

RACQUETBALL

Magazine ... May - June 1997 ... \$4.00

SO YOU WANT TO BE SPONSORED?

How do players get all this neat stuff? Racquets, shoes, "team" warm-ups? Author Tom Slear asks around and gets some interesting answers ... plus some tips for the up-and-coming!

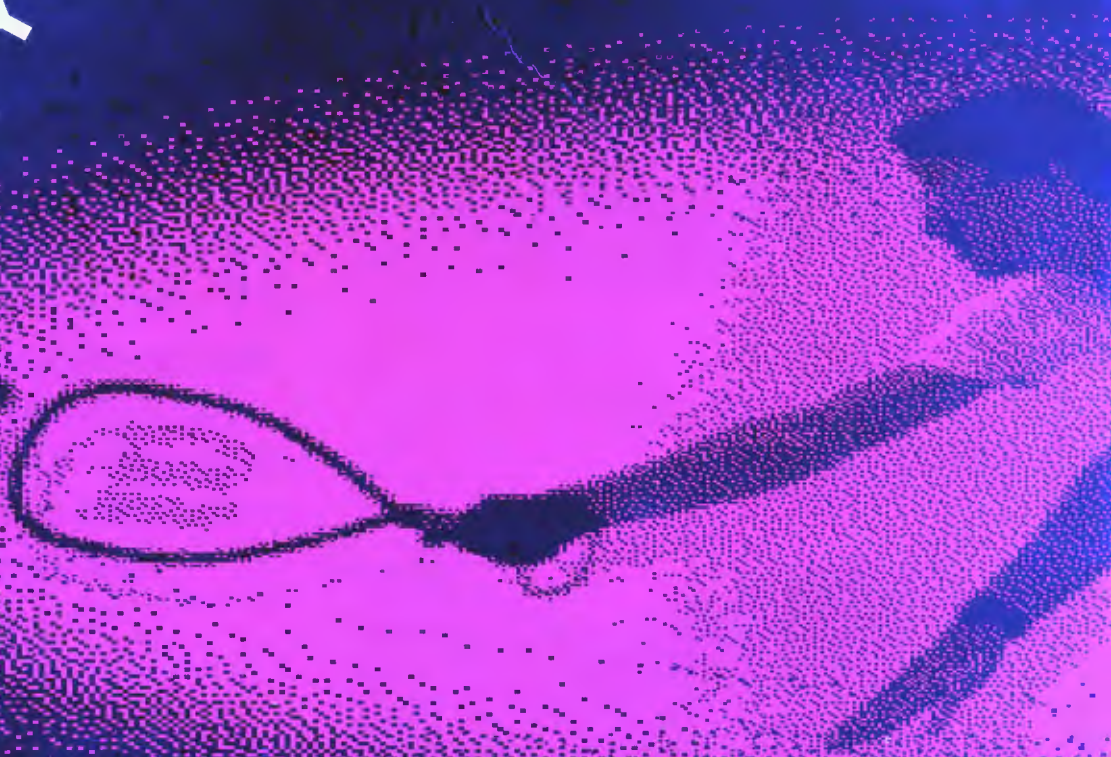
Also inside ... Tournament of the Americas & Nationals updates, People! Athlete Awards & Hall of Fame, Industry News, Pro tour coverage, Instructional ... and much more!

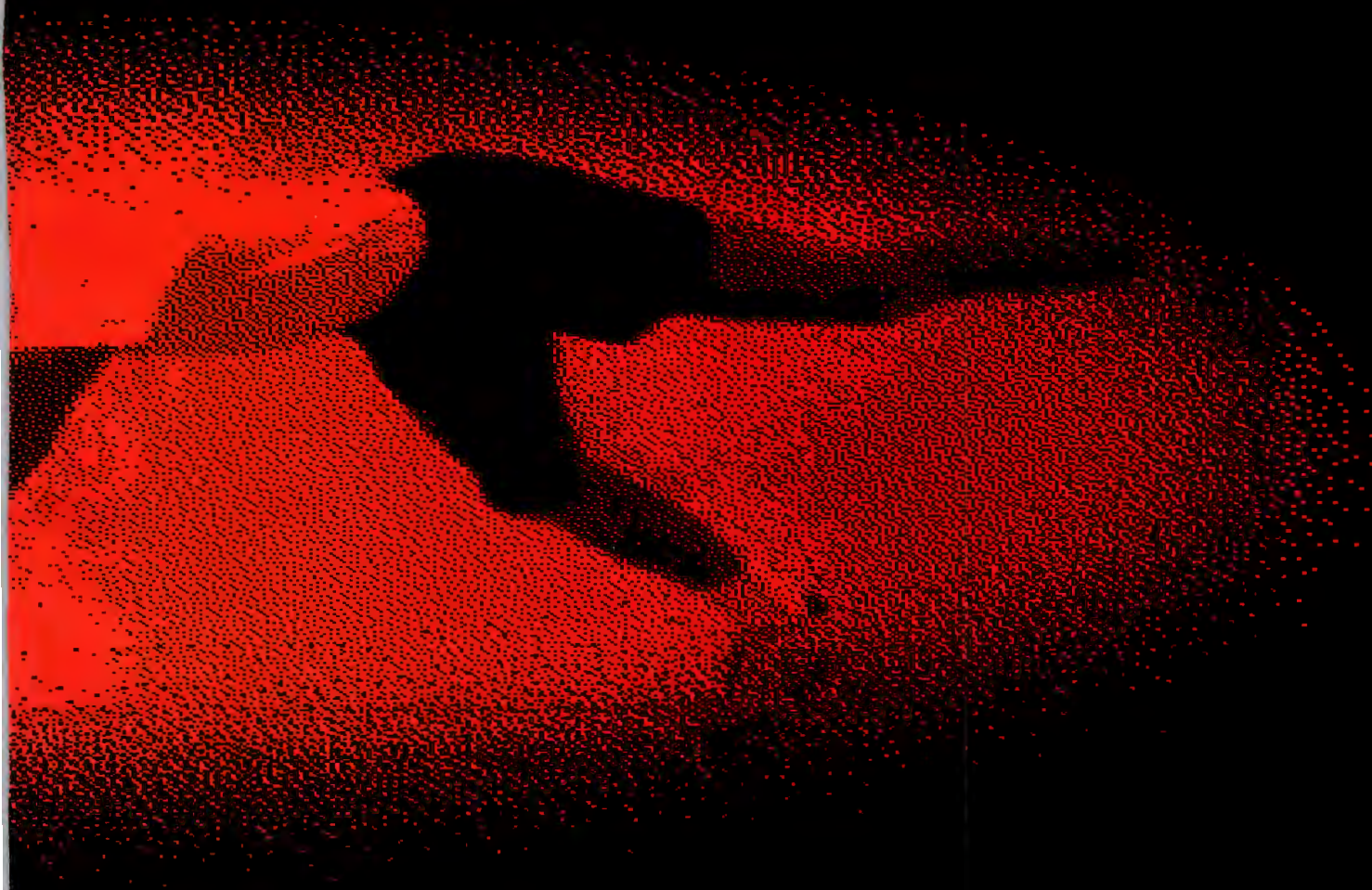
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from the editor

With due credit to Saturday Night Live's "Coffee Talk" I'll give you a topic: personal responsibility ... do we make our own destiny — or simply react to it? Discuss.

Particular to racquetball, there are lots of things that require that we take an active part in what is going around us. For example, the glaring absence of women (or amateurs, for that matter) in ESPN's televised coverage of the U.S. Open. Although the event was designed to be **much** larger than your average IRT stop, why wasn't it treated that way? Discuss.

Sports Illustrated — that wildly popular icon of sports culture — recently exceeded its editorial commitment well beyond the swimsuit issue to announce the debut of an entire publication dedicated to women's sports. Evidently the market for women's sports is viable enough for this type of venture by a major publishing concern. And they'll no doubt be underwritten through massive advertising campaigns by Nike, Reebok, Adidas — and many others — which compete fiercely for the female consumer. The twenty-year old *Womens Sports + Fitness* (the official publication of the Womens Sports Foundation) boasts a circulation of 500,000. No doubt SI's *WomenSport* expects to reach at least that number, probably more. So isn't it more than a bit "politically incorrect" to cling to the notion of a "relative market value" for top female racquetball pros that sets their worth at well below half of their male counterparts? Discuss.

The notion is simple. The best in women's racquetball is *equal* to the best in men's racquetball ... and they don't have to compete against each other to prove it. "Operation Gold" funds from the U.S. Olympic Committee are allocated at exactly identical levels for men and women — all the way down the line. Which is the most productive, and progressive, road for racquetball to take? Discuss.

So, back to the premise. Who's responsible for making sure racquetball does the right thing? We are. The people who play the game, buy equipment, watch ESPN and save up for the Nikes. How do we make a difference? By reaching out to those major market interests that want our business. Find those addresses and phone numbers and *make noise* — it sure can't hurt.



editor

Linda L. Mojer
USRA Director of Communications

publisher

Luke St. Onge
USRA Executive Director

production staff

Linda Mojer Graphic Design, Layout & Production
Kevin Vicroy Department/Columns Editor
Denise Whitelaw Copy Assistant

business & advertising office

United States Racquetball Association
1685 West Uintah
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80904-2921
Tel: 719/635-5396, ext. 25
Fax: 719/635-0685
e-mail: rbzine@webaccess.net
<http://www.racquetball.org> OR www.usra.org
<http://www.racqmag.com>

national staff directory

Name	Title & Office Extension
Luke St. Onge	Executive Director (31)
Jim Hiser	Assoc. ED/Programming (30)
Kevin Joyce	Membership Director (23)
Linda Mojer	Communications Director (27)
Jeremy Case	Data Entry (21)
Margo Daniels	Natl. Tournament Director
Tyler Ohlbrecht	Distribution (32)
Barbara Saint Onge	Archives/Protocol (28)
Twyla Varnado	Customer Service (20)
Kevin Vicroy	Media/PR Coordinator (26)
Melody Weiss	Finance Director (22)
Dalene Werner	Office Manager (29)

E-mail
usragen@webaccess.netto reach:
Weiss, Varnado, Case & Ohlbrecht
usraadm@webaccess.netto reach:
St. Onge, Hiser & Werner
usrambr@webaccess.netto reach: K. Joyce
usrapr@webaccess.netto reach: K. Vicroy
rbzine@webaccess.netto reach: L. Mojer

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Top: Where else but St. Louis might you hope to have Marty Hogan "drop by" to award you a medal? High school athletes had that chance in March (pg. 18). Photo: courtesy Jen Yokota. Center: Malia Bailey jumps at the chance to talk about sponsorships (pg. 8). Photo: Scott Liparelli. Bottom: The U.S. National Team wins Tournament of the Americas – one more time! (pg. 14). Photo: Jim Hiser.

ON THE COVER

Like any newcomer to the tournament scene, Angie Birchler might hope for a sponsorship someday. Photo: Jim Hiser.

reader forum

BROADCAST ALTERNATIVE

I've been playing racquetball for a couple of years and I'm very excited about the sport. My interest has grown to the point that I play at least three times a week; watch the pro matches whenever shown on ESPN; read the interesting articles in **RACQUETBALL** magazine and — just recently — listened to an hour-long radio program called "Racquetball Round Table." This program is hosted by Gary Stout and aired by WNJC 1360 AM on Wednesday nights from 9:00 to 10:00 PM.

It's a live show that reaches a listening audience in the Philadelphia and south Jersey areas. The host takes phone calls and faxes, then talks about rules, tournament dates and sites of upcoming events, who the top pros are and other information that would be of interest to the beginner through advanced-level player. Last week a live interview was held with Jodi Paul, the racquetball program director for the Allentown Racquetball and Fitness Club, and Lou Riccelli, the racquetball director for the Flex Gym in Edgewater Park, New Jersey. What a great interview!

Are there any radio programs anywhere else in the U.S. that deal with racquetball only? Do you know anything about radio host Gary Stout, or this show?

David Ruiz — racquetball fan
Belmawr, New Jersey

[Gary Stout has been a member of the association since 1988, so it seems that he is a perfect choice to host the program you've brought to our attention. But, now you've got me wondering ... are there any other sports/talk programs like this one around the country? If not, why not? Shall we start a grassroots demand for them? Television certainly isn't the only way to get the word out ... — Editor]

RACQUETBALL IN PARADISE

Hello and Aloha. I've been playing a little over a year, and I play every chance I get — sometimes five hours a day! It even made me lose over 60 pounds. But the best thing about racquetball is that I have fun and at the same time I get a good workout. I love the sport so much that I want to know everything about it ... so here's my \$20.00 for membership and a subscription. Thank you and much aloha.

John Lalotoa
Honolulu, Hawaii

AND IN THIS CORNER ...

I want to congratulate you on a uniformly great publication and wish you continued success. Like many other subscribers, I anxiously await the arrival of each issue. Keep up the great work. While I know you don't need any Reader Forum advice, I wanted to quietly offer that I think an "editor's remarks" should have followed the "Ordinary Joe" article that appeared in the January/February issue.

Here is a guy who is supposedly a college professor, whining because this publication does not offer enough health related articles. You should have reminded him that his employer has a library full of health related publications and if he's serious about personal health concerns, maybe he should do a little reading "before" he embarks on playing 1200 games of racquetball annually.

He also claimed he wanted more information about new products/strategy and a whole lot less coverage of the pro tour results and national rankings. The same nutty professor admitted that he does not play in leagues or tournaments, and credited people like himself for keeping racquetball from producing household-name-type players. You should have explained that

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FACTBOOK OMISSION?

Everyone who has won a national event is probably very proud to have been published in "our" magazine.

In 1995 I attended (and paid a lot of money) the Inaugural U.S. Open in Indianapolis, Indiana. I was told that this was the be the equivalent of the U.S. Open in tennis. I was real excited to participate in this event and was fortunate to be inspired to work harder than I have ever worked in a tournament. I finished first in my age group, age 60, and was "published" and many of my friends in racquetball congratulated me for the accomplishment. So far so good, right?

When I received the 1997 factbook ... the 1995 and the 1996 U.S. Open results for the age divisions were inadvertently left out. I am writing this hoping that this will be corrected and incorporated in future publications.

Thank you for your continued support in the sport that many of us love dearly ... we can still compete, no matter what age we are ... I thought I would be rocking-chair bound, by now!!!

Jerry Holly
Northridge, California

The Editor responds with ... "Gee, this is exactly the opening I've been looking for ..."

First, I want to thank Jerry for the opportunity to clarify several items regarding the U.S. Open (no, not who's on first ...)

Secondly, it's important that everyone understand that the amateur divisions at the U.S. Open are **not** national championships, nor have they ever been. At the 1995 event, all competition in championship divisions (those listed in the official rulebook, under Rule 5.11-Divisions) were designated as "Level 5" — or an "invitational" competition. Skill level competition in the A,B,C & D divisions was set as "Level 3" — or equivalent to a state championship. In 1996, the former, stand-alone National Skill Level Championship was incorporated into the U.S. Open, retaining its "Level 6" standing. All other amateur division play remained at "Level 5." In the Factbook, you'll find that only "Level 6" events are true national championships, and only winners of those events are listed therein. As the record book for the U.S. Open grows, you'll find that all "non-championship" citations in that section will be removed.

I'll be the first to admit that, in all the excitement surrounding the U.S. Open, a good deal of confusion has flourished in the field. Now with the association's name change, you'll see that more and more tournaments will carry the sanctioning statement "a USRA event" (just like tennis), but they will definitely **not** all be national championships. The USRA recognizes six amateur national championships per year: Singles, Doubles, Juniors, Intercollegiates, High Schools and Skills. The U.S. Open is "a USRA event" in three parts — with a pro tour component, an invitational tournament for recognized Open and Master's age divisions, and the National Skill Level Championships.

if he ever attended a full scale tournament he might just stumble into a trade show and maybe even get to have a one-on-one conversation with a top tour player who would offer advice on shot selection and court strategy topics. You could have further told the fiscally tight professor to invest in a week-end racquetball clinic where strategy and shot selection are both demonstrated and practiced. It's very unfair for any reader to expect similar results from simply reading or looking at pictures of strategy/shot selection.

Further you should have told D. Brown that it's time he give up his narrow pursuit of this sport and start giving back by supporting those who have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to elevate their game. Explain to him that there

is more to this sport than seeing how many games you can play annually at the college rec center.

Tell him that if he ever has the chance to watch in-state talent like the great Johnny Northern, Stu Hastings, Mike Anderson, Chris Cole, Jack Huzcek, Joel Bonnett, Jimmy Floyd (now living out of state), he would no longer question why they, and not ordinary joe's, deserve all of the coverage they can get. The truth is that the whole aforementioned group probably hasn't received a full page of recognition in the past several years.

In fact, I would love to see a short "Where Are They Now" column (within each issue) telling us where and what former top players are doing today. Tim

Doyle is a good example of a player whose ranking has slipped dramatically, (apparently due to a back problem?), but a quick quote from him saying that a comeback or retirement seems likely, would be appreciated. Having watched Tim (who moved to Ohio as a teenager) go on to rank as high as #1 on the pro tour, you can see why his well-being is important to all of his Buckeye fans. I am sure there are fans in many states with similar memories who would enjoy a brief update.

Thank you again for a wonderful publication. I can't wait for this sport to grow to the point where you must publish monthly!

Steve Lahey
Ottawa, Ohio

readerforum

OVERSIZE COMPLAINT

It greatly distresses me that the length of racquets will once again be increased. I believe that the oversize racquet has been the single most detrimental change in the history of racquetball. I have been playing the game for over 30 years and you may refer to me as a dinosaur, however I truly believe the game was much more interesting when racquet length was a maximum of 17".

It was also known then, and has not changed today, that television coverage would be better with slower speed balls and longer rallies. The serve and shoot game is not very interesting to play, witness, or watch on TV. There were great gets and great play back when Charlie Brumfield was the master of racquetball. The players of today would still be fun to watch, and easier to watch, with smaller racquets. Although I don't have statistical data, I have subjectively seen a great increase in shoulder and

elbow injuries since the introduction of high tech oversize racquets. It is not reasonable to ignore the increased possibility of injury by comparing racquetball to squash. The two sports are significantly different, as are the racquets.

You state that a "special session" of the USRA Board was held to vote on this new rule, at the request of the Racquetball Manufacturers Industry. It appears from my perspective that you simply caved in to pressure by profit-oriented executives to change a rule for the sake of equipment sales. I fail to see how the larger frames will "bring new excitement to the sport." I do not agree with your statement that oversized frames introduced in 1984 added excitement. They made the player who played with a standard size racquet have a distinct disadvantage, so every competitive player had to convert to stay competitive at his previous level. They did not add excitement. The shorter

rallies created largely by the introduction of more power generating equipment, along with the shorter game format, has greatly removed the endurance aspect from racquetball. If you want to find great athletes, endurance should be a factor. The cramps many players experienced when they played 2 of 3 games to 21 using 17" racquets are no longer witnessed in racquetball.

I personally have gone back to playing badminton instead of racquetball for much of my recreation. The new rule change will encourage me to abandon the sport altogether rather than having a positive effect. I do not believe your decision was very well thought out and also wonder why a decision which affects the entire sport could not have waited while input was solicited from the racquetball community.

Mike Wolfe
via e-mail



The portable court may be a reality but we still have a long way to go before the fundraising is complete (our goal is \$75,000). Help us raise the remaining \$57,000+ and add your name to the full donor list (last published in the March/April issue) which will later become a permanent plaque that travels with the court. Make your contribution to the cause in the gold, silver, bronze or patron donor category, and become one of our very special portable court "builders." Call the USRA at 719/635-5396 to make your donation!

PORTABLE COURT UPDATE

New portable court donations since the last issue have been made by: **The New Mexico Racquetball Association**, which continued its march up the "donor ladder" by adding another \$300.00 contribution to the portable court project to bring its total gift to date to \$1,050.00 and enter the Gold Corporate Patrons category. New corporate donor, **Sports Unlimited**, offered \$500.00 to the project to claim a spot in the Silver Donor list. **Paul R. Lowe** added \$200.00 to his previous donation of \$125.00 to move into the "bronze patron" category, along with **Hal & Cari Mitlitsky** who gave \$250.00 to the project, becoming the most recent of only five donors in the individual category at the "bronze" level. **David Soifer** joined the "patron" group with his contribution in April. Overlooked "in-kind" donations to the project (from the outset) were credited to **The Court Company** and the **IRT/WIRT** on the Gold donor list.

Donations through April 18 total \$17,536.00 — which still leaves us quite a way to go before we reach the home stretch. Only then will we be able to have the permanent, traveling plaque made up to accompany the court on its journeys. So, if you've already given and would like to increase your gift (and perhaps jump into a higher category), it looks like you have plenty of time before the final list is memorialized in its permanent form.

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Racquetball manufacturers are more careful with their money than ever, but there are still plenty of sponsorship opportunities around ...



PHOTO: KEVIN VICROY

THE SPONSORSHIP GAME

Malia Bailey has experienced sponsorships from A to Z. She got her start in 1982, after she had been playing racquetball for four years and had recently finished third at the amateur nationals under her maiden name, Kamahoahoa. Voit, which was known primarily for its racquetballs, called her and offered two rackets a year and all of the gloves, balls, and shirts she would need. All she had to do in return was to wear Voit's clothing and use its equipment.

Was she interested?

by Tom Slear

he took about three nanoseconds to decide. Until that moment, she had never given sponsorship a thought. She figured that none of the manufacturers would call her since she was a step outside the glare of the best players. As for approaching a manufacturer herself, she could no more envision such a pretentious move than she could foresee playing with one of those dimpled balls that Voit was selling.

Bailey and Voit settled into a casual relationship. "They said, 'Here's our stuff, wear it.'" Bailey says "They just assumed that I would have influence over the people in my area."

After Voit, there was a brief fling with Head, which sweetened the pot with shorts and socks. Bailey was moving up the pecking order. In 1985, with her exposure widening noticeably, she moved from Head to Diversified Products, or DP. Her deals with Head and Voit consisted of nods and handshakes. With DP she signed a contract. The company

gave her equipment and expense money as well as bonuses for finishing in the semifinals or finals of major tournaments.

