

KILLSHOT

August, 1991
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Interview:
Michelle
Gilman

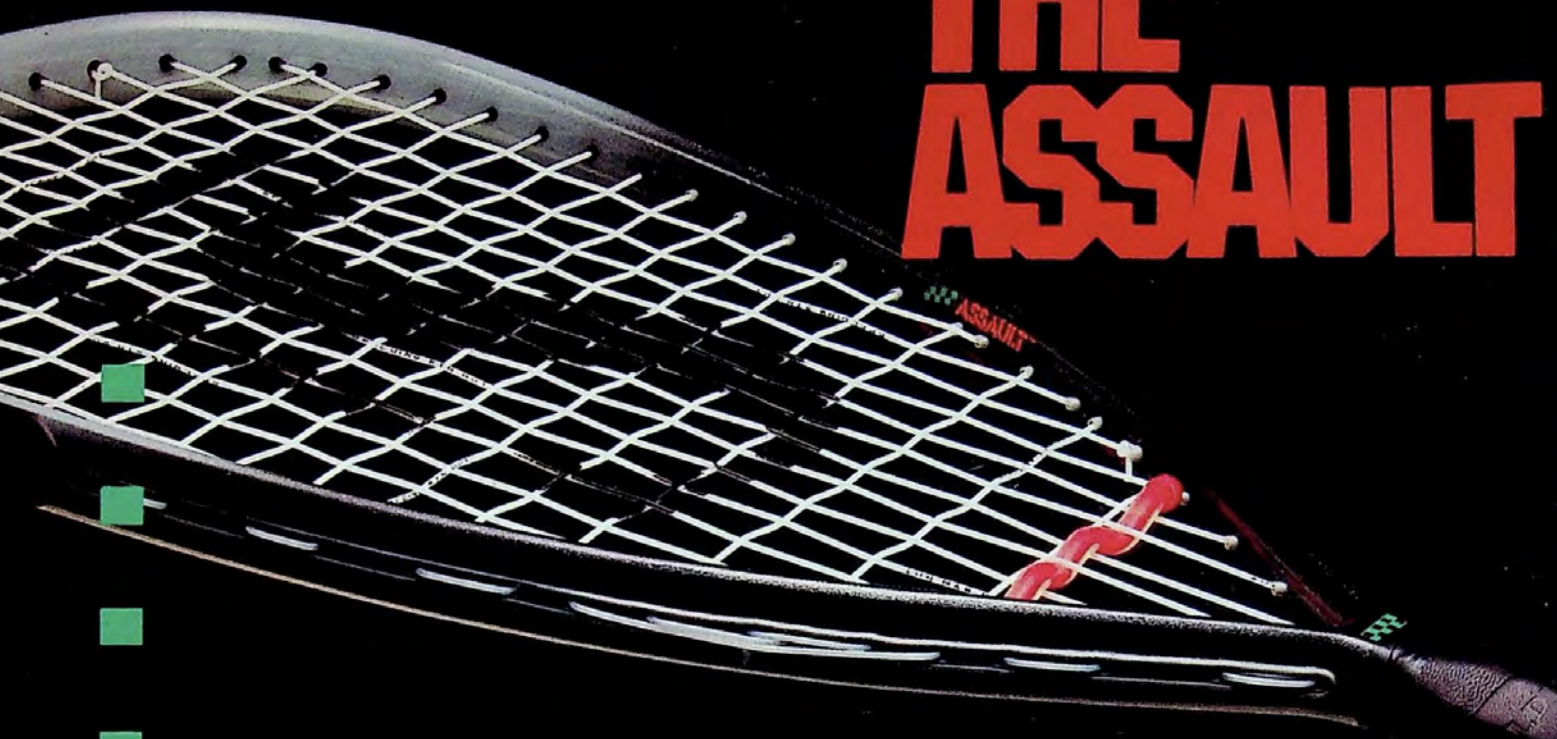
Who's
Mike
Ray?

Pro Tour:
WPRA San Francisco
MPRA Chicago

Plus:
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KILLSHOT

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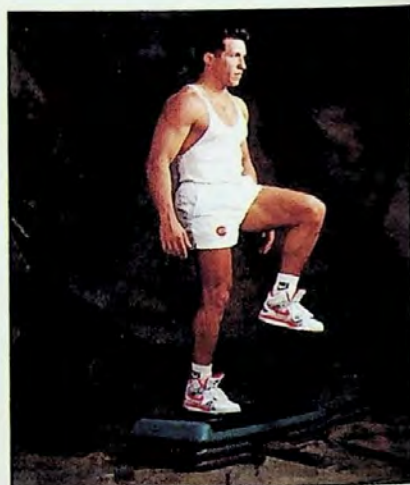
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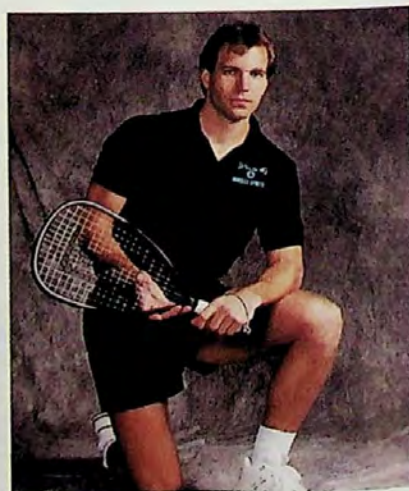
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What's the Point?

The tee-shirt is white, with bold neon lettering that says, "Who's Mike Ray?" It's funny, but at the same time it's a sobering summation of racquetball today. The first time I met Mike Ray was on Superbowl Sunday in Nashville for lunch. I'd seen him play but not against any real competition. And, it was only after seeing him battle other MPRA tour players that I fully appreciated his talents. I remember thinking, "How strange to be meeting one of the top athletes of our time in a public restaurant with absolutely no interruption from fans." The same thing happened a few weeks later in St. Louis with Michelle Gilman.

