

National Racquetball®

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Off The Wall

by Joe Massarelli



1986 In Retrospect

As I shook hands with former owner and publisher, Hugh Morgan, in his Glenview, IL offices on that cold January morning just a year ago, little did I realize what would happen in just 12 short months.

We were making small talk about the typically nasty Chicago weather as the accountants reviewed the final drafts of our contract to purchase *National Racquetball*, when Hugh asked a simple but profound question. "Now that you own it, what do you plan to do with it?"

The thought made me shudder for a moment. Here I was on the threshold of an entirely new and foreign venture. No, publishing wasn't new to me. I've been publishing monthly magazines since 1969 when I became partners with a publisher friend of mine. As a matter of fact, my office was just down the street in neighboring Mt. Prospect.

But my publishing experience was with trade journals and not with specialty interest consumer books. Secondly, I knew that racquetball and the magazines serving the sport were steeped in a tumultuous history to put it mildly.

Yet, the opportunity intrigued me enough to put the deal together with Mr. Morgan. After all, I'd been playing racquetball recreationally for years. And what's the big deal about publishing a consumer book versus a business journal? I guess my rationale was about as logical as saying I could be a pharmacist because I hung

around a drugstore when I was a kid!

I've been a gambler all of my life, so with pen in hand I consummated the contract on January 3. By January 14, I had made our first tour stop in Tempe where I was privileged to meet some of the pros, along with Drew Stoddard, the pro commissioner at the time.

What disturbed me most, during that first exposure to competitive racquetball, was a very negative attitude that pervaded any discussion about the sport's future.

After returning to Florida, I got senior editor Chuck Leve on the phone and picked his brain for some answers to the nagging questions that popped up as a result of the Tempe experience.

I quickly found out from Chuck that he didn't share this negativism. "Yes, it's true," he explained, "racquetball as a competitive sport and as a recreation has been declining in popularity during the early '80s, but much of this was due to many club owners opting to utilize court space for other activities."

And Chuck should know. He's on staff with the International Racquet Sports Association (IRSA), and he's been with the magazine since its inception.

I then hit a couple of trade shows and most of the major tournaments during the balance of the year. And did I learn!

First, the problems with racquetball were, as I said previously, attitude problems! So, the magazine endeavored to change these

attitudes by portraying a more professional image of the sport. We think we've succeeded.

Our next mission was to give racquetball more visibility. With the help of dedicated people like Luke
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National Racquetball

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First Serve

by Chuck Leve



The Portable Glass Court — Revisited

Somebody once said that if you live long enough you see everything twice. I haven't lived all that long, but I have seen many things in the racquetball world at least twice, and the portable glass court is one of them.

After many attempts to bring this elusive and (some say) savior of the professional end of the sport to the masses, it appears that the portable court may be closer than ever to becoming a reality.

Of course, a portable glass court has been in existence for about five years now. Scores of major, professional events, with huge galleries, cable television coverage and big sponsors have supported the structure. Trouble is, it's a squash court.

I've often wondered where racquetball went wrong in comparison to squash. After all, the highly reputable National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) reports that there are less than 500,000 squash players in North America, while there are at least 4.5 million racquetballers.

I'll admit compared to racquetball, squash demographics might show their players to be a bit wealthier, possibly better educated and more are likely to live on the East Coast: but racquetball's vital statistics hold up well against squash, and we've got at least nine times the players.

Curiously, the latest impetus toward a portable glass racquetball court comes not from a racquetball promoter but from one Joe Garcia, known nationally as "Mr. Wallyball," a designation he wears proudly as the inventor of that game. Garcia, in

his never ending and admirable efforts to promote wallyball, has been actively soliciting the support of many manufacturers within the racquetball field to get behind his portable court concept.

Since wallyball uses the same court as racquetball (merely adding the netting for this volleyball-using-the-walls sport) there is certainly much to be gained by Garcia if he can pull off the portable court.

Nobody has ever accused Joe Garcia of planning small. He intends to have the portable glass court up and on display at the Super Show in Atlanta next month. The Super Show, the sporting goods industry's leading trade show, attracts many thousands of facility personnel, retailers, school and university planners along with hundreds of exhibitors in all facets of sports.

Indeed, a portable glass court at the Super Show would be a great accomplishment for Garcia, wallyball and racquetball.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Garcia next intends to erect the structure at the annual International Racquet Sports Association (IRSA) national convention/trade show in March in Dallas. With more than 1,800 club owners and operators on hand, the promotional advantages using the glass court are limitless.

I suppose I should add here that I have never been a rabid fan of the portable glass court, a position that got me into some hot water a few years ago. However, that does not mean that I am "down" on the concept. Rather, I am very much in favor of the court.

My primary concern in years past was the cost of the court, often rumored to be in the neighborhood of \$250,000. I long held that such a sum would be better spent promoting the pro tour and televised racquetball, or put into grass-roots development of the game.

But Garcia reports that the cost is far less than that, in which case I would love to see the court developed. I have talked with the people who will be building it, and they see no problems in its creation, shipping, erection on site, tear-down and re-shipping to the next location.

The question is, of course, who will pay for it, no matter what it costs? At the present, Garcia is seeking that financial support from an industry-wide collection of racquetball equipment manufacturers, the people who would obviously stand to gain the greatest reward should the portable glass court stimulate a surge of new racquetball players.

Cracking this nut will be a tough job. There have not been overflowing profits in the racquetball business the past few years to say the least and many companies have had to carefully re-examine their marketing techniques and expenditures. But it seems to me that somewhere there should be a half-dozen or so companies willing to put up \$10,000 each to support the effort.

Garcia plans to use the court, not only for tournaments and exhibitions for the top players, but possibly more importantly, as a

(continued on page 47)



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Off Court Fitness

by Jean Sauser



Different Strokes

A funny thing happened to me a couple of days ago which reminded me of the importance of an old '60s song called "Different Strokes", by Sly and the Family Stone. For those of you who were not around to hold a racquetball racquet back then, the song is about doing what's best for you while letting others do what's best for them, even if there is a difference. I was abruptly reminded of how this philosophy applies to fitness when a few days ago, in less than 24 hours, three people tried to talk me into things I had no need for, based on the fact that "everyone" was, or should be, doing them.

It started when a girlfriend, who was going through a divorce, called me. She had been seeing a therapist and out of the clear blue sky, began to urge me to do the same.

"I would if I thought I needed it, but with the exception of a few bumps here and there, my life is going great these days," I told her.

"Well," she huffed. "Everyone needs counseling."

Our conversation ended on a sour note when I informed her that one of my most basic philosophies of life was: "Different strokes for different folks."

The very next morning, I dropped my car off at my dealer's for its 3,000 mile checkup. Part of their service is to have one of their mechanics drive you to work if you don't have a ride yourself. On the way there, he struck up a "casual" conversation about the fact that

the reason some people in the world were so messed up was that they were not born-again Christians, like himself.

From there, he proceeded to explain why his religion was for everyone. Once again, I felt obliged to do my '60s thing.

"Different strokes for different folks," I told him. "I'm religious, too, but it's different from yours. I appreciate what your religion is doing for you, and I hope you'll do the same for me."

From there I hopped out of the car and ran into work. The day was capped off with round three of "this is something for everyone" when I went to my health club to play racquetball.

"Have you tried our new 7 p.m. aerobics class?" one of the staff asked me as I signed into the club.

"No, I'm not into that part of the club," I explained. "I only come here to play racquetball and lift weights."

"Well, you really should take this class," she insisted. "Aerobics is something that's for everyone."

I couldn't believe my bad luck! Three times in less than 24 hours, someone tried to convince me to do something because it was for "everyone".

Back in the early days of racquetball, the late '60s and early '70s to be exact, I was making my living teaching racquetball. It was there that I quickly learned that nothing is for everyone.

In my never ending effort to bring the fundamentals of the sport to the masses, I began to notice

that there was simply no one way to teach, in short, no one method that worked for "everyone". Different people respond to different methods of instruction.

The major point of contention in our sport back then was bad habits — in other words, people who stroked the ball differently from what was standardly taught. It was out on the pro tour, after watching a youngster named Marty Hogan hit the ball off the wrong (back instead of front) foot harder and more accurately than anyone in the sport, that my "different strokes for different strokes" strategy was born.

I changed my teaching style drastically. I took the words "wrong", "right" and "everyone does it this way" out of my vocabulary. I let my players be who they were and build up the positive parts of their games first.

Needless to say, I got more results than anyone around and a lot of loyal students.

Not one to stray from a winning program, I translated my "different strokes" philosophy into my fitness programs a few years later when I became the manager of a multi-purpose health and racquetball club. In fact, on more than one occasion, it got me into trouble with the owner.

"I can't believe you don't try to sell the weight room," he lamented to me one day. "We've spent a fortune building it. It holds more people per hour than our racquetball courts, and weightlifting is the new hot craze."

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Canadian Report

by Sigmund Brouwer



Funding Increases

There is an unusual rumbling in Canada and it bodes well for our sport, not only here, but probably everywhere.

The rumbling began in the national office of the Canadian Racquetball Association as an application to Sport Canada, following the World Championships in Florida last August, where Canada and the United States fought to a draw to become co-world champions.

Sport Canada is a federal agency that funds Canadian amateur sports.

In December 1985, Sport Canada made history in racquetball by funding then World Amateur Champion Ross Harvey of Montreal, Quebec through their Athlete Assistance Program. The funding

assisted Harvey paying for education, training and living expenses while pursuing his amateur sport career and going to veterinary school in Guelph, Ontario.

Fortunately, that was just a hint of the rumble.

On Friday, November 14, Sport Canada announced financial assistance awards to six more Canadian racquetball athletes.

Harvey's funding was to continue. Roger Harripersad, transferred from Cal State Sacramento to the University of British Columbia, and his former teammate at Cal State, Crystal Fried, now at Athabasca College in Alberta, were given "C-1" status. So were other Canadian team players Joe Kirkwood, Glen Collard, and gold

medalists in womens doubles Manon Sicotte and Carol McFetridge.

All of them receive tuition as they attend post-secondary schools, along with a training allowance of \$350.00 a month.

At first glance, the awards may not seem unusual or of much significance to racquetball. But there are two reasons to make this announcement a very important rumble.

Sport Canada rarely awards the AAP to athletes unless they are competing in Olympic, Pan American or Commonwealth games. As we all know, the closest racquetball has come to any of these prestigious events is recognition by the International Olympic Committee.

The awards tell us racquetball is gaining credibility in the eyes of officialdom. Not only do these awards serve notice to Canadians (and Americans) that racquetball itself is important enough to deserve this attention, but they say that racquetball's premiere amateur event, the World Championships, is established enough, well-organized enough, and draws enough countries to *count* as a worldwide athletic event.

The other reason for excitement in these awards comes in looking at percentages.

Sport Canada awarded assistance to seven players. The entire Canadian team has only 10 members. And that is 70 percent. Not bad for a non-Olympic sport. It is

1987 Canadian Racquetball Tournaments

JANUARY 1987

11 Rencontre amicale Junior
15-18 Q94/Pepsi Supersmash

L'Impact Inc., Sorel, P.Q.
Supreme Racquet Club,
Winnipeg, Man.

15-18 Championnat regionaux en double
16-18 Junior Open
23-25 Circuit interclubs amateur

T.B.A.
Agincourt R.C., Ont.
Club Le Carrefour,
Sherbrooke, P.Q.
Regina Court & Fitness Club
Waterloo, Ont
Court Sports Club, Winnipeg

23-25 Coke Queen City Tournament
23-25 Columbia Classic
28-31 Court Sports Open Seniors

FEBRUARY

1 Rencontre amicale junior
5-8 Quebec Ouvert
6-8 3rd Annual South Family
YMCA/Country Kitchen
6-8 Miller High Life Provincial Open
13-15 Lakeshore Open

Trois Rivières, P.Q.
Club Lebourgneuf, Quebec
Winnipeg, Man.
Racquetcourts South, Sask
Lakeshore Estates Club,
Regina, Sask.

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WPRA Report

by Caryn McKinney



Up-and-Comers

Every couple of years it seems like a whole new group of "up-and-coming" players surface. Racquetball, like any other sport, needs new talent in order to challenge the established players, but also to continue the growth of the sport and improve the quality of play. Well, there are many new faces on the WPRA Tour they're starting to do big things, and we're glad to see them!

Take a look at the results of last season's national events and our first few tournaments of this season and you'll see these new names. Some of these ladies are the product of the AARA Intercollegiate system and the U.S. National Team — Trina Rasmussen, Kathy Treadway, Toni Bevelok, Dot Fischl, Cindy Baxter and Mary Dee. These AARA programs have demonstrated phenomenal growth during the last three years and are proving to be a valuable "feeder system" for both the women's and men's professional tours.

Not all players, however, have the opportunity to compete on collegiate teams. In fact, most are the product of individual effort and dedication outside the team atmosphere — Robin Whitmire, Jackie Paraiso, Joy Paraiso, Lynn Cherry, Andrea Katz, Linda Porter, Diana Reyes, Pam Laursen, Mary Pat Sklenka, Diane Bohling, Janet Kelleher, Roz Olson, Roxanne Goblisch, Kay Kuhfeld, Sue McTaggart and Cathy Nichols are all talented players.

Racquetball, like any other sport, needs new talent in order to challenge the established players, but also to continue the growth of the sport and improve the quality of play. Well, there are many new faces on the WPRA Tour they're starting to do big things, and we're glad to see them!

Each of these players are contributing to the growth of womens racquetball and improving the depth and quality of play on the professional level. Now is the time to start watching the "up-and-comers" who have already played their way to a few upsets of seeded professionals. Most notably, Trina Rasmussen made it to the semi-finals in the 1986 WPRA National Championships; Toni Bevelok, Kay Kuhfeld and Cindy Baxter each made it to the quarterfinal round in a 1985/86 Tour event, and Dot Fischl posted a quarterfinal showing in our Chicago tournament this fall (complete results in next month's issue). By no means are they the only ones to watch, but it's a good starting point.

Speaking for the WPRA, we're glad to have these ladies join our Tour. They are valuable to the growth of our organization and we're proud to provide them with the opportunity to compete. Welcome and good luck! ○

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PASSING SHOTS

by Norm Blum



T. Boone Pickens and Other Rich Stuff

Next Court Up — While on vacation recently, I discovered several potential tournament directors at the airports in Denver and Atlanta. When passengers stormed the desk asking about delays, the airline personnel handled the impatient customers with ease . . . Marriott's Mark Resort in Vail, CO, has three beautiful indoor courts, but surprisingly enough they are used more often when the weather is warm than during the winter. Apparently exhausted skiers don't have the energy for a game after a grueling day on the slopes.

Dumbest question of 1986: "You must have something to do with Ektelon," one person told world champ Mike Yellen. "How could you tell?" Yellen replied . . . Best question at an exhibition and clinic: "Do you adjust your game to different surfaces?" "I find players who start blaming a surface on their performances are using an alibi. I might make some adjustments on a certain court when you might have to hit a ceiling ball differently. But overall, I play the same way," Yellen said.