In 1988, she went with Fin, an English company that made what Bailey calls "a nice little racket." Fin looked upon court performance and efforts to grow the sport as laudable, but mostly irrelevant. What mattered was racket sales. As a sponsored player, Bailey bought Fin rackets at wholesale, sold them at retail, and pocketed the difference. It was sponsorship with a sales twist. If you sold a lot of rackets, your sponsorship continued. If not, you were on the street, even if you were a latent Sudsy Monchik.

"It certainly was an incentive for players to promote the equipment," Bailey understates. "Is it right to make you a sales rep and call it sponsorship? I don't know. But we did sell a lot of rackets. I was very upset when they went out of business [in the U.S]."

Bailey then switched to Pro Kennex. In addition to equipment, expenses, and bonuses, she got the Holy Grail of sponsorship, a retainer.

For a while, life was good, but racquetball in general was stuck in second gear. Industry-wide sales were flat, forcing the manufacturers to re-evaluate their sponsorship programs. The hints from Pro Kennex were as subtle as a sledgehammer. When Bailey found out she was pregnant, she used her right hand to count her remaining days with Pro Kennex.

Bailey is back now, sponsored by Gemini Racquetball, which is based near her home in Norfolk, Va. She's come full circle. Gemini gives her equipment and clothing only. As for any loosening of the corporate purse strings, Bailey doesn't see it anytime soon. Two years ago she appeared in the cover photo of this magazine, the Gemini brand name clearly visible. One would think that the company could have sprung for some expense money; maybe a cash bonus.

"I didn't even get a call from Ron (Halloran, Gemini's owner)," Bailey says. "I was on the cover of **RACQUETBALL** and he didn't even call."

Quid pro quo. Bailey isn't whining. She tells the anecdote merely to make the salient point of her 15-year experience with sponsorships. No matter the

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Think you can land a sponsorship? Here are some current numbers (of sponsored players) that reflect the size of some programs, plus specifics on what each company's sponsorship includes. Keep in mind that the more you have to offer, the better your negotiating position ...

COMPANY ... #'s.....	SPONSORSHIP INCLUDES
Ashaway 35	Free product, \$ performance/signing bonuses to pros
Babolat..... —	IRT & WIRT tours receive a cash stipend and product
Courtesy 60+	As a distributor (rather than a manufacturer) Courtesy Sports sponsors players and events
E-Force..... 400+	Free and/or discounted equipment, \$ performance/signing bonuses
Ektelon.... 1000+	Free and/or discounted equipment, based on sponsorship "levels," plus retainers and \$ performance bonuses. Also offer leadership positions in the Team structure.
Gemini —	Free equipment for "full" sponsorship (for elite players only); secondary sponsorship is a purchase plan: buy 1 frame, sell 2 and receive shirts & bag, etc.
Head 700	Free and/or discounted equipment, \$ performance/signing bonuses
Leader 6	Varies, based on individual negotiations
Penn..... —	IRT & WIRT tours receive a cash stipend and product
Python* 250	Free product, \$ in special cases
Power 150	Varies, based on level of sponsorship: Touring Pro, Advisory Staff, Pro Support
Pro Kennex .. 200	Varies, based on "staff" level; "Pro" receives cash, "Elite" = free product & clothing; "Tournament" = can purchase at cost
RAD* 250	Free product, \$ in special cases
Spalding 150	Varies, based on level of sponsorship: Touring Pro, Advisory Staff, Pro Support
Transition —	Discounted equipment package to selected "Preferred Player"
Wilson —	Free and/or discounted equipment, \$ performance/signing bonuses

*Python and RAD eyewear programs are handled through Network Marketing, and share their data. Spalding and Power Footwear are handled through Complete Creative and are associated in the same way.



level—whether ranked pro on the IRT or a club pro in a rural town in Mississippi, sponsorship is a little bit about performance and a lot about money. The manufacturers must see returns on their investments. If Bailey had Gemini's phone number written on her forehead during that cover shoot for **RACQUETBALL**, then Halloran

would have called, but not before checking to see if racket sales had increased.

As obvious as it might seem, this quid pro quo — sponsorship for sales — often gets overlooked by players. Head sponsors some 700 players; E-Force 400; Ektelon over 1,000. Not all of these players are good, or even average. But to one degree or another, they all generate

revenue for their respective companies. If not, the players are back in baggy shorts and ripped T-shirts.

"Someone who's not ranked at all, not a name you would recognize, will approach me acting like he's one of the best players in the world," says Dave Peck, Ektelon's promotions manager. "When I ask him what he can do to help sales, he says, 'Oh, I play. I don't do anything to help sales.' I see this kind of arrogance starting as early as the junior level. They think they will get something from us without accountability."

Ruben Gonzalez, who was ranked as high as sixth on the pro circuit until he tore his Achilles' tendon two years ago, agrees. Too many players overrate their drawing power, he says. They win a few tournaments at the local or regional levels and then begin to think that the manufacturers owe them a living.

"It's just not that way anymore," says Gonzalez, whose first sponsorship experience dates back to the mid-1970s. "The manufacturers are going to ask, 'What are you doing to sell rackets? Have you done any exhibitions? Any clinics? Do you teach lessons?' Don't get

WHAT COMPANIES LOOK FOR

Most companies in our survey indicated that the most valuable "sponsored players" were those with a combination of things to offer, including factors like: the ability to influence sales (club pros, pro shop buyers); performance (elite athletes, local stars) and profile (former big names in the sport, state directors, administrative leaders). Where do you fit?

KEY • S = SALES ability • C = COURT Performance • P = High PROFILE

COMPANY	S	C	P	OTHER FACTORS
Ashaway	x	x	x	All factors are considered in balance
Babolat		*		Does not have a "player specific" program, but provides sponsorship for associations, primarily IRT & WIRT
E-Force	x	x	x	All factors are considered in balance
Ektelon	x	x	x	Players are expected to be leaders in the industry, highly-visible and respected, with a common goal of growth & development for the sport
Gemini	x	x	x	Must submit resume w/3 references, player should be well-known, "family" oriented and exhibit good sportsmanship
Head				Looks for players who are influential at club, local, state, regional or national levels
Leader		x		Top pro tour players only
Penn		*		Does not have a "player specific" program, but provides sponsorship for associations like USRA, IRT & WIRT
Python	x		x	Players are associated with a specific "account" to which sales are reflected
Power	1	2	Bonus	Power is the footwear partner to Spalding, and automatically sponsors all Spalding players
Pro Kennex	x	x	x	Seeks loyalty and frequent promotion of product line in a positive way, high-visibility at club events and tournaments, good rankings and reputation
RAD	x		x	Players are associated with a specific "account" to which sales are reflected
Spalding	1	2	Bonus	Factors are considered/weighted in the order shown, for both Spalding and Power Footwear
Transition	x	x	x	Players must have good exposure at their club, along with good rapport skills
Wilson	1			Top promoters with sales influence are a primary consideration

* Tour players receive Babolat & Penn sponsorship packages based on rankings.

me wrong. Everything is not sponsorship. You should go out and play. Work on your game. Then the sponsorships will come along. But when they do, the company will want something in return."

Even Michelle Gould, indisputably the top women's player in the world, feels a bit uncomfortable relying strictly on her tournament performance.

"I do enormous amount of work for Ektelon," she says. "It's all to get more visibility in the marketplace. The racquetball industry is tough. There are no unlimited funds."

What's left? If someone of Gould's stature has to scramble to maintain her status, what's left for the mass of racquetball players?

In fact, more than you might think. Racquetball rests in the middle of the advertising spectrum. The industry is too small to justify the expense of advertising on television or in mainstream magazines, but too large to rely strictly on brochures and ads in trade publications.

"If you spend money (on television and print ads), you waste a lot of it because many of the people you reach are not going to buy racquetball products no matter what," says E-Force owner Ron Grimes. "So, how do you get the exposure you need? By getting those influential players at the clubs who the other players pay attention to."

Consequently, manufacturers offer an eclectic mix of sponsorship programs. The titles vary from company to company, but the purpose of each program is the same: cheap advertising at the grass-roots level.

At the entry level, you need to look closely at what you are getting as a "sponsored" player. Most of the manufacturers' entry-level programs resemble the deal Bailey had with Fin, only minus the sales commission. Head will dub you an influential player after you pay a couple of hundred dollars for a head-to-toe equipment package, including a racket. E-Force's preferred player program is nearly identical. With Gemini, you buy the first racket at regular price, anywhere from \$169 to \$220. If you sell two other rackets, you get an equipment bag and two shirts for free. Sell another three rackets and you get a racket for free.

UP TO SNUFF?

Here a sampling of players who are currently sponsored by the major companies. How do you stack up?

COMPANY . . . TOP SPONSORED PLAYERS

Ashaway	Laura Fenton, Robin Levine, Mike Johnson, Derek Robinson
Babolat	Lydia Hammock, Adam Karp, Jason Mannino, Dina Moreland, Janet Myers, Mike Ray, Todd O'Neil
E-Force	Tim Doyle, Kersten Hallander, Tony Jelso, Caryn McKinney, Louis Vogel, Michelle Wiragh
Ektelon	Dan Fowler, Kelly Gelhaus, Michelle Gould, Mike Guidry, Cheryl Gudinas, Drew Kachtik, Andy Roberts
Gemini	Craig Rappaport, Shane Wood
Head	Lynne Coburn, Sudsy Monchik, Cliff Swain
Leader	Mike Ceresia, John Ellis, Sudsy Monchik, Cliff Swain
Penn	Woody Clouse, Laura Fenton, Ruben Gonzalez, Amy Kilbane, Marcy Lynch, Mike Ray
Python	Sudsy Monchik
Power	John Ellis, Mike Ray, Derek Robinson
Pro Kennex	John Ellis, Marty Hogan, Dina Moreland, Jackie Paraiso, Joe Paraiso, Tyler Siggins, Adrian Webb
Spalding	Woody Clouse, Laura Fenton, Marcy Lynch, Jason Mannino, Todd O'Neil, Mike Ray
Transition	Dave Kovanda, Shane Vanderson
Wilson	Lynn Adams, Michael Bronfeld, Derek Robinson

Hmmm. Let's see. A player pays \$200 for the opportunity to wear Head's clothing and play with one of its rackets. Doug Ganim, a Head marketing consultant, says the price is a deep discount from retail and availability is limited to two players per club. Maybe so, but it sounds more like advertising than sponsorship with the player picking up the tab.

"It's multi-level marketing," insists Peck of Ektelon. "It's a very effective business tactic, but it's irresponsible to call it sponsorship."

Pockets of influence. Consequently, real sponsorship begins at a higher level, where the manufacturers give out clothing and equipment and demand a return on their outlays. They want players in similar situations to Bailey back in 1982. When she spoke, most of the racquetball players in southeastern Virginia listened. The others at least noticed the brand of equipment she was using.

"Racquetball is a sport of pockets," says Ganim. "In each pocket there is an influencer, an opinion leader, and it's not directly related to the level of his or her play. It could be someone who teaches a lot of lessons, runs a lot of leagues."

"It's not a matter of who the best player is, but who influences the most number of people," says Grimes. "A

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Still think you're "sponsored player" material? Contact these individuals as your first step ... but before you call to make your pitch, do your homework. Research the company fully (using the other sidebar information in this article) to make sure their needs — and yours — are a good fit.

COMPANY	CONTACT NAME	PHONE
Ashaway	Steve Crandall	(401) 377-2221
Babolat	Amy Wishingrad***	(413) 536-4594
E-Force	Rachel Harrison	(619) 623-4040
Ektelon	Melissa Cain*	(609) 291-5800, x5312
or	Dave Peck	(512) 343-2134
Gemini Racquetball	Art Zachery	(804) 745-0075
Head Sports	Doug Ganim	mail queries only**
Leader	Doug Ganim	mail queries only**
Penn	Carrie Cimino***	(310) 827-4474
Python	Doug Smith	(770) 751-9463
Power Footwear	Steve Lerner	(888) 772-5346
Pro Kennex	Mike Martinez	(800) 854-1908, x8154
RAD Eyeguards	Doug Smith	(770) 751-9463
Spalding	Steve Lerner	(888) SPALDING
Transition	Elaine Mardas	(614) 457-4076
Wilson	Terri Graham	(773) 714-6400, x6727

* Ektelon has a decentralized program which requires that a prospective sponsored player would need to contact the local Sales Association first. Melissa Cain can provide you with that contact information — ** Write to Doug Ganim at 6449 Lake Trail Drive, Westerville, OH 43082. — *** Either Amy Wishingrad or Carrie Cimino can answer queries for both Penn & Babolat sponsorship programs.

player in, say, Albuquerque, may get a preferred contract (equipment at a discount), while in L.A., a player who is not as good may get a club pro contract (equipment free). It's a question of who is reaching the most people."

Ektelon takes a slightly higher road, according to Peck. The company is more concerned with growth than influence. If racquetball's popularity grows, Ektelon, given its dominant market share, will undoubtedly grow along with it. Peck is after players willing to put in the time to teach lessons, administer leagues, run clinics. Ektelon's point system for accountability awards one point for playing in a local tournament, but five points for staging an exhibition. Getting certified as a referee is worth 10 points.

Junior players are the exception to the manufacturers' sponsorship rules. All the companies want the next Cliff Swain. But handicapping adult performance based on youthful talent is hardly

an exact science. The potential for error is enormous. So the manufacturers do what college football coaches do — recruit 10 in the hope that one works out.

Junior players typically receive equipment free with little expected in return other than steady improvement in their game and decorum on the court.

"What are you going to do for the company when you are 14?" says Gould, whose first sponsorship was with Head in 1985 for equipment and clothing. "The manufacturers are realistic when they deal with junior players."

Whether a junior or an adult player, if you are interested in a sponsorship, contact the manufacturer's local representative or call the company directly. You will likely be told to mail a racquetball resume with references included. Ganim says he averages 60 letters a month, of which five or so are from players with backgrounds that make his cut. If those numbers sound daunting, take heart from another Bailey anecdote.

She recently ran into someone decked out — head to toe — as a newly-sponsored player. He was a B-level player and not that well known. Bailey had doubts.

"Where did you get all of this stuff?" she asked.

"I got a sponsorship," he said.

"A sponsorship?" she asked. "How did you work that out?"

"I lied," he said, not a trace of compunction in his tone. "I told them I was a club pro and an open player." •



THE LINE ON HOUSTON

by Jim Hiser & Molly O'Brien

1996 FINALISTS — TOP LEFT: MICHELLE GOULD; BOTTOM: CHERYL GUDINAS
TOP RIGHT: RUBEN GONZALEZ; BOTTOM: TODD O'NEIL — PHOTOS: CECIL HAYNES



Defending Champion

Michelle Gould (3 to 1) • no signs of slowing down • still best serve on tour; plagued by injuries all season (including a knee problem that forced her to drop out of the Tournament of the Americas final) and they could become a factor during a long event. Strength — serve and shot-making ability. Weakness — mobility and up-and-back movement.



Cheryl Gudinas (odds 1 to 2) • as dedicated as any athlete on tour •

needs to develop effective serve • can shoot as well as anyone; needs to believe she can beat Michelle. Strength — backhand pinch and intensity. Weakness — serve.

Jackie Paraiso (odds 1 to 3) • has game to beat Michelle • good serve, power, and mobility • needs to play more tour events to maintain competitive level. Strength — mobility and serve. Weakness — conditioning and concentration.

Malia Bailey (odds 1 to 5) • although she's playing better than she has over much of the last season, doesn't seem ready • out of shape, but her experience and consistency could pull her through. Strength — serve. Weakness — conditioning.

Laura Fenton (odds 1 to 2) • improved greatly last few months — recently beat Gudinas and took Michelle to five. Health problems have kept her from being 100%. Strength — good mobility and shot selection. Weakness — serve & consistency.

Lynne Coburn (odds 1 to 3) • great forehand serve; all around games is solid, but again, real life forces her to miss some tour stops. Has potential to upset anyone at anytime. Strength — forehand serve. Weakness — consistency.

Sleepers ... Robin Levine (1 to 4) • has she recovered completely from shoulder surgery? **Kersten Hallender** (1 to 4) • good power and aggressiveness, but lacks confidence. **Chris Evon** (1 to 4) • great all-around game, very quick on the court, but may lack "tournament toughness" for a championship. **Elaine Mardas** (1 to 4) • always a tough competitor, but needs more top level play. **Lydia Hammock** (1 to 4) • played well against Gould at one tour stop, has been gaining confidence and working hard on her game and conditioning. **Randy Friedman** (1 to 5) • Has played a good number of stops this season and improved over the last two years.



Defending Champion

Ruben Gonzalez (odds 1 to 2) • determined to repeat, but injuries could affect that resolve; Achilles and knee problems could re-surface over a long event • rehab & layoff, plus age, could affect conditioning. Strength — experience, determination, consistency. Weakness — injuries, inability to train.



Todd O'Neil (odds 1 to 2) • should have confidence after winning World Championships and breaking his long-endured "Houston jinx" last year • first round losses on pro tour indicated inconsistency.

Which Todd will show up? Strength — stroke mechanics. Weakness — concentration and conditioning.

Derek Robinson (odds 1 to 3) • shoulder and leg injuries have plagued Derek all season • strong showing in February pro stop indicates that if he can maintain conditioning he'll be a threat; all the tools, but has never put together a "whole" major tournament. Strength — power, reach, and serve. Weakness — injuries, consistency, backhand.

Kelly Gelhaus (odds 1 to 3) • broke through last season, but still unproven; new dedication to conditioning; pro tour experience will help. Strength — power. Weakness — late match concentration and conditioning.

Adam Karp (odds even) • perhaps the quickest player in tournament; great mobility • occasionally loses concentration; hits on run as well as anyone. Strength — speed and fast hands. Weakness — shot selection and concentration.

Aaron Katz (odds even) • game style frustrates opponents • enough experience to beat anyone in field; if he was practicing on a regular schedule, would definitely be favorite, but "real" life may take toll over long event. Strength — game style, shot selection. Weakness — dedication and conditioning.

Sleepers ... Jason Thoerner (1 to 4) • much improved • Houston courts favor his power game; moves well. Strength — power. Weakness — inconsistent and not aggressive enough. **James Mulcock** (1 to 4) • good shot selection, but has been in a slump. **Doug Eagle** (1 to 3) • #1 dark horse • good power and conditioning, but over hits at times. **Joey Paraiso** (1 to 4) • has the game to beat anyone, but doesn't compete enough. **Joel Bonnett** (1 to 4) • power and conditioning, but again, doesn't play top players enough. **Chris Cole** (1 to 4) • in '96 showed some signs of the Old Chris, but does he have the desire?



TOURNAMENT OF THE AMERICAS – MEXICAN-STYLE

from on-site staff reports

Exciting opening ceremonies for the 11th Torneo de las Americas set the tone of the ten-day event in Chihuahua, Mexico, when twelve full delegations were greeted by a crowd of 5,000 as they arrived in chartered buses at the downtown plaza. Delegations from Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Puerto Rico, USA, Venezuela and Mexico (marching last as is customary for the host country) were presented before the cheering crowd on a beautiful spring evening in Chihuahua.

Speeches — including IRF Rules Chairman Jim Hiser's delivery of the officials' oath in perfect Spanish, to the delight of the standing-room-only crowd — music, entertainment and a fireworks finale led to the official opening command to "Let the games begin."

The following day, each country's coaching staff attended a meeting at the beautiful Club Compestre de Chihuahua to finalize the round robin phase of the competition to be held the first four days to determine seedings. Positioning in the preliminary phase was based upon past finishes, with attention to separating perennial favorites Canada, USA and Mexico as much as possible.

Canada found itself in trouble almost immediately when Jacques Demers misread his match time and was forfeited. Former University of Memphis star Fabian Balmori played well but not up to expectations and finished third in his bracket for Venezuela. Shai Manzuri, who previously competed for Israel, raised

some eyebrows by playing extremely well for the Argentine team. Colombians Juan Felipe Gomez, German Herrera and Juan Manuel Gutierrez were also very solid. As anticipated, U.S., Canadian, and Mexican athletes all finished at the top of their divisions.

There were no surprises on the women's side, as seedings held true and played out as expected. It soon became clear that there would be another head-to-head battle between the United States and Canada in both the men's and women's divisions in the second half of the tournament.

After the preliminaries, the local organizing committee took the entire entourage to a rodeo, where everyone enjoyed local cuisine, line dancing and even calf and burro riding. It was a great way to ease the tension of four hard days of competition.



Entering the second phase, the local organizing committee faced a real challenge in finding enough seating for the spectators. Each session on the exhibition courts was completely filled, security was tightened and a limited number of passes were issued. Still, crowds of over 300 were turned away at

each session, and daily, full-color local press coverage only added to the demand.

Following the men's quarterfinal round, all three U.S. singles players (Kelly Gelhaus, Eric Muller and Dan Obremski) advanced into the semi's along with former world champion Sherman Greenfeld of Canada. Assigned to the team's #3 singles spot, Muller believed he had a chance to win it all after a narrow victory over Canada's Brian Istace, 15-12, 15-12. In doubles, teams from the U.S., Canada, Mexico and upstart Argentina all advanced to the semifinal.



In women's singles, the U.S. advanced three again (Malia Bailey, Michelle Gould and Cheryl Gudinas), along with Canada's #1, Christie Van Hees. Much to her credit, U.S. #3 Malia Bailey defeated Josee Grand'Maitre of Canada, 15-11, 15-4, to advance — only to face teammate and three-time world champion Michelle Gould. Doubles favorites all moved into the semifinal, with the U.S. facing Mexico and Canada going against Bolivia.