What other sport has anonymous players at the top of the game? Everyone knows pro golfers and tennis players. Fans across the

country have their favorite baseball, basketball, and football heroes. Beach volleyball's Sinjin Smith is a household name. Even pro bowlers have a certain amount of notoriety. And, it's a sure bet that the world knows Bo (and Bo knows promotion). But, the sad truth is, people outside competitive racquetball (and many people in competitive racquetball) are totally unaware of who's who and what's what in the sport. They have little information and insights into the lives, training and strategies of the top players of the Men's Professional Racquetball Association and the Women's Professional Racquetball Association.

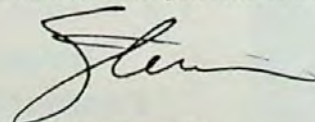
Our goal is to fill that void. Our dream is for these players -- world class athletes -- to get the visibility they deserve and the recognition they've earned.

Our responsibility is to provide as balanced a view as we possibly can at the exciting world of racquetball -- amateur and professional. We will do this with profiles and interviews, practical features and beneficial articles, tips and pointers from qualified authorities, tournament coverage and product features.

Our hope is to provide a useful vehicle for manufacturers, serious players, club owners, and recreational players to come together, keeping abreast of the trends and issues of the sport.

We promise not to take our job too lightly but, at the same time, vow not to take ourselves too seriously. We welcome your comments, views, and criticism, and hope that **KILLSHOT** can be shaped into a form most functional for the benefit of our readers.

So, send us your thoughts and views on what you'd like to see. Wait a minute, better yet, send us a subscription card!



Steve Quertermous*



*In traveling across the United States and Canada gathering material and promoting **KILLSHOT**, I've become a familiar fixture around pro stops and major tournaments. But, unless you met him at only a few of these tournaments or visited our offices in Kentucky, you probably don't know my brother, Steve. His publishing experience is responsible for making **KILLSHOT** a reality. My question is, who are those other people in the photo with Steve? --Marvin Quertermous, Managing Editor

FREE!?

Oh yeah, sure. Nothing is free. No such thing as a free lunch. Well, you're lookin' at it, bub. At this very moment you are holding your very own (unless of course you swiped this from an unsuspecting friend or the club desk) free copy of

KILLSHOT. This premiere issue is being provided free to racquetball enthusiasts from the U.S. and Canada. No obligations. No strings attached. Makes you wonder doesn't it?

Why?

We thought the best way for you to see what we had in mind for a new racquetball magazine was to give you the chance to hold it in your hand, with no obligation or expense to you. We think you've been promised enough and delivered very little. We are also confident you'll like what you see well enough to want more. And, the only way you can get more is by subscribing.

Are we crazy?

Definitely a possibility.

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Frankly, no. So please send in those subscription cards today.

KILLSHOT

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What it all is?

An overview of racquetball today and the ingredients that com- prise the state of the sport

Finally, more and more every day, the fog is lifting from racquetball. Confusion and misunderstanding created by the growth and change of this young sport have kept us all in the midst of this fog for a very long time. Lack of good communication has furthered the confusion. Unfortunately, over the years many individuals have, for their own gain, capitalized on this confusion by promoting myths and boldfaced lies.

It is the trend of openness and honesty which has come about in the '90's because of several factors. First, drastic up and down swings in participation and support have leveled to a consistent measurable rise. Second, the hype and fad factors of the late '70's are behind us. Third, (and possibly most important) Cooperation and honesty among the leaders of amateur and professional groups have become the standard.

Because of the confusion of the past, many of us are left with little information about the sport as a whole. It seems appropriate, then, that we go back to basics and do some catching up. Many of the basics may seem obvious; many may seem unimportant. But these

are the subjects of some of the most asked questions today.

Organizations

The Men's Professional Racquetball Association (MPRA) and the Women's Professional Racquetball Association (WPRA) are

the international governing bodies for professional racquetball. They work independently but cooperatively with each other. These organizations are each supervised by executive boards, made up primarily of players. The 1990-1991 tour season, now coming to a close for both groups has been testimony enough to their dedication and professionalism. Men's professional racquetball has maintained (under several different names and with various interruptions) since 1973. The WPRA was formed in 1979.

Pro stops are a slick package of organization and promotion designed to showcase some of the most talented athletes in any sport. Players are intense, very serious, and often outrageous. This level of play has to be seen to be believed.

The American Amateur Racquetball Association (AARA) is the governing body for amateur racquetball in the United States. The AARA has probably done more to assure the steady growth of the game than any other single



WPRA #7 Kaye Kuhfeld.

Current World Champion Egan Inoue.

What it all is?

organization. Their efforts have brought about organization within the U.S. and set the standard for international play. Started in 1960, the AARA began life as the International Racquetball Association. Its official organization came about in 1968 and 69 and its current name was adopted in 1979.

Racquetball Canada oversees amateur play in the Canadian provinces. Organized in 1971, Racquetball Canada celebrates its 20th birthday this year. Drawing from a membership somewhere around one-ninth the size of the AARA, Canada has managed to assemble the #2 team in the world.

The International Racquetball Federation (IRF) works with officials of the U.S. and Canada as well as Japan, Mexico, and much of South America and Europe to promote worldwide amateur competition. The IRF came into existence in 1979, as the International Amateur Racquetball Federation. Because of the efforts of these amateur groups, many feel that racquetball's inclusion in the Olympic games may be a reality as soon as 1996.

Pros/Ams

Probably the most frequently asked question in racquetball today is "How can some of the same players compete on the professional tour, and on the National Team, and in local tournaments?" The answer is relatively easy. In order to be on the National Team or compete in sanctioned amateur play, players are not allowed to accept prize money. To keep amateur status, they must direct their winnings to a special trust fund designed for this purpose and maintained by the AARA. They may draw from this fund to cover certain approved travel and training expenses. They may claim the balance of their winnings upon the termination of their amateur status. This process allows top players to benefit from the experience gained on the pro tours, while maintaining their eligibility to represent their country in international play.

Often professional players may be seen at



local tournaments. This is allowed because many of the newer players on the tour who do not consistently make it into the money rounds need prize money from open draws at local tournaments to supplement their income. Top tour players who play local events are usually compensated for their appearance by special fees or particularly attractive first place money with little expense to themselves.