National doubles champ Mary Lyons of Jacksonville, FL, a teaching pro, admits she's destined to die poor. Before giving lesson No. 1, the player has to agree to practice three hours for each hour lesson. "That's part of the understanding," Lyons said. "I want them to get better." Teaching pros report lessons are popular after the first of the year, but don't attribute it to a New Year's resolution. "Once a player gets a new racquet he's ready to take a lesson," one teach-

ing pro remarked.

Hilton Head, SC played host to its first AARA-sanctioned racquetball tournament and almost doubled the state's membership . . . Racquetball figures on trophies add almost a \$1 to each award. Manufactureres don't churn out racquetball figures like they do for bowlers . . . Steve Strandemo's new book is selling well and we're happy to report it was prominently displayed at a Herman's sporting goods store in Queens, NY . . . Popular stocking stuffers didn't change any this Christmas season. A can of balls headed the list. But where are the racquetball mugs, key chains and knick knacks other sports have?

Wake Up — Alert, front desk personnel are in demand. It's too easy to walk into a club and play a game without paying . . . Traveling salesman Ben Guzzone has missed playing racquetball only one day in the last three years. "It was Christmas and I couldn't find a club open in Boston," he said . . . Things I like: Properly mixed Gatorade; snack bars/lounges that overlook the court, but are away from the noise and serve items other than junk food; whirlpools and steam rooms that work and clean locker rooms . . . One of the hardest times to reserve a court anywhere in the nation is between 6:30 and 7:30 a.m. The before-work racquetball game is quite popular.

Oil magnate T. Boone Pickens plays racquetball on a regular basis. In a recent interview, Pickens said playing racquetball three times a week enables him to withstand

those physically grueling cross-country trips . . . Incidentally, I wrote Pickens a proposal to sponsor a pro tour, but the idea was nixed. I'll have to try again . . . You know a person is down on his luck when he owns a court at his house but can't find anyone to play.

Draw Your Own Conclusion Department — In a survey among 450 participants in the National Doubles Championships regarding the racquet they use, more than 300 responded. How many of those players were sponsored isn't known, but the results were as follows: Ektelon's oversized Toron racquet was used by 70 players . . . Isn't it amazing at how quickly racquetball became an integral part of the Junior Orange Bowl? . . . It's getting more difficult to find courts without some type of viewing glass . . . An ideal site for a pro stop would be at the Miami Lakes Inn & Country Club. A plush hotel is across the street from the athletic facility. Sponsors interested in getting involved should call me at (904) 743-0218 or write: P.O. Box 11657, Jacksonville, FL 32239.

The Ektelon National Championships, which were held in Anaheim, CA, in May, were first seen on ESPN in November. In the past the event has been aired during summer months and Ektelon believed they'd benefit more with a fall showing . . . The latest Mike Yellen poster depicting him as a legend in his own time is quite popular. At a recent appearance in Miami he gave out close to 200 of the four-color posters. ○

What's the Call?

"The 5-Foot Line"

by Otto Dietrich

To provide a margin of safety on the return of serve, the Official Rules of the AARA define a 5-foot "safety zone", which is bounded by the "short line" and a "receiving line". The receiving line is often called the "5-foot line". In returning the serve, the receiver (and the receiver's partner in doubles) must remain behind this line until either (1) the ball bounces in the 5-foot zone or (2) the ball crosses the 5-foot line. Then and only then may the receiver cross over the line or hit the ball.

A frequently asked question is: "Can the receiver hit the ball on the fly and then follow through across the 5-foot line? The answer is: "Yes", as long as the ball crosses the 5-foot line before the receiver does and the follow-through does not cross over the short line.

What happens if a receiver breaks this rule? The server automatically wins the rally, and a point is awarded to the server — a very strong penalty which is intended to emphasize the importance the AARA places on player safety.

What about the server? Doesn't he have some responsibility for safety too? Of course, the server must get out of the way to avoid creating a hinder on the return, but at the same time avoid crossing over the short line before the ball does. If the server crosses over the short line before the ball does, then he is guilty of entering the "Safety Zone" too soon and he automatically loses the rally, thus losing his serve.

Except for the most blatant violations of this rule, this call is a very difficult one for the referee, primarily due to the perspective which he has. But never fear, the AARA has declared this call or non-call to be appealable. This permits the referee to take into account the

observations of lines judges, who usually have a better angle from which to make the call. As with all appeals, however, if either lines judge agrees with the referee's call, then the call stands. If you think your opponent is breaking this rule and the referee is not calling it, ask the referee for his interpretation of the rule (you're entitled to one) and consider asking for line judges to provide different views of the play.

One last point — prior to 1984 the "5-foot line" existed mostly in the imagination of the players since there were no actual markings on the court to indicate the line other than a 6-inch line at either side wall. But last September, the *AARA Rulebook* was revised to require that the 5-foot line actually be marked on the court by a broken line that is parallel to, and 5 feet behind, the short line. Do the courts you play on have this line? If not, I suggest that you get a copy of the 1986-87 *AARA Rulebook* and show the manager the rule (2.A.2.e.) on page 6.

Got a question on rules or refereeing? Write me and I'll answer it for you. ○

About the author: Otto Dietrich has been an active member of International Racquetball Association and the American Amateur Racquetball Association since 1975. He was a member of the U.S. Racquetball Association from 1975 through 1982; organized and directed the Korean Racquetball Association for military personnel from 1976 through 1980; and has been a member of the board of directors of the Georgia State Racquetball Association since 1983.

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Commissioner's Report

by Jim Hiser



The New Professionalism

There is a new breed of promoters entering into professional racquetball. Not only are they introducing exciting ideas into the tournament format but they are generating a new enthusiasm into the professional game.

Professionalism seems to be the key ingredient to the new success. In Arlington, VA, all referees were dressed in sport jackets with ties and lines judges were uniformly attired in special shirts. A polished and experienced public

speaker made player introductions and a prominent local celebrity sang the National Anthem prior to the final match.

In Dallas the players were treated like other great athletes and introduced to local personalities during a black tie reception. Commissioned photographers captured the evening's special moments for inclusion in the day's social columns. A football stadium-size scoreboard kept everyone aware of the professional division scores.

Although many may dismiss the above as only cosmetic, the reality of such changes indicate an advancement toward professionalism already exhibited in other sports.

There are many critics who still believe professional racquetball will not succeed. Fortunately these are the same individuals who thought the oversize racquet would *not* be successful. If approached as an inferior sport racquetball will be accepted as such.

The new professionalism has resulted in numerous changes within the players' themselves. Better conduct, appearance and attitude are only a few of the positive signs of this new-found maturity.

Already I have had more inquiries than ever before from individuals interested in hosting a professional event. If this positive attitude continues, who knows, the portable glass court may even become a reality! ○

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New Directions

by Luke St. Onge



Fellow Members:

I am most happy to make the following report concerning the AARA Board of Directors Meeting held this October in Colorado Springs.

1. Approved the financial audit for 1985-86 done by Ken Waugh & Associates.

2. Approved Visa Card offer to all members of the AARA.

3. Approved Teaching Certification Program to begin operating January 1, 1987.

4. Approved new ranking system that is now in operation out of the National Office.

5. Approved second printing of the Junior Handbook.

6. Approved the writing of the Intercollegiate Handbook.

7. Reported that in the first four premier events of 1986, reached over 150,000,000 people.

8. Approved the affiliation of the St. Louis High School League as part of the AARA.

9. Approved the Pan Am Championships for the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, September 17, 1987.

10. Approved continued effort to secure Group A Status in U.S.O.C.

11. Approved sending two athletes and one official to the Tournament of the Americas in Caracas, Venezuela, in April 1987.

12. Approved European Tour in February of 1987 dependent upon funding by private donations.

13. Approved pilot grass roots membership program for court clubs in New Jersey, Florida, Indiana and Michigan.

14. Approved position of Assistant Executive Director to go on board

(continued on page 48)

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Letters To The Editor

Word From Germany

My favorite articles in your magazine are those written by the legendary Charlie Garfinkel. He always seems to comment on parts of the game never given much thought. For example: strategy used while playing when fatigued.

Although I'm well conditioned, when I become fatigued during a racquetball match, I tend to commit numerous unforced errors. I've learned a lot from Mr. Garfinkel's fatigue strategy. Thanks

How about a nostalgia section in *National Racquetball* . . . Articles written by former great players, like Davey Bledsoe, containing their greatest and most remembered matches? The shots and strategy used to conquer racquetball's former best?

Dano Jennings
Bad Aibling Station
West Germany

Editorial Note: Thank you for your comments concerning the nostalgia idea. Racquetball today is a vastly different game from 10 years ago, and the techniques of the game's great early players don't always pertain to racquetball in the '80s. If other readers show an interest, we will consider such articles.

Sports and Alcohol

I have been an active participant in the sport of racquetball for over 20 years and have looked forward to receiving your magazine each month. One thing concerns me deeply — the use of racquet-

ball to promote the use of alcohol. (Front cover of November issue)

I have two sons who love the sport of racquetball, but I really don't like the attitude racquetball is creating for them to follow. Most shirts given out at tournaments have beer commercials on them; many tournaments have kegs of beer and are sponsored by alcoholic beverage companies.

I teach and coach in a high school setting, and alcohol abuse is a very serious problem. I prohibit my athletes from using anything that might hinder their athletic performance. (By the way, our team was #2 in the state of Idaho this year.)

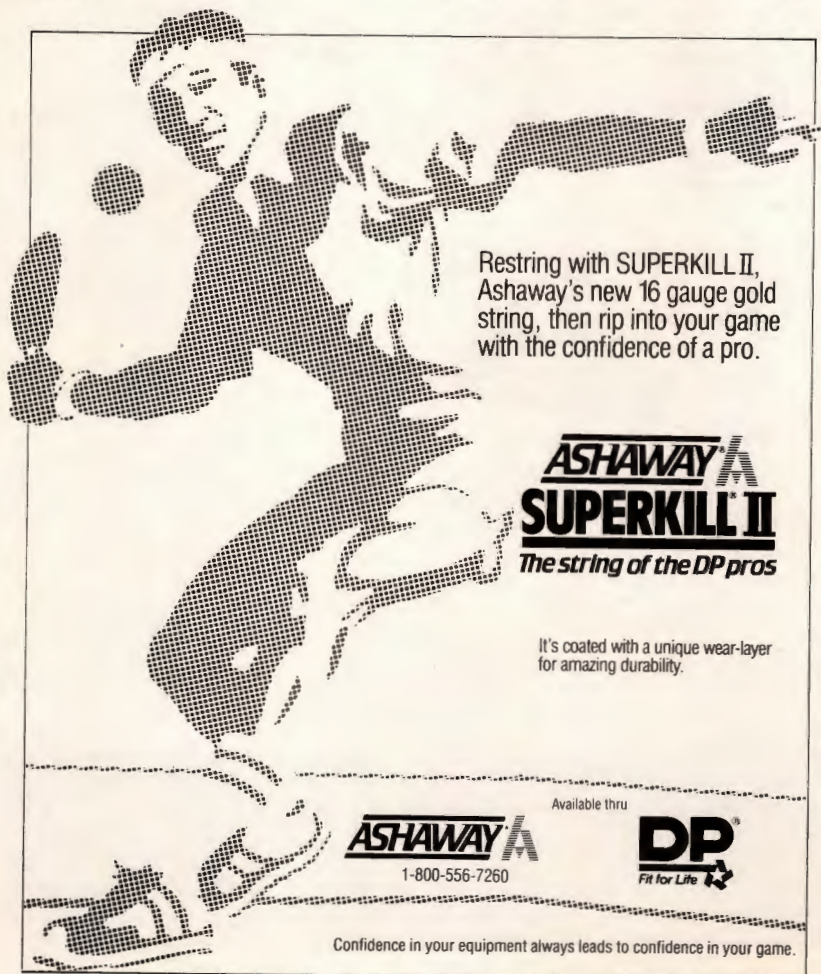
It is hard for me to understand why we can't find other sponsors for our tournaments. Aren't we as sportsmen trying to provide an uplifting activity for everyone to follow? Maybe you are not aware of the following statistics:

- More than half of teenage deaths are the result of drugs/alcohol.
- There are twice as many 14-17 year old problem drinkers as there are adult problem drinkers in America.
- The average age of beginning alcohol users is 12.5 years.
- Every five seconds a teen has a drug/alcohol-related accident.

Please, please as a national organization who has the ability to touch the lives of millions, do what you can to eradicate the vices in American society, not promote them.

Bob Boice
Rexburg, ID

Editors Note: Your point is well taken, but it is a fact of life in our society that many professional sporting events are sponsored by beer, liquor and tobacco companies. Some of those sports would not be available without such advertisers. It's a difficult issue. Perhaps other readers would like to comment.



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Refs

Concerning the problem of having juniors referee their own matches: as an adult I have been refed by juniors and have had no problems with them. If juniors do not referee at their nationals that leaves the parents to ref, and everyone knows that would be worse for the juniors.

Concerning the problem of poor refs: few if any refs call foot faults; they claim you cannot watch for short serves and still look for foot faults. I am a one-eyed "D" player and can do it for pro level play. It is so bad that the rule should be eliminated. The five foot rule of course should remain.

Thomas M. Peterson
Yountville, CA

Mike Griffith

Tragically, the life of Mike Griffith came to an end as a result of an automobile accident recently. Mike had spent the weekend with his parents in Gig Harbor, WA and was on his way home to Salem. He had just returned from Arlington, VA where he had defeated Egan Inoue in the 32's and lost to Mike Yellen in the 16's.

Those of us closest to Mike, who believed so much in him and his future, are shocked beyond words. The void of losing this young "hero" from the ranks of Salemites can never be filled.

My purpose in writing you is to thank you for your support and coverage of Mike. As his career blossomed, we were hoping to build on the exposure that he deserved and you could provide. I hope that the other young players out there, wherever they may be, will use the example that Mike set to be the best they can. By setting their sights high enough and total dedication, they also can reach the plateau that I know Mike was heading for.

Dean L. Wallace
Salem, OR

Lengthy Articles

I have been a subscriber of your magazine for a couple of years, and I would like to make a

suggestion on your reporting of tournaments.

It would be a lot easier for readers, I believe, if you could go back to the old format of reporting results and scores of every round; with brief comments on significant matches. The current format of writing a lengthy essay which looks like a Ph.D dissertation can be tough on readers to maintain their interest (especially when the articles are so wordy that readers have

to go from p. 10, jump to p. 39, jump to p. 42 in order to finish, by which time they might have forgotten who has won the tournament).

If you doubt my suggestion, I would think that you should do a reader survey.

Vincent Mui
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Editor's Note: What do you think about Vincent's suggestion? Write and let us know.