Eric Muller played a near-perfect match against Sherman Greenfeld to win 12-15, 15-7, 11-4 and reach his first international singles final. In the other bracket, veteran Dan Obremski defeated tiring teammate Kelly Gelhaus, 13-15, 15-7, 11-4, to meet Muller in the finals. In doubles U.S. national doubles champions Todd O'Neil and Derek Robinson had little trouble reaching the finals by defeating Pedro Lara and Luis Bustillos of Mexico 15-8, 15-2. Mike Ceresia and Mike Green had their hands full with the Argentine team of Shai Manzuri and Fabian Apa, but still managed to pull out the narrow 15-11, 6-15, 11-7 win for Canada.

In the women's semifinal, Gould defeated Bailey 15-4, 15-5, but injured her knee during the match and almost didn't finish. Teammate Cheryl Gudinas, facing her first real test, defeated Canada's Van Hees 15-12, 15-9 to advance into the final. In doubles, the USA team of Jackie Paraiso and Joy MacKenzie had no

problem advancing to the finals over Diana Almeida and Rosy Torres of Mexico, 15-8, 15-2. Canada's Lucie Guillemette and Vicki Shanks defeated Yaque Parada and Maria Fernanda Romero of Bolivia, 15-3, 15-8.

Most finals were anti-climatic as members of the U.S. National Team faced each other in men's singles with

Eric Muller defeating Dan Obremski 15-8, 15-12, and Gudinas winning by injury forfeit over Gould. In doubles the U.S. Team of Todd O'Neil and Derek Robinson took no prisoners, destroying Canada 15-4, 15-2, as did the slow-starting U.S. team of Paraiso-MacKenzie over Guillemette & Shanks 15-4, 15-5.

For the bronze medal playoff, local excitement developed as the highly touted Mexican doubles team of Lara/Bustillos took on the upstart Argentine team of Manzuri & Apa. But the excitement didn't last long as Argentina took apart the Mexican team, 15-10, 15-8.

Special recognition should be given to Malia Bailey who, due to personal injuries, was unable to adequately prepare for this event, but rose to the occasion. Her victories over Canadians Van Hees and Grand'Maitre came only eight months after both had defeated her at the IRF 8th World Championships in Phoenix.

A special thanks to the local organizing committee, under Julio Saenz, who ran the most well organized international event ever to be held in our sport.



TOP: ALL-USA FINAL, DAN OBREMSKI VS. ERIC MULLER; MIDDLE: EARLY ROUND, LOURDES GARCIA (MEX) VS. CHRISTIE VAN HEES (CAN); BOTTOM: BRONZE MEDAL, ARGENTINA'S SHAI MANZURI & FABIAN APA VS. PEDRO LARA & LUIS BUSTILLOS OF MEXICO.

ALL PHOTOS THESE TWO PAGES: ALEX AGUIRRE TERRAZAS.



Brockbank, Simpson and BYU earn Intercollegiate Titles

by Kevin Vicroy

Brigham Young University and Tammy Brockbank (Boise State) each successfully completed their respective "3-Peat's" while Brian Simpson (Indiana) won his school's first national racquetball title at the 1997 E-Force 25th U.S. National Intercollegiate Racquetball Championships, presented by Penn Racquet Sports. The event was hosted by the Court House in Boise, Idaho April 2-6.



For the third straight year, the Brigham Young Cougars captured the national team championship. Led by top singles players Steve Black and Cindy Richards, BYU outdistanced the other top-five finishers, University of Florida, University of Memphis, Penn State and University of Missouri to come out on top of the 35-team field.

Boise, Idaho native Tammy Brockbank, representing Boise State, held on to her national intercollegiate crown for another year by downing #2 seeded Sadie Gross from the University of Memphis in the women's No. 1 singles finale, 15-11, 15-3. The BSU Bronco also won in 1995 and '96 while playing for Treasure Valley Community College.

*Top: 1997 Champions Brian Simpson & Tammy Brockbank
Above: BYU Cougars
Facing Page: A selection of collegiate teams pose during the banquet. All photos these two pages: Jim Hiser*

Brockbank, a member of the U.S. National Racquetball Team, has won the women's title three years in a row, more than any other woman in intercollegiate history. With this year's win, Tammy earned another one-year appointment to the national team.

For the second-place U.S. Junior National Team member Gross, she'll have two more years to compete for the 12-time national champion Memphis Tigers.

Two former Junior Team USA members Vanessa Tulao, from the University of North Carolina and Shannon Feaster of Howard University battled for the bronze medal. The Tar Heel's No. 1 singles player won 15-7, 15-9 over Feaster.

Currently ranked 24th on the men's pro tour, while retaining his amateur status, Brian Simpson of Indiana University put away University of Florida's feisty Aaron Metcalf 15-12, 15-12 in the men's No. 1 singles finals for his first national intercollegiate championship. It was also Indiana University's first national racquetball title. Simpson is now a member of the U.S. National Racquetball Team with a one-year appointment.

The 1995 champion, Shane Wood (Nichols (Mass.) College), physically suffered through the men's bracket all the way to the semifinals before giving in to what was later discovered to be a slight concussion. Mike Dennison of the University of Akron finished in third place by injury forfeit.



E-FORCE WORLD & 25TH U.S. NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS FINAL RESULTS



Men's Singles — #1: Brian Simpson (Indiana University) def. Aaron Metcalf (Univ./Florida) 15-12, 15-12; #2 Luis Bustillos (Univ./Southern Colorado) def. Ross Greenburg (Univ./Florida) 15-12, 15-11; #3: Javier Moreno (Univ./Southern Colorado) def. Tony Shawver (Univ./Florida) 15-11, 15-5; #4: Rafael Filippini (Univ./Southern Colorado) def. Asher Friend (Indiana Univ.) 15-3, 15-3; #5: Joddy Stahl (Univ./Florida) def. Dave Capener (Brigham Young) 15-11, 15-10; #6: Alfredo Andazola (Univ./Southern Colorado) def. Scott Noble (Indiana Univ.) 15-5, 15-0.

Women's Singles — #1: Tammy Brockbank (Boise State) def. Sadie Gross (Univ./Memphis) 15-11, 15-3; #2: Darla Wenger (Brigham Young) def. Michelle Zellers (Penn State) 15-6, 15-4; #3: Karen Pearson (Brigham Young) def. Wendy Williams (Penn State) 15-8, 15-6; #4: Valorie Woodbury (Brigham Young) def. Sabrina Landis (Penn State) 15-5, 15-9; #5: Colleen Keegan (Brigham Young) def. Jennifer Swan (Univ./Florida) 15-9, 15-6; #6: Janette Olsen (Brigham Young) def. Danna Maberry (Air Force Academy) 15-0, 15-0.



Men's Doubles — #1: Luis Bustillos/Javier Moreno (Univ./So.Colo.) def. Steve Black/Cameron Boice (BYU) 14-15, 15-1, 11-0; #2: Jed Bhuta/Ross Greenberg (Univ./Florida) def. Dave Capener/Todd North (Brigham Young) 15-3, 15-2; #3: Dave Cato/Joddy Stahl (Univ./Florida) def. Brian Gill/Ben McClure (Brigham Young) 15-12, 15-7;

Women's Doubles — #1: Cindy Richards/Darla Wenger (BYU) def. Michele Chick/Sadie Gross (Univ./Memphis) 15-12, 6-15, 11-10; #2: Karen Pearson/Valorie Woodbury (BYU) def. Michelle Couden/Teresa Fitzgerald (Univ./Florida) 15-3, 15-12; #3: Colleen Keegan/Janette Olsen (BYU) def. Samantha Gibbs/Jennifer Swan (Univ./Florida) 15-8, 15-5.

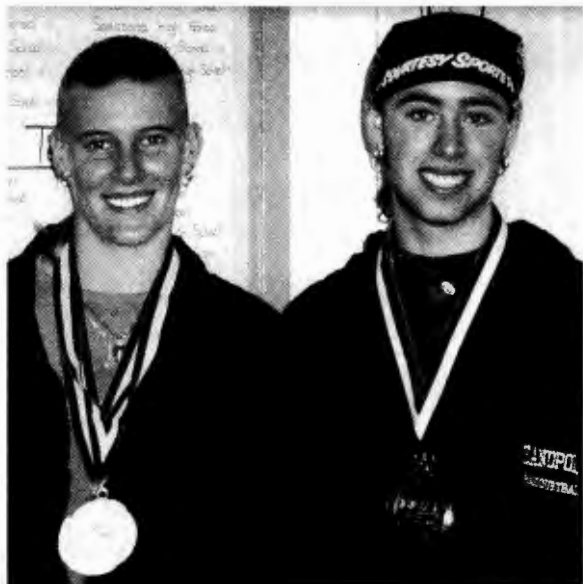


TEAM RESULTS — Overall Team Results (combined squads only): 1. Brigham Young, 7535; 2. Univ. of Florida, 7295; 3. Univ. of Memphis, 4063; 4. Penn State, 3758; 5. Univ. of Missouri, 2686.5; 6. Weber State, 2405; 7. Boise State, 1920; 8. Texas A&M, 1754; 9. Baldwin-Wallace College, 1577.5; 10. Nichols College, 1526; 11. Air Force Academy, 1432; 12. Univ. of Colorado/Boulder, 1245; 13. North Carolina, 1139.5; 14. Utah State, 825; 15. Army, 583; 16. Ricks College, 550; 17. Univ. of Calif./Davis, 254; 18. Providence College, 210.

Men's Team Results: 1. Univ. of Florida, 4540; 2. Brigham Young, 3655; 3. Indiana Univ., 3565; 4. Univ. of Southern Colorado, 2270; 5. Univ. of Memphis, 2149; 6. Weber State, 1945; 7. Univ. of Missouri, 1509.5; 8. Penn State, 1298; 9. Nichols College, 1126; 10. Idaho State, 970; 11. Texas A&M, 969; 12. Boise State, 920; 13. Baldwin-Wallace College, 875; 14. Univ. of Minnesota, 871; 15. Idaho Univ., 840; 16. Lewis & Clark State, 770; 17. Univ. of Colorado/Boulder, 730; 18. Akron, 660; 19. Utah State, 655; 20. Air Force Academy, 466; 21. Army, 403; 22. Ricks College, 350; 23. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 349; 24. Univ. of California/Berkeley, 215; 25. Cal State-Sacramento, 200; 26. North Carolina, 75; 27. Univ. of California/Davis, 54; 28. Univ. of Kansas, 50; 29. Providence, 0.

Women's Team Results: 1. Brigham Young, 3850; 2. Univ. of Florida, 2755; 3. Penn State, 2460; 4. Univ. of Memphis, 1914; 5. Univ. of Missouri, 1177; 6. Univ. of North Carolina, 1064.5; 7. Boise State, 1000; 8. Air Force Academy, 966; 9. Texas A&M, 785; 10. Baldwin-Wallace College, 702.5; 11. Howard University, 600; 12. Univ. of Colorado/Boulder, 515; 13. Weber State, 460; 14. Nichols College, 400; Shippensburg University, 400; Clovis Community College, 400; 17. Providence College, 210; 18. Ricks College, 200; Univ. of California/Davis, 200; 20. Army, 180; 21. Utah State, 170.





ABOVE L-R: RHONDA RAJSICH & ERIN BRANNIGAN.
PHOTO: COURTESY JEN YOKOTA.

Brannigan and Rajsich Win National High School Titles

Beaverton High School Captures Second Consecutive Team Title

by Kevin Vicroy

Top seeds Erin Brannigan of Sagle, Idaho and Rhonda Rajsich of Phoenix, Ariz. won singles division titles at the 1997 Pro Kennex USRA 10th U.S. National High School Racquetball Championships, presented by Penn Racquet Sports. The event was held at the Concord Sports Club in St. Louis, Mo.

For the team championship, Beaverton (Ore.) High School scored 234 points overall and outdistanced Sarasota (Fla.) H.S. by 18. Lafayette (Mo.) H.S. finished with 147 points to take third place, while Lincoln Southeast (Neb.) H.S. was fourth with 120.

Brannigan, the boys' top seed, defeated fellow U.S. Junior Racquetball Team member Ryan Staten of Dodge City, Kansas in the finale, 15-10, 15-14. The Sandpoint H.S. senior made it through the tournament without losing a single game, preying on unforced errors by his opponents.

In the girls' ranks, Rajsich became only the second player to repeat as a U.S. National High School Singles Champion. A senior at Thunderbird High School, Rajsich cruised through the girls' bracket from her No. 1 seed position until she met Sara Borland of Bettendorf, Iowa in the finals.

A rematch of last year's final, Borland again finished second, but not without a struggle. Rajsich found herself behind early in each game. Fortunately for Rajsich, she came back to win two of the three games to win her second straight high school crown. According to the future Division I basketball player, "Slow starts are characteristic of my game. In the first and third games, I played my game all the way through. In the second, I came back, but froze and let Sara back into the match."

The final scores were 15-7, 8-15, 11-2, giving Rajsich her second title win. Elkova Icenogle is the only other athlete to win more than one high school singles crown (1990, '91, '92).

There were 19 states represented, 55 schools and 186 participants.

PROKENNEX 10TH U.S. NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS - FINAL RESULTS

BOY'S GOLD SINGLES - Erin Brannigan, ID (Sandpoint H.S.) def. Ryan Staten, KS (Dodge City H.S.) 15-10, 15-14; 3. Brandon Henline, GA (Lakeside H.S.); 4. Willie Tilton, CO (Liberty H.S.). Blue: Andy Warner, AZ (Mesa H.S.); Red: Tim Dickmeyer, MO (St. Louis U. H.S.); White: Brendan Buehre, MO (St. Louis U. H.S.)

GIRL'S GOLD SINGLES - Rhonda Rajsich, AZ (Thunderbird H.S.) def. Sara Borland, IA (Bettendorf H.S.) 15-7, 8-15, 11-2; 3. Brooke Crawford, OR (Henley H.S.); 4. Katie Gould, MO (Lafayette H.S.). Blue: Kristen Kovar, NE (St. Pius X H.S.); Red: Colleen Kintz, MO (Nerinx Hall); White: Bridget Cleary, MO (Webster Groves H.S.)

BOY'S DOUBLES - Mike Harmon/Larry Peek, FL (Sarasota H.S.) def. Erin Brannigan/Ryan Burke, ID (Sandpoint H.S.) 15-9, 15-12; 3. Andy Warner/Mark Warner, AZ (Mesa H.S.); 4. J.R. Basham/Aaron Agner, OR (Aloha H.S.)

GIRL'S DOUBLES - Liana Kerwood/Christina Lewendal, OR (Beaverton H.S.) def. Megan Bals/Kristen Kovar, NE (Pius X H.S.) 10-15, 15-2, 11-5; 3. Christina Huelsing/Jane Romback, MO (Nerinx Hall); 4. Margie Drazen/Betsy Keegan, MO (St. Joseph's Academy)

MIXED DOUBLES - Melissa Harmon/Mike Harmon, FL (Sarasota H.S.) def. Maggie DeBord/Andy Tucknott, NE (Lincoln Southeast H.S.) 15-3, 15-12; 3. Christina Lewendal/Jason Kerwood, OR (Beaverton H.S.); 4. Katie Gould/Todd Bullock, MO (Lafayette H.S.)

TEAM RESULTS (by points) - **BOYS:** 1. Sarasota H.S., Sarasota, Fla. - 144; 2. Sandpoint H.S., Sandpoint, Idaho - 132; 3. Mesa H.S., Mesa, Ariz. - 111; 4. St. Louis Univ. H.S., St. Louis, Mo. - 108. **GIRLS:** 1. Beaverton H.S., Beaverton, Ore. - 144; 2. Nerinx Hall, Webster Groves, Mo. - 90; 3. St. Pius X H.S., Lincoln, Neb. - 84; 4. Thunderbird, Phoenix, Ariz. - 72. **OVERALL:** 1. Beaverton H.S., Beaverton, Ore. - 234; 2. Sarasota H.S., Sarasota, Fla. - 216; 3. Lafayette H.S., Ballwin, Mo. - 147; 4. Southeast H.S., Lincoln, Neb. - 120.

team news

JUNIOR TEAM PROFILE:

Rhonda Rajsich

by Craig Rappaport

Rhonda Rajsich is an 18 year old from Phoenix, Arizona, whose racquetball career began in 1989 when she was introduced to the game by her father, Dennis, who remains her coach today. Rhonda's natural athletic ability coupled with a strong work ethic accounts for her rapid rise to the top of girls' racquetball.

In 1992, Rhonda won her first national title at the Junior Nationals when she teamed with Vanessa Tulao in the 14 and under doubles. In 1993, the Rajsich/Tulao team repeated as 14 and under champions and Rhonda finished second in the 14 singles. Rhonda has since added three more national junior doubles titles to these two consecutive championships.

In 1994, Rhonda was appointed to Junior Team USA, and later helped earn the World team title by winning the 16 and under doubles with Vanessa at the IRF World Junior Championships.

In 1995, Rhonda competed in her first High School Nationals where she finished third. Later that year, Rhonda again competed for the U.S. at the European Peace Games in the Netherlands, finishing second in singles and doubles. After being reelected to the 1995-1996 Junior Team, Rhonda helped the U.S. win another team title with her second place doubles finish and third place singles finish in 18 and under.



In 1996, Rhonda won her first national singles title at the High School Nationals. Later in 1996, after finishes in the Junior Nationals, National Doubles, the US Open Championships, and another appointment to the 1996-1997 Junior Team, Rhonda came home from the Junior World

Championships in Fountain Valley, CA with a team, doubles, and her first world singles title.

Off the racquetball court, Rhonda is a star basketball player at Thunderbird High School. After graduation later this year, Rhonda plans on attending Southern Cal, Arizona or Pepperdine.

JUNIOR TEAM USA COACHING STAFF

Eric Muller, former Assistant Coach of Junior Team USA, assumed Head Coach responsibilities on January 1, 1997. Muller (shown directly left) is relieving interim Head Coach of Junior Team USA, Jim Winterton (far left). Winterton will remain involved with the Team in a consulting capacity as Junior Coach Emeritus. Rounding out the coaching staff are Assistant Coaches Craig Rappaport (below left) and Jennifer Yokota (below right).



Mark your calendars!

June 21-25: Baltimore, MD
Ektelon Junior Olympics
July 12-19: Memphis, TN
Roberts Junior Academy
July 31 - August 03:
Bloomington, IL
Midwest Juniors Camp with
Lynn Adams (see pg. 39)
August 15-21: Colorado
Springs, CO
Junior Team Trials
December 19-23: Fountain
Valley, CA
IRF 9th World Junior
Championships

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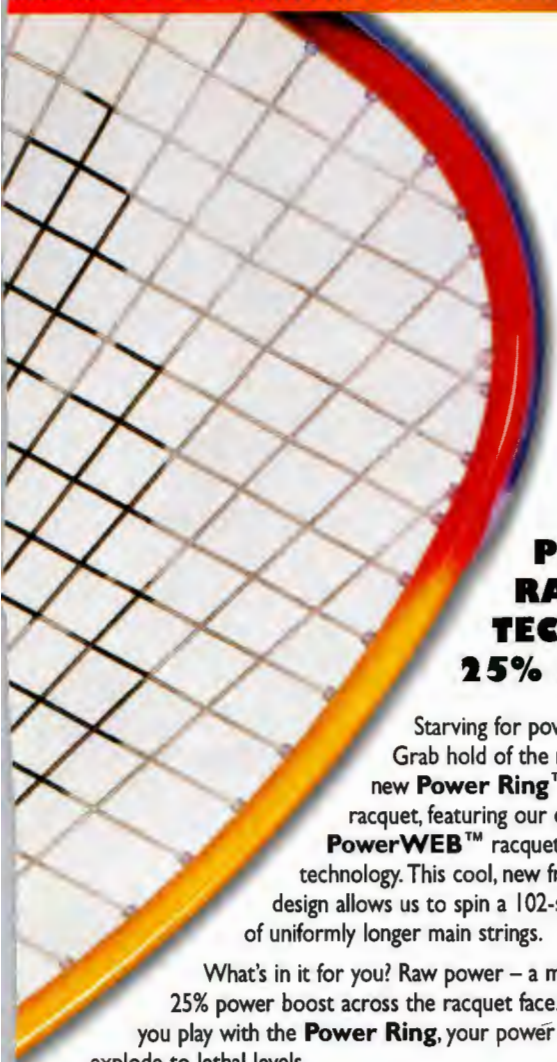
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IRT COVERAGE BY DARRIN SCHENCK - WIRT COVERAGE BY CHENYI BERNARD

FUTURE CELLULAR PRO-AM

Continental Athletic Club

Columbus, Ohio: February 19-23

Fresh off the visit to Atlanta, the IRT traveled to Ohio and the fabulous Continental Athletic Club for the next tour stop. With little change in ranking positions in seven days time, there were several rematches from the previous week to be played.

Early Rounds

Sudsy Monchik easily defeated qualifier Mike Dennison in three straight, as did John Ellis over Shane Vanderson, and Derek Robinson, who played a tough three games to defeat James Mulcock. Louis Vogel also started out strong with a win over Mike Green in three flawless games, setting up an Ellis/Vogel rematch. Jason Mannino won his match against qualifier Matt Adesso in four; Tony Jelso won a see-saw battle with Brian Simpson 11-8 in the fifth, and Kachtik also went to a tiebreaker to advance over Mike Ceresia, 11-7. Woody Clouse advanced by forfeit over Sable.

The bottom half of the draw finished quickly, with straight game wins by Andy Roberts over qualifier David Hamilton, along with Mike Bronfeld over Rafael Filipini; Mike Guidry past Mike Anderson; Mike Ray over George Delaney, Dan Fowler over Ryan Homa; Cliff Swain in three close ones over

qualifier Ed Davidson; and Kelly Gelhaus worked over yours truly. In the bottom bracket, only Adam Karp dropped a game to Grant Smith before advancing.

Round of Sixteen — the rematch lineup

It was "deja vu" for Ellis/Vogel, Mannino/Jelso, Roberts/Bronfeld, and Gelhaus/Swain. Last week the only upset had been Vogel over Ellis, but there was no repeat performance in Columbus. All the top seeded players advanced to the quarterfinals — Ellis beat Vogel in three, Mannino won a five-game two hours plus war with Jelso, Roberts won in three over Bronfeld, while



Cliff Swain comes around on a forehand, as John Ellis (foreground) gets ready to go vertical.

