
702-826-6037

WPRA 1985-86

SEASON SCHEDULE

Oct. 17-20

\$10,000 Open

Pacific Mutual Pro/Am
Los Caballeros Sports Complex
Fountain Valley, CA

Oct. 24-27

\$12,000 Open

Anchorage Athletic Club
Anchorage, AK
Winners: TBA

Jan. 17-20, 1986

\$10,000 Open

The Courthouse Fitness Center
Rockwall, TX

Mar. 14-17*

\$10,000 Open

The PAC West Athletic Club
Tacoma, WA
*Date Tentative

April 11-14

\$12,000 Open

Sportsworld Athletic Club
Lawton, OK

May 1-4

\$18,500 Open

Ektelon National Championships
Anaheim, CA

June (TBA)

\$30,000 Open

WPRA Nationals
Site To Be Announced

FOR WPRA INFORMATION

Jim Carson, Commissioner
714-641-7452

AARA NATIONAL EVENTS

Oct. 24-27, 1985

National Doubles
Cheyenne, WY
Winners: TBA

April 11-13, 1986

Intercollegiate Championships
Playoff Athletic Club
2191 Post Rd.
Warwick, RI 02886
Contact: 401-738-0833

May 21-26

National Singles Championships
(Qualifying required)
Downtown YMCA
Houston, TX
Contact: AARA
303-635-5396

June 28-July 2

National Juniors Championships
(Qualifying required)
Chicago, IL
Contact: AARA
303-635-5396

July TBA

World Games
(Qualifying required)
Site To Be Announced
Contact: AARA
303-635-5396

July-August TBA

AARA Elite Training Camp
(Qualifying required)
Colorado Springs, CO
Contact: AARA
303-635-5396

October 23-26

National Doubles Championships
Racquet Power
3390 Kori Road
Mandarin, FL 32217
Tom Collins,
904-268-8888

MAJOR SPORT CONVENTION CALENDAR

Feb. 19-23

IRSA National Convention
Operland Hotel
Nashville, TN
Suzanne Lentke
617-734-8000

RANKINGS

The sources for these national rankings are as follows: Men's-Official RMA Pro Racquetball Tour rankings; Women's-Official WPRA Tour rankings; Amateur-Official AARA national rankings.

RMA PRO RACQUETBALL TOUR OFFICIAL PROFESSIONAL RANKINGS OCTOBER 6, 1985

Ranking	Player	Points
1	Marty Hogan . . .	531.35
2	Mike Yellen . . .	399.15
3	Gregg Peck . . .	389.76
4	Cliff Swain . . .	362.78
5	Jerry Hilecher . .	337.51
6	Ruben Gonzalez .	318.06
7	Bret Harnett . . .	288.76
8	Gerry Price . . .	280.43
9	Scott Oliver . . .	254.29
10	Doug Cohen . . .	215.06
11	Dave Peck . . .	208.26
12	David Gross . . .	185.91
13	Mike Ray . . .	181.23
14	Cory Brysman . .	160.96
15	Jim Cascio . . .	159.29
16	Ed Andrews . . .	157.33
17	Andy Gross . . .	136.36
18	John Egerman . .	134.01
19	Jack Newman . .	131.47
20	Dan Obremski . .	122.27
21	Steve Lerner . . .	92.55
22	Rich Wagner . . .	87.55
23	Brian Hawkes . .	67.68
24	Mike Levine . . .	64.29
25	Dolwain Green . .	59.50
26	Dave Johnson . .	56.61
27	Andy Roberts . .	53.11
28	Doug Ganim . . .	52.57
29	Sean Moskwa . .	46.70
30	Egan Inoue . . .	45.86
31	Jack Nolan . . .	44.90
32	Evan Terry . . .	35.96
33	Dave Negrete . .	33.82
34	B. Sell . . .	30.98
35	W. Snead . . .	29.36
36	W. Clouse . . .	26.36
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38	M. Plotkin . . .	25.10
39	R. Navarro . . .	22.23
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41	M. Martino . . .	17.52
42	M. Griffith . . .	16.64
43	M. Lowe . . .	14.74
44	F. Calabrese . .	14.68
44T	D. Simmonette .	14.68

12	Molly O'Brien .	44.50
13	Joyce Jackson . .	42.75
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22	Linda Porter . . .	15.00
T	Shannon Wright .	15.00
24	Val Paese . . .	14.00
25	Terry Latham . . .	12.50
T	Trina Rasmussen .	12.50
27	Dot Fischl . . .	10.00
T	Mona Mook . . .	10.00
T	Cathy Nichols . .	10.00
T	Mary Pat Sklenka .	10.00
31	Toni Bevelock . .	7.50