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For The Winning Hand

Pat Colombo: High and Mighty

by Charlie Garfinkel

After defeating a recent racquetball opponent by the scores of 15-3, 15-2, Pat Colombo was approached by a friend who said, "Boy, I bet your opponent was mad." Typically, Colombo snarled and replied, "What are you talking about? He walked away happy!"

Caustic remarks, his famous scowl at opponents and referees alike, his affinity for never leaving the center court position unless he is forced to and his never-say-die attitude are forever etched in racquetball lore.

Colombo isn't only a tremendous competitor and athlete, he has an uncanny knack for predicting his results against an upcoming opponent. On the rare occasions his predictions don't come true, he always rises to the occasion with a ready explanation.

A few years ago in the Eastern Regionals, Colombo had to play Pete Talbot of New Jersey in the

Mens Masters finals. Having never lost to Talbot, Colombo was telling everyone that it would be a routine win. In addition, he said that Talbot wouldn't average more than eight points a game.

After Colombo and Talbot had split the first two games, Colombo wasn't looking too happy. However, he did manage to eke out a close tiebreaker win in the third game. As he was sitting in the locker room after the match, someone remarked, "Hey hotshot! I thought that you were going to blow Talbot out the door." Colombo looked up with the infectious grin that he's famous for and said, "Hey, the poor guy had to drive 45 minutes from Jersey to get here. I felt sorry for him traveling so far, so I let him win a game."

Colombo, an airline pilot for American Airlines, is equally adept in singles as in doubles. His national wins include the National 40s and Over Singles Invitational in 1977, the AARA National 50 Sin-

gles, the National Invitational 50 Singles, the AARA National 45 & 50 Doubles, all in 1984, the World Master's 50 Singles in 1985 and the recent AARA National 50 Doubles this past October.

Born in Mount Vernon, N.Y., he came from a close family. An outstanding athlete as a youngster, he excelled in handball, basketball and baseball. When only 11 years old, he started working part time in his father's plumbing, heating and oil business. "My main job was to carry the tool box whenever we went on a call," he said.

In high school at Mt. St. Michael's Colombo's skill in handball became well known. Playing against a brick wall in all kinds of weather, the handball was extremely hard on Colombo's hands, he never wore gloves. "As a youngster I ate a lot of hot peppers. After that, nothing bothered me," he said.

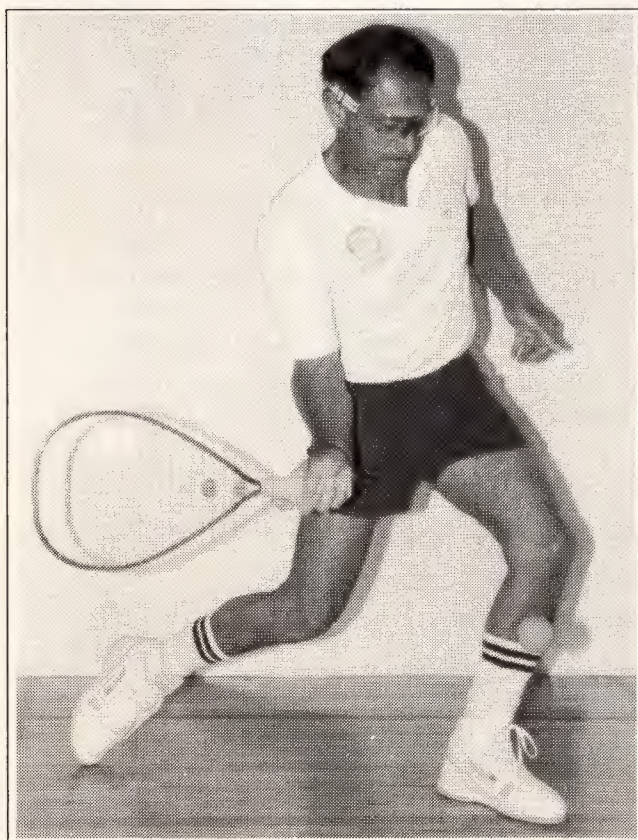
After graduating with honors from high school, Colombo attended New York University where he became an intramural legend. In addition to excelling in touch football, he also won the following track events: the quarter mile, the broad jump and the high jump. In his spare time, he helped his father run the growing family oil business.

After graduating from NYU with an engineering degree, he went into the service, choosing the Air Force because of a life-long wish to become a pilot.

Stationed at Dow Air Force Base in Bangor, ME, Colombo became close friends with David Hartman, the future television personality. Colombo played short-stop and Hartman played first base on the compay softball team.

During his four years in the Air Force, Colombo flew in Japan and Europe. His main job was to transport troops and supplies all over the world. However, he still found time to win numerous handball tournaments wherever he was stationed.

After leaving the Air Force, he went back into the family oil busi-



Pat Colombo on the racquetball court.



Pat Colombo in the cockpit of an American Airlines jetliner.

ness. He kept his hand in flying by joining the New York Air National Guard. Although he enjoyed working with his father in the family business, the desire to fly on a full-time basis overwhelmed him. He went to the American Airlines flight school for 3-1/2 months, graduating as a flight officer. He was flying for American soon after and today he's a captain.

Once Colombo started flying for American, he was able to combine his love for flying and handball. Every time he had a layover in large cities such as San Francisco, Dallas, Los Angeles or Houston, he always found someone to play handball against. And he finally made a concession that playing with gloves would make it much easier on his hands.

When paddleball, the forerunner of racquetball, started to become popular in the late 1960s, Colombo threw a paddle ball racquet into his gym bag, in addition to his handball gloves.

"I could see that handball was gradually starting to die out," Colombo said. Everyone was playing paddleball. You didn't have

to worry about hurting your hands or using two different hands to hit the ball."

Soon after paddleball, racquetball became immensely popular. Colombo started playing in the original hotbed of racquetball: San Diego. "Although I played pretty well with the wooden racquets. I could see that the new metal racquets that Ektelon had come out with were far superior," he said.

Playing around the country and at the Port Chester YMCA when he was home, Colombo quickly became a top A player. In his travels around the country, he started playing against Dr. Bud Muehleisen, Steve Serot and Jerry Hilecher, each an all-time great. When asked how he did against players of this caliber, Colombo typically replied, "What do you think? I more than held my own." Colombo is also proud of the fact that he has helped three of the great players of the game: Ruben Gonzalez, Richie Wagner and Victor Niederhoffer.

In addition to playing at the Port Chester YMCA, Colombo started playing regularly at the Pat-

erson, New Jersey YMCA, with Fred Rizzo and his entourage of racquetball standouts. He also occasionally journeyed to the New Britain YMCA, where he played with such skilled characters as Mike Luciw, Don Wallace, and Bob Yellen.

"I'll never forget the first time that I went to the New Britain YMCA," Colombo said. "Luciw had never lost a practice match there. He quickly informed me that he was going to give me the doughnut in one of the two games we were going to play. However, it was Luciw who had a "glazed" look in his eye after I defeated him in two straight games."

Colombo felt that handball greatly helped him with his racquetball court sense and wide variety of shots. He also learned a lot by watching other players, such as Muehleisen and Serot.

Colombo is one of two outstanding players (the other being Jim Austin) who use a backhand serve. He feels that this serve opens up the court and allows him to watch his opponents hit the ball.

(continued on page 20)

He also feels strongly that you must control the middle of the court. He will take shots out of the air and short hop (hit the ball as soon as it bounces) the ball, to stay in the center court position.

"I call this the 'war zone'," he said. "I never leave this area if I can help it." His opponents heartily concur.

Colombo stresses that doubles and singles complement each other. "In doubles, you must use a varied shot selection, shoot between your opponents, and use a smaller hitting area to hit the ball. If you can make your shots under these conditions in doubles, you'll have a much easier time making them in singles," he said.

Having won many doubles championships, both nationally and regionally, Colombo feels equally at home on either the right or left side of the court. He feels that the right side player has to be extremely steady. He also has to know which shots to let his partner take. The player on the left side is the shooter. He controls the play and usually scores most of the points.

However, Colombo's aggressive style of play constantly gets him involved in controversies with referees. He says, "There's such a disparity in calls by referees, that it's ridiculous. One or two avoidable hinders in a match should be about average. Four or five avoidable calls in a match is absurd."

When it was suggested that his style of play is conducive to hinders and avoidable hinders, Colombo bristled. "I'll play one or two matches with no problems at all. Then, in my next match, they'll call three or four on me. It's absolutely absurd. There has to be some uniformity among referees," he said.

Colombo does enjoy playing in the nationals and national invitationals. He likes the invitationals because players get a chance to play a lot of matches and they play against players from all over the country. Even if they lose a match, they continue to play, due to the round robin format.

"The only problem with invitationals is that there are no referees," Colombo said. "Each player must call his own match. However, considering the format, it works surprisingly well."

Colombo prepares even harder for the regular nationals. Because the matches are longer, the physical pace is gruelling. In addition, the mental strain is almost unbearable. One loss and you're out of the tournament.

Colombo usually plays three-four times a week, two-three hours at a time, both singles and doubles. Before the nationals, he'll



Colombo takes to the air on the court.

play three-four hours. Often, he'll play against anyone who's looking for a game.

One of his favorite opponents is his long time friend, Peter Gianukakis, a recently retired social studies teacher from the Scarsdale, NY area. "I know that may people think that Pat is a hard nosed son of a gun, who never

gives his opponent an inch. It's a shame they feel that way, as the real Pat Colombo is a pussycat," Gianukakis said. "If you want to defeat him, be nice to him, Compliment him. Tell him how nice he looks. Tell him what a thrill it is to play against a player of his stature. He'll never get mad at you."

"He's a very generous person," said Gianukakis, who has known Colombo for over 20 years. Regardless of your level of play, he'll play against you. He'll always offer advice which will help your game. It doesn't matter whether you've got a problem with your racquetball game or not. Colombo is always eager to help people, whether or not they've got a personal or practical problem."

Gianukakis feels that Colombo's reputation to win at all costs is somewhat unfair. In fact, Colombo has a great sense of humor, even in the heat of battle, he believes.

Gianukakis remembers a close match between Colombo and Fred Letter. Letter passed Colombo with a hard forehand. However, Colombo thought he could return it. The referee wouldn't hear of it, and awarded the point to Letter. Colombo protested. The referee said, "No one could've returned that passing shot. Who do you think you are, Superman?" Colombo whirled around and said, "Yeah, I do think I'm Superman. What do you think about that?" Of course, the referee's decision stood.

Gianukakis acknowledges the fact that Colombo becomes a different person as tournaments approach. He'll go out to destroy Gianukakis and other players he practices against.

"I don't take it personally. He wants to be ready physically and mentally for the tournament competition," Gianukakis said.

Colombo, who is well known along the tournament circuit for his long pants and high top sneakers, feels that he is an extremely fortunate person.

"My pride and joy are my three lovely daughters: Patricia, Barbara, and Diane," he said. "As for my occupation, I love flying. It has enabled me to travel and meet many wonderful people, both in and out of racquetball. I've also been able to play racquetball, the best sport in the world, throughout the country." ○

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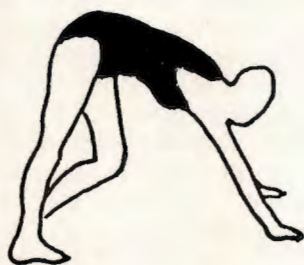
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Flexibility First

by Jean Sauser and
Jacque Hooper

Training for, as well as playing injury-free top-performance racquetball involves improving and maintaining your flexibility first. You should always stretch lightly before, and purposefully after, every racquetball match you play and every workout. If your upper and lower body flexibility is adequate, it's like owning accident insurance. You'll be less likely to injure yourself, and if by chance you do, your

Calf Muscle Stretch #1



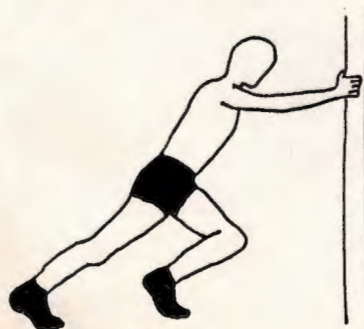
injury will take less time to heal! Maintaining and improving your flexibility is the best way to stretch out your years on the court.

Calf Muscle Stretches

Your calf muscles are made up of the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles. This complex originates behind your knee and inserts into your heel as your achilles tendon (see muscle chart).

The single most common leg

Calf Muscle Stretch #2



injury in racquetball involves the tearing of the calf muscles or, worse still, the achilles tendon. This occurs because racquetball builds your calf muscles. Without a proper flexibility program, they become inflexible. Inflexibility can result in the shortening of your gastrocnemius complex, which in turn can lead to a tighter achilles

hips and distribute your weight evenly between your hands and feet (see illustration).

Step Two: Drop one knee forward while pressing the heel of your other foot down. By keeping your heel down, you'll be stretching the calf of your straight leg. Switch legs by dropping the other knee and repeating this proce-

MUSCLE CHART (back)

This chart illustrates the major muscles. Numbers list exercises for each muscle.

TRAPEZIUS
II 3, 5
III 1, 2, 5
IV 6
V 1, 2, 4, 7a, 7b

TERES MAJOR
II 3, 5
IV 1, 2, 6
V 4, 7a, 7b

LATISSIMUS DORSI
IV 1, 6
V 1, 6, 6a
VII 1, 2
XI 4

GLUTEUS MAXIMUS
I 4, 2
II 5, 11
V 12, 16
IX 6a, 6b
XI 1, 2, 2b, 5

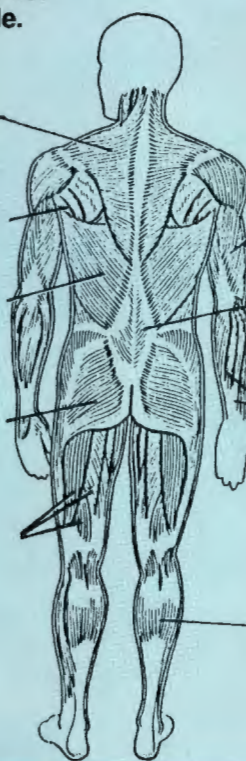
HAMSTRINGS
V 12
X 2
XI 1, 2a, 2b, 5

TRICEPS
II 1, 8, 9, 10
III 1, 2, 5, 4
IV 4, 5
V 2
VII 1a, 1b
XI 4

SACROSPINALUS
II 5
IV 3
V 9
IX 6a, 6b
XI 1, 2, 2b, 5

WRIST & FINGER EXTENSORS
V 19, 19a, 14a, 14b, 15
II 4

CALF (GASTROCNEMIUS)
I 3, 4, 3b
II 6
III 3



tendon. And this can result in chronic tendon pain caused by achilles tendonitis or a ruptured or torn achilles tendon that can keep you off the court for months on end.