At a recent major tournament, one of the spectators approached a regular touring pro to ask, "What do you do for a living that you have time to stay so good at racquetball?" In disbelief, the player replied, "I play racquetball. I'm a pro. That means it's my profession." Sizing him up to see if he was serious, the fan replied, "Come on, this isn't tennis. You can't live on it. What do you really do?"

The truth is, in 1991, you can live on racquetball. Not everyone, in fact not many, but it does happen. There are even a few players who live very comfortably. This is by no means encouragement for any local open player to give up a secure income to jump on the pro tour. It is encouragement for those players who are truly dedicated to know that there is some reward for their expertise and conditioning.

OK, let's be honest. Many of the pros on the tour supplement their income by teaching in clubs or at camps. And, indeed, no one lives on prize money alone. Sponsorship dollars in the form of expense money, bonuses for advancements, or wins in high-profile tournaments, or, in some cases, salaries or percentages make up a large part of a professional player's income. Certainly players who have managed to stay on top since the last days of highly publicized racquetball, such as Marty Hogan, Mike Yellen, or Lynn Adams may command a premium price for their endorsements. But current players Mike Ray, Egan Inoue and Dan Obremski are beginning to profit from their endorsements, as well.

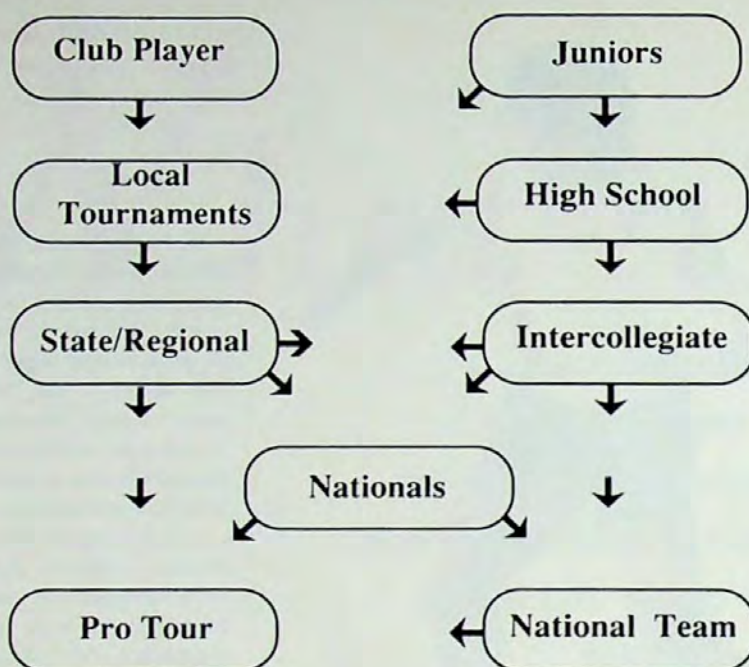
While only a select few players have the ability to achieve this kind of notoriety, there is recognition for talented and dedicated players of all types within the amateur structure. The AARA provides for competition for age groups, high schools, intercollegiate, blind, wheel chair, and military, as well as six skill divisions for men and for women (Open, A, B, C, D, and Novice). The association is further divided into seventeen geographic regions within the United States. National team members are selected on the basis of their finish in certain qualifying events for competition in international play.

Rankings

AARA members are ranked based on their success in sanctioned tournament play. Rankings are based on cumulative points over the previous twelve month period. Points are earned for finishes from quarter-finals through finals. Points are increased with regard to the level of play at each tournament. The AARA publishes these results bimonthly in *Racquetball Magazine*. State and regional newsletters report rankings for their members as well.

Rankings are particularly important in the Professional Tours. To make tournament re-

What it all is?



Player Development Flow Chart

sults as accurate as possible, the draw must be seeded in such a way that higher ranked players do not meet until late round play.

Chicago's Jack Newman carries the role of statistician for the MPRA. It is rumored that Jack has committed to memory not only the rankings for the pro tour at any given time, but also players' head-to-head results over a several year period, and a staggering array of statistics from pro baseball and football as well. Men's tour points accumulate with each tournament, with the oldest point award dropping off with the addition of each new one. There is also a divisor built in so that players who miss a stop due to injury or other reasons are not penalized too heavily. This also prevents top players who play only a select few stops from being seeded inaccurately.

San Antonio's J.J. Risch keeps the tally for the WPRA. As with the men's tour, the WPRA makes use of a complex divisor system to maintain accuracy in the rankings. After seeing the detailed description of the revised WPRA system for 1991-92, we now understand why the WPRA values J.J.'s expertise so highly.

Rules

In addition to different ranking systems, there are rule variations among the different organizations. AARA play consists of two out of three-game matches, scoring to 15 with an 11-point tie breaker. WPRA/MPRA play is 3 out of 5 games to 11. The tie breaker in professional play must be won by a 2-point margin. This is known as a Super Tie Breaker. (Continued on page 58)



WPRA #5 Jackie Paraiso

MPRA TOP 8

1 Mike Ray	Nashville
2 Drew Kachtik	Dallas
3 Tim Doyle	Huntington Beach
4 Egan Inoue	Honolulu
5 Dan Obremski	Pittsburgh
6 Ruben Gonzalez	Staten Island
7 Andy Roberts	Memphis
8 Mike Yellen	W. Bloomfield, MI

WPRA TOP 8

1 Lynn Adams	Chicago
2 Michelle Gilman	Ontario, OR
3T Caryn McKinney	Atlanta
3T Malia Bailey	Norfolk
5 Jackie Paraiso	San Diego
6 Toni Bevelock	Santa Ana, CA
7 Kaye Kuhfeld	Indianapolis
8 Marci Drexler	San Diego