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Ranking	Player	Points
1	Cindy Baxter . . .	1005
2	Terry Latham . .	710
3	Cindy Doyle . . .	505
4	Nan Higgins . . .	500
5	Chris Evon . . .	465
6	Claudia McCarthy .	395
7	Mona Mook . . .	390
8	Mary Dee . . .	375
9	Martha Adams . .	340
10	Cathy Nichols . .	335
11	Cathie Fredrickson .	315
12	Robin Levine . . .	310
13	Diane Bullard . .	300
14	Marci Drexler . .	300
15	Pam Beck . . .	295
16	Irina Rasmussen .	290
17	Sandy Robson . .	285
18	Diana Almeida . .	280
19	Debbie Mackell . .	275
20	Dot Fischel . . .	270
21	Sheri Anderson . .	265
22	Malia Kamahoa . .	255
23	Anne Calderone . .	240
24	Joy Eon . . .	240
25	Rosemary Magliano .	240
26	Jan Curtis . . .	235
27	Kaye Kuhfeld . .	235
28	Terry Singletary .	235
29	Babette Bell . . .	225
30	Joetta Hastings . .	225
31	Joan Azeka . . .	215
32	Lynn Price . . .	215
33	Kathy Givuna . . .	210
34	Janell Marriot . .	210
35	Michelle Gilman . .	205
36	Diane Fields . . .	200
37	Cindy Overstake . .	200
38	Linda Porter . . .	200
39	Linda Diamond . .	190
40	Anglea Wyble . .	190
41	Joanie Quinlan . .	185

42	Leigh Anne Coutu .	316.75
43	Toni Benelock . .	175
44	Laura Fenton . . .	175
45	Kim Tiedeman . . .	175
46	Sharron Fanning .	170
47	Janet Burke . . .	165
48	Crystal Fried . . .	165
49	Kelly Cremeans . .	160
50	Lisa Ecker . . .	160

AARA/ARHS NATIONAL RANKING (1) MEN'S OPEN SEPTEMBER 25, 1985

Ranking	Player	Points
1	Fred Calabrese . .	690
2	Ed Andrews . . .	630
3	Dan Obremski . . .	585
4	Andy Roberts . . .	555
5	Tom Montalband . .	520
6	Aaron Katz . . .	500
7	Dave Negrete . . .	490
8	Tim Hansen . . .	485
9	Joey Cline . . .	480
10	Doug Ganim . . .	470
11	Sergio Gonzalez . .	415
12	Todd O'Neil . . .	415
13	Mark Morrison . .	400
14	Charlie Nichols . .	390
15	Mark Hegg . . .	385
16	Jim Cascio . . .	325
17	Jim Hamilton . . .	320
18	Bruce Christensen .	290
19	Dan Ferris . . .	280
20	Don Kelly . . .	280
21	Todd Thielen . . .	280
22	Don Costleigh, Jr. .	265
23	Dennis Aceto . . .	260
24	Scott Reid . . .	255
25	Mike Ray . . .	250
26	Scott St. Onge . .	250
27	Richard Hull . . .	245
28	Rodger Lindwall . .	230
29	Paul Marino . . .	225
30	Brian Valin . . .	220
31	Vinnie Ganley . . .	215
32	Jim Jeffers . . .	215
33	Dave Bennett . . .	210
34	Skip Merrill . . .	200
35	William Gottlieb . .	195
36	Howard Nixon . . .	195
37	Jim Owen . . .	195
38	Mike Spugnardi . .	195
39	Dave Watson . . .	195
40	Tom Fournier . . .	190
41	Mike Lowe . . .	190
42	Mark Mikulla . . .	190
43	Oscar Gonzalez . .	185
44	Rob Kulp . . .	185
45	Garr Thompson . .	183
46	Ruben Gonzalez . .	180
47	Sean Muskwa . . .	180
48	Tom Riley . . .	180
49	Gene Rodgers . . .	180
50	Steve Rubin . . .	180

WPRA RANKINGS JUNE 20, 1985

Ranking	Player	Points
1	Lynn Adams . . .	316.75
2	Vicki Panzeri . . .	208.00
3	Terri Gilreath . .	140.00
4	Caryn McKinney . .	110.00
5	Marci Drexler . .	108.00
6	Janell Marriot . .	88.25
7	Heather McKay . .	81.50
8	Liz Alvarado . . .	75.00
9	Diane Bullard . .	59.25
10	Cindy Baxter . . .	56.25
11	Laura Martino . .	54.00

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For questions about the WPRA women's pro rankings, contact: Jim Carson, Commissioner, 714-641-7452.