You can prevent these common calf muscle injuries by using the following simple calf stretching exercises shown here before and after your matches as well as your workouts.

Calf Muscle Stretch #1

Step One: Get down on all fours as if to run a race. Raise your

head. Never bounce up and down in an effort to loosen up your calf muscles! This could result in injury instead of increased flexibility!

Calf Muscle Stretch #2

Step One: Position yourself slightly more than an arm's length from a wall or fixed upright object (like a post, etc.). Place your hands flat against that object at shoulder level. Split your stance so that your thigh is at a 45 degree angle to your calf and the heel of your bent leg is on the floor. Your other leg

(continued on page 47)



Jim Hiser presents
tournament cup to
Marty Hogan.

Hogan Takes Texas at Dallas 'World Pro' Tourney

by Jim Hiser

World Professional Racquetball made its debut with this year's most elaborate tournament. Robert Gebron, an independent promoter from Dallas, was determined to elevate the professional game to new heights and develop standards to which every other tournament could compare. If the response of the players was any indication, Gebron achieved his goal.

The welcoming cocktail party, hosted by WCR and the luxurious International Athletic Club set the tone for the week's activity. Although the players were informed of the required attire and decor, few were prepared for the elegant setting. Local celebrities and socialites decked out in tuxedos, furs and evening gowns introduced the





Hogan grimaces, retrieving Cliff Swain's lob Z serve.

RMA tour and professional players to a warm Dallas welcome.

The Round of 32's

On the courts, the round of 32's produced three upsets. The most surprising was the defeat of #16 seed David Gross by qualifier Tim Hansen from Florida. This was only Tim's second appearance on the professional circuit, but his fifth game 11-9 victory over Gross indicated the threat of another talented rookie.

Jack Newman (#21) easily defeated Egan Inoue (#18) in another first round match-up. Although Egan has been bothered by some physical problems in the last three tournaments, Jack's consistency forced Egan to make numerous errors.

John Eggerman (#20), returning after missing two stops, defeated #12 Gerry Price in four games. Gerry's game has been struggling this season as his drop from #7 to #12 indicates.

Although not an upset, perhaps the most interesting first round match was that of Marty Hogan and Roger Harripersad of Canada. It was in Dallas only 6 months before that Roger had shattered Marty's hopes of a national title by defeating him in the first round of the DP Nationals. Marty avenged the earlier loss by beating Roger in four games in Dallas.

The Round of 16's

Many of the 16's went as expected with #1 seed Bret Harnett defeating Andy Gross, Reuben Gonzalez outlasting Dan Obremski, Cliff Swain out-serving Jack Newman, Ed Andrews beating local favorite Aaron Katz, Greg Peck crushing John Eggerman and Marty Hogan introducing qualifier Tim Hansen to the realities of professional racquetball.

The most exciting match-up was local Dave Peck against Steve Lerner of California. Dave's game

has been steadily improving this season, as has his ranking. Lerner survived Dave's persistence and squeaked out an 11-10 tiebreaker victory.

The only real upset in the 16's was the defeat of Mike Ray (#7) by Jerry Hilecher (#12). Although Mike was still recovering from a ski injury, Jerry's ability to capitalize on Mike's errors resulted in an 11-7 tiebreaker victory.

The Quarter Finals

In the first quarter final match Steve Lerner faced the tour's most improved player Ed Andrews. Game one was indicative of Steve's recent inability to hold a lead. Although Steve raced out to an early 8-2 lead, Ed quickly closed the gap with three forehand kills and two unforced errors by Steve. At 10-10 Ed hit a forehand drive ace serve for the game. In the second game Ed continued his ace serve barrage, easily winning 11-5. In the third game Steve failed to capitalize on four easy forehand set ups in a row, allowing Ed to retrieve and re-kill the ball and win the match 11-3.

The tournament's most exciting match was to follow. Reuben Gonzalez turned the tables on Bret Harnett and accomplished what few players have been able to do. Down two games to zero Reuben fought back to win game three 11-1 and game four 11-8. Reuben's ability to hit the crack on his

(continued on page 24)



Reuben Gonzalez dives for Harnett's pass.

Dallas

(continued from page 23)

forehand serve forced Harnett to make weak returns, allowing Gonzalez the chance to end the rally. Bret began the tiebreaker in typical Harnett style rolling back hand splats from 39.5 feet and took an early 5-1 lead. Reuben literally dove his way back into the game with tremendous lunging kill-shot gets. He tied the score at 6-6. Harnett continued to pressure Reuben and finally went ahead 10-7. Reuben regained the serve and the next three rallies were some of the best racquetball seen on the tour this season. Both players made tremendous gets with Reuben winning the first two rallies. At 10-9 Reuben executed the season's most unforgettable shot. After diving full-out and retrieving three Harnett backhand splats, Reuben found himself racing backwards to deep court to retrieve Harnett's near perfect ceiling ball. With everyone, including Bret, looking to the ceiling, Reuben unexpectedly fully extended himself and hit an overhead reverse pinch roll out, while falling backward against the wall. Harnett's only response was a bewildered congratulating smile. Reuben went on to win 11-10.

In the next quarter final match, last year's Dallas winner Gregg Peck faced Marty Hogan. Although Marty had never won a match in Dallas, (prior to this tournament), his determination to change history was evident from the beginning. Playing with great intensity Hogan went out to a 10-7 lead. Peck regained the serve and went to forehand Z lobs. Hogan made four straight weak ceiling returns, which Gregg capitalized on for points and the game. Marty fought back and won the next two games 11-6, 11-7 and went behind 8-5 in the fourth game. Although Marty wasn't hitting with great accuracy, the velocity of his shots seemed to handcuff Gregg as he skipped three straight deep court shots. At 8-8 Gregg finally regained his momentum and won the game 11-9. In the tiebreaker Hogan began with drive serves and took an early 5-3 lead. Marty then changed strategy and served a high forehand Z lob to Gregg's forehand. Everytime

Marty served the Z lob he forced a weak Peck return. Marty went ahead 10-6. Suddenly Gregg's backhand got hot and he rolled four straight shots to tie the score 10-10. Marty regained the serve on a forehand kill and returned to the lob serve, which Gregg again returned weakly. Although Marty didn't kill the set up, he forced Gregg to skip a forehand. After three hours and 10 minutes, Hogan had survived to reach the semis.

The last quarter final match was anticlimatic, Cliff Swain com-

Hogan's determination to overcome his Texas jinx continued into the finals . . . He finally captured Texas and once again returned to the #3 ranked spot.

pletely dominated Jerry Hilecher. Cliff's serves kept Jerry off balance, and Cliff's ability to serve hard second serves with as much force and accuracy as his first serves continued to put pressure on Jerry. Cliff won in three straight, 11-4, 11-3 and 11-4.

The Semifinals

Marty Hogan continued his march to the finals by defeating Ed Andrews in three straight games in Saturday's first semifinal match. Ed's inability to short-hop Marty's second serve continually allowed Marty to capitalize on Ed's errors. Although recognized as one of the tour's most prolific short-hop retrievers, Ed repeatedly skipped, encroached or hit high backwall returns. Marty won the first two games 11-7 and 11-5. In the third game Marty surged out to a 10-4 lead, then Ed fought back to 10-10. Ed's inability to capitalize on easy shots proved his downfall as he skipped a forehand set up from 10 feet for Hogan's match point.

In the other semifinal, Reuben Gonzalez challenged Cliff Swain. Reuben captured the first game 11-6 but then went ice-cold and started to skip backhands. Cliff gave Reuben a doughnut in game two. Cliff continued his onslaught

with an 11-2 third game victory and it looked as if Reuben had fallen into a trance. But just when everyone gave up on Reuben, he surged back to easily win the fourth game 11-4. In the tiebreaker, Reuben continued to skip short set ups, and Cliff went out to an early 8-4 lead. Although Reuben fought back to 8-7, his propensity to skip cost him the match and Cliff won 11-8.

To congratulate the finalists, World Championship Racquetball sent bottles of champagne and roses to each player's room. Another example of the high quality and professionalism exhibited by WCR.

The Finals

Hogan's determination to overcome his Texas jinx continued into the finals. The first game exemplified Marty's determination to win. Down 6-0, Hogan fought back to win 11-8. (When he gets his first serve in, Marty is almost unbeatable. Fortunately for the other players Marty's normal percentage of good first serves is less than 25 percent but against Cliff in game one Marty hit at least 50 percent.)

In game two another uncharacteristic trait emerged. Marty started to short-hop lob serves. Although Hogan seldom, if ever, attempts such a shot, he executed the short-hop with great success. Ironically his success in cutting off the lob serve actually caused him to lose the game as he forced Cliff to return to a drive serve. Cliff won the second game 11-4. Hogan returned in the third game with crisp cross court serves, which Cliff could hardly retrieve. As mentioned earlier, Marty had trouble keeping the ball down, but his ability to hit the ball wide, changing angles, made it difficult for Cliff to set up. Marty won the third game 11-6 and Cliff won the fourth. The tiebreaker was a see-saw battle with both players exchanging serves and Marty finally going ahead at 9-8. Marty served four times at 9 and each time Swain returned the serve for a side out. Finally, on his fifth try, Marty went to high lob Z serves which Cliff continually left short for plums, allowing Marty to put away points 10 and 11.

Hogan had finally captured Texas and once again returned to the #3 ranked spot. ○

European Report

The Third Autumn Open — Where Shall We Go Next Weekend?

With the growth of racquetball in Europe, each year more tournaments are added to the racquetball calendar. This makes it more and more difficult for players to choose where they should go to tournaments.

The third Autumn Open was held recently. In the past two years top players from all over Europe have come to Zoetermeer, Holland to compete in this event. (The other major international event, the ninth Dutch Open, which will be held in March, is the oldest Open in Europe.) One of the problems with the Autumn Open is the fact that there are a number of other tournaments held in close succession.

In October/November the following tournaments were available to competitors:

- Oct. 24-26, 3rd Autumn Open, Zoetermeer, Holland
- Oct. 31-Nov 22nd, NRC Open, Hamburg, Germany
- Nov. 7-9, 4th Belgian Open, Brussels
- Nov. 7-9, Castle Shootout, Heidelberg, Germany (U.S. Military)
- Nov. 13-15, Rhein/Main Open, Frankfurt, Germany (U.S. Military)
- Nov. 13-15, 9th Dutch Nationals, Zwijndrecht, Holland
- Nov. 20-22, Turkey Shootout, Ramstein, Germany (U.S. Military)
- Nov. 20-22, Spanish Nationals, Barcelona
- Nov. 20-22, Schinnen Open, Schinnen, Holland (U.S. Military)
- Nov. 28-30, \$1,000 Tournament, Hamburg, Germany

Ten tournaments in five weeks is too much, (understatement). A player with a family who wants to go to more than two or three, could get into serious trouble. And, for any player to play so many tournaments in a row isn't healthy.

Because of this there were fewer familiar faces at the Autumn

Open than in years past. A pleasant surprise was the number of new faces who came to Holland. Players from Germany, the U.S., Belgium, Holland played in this tournament for the first time. A total of 74 players from eight countries met in seven categories.

Brigitte Corsius, tournament director said, "At first we didn't get the number of entries that we'd hoped for, but looking back on this tournament I can say that this one



Teenagers Frits Groenedijk, left, and Ronald de Zwijger competed in Holland's Autumn Open.

lot of fun and good competition in Men's B and C, Women's B and in Boys under 16, but the Men's and Women's Open didn't have the international competition it usually has.

"In the Men's Open the best Dutch players ruled the semi's, and in the Women's Open only Dineke Kool (HOL) and I could give each other any competition," explained Corsius.

A second generation of racquetball players is coming into its own in Europe. This was the first international tournament with a boy's under 16 age group. Unfortunately, the only entrants were from Holland. (Word will have to get around. In Germany some youngsters are improving and international competition is close by. Hopefully entries from other countries will follow soon.)

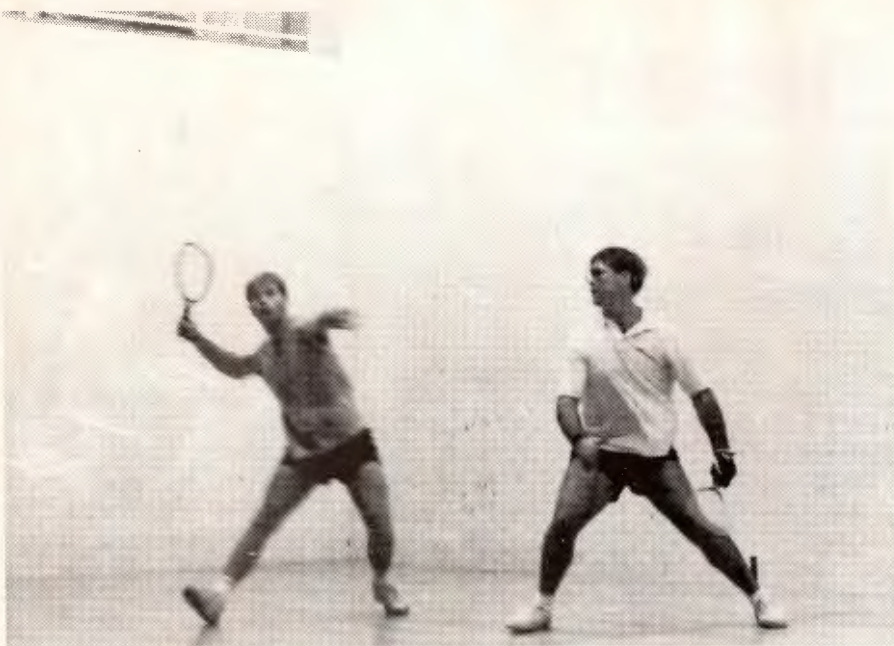
The most promising player in the boy's under 16 is 14 year old Jeroen van der Holst. He won the finals over Gert-Jan Vierling and showed a lot of improvement. In the Men's B, he won the consolation finals in three games and surprised his opponent in the tiebreaker.

In the Men's C, Ed van Delft (HOL) won over Gary Dunn (U.S.) in his match, which seemed more like a diving contest. Gary played a smart game, but the inexperienced van Delft played the match of his life. Dunn won the first game, van Delft won the second and took the tiebreaker, leaving the court with a few minor bruises. For third place Peter van der Bosch (HOL) beat Mike Howard 11-0 in the tiebreaker. As the long match progressed the five minute timeout did a world of good for Peter, but wrecked Mike.

In the Men's B, Art Beasler (U.S.) who had beaten Rene Hehemann in the semi's met Rich Hewlett. Mike won in a tiebreaker by two points. In the match for third place Rene Hehemann won in a tiebreaker 11-10, against Patrick Pisse (BEL) who played with a minor back injury and developed muscle cramps after a long game.

It was all Holland in the semi's. Ronald de Zwijger played Rob van de Kamp in their first match in over a year. Rob had spent eight months training in Sacramento with Ed Martin. He shared an apartment with Roger Harripersad of Canada, in downtown Sacramento.