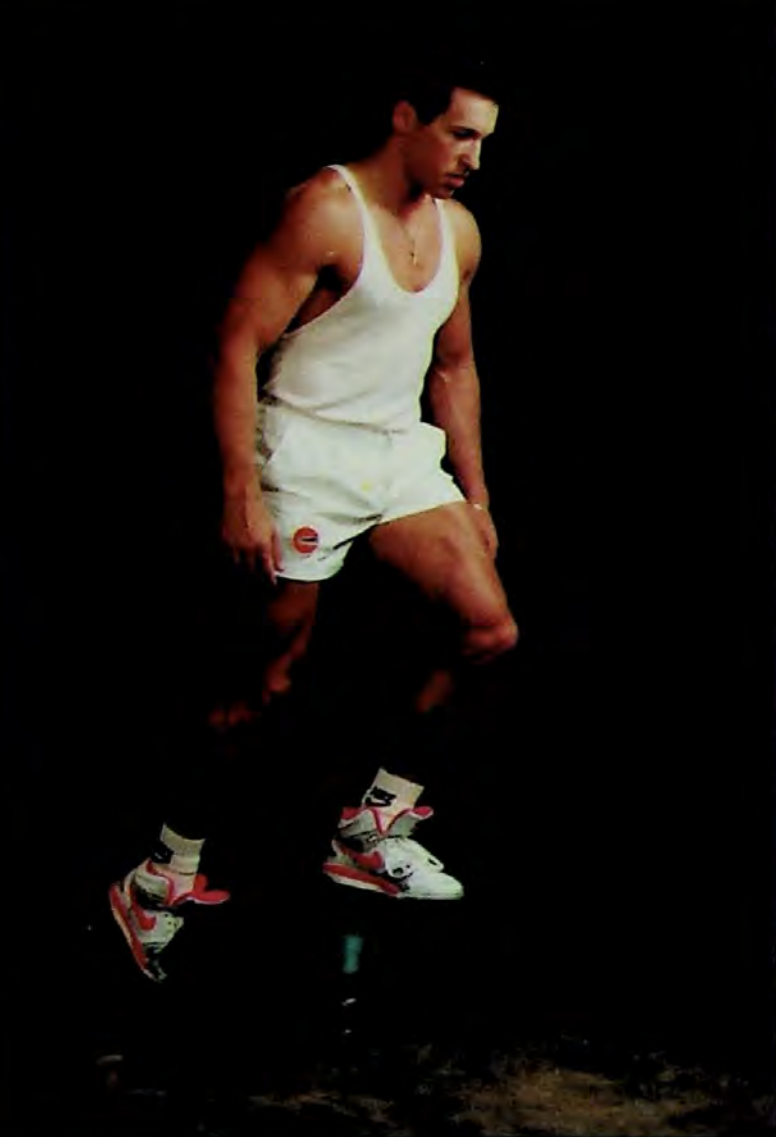
Who's Hot

Woody Clouse	Jacksonville, FL
Lynn Coburn	Baltimore
Doug Ganim	Columbus, OH
Sherman Greenfeld	Winnipeg
Brian Hawkes	Huntington Beach
Elaine Hooge	Columbus, OH
Elkova Icenogle	Auburn, CA
Dave Johnson	Huntington Beach
Marcy Lynch	North Wales, PA
Sudsy Monchik	Staten Island
Jack Newman	Chicago
Sandy Robson	Chicago
Heather Stupp	Montreal
Tim Sweeney	Chicago

Why

In quarters twice, '90-91 MPRA tour. Former U.S. and Canadian Open champ. MPRA #13
 WPRA Most Improved, '90. In quarters twice, '90-91 WPRA tour. WPRA #9
 Current #1 AARA Open. In quarters once, '90-91 MPRA tour. Two-time World doubles champ. MPRA #15
 3-time Canadian National champ
 6-time Outdoor champ. Former AARA Doubles champ. In quarters twice, '90-91. MPRA tour. MPRA #11
 '91 Intercollegiate champ. Current #1 AARA Open
 '91 High School champ. Current #1 AARA 18-
 In quarters three times, '90-91 MPRA tour. 2nd place Stockton pro stop. MPRA #9
 In quarters once, '90-91 WPRA tour. WPRA #10
 '91 High School champ. Current #1 AARA 16-
 Won Chicago Spring pro stop. In quarters twice, '90-91 MPRA tour. 2-time Jr. champ. 2-time Intercollegiate champ. MPRA #10
 In quarters once, '90-91 WPRA tour. WPRA #11
 5-time Canadian National champ. 2-time World champ
 Intercollegiate champ. Won Chicago fall pro stop. In quarters twice, '90-91 MPRA tour. MPRA #12

Who's Who

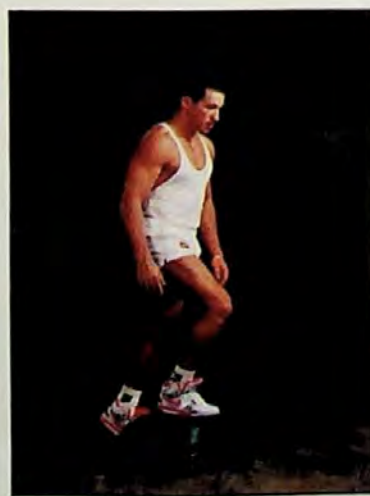
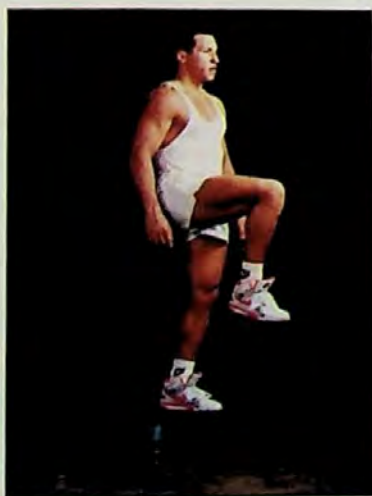
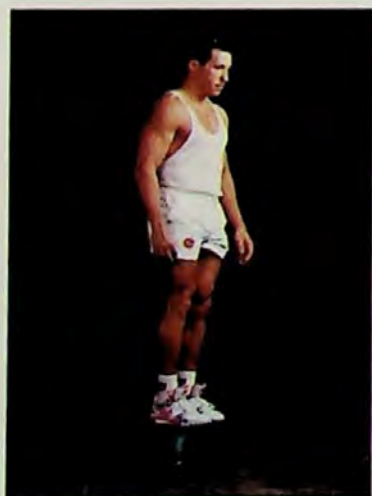