For questions about the AARA/AHRS amateur rankings, contact: Luke St. Onge, 303-635-5396.

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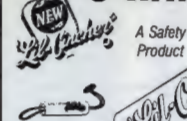
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SIDE OUT

By Drew Stoddard



An Act Of Honor

Consider this hypothetical situation: You're a racquetball player and you've spend most your adult life training and refining your game with the single-minded goal of one day winning a major professional tournament. It's a lofty goal that few achieve, but week after week you travel hundreds of miles to try again, hoping that eventually your time will come.

Suddenly, one day you find yourself playing Marty Hogan in the tiebreaker of the final match of a ranking pro stop. You're down 10-8 and Hogan is serving for the match when you end a long rally with a forehand kill down the right wall. The referee calls "good", Hogan appeals, and the linesmen agree. The serve is yours and only three points stand between you and greatness.

But there's a problem. Your shot skipped, there's no doubt in your mind. And apparently you are the only one who knows. The rules say the ref makes the call, and technically you have the right to just step up and serve the ball. If you overturn the call yourself you will throw away the only chance you may ever have to reach your dream. So you stand silently in center court as 300 spectators, most of your fellow players, and your best friend all stare at you from the other side of the glass. You have ten seconds to decide. What do you do?

Sounds like a trick question during an important job interview, doesn't it? For you and I, it's an interesting question to ponder—a worst possible scenario designed to test one's sense of honor. But for Ruben Gonzalez on one Sunday afternoon in Arlington, Virginia, it was no test—it was painfully real.

Now I must admit that I like Ruben very much. In the last couple of years I've come to know him as both a gentleman and a friend. (Ruben taught me

that when someone says "give me five", it doesn't necessarily mean they want to borrow money.) I know what the Arlington tournament meant to him; he's one of a handful of talented players who has fought in the trenches for years and achieved great success, yet has never won a ranking tour stop. But even I was stunned to see him reverse that call and immediately offer his hand to Hogan in congratulations. It was the finest display of sportsmanship I have ever seen on a racquetball court.

"It skipped," he told me later, "and that was the only thing that really mattered... I stopped there for about a second just to replay that match in my mind, but I saw Jack (Newman) and the linesmen and the spectators, and I just couldn't take it because I knew I would have had to live with that for a long time."

'Only three points stand between you and greatness. But there's a problem. Your shot skipped and apparently you are the only one who knows.'

"I over-ran the ball and was right on top of it... I don't think anybody else saw it, but I thought 'If I'm going to win it, I'm going to win it the right way; there will be another time'. My conscience is clear and I feel good about it."

What Ruben did, said a lot about his own integrity. But it also said something about how far pro racquetball has come in its short life. In the last couple of years a new generation of players has transformed the pro game from a dis-

grace into the standard of sportsmanship and professionalism it was always intended to be.

Some of you who haven't seen the pros for a while may have a hard time believing that. But consider that in three tournaments so far this season—123 matches—we have had exactly two instances that required action under a fairly strict RMA Code of Conduct: one resulted in a player's suspension, and the other was a minor technical foul. I would like to say the RMA had something to do with the change, but in fact the players did it themselves well before the Code of Conduct was even written.

What made this one incident particularly significant was that Arlington was the first time the pros ever played in the Washington D.C. area. As we were walking out of the club together after the tournament, one beaming spectator came up to Ruben and congratulated him on his performance and then added, "You know, there were amateur players in that crowd today who have never seen anyone make a call against themselves, even in a practice match. You don't know how much good you did out there today."

I watched Ruben's expression as the man spoke, wondering if he'd rather have been congratulated for winning his first tournament. But there was no regret on his face. His honor was intact.

A great philosopher once stated his simple view of life this way: "We know what we know; and what we know we either act on, or we do not." Ruben knew, and he acted without hesitation. Few in Arlington will ever forget, even when the memory of one great Sunday afternoon match has faded into a distant blur. □

(Drew Stoddard is the commissioner for the RMA Pro Tour and Editor of National Racquetball.)

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