Rob has improved a lot, but lost to a superior Ronald. Ronald, who played in Orlando recently in the World Championships and squashed Willi Rodriguez (PR), played with Rob who had also given a strong performance at the World Championships playing against Rueben Gonzalez (PR) to



Semifinalists Frank Toney, left, and George Haegerty in Brussels.

lose 15-14, 15-7 after serving game point in an excellent match. Ronald advanced into the finals after winning two games.

Fritz Groenendijk took the tie-breaker against 17 year old Richard van Doezum by two points to advance into the finals, only to lose to Ronald de Zwijger. Fritz lost in two games and left the court with his head hanging. He said he is lacking in racquetball practice, spending more time playing squash.

"In the next few weeks until the nationals, I'll have to practice a lot to catch up with Ronald", said Fritz. "In my view he will be the top candidate to take the crown from defending champion, Tony Luykx. I will be there to prevent this."

Men's doubles title went to the newly formed team of Zwijger/van de Kamp when they played a skillful game against Mooyman/Bik.

In the Women's Open finals Dineke Kool gave a classic performance against Brigitte Corsius. She won in two games never allowing Brigitte to score more than three points in the match. As tournament director Brigitte had a good excuse for her defeat. It's just too big a job to make playing in the finals an easy thing to do. In the past Dineke has had her work cut out to win over Brigitte, with games frequently going into a tiebreaker.

Lyn Batter (U.S.) turned out to be the better player in her match against Bea Peaman (CAN). This was Bea's first tournament on the

continent. She and her husband and two sons will spend some time in Holland and other countries in Europe, playing in some of the other European tournaments.

In the Women's B, Philomine van Pelt (HOL) had to deal with Bodil Petersen (DEN). In two straight games she proved that her



The 19th century facade of the Brussels Racquet Club disguises a modern athletic facility.

victory over Bodil earlier this year in Belgium was a coincidence, but if she continues to improve as rapidly as she has been, she will soon become a Women's Open player to be reckoned with. Sonja Holierhoek won third place without hitting a shot. Her opponent,

Sonya Martin (U.S.), forgot to inform her opponent and the tournament director that she had to leave and thus forfeited the game.

Best performance award was to Ed van Delft, for winning the diving contest. Carla Kruizinga (HOL) won an award for refereeing a two hour match in the Men's Open between Frans Bik (HOL) and Ivan Devos (BEL). Neither of these men made her job easy.

The T-shirts given away at this tournament were greatly appreciated by everyone. One of the tournament sponsors, *Off The Wall*, The Hague did an extraordinary job in providing a sweatshirt with short sleeves which was well received by all the players.

Some of the players commented on the fact that not everyone wore eyeguards which are required by the I.A.R.F. According to the tournament director, eyeguards are not easy to get in Europe and not all the players are accustomed to wearing them. Hopefully this problem will be solved in the near future.

3rd Autumn Open October 19-21, 1986 Zoetermeer, Holland.

MEN'S OPEN

(1) Ronald de Zwijger (HOL); (2) Frits Groenendijk (HOL); (3) Rob van de Kamp (HOL); (4) Richard van Doezum (HOL)

MEN'S B

(1) Art Beasler (U.S.); (2) Richard Hewlett (U.S.); (3) Rene Hehe-mann (HOL); (4) Patrick Pisse (BEL)

MEN'S C

(1) Ed van Delft (HOL); (2) Gary Dunn (U.S.); (3) Peter van der Bosch (HOL); (4) Mike Howard (U.S.)

BOY'S UNDER 16

(1) Jeroen van der Holst (HOL); (2) Gert-Jan Vierling (HOL); (3) Erik van der Berg (HOL); (4) Dennisa Poeliejoe (HOL)

MEN'S DOUBLES

(1) de Zwijger/van de Kamp (HOL); (2) Mooyman/Bik (HOL); (3) Vink/ van Doezum (HOL); (4) Spraggins/ Beasler (U.S.)

WOMEN'S OPEN

(1) Dineke Kool (HOL); (2) Brigitte Corsius (HOL); (3) Lyn Batter (U.S.); (4) Bea Peaman (CAN)

WOMEN'S B

(1) Philomine van Pelt (HOL); (2) Bodil Petersen (DEN); (3) Sonja Holierhoek (HOL); (4) Sonya Martin (U.S.)

Fourth Belgian Open in Brussels, Belgium

Toney Takes Another Shot at Souther

After a week of long hours and hard work the sports hotel at the racquetball facility in Brussels was finished just two hours before the beginning of the Belgian Open.

The four court racquetball facility is located in the center of Brussels. Behind the late 19th century facade a modern center has been created. One court has a glass side wall, another a glass back and a sauna, solarium, poolroom, bar/restaurant makes it one of the nicest facilities in Europe.

For most of the 74 players it was their first visit, and the center staff did an excellent job. The hospitality was warm and much appreciated.

This years tournament didn't have as many participants as last year, but nobody complained because it was still a lot of fun and there was no falling behind schedule.

In the Men's Open the best American players in Europe were present. A lot of the German players were attending the regional tournament in Heidelberg, Germany, but it didn't keep the Americans away. This meant more game time for those who came to Brussels, especially in the consolations and also more time between matches . . . and more time to be sociable.

Unfortunately, there was only one women's category. In the Women's B 19 women played for first, second and third place.

Marian Wakins (U.S.) lost to Carla Kruizinga (HOL). In the tiebreaker she needed two more points, but Carla's stronger nerves put her into the finals.

Annick Peeters and Kathlijn Dewolf, both from Belgium, also went to a tiebreaker with Kathlijn's experience being the deciding factor.



Part of the audience at the Brussels Racquet Club.

Marian Wakins completely dominated the match for third place. Within record time she beat



Brussels Men's C finalists Gerry van der Kluit, left, and Manfred Kaiser.

Annick Peters in two games.

In the finals, Carla Kruizinga was impressive in the first game but she could barely stay alive and win in the second after two game points against her.

In the Men's C, Manfred Kaiser (SWZ) had a tough time only in the first game against Gerry van der Kluit (HOL). The second game was a formality. For third place, his countryman Heini Dingetschweiler, won against an inexperienced Boudouin Bergers (BEL). Bergers who only started to play racquetball four months ago, proved to be a real talent. He has excellent tech-

nique and with good coaching could become a top player in the next few years.

Another young talent is the 14-year-old Dutchman, Jeroen van der Holst. In the Men's B he performed very well. In his first three matches he came from behind to win in the tiebreaker. In the semi's he lost to Ed Clark (U.S.). In his match for third place, Jeroen hadn't recovered completely from his loss in the semi's and lost the first game. He pulled himself together in time to blow away Frank Torres (U.S.) in the second game.

Ed Clark didn't have a weak moment in the finals against Ronald Schmid (HOL). He stayed on top all the way. Even good coaching couldn't alter the situation for Schmid.

For Frank Toney (U.S.), his match in the quarter finals against Frits Groenendijk (HOL) was more difficult than his match in the semi's against George Haegerty (U.S.). Usually Haegerty puts up a lot more resistance than he did in the semi. In the other semi Lou Souther (U.S.) out-classed Chuck Warwick (U.S.). This match was more fun

(continued on page 46)

The Strategic Game

Part Nine: Improving Your Stroking Technique

by Steve Strandemo
with Bill Bruns

If you're interested in ordering an autographed copy of Strategic Racquetball, please write to Strategic Racquetball, Inc., Box 591, Coronado, CA 92118.

Now that you've analyzed the shots that need to be hit in good racquetball, you must have an open mind about your stroking technique off both sides (forehand and backhand). The key is: Can you implement the strategy outlined in the preceding articles with the strokes that you now have?

When teaching the forehand and backhand I continue to emphasize the fundamentals I illustrated in my previous book, *Advanced Racquetball*. These key concepts help ensure a solid stroke that "repeats" itself in the hitting zone, allowing you to hit with power and accuracy even when you're not set up. When you can incorporate these techniques into your swing, the ball will jump off the racquet instead of simply making contact, and even your "misses" will put pressure on your opponent.

The game's top players follow the fundamental swing patterns described here. Their setups and follow-throughs will differ slightly, since people must adjust to the way their own body is structured (some more flexible, others stiff), but down in the hitting zone — from about two feet before impact and two feet after — the leading players use the same fundamental motions.

The Forehand

The forehand motion is the single most important part of your stroking technique, since it is the basis of most of your offense. Here are four crucial elements that need to be grooved into your swing:

1. The Setup. In my opinion, the best way for you — and virtually all players — to set up is to bring your hitting elbow back up to about *shoulder* level. This will give you enough leverage and time to come down through the ball powerfully and efficiently.

True, you can generate slightly more power by taking the elbow higher (as many elite players do), but lengthening your swing like this requires more precise timing as you try to bring the racquet face through flat at impact. The shooting accuracy lost in this tradeoff is not at all worth it, especially since the real power in your stroke is created by good shoulder and hip rotation, elbow extension, and wrist snap. When you try to take your elbow higher than the shoulder (a physical impossibility for many players), you must also control more movement each time you swing. This may be fine when there's plenty of time to hit, such as when the ball is coming off the back wall, but in better play, you'll realize that you need a more compact stroke in center-court action where the play is quick and demanding. You should think, "elbow up to the

shoulder," so that your stroke is complete but not excessively long, and then strive for the correct mechanics. Once you acquire a grooved motion, you can learn to add more power *within* the motion.

2. Elbow Extension and Wrist Snap in the Hitting Zone. You may be slight of build, but if you can extend your hitting elbow just before impact — so that your arm is straight — and snap your wrist properly, you will hit the heck out of the ball. Conversely, no matter how strong you might be, you will have serious problems generating velocity if you lack this explosive inner motion, starting about two to



A good starting position on the forehand, for most players, is to have the elbow at the same height as the shoulder. Many of the top players take the racquet higher, but this takes expert timing, strength, and flexibility. You can rip the ball with plenty of power from the position shown here.

three feet before impact.

3. Contacting the Ball. Many players have been told that when they have time to set up on a forehand, they should try to let the ball drop to about ankle height before making contact. This is ideal — if you happen to have the agility of an athletic teenager

and precise timing as you hit down through the ball at this level. In reality, I've found that trying to contact the ball this low (six to eight inches off the floor) is too demanding physically for the majority of players. Most low-zone shots in a rally will actually be hit in a range between waist height and just below the knee.

When your racquet contacts the ball below knee level, the racquet angle can vary, depending upon how much you bend your knees. The racquet face can be at the same height as the wrist, or tilted below wrist level (this is totally acceptable, and most practical given the difficulty of bending low with the knees to drop the racquet face). When you make contact between knee and waist, the racquet face and wrist should be on about the same level. What counts here, at any level, is how well you can contact the ball with a flat, wrist-snapping action that generates power and keeps the ball low and on target.

Whenever possible, make sure you keep the ball far enough from your body so that you can extend your hitting arm comfortably at contact, giving you that final pop on the ball.

4. The Follow-Through. You can follow-through on a horizontal level, but it's more natural to finish up at around ear level. Also, keep your non-hitting arm out of the way so that you can swing the racquet through freely. Leaving this non-hitting arm across your body forces you to swing across a barrier and will limit your effectiveness.

Common Problems

When you study your swing in a mirror or on videotape, or with the assistance of a teaching pro or a player you feel you can trust, here's a checklist of flaws to look for:

- Relying too much on the arm when swinging, instead of utilizing strong upper body movements tied in with rotation of your hips and legs.
- Straightening or extending the hitting arm *too early* in the swing, which results in an ineffective, tennis-like stroke.
- Your hitting arm is too close to your body, constricting your ability to really pop the ball.
- Not enough wrist snap.
- Stopping the swing too abruptly, which is hard on the arm.
- Your non-hitting arm stays in front of your body during the swing and on the follow-through. (You should dip the hitting shoulder as your initial movement out of the setup position, and have your non-hitting shoulder clear the way as you swing through the shot.)
- Having the off-hand touch and even grab the racquet before the setup, either to help switch grips or to get the racquet set properly. Touching the racquet like this won't hurt your efficiency when there's plenty of time to set up, but it's an unnecessary movement that can cost you points here and there in center-court rallies. (One trick is to put a ball in your off-hand as a constant reminder not to touch the racquet handle.)

The Backhand

Most players have a two-pronged problem on the backhand, starting with an ineffective swing that limits their accuracy and velocity. This in turn creates a lack of confidence in the backhand, which results in an



This photo sequence shows the important fundamentals. Notice the good elbow bend coming down through the swing and the explosive elbow extension at ball contact.

overly defensive shot selection.

1. The Setup. An excellent setup position for most players is to have the hitting shoulder faced into the back left corner, with the hips rotated slightly toward the back wall. This setup creates a swing that has reasonable length but is controllable, with considerable potential for velocity. Players in the elite class may find it necessary to rotate their shoulders until they are parallel to the back wall in order to gain the increased power demanded at that level.

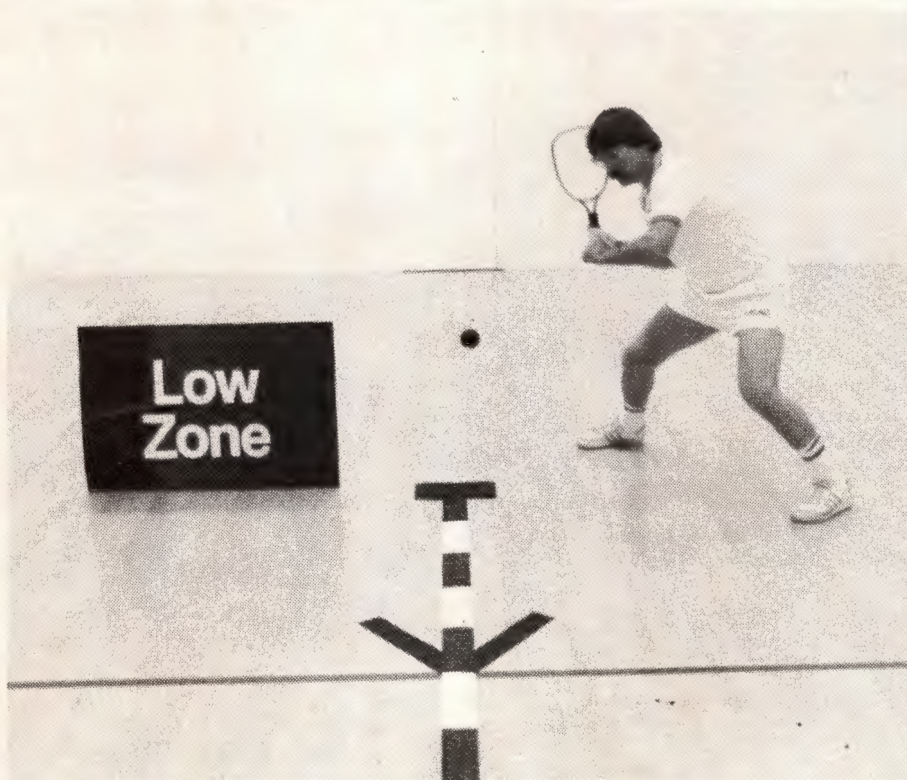
Taking the racquet back high is okay, provided you can pull it down from there and retain good timing. If you're having trouble, set the racquet lower, and you'll still reach the ideal point in the hitting zone.