STEP

Throughout the course of every athlete's respective career, there comes a time when a so-called sticking point is reached, and the necessary tools needed to get over the top are not always self-evident. Not long ago I encountered the relentless thoughts and voices in the back of my mind badgering my self-imposed image of a professional athlete, whose career was at that sticking point. My ranking as a pro remained around the #8 spot for the past 2 years, never stringing together 3 or 4 good victories in a specific tournament. Was it my game? My training? My diet? My mental preparation, or did I just not have what it takes to break into the top 3? Was it too much or too little of each of these factors? Regardless, I had to reassess my goals and determine a new game plan. In early December, during a conversation with fellow touring pro Aaron Katz, I was enlightened to the fact that more emphasis had to be directed towards actual on-court practice and play. It was always my philosophy that if I trained harder than anyone else, and looked in better shape, that I would do well at tournaments. Obviously, I was wrong. So, in an effort to enhance my playability on the court, I cut out most of my training off court. Instead of lifting 3-6 days a week, training cardiovascular 4-6 days a week and practicing 2 days a week, I decided to lift 1-2 days a week and practice and play 6 days a week.

As far as my cardiovascular program, I wanted to combine an exercise that worked my cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, and lower body explosiveness. It just so happened that a few aerobic instructors were badgering me to try this phenomenon

Photos by Tom Clouser



called *Step-Up Class*. Maybe it's a coincidence, but after you hear the testimony of this class' effectiveness, as well as its benefits you'll be hooked.

In early December I started doing Step-Up Class 2-4 days per week as my sole cardiovascular program. I also cut down my weights to 1 day per week. In mid December I attended the Riverside, California pro stop near Los Angeles. In the round of 16, I defeated Marty Hogan in 4 games. In the quarters, Egan Inoue in 4 games, in the semi's Mike Yellen in 4 games before losing to Mike Ray in the finals. Great play, not fatigue was in the winning factor. No fatigue, great leg spring, great endurance – ranked #3. I didn't know if this was a fluke or some eye opening revelation hidden for the past 4 years of my career.

"I wanted to combine an exercise that worked my cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, and lower body explosiveness."

To substantiate the validity of my assessment, I decided to use the same program

for the Memphis pro stop one month later. To my satisfaction (almost), I had the same result. 16's Tim Sweeney in 4, quarters, Mike Yellen in 5, semis, Egan Inoue in 5. In the finals I had the tournament taken from my grasp in a controversial 1 point heartbreak loss to Andy Roberts. Results – I ranked #2. Never before had I been within 10 points of the #1 position, nor had I played with such enthusiasm energy and confidence. February 3rd, I had a chance to avenge my loss to Andy Roberts during the Saranac Pro Invitational in Green Bay Wisconsin. Results: a 15-13 15-14 win, again reaffirming my faith and confidence in this routine. I thank God I found this out before I grew old and winless on the court.

That's enough jubilation and credibility resulting from my performance. Now, a brief explanation of the content, the time frame, and the racquetball related benefits of the *Step-Up Class, The Ultimate Racquetball Workout!*

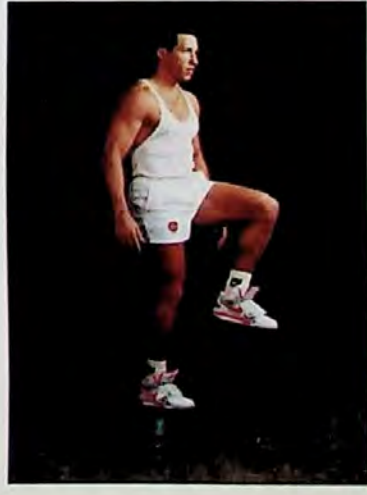
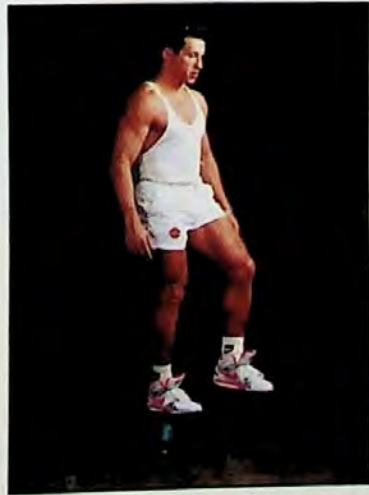
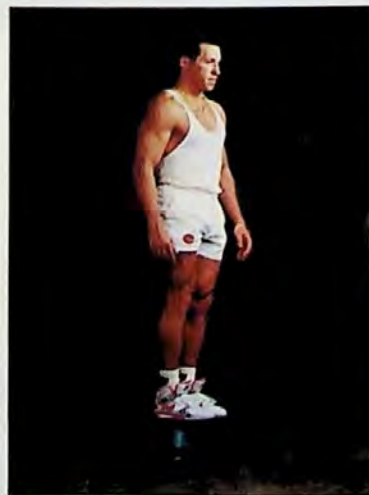
I call Step-Up Class the Ultimate racquetball workout. It combines many of the philosophies I've had over the years concerning step ups, lunges, and plyometrics, as well as the cardiovascular and muscular endurance needed for racquetball. This time saving supplementation should be considered by all true racquetballers looking for an overall

workout using the specific muscles needed to reach a higher standard. To condense my thoughts, I would suggest that you choose a class in the following manner. Start with a bench or step that is good for your level of fitness. I use a bench that is usually 12-16 inches. Use light hand weights to begin and work hard to make this a full-body workout. The extra hand weights also tax your cardiovascular system more readily. Finally, look for a class that is structured for your pace. The class should include straight step ups (thigh, rear end, calves), cross steps (outer thigh, rear end, calves), foot work variation (coordination), and plyometrics (ex: hopping onto step, promotes explosiveness). Work your way up to 3 or 4 days a week, with an aggressive attitude, and your explosiveness and ranking will escalate like never before.

Fitness Editor Dan Obremski is two-time World Doubles champion, three-time National Doubles champion, four-time National Mixed Doubles champion and currently #5 on the MPRA tour. He is involved with numerous fitness training seminars and is fitness instructor at the National Elite Training Camp.