Swain took a straight game win over Gelhaus. Also in this round Kachtik defeated Clouse in four, Monchik battled with Robinson, winning in five. Adam Karp won in three over Guidry, and Dan Fowler won three very close games over Mike Ray.

Quarterfinals — Upset Time!

For the second time this season, #1 Sudsy Monchik fell to Drew Kachtik, who took this upset 11-6 in the fifth. A series of good passes and even better hipchecks got the Texan into the semi's. John Ellis beat Mannino in three games 12-10, 11-3, 11-5, while Cliff Swain hammered Dan Fowler 11-2, 11-2, 11-1 to close the gap a bit more between himself and the number one spot. Andy Roberts cruised over Adam Karp in three straight 11-3, 11-5, 11-2, setting up a routine semi between Roberts and Swain — where Andy would be trying to redeem himself from their match in Atlanta.

Semi-finals

The semifinals had it all — the standard tour lineup between Swain and Roberts, and the contrasting styles of John Ellis and Drew Kachtik. John Ellis looked sharp in front of his “home-away-from-California” fans as he ripped shots past the leg-weary Kachtik to move into the finals with the 11-6, 11-3, 11-2 win. Andy Roberts squeaked out a tight first game 12-10 before Cliff won the next two, 11-7 and 11-7. The fourth game was all Roberts, as he controlled center court and put away Cliff's left up shots. The fifth game was dominated by Cliff, who rolled shots from both sides to take a decisive 11-2 win. The final was set, Swain and Ellis. A win for Cliff would bring him a step closer to the number one spot. Ellis was in line to gain some serious ground on the four players ranked above him.

The Finals

The finals started out with all the firepower you would expect from a Swain/Ellis match. Ellis was swinging so hard he was coming out of his shoes, and played the game close to 6-5, before it happened. Cliff took over the match, controlled the pace, killed his fair share of set-ups and then some. Ellis felt some of the pressure, and began to force some shots and make unforced errors. The

combination of Ellis' skips and Swain's rollouts was too much to go longer than three — with Swain taking the win 11-7, 11-2, 11-6.

VCI Atlanta Pro-Am

Southern Athletic Club

Atlanta, Georgia: February 12-15

The IRT headed to a new site, the Southern Athletic Club in Atlanta, for some exciting action, courtesy of Volkswagen Credit, Inc. Once again the number of qualifiers increased over the year before, including hopefuls Sean Graham, Brian Simpson, Mike Glow, Grant Smith, Mike Ceresia, Mike Green, Jason Thoerner, and Sam Rutkowski — who all made it into the main draw.

Early Round

It was a lucky Sean Graham who went from being the #32 qualifier slotted against the #1 seed, to the recipient of a forfeit advance when top-ranked Sudsy Monchik withdrew from the tournament with the flu. Knowing that the top half of the draw was now open to a chal-

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lenger, the remaining players began moving into position. James Mulcock got past an injury-slowed Scott Reiff to earn a second-round bid against Graham in the top spot. Woody Clouse advanced over Dave Sable, Mike Ray started slow but finished strong against Brian Simpson, John Ellis dropped a game to local favorite Mike Glowa, Louis Vogel cruised past Buz Sawyer, Tony Jelso beat Kelly Kerr in three straight and Grant Smith managed to sneak a game before losing to Jason Mannino.

The bottom half of the draw offered a tougher-than-usual first round for Andy Roberts, who went up against Mike Ceresia in three, Michael Bronfeld cruised over yours truly, Dan Fowler took out Rafael Filipini in three games, Mike Guidry defeated Mike Green, Jason

Thoerner took out a slightly unmotivated Drew Kachtik in four, Adam Karp advanced after a no show by Brian Istace, Gelhaus edged Robinson in three close ones, and Swain advanced over qualifier Sam Rutkowski.

Round of 16

This round had a couple of upsets, and some of the usual. Due to the absence of the number one seed, Mulcock and Graham battled for a chance at the quarters, and James struggled to a five game win. Woody Clouse looked sharp in his four game upset over #8 seeded Mike Ray. Louis Vogel squeaked past John Ellis with a come-from-behind victory lasting into the early morning hours, and Dan Fowler battled with Mike Guidry and came out on top in four long games. And for the usual, Roberts advanced over

Bronfeld, Swain over Gelhaus, Mannino over Jelso, and Karp over Thoerner.

Quarterfinals

The quarterfinals first match-up was between Mulcock and Clouse. Mulcock looked tough in his first trip to the quarters, taking Woody the distance before losing 11-5 in the fifth. Between Roberts and Fowler, a rare argument by Fowler earned him a technical at the start of game two, followed by an 11-1 game loss, and a match loss in three straight. Next was a battle between Jason Mannino and Louis Vogel for a shot at the semi's, with Mannino advancing after three. Swain was having one of those weekends in which he refuses to drop a game to anyone, which included an unlucky Adam Karp.

Semi-finals

The Clouse/Mannino match-up drew a full house, which crammed into the bleachers behind court one, where Woody was slowed by an arm problem from some of his earlier round battles, and went down to Mannino in three 11-1, 11-4, 11-5. Against Roberts, Swain showed signs of what made him the most dominant player before the Monchik reign began, also taking a straight game win of 11-7, 11-6, 11-4.

The Finals

Swain and Mannino had survived to reach the finals of the VCI Atlanta Pro-Am, where the two vied for the first place check and points that keep tightening as the season draws to an end. Jason looked tough in this first pro final, extending rallies and hitting his patented backhand splat. But Cliff Swain would not be denied as he went on to finish the weekend — again without dropping a game — winning the title in Atlanta 11-6, 11-7, 11-6.

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Berglund Automotive Pro-Am

Roanoke Athletic Club

Roanoke, Virginia: February 7-9

by Kim Machiran and Cheryl Gudinas

The Roanoke Athletic Club welcomed the WIRT for the first time in February, and the hospitality of the staff and the locals made the ladies feel right at home! The weekend kicked off on Thursday night with a clinic by #4 ranked Laura Fenton. The next day, matches began in earnest.

Round of 16

In the first round, Lydia Hammock, who seems to improve with each tournament, took out veteran, Doreen Fowler, proving that her reading and hard work is paying off. Look out for her in the second half of the season. Molly O'Brien eliminated Kim Machiran in three games, leaving her to solve some crises the remainder of the weekend. Lynne Coburn defeated Kersten Hallander in three, and Janet Myers showed what a bit more quickness can do for the game with her straight-game win over Lorraine Galloway. Marcy Lynch defeated Michelle Wiragh and Laura Fenton beat the long-missed Marci Drexler ... welcome back Marci! Gould and Gudinas advanced with byes.

Quarterfinals

In the quarters, Hammock put up a good fight early, but Gould's serve was too much to handle in the late stages of each game, as she advanced 11-9, 11-9, 11-3. Coburn served up a storm against O'Brien, and won the match with relative ease. Lynch tested Fenton in streaks, but Laura still prevailed, as she has in most of their recent meetings. And Myers quick feet were not enough to defeat Gudinas, who advanced after three games, 11-3, 11-9, 11-3.

Semifinals

In the semis, Gudinas started out hot against Fenton, winning the first game, then appeared to hit a wall midway through the second. Uncharacteristically leaving the ball

up, Gudinas struggled and finally fell to Fenton in the remaining three. A newcomer to the semis this season, Lynne Coburn took a while to relax against Gould. As the match progressed, Coburn brought out her patented "head fake" serve to win the second game and leave Michelle guessing. But as usual, Michelle got it back together and cruised through games three and four to take the match, 11-1, 3-11, 11-5, 11-0.

In the final, Gould breezed past Fenton in three, 11-3, 11-5, 11-2, to bring home yet another blue ribbon.

AJB Auto Service/Chrysler- Plymouth Grand Slam

Highpoint Athletic Club

Chalfont, Pennsylvania: January 10-12

The WIRT celebrated the 10th anniversary of the AJB Auto/Chrysler Plymouth Grand Slam at the Highpoint Athletic Club in January. The tournament kicked off Thursday evening with the Pro-Am Mixed Doubles challenge, where eight of the top pros were matched up with eight of the finest local male players, and fun was

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Michelle Gould (left) takes a forehand against Laura Fenton in their semi-final match in Chalfont. Photo: courtesy Molly O'Brien

had by everyone. Michelle Gould was even spotted playing the right side!!

Preliminaries

Aimee Roehler made her bid to reach the round of 16 against Joy MacKenzie but fell in three games. Monique Flaherty traveled from the west coast to add some excitement to the tournament, but was defeated by Kersten Hallender, who's been showing up on the scene a lot lately.

Round of Sixteen

Although defeated by fellow U.S. team member Michelle Gould, Joy MacKenzie played well and was heard offering her twin sister Jackie some tips for the future during time-outs and between games. Randy Friedman advanced past Janet Myers in straight games, Kersten Hallender took Laura Fenton to four, and Coburn eliminated Doreen Fowler in three. On the other half, Jackie Paraiso dispatched Michelle Wiragh and Molly O'Brien advanced after dropping game three to Shigemi Yasuda, who headed home to Japan after this stop. Gudinas took a forfeit, and Marcy Lynch was tested by Lydia Hammock before winning their four game match.

Quarterfinals

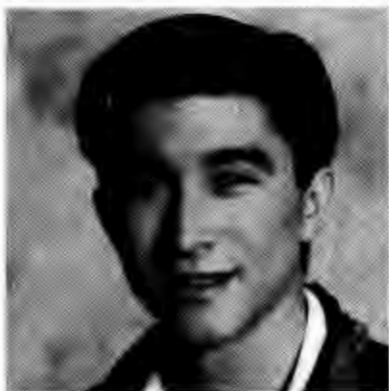
Gould made quick and easy work of Friedman, while Laura Fenton defeated Lynne Coburn with an equal amount of ease. Molly O'Brien lost to Jackie Paraiso, who was on a mission to make it to the finals after finally being placed on the bottom half of the draw, away from Gould, who she had drawn in the semis in five of the first six events. Marcy Lynch's run would end, with a loss to #2 Cheryl Gudinas, who didn't seem to miss much during their match.

Semi-finals

Paraiso came out hot in the first game to beat Gudinas, who could not generate any momentum and grounded several balls off Jackie's serve. Gudinas later relaxed to grab games two and three with relative ease, 11-5, 11-4. The hard-z was working, and Jackie could not get an offensive return going in her favor. Although Paraiso came back to save the fourth game 11-8, Gudinas never really appeared to lose control, got back to a relaxed mode, and took the tiebreaker easily with some good serves, and more pinches than normal.

In the other semi, Laura Fenton surprised Gould with a first game win by returning Gould's usually accurate serves effectively, and forcing Michelle to run more than she's used to. A master at re-grouping, Gould got it together and annihilated Fenton in the next two games, 11-2, 11-0, before her serve again became erratic and Fenton took advantage. Laura put the ball in the corners, moved Gould cross court, and kept her on the run to win game four 11-9. But, characteristic of Gould, she was inspired by the loss to her former doubles partner and returned to the tiebreaker determined to not let this one get away from her. She took the fifth 11-1.

In the standard finals match-up for this season, Gould faced doubles partner, Gudinas. And although Cheryl has been consistently intense all season in her matches — up to the finals — she doesn't seem able to muster up that same intensity on Sunday. Gould, on the other hand, took her five game semifinal as a wake up call and improved her game overnight with some mental preparation. For her part, Gudinas returned Gould's serve better than usual, and got Michelle into some rallies this time around. Taking a little off the ball, and hitting good pinches proved to be effective for Gudinas, but she has struggled all season to find a mix of serves that will work as well. After attacking each serve, Gould kept Gudinas guessing and on the run as she took another straight game win, 11-1, 11-2, 11-1 for the title.



pro X:

Part II: Back in Action

by Grant P. Smith D.C.

In my previous article, we established that exercises are beneficial for those who suffer from

low back pain. Keep in mind that these exercises are not for acute conditions. The exercises described below are designed to stretch and strengthen the low back. It is very important to use caution when attempting these exercises so as not to further any complications that you might have. If you feel any pain, stop immediately and inform your health care provider.

Aerobic Training

Walking on level ground for 15-30 minutes. The surface you choose should have some give to it like a treadmill, grass, dirt or even asphalt. Try not to walk on concrete. As your back gets stronger, stairstepping may be added to your workout schedule. Aerobic training is used to enhance circulation which will help repair damaged tissue faster.

Knee to Chest (top right)

Start by lying on your back and bringing one knee toward your chest and hold for a count of ten. Lower the bent knee and bring the opposite knee up to the chest, repeat 3-5 times. This action stretches the muscles and ligaments along the spine.

30 Degree Crunches (center right)

Flex the knees at 90 degrees up on a chair or elevated platform. With arms folded to the chest, lift the shoulders 4-5 inches off the floor and hold for five seconds then slowly lower the shoulders back down. This will strengthen the abdominal muscles and improve pelvic stability.

Hamstring Stretch (bottom right)

Find a stretching bar or the ledge of a court about waist high. While supported, put one leg up while keeping the other foot firmly planted on the ground. Slowly bend forward until there is a slight pull. Remember to breathe normally and try to relax, hold for 30 seconds, come up and carefully switch legs.





Hip Flexor and Quadriceps Stretch (above)

While kneeling on one knee, place the front leg at about 135 degrees and bend the knee forward. After a good stretch, draw the front leg back to a 90 degree angle and flex the trailing leg to the buttock. Hold each position for 8-10 seconds and don't forget to switch. For long term control of back injuries the hamstrings, quadriceps and hip flexors must be flexible.

Wall Squat (right)

While standing with your back against the wall, slowly bend the knees as if to sit in a chair. Hold for five seconds then return to start. Do not exceed 90 degrees of flexion on this one. Wall squats are designed to strengthen the low back, hip, and thigh muscles.



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Lunges (below)

While standing erect, step forward with one leg bending the knee until the posterior knee almost touches the floor. Hold momentarily, then return to a standing position. Lunges will enhance the stability of the back, quadriceps, and gluteals.



pro tour calendar



**INTERNATIONAL
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**WOMEN'S
INTERNATIONAL
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IRT CALENDAR

May 14 – 18

Bay 101 IRT World Championships
Bayhill Athletic Club
Milpitas, California

June 4 – 8

Spalding Tournament of
Champions @ Multnomah Athletic
Club—Portland, Oregon

WIRT CALENDAR

May 14 – 18

Bay 101 WIRT World
Championships @ Bayhill Athletic
Club—Milpitas, Calif.

June 5 – 8

RAD Tournament of Champions
Multnomah Athletic Club
Portland, Oregon

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IRT JAPAN

July 19 – 21

Sports Club Together
Fukuoka, Japan

For IRT Japan Information:
Koichi Kitamura, Moonlight
Workshop; Headquarters for IRT
Japan. 81-3-3398-2847
e-mail: chau-san
@libra.bekkoame.or.jp

'96-97 irt & wirt rankings

MEN'S STANDINGS

1.	Sudsy Monchik.	New York	2615
2.	Cliff Swain	Massachusetts	2461
3.	Andy Roberts	Tennessee	1932
4.	Jason Mannino	California	1692
5.	John Ellis	California	1487
6.	Mike Guidry	Texas	1393
7.	Mike Ray	South Carolina	1321
8.	Drew Kachtik	Louisiana	1201
9.	Dan Fowler	Maryland	1065
10.	Adam Karp	California	1031
11.	Woody Clouse	California	978
12.	Louis Vogel	New Mexico	899
13.	Tony Jelso	California	763
14.	Michael Bronfeld	California	698
15.	Kelly Gelhaus	California	653
16.	James Mulcock	New Mexico	562
17.	Todd O'Neil	Texas	405
17.	Scott Reiff	Florida	405
19.	Derek Robinson	Washington	361
20.	Darrin Schenck	Arizona	304

Rankings as of 3.25.97

WOMEN'S STANDINGS

1.	Michelle Gould	Idaho	1697
2.	Cheryl Gudinas	Illinois	1258
3.	Jackie Paraiso	California	953
4.	Laura Fenton	Nebraska	869
5.	Lynne Coburn	Maryland	701
6.	Molly O'Brien	Maryland	664
7.	Marcy Lynch	Pennsylvania	618
8.	Janet Myers	North Carolina	548
9.	Lydia Hammock	California	485
10.	Dina Moreland	California	420
11.	Doreen Fowler	Maryland	399
12.	Robin Levine	California	387
13.	Randy Friedman	New York	312
14.	Kim Machiran	Missouri	265
15.	Amy Kilbane	Ohio	273
16.	Kersten Hallander	Florida	226
17.	Lorraine Galloway	New York	223
18.	Shigemi Yasuda	Japan	213
19.	Anita Maldonado	New York	206
20.	Michelle Wiragh	Maryland	189

Rankings as of 3.25.97

WIRT BONUS POOL STANDINGS

Ektelon NFS Shoe

1. Michelle Gould
2. Cheryl Gudinas
3. Molly O'Brien
4. Kim Machiran
5. Doreen Fowler
6. Randy Friedman
7. Lorraine Galloway
8. Michelle Wiragh

Pro Penn Glove

1. Laura Fenton
2. Marcy Lynch
3. Kim Machiran
4. Randy Friedman
5. Anita Maldonado
6. Michelle Wiragh

Spalding Xenon

1. Laura Fenton
2. Marcy Lynch
3. Kim Machiran
4. Randy Friedman
5. Anita Maldonado
6. Michelle Wiragh

Tacki Mac Grips

1. Dina Moreland
2. Kim Machiran
3. Randy Friedman
4. Anita Maldonado

industry update



EKTELON HITS MARKET WITH LONGBODY™

Ektelon has announced that it will introduce six longer-length racquetball frames in June. The LongBody™ racquet technology, which is patent-pending, will effectively extend racquet frame length up to one full inch to deliver more power and reach. The USRA has ruled that 22" frames, one inch longer than the previous maximum length, will be legal for sanctioned amateur competition, effective September 1, 1997.

According to newly-promoted Director of Indoor Court Sports, Scott Winters, "Ektelon hasn't just tacked on an inch to the end of our racquets. Rather, we have developed a series of frames that are also perfectly balanced to deliver enhanced performance and comfort for players at all levels. Ektelon LongBody™ racquets will offer measurable increases of up to 10% more power and 13% more reach, in addition to being kind to your arm."

Ektelon has enlisted several of the world's top racquetball players in perfecting the technology specifically for racquetball. Andy Roberts, Drew Kachtik, Mike Guidry and Dan Fowler, each among the top 15 on the mens pro tour, have been playing with the LongBody™ racquets since January. The top two WIRT players, Michelle Gould and Cheryl Gudinas, are expected to switch to LongBody™ racquets after the Ektelon 30th U.S. National Singles Championships in May.

ProKENNEX RESTRUCTURES ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

ProKENNEX president Kevin Gilbert announced a series of administrative changes recently, including the naming of Mike Martinez (a seven-year member of the ProKENNEX Racquetball Professional Advisory Staff) as national director of racquetball. Martinez's role will include product development, player development and marketing. An experienced, esteemed, and highly qualified player and instructor, Martinez will serve as regional promotional manager of ProKENNEX Racquetball's Team Tour Gear, comprised of elite

racquetball players competing with ProKENNEX-branded equipment. Martinez has begun his new responsibilities, replacing John Weaver, who left his post as vice president of ProKENNEX's Fall Sports Division last November to pursue other business interests.

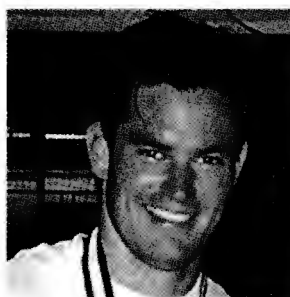
WILSON RACQUETBALL SIGNS ADAMS, ROBINSON, AND BRONFELD THROUGH 2000

Wilson Racquetball recently announced the signing of Lynn Adams, Derek Robinson, and Michael Bronfeld as Elite Staff members through the year 2000. Lynn Adams, seven-time Pro National Champion, was the first player to sign with Wilson Racquetball in July 1994, as the company's Manager of Education and Player Development. Lynn spearheads the Wilson Clinic Program, and conducts over 200 racquetball clinics and exhibitions each year. Derek Robinson joined Wilson in the fall of 1994 and is also a key participant in the Wilson Clinic Program, and teaches racquetball to players of all ages and skill levels across the country. He is the current National Doubles Champion, finished third at the 1996 AARA National Championships, and is a top touring professional. Michael Bronfeld is the newest member of the Wilson Racquetball Elite Staff. The two-time National Amateur Champion recently signed a 3-year contract to represent the company and its products. Michael is one of the most recognized players in the amateur game, and his mentally-tough style of play is making him a major threat on the professional tour as well.

LEVINE AND JOHNSTON SEW ON ASHAWAY PATCH

Tour professionals Robin Levine of Sacramento, Calif. and Mike Johnston of Colorado Springs, Colo. have added Ashaway Racket Strings to their list of sponsors. Levine, currently ranked 12th on the Women's International Racquetball Tour (WIRT), is extremely pleased to have the Ashaway patch added to her playing attire. For Johnston, the top-ranked player in his former home state of Michigan, the Ashaway SuperKill®

CLOCKWISE FROM
TOP LEFT:
MIKE MARTINEZ
LYNN ADAMS
DEREK ROBINSON
MICHAEL BRONFELD
ROBIN LEVINE
MIKE JOHNSTON
SCOTT WINTERS



II string is the most durable he's used. According to Ashaway Vice President of Sales and Marketing Steven Crandall, "We're thrilled to have signed these two talented players, and pleased that our strings are exceeding their expectations."

Ashaway, the official string of the United States Racquetball Association (USRA), is the only U.S. manufacturer of strings for racquetball and other racket sports.