2. Hitting with Shoulder Action. When you initiate the backswing by rotating your hips and shoulders away from the ball, this should automatically

handed, contact the ball off the inside of your left foot. Keep the ball comfortably away from your body so you have room for leverage as you hit. If you contact the ball out in front of your right foot, you are very likely "arming" the ball too much, and losing power and accuracy.

As you rotate into the ball with the hitting shoulder and pull through with your arm, your arm should start to extend, but your wrist remains cocked until you snap through at impact. You want elbow extension and a subtle but strong wrist snap. *Rip the ball*, don't simply reach out and slap or poke at it.

On the follow-through, learn to pull through with shoulder and hip action, but be sure to shorten your swing in center-court before you interfere with your opponent's anticipated coverage position — for safety's sake.



One reason you may be having trouble scoring from center-court is that your non-hitting hand inadvertently touches the racquet just before you go to swing. There's just not enough time to do this in a fast exchange and still make your shot. People who have this habit tend to hit with a late, punched stroke that limits their offensive potential.

pull your racquet up and back. You should now strive for strong rotating action by the shoulders as you utilize the power in your body to pull the racquet forward, rather than simply "arm" the ball with a punching type of motion.

Too many players try to let their arm do the work instead of rotating into their shot with the hips and shoulders. If this is your problem, remember that even the strongest arm becomes increasingly inaccurate and inconsistent as the match wears on and the arm wearies. You might be able to muscle a lot of shots with a strong arm, but you'll find timing is difficult.

Good use of your shoulders, however, will relieve the pressure on your arm and solidify your hitting motion by transferring the power demands to your entire body.

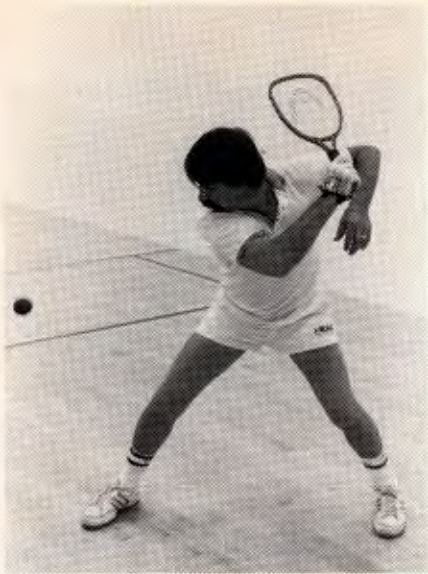
3. Contacting the Ball. When you have time to set up, waiting for the ball to come into your ideal hitting zone calls for patience. Let the ball come deeper than you might want to. If you are right-

4. The Non-Hitting Arm. Letting your non-hitting hand touch the racquet is much less of a problem on the backhand than the forehand, since you're taking the racquet back in the same direction as the non-hitting hand. However, if this hand inhibits the desired setup by limiting your shoulder rotation or stopping your racquet from traveling back far enough, then this unnecessary habit should be eliminated.

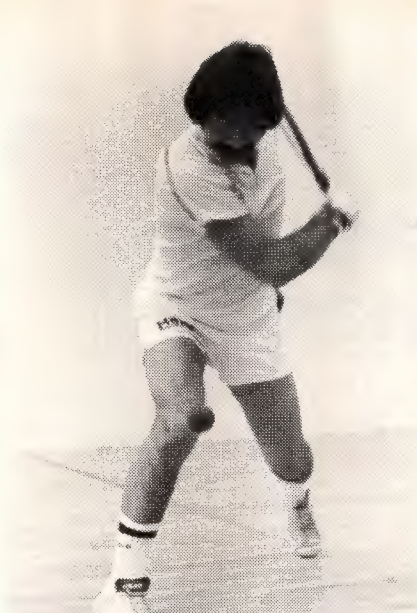
5. Taking the Offensive. An important goal at my camps is to get players to become more aggressive on their backhand sides.

If you are too tentative on this side — at your particular level of play — the first important breakthrough, of course, will be to find the weaknesses in your stroke that need to be remedied.

Next, as you play, you need to remember that you don't have to kill the ball to be effective. Knowing your actual low-zone area should open you up to more offensive hitting, but if you presently have little confidence in your backhand, it will obviously take time



Notice how the hitting arm is pulled way back on the back back-hand setup, and how the top of the arm — from the shoulder to the elbow — is nearly parallel to the floor.



During the swing (center), there's good elbow bend until just before contact . . .



When the body is pulling through and the elbow is extending explosively.

and patience to make the change. In practice matches, develop a more aggressive approach by popping the ball at every reasonable opportunity, even though you may skip or leave up one shot after another. Greater power is what you're striving for, to go with your new outlook on the stroke, so swing through the ball and don't back off.

Making Changes in Technique

While it's tempting to think we can simply *play* our way to better racquetball technique, the body is not that obliging. Any effort to train or retrain it to respond in a particular way takes time, patience, and persistence.

Utilizing Video

I discussed in an earlier article why you should try to take advantage of videotape cameras and recorders, for this is the only way you can slow the game down enough to actually see the flaws in your strokes.

Videotape analysis is an indispensable learning tool, for there is often a huge difference between what you *think* you're doing as you swing and what you actually see yourself doing on the screen. I know that videotaping helps make me a more effective instructor. For instance, if I tell a student his racquet isn't high enough on the forehand setup, but he thinks it is, we have a serious communication problem. Yet when he sees himself on tape, he'll admit, "I can't believe the racquet is that low." Then we're on common ground and he's better motivated to make this necessary change in his swing.

Video also helps you recognize the exact moment when you have wasted motion in your swing. For the first time, you may realize that you have certain ingrained habits that you repeat and repeat without even knowing it.

If possible, have your strokes taped alongside an instructor or a top player at your club so that you have a role model and a point of reference when you study the tape.

Learn To Be Your Own Coach

As an instructor one of my important goals is to motivate you to spend time thinking about your game, analyzing it, and comparing it to the advice you are gathering here. Ideally, you'll try to become your own coach. Instructors and other players can provide advice, and video can reveal your errors on screen, but in the end you must get on an empty court and "coach" yourself to more effective strokes.

If you have the determination to improve, making changes in your stroke should include five or ten minutes a day in front of a mirror, just swinging. You simply want to work on the desired motion, getting a feel for the different new movements while checking yourself against the mirror at key points.

Next, you must get on an empty court and just bounce the ball, hitting one easy shot after another so that you grow more familiar with the desired motion and you're not worried or distracted by playing points. Standing and hitting like this may seem a bit boring, but this is the only way to acquire a solid, consistent motion that will help up when you're competing.

Finding a competent instructor is of course important. There are relatively few qualified instructors around, and many are conveying false information and flawed concepts about strategy and technique. When you do sign up with an instructor you feel you can trust, be aware that he may explain the strokes differently than I do, since we all have our individual teaching approaches. Just remember that the top players all use the same stroking motion as they come through the hitting zone, and that's what you're striving to emulate. So make sure your instructor covers the major elements of the swing — setup, body movement into the shot, elbow bend and extension, wrist snap, and a sensible follow-through — while trying to eliminate unnecessary "extras". Aside from these overall stroking patterns, he should allow you to swing in a natural flow that fits your body build and athletic ability.

(continued on page 38)

Four Memorable Characters

by Charlie Garfinkel

Having played racquetball tournaments for almost 20 years throughout the nation, I've met many people involved in all aspects of racquetball. Memories of four of these players or characters, remain firmly entrenched in my mind. My thoughts on four of these personalities follow:

Marty Hogan

My first contact with Marty Hogan occurred at the Louisville pro stop in 1974. Already known as a budding prodigy, his on-court behavior was unbelievably obnoxious for a youngster barely 15 years old.

Short for his age, I immediately noticed that his sweat socks practically touched the hem of his shorts. But, it was his incredible shooting ability and power which really impressed me.

Playing in both the Open Amateur and professional events, Hogan was scheduled to play Charlie Brumfield, the #1 player in the world, at the professional level. The gallery was packed. And, yours truly, was the referee.

Joking and clowning throughout the first game, Brumfield easily defeated an obviously nervous and frustrated Hogan. But, Brumfield wasn't joking around after Hogan's nervousness disappeared and he won game two quite handily.

During game two Hogan showed the skills which would lead him to the highest winning percentage (more than 85 percent) in the history of men's professional racquetball. Although Brumfield easily won the third game, he and the spectators knew Hogan was des-

tined for future greatness.

Even though Hogan lost early in the pro division, he progressed to the finals of the Open Amateur event, where he met Myron Roderick, a former two time national intercollegiate wrestling champion. Roderick, who is the present athletic director at Oklahoma State University, was about the same height as Hogan. But, he outweighed Hogan by at least 60 pounds.

For some reason, Hogan didn't pull any of the shenanigans that he had used against earlier opponents. Roderick went on to defeat Hogan in two well-played games.

Three years later Hogan was completely dominating the national professional scene. After winning nine straight tournaments leading into the national championships, the only question in everyone's mind was: How many points his final round opponent would score. However, it wasn't to be.

In one of the greatest upsets which has occurred in any racquet sport, Davey Bledsoe defeated Hogan 21-19, 21-20. Although Bledsoe played the match of his life, it was obvious that Hogan was greatly off his game.

But the match showed how Hogan had matured in three years. Although he was visibly crushed by his loss, he was magnanimous in defeat. He congratulated Bledsoe and acknowledged that life must go on.

From 1978-81 Hogan won four national professional championships. His wins were accomplished so easily that it appeared he could predict the score in each



and every match. Although he was cocky and self assured, he was a sportsman of the highest order.

Now recognized with Mike Yellen as one of the greatest players to have ever played racquetball, Hogan is still a threat to win any tournament he enters.

Equally important are the high standards and court demeanor he has exhibited to players of all ages. Without a doubt, the most popular champion to have ever played the game, he has been racquetball's greatest goodwill ambassador, both on and off the court.

Dr. Bud Muehleisen

Dr. Bud, who is affectionately known as Fudley to the racquetball world, received this dubious nickname from the legendary Charlie Brumfield.

Dr. Bud has won more than 60 national titles, the most in the annals of racquetball. He held the National Open Singles Championship at the age of 37. Assorted injuries shortly after that, kept him from attaining further heights in open singles play. However, he still was one of the top doubles players well into his 40s. And he completely dominated the different national age brackets he entered.

Dr. Bud wasn't too thrilled when Charlie Brumfield ranked him as #1 cheater of all time in another racquet publication. Brumfield said, "I knew everyone would be shocked. However, Dr. Bud is so pristine clean that it completely blows your mind when it appears

he has made a bad call or tries to intimidate the referee."

Personally, I feel that Dr. Bud has never knowingly made a bad call. However, he does have this amazing affinity for persuading his opponent or the referee to play a point over when it has gone against him.

Two stories come to mind, both involving Al Ferrari, the former standout guard of the St. Louis Hawks of the National Basketball Association.

About 10 years ago, Muehleisen and Ferrari were tied at 20-20 in a one game final of a round robin in the National Masters Singles Invitational, which — unbelievably — didn't have referees. After a prolonged rally, Muehleisen hit a shot which appeared to skip to everyone watching, including Ferrari. The missed shot would've given Ferrari the championship. However, after a heated discussion, Muehleisen convinced Ferrari to play it over. Naturally, Muehleisen regained the serve and won the match.

About four years later, Muehleisen and Ferrari were playing in the finals of the master's division of the AARA Nationals. This time they had a referee and line judges. Muehleisen won the first game easily and had a big lead in the second game. Suddenly, Ferrari started playing with renewed confidence and vigor.

Serving at 19-20, Ferrari became involved in a long rally with Muehleisen. Ferrari eventually won the point. The score was now 20-20. Or was it?

While the crowd was going wild, Muehleisen was busy talking to the referee and line judges. Suddenly, the referee said, "Second serve." Ferrari, furious, turned and said, "What are you talking about?" The referee calmly replied, "Dr. Muehleisen appealed your serve. The line judges overruled me." Dr. Bud, merely smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

Needless to say, Dr. Bud regained the serve. He quickly won another point to win the championship. And it was rumored that Ferrari turned down a chance to become president of the Dr. Bud Muehleisen Fan Club.

Bill Schmidtke

Although Schmidtke won the

1971 and 1974 National Open Championships, his success never went to his clothes. Wearing his usual attire of a faded flannel shirt with jeans to match, he always gave the impression of being a country bumpkin.

Schmidtke's forehand was one of the greatest of all time and his heart, sportsmanship and determination were second to none.

In the 1971 National Singles Finals he was losing to Craig Finger, 14-3, in the third and final game. (Games were to 21 points) Schmidtke appeared exhausted, confused and angry. It seemed that Finger would win handily.

In addition to Bill Schmidtke's phenomenal shooting in the 1974 nationals, his performance ranks as one of the greatest displays of courage and determination I have ever seen. He was a great champion.

However, Schmidtke turned the match around with the greatest display of serving and shooting I had ever seen up to that time. He proceeded to score 18 straight points to win the third game 21-14. When the match was over, Finger was the one who was confused and upset.

Schmidtke's 1971 performance will never be forgotten. However, as great as his 1971 performance was, he surpassed it in 1974.

Despite his 1971 win, Schmidtke hadn't reached the finals of the Nationals in 1972 or 1973. In 1974, he had been completely overlooked as a contender for the national title, due to the outstanding year-long performances of Charlie Brumfield and the three Steves: Strandemo, Serot and Keeley.

Schmidtke confounded the experts and Brumfield, Strandemo, Serot and Keeley who he defeated respectively, in the quarterfinals, semifinals and finals. Each match went the full limit of three games. Schmidtke was almost 10 years older than both Brumfield and Strandemo, and almost 15 years older than Serot. However, he was

the one who was stronger mentally and physically in each of the third games against his more favored opponents.

In addition to Schmidtke's phenomenal shooting in the 1974 nationals, his performance ranks as one of the greatest displays of courage and determination I have ever seen. He was a great champion.

Chuck Leve

Some of you may be wondering why Chuck Leve is included with such all-time playing greats as Hogan, Muehleisen and Schmidtke. However, you must remember that this article is about memorable characters that I've met in racquetball, not only players.

My first contact with Chuck Leve occurred in 1971. He was the editor of *Racquetball Magazine* at the time. In addition, he was in charge of the national tournament. About a month before the nationals I called him to say I should be seeded in the top eight. When he asked why, I told him I was playing as well as anyone in the country. In addition, I didn't want to embarrass the seeding committee. Leve said, "I'll see what I can do." Suffice to say, I was seeded 15th.