ON IT!

by Dan Obremski
FITNESS EDITOR





Michelle Gilman

At the age of twenty, Michelle Gilman has won nearly every title in amateur racquetball. She has been consistently ranked at the top of the WPRA since joining the professional tour in 1989. Returning from a WPRA National Championship title in her rookie season, Michelle has dominated this year's tour with four pro stop wins to date.

study in determination

Dedicated and professional, she is the kind of class athlete that everyone admires. Michelle is one of the forerunners in a movement toward classic sports ideals and values that is the hallmark of racquetball in the nineties.

By Marvin Quertermous
Photographs by Charlie Palek

Interview

KILLSHOT

Michelle

Q: Michelle, how did you get started playing racquetball?

MG: I got a membership at the club for a birthday present when I was ten. My family went and we just went on the court and tried to play. It was really frustrating because, I couldn't even hit the ball; no matter how hard I tried. I couldn't believe it because I was a really athletic kid. At first, they counted and it took me forty-seven swings to hit the ball one time.

Q: When you say you were athletic, how do you mean; which sports?

MG: Well, I did all the track and field kinds of stuff and played baseball. Most of my baseball team were boys and we played hardball. Plus, I grew up in the country, so I was always outside and everything became a sport.

Q: But you liked racquetball even though it was difficult for you at first?

MG: I was so awful at it, it made me play even more. I spent enormous amounts of time playing because I wanted to get better. Nobody

thought I would ever be able to play. Everyone who saw me just said, "Give it up." That was great because it made me try even harder.

Q: Did you start working with any teachers?

MG: After about a year of playing as much as I could, I started working with John Egerman. Do you know John?

Q: No, I don't.

MG: I thought you might. He was a nationally ranked player in those days.

Q: Must have been around 1982.

MG: Yeah, somewhere around then. Anyway, he made the biggest differences in my game. And of course my dad and I played a lot then, too.

Q: Your father is still your coach isn't he?

MG: Yeah, he's really great.

Q: Was he already really good when you started?

MG: No, he learned to play when I did.

incredible sense of what's happening right or wrong. And he knows me so well, he knows when he can push and when not to, to get the best response from me.

Q: Does he compete?

MG: Sure, he played in the nationals this year for his age division, 45+. My brother, Jon, is an excellent player too. He's older than me and a great natural athlete. That used to push me to improve too, because he had all the talent. He used to destroy me on the court and that made me go and practice twice as hard.

Q: You once told me

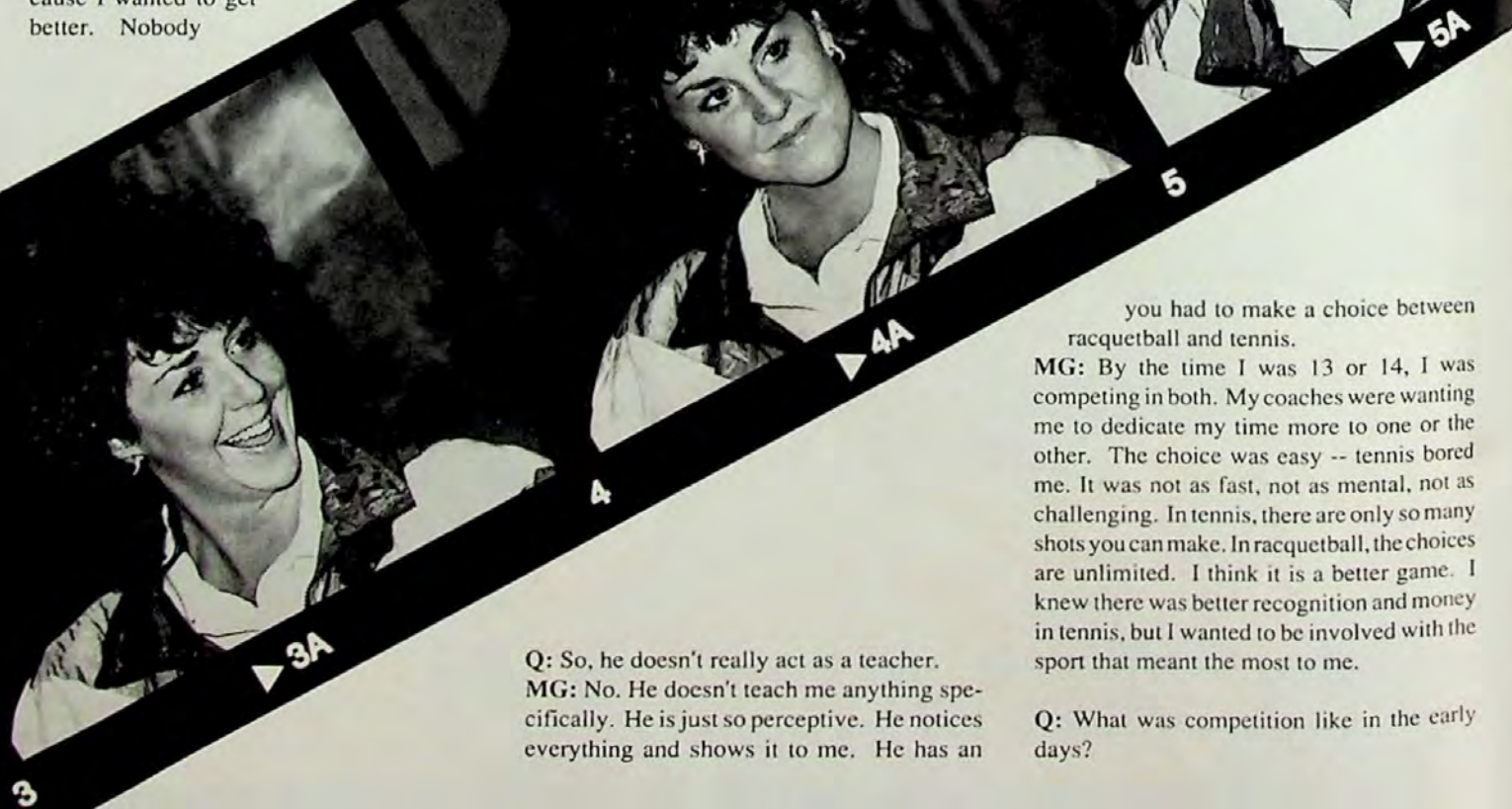
you had to make a choice between racquetball and tennis.