"WALTER" THE PYTHON

Probably the most unique booth at the Promus Hotel Corporation U.S. OPEN was the Python Grip booth which housed "Walter," a 12 ft foot live python. Doug Smith, manufacturer of Python Grips, had a constant crowd at the booth as both players and spectators wanted a chance to touch and, in some cases, handle



the over 100-pound snake. Pictures were taken of Hank Marcus, Lynn Adams, Ruben Gonzalez, Chris Evon, Caryn McKinney (above), Ryan Staten, Robin Levine, Rhonda Rajsich and many others. All with "Walter" draped around them. Sudsy Monchik, the #1 Python player, vowed to do it "next year"...we'll see. Racquetball player Joe Ault (above) of Indiana is the proud owner of "Walter" (above).

EKTELON'S WINTERS PROMOTED

A good friend of racquetball, Scott Winters, has been promoted to Director of Indoor Court Sports for the Prince Sports Group. He will be primarily responsible for the Prince® Squash, Prince® Badminton and Ektelon® racquetball product lines. A graduate of University of California-Irvine, Scott has spent more than 15 years in sports instruction and health facility management.

Rick Margin, Vice-President of Marketing for the Prince Sports Group, had this to say about Winters following the announcement. "He has excelled in every area for which he has had responsibility. His proven business leadership, product knowledge and development, and his marketing and promotion skills make him a 'natural' for this position."



THE NEW YORK YANKEES AND YOU

What is that blue thing hanging around the necks of the World Champion New York Yankees this spring? It's the "COOL-THING." It may look like just a blue nylon towel, but when draped around the neck, the "COOL-THING" can help the athlete cool down, feel refreshed and minimize the possibility of heat exhaustion. Made of quick drying, washable fabric with crystals inside that are activated by briefly soaking in water, the "COOL-THING" stays cool after the fabric dries for four to five days, without refrigeration, and is reusable. Currently being used by the NBA's New York Knicks, as well, the "COOL-THING" can be ordered by calling 1-888-COOLSME. The suggested retail price is \$14.95.

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DS-USRA \$39.00

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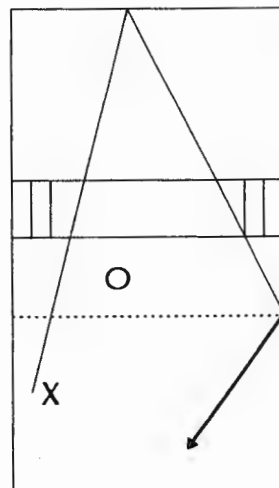
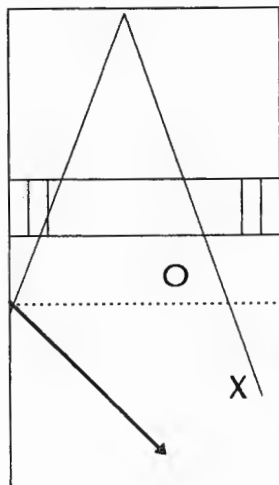
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wide angle cross court

The Cross-Court – Wide Angle is an especially effective passing shot because it makes your opponent move in two directions – the first reaction is to move toward the side wall, and then toward the back wall.



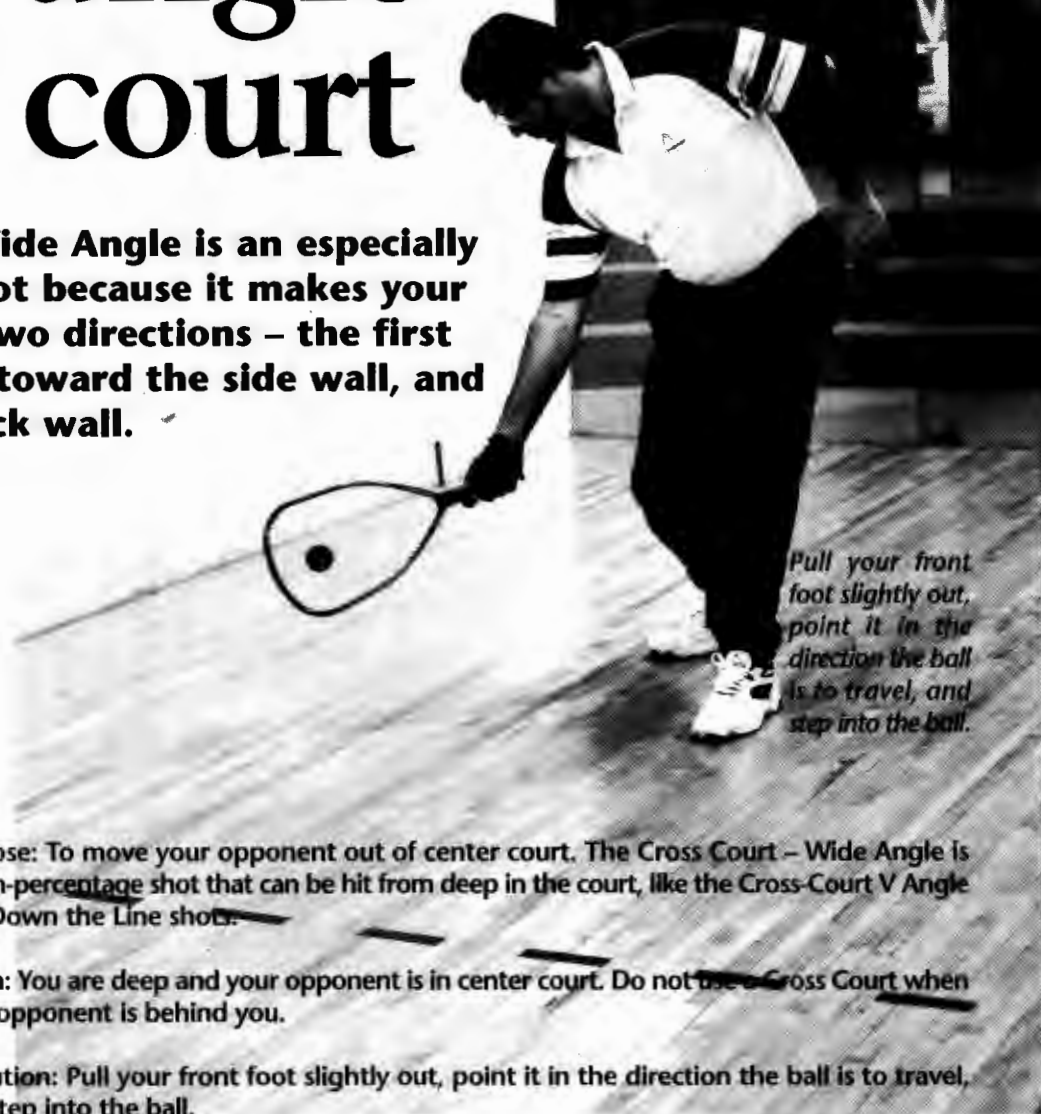
Purpose: To move your opponent out of center court. The Cross Court – Wide Angle is a high-percentage shot that can be hit from deep in the court, like the Cross-Court V Angle and Down the Line shots.

When: You are deep and your opponent is in center court. Do not use a Cross Court when your opponent is behind you.

Execution: Pull your front foot slightly out, point it in the direction the ball is to travel, and step into the ball.

The Cross-Court - Wide Angle contacts the front wall slightly left of center, to create a wider angle that sends the ball into the side wall and then into the center court. Pull your front foot slightly out, point it in the direction the ball is to travel, and step into the ball. The ball should hit 18"-20' high on the front wall. Be sure the Cross Court (whether Wide Angle or V) makes your opponent reach and hit a weak return.

Eighth in a series based on Mastery of Racquetball™, an official USRA instruction program taught by Tom Travers, three-time Men's 40+ National Champion. Travers has taught at the USRA Elite Racquetball Camp, U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, and is assistant coach of the U.S. Racquetball Team. For further information about Mastery of Racquetball, see the display ad on page 37.



Pull your front foot slightly out, point it in the direction the ball is to travel, and step into the ball.

AMPRO TIP: How to Handle an Injury

By Fran Davis & Diana McNab



An injury can be traumatic for any racquetball player. Besides the physical pain, it can create fear and a severe loss of confidence. As a matter of fact we often don't realize that the emotional healing sometimes can be as important, if not more important, than the physical healing.

In my career I have seen many injured racquetball players take the necessary steps to come back from their injury as strong or stronger than before. You can follow the same steps to bounce back from an injury.

Step I: Accept you are injured ... don't deny it, or ignore it. Don't continue to play with it ... it'll usually get worse and become more serious.

- Seek a professional opinion
- Stick to your rehab program set forth by your doctor, physical therapist, athletic trainer or any other professional that could help you.
- Don't let your injury get you down ... instead focus on turning it into a positive. The injury may be a blessing in disguise.

Step II: Take this time to re-focus, re-group and take a good hard look at yourself.

- Use your injury to give your mind, body and spirit a rest ... we often play racquetball year round and never take a break.
- Re-evaluate your training program – sometimes an injury is just bad luck or it can be your body's way of sending a message about over- or under-training. Check it out with a professional trainer.
- Use this time to get stronger – strengthen your weak ankles or weak legs or other parts of your body, so when you come back your lower body or upper body (depending on your injury) is stronger than before.
- Re-assess your game – when you play so often in leagues or tournaments sometimes we lose perspective. So while you are hurt take a look at the big picture and check out your goals, attitude, coach, fitness, nutrition and your physical game (strokes, serves, court position,

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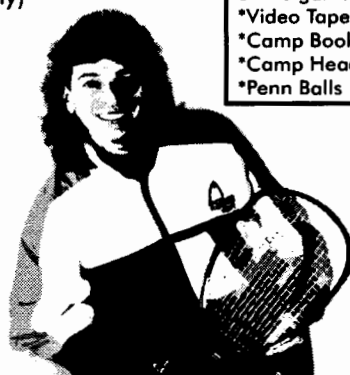
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GRAPHICS DONE
BY TONY JAMES
OF COURTWEAR

return of serves, game plans, etc.).

- Enjoy the time off – look at it in the positive light – as a break, an opportunity to regain balance in your life.

Step III: What to Actually Do

- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat plenty of protein for tissue repair.
- Visualize on a daily basis – do two types of visualizing;
 - repairing of tissue and cells
 - your game
- Watch tapes of you, mentors and professionals – their skills, techniques and strategies.
- Practice stress management – relaxation, breathing, meditation.
- Use massage therapy – electrical stimulation.
- Use affirmations of the way you want to play.
- Religiously follow the rehabilitation program and weight training program that you received from your doctor, trainer or therapist. We cannot stress this enough. Too many people deviate when they start feeling better and wind up re-injuring themselves and they regress quickly. Be smart, stay on track.

Step IV: The Comeback – the worst thing you can do after an injury is to come back too soon or too quickly. If you overdo it, the re-injury is usually worse than the original.

- Get into playing condition, slowly.
- Start slowly and ease into it. Drill first, little by little, at about 50% and work your way up from there. Too often after an injury people just set up a match immediately and go play again as if they were never hurt – a huge mistake. Take it one step at a time.
- Stretch on a regular basis.
- Continue to weight train according to the doctor's prescription.
- Limit your expectations. Don't expect to win the club championships or your league the first month back. Too much pressure will result in failure rather than success and can break your confidence.
- Have faith in the future. After your injury you'll face many emotional challenges – fear of re-injury, fear that you'll never regain your strength, speed or flexibility, fear of pain. But in most cases the injury heals and the player is as good as before. Be prepared for the emotional crisis.

Remember — if you're patient, persistent and positive you can return from your injury as good if not better than before ... just like so many others have done. Dig deep and be ready for the challenge that lies ahead. We know you can do it ... enjoy the process. Good Luck!!!!

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Bring back the Thrill — Part II: Hit any Good Z-Balls Lately?



By now the season is in high gear, some of you are preparing for nationals, and you've got at least one full league left before the summer slow down. Still, you've got plenty of time to work out those bad habits we discussed in the last issue, plus add some new shots to your game.

Let's tackle Part II of "Bring Back the Thrill," and go over some highly effective, but not often seen, shots and serves. For serves, we'll talk about adding a jam serve, an offspeed/change of pace serve, and a junk half lob, or as I like to call it, a sucker serve. For shots, I'll describe an overhead, around the wall, and z-ball.

Jam Serve

Usually we try to hit the serve away from our opponent. A jam serve does just the opposite, angling in towards the opponent's body, preferably at their gut. This leaves them no time to turn or swing, they get all "jammed up," hence the term "Jam Serve." To be most effective with this serve, it should look like you are about to hit a drive to the left corner. Instead, the ball will strike the front wall a little closer to the left corner (see diagram on next page), then take a path that hits the left side-wall behind you, then angle directly toward your opponent's midsection.



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Part 2 Forehand: principles, how to execute an arsenal of 12 different shots. Practice drills. (40 mins.)

Part 3 Backhand: principles & confident execution of 11 different shots. Practice drills. (45 mins.)

TAPE 2: 1 HOUR 23 MINUTES

Part 4 Serve & Service Return: mechanics & strategies of a variety of winning serves & service returns. Practice drills. (33 mins.)

Part 5 Preparation & Strategy: warm-up, game plan, shot selection, offensive and defensive pressure, anticipation. (50 mins.)

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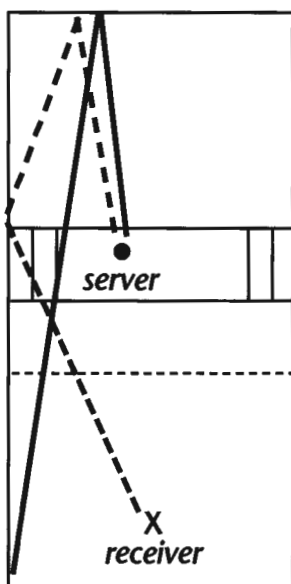
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Jam Serve



Off Speed/Change of Pace

If a baseball pitcher only threw fast balls, we'd see lots of hits and homeruns! What does a pitcher do to stop this from happening? He changes things ... the look, the height and the speed of his pitches. The key is not to let the batter get into a rhythm. You want to do the same thing when you are in the service box. If you hit with power, you can change up the pace of your serves. You won't fake anyone out hitting 60 mph and then pulling back to 30

mph, but if you hit the ball with some speed you can really throw off your opponent's timing by hitting some off-speed serves now and then.

What you need to work on is making your off-speed serve look like it's going to be a heater ... until the very last second. Hit a bunch of hard drive serves and really analyze how you look when you step into the ball and swing. Then try to repeat the exact same motion, only slow down your swing at the last instant.

This is an excellent weapon against an opponent who loves to hit the ball hard, swinging at one speed ... fast. By changing pace on your serves, you can confuse and frustrate your opponent, hopefully making power less of a problem.

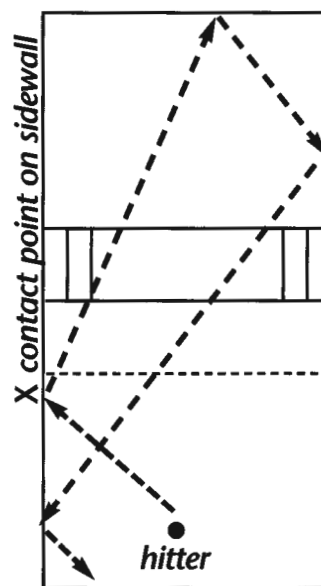
Junk 1/2 Lob

(Alias: The Sucker Serve)

This serve can seem so blasé and unimposing that it is often overlooked as an effective weapon in your serve arsenal. In actuality, it can drive many an opponent crazy for the same reason. It seems like such an easy serve that when an opponent struggles to hit a decent return, the frustration produces a double whammy effect.

The serve is hit with a lob motion, but instead of coming up underneath the ball, come in squarely behind the ball. You want the serve to travel between waist and chest height but at a speed that doesn't allow it to come off the backwall for a set up.

Around the Wall #1



So why is this a frustrating serve to return effectively? It looks so simple that players assume they can tee off on the ball. But hitting at waist to chest height makes it very difficult to generate power and accuracy.

Around the Wall

This shot does exactly what the name implies. It travels high around all the walls, ending up in a back corner. This shot is hit instead of a ceiling ball, as a change of pace. It is typically hit from deep in the court, usually after your opponent hits you a ceiling ball or a lob serve. Diagram #1 shows the path of an around-the-wall ball when you hit into the side wall you are standing next to.

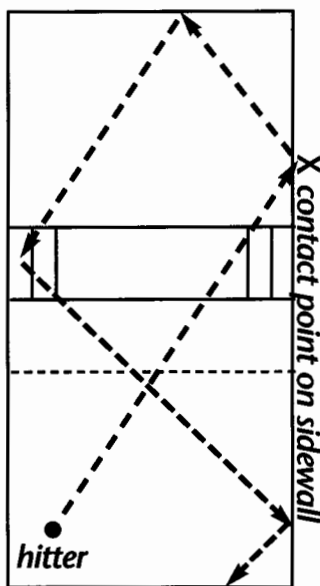
Diagram #2 shows the path of an around-the-wall ball when you hit into the opposite side wall you are standing next to. An around-the-wall shot can throw off an opponent who hasn't seen many of them. The spin and angle of the shot can be confusing, so hit one in lieu of a ceiling ball, and you just might find a new weakness in your opponent.

Z Ball

This unique shot is rarely seen. I joke in my clinics and camps that only old people hit z-balls, because it's usually the cagey veterans who use this shot. A z-ball is similar to a z-serve in the path it takes, except it is hit high into the front wall/corner instead of at chest height. You want to hit the ball from approximately 10 to 15 feet up on the front wall and angling towards the corner, similar to a z-serve. The ball will then cut across the court and hit the side wall high, then run parallel along the back wall, dying in the corner.

This is a great shot to keep your opponent off balance and out of a rhythm. Imagine you have a nice, low forehand set-up around the short service line. As you drop low as if you are going to go for a rollout, your opponent starts moving forward to cover. At the last second, you whip the ball up and high into the opposite corner, hitting a z-ball. Your opponent hits the brakes, shoes squeaking, and tries

Around the Wall #2



to backpedal as the ball goes overhead. It doesn't matter whether they get the shot or not, since you'll have them guessing the next time you've got a great set up around the service box. Will you hit the low shot, or go high for the z-ball? Then, instead of committing to a specific shot, they might hang back and watch a little longer, cutting into their reaction time. All of

this helps make your shot a little more effective and keeps your opponent off balance and unsure of your shot selection.

Overhead

If you've ever watched a tennis match, you've seen what an overhead looks like. It's a tennis serve motion. When the ball is high above your head, you come down over the top of the ball, driving it low onto the front wall. The key is being slightly behind the ball so you can come down on top of it. If the ball travels behind your head, you won't have the right angle to hit down on the ball, and you'll tend to hit those wonder-

ful shots that hit high on the front wall, and then carry far out off the back wall for a big-time set up. Yuck !!

Overhead shots take a lot of shoulder and upper body strength, so make sure you warm up before you start slamming overheads.

There are two types of overheads — the drive and the pinch. The overhead drive is used to keep the game moving at a fast pace. Instead of hitting an abundance of ceiling balls, you might try bringing the ball down to force your opponent into a quicker pace. An overhead keeps your opponent from getting into the nice, easy rhythm of a ceiling ball rally. Also, if an overhead drive is hit correctly, it will end up in that gray hitting area between your waist and chest. Overall, this is a great shot to keep the pressure on your opponent.

An overhead pinch is a much tougher shot to hit, with very little room for error. If you don't hit low enough on the side wall, you leave the ball up in the front court for a big juicy plum. If you hit it too low, you skip the ball. That's why it's a low percentage shot, but that doesn't mean you can't practice it and add it to your game. Just pick your times to use it wisely — like when you're way ahead and having a hot game.

I hope you enjoy trying some of these different serves and shots. They can be a wonderful addition to any game style, and they add a spark of excitement — especially when you see them work. Good Luck !!!!

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Picking the Right String for your Racquet

All the "hype" you've heard and read about the new racquets is, for the most part, true. The current oversize crop are in fact better than anything we've ever seen on the racquetball court. Stiffer, lighter, and more powerful than earlier models, oversize racquets help virtually every player perform better.

Larger racquets generate more power because they use longer string. The longer the string, the more it can



Wow! Look what we used to play with. The new oversize racquets are unquestionably better, but they're also tougher on string. Photo: courtesy, Ashaway Racquet Strings.

stretch, so the greater the "trampoline" effect. But oversize racquets are also tougher on string, and require adjustment in stringing habits to bring out their best.

Small-headed racquets have relatively "dense" string patterns: in

other words, the strings are close together, providing a lot of support for one another. In a well-hit shot with an older racquet, the ball would typically make solid contact with four main strings and four cross strings, all of which absorbed the shock and abrasion.

Oversize racquets have more "open" stringing patterns, with more space between the strings. This makes the string bed less stiff, and the greater resiliency adds to the racquet's power. But now, the same well-hit shot makes solid contact with just three mains and two crosses. Because fewer strings are absorbing the same amount of force, they tend to wear quicker and break more frequently. Furthermore, the open pattern allows the strings to move around more relative to one another. This "sawing" motion of the crosses against the mains also accelerates wear.

A long string must be strung tighter to obtain the same response and control that a short string provides. And while this will stiffen up the string bed and somewhat reduce the "sawing" action, it also increases the chance of "catastrophic" breakage at the grommets near the head of the racquet. The solution is to use heavier-gauge string, or a string designed for extra durability. So if you like the feel of a multi-stranded monofilament string, you could switch from a 17 gauge to a 16 gauge (e.g., from SuperKill® 17 to SuperKill II). Or you might switch to a hybrid string set that combines



monofilament crosses for power and "feel," with Kevlar® mains for durability (e.g., Killfire®). If you're a chronic string breaker, and want the ultimate in durability, go for a really heavy, 15 gauge string with a Kevlar core (e.g., DuraKill™).

You may have noticed that many pros use thin 17 or 18 gauge strings, because it provides more power. But also notice that these pros carry around a bag of five or six racquets, and restring frequently because of breakage. Even if you can afford it, it's not an ideal situation, according to Mike Johnston, the 1996 #1 doubles and singles champ in Michigan, and a major power player.