Even though I was somewhat disturbed that Leve couldn't be bought, this incident was an excellent example of Leve's high ideals and sense of fairness. He honestly felt that was where I should've been ranked.

Of course, he was probably whistling a different tune after I defeated #2 ranked Charlie Brumfield.

In addition to later becoming the editor of *National Racquetball*, he was also in charge of the mens and womens professional tour. His reputation for fairness and decisiveness were second to none.

Perhaps Leve will best be remembered for instituting the third game tiebreaker to 11 points. At the time, all games were to 21 points. To this day, most tiebreakers are still played to 11 points.

Leve and racquetball have been intertwined since the early 1970s. He has seen the best and worst of times in racquetball. Personally, I feel that racquetball has been extremely fortunate in having a person as dedicated and knowledgeable as Leve has been, in his endeavors to promote racquetball. ○

WPRA Alaska Tour Stop

by Lynn Cherry

Lynn Adams came up a double winner in the opening stop of the women's professional season held at the Alaska Athletic Club in Anchorage, October 15-19.

Adams continued her tournament winning streak by defeating the number two ranked McKinney, 11-5, 11-6, 11-4. Last season, both players competed in the finals of every women's event. Adams second win of the tournament came in blind draw mixed doubles for the second straight year. Adams was lucky enough to be paired with the top seeded men's open player, Danny Hall, to beat Fran Davis and Mike Seidl, 10-11, 11-4, 11-7, 11-4.

This season, the women's scoring system is consistent with the men's style of three out of five games to 11. Already the new method seems to be having an interesting effect. In Adams' semi-final match, third ranked Marci Drexler extended her to four games 11-2, 11-3, 9-11, 11-6. Last season, Adams did not lose a single game until the sixth tournament of the year.

"I think in the 11 point game,



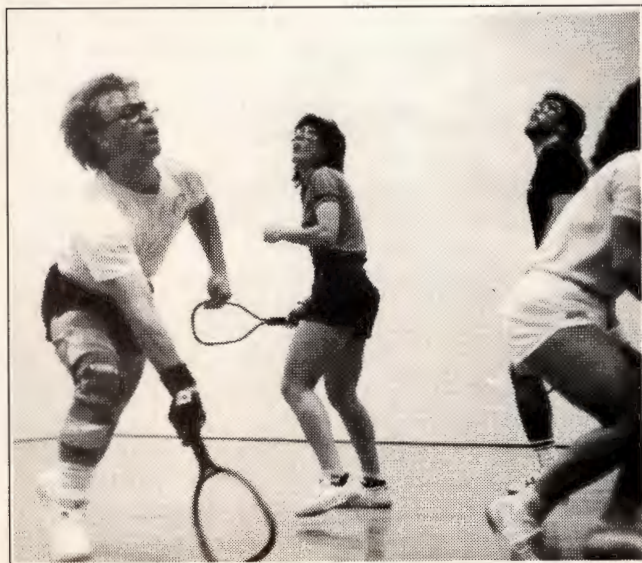
The winners are all smiles in Anchorage.

there's more room for an upset. When you're up 10-2 or 9-2, you still don't feel like the game is in the bag or you couldn't come back," said Adams. "Because of the new scoring system I would be surprised if I went undefeated again. This scoring to 11 makes the chances of losing much greater. Now, I try to beat the scoring system along with the player."

In the quarter finals, McKinney faced some stiff competition in a five game match against Sandy Robson. "I lost four games last year

with the exception of Lynn. It would be nice if the two games lost to Sandy will be all I lose this year, but this scoring system makes that unrealistic," said McKinney.

This season, the women's scoring system is consistent with the men's style of three out of five games to 11. Already the new method seems to be having an interesting effect.



It's 'heads up' for pro-am doubles players.

As Adams, the #1 ranked player shot her way to a 9-2 advantage, she did not spend . . . "I know a lot of things she does and the tendencies she has," said Adams. "I think that's to my advantage. The more I know her game, the less chance there is for an upset. She'd have to play exceptionally good racquetball to beat me." Adams finished off McKinney on a backhand splat and backhand kill, 11-5.

In the second game, Adams

jumped out to a 6-0 advantage before McKinney scored four straight herself. The first came on a forehand ace serve which caught Adams off guard. Then, McKinney earned three more points on the third shot of each rally, including a diving get which rolled out on the front wall.

Adams started her march to finish the game when McKinney missed a backhand setup off the back wall and shot a forehand, which missed short. Adams went on to win 11-6.

The third and final game started out all Adams again as she scored nine straight points. McKinney scored four points before Adams collected an 11-4 victory and the 2,500 winner's check.

After the match McKinney said, "She played extremely well. I didn't put balls away against Lynn like I had all week. Part of it might be knowing Lynn is covering the court versus someone else, but I didn't have intelligent shot selection."

In the first semi-final match McKinney quickly defeated fourth seeded Vicki Panzeri 11-2, 11-9, 11-1. The later match to determine who would meet the second seed in the finals was a crowd pleasing four-game battle between Adams and Drexler.

At first, Adams looked like she was going to win as easily as

points with a little bit of luck. She moved to within one, 7-6, on a pass down the forehand line which should have come off the back wall for setup, but instead stuck to the side wall so Adams had no play. The game was tied when Drexler swung at the ball, missed and it hit Adams.

The players traded points until Drexler was up 10-9. She finally won on a screaming backhand serve that aced Adams, 11-9.

game was anticlimatic as McKinney held Robson to one point 11-1.

In the other quarterfinal match, Molly O'Brien had edged Panzeri 11-10 the first game, and let the match 2-1 after Panzeri won 11-6 and lost the third 11-9. The fourth game proved to be the turning point in the match when Panzeri managed to score six straight points for the victory and overcome O'Brien in the tiebreaker, 11-1.

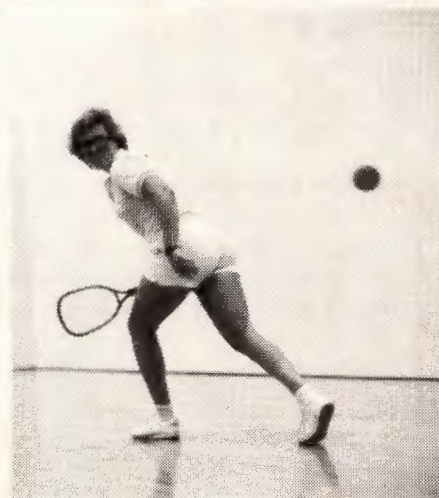
Adams has won the Alaska

Lynn Adams in action in Alaskan tourney.



The fourth game Drexler stayed on track for a 3-0 lead before Adams came back for seven straight points. Drexler rallied to trail 7-6, but Adams pulled away for the match victory 11-6.

In the quarterfinals, Adams defeated Marcy Lynch in three



Caryn McKinney goes for it.

"I think in the 11 point game, there's more room for an upset. When you're up 10-2 or 9-2, you still don't feel like the game is in the bag or you couldn't come back," said Adams.

McKinney had earlier in the afternoon. She started the match by rolling to a 7-0 lead before Drexler finally scored a couple of points before the end of the game, 11-2.

The next game Adams controlled 11-3 and she started the third game with equal domination, leading 7-1. But, an ace serve by Drexler set her on fire as she rolled out a forehand kill. Drexler then aced Adams on a forehand serve that caught the back corner to run parallel to the side wall.

Drexler gained the next two

games 11-0, 11-6, 11-4 while Drexler dropped Fran Davis 11-3, 11-7, 11-9. Although four of the regular touring pros in the top 12 did not make the trip to Alaska, the bottom half of the bracket proved to be difficult.

Both fourth seeded Panzeri and McKinney were tested in five game wins. McKinney lost the opening game of her match against seventh seeded Sandy Robson 11-8 before she took the next two 11-2, 11-3. But Robson evened the match with a 11-5 win. The last

tournament for eight straight years. The last two years it has been a full women's pro stop featuring \$12,000 in pro singles and blind draw mixed doubles. Previously, the tournament has been an invitational event for eight of the top professional women.

The event was sponsored by the Anchorage Daily News, Green Connection, Tower Club and Ram Racquetball. Many thanks to these sponsors and the Alaska Athletic Club for another outstanding event. ○

The Side Wall Toss Syndrome

by Dr. David C. Pizarro
and Rex Schott

About the Authors:

Dr. David C. Pizarro is an assistant professor of physical education instructor. Both are with the Physical Education Department of Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas.

The two players entered the racquetball court for their weekly match. A few friendly words were exchanged and then each player, ball in hand, moved to their side of the court for warmup. Each began tossing the ball to the side wall and backhands. Several minutes later they changed sides of the court. More warm up strokes were made from balls tossed to the side wall. After a few more minutes, warm up was ended, a decision to serve was made and play began.

This is an all too familiar scene in the world of racquetball. Without realizing it, these players had become victims of the Side Wall

Toss Syndrome.

The Side Wall Toss Syndrome is an insidious disease that afflicts certain racquetball players. It is the tendency to practice hundreds of shots using a side wall toss to initiate the shots.

The syndrome has grown through a variety of mediums. Several racquetball textbooks (Collins, Hodges & Marshall, 1983, Norton & Bryant, 1984, Reznik, 1981, Sauser & Shay, 1981) suggest drills which promote a side wall toss to practice forehands, backhands or ceiling shots. The players review the drills and then practice what the authors have outlined for them.

Other players acquire the Side

Wall Toss Syndrome from watching better players at the club who are already ingrained. The expanded use of this method for warm up and practice by numerous players has resulted in its quiet acceptance. Only in carefully examining the body movements and basic concepts of motor skill practice may we understand how the side wall toss may be affecting performance during actual games.

Due to the nature of the sport, racquetball often encourages individualized practice sessions. Practice sessions should be designed to simulate game conditions. These sessions should be planned so that the player is constructively working on stroke improvement, the calculation of angles and the development of power and accuracy. Poorly planned drills which fail to create realistic game conditions often establish habitual mechanical and movement errors. The errors often result in miscalculated strokes under the pressure of a match situation.

Side wall toss drills, which are designed to help the player get in a position to play racquetballs coming off the side wall may create unrealistic practice conditions. Side wall drills instruct the player to stand facing the side wall and then toss the ball lightly toward the wall. This type of set-up, a ball rebounding from the side wall at a 90 degree angle, rarely occurs in a game situation. This type of rebound from the side wall is usually seen only in sharply hit Z serves and Z shots.

Racquetballs tossed to the side wall do not represent a realistic simulation of a game condition for forehand and backhand drives. A tossed ball rebounding from the

Figure 1. Directional force of tossed racquetball rebounding at ninety degree angle from the side wall.

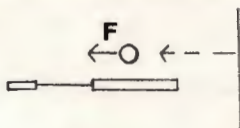


Figure 2. Directional forces of stroked racquetball rebounding at an angle from the side wall.

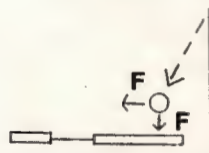
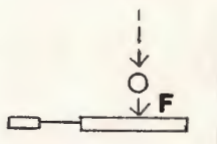


Figure 3. Directional force of stroked racquetball rebounding from the front wall.



Legend:

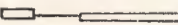
-  = Side wall
-  = Path of the ball rebounding from the wall
-  = Ball
-  = Directional force of racquetball
-  = Racquet face



Figure 4 — Player initiating side wall toss for forehand stroke.

side wall at a 90 degree angle creates little, if any, directional force into the racquet face (**Figure 1**). During play, the ball angling off the side wall (**Figure 3**) applies varying amounts of directional force into the face of the racquet. If the player does not utilize game-like drills which encourage neuromuscular compensation of this directional force of the ball into the racquet (action), there will be small positional changes in the racquet face (reaction) when the opponent's hard driven shot impacts on the strings. These changes may result in improperly angled shots, which lead to set ups for the opponent.

The side wall toss drills suggested by the various authors may also limit the use of the proper mechanical concepts in stroking. **Figure 4** shows a player initiating the toss to the side wall. A tossed ball rebounding from the side wall may cause cramping of the arm against the body because of its movement directly toward the mid-section of the player. The ball, rebounding at a 90 degree angle, may also force the player to step back, or open their stance to accommodate arm swing (**Figure 5**). These backward adjusting movements prevent the player from stepping into the ball and applying force in the desired direction: Toward the front wall. These mechanical compensations made by the player may prevent the development of consistent arm/wrist action and the appropriate transfer of weight at contact.

The same problem noted in



Figure 5 — Player stepping back and opening stance to accommodate ball movement after a side wall toss.

Figure 6 — Player initiating side wall toss for ceiling shot.



the side wall toss forehand drill may also be found in the ceiling shot drill which uses a side wall toss (Norton & Bryant, 1984). Racquetballs tossed high to the side wall (**Figure 6**), which rebound at a 90 degree angle often force the player's weight in the direction of the ball's movement as the arm is brought overhead (**Figure 7**). This off-balance position may prevent the practicing of the proper mechanics of the ceiling shot. Like the forehand and backhand drives, very few ceiling shots will ever rebound at a 90 degree angle from the side wall. Therefore, why practice under these conditions if they do not simulate match conditions?

Elimination of the Side Wall Toss Syndrome is not difficult. It only requires the conscious

(continued on page 41)



Figure 7 — Off balance position created by side wall toss for ceiling shot.

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The Strategic Game

(continued from page 27)

Some Closing Thoughts About The "Power" Game

In racquetball's "control era", before it became important to hit the ball with considerable power, swings were shorter in nature, with a high premium on accuracy. The forehand setup position had the elbow *below* the shoulder, and the swing was more compact, but it could still generate good power. On the back-hand setup, the hitter's shoulders were basically parallel to the side wall, and the racquet wasn't drawn as far back or nearly as high as it is today. The result was an even-paced swing that produced a respectable offen-sive pace and considerable accuracy.

Since racquetball games all ran to 21 then, and no real blaster or shooter could outduel the top control players, most newcomers placed their emphasis on control instead of power. Then came Marty Hogan, who was the first to successfully challenge the "control group" that was perched at the top of the sport. He went through three or four years of learning to tame his blistering power, but when he gained control — in 1977 — he became the unquestioned king of the hill.

I should note, however, that Marty was an unbelievably gifted athlete, with a rare ability to retain control at tremendously high velocity. Many other players in the years since have tried and failed to duplicate his feats by using his methods.

What Marty did do for the sport, though, was to make racquetball players stand up and take notice of the many virtues of hitting the ball harder. Increased pace on the ball significantly reduces an opponent's reaction time, as long as the ball is hit accurately. Simply put, power combined with control is much more dangerous to play against than just control.