MG: By the time I was 13 or 14, I was competing in both. My coaches were wanting me to dedicate my time more to one or the other. The choice was easy -- tennis bored me. It was not as fast, not as mental, not as challenging. In tennis, there are only so many shots you can make. In racquetball, the choices are unlimited. I think it is a better game. I knew there was better recognition and money in tennis, but I wanted to be involved with the sport that meant the most to me.

Q: What was competition like in the early days?

Q: So, he doesn't really act as a teacher.

MG: No. He doesn't teach me anything specifically. He is just so perceptive. He notices everything and shows it to me. He has an



MG: Well, I made it to my first Nationals when I was 12. I lost in the first round. When I came back the next year, I lost in the second round to the girl who went on to win. That was so disheartening, it made a



major impact on me. I came back when I was 14 to win the Junior Nationals. That was my first year on the National Team, playing doubles with Connie Peterson. (Now Connie Peterson Martin)

Q: You were known for doubles for a while. Who were your other partners and who are the toughest opponents?

MG: I played with Cindy Doyle for a while. Now I play with Jackie Paraiso. We've done really well together. Probably the toughest team to play, I think, are Toni Bevelock and Malia Bailey.

Q: I guess Cindy's playing again now after being out with an injury?

MG: She placed second at the intercollegiate this year behind Elaine Hooghe. So, I guess she's playing well. I need to give her a call. I'd really like to talk with her.

Q: Do you expect to see either Cindy Doyle or Elaine Hooghe on the tour next year?

MG: Well, Elaine has a family now, so I don't know if she has the time or the interest. You're the one with the magazine, why don't you call them and find out?

7

Q: OK., I get the message. What can you tell me about playing Heather Stupp?

MG: I first knew about Heather around 1986. Our match last year really hit me hard because I wanted a win so badly.

Q: Last year at the World Championships in Caracas?

MG: Right. I was coming off a Grand Slam win and I really wanted the World Title.

Q: Can you explain "Grand Slam?"

MG: All the important amateur titles. I won Juniors, Junior Doubles, Nationals, National Doubles, and the Olympic Festival. All the top titles in the U.S. in a single year. In Venezuela, I took the first match but choked in the second.

Q: Why two matches?

MG: Well, at those games you play twice, once for your country then once as an individual. I won against Heather for the U.S., but lost for the World Champion Title.

Q: So, I guess you are looking forward to Montreal next year.

MG: I'm looking forward to Honolulu next month.

Q: Pacific Rim Games. You sound pretty determined.

MG: You got it!

Q: I forgot about that. So you will get your chance at Heather pretty soon.

7A

MG: If the draw falls right.

Q: Tell me how those games work.

MG: It's an invitational tournament for the top ten racquetball countries; very prestigious. Right now the U.S. is number one and Canada is number two. Mexico and Japan are always third and fourth; I can't remember who's ahead of who right now between the two.

Q: You seem to really like international play.

MG: It's the best! I can't describe the thrill. Sports are so different in other countries than the U.S. The crowd gets involved. They make up songs and they have all these cheers and chants. They get behind all the players and they go crazy. Plus, just seeing the different cultures is so great. The people are so different and so colorful. Everywhere we go it's so openly emotional. It also makes me appreciate the U.S.

Q: You mean the poverty of some of the other countries?

MG: Right. When you experience their way of life first hand, you see how lucky we are.

Q: What is your most memorable trip?

MG: Definitely the Bolivia trip -- so much happened. We went sight seeing in this wagon and it was so bad and so were the roads that most of us got out and walked along side for fear of going over the side of the mountain. We were all sunbathing with a bunch of lizards. We also got really sick, either while there or after we got back. I roomed with Kaye Kuhfeld. She became so sick that one time I awoke in the middle of the night just in time to jump up and catch her before she fell to the floor. She just passed out on her feet on the way back to bed. I just had to stand there and yell for help.

Q: Please explain how you can play the amateur events and the pro tour as well.

MG: A lot of the players do it. To keep our amateur status, we simply turn in any winnings to the trust fund set up by the AARA. Then we turn in receipts for expenses and we are reimbursed from the fund. The rest just sits there earning interest and taxes until we give up our status.

Q: What about when something happens like winning the car at the Men's Nationals in Seattle?

MG: They got a car?! What a nightmare -- I want a car! I didn't know about that. What kind is it?

Q: I think it's a Hyundai.

MG: I don't know how that will work if someone with amateur status wins it. I'd like to win one and find out.

Q: Do you work anywhere outside the sport?

MG: No. I'm in school studying Business Law undergrad. I only work teaching some junior players in the afternoons. I'd like to be an attorney somewhere in sports.

Q: What are your days like when school is not in session?

MG: I start around 7:00 a.m. with running,

"Tennis bored me. It was not as fast, not as mental, not as challenging"

then on to the court for some drills, followed by the bike or the stair machine. Early afternoons I work with my junior players then do an aerobics class. In the evenings I try to play some matches then finish off with some weight training.

Q: Everyday?

MG: Usually five to six days a week. I sometimes vary it a little or throw in other sports. Even in the time I'm not training I'm usually playing golf or some other sport. I like being outside and try to always keep doing something.

Q: Have you ever been injured while playing?

MG: When I was 14, I was hit by a racquet during a training camp. We were doing forehand drills and the player beside me decided, for some reason, to turn and hit a backhand. She ended up crushing my cheekbone with her follow through. It was so bad, it took forty-eight stitches and plastic surgery to repair.

Q: Was it tough playing again after that?

MG: I was so nervous the first time I went back on the court, I thought I would hit myself. But it's like falling off a horse, then getting back on.

Q: Who were your heroes?

MG: All athletes. When I was younger, I



3A

4



▶ 4A

5



always had posters all over my room of Olympic athletes. I've always wanted to go to the Olympics -- that's my dream. Chris Everet was a big hero of mine as well. It's a funny thing, too, because when I was 12, I saw Lynn Adams play for the first time. I had my picture taken with her and she wrote on it, "Don't get too good too fast 'cause I'll be waiting". That

"The crowd gets involved. They make up songs and they have all these cheers and chants."

really inspired me. It explains a lot about being at the top. I'm sure she doesn't remember it and I've been meaning to show it to her.