"If you break a string in the middle of a match and have to change racquets, it can knock you right out of 'the groove,'" Mike told me. Some players, he says, prefer the durability and reliability of a thicker string — even if it means giving up a bit of power. Mike, a sponsored player who could use any string he wants — and as much of it as he wants — strings his racquets with 16-gauge SuperKill II string. So go ahead and string thick if you want: you can tell your opponent it's because your swing is too powerful.

Just one more item for your consideration: some of the new racquets are so big that a typical string set is no longer long enough. For these, you'll have to go to a racquet stringer who buys string in bulk, and can cut it to length.

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING!



**OF COURSE,
A HALL OF FAME BACKHAND
DOESN'T HURT EITHER.**

Lynn Adams won everything there is to win in racquetball. Seven times. And when Multiple Sclerosis ended her playing career, she immediately focused her winning attitude toward helping others learn to play the game she loves. If life had a Hall of Fame, she'd make that one too. Congratulations, Lynn.



WHAT'S THE CALL? By Otto Dittman USRA National Rules Committee



Q ● Rule 4.15(a)2 under "Deadball Hinders" states "When an opponent is hit by a return shot in flight, it is a deadball hinder." Note that it doesn't state that there are any exceptions, such as failure to move which Rule 4.16(a) says is an avoidable hinder. Which takes precedence? It looks like these rules need clarification.
Michael R. Matheson, M.D., Greenwood Park, CO.

A ● You are absolutely correct — clarification is needed and will appear in the next iteration of the rulebook. Of course the real answer to your question is that the avoidable hinder condition takes precedence. That is how I'll propose that the clarification be treated — Rule 4.15 will indicate that exceptions are listed in Rule 4.16.

Speaking of avoidables, I'm frequently asked how to tell whether a "hinder" is avoidable or not. In addition to the basic concepts set forth in Rule 4.16, here is how I like to explain it.

Let's say that Charlie hits the ball and has time to move out of Bill's way, but doesn't. When this type of interference affects the rally and the referee concludes that Bill could have gotten to the ball had there been no interference, then **it's an avoidable hinder** — regardless of how "offensive" the shot the player who was hindered might have taken! Charlie, clearly having the opportunity to move, **must** move to allow his opponent a shot. The "failure to move" rule doesn't say anything about the shot that was taken away having to be an "offensive shot."

In a situation identical to the one just described, except that the referee determines that Bill couldn't have gotten to the ball — even if the apparent interference hadn't occurred. **There's no hinder at all!**

So much for the two most obvious situations ...

Now, let's assume that Charlie hits that ball, but **doesn't** have time to move before interference occurs as a result of (i) the direction and speed of the shot taken and/or

(ii) the proximity of Charlie, Bill, and the ball. When this type of interference occurs and the referee concludes that Bill could have gotten to the ball had there been no interference, then some form of hinder must be called.

The referee's decision as to whether this hinder should be declared a deadball hinder or an avoidable hinder should be based on how much advantage the referee feels (i.e. their judgement) that Player A's opponent would have had if there had been no interference at all. Here's the criteria:

- If the advantage would have been great (that is, Bill very likely would have ended the rally with the shot that he didn't get to take) then **it's an avoidable hinder**.
- Conversely, if there would have been no great advantage (that is, Bill's shot surely would have been returned by Charlie), then **it's a deadball hinder**.

So, for all the many degrees of potential advantage that lie in between, the decision is left to the referee's sole discretion (once again, a judgement) with this simple admonition that "the more likely it is that the hindered player's shot wouldn't have been returned, the more likely it should be called avoidable."

Therefore, this type of situation is the **only** time when the concept of "taking away an offensive opportunity" should become a factor in making the call. In this instance, "offensive opportunity" is synonymous with "high probability of hitting a rally-ending shot."

The Final Shot: If you're on the internet, join us at the newsgroup [alt.sport.racquetball] to discuss a wide range of rules questions and interpretations. And if you'd like to e-mail your questions to me, I can be reached at: ottod@worldnet.att.net

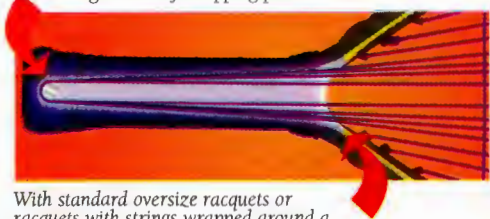
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FITNESS ON THE FAST TRACK

By Kory Dunne



With spring just around the corner, we are all endeavoring to work at getting in shape or going to the next level. Last season many of us experienced periods where we seemed almost unbeatable. But the thrill of victory turned into the agony of defeat because we just didn't maintain our physical peak nor our mental concentration as the racquetball season progressed.

So it's back to the drawing board for many of us ... because, no matter what, you love this game. So what are you going to do to improve your game and get in better shape? The problem for many people is not being able to find time in their busy schedules to get to the gym so they can get in better shape and burn off those extra pounds. So here's what I recommend you do to get in better shape, without all the fluff.

Abdominals

I promised myself that I would work on my mid-section more than usual. One of the things most people need to know about the mid-section is that its position on the body is important to both the upper torso and lower body. If you have a strong mid-section, you will have a strong back and most likely will not experience the problems others do because of a neglected mid-section.

I start when I get up in the morning by doing some knee-to-elbow crunches with a twist standing up. Try not to force your head to your knee. I do about three sets of 25-50 reps. In the evening I also do a couple of sets before I go to bed. I also do some crunches lying on my back. Remember to only lift the shoulders and place your arms across the chest. Placing your hands behind your neck can cause strain in the neck muscles. Make sure your heels are planted and your lower back is flush with the ground so that your hip flexors don't move.

Upper Body

Then there is the old favorite, the push-up. I know lots of people who can't do twenty pushups. Now before you say "I can do 20 pushups," I don't mean the kind where your arms go down a half an inch. Anybody doing those types of pushups can do over 100. The best

way to build up those pecs, shoulders, and arms is to do the old basic push up.

Or, if you want more variety, put your feet up on a chair or your bed and try doing push-ups this way as well. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, men age 20-29 should average 35-44 push-ups. For women in the same age bracket, they should average 17-33 in the modified "knee" position. The best way to know how much upper body strength you have is to place a cup under your torso. Then see how many times you can touch it with your chest. Make sure your arms are at shoulder width, feet together, back straight, and head down. You'll be surprised to know how strong you really are.

Stretching

Last but not least, stretching. We all know the importance of stretching before and after exercising. My wife is a great example of flexibility. She can stretch like a world class gymnast, and she's had three children. On the other hand, I have to work at my flexibility all the time because of my fondness for heavy weight training.

Remember to warm up for 5-10 minutes before exercising, by jogging in place, or jumping rope. You can't stretch cold muscles. Static stretches are used for preparing the body for activity. These type of stretches are held from 10-30 seconds, or until you feel a slight discomfort, repeating 2-3 times per exercise session. For best results, stretching exercises should be done on a regular basis. If you have the time, there are facilities which now offer "stretching only" classes for those who want to be more flexible.

Do your Home-Work

If you want to tone up, but don't have the time to frequent a health club, try working out at home, it may be the best thing for you. It will also give you more time to spend in the court to play and practice. So until the next workout, be careful out there, it's a fitness jungle.

Hey Dave

What are you going to do
now that you have been
elected to the
USRA Racquetball
Hall of Fame?

**Congratulations on your sport leadership
and championship performances.**



Dave Peck
1982 #1 Ranking
Men's Pro Tour

AmPRO Club RACQUET

AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL RACQUETBALL ORGANIZATION

NEWS FOR PROFESSIONALS IN THE BUSINESS OF RACQUETBALL • Special to RACQUETBALL Magazine

THE NEW DIRECTION OF AmPRO

By Michelle Gould, AmPRO Executive Director

AmPRO promises to attract a lot of attention in racquetball and fitness circles — by making dramatic changes in its programs, creating new areas of interest for members, and providing valuable information about how to stop courts from being taken out of service.

In working to develop a leadership role in the health club industry, AmPRO is now a regular contributor to Club Business Industry [CBI] magazine and will be highly visible at this year's IHRSA convention. Club owners and managers have all heard that racquetball is dead, and that they should convert their courts and put in the newest exercise equipment (according to the latest rage) to keep their members happy. In response, AmPRO and the USRA have begun a pro-active advertising and educational campaign to keep this type of bad publicity from ruining the sport we all love. The fact of the matter is that the "doom and gloom" reports just aren't true.

Racquetball is a wise investment for club owners and managers who want to increase their bottom line. AmPRO and the USRA can provide statistics to support that claim, and will use them to fight for the future of our sport. I am sure that everyone has seen new equipment/activity fads come and go in their clubs. At the same time, racquetball has survived with very little (if any) support beyond the initial investment. The sport has remained strong through the years because it is a fun-filled, exciting, social workout that is second to none in the fitness industry.

So, other fitness trends need to look out — because racquetball is fighting back with the facts. With no more effort than it takes to schedule a

week's worth of aerobics classes, racquetball can have a positive impact on any health club's bottom line, and can result in higher membership retention than any other program area. Racquetball is here to stay, and it's time we all took a stand to begin educating our club owners and managers, instead of letting offhand rumors control our destiny.

New and improved AmPRO Instructional Manuals are now being used in certification programs, and are available for purchase by any current member who has previously attended an instructional clinic, for \$39.00 (at cost). AmPRO wants all its certified instructors to be successful — and the new manuals will help them do just that. Not a member? If you haven't attended an instructional clinic, you can still purchase the manual once you join AmPRO [\$50.00/year, \$35.00/year for USRA members].

Updated AmPRO Programming Manuals are also available to current members for \$119.00. The cost to attend an AmPRO Programmer Clinic is \$175.00 — which includes a two-day clinic covering added information not contained in the manual, certification testing, the manual itself, AmPRO/USRA memberships for one year, quarterly AmPRO newsletter, and access to a nationwide AmPRO network of business contacts, opportunities and leads. Don't miss the next AmPRO Programmer Clinic in your area!

The AmPRO Coaching Program will be unveiled this summer, featuring a wealth of new and exciting information in this growing program area.

Maybe it is time for you to give AmPRO a try. We really are making tremendous strides for Instructors, Programmers, Coaches, and the sport itself. Watch out world, *here we come!*

1997 AmPRO Instructor Clinics

DATE	CITY
May 2-4	Houston, TX

1997 AmPRO Programmer Clinics

DATE	CITY
June 13-15	Central US
August 1-3	Western US

For additional information, or to schedule your own clinic, please call Michelle Gould, AmPRO Executive Director at (208) 362-3844



AmPRO Tip: PLAYING YOUR WAY TO A BETTER GAME

**By Lorraine Galloway,
Certified Ampro
Clinician**

Depending on your level,

there are many roads to take toward improving your game. In this article, I'm going to help you meet new partners and help you find great games whether you just play at your club or are thinking about playing tournaments. But first, let me stress that you should drill no matter what level you are ... and the following will help you choose which drills will help you along the way.

BEGINNERS definitely need to drill at least 50% of the time you spend on the court. The best drills at this point are drop & hit and set up & hit off the front wall, emphasizing good form on both the forehand and backhand strokes. You should take a couple of lessons from your Pro (preferably group lessons so you can meet other beginners and save money at the same time) just to ensure proper form and the correct rules. I don't recommend doubles at this level. Check with the Pro to see if there's a beginner round robin — a great way to meet other beginners socially. Ideally, you can then pick one person from the group lesson or the round robin to become your regular partner. Now you have the tools to get you on your way [drilling, one regular game and round robins].

NOVICE TO C PLAYERS still need to drill at least 40% of the time you spend on the court. The best drills at this point are drop & hit off the back wall, set up & hit off the front wall, and ceiling balls, all using forehand and backhand strokes. It wouldn't hurt to take a private

lesson or two in order to fine tune your strokes, and this is a good point in your to game to sign up for a league (still no doubles just yet). This is a good way to meet players at a competitive level, but if you just want to meet people without making it too competitive, check with the club Pro to see if there's a low-intermediate round robin. It would be great if you can pick one person from the round robin or the league to become a regular partner. Now you have all the tools to get you on your way [drilling, round robins, leagues, and one regular game].

B TO A PLAYERS still need to drill at least 30% of the time you spend on the court. The best drills at this point are drop & hit out of the corners, pinches, splats,

DRILLING TERMS

"Drop & hit" is simply facing sideways (parallel to the sidewall depending on if you are hitting a forehand or a backhand), dropping the ball to the floor and striking the ball sidarm to attempt to hit straight to the front wall.

"Set up & hit" is facing sideways (parallel to the sidewall again depending on if you are hitting a forehand or a backhand), dropping the ball to the floor and striking the ball sidarm so that the ball hits softly about five feet high on the front wall. Your job is to practice letting the ball bounce once on the floor and attempt to hit straight to the front wall.

"Set up & hit off the back wall" is facing the sidewall tossing the ball to the floor so the ball rebounds off the backwall. Your job is to hit the ball before it bounces twice on the floor and to attempt to hit straight to the front wall.

"Ceiling balls" How many consecutive ceiling balls (backhands and forehands) can you hit in a row?

"Drop & hit off corners" is drop & hit off the backwall, except now you toss the ball to the floor so that the ball rebounds off the backwall and immediately to the side wall. Your job is to hit the ball after it comes off the side wall but before it bounces twice on the floor.

"Serves" Your job is to practice serving drive serves so that the first bounce is somewhat in between the short line and the receiver's line and hopefully the ball bounces twice on the floor before the ball hits the back wall. For lob serves, hit the ball soft enough (no matter if it's full or half) so the ball just about dies on the back wall.

"Offense/defense" is simply alternating your hits while keeping the ball moving. If your first hit is a fast offensive shot, run to dig the ball up to the ceiling and continue until you get tired. You have as many bounces as you want just keep the ball moving... (ceiling ... shoot ... ceiling ... shoot ... ceiling ...).

"Short hops" are set up & hit, except now you have to hit the ball immediately after it bounces for the first time (off the front wall). Try not to let the ball rise too much.

"Volleys" are set up & hit, but now you have to hit the ball before the ball hits the floor but after you hit it to the front wall.

and serves (drives and lobs), all with forehand and backhand strokes. It still wouldn't hurt to take a private lesson to perfect your strokes, and now I'd recommend doubles as a good addition to improve hand and eye quickness. This is where I definitely see the competitive blood come out, and a cardiovascular program is highly advisable at this point. The ball is moving faster now and you would not want to lose because you are tired.

Joining a league would be perfect for honing your competitive edge, and at this point, you want to play as many different people as possible. It is very important you play as many different styles as you can. Challenge court is a great way to meet new players without making a commitment with anyone. If you have problems finding a game, you can decide at the last minute to show up at a challenge court and still find a good game. A travel league where you play against players from other clubs is an excellent way to meet new people in the area. The next best way to meet other players outside of your club is to enter local tournaments. Well, I believe you are a pretty busy person. I'm sure you can find the perfect partner from all of these activities along with participating in a few of these activities.

OPEN PLAYERS TO PRO PLAYERS believe it or not still need to drill at least 10% to 20% of the time spent

on the court. The best drills are offense/defense, serve drills, short hops, and cut-offs/volleys. Again, stick with a cardiovascular program and include a footwork program. At this point, there aren't many people in your club to contend with, so it's definitely time to compete in tournaments. You might have to start traveling because you are probably playing the same people in local tournaments as well. The only road left is to start competing regionally, nationally, and eventually at Pro stops. Doubles again improves your timing and gives you quicker hands. If you are not interested in tournaments, you are most likely giving lessons part-time or full time. You are definitely in a position to invite fellow open or pro players to your club to play you and help keep you on top of your game.

Well, good luck to all of you. I'm sure you have enough activities to keep you busy for awhile.



changingtimes • by Luke St. Onge

AmPRO, the pro tours and virtually every facet of our industry have finally come together to unify and promote our sport to renewed heights.

At a time when all minor sports are under siege by competitors who want to lure participants away to the newest, coolest, most-extreme sport variations — we've managed to attract a substantial number of new (or returning) players to racquetball. In spite of millions of dollars spent in promotions by professional sports organizations to bring more players into football, soccer, hockey, baseball and beach volleyball, we've managed to make the most out of some very limited resources to regain a foothold in the market.

How was it done? Using facts and figures we're all familiar with — racquetball players claim the highest retention rates in the private club system (3.7 years on average vs. 2.2 years for fitness members — without the need for new gimmicks

and equipment upgrades each year). Racquetball players burn 800 calories per hour and have fun doing it. Enthusiasts begin early, stay with the sport through college, then play well into their golden years — often competing to age 85, and beyond. With good programming and management, each racquetball court in a facility can realize \$90,000 per year, per court for savvy club owners.

But there's still plenty to do. Our efforts are only in the preliminary stages of development. We need to convince diehard, doom-and-gloom pessimists to get on the bandwagon and support important initiatives instead of sitting on the sidelines saying it can't be done. If we can achieve this, just think of all we can accomplish as our sport matures.

Spread the word. Well-managed racquetball is here to stay — growing up responsibly, intelligently, and politely — on the worldwide playground of sport.

After quietly reporting negative participation figures over the past four years, I am most pleased — in fact, excited — to share better news with you. According to its most recent poll, the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association has confirmed a dramatic addition of one-half million racquetball players to our ranks in 1996. This 500,000 increase gives us a grand total of 6.8 million players in the U.S. alone.

We feel this marks the beginning of the end of a downturn that began in the early 1990s. We're also convinced that the many grassroots efforts initiated in 1994 on the part of the USRA, IHRSA, SGMA,

rb:global

EKTELON SELECTED AS OFFICIAL BALL OF IRF

The Ektelon Premium Select racquetball was recently named the "Official Ball" of the International Racquetball Federation (IRF) and adopted for use at selected sanctioned events in 1997 and '98. The Ektelon Premium Select ball premiered on the IRF schedule at the 1997 Pan American Racquetball Confederation (PARC) Tournament of the Americas in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Added IRF Events to use the Ektelon Premium Select:

Dec. 19-23, 1997	Pro Kennex 9th World Junior Championships, Fountain Valley, Ca.
April 3-11, 1998	PARC 12th Tournament of the Americas, Winnipeg, Canada
July 10-18, 1998	9th World Championships, Cochabamba, Bolivia
Dec. 18-22, 1998	Pro Kennex 10th World Junior Championships, TBA

1997 19th DUTCH OPEN: March 14-16

Submitted online by: Mike Mesecke
General Secretary, German Racquetball Federation

RESULTS — Men's Open: 1. Michiel van der Holst (Ned); 2. Trevor Hayter (Ger); 3. Joachim Loof (Ger); 4. Martin Klippel (Ger); cons: James Johnson (USA). Men's B: 1. Mike Mesecke (Ger); 2. Bart Wouters (Bel); 3. Bjorn Jensen (Ger); 4. Pascal Vanderlinden (Bel); cons: Arjen Wildemans (Ned). Men's C: 1. Andrew Loof (Ger); 2. Alexander Muller (Ger); 3. Jorg Sattler (Ger). Seniors 35+: 1. James Johnson (USA); 2. Dean Smith (USA); 3. Rene Hehemann (Ned). Doubles Open: 1. Hayter/Loof (Ger); 2. Lysakowski/Scheffler (Ger); 3. P.Matla/Klippel (Ned/Ger); 4. Jensen/Bebia (Ger).

LOOF WINS GERMAN OPEN

Submitted online by: Mike Mesecke
General Secretary, German Racquetball Federation

The 1997 German Open Championships are history now. Let me first thank everyone who participated in our great tournament. I think we all had a great time. For me personally, this tournament showed that the European racquetball scene is still very active, but there is still lots of work to do for us to bring our sport into the spotlight of European sports. I hope that the German Open 1997 have been a new start for all of us.

RESULTS — Mens Open: 1. Achim Loof (GER); 2. Trevor Hayter (GER); 3. Martin Klippel (GER); 4. Ralf Klinke (GER). Men's B: 1. Oliver Bertels (GER); 2. Bernd Hartmann (GER); 3. Sebastian Frank (POL); 4. Bob Horrow (USA). Men's C: 1. Andrew Loof (GER); 2. Jean-Pierre Boudard (FRA); 3. Steffen Schroeder (GER); 4. Frank Nehr (GER). Doubles Open: 1. Ralf Klinke/Bernd Droege (GER); 2. Achim Loof/Andre Schimpt (GER); 3. Richard van Doezum/Jeroen Vink (NED); 4. Ralf Laysakowski/Oliver Bertels (AU/GER). Seniors: 1. Marc Scheffler (GER); 2. David Szafranski (USA); 3. Antonio Bebia (SPA); 4. Bernd Hartmann (GER). Seniors Doubles: 1. Bjoern Jensen/Marc Scheffler (GER); 2. Joerg Ludwig/Antonio Bebia (GER/SPA); 3. Rene Hehemann/Ron Ruiz (NED/USA); 4. Karel Matla/Peter de Jong (NED).

ELIMINATOR '97 Tournament

Results submitted online by:
Joe Villarreal

We've had another successful tournament at the Mountaineer Fitness Center here in Baumholder Germany, where over 70 players in six divisions participated in our "Spring Eliminator '97". Tournament directors Brad Porter, and Bernd Kurth would like to extend their appreciation to all the participants, and special thank's to Joe Vigil for his expertise and hard work.

Many of the top players in Europe showed up to do battle at The Eliminator, including: Clint Imholte, USAREUR Open Champion, Joseph Villarreal, #3 USAREUR, James Johnson, USAREUR Masters Champion, and Jayne Vigil, #2 Womens Open.

RESULTS — Men's Open: 1. Clint Imholte; 2. Craig Rife; 3. Marty Page. Women's open: 1. Jayne Vigil; 2. Yvonne Kortess; 3. Ynez Slaymaker. Men's B: 1. Nathan Andree; 2. David McCrane; 3. John Slaymaker. Men's C: 1. James Anderson; 2. Ferdinand Zylla; 3. Ryker Moore. Men's Seniors: 1. Craig Rife; 2. Marty Page; 3. James Johnson. Open Doubles: 1. Joe Villarreal/Dan Whitcher; 2. Joe Vigil/John Surovy.