Unfortunately, the quest for greater power led to considerable changes in swing emphasis: a much higher forehand setup (the elbow way above the shoulder) and shoulders facing the back wall on the backhand setup. Many players became enamored with a

looping-type swing, where near-perfect timing was necessary — and tough to accomplish hit after hit.

The increased power in racquetball has brought considerable success to those players who know how to implement it, but it has caused widespread grief among the many players who either lack the necessary ability or common sense to use it intelligently. This is especially true at the club level, where many general C, B, and A players have taken the power theory to an unreasonable extreme. They try to duplicate these high, looping-type swings when they lack the physical ability to implement these strokes properly and consistently. Some of these players are impressive at times, maintaining their power over stretches of games and matches, but they can't maintain the necessary efficiency over a long haul.

So as you build and refine your game in the coming months and years, keep in mind that power *and* control are both integral parts of this game. ○

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Flexibility First

(continued from page 21)

should be straight behind you with its heel down as close to the floor as comfortable.

Step Two: Slowly lean forward by bending your front leg to stretch the calf muscles of your straight leg. Keep your head up. Lead with your head and chest into the stretch.

Warm Up

Before playing a racquetball match or conducting a workout (such as running) that will be tightening your calf muscles, execute one or both exercises, doing three or four stretches on each leg. Hold each stretch for a count of five to eight.

Cool Down

After you've finished your match or workout, do five stretches on each leg. Hold each stretch for a count of 10-12.

Additional Tips

If you have problems with your calf muscles already being tight, or are coming back from a calf muscle injury, it is advisable to use both exercises before and after you play or every workout involving your calf muscles that you do. ○

**Next month:
Hamstring Stretches**

Side Wall

(continued from page 37)

thought that drills and warm ups need to simulate game-like conditions. Drills can be started with a drop hit or a toss to the front wall, but they should be continued in such a manner that the player becomes accustomed to compensating for the various directional forces applied to the racquet face. Drills that encourage continued play on the ball, such as rally type drills, (Collins, Hodges & Marshall, 1983; Reznik, 1981), would more realistically develop the game-like conditions sought.

For instructional purposes, racquetballs thrown in an overhand motion to the front wall, or hit to the ceiling, can also be used to simulate game-like conditions.

The next time you warm up or practice, examine your methods. Is the repetitive side wall toss part of your style? If so, you may have already acquired the Side Wall Toss Syndrome. Break the habit. Use rally drills and learn to control the directional forces applied to the racquet face by your opponent's shots. You'll notice the improvement in your weekly match.

References

Collins D.R., Hodges, P.B., & Marshall, M.G. (1983). *The Art and Science of Racquetball*. Bloomington, Indiana: Tichenor Publishing.

Norton, C. & Bryant, J.E. (1984). *Racquetball: A Guide for The Aspiring Player*. Englewood, Colorado: Morton Publishing.

Reznik, J.W. (1981). *Racquetball*. New York: Sterling Publishing.

Sauser, J. & Shay, A. (1981). *Intermediate Racquetball Drill*. Chicago: Contemporary Books. ○

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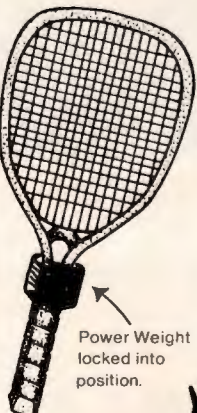
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7	Molly O'Brien	63.75
8	March Lynch	60.00
9	Trina Rasmussen	48.33
10	Sandy Robson	47.50
11	Fran Davis	41.25
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3	Doug Ganim
4	Kelvin Vantrease
5	Tim Hansen
6	Charlie Nichols
7	Dave Negrete
8	Mike Lowe
9	Aaron Katz
10	Jamie Sumner
11	Don Kelly
12	Mike Spugnardi
13	Roger Harripersad
14	Tom Montalbano
15	Dennis Aceto
16	Dan Obremski
17	Sergio Gonzalez
18	Shawn Fitzpatrick
19	Tony Gabriel
20	Steve Moody
21	Scott St. Onge
22	Oscar Gonzalez
23	Fred Calibreese
24	Mark Morrison
25	Tim Anthony

RMA Pro Racquetball Official Rankings October 19, 1986

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3	M. Hogan	371.73
4	E. Andrews	329.59
5	C. Swain	314.69
6	G. Peck	313.21
7	M. Ray	262.51
8	R. Gonzalez	250.15
9	D. Peck	213.23
10	G. Price	181.26
11	S. Lerner	166.18
12	J. Hilecher	165.76
13	S. Oliver	144.07
14	D. Obremski	139.94
15	D. Cohen	136.48
16	A. Gross	130.08
17	D. Gross	120.68
18	E. Inoue	120.52
19	A. Katz	98.53
20	M. Griffith	98.09
21	L. Gilliam	94.81
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European Report

(continued from page 27)

than competitive and resulted in an easy win for Souther.

George Haegerty and Chuck Warwick played a marathon match for third. They battled for points for more than 1-1/2 hour with George winning in the tiebreaker.

Frank Toney was very confident in his matches prior to the finals, but in the first match he wasn't in control of himself and needed more rallies than necessary to score points. Frank wasn't Frank. He was somehow intimidated by Lou. He lost the first game and at the start of the second he started out the same way. Then, slowly but surely, he pulled himself together and began to play. He started to dive and was in his best form during the second half of the game. But luck wasn't on Frank's side. He lost the match after serving game point. A crowd of about 200 watched this game and rooted for Frank hoping to see him win this

one, but once again Lou proved to be the best in Europe.

Toney got his revenge on Souther when he and partner Chuck Warwick beat Lou and Eddie Virgil in the doubles finals. Virgil is a good B player, but at this level Souther must compensate too much. The score showed this all too clearly.

At the awards ceremony, Dirk Coopman (BEL), general secretary

of the Belgium Racquetball Federation and tournament director, showed his appreciation for the participation of all the players who came from all over Europe.

He handed out door prizes provided by Spalding, Australian, Browning/Ektelon and the center itself. He apologized for the misprinting on the t-shirts — Antwerp instead of Brussels — saying that the misprint made the shirts pretty exclusive, and if the players wanted a t-shirt with Brussels on it, they had to come back next year.

To those Americans who did not plan on returning next year, he wished a pleasant stay elsewhere in the world and asked them to remember the many friends they had made at the Belgian Open this year. ○

**4th Belgian Open
November 7-9, 1986
Brussels, Belgium**

MEN'S OPEN

(1) Lou Souther, (U.S.); (2) Frank Toney (U.S.); (3) George Haegerty (U.S.); (4) Chuck Warwick (U.S.)

MEN'S B

(1) Ed Clark (U.S.); (2) Ronald Schmid (HOL); (3) Jeroen van der Holst (HOL); (4) Frank Torres (HOL)

MEN'S C

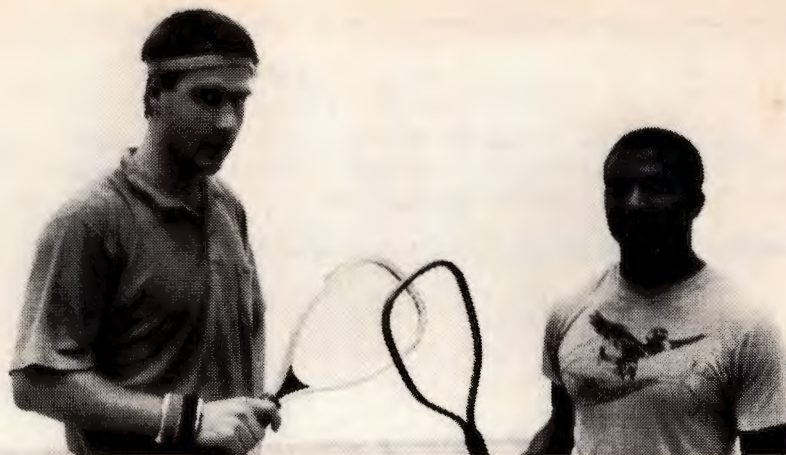
(1) Manfred Kaiser (SWZ); (2) Gerry van der Kluit (HOL); (3) Heini Dinget-schweiler (SWZ); (4) Bouduooin Bergers (BEL)

MEN'S DOUBLES

(1) Toney/Warwick (U.S.); (2) Souther/Virgil (U.S.); (3) Plummer/Duggan (U.S.); (4) Minor/Little (U.S.)

WOMEN'S B

(1) Carla Kruizinga (HOL); (2) Kathlijn Dewolf (BEL); (3) Marian Wakins (U.S.); (4) Annick Peeters (BEL)



Finalists in the Men's B, Ronald Schmid, left, and Ed Clark in Brussels.

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Off Court Fitness

(continued from page 6)

"You mean it's something for everyone?" I said.

"That's right." He replied.

"Well, you're wrong," I said as I burst his bubble. "There is nothing in fitness that's for everyone. Even more important, weight training is not for people who are fat to begin with. They need to lose weight first, and that can be done through diet and aerobic exercise."

"Now you're telling me I have to put more money into diversifying this club," he scowled at me.

"Sad, but true," I told him.

Three months later, I quit that club and a year after that it went out of business. The reason? Possibly failure to realize that nothing is for everyone.

The business end of health and fitness aside, using the philosophy of different strokes for different folks can help you be successful in fitness and racquetball regardless of the kind of club you belong to or the players you hang out with.

When considering a personal fitness program, choose the activities you enjoy. It doesn't matter how many of your friends are cross country skiing for aerobic fitness. If you hate the cold you won't be able to stick with it long enough to reap the benefits involved.

Instead, find what *you* like to do and do it on a regular basis. Stick with it if you're getting good results, even if it isn't what everyone around you is doing.

Remember, in the world of fitness, just like the world of fashion, every dog has its day. What you're doing this year might be considered out of date or uncool, but it will probably become the hottest thing in a year or two. That's what trend setters and leaders are all about! It's also the beauty of life in America.

Be a leader instead of a follower. Concentrate on what's right for you. Nothing is for everyone. In fact, in the world of racquetball, fitness — and that bigger picture called "life" — doing something solely because "everyone" is doing it leads to failure more often than it ever leads to success. Long live "different strokes"! ○

Canadian Report

(continued from page 8)

easy, and comforting, to read the message Sport Canada is sending to the CRA and CRA's National Team Program.

Most significant about all of this are the repercussions of those rumblings. The echo.

How do all sports thrive?

Youngsters. Kids growing up, wanting to be the Wayne Gretzkys, the John McEnroes, the Dwight Goodens, the Marty Hogans.

The juniors in Canada have something to look forward to. They know their excellence in racquetball can be rewarded significantly. And that's a big deal.

As Bill Houldsworth, executive director of the CRA said, "It's another brick in making the building." Then he grinned. "A helluva big brick." ○

First Serve

(continued from page 4)

vehicle to promote the sports (his and ours) to the masses. His bold strategy would have the court erected in shopping malls, as well as local and regional fitness expositions, thereby exposing millions of "regular" people to racquetball and wallyball.

I, frankly, have never seen anyone work harder and with more dedication on a project than Garcia is on this one. If he pulls it off, it could be a turning point in the development of racquetball that would have a lasting impact on the sport's future.

I am particularly pleased to see that the long-range intent is to bring the sport to the masses, thereby exposing racquetball to millions of youngsters. This, more than anything, is vital to the long-term health of the sport.

We'll keep you updated as developments occur. In the meantime, it wouldn't hurt if you called your neighborhood racquetball equipment manufacturer and urged him to send Garcia some dough. He'll get a lot more for his money than spending it on tournament t-shirts. ○

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New Directions

(continued from page 15)

January 1, 1987, with special emphasis on state organizations and services, internal control and membership development.

15. Approved the following sites for 1987 U.S. National Championships:

a) U.S. National Intercollegiates — International Athletic Club, Denver, CO

b) U.S. National Singles — Downtown Y.M.C.A., Houston, TX

c) U.S. National Juniors — Sawmill Athletic Club, Columbus, OH

d) U.S. National Doubles — Arizona Athletic Club, Tempe, AZ

16. Rules — approved sending to membership eight new rule proposals one of which is mandatory eye protection for all.

17. Approved reduced membership for active military personnel.

18. Approved the Disabled National Championships to be separate from able bodied. Disabled division at National Singles will carry a level 5 value.

19. Approved a regional and state directors seminar for the O.T.C. in January of 1987.

20. Nominated the following individuals for election to the A.A.R.A. Board for 3-year term beginning June 1, 1987:

Van Dubolsky, Florida
Jim Hiser, Michigan
Mike Arnolt, Indiana
Ivan Bruner, Wisconsin
John Foust, Colorado

21. Formulated a Strategic Planning Committee to make recommendations for the future of the sport into the year 2000. ○

Off The Wall

(continued from page 1)

St. Onge, the AARA's executive director; pro commissioner Jim Hiser; Steve Strandemo; Jean Sauser; and many other pros, we developed a strong editorial direction that brought all elements of the sport to the pages of *National Racquetball* each month.

We knew that our readership was interested in various aspects of the sport, ranging from recreational and amateur to pro. We had to make sure the total readership was served, not just a portion of it.

Our increased circulation attests to the fact that we achieved the editorial focus we strived for.

The only area left to tend was that of a support effort for the associations — both state and national — that are dedicated to expanding racquetball to its rightly deserved international status. Again, we achieved this through the pages of *National Racquetball* by bringing in contributing editors from around the world.

But we're not resting on past laurels. *National Racquetball* plans to sponsor one or more tournaments during 1987 as a further show of support for a sport we believe has the potential to take its

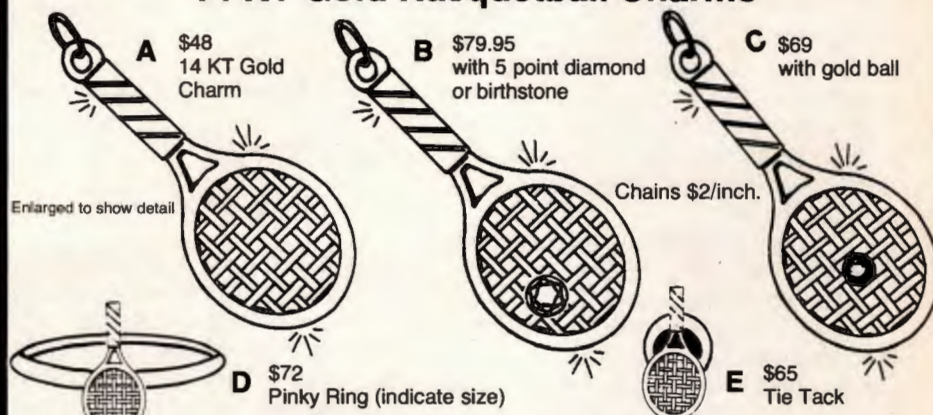
place with the most popular participative sports.

Yes, I had considerable consternation after my Tempe experience. But that was last year. And, past is prologue. We forward-thinking players know things are going to get better! ○

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