Ricky Duah Boateng of Ghana doesn't get much court time — but he sure likes the shirt! Ricky is an avid fan of racquetball in West Africa and regularly writes to the main office.

rb:people



LYNN ADAMS CLAY

SIX ELECTED TO RACQUETBALL HALL OF FAME

Athletes Lynn Adams, Marty Hogan, Heather McKay, Dave Peck, Mike Yellen and contributor Chuck Leve will all be inducted into the Racquetball Hall of Fame at the United States Racquetball Association (USRA) Awards Banquet on May 24, 1997 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston, Texas. Chosen by the USRA Board of Directors, the inductees will join 19 others who have been honored since 1973.



HEATHER MCKAY



MARTY HOGAN

But this go-round is different. For the first time in association history, the USRA Board of Directors has embraced the entire sport — professional and amateur — into its Hall of Fame. By making the Hall of Fame representative of the sport as a whole, the USRA can forever recognize those individuals who have excelled athletically or made highly significant contributions to racquetball's development and leadership. The timing is perfect to invite the entire sport to recognize and honor these six individuals.



DAVE PECK



CHUCK LEVE

Lynn Adams (Libertyville, Ill.) won 325 of her 369 professional matches, for a .887 winning percentage. An eight-time player of the year (1982-88, 90), Adams won six pro tour season titles (1982-83, 85-88) and seven overall championships (1982-83, 85-88, 90). Even more impressive is Adams' courageous fight against multiple sclerosis throughout her life and racquetball career.

Chuck Leve (Northbrook, Ill.) has been an integral part of racquetball since 1969. Leve was the Executive Secretary of the International Racquetball Association (IRA) in '70. After following IRA President Robert Kendler, in 1973, to the newly formed National Racquetball Club (NRC), Leve privately felt that the amateur players had been left out. In 1976, he formed the United States Racquetball Association to service those players outside the professional ranks. In 1979, Leve joined the National Court Club Association, now known as the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA). Now the Director of Sales and Promotions for IHRSA, Leve continues to lend his support to the sport of racquetball.



MIKE YELLEN

Marty Hogan (Chesterfield, Mo.), the sport's first million dollar man, owned the men's professional tour from 1977 to '82, earning six national championships. Hogan garnered several top honors from the '75 Boy's 18-and-under crown to the '94 Men's 25-and-over national doubles championship with Major League Baseball's Jeff Conine. Hogan was tagged as the "King of Racquetball" and transformed the sport into the power game that it is today.

Heather McKay (Brisbane, Australia) had lost only two matches in two decades of international squash dominance before turning to the sport of racquetball in 1980, at the age of 39. McKay didn't waste much time

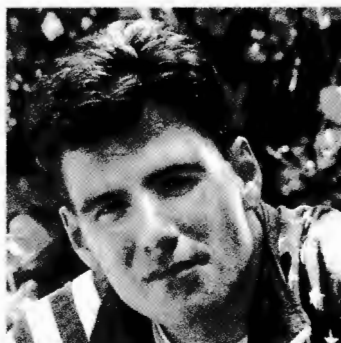
earning the title of best women's racquetball player in the world, winning the pro national's in 1980 and '81. She again won the coveted title in '84. Before returning to Australia in '85, the Canadian national amassed nine national titles and the '84 Steding Cup, given yearly by the women's pro tour for outstanding contributions to women's racquetball.

Dave Peck (Austin, Texas) was awarded the professional tour's Rookie of the Year trophy in 1978. In the year's following, Peck established his place among the racquetball elite, winning the Ektelon National Championship in 1981 and '82. The powerful Texan also captured the Catalina National title and Player of the Year honors in '81. With a brilliant pro career under his belt, Peck continues to play competitively in the amateur ranks. In 1995, he captured both the national singles and doubles crowns for the Men's 35-and-over age groups.

Mike Yellen (West Bloomfield, Michigan) made his mark on the men's pro circuit in the same era as Hogan and Peck, claiming a spot as one of the most fundamentally sound and powerful players on the tour. His year was 1983, when he claimed three national championships in one season to take the #1 spot. In the process he defeated all of the top names: Hogan, Peck, Harnett, Gonzalez, Hilecher and anyone else who crossed his path. Like McKay, Yellen took important lessons from his second passion, squash, and applied them to a racquetball career which has served him well. In an interview in 1983, Yellen was quoted as wanting "to be remembered as having been one of the best players to have ever played racquetball." Almost a decade later, Yellen had definitely achieved that goal, and was still active on the pro tour, reaching the finals of two stops in the '92 season, before retiring from the pro game in 1993.



MICHELLE GOULD



TODD O'NEIL

USRA ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

U.S. Team members Michelle Gould and Todd O'Neil earn top honors — Eileen Tuckman and Victor Sacco named "Age Group" Athletes of the Year

The United States Racquetball Association (USRA) Board of Directors recently made its annual picks for athletes of the year — settling on two U.S. Team members and two elite level age-group competitors for recognition of their accomplishments in 1996.

Female Athlete of the Year: Michelle Gould

It was just your normal year for Gould, who went undefeated in all of her amateur and professional singles matches in '96. The Boise, Idaho native began the year by winning the women's open doubles crown with Cheryl Gudinas (Lisle, Ill.) at the 10th Tournament of the Americas in Cali, Colombia. Next up for racquetball's superwoman was the Ektelon USRA 29th National Singles Championships in Houston, Texas, where Gould won her seventh singles crown in eight



EILEEN TUCKMAN



VICTOR SACCO

years. In August, Gould led Team USA to its eighth World Cup victory in Phoenix, Ariz., and took home her third consecutive gold medal in women's world singles. Later re-teaming with Gudinas, the two superstars successfully defended their national doubles title to close out the season.

Male Athlete of the Year: Todd O'Neil

O'Neil began the season with a major breakthrough and turned in one of the best years of his career. For 13 years, the Dallas resident (formerly of New England) hadn't made it past the round of 16 at national singles. But in '96 "Teddy" finally kicked the jinx and played his way into the finals of the Ektelon USRA 29th National Singles Championships before losing a heart-breaking tiebreaker to 44-year-old ageless wonder Ruben Gonzalez (Staten Island, N.Y.). In August at the World Championships in Phoenix, the slick southpaw rebounded to defeat Gonzalez for the world singles title. O'Neil ended his amateur season on a high note, with doubles partner Derek Robinson (Kennewick, Wash.), by winning the national doubles crown over doubles

legends Dan Obremski (North Versailles, Pa.) and Doug Ganim (Westerville, Ohio).

Peggy Steding Award: Eileen Tuckman
[Female Age Group Athlete of the Year]

A licensed massage therapist and Firefighter for the City of Delray Beach, Florida, Eileen Tuckman still finds time to compete at the national level. On the basis of her performances in 1996, her nomination for Female Age Group Athlete of the Year came on the highest recommendations from former recipients of the Steding Award. In both singles and doubles, Tuckman excelled at four of the largest tournaments of the season — even earning a “double gold” at the Ektelon USRA 29th National Doubles with partners Agatha Falso and Gary Mazaroff.



FAULKENBERRY
HONORED

Former U.S. Team member Barbara Faulkenberry was honored this past January 11 by the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce as one of the Ten Most Outstanding Young Americans for 1997. A 1982 graduate of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., Barbara won the 1979, '80 and '81 National Intercollegiate singles crowns. At the '81

World Racquetball Championships in Santa Clara, Calif., she helped Team USA win the first World Cup. Barbara won the women's singles' silver medal, falling to Cindy Baxter 21-6, 18-21, 15-2 in the finals. In military competition, Faulkenberry has won 10 Air Force singles titles and 10 Armed Forces championships and remains undefeated outside the civilian ranks.

Beyond the sport of racquetball, the Grand Forks, N.D., resident competes in ultra-endurance cycling events and triathlons. An avid promoter of women's fitness, Barbara conducts racquetball clinics, self defense instruction and bicycling events. She is even involved with inner-city youth as part of the “Partners in Education” program. As the Chief of the Academy's Instruction Division, Faulkenberry created a new course in women's self defense for freshmen cadets. One of her military honors is the Airman's Medal for heroism

Bud Muehleisen Award: Victor Sacco
[Male Age Group Athlete of the Year]

Another prominent name on the “senior tour,” Victor Sacco of Norwood, New York also managed a “double gold” finish at one of the season's most demanding events. At the Ektelon USRA 29th National Singles Championships, Sacco earned top honors in both the Men's 65+ and 70+ categories. Throughout the season, Sacco stayed at the top of his form at National Masters Racquetball Association events, with four singles and doubles titles to his credit. Sacco closed out the '96 season with doubles accolades, reaching the quarterfinals of Men's 65+ with partner Ivan Bruner, and winning the men's 70+ with Phil Dzuik.

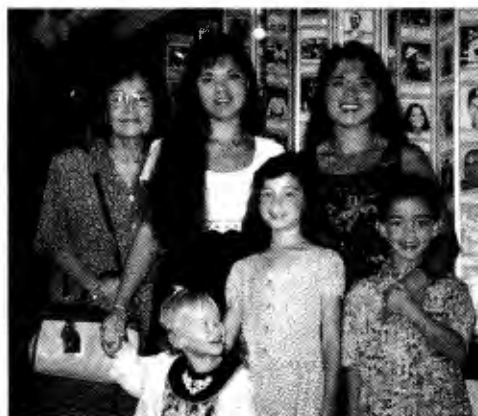
which she earned for coming to the aid of a woman attacked by a recently paroled rapist.

Others previously honored with the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce's award include: Presidents John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Bill Clinton, also Howard Hughes, Orson Wells, Elvis Presley, Nelson Rockefeller, dogsled champion Susan Butcher and actor Christopher Reeve.

TWINS INDUCTED INTO HALL OF
CHAMPIONS

Identical twins Jackie Paraiso and Joy MacKenzie were recently inducted into the San Diego Hall of Champions. The U.S. National Team members hold the world doubles title and now are permanently displayed alongside several of today's sports stars. “It's an honor to be recognized in the same limelight as (Tony) Gwynn and (Ken) Caminiti,” Jackie said. Others inducted were: Ken Caminiti, Tony Gwynn and Fernando Valenzuela of major league baseball's San Diego Padres, Chicago

Cub slugger Mark Grace and professional golfer Phil Mickelson.



AT LEFT (L-R):
MOM JUNE
PARAISO, JACKIE
& JOY, (FRONT)
DANIELLE
GIBSON, BRIT-
TANI & ANDREW
MACKENZIE

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In memory of favorite things – Russell Hinkle (pictured left) is remembered by daughter Michele Kinaan after a tragic loss enroute to Memphis.

KINAAN DISPLAYS COURAGE THROUGH DESPAIR

Some titles mean a lot, others mean everything. For Michele Kinaan (Costa Mesa, Calif.), her 1996 U.S. Open womens A division gold medal is one to cherish.

A few days before opening day in Memphis, Tenn., Kinaan flew from her home in California to St. Louis, Mo., to meet her parents, Russell and Mary Hinkle, who lived in Southern Illinois. From there, the three planned to drive on to Memphis. While stopped at a rest area in Arkansas, the unthinkable happened. Russell Hinkle was attacked and murdered by four teenagers with a gun.

Hesitant about competing, Kinaan pushed forward...for herself and her father.

"She didn't know what to do," her brother-in-law Mike Melton (Maryville, Ill.) said following the incident. "Her mother said, 'Dad would have wanted you to go.'" She went on to Memphis, and she won.

"My experience at the U.S. Open was one of the most, if not the most, memorable events in my athletic career, for many reasons," Kinaan said. "I would like to specifically thank my husband and family, my aunt, uncle and cousins (from Memphis) for their loving support throughout the tournament and Debbie Tisinger for the hugs and ribbon of courage that she gave to me before my first match. I could not have pulled it off without their help."

On behalf of the entire racquetball community and the USRA, **RACQUETBALL** magazine extends deepest sympathies to Michele and her family.



FINCH JOINS TEAM USA

A sport psychology consultant, Laura Finch, Ph.D., was named as the team psychologist for the U.S. National Team. Finch is an assistant professor in the Department of Physical Education at Western Illinois

University in Macomb, Ill. Having provided sport psychology services to athletes and coaches at the youth, college, national and professional levels, Finch consults on a variety of performance enhancement issues including: stress management, confidence enhancement and precompetitive mental preparation.

A three-sport varsity athlete at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, the WIU professor went on to receive her Master of Arts at the University of North Carolina and her Doctor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Nancy Martin has been a part of the racquetball community for over 20 years. A native of La Jolla, Calif., Nancy won gold medals at the 1994 and '95 California State Senior Olympics, and recently competed in the National Women's Senior/Masters Racquetball Championships in Chattanooga, Tenn.



Vanilla Blood is the title of her latest book (Tecolote Publications, October, 1996, \$10.95), but the only recipe Martin offers is a spicy proposal for human-chimp relations. Anticipating a future when genetically-altered apes share homes with human families, Martin creates an unusual story that presages a slightly offbeat 21st century. Half spoof, half serious, this unusual work promises to change the way you see yourself in relation to your simian cousin, the chimpanzee, and reveals a fascinating future that my already be here. According to Dr. Jared Diamond, author of *The Third Chimpanzee*,

"Humans share 98.4% of their DNA with chimps. The chimpanzees, not the gorilla, are our closest relatives. Put another way, the chimpanzees' closest relative is not the gorilla but humans."

Martin spoke to **RACQUETBALL** Magazine and had this to say about her latest published work: "Of course, the hero and heroine play racquetball. In fact, they meet on the racquetball court. The novel's not about sports but ... racquetball remains as important a part of the main characters' lives as eating, sleeping, and loving. It's their time-out, their moment to refill, to play, to be." From personal experience, she adds that the "genetically altered ape" feeling is not uncommon on the court. Besides suspense novels, Martin authors children's literature.

PIECE OF RACQUETBALL ADDED TO OLYMPIC MUSEUM

USRA Executive Director Luke St. Onge recently received a fax from International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch. A print of the Meso American Ball Game painting will be displayed in the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland. The original painting hangs in the entry of the USRA home office in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The letter read as follows:

*Dear Mr. St. Onge,
These few words are to thank you very much for the numbered print you sent me on the 18th December regarding the Meso American ball game. This print will be sent to the Olympic Museum.*

*Yours sincerely,
Juan Antonio Samaranch*



GALLERY

ABOVE: Some newly-elected state presidents and first-time Leadership Conference attendees (plus a nominee for the vacant Alaska state director position?) Standing (L-R): Ken Arrowsmith (Fla.), Al Schof (Miss.), Lee Bateman (Pa.), Thomas O'Donoghue (Nev.), Dave Curtis (Calif.), Wayne Koerwitz (Wy.). Kneeling front (L-R): Jurgen Denk (Colo.), John Cantrell (Kan.), Chillin' & Ed Hammer-Williamson (Utah). Photo: John Foust.



ABOVE LEFT: It's been awhile since you've seen Rick Bezousek on the national circuit – and here's one of the reasons: daughter Presley Drew Bezousek, now going on two. Another project keeping Rick busy is his growing business "Artwears," which recently took on the USRA as a client. Rick and his colleagues are responsible for the new line of USRA merchandise featured on pages 32-33 of this issue.



LEFT: RAY & CROOK WIN PRO/SPONSOR DOUBLES
Larry Crook (Lakewood, Colo.) and IRT tour pro Mike Ray (Hilton Head, S.C.) teamed together to win the Pro/Sponsor Doubles event held prior to the 1996 APH Service Company Holiday Pro-Am Classic this past Dec. 11-15. Eight teams played a flighted round-robin format with Crook and Ray defeating Bruce Burgess of Littleton, Colorado and the top-ranked player in the world, Sudsy Monchik. Photo: courtesy Marianne Alonzi.

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MEMBERSHIP: Players must present proof of membership with their respective International Racquetball Association; otherwise, a USRA competitive license (\$20.00 for 12 months) is required for participation in this tournament.

RULES & FORMAT: IRF Official Rules will govern competition unless otherwise specified. Round-robin format for qualifying rounds Tuesday through Friday. Matches consist of 3 games to 11 points. Matches are self-officiated. One tourney point earned for each game point scored, 3 points earned for each game won, and 7 points earned for each match won. At a minimum, the top 8 qualifiers within each age group earn berths in the Saturday Championship Medal Rounds. Flight winners are guaranteed a berth. Saturday playoff matches consist of 2 out of 3 games to 11 points with finals 2 out of 3 games to 15 and an 11-point tiebreaker (single elimination). No consolation matches will be scheduled.

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REGISTRATION & CHECK-IN: ALL PLAYERS MUST CHECK IN AT REGISTRATION PRIOR TO PLAYING THEIR FIRST SCHEDULED MATCH. REGISTRATION on **MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 2:00 PM TO 7:00 PM** at The Sheraton. Tournament play begins TUESDAY, August 26, at 7:00 AM. First match time information will be available at registration. Late registration TUESDAY - 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Tom Young's.

ENTRY FORM. PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION LEGIBLY.

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 LAST NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
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 AGE AS OF 8/26/97 _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

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- ☐ 45+
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NATIONAL SINGLES ENTRANTS!

Don't forget that women age 45 and over, and men age 55 and over (as of May 21, 1997) are NOT required to pre-qualify for competition at a regional championship in order to compete at national singles. You probably still want to, however, since you can earn valuable ranking points and seeding consideration! The same goes for junior and intercollegiate regional participants ... if you have already played in a junior or intercollegiate regional to qualify for associated events, you don't have to re-qualify for national singles at an adult regional championship.

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MEN

MEN'S OPEN

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2. Ruben Gonzalez, NY
3. Travis Aldinger, PA
4. Dan Fowler, MD
5. Chris Wright, MO
6. Derek Robinson, WA
7. Clay Griffin, SC
8. Mike Locker, MN
9. Jeff Mayorga, CA
10. Dan Llacera, DE

MEN'S A

- 1T. Scott Grunin, MA
- 1T. Dan Pischke, WA
3. Scott Foster, CA
4. Jack Huczek, MI
5. Joe Paredes, ID
- 6T. Daryl Cooperrider, FL
- 6T. Geoff Hunter, FL
- 6T. Alain Pujolar, FL
- 6T. Ryan Staten, KS
10. Jeff Gal, NY

MEN'S B

1. Sam Ryder, WI
2. Tony Desanto, FL
3. Cory Martin, WI
4. Fabrizio Avelar, FL
5. Ivan Perry, PA
6. Don Carter, FL
- 7T. Reed Bastian, CA
- 7T. Don Grunstra, SC
- 7T. Melvin Bailey, SC
- 7T. Don Dettmore, FL

MEN'S C

1. Preston Gaster, NC
2. Lynn Stephens, NC
3. Hal Mitlitsky, NY
4. Bill Morrell, CT
- 5T. Jeff Giannotto, NJ
- 5T. Bill Herr, FL
7. Kevin Brand, SC
8. Tim Page, PA
9. Juan Soto, SC
10. Todd Boss, MD

MEN'S D

1. Leonard Toth, TX
2. Ray Meisner, IL
3. Louis Todechney, CA
4. Bryan Jacoby, SC
5. Ryan Kinnaman, AR
6. Jerry Gibson, TN
7. Cruz Jimenez III, TX
- 8T. Mike Ciano, MA
- 8T. Ervin Elliott, DE
- 8T. Vince Session, MI

MEN'S NOVICE

1. Bill Kelsey, CT
2. Todd Middlekauff, PA
3. Allen Arnold, FL

4. Brian Smith, TX
- 5T. Lee Austin, DE
- 5T. Matt Barker, OH
- 5T. Josh Chronister, PA
- 5T. Jimmy Lebolt, WV
- 5T. Jeff Popple, PA
- 5T. Robert Sottosanti, NY

BOY'S 19+

1. Rich Baer, NY
2. Jason Thoerner, FL
3. Scott Grunin, MA
4. Rob DeJesus, NM
5. Franco Palmer, CA
6. Brian Simpson, IN
- 7T. Matt Adesso, OH
- 7T. Erin Brannigan, ID
- 7T. Tom Fuhrmann, MS
- 7T. Brad Harmon, NC

MEN'S 25+

1. Kevin Graham, WI
2. James Lello, FL
3. Mike Locker, MN
4. Chris Baker, MS
5. Rob French, CO
6. Adam Kemp, FL
7. Travis Aldinger, PA
8. Anthony DeFusto, NY
9. Mike Martino, FL
10. Seth Farber, NY

MEN'S 30+

1. Bruce Erickson, MO
2. Lance Gilliam, TX
3. Alan Sheppard, NC
- 4T. John Amatulli, IN
- 4T. Eric Eisman, NY
- 4T. Rob French, CO
7. Bob Jackson, MS
- 8T. Tim Hansen, FL
- 8T. Brad McCuniff, IA
- 8T. Rabbit Rogers, ID

MEN'S 35+

1. Mitch Smith, PA
2. Dave Peck, TX
3. Dave Eagle, OH
4. Mike Martinez, CA
5. David Watson, OH
6. Jeff Hanno, NY
7. John Scargle, FL
- 8T. Marty Hogan, MO
- 8T. Steve Lerner, CA
10. Will Rosa, MO

MEN'S 40+

1. Gene Couch, FL
- 2T. Ed Garabedian, PA
- 2T. Mitt Layton, FL
- 2T. Tom Travers, OH
5. Steve Schwarz, NY
6. Steve Neighbors, ID
7. Tom Rall, NY
8. Ron Burris, FL
9. Jamie Velasco, MD
10. Darryl Warren, CA

MEN'S 45+

1. Mitt Layton, FL
2. Gene Pare, CA
3. Darryl Warren, CA
4. Dan Davis, TX
5. Bruce Metras, CA
6. Gary Mazaroff, NM
7. Jerry Dye, TX
8. Rick Fusari, FL
9. Leo Gurnoe, CA
10. Frank Ciociola, NY

MEN'S 50+

1. Ed Remen, VA
2. Stan Lemon, TX
3. Horace Miller, IL
4. Dennis O'Brien, ID
5. John Aldape, ID
6. Ray Huss, OH
7. Russ Deegan, FL
- 8T. Tom McKie, TX
- 8T. Ken Vanzandt, TX
10. R.O. Carson, CA

MEN'S 55+

- 1T. Warren Reuther, LA
- 1T. Bobby Sanders, OH
3. Rex Lawler, IN
- 4T. Ron Galbreath, PA
- 4T. Fred Letter, NJ
6. Les Barbanell, NJ
- 7T. Ron Hutcherson, IN
- 7T. Robert Large, KS
- 7T. Dario Mas, DE
10. Richard Valleroy, MO

MEN'S 60+

1. Paul Banales, AZ
2. Jerry Holly, CA
3. Jack Dunsmoor, ID
- 4T. Don Alt, OH
- 4T. Otis Chapman, OH
- 4T. David Jordan, NJ
- 4T. Charlie Douglass, IN
- 4T. Jay Krevsky, PA
9. Dave Lund, MI
10. Joe Lambert, TX

MEN'S 65+

- 1T. Joe Lambert, TX
- 1T. John O'Donnell, IL
- 1T. Vance Lerner, CA
- 1T. Victor Sacco, NY
5. Verlyn Dunn, ID
6. J.D. Driver, MI
7. Charles Kaiser, MI
8. John Reid, CA
9. Pearce Grove, VA
10. Jack Bogasky, VA

MEN'S 70+

1. Victor Sacco, NY
- 2T. Earl Acuff, NC
- 2T. Mal Roberts, FL
4. Dick Kincade, CO
5. Nick Sans, CA
6. Tony Duarte, CA

- 7T. Richard Davis, TX
- 7T. Hank Richard, GA
- 7T. Philip Dziuk, IL
- 7T. Bob Finkleman, MI

MEN'S 75+

1. Earl Acuff, NC
2. Nick Sans, CA
3. Robert McAdam, TX
- 4T. C. Allen Shepherd, MD
- 4T. Cam Snowberger, SC
6. Hank Richard, GA
7. Al Romero, NM
8. Bill Matotan, NM
- 9T. Fred Felton, TX
- 9T. William Gillio, CA

MEN'S 80+

1. C. Allen Shepherd, MD
2. Harry Steinman, MD
3. John Pearce, TX
4. George Spear, NY
5. Harmon Minor, CO
6. Richard Hank, TN

MEN'S 85+

1. John Pearce, TX

WOMEN

WOMEN'S OPEN

1. Michelle Gould, ID
2. Cheryl Gudinas, IL
3. Mary Tessier, CA
4. Lisa Hjelm, CA
- 5T. Kori Grasha, NY
- 5T. Lydia Hammock, CA
- 5T. Denise Mock, TX
8. Mindy Hartstein, NY
9. Malia Bailey, VA
10. Heather Dunn, VT

WOMEN'S A

- 1T. Cheryl Gistand, TX
- 1T. Michelle Kinnan, CA
- 1T. Vallana Perrault, MN
- 1T. Darlene Truett, TN
5. Joanna Boyte, NC
6. Angie Daake, NE
7. Susan Hann, FL
8. Sherron Boyea, CA
9. Carol Schneider, NY
10. Trudy Weathers, ID

WOMEN'S B

1. Yesenia Delbusto, FL
2. Belinda Dettman, FL
3. Adrienne Fisher, OH
4. Bonnie Mobley, TX
5. Kim Moore, TN
6. Renee Kemp, MD
7. Chopi Masada, CA
8. Juliana Mayor, NY
9. Patricia Chikalla, FL
10. Mary Anne Brainard, DE

WOMEN'S C

1. Heather Elliott, FL
2. Kassi Herr, FL
3. Lisa Dove, NC
4. Becky Bostick, KY
5. Laurie Gordon, CT
6. Karen Davis, CT
7. Marrie Lopez, CT
8. Cheryl Bird, TX
- 9T. Suzanne Carpenter, OH
- 9T. Malinda Sargeant, KY

WOMEN'S D

1. Terry Truvillion, MI
2. Judy Mancuso, VA
3. Tricia Antonie, LA
- 4T. Kelley Fisher, OH
- 4T. Tracy Hunter, FL
- 4T. Anna Martino, TN
7. Cheryl Stamps, AR
8. Terri Hench, FL
9. Jennifer Dunn, AR
10. Lisa Dove, NC

WOMEN'S NOVICE

1. Lisa Veneruso, CT
- 2T. Erica Balkonis, CT
- 2T. Lisa Barrett, PA
- 2T. Rhonda Kopf, NY
- 2T. Lourdes Rivera, FL
- 2T. Jennifer Rossier, OH
- 7T. Sabieta Dass, NY
- 7T. Jen Ersek, NY
- 9T. Jamie Farrar, PA
- 9T. Shelli Hamilton, NM

WOMEN'S 19+

1. Amy Kilbane, OH
2. Kerri Stoffregen, OH
3. Erika Juhl, DE
4. Heather Dunn, VT
- 5T. Melissa Macgregor, FL
- 5T. Aimee Roehler, PA
- 7T. T.J. Baumbaugh, PA
- 7T. Leslie Butler, FL
- 7T. Sandra Cabrera, CA
- 7T. Angie Daake, NE

WOMEN'S 25+

1. Elaine Mardas, OH
2. Stacy Sour, CO
3. Jen Yokota, MO
4. Michelle Wiragh, MD
- 5T. Kelley Beane, NH
- 5T. Anthnita Dickerson, MI
- 5T. B.J. Ehrgott, CT
- 8T. Bonnie Beyer, DE
- 8T. Sue Cox, FL
- 8T. Renee Kilpatrick, PA

WOMEN'S 30+

1. Kresten Hallander, FL
2. Lorraine Galloway, NY
3. Dina Moreland, CA
- 4T. Lydia Hammock, CA
- 4T. Lisa Hjelm, CA
6. Lori Lepow, FL

rankings...rankings

7. Laura Brandt, FL
- 8T. Bridget Barron, TX
- 8T. Deb Brosious, PA
- 8T. Kathleen Cartland, SC

WOMEN'S 35+

1. Debbie Tisinger, CA
2. Mary Bickley, PA
3. Denise Mock, TX
- 4T. Mary Beke, AZ
- 4T. Kim Machiran, MO
- 6T. Carol Kriegler, MN
- 6T. Phyllis Morris, TX
8. Cheryl McConaghy, NM
9. Mary Bridges, MO
10. Sherron Boyea, CA

WOMEN'S 40+

- 1T. Janell Marriott, FL
- 1T. Janet Myers, NC
3. Linda Moore, NE
4. Susan Pfahler, FL
5. Val Shewfelt, UT
- 6T. Mary Bickley, PA
- 6T. Jere Luttner, TX
- 6T. Brenda White, IL
9. Renee Fish, FL
10. Darlene Truett, TN

WOMEN'S 45+

1. Eileen Tugman, FL
2. Shelley Ogden, OH
- 3T. Nancy Kronenfeld, IL
- 3T. Gerri Stoffregen, OH
5. Elaine Dexter, CA
6. Janet Myers, NC
- 7T. Andee Glansberg, NY
- 7T. Karen Weins, FL
- 9T. Agatha Falso, FL
- 9T. Dianne Nero, NY

WOMEN'S 50+

1. Merjean Kelley, CA
2. Gerri Stoffregen, OH
3. Agatha Falso, FL
- 4T. Nidia Funes, CA
- 4T. Margaret Hoff, IL
6. Mildred Gwinn, NC
- 7T. Marta Groess, MN
- 7T. Sharon Hastings-Welty, OR
- 7T. Nancy Butts, WI
- 7T. Donna Johnson, ID

WOMEN'S 55+

1. Jo Kenyon, FL
2. Mildred Gwinn, NC
3. Nancy Butts, WI
4. Margquita Molina, CA
5. Sharon Hastings-Welty, OR
6. Sylvia Sawyer, UT
7. Lou Bradley, WI
8. Sue Carow, IL
9. Annabelle Kovar, NE
10. Gail Schaeffer, MD

WOMEN'S 60+

1. Jo Kenyon, FL
2. Helen Dunsmoor, ID
3. Kathy Mueller, MN
4. Mary-Low Acuff, NC
5. Susan Embry, CA
6. Lola Markus, IL
- 7T. Naomi Eads, MO
- 7T. Mary Walker, CA
9. Paula McNeish, FL
10. Louise Kiss, NM

WOMEN'S 65+

1. Lola Markus, IL
2. Reta Harring, WI
3. Mary-Low Acuff, NC
- 4T. Paula McNeish, FL
- 4T. Jane Smith, DE
6. Rebecca Dixon, OH
- 7T. Louise Kiss, NM
- 7T. B.G. Railey, TN
- 7T. Dorothy Vezetinski, WA

WOMEN'S 70+

1. Mary-Low Acuff, NC
2. Louis Gerry, TN
3. Beth Keene, TX
4. Mary Lou Kackert, NM

WOMEN'S 75+

1. Mary-Low Acuff, NC
2. Eleanor Quackenbush, OR
3. Christine Stephens, TX

BOYS

BOY'S 8 & UNDER

1. Andrew Grissom, CA
2. Nick Arturo, AK
3. Cody Drago, OR
4. David Lewis, CO
5. Brady Prince, MN
6. Bryce Milakovich, CA
7. Harrison Slocum, FL
- 8T. Jamin Godwin, FL
- 8T. Eric Noble, NC
- 8T. Scott Rieders, OR

B8- MULTI-BOUNCE

1. Justin Erdman, OH
- 2T. Ken Green, GA
- 2T. Bill Travers, OH
4. Mark Swanson, NM
5. Ori Melnik, TX
6. Cody Drago, OR
- 7T. Nick Arturo, AK
- 7T. Matthew Machiran, KS
- 7T. Ross Williamson, KS
10. Jamin Godwin, FL

BOY'S 10-

1. Jeremy Robbins, TX
2. Brad Slocum, FL
3. Charlie Pratt, OR
4. Tyler Hollingsworth, OR
5. Matthew Hammond, TX

6. Geoffrey Mora, CA
7. Ben Croft, IL
- 8T. Justin Erdman, OH
- 8T. Matt Johnson, NM
- 8T. Eddie Mazur, CT

BOY'S 12-

1. Jack Huczek, MI
2. Trevor Crowe, OR
3. Bart Crawford, OR
4. Clay Burris, FL
5. Steven Klaiman, TX
6. Seth Parker, PA
7. Cory Martin, WI
8. Andrew Kopf, NY
9. Brad Slocum, FL
10. Patric Mascorro, TX

BOY'S 14-

1. Shane Vanderson, OH
2. Jason Jansen, ND
3. Erik Leetch, AR
4. Patric Mascorro, TX
- 5T. Ashley Conway, NC
- 5T. Scott Fisher, NY
- 5T. Philip Hammond, TX
- 5T. Stephen Lewis, WA
9. Bobby Tantalo, NY
10. Danny Akes, FL

BOY'S 16

1. Willie Tilton, CO
2. Rocky Carson, CA
3. Stephen Mykalcio, NY
- 4T. Josh Tucker, MO
- 4T. Andy Tucknott, NE
6. Jeffrey Garner, AL
- 7T. Justin Carey, NY
- 7T. Brandon Henline, GA
- 7T. Stephan Lewis, WA
- 7T. Fred Tantalo III, NY

BOY'S 18

1. Erin Brannigan, ID
2. Eric Storey, IN
- 2T. John Stanford Jr., FL
- 2T. Ryan Staten, KS
5. Tyler Siggins, CA
- 6T. Dan Darling, OR
- 6T. Bucky Freeman, TX
8. Larry Peek, FL
- 9T. Rocky Carson, CA
10. Brandon Henline, GA

GIRLS

Girls 8 & UNDER

1. Ashley Willhite, OR
2. Dianne Meyer, OR
3. Rebeka Kopf, NY
4. Trina Harper, WI
5. Sarah Moyle, OR
6. Jenny Epstein, NY
7. Brittany Heathman, NC
8. Kristin Brunelle, OR

- 9T. Keeley Hodgins, OK
- 9T. Brittany Legget, OR

G8- MULTI-BOUNCE

1. Sarah Moyle, OR
2. Trina Harper, WI
3. Brittany Legget, OR
4. Nichole Robinson, OR
5. Christine McCracken, NM
6. Dianne Meyer, OR
- 7T. Jesse Ballard, UT
- 7T. Rebeka Kopf, NY
9. Melissa Garcia, NM
10. Victoria Ramirez, NM

GIRL'S 10-

1. Adrienne Fisher, OH
2. Deraí Darling, OR
3. Jesi Fuller, NM
4. Brandie Hanson, OR
5. Cari Mitlitsky, NY
6. Jenny Hough, MD
- 7T. Kelley Fisher, OH
- 7T. Katherine Stock, OR
9. Ashley Willhite, OR
10. Rebeka Kopf, NY

GIRL'S 12-

1. Kimberly Irons, OH
2. Crystal Winfrey, OH
3. Cari Mitlitsky, NY
4. Molly Law, CO
5. Lindsay Deutsch, TX
- 6T. Jeni Fuller, NM
- 6T. Grace Leutele, AZ
8. Mary Sweeney, NY
- 9T. Deraí Darling, OR
- 9T. Lauren Snider, NM

GIRL'S 14-

1. Krystal Csuk, IL
2. Maggie Debord, NE
3. Kristen Walsh, UT
4. Adva Buzi, TX
5. Juliana Mayor, NY
6. Kristen Kovar, NE
7. Sara Wencil, OR
8. Melanie Mueller, CO
9. Jen Ersek, NY
10. Lindsay Deutsch, TX

GIRL'S 16-

1. Brooke Crawford, OR
2. Sara Borland, IA
3. Megan Bals, NE
4. Dionna Brown, CA
5. Liana Kerwood, OR
6. Katie Gould, MO
7. Melissa Harmon, FL
8. Christina Lewendal, OR
9. Meghan Guardiani, MA
10. Jennifer Bennett, UT

GIRL'S 18-

1. Rhonda Rajsich, AZ
2. Sadie Gross, SD
3. Kori Grasha, NY

4. Christina Lewendal, OR
- 5T. Sara Borland, IA
- 5T. Brooke Crawford, OR
- 5T. Dawn Gates, IL
8. Katie Gould, MO
9. Meadow Krantz, MN
10. Liana Kerwood, OR

RANKINGS DATED:
04/03/97

FAIR WARNING!

Since ranking services are a benefit of USRA membership, **RACQUETBALL** will begin upholding its policy for publishing the "Top-Ten" national rankings of members only — effective with the next issue.

At that time, ranking lists will be reviewed prior to each publication to ensure that all named "top-ten" athletes in their respective divisions are current members of the USRA. This means that — in order to maintain a position in the published top-ten — it is the ranked athlete's responsibility to make sure that his/her membership is in good standing year-round.

Before you panic, think about it. In this list, approximately 60 ranked players (over 10%) are holding expired memberships.

Now, we're not going to embarrass those 60 people by highlighting their names or otherwise bringing attention to them this time, but some mysterious disappearances may strike you when the July/August issue hits the streets. And if you suspect that you might be among that "missing in action" group — you'll definitely want to confirm your status before JUNE 1.

MAY

May 16
Spring Blast
Pro Sports Club
Bellevue, WA
206-885-5566

Spring Fling
Cash Classic
Orlando Fitness &
Racquet Club
Orlando, FL
407-645-3550

12th Pepsi Cup Club
Championships
Aurora Athletic Club
Aurora, CO
303-750-3210

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- **Spalding**
- **Wilson**

May 23
Summer Sizzler
Clubsport of
Pleasanton
Pleasanton, CA
510-463-2822

May 25
So. Florida Memorial
Day Tournament
J.C.C. of Greater
Palm Beaches
West Palm Beach, FL
561-689-5747

JUNE

June 6
All-Military
Championships
Downtown Athletic
Club – Norfolk, VA
804-625-2222

Park Point Athletic
Club Open
Santa Rosa, CA
707-578-1640

2nd Irving Fryar
Quadrangle East
Coral Springs, FL
954-753-8900

June 12
New Mexico 1st
Security Games
Midtown Sports
and Wellness
Albuquerque, NM
505-266-8960

June 13
For Women Only
Harbor Square Athletic
Club – Edmonds, WA
206-745-8008

June 20
Gold Country Open
Courthouse Athletic
Club – Auburn, CA
916-885-1964

Quad West Athletic
Club Summer Classic
Clearwater, FL
813-535-4901

Summer Bash
Sports Club of
Asheville
Asheville, NC
704-252-0222

Summer Splat
Modesto Court Room
Modesto, CA
209-577-1060

Venus Swim
Wear Classic
Racquetpower
Jacksonville, FL
904-268-8888

Caliente Open
The Racquet Centre
Hollywood, CA
310-861-6028

6th Crystal Coast
Classic @ Sports Club
of Morehead
Morehead City, NC
9919-726-7070

June 21
Shoot-Out
Chancellors Racquet
& Fitness
Houston, TX
713-772-9955

JUNE 21 - 25
Level Six:
National
Ektelon 24th U.S.
Junior Olympic
Championships
Merritt Athletic
Club-Security
Baltimore, MD
410-298-8700

JULY

July 11
Courthouse of Blues
The Courthouse
Jackson, MS
601-932-4800

Redwood Empire Open
Rancho Arroyo
Racquet Club
Petaluma, CA
707-795-5461

Southern California
Championships
Los Caballeros
Sports Village
Fountain Valley, CA
714-546-8560

Steve Powers
Memorial
Bally's Holiday Spa
Falls Church, VA
703-573-0660

The Head Tour -
Summer Doubles
Continental Athletic
Club – Columbus, OH
614-890-6073

Sunshine State Games
Orlando Fitness &
Racquet Club
Orlando, FL
407-645-3550

July 12
Summer Pro-Am
Hall of Fame RB Club
Columbia Heights, MN
612-572-0330

July 16
NMRA International
Masters Singles &
Doubles: Las Vegas
608-271-3131

July 17
Georgia Games for
Racquetball
GA Tech Student
Athletic Center
Atlanta, GA
404-636-7575

July 18
The Way It Wuz ...
Again @ Schoeber's
Athletic Club
Fremont, CA
510-794-9594

July 19
Summer Shoot-Out
Northwest Fitness
Center – Houston, TX
713-895-8688

July 25
Ballard Open
Olympic Athletic Club
Seattle, WA
206-783-0427

Bluegrass State Games
University of Kentucky
Seaton Center
Lexington, KY
606-288-6011

alendar...calendar

BOLDED listings are State Championships (Level 3) or higher.

I Love Racquetball
Aspen Hill Club
Silver Spring, MD
301-598-5200

4th Summerfest
Glass Court Swim &
Fitness – Lombard, IL
630-629-3390

AUGUST

August 8
Ektelon Summer
Sizzler @ Hall of Fame
Racquetball Club
Columbia Heights, MN
612-572-0330

August 9
Friendly's
Racquetballathon
Nautilus Fitness Ctr.
Erie, PA
814-868-0072

One Day State
Doubles Warm-Up
Quad West Ath. Club
Clearwater, FL
813-535-4901

August 15
Summer Sizzler Open
Twin Arbors Ath. Club
Lodi, CA
209-334-4897

1997 USRA NATIONAL EVENTS
MAY 21-26 Ektelon USRA 30th U.S. National Singles Championships: Houston
JUNE 21-25 Ektelon USRA 24th U.S. Junior Olympic Championships: Baltimore
JULY 16-19 NMRA International Masters Invitational Singles/Doubles: Las Vegas
AUGUST 26-30 IRF 9th World Senior Championships: Albuquerque
OCTOBER 15-19 Ektelon USRA 30th U.S. National Doubles Championships: Phoenix
NOVEMBER 12-16 Promus Hotel Corporation 2nd U.S. OPEN Championships: Memphis
DECEMBER 19-23 IRF 9th World Junior Championships: Fountain Valley, CA

1998 USRA NATIONAL EVENTS
JANUARY 15-17 USRA 14th Annual Leadership Conference: Colorado Springs, CO
JAN. 30 - FEB. 1 Women's Senior/Master National Championships: Canoga Park, CA

August 21
Utah State Junior
Championships
Redwood Multi-
Purpose Center
West Valley City, UT
801-974-6923

August 22
I Love Racquetball
Aspen Hill Club
Silver Spring MD
301-598-5200

Florida State Doubles
Championships
South Florida
Racquetball Club
Ft. Lauderdale, FL
904-270-2224

AUGUST 26 - 30
Level Five:
Invitational
IRF World Senior
Championships
Tom Young's
Athletic Club
Albuquerque, NM
505-266-8960

August 28
Stockton Pro-Am
West Lane Racquet
Club – Stockton, CA
209-472-2100

SEPTEMBER

September 12
Peter Peterson Classic
IX @ Hall of Fame
Racquetball Club
Columbia Heights
612-572-0330

September 19
Fall Racquetball
Classic @ Maverick
Athletic Club
Arlington, TX
817-275-3348

Jesse James Shootout
Olympic Athletic Club
Northfield MN
507-645-8007

September 26
KRA Women's
Invitational
Downtown YMCA
Louisville, KY
502-231-3576

Regional Doubles
RacquetPower
Jacksonville, FL
904-270-2224

OCTOBER

October 3
Magic City Classic
Courtsouth Racquet &
Fitness
Vestavia Hills, AL
205-823-2120

Texas State Doubles
Chancellors Racquet
& Fitness
Houston, TX
713-772-9955

OCTOBER 15-19
Level Six:
National
Ektelon 30th U.S.
National Doubles
Championships
City Square
Sports Club
Phoenix, AZ
602-285-2929

October 17
Kentucky State
Doubles
Downtown YMCA
Louisville, KY
502-231-3576

Event Level & Description	Finish & Point Awards				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5-8
1 = Closed State Tournament	30	20	15	10	5
2 = Open Tournament	50	30	20	15	10
3 = State Championship	150	100	75	50	25
4 = Regional Championship	250	150	100	75	50
5 = National Invitational	300	200	150	100	75
6 = National Championship	600	400	300	200	100*

*In draws of 48 or more at a national championship, the 9-16th place finishers receive 50 points.

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