Q: Do you think it's interesting that you've been so successful against Lynn on the tour

when only about ten years ago she came on the scene to challenge Heather McKay's #1 standing the same way.

MG: I try to stay away from any comparisons. I like to think that Michelle Gilman is so special and so different from anybody else.

Q: Go on.

MG: Well, I just believe it's all about being what I can be, not being like or not like someone else. I'm not happy unless I'm happy with me. In the end, it's not about who I beat, but if I've played as well as I'm capable of.

Q: Then what are your goals?

MG: Immediately to do well at the Pacific Rim games and then at the Olympic Festival. But, one day, I want to feel that I've played as well as I can as a player. That's my motivation, to be as good as I can be -- and right now I'm not even close.

Q: How can you stay motivated to improve when you blow away anyone else you play?

MG: Racquetball is a game. But it's a game I play with myself. It doesn't matter who I'm on the court with, I'm playing to see improve-

Interview

KILLSHOT

Michelle

ments in me. That's how I can be such good friends with the other players off the court.

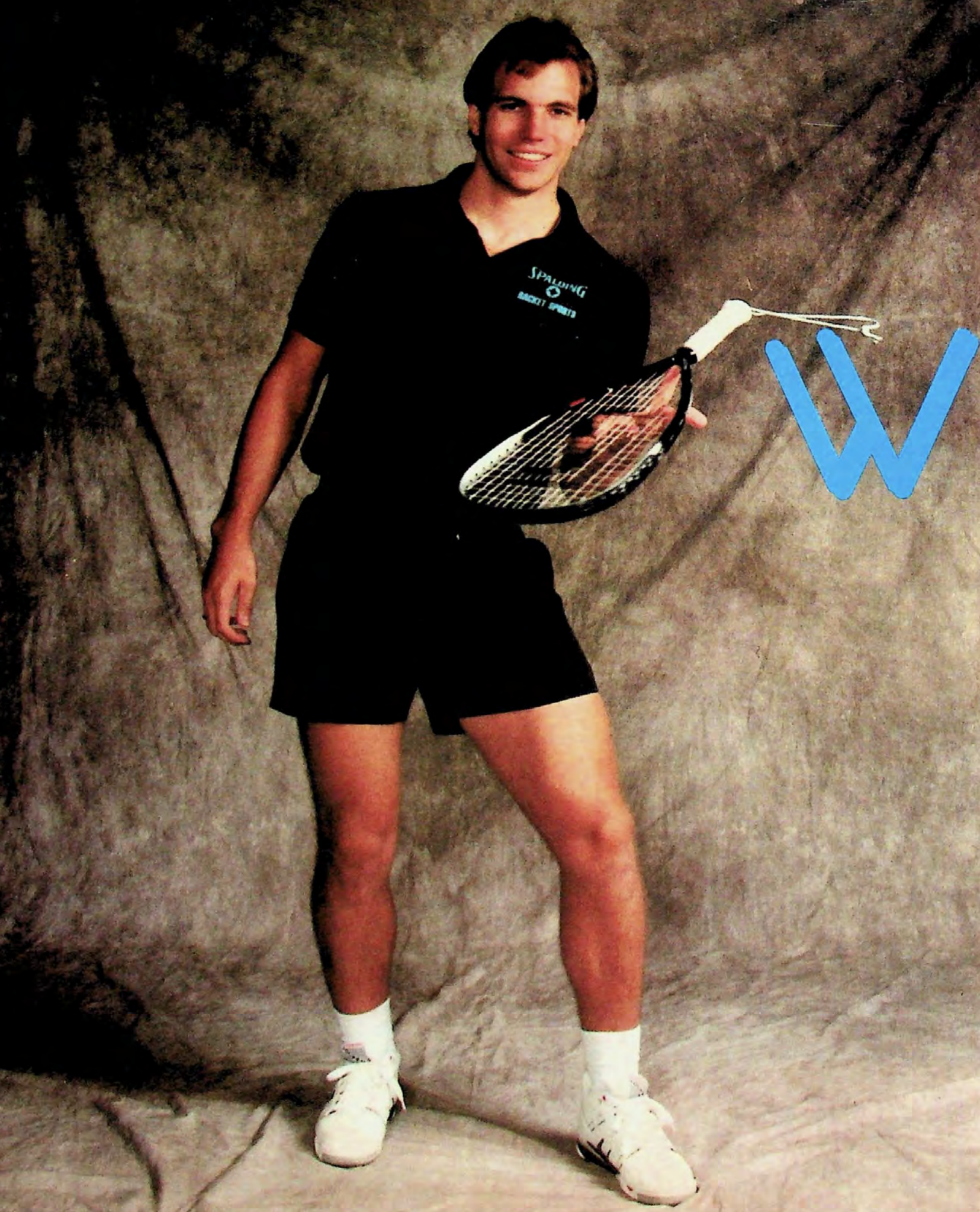
Q: That sounds really idealistic, almost like Wheaties box philosophy.

MG: It's just how I am. I decided a long time ago to get as much as I can out of life. That means going places and doing things, but, mostly being happy with myself. That's how I know if I'm successful, if I'm happy with me. I've got a long way to go to be as good as I can be as a player. But, I'm happy with me right now.

Q: What next?

MG: Play some racquetball, what else?





SPALDING
RACKET SPORTS

W

The guy loves racquetball. The guy also loves to win. Does he have textbook form? Well, no. Has he had all the best training and instruction? I guess not. Does he hit the ball harder than anyone else in the game? Sorry, but no. Well then, what's he doing at the top?

Who's Mike Ray?

by Steve Quertermous

There he was at the Downtown YMCA in Houston at the AARA National tournament. He wasn't playing -- just watching and visiting, and obviously enjoying the atmosphere of the huge event. Why was the #1 ranked professional player on the MPRA tour watching the amateur tournament? Because he loves

"He is of tremendous value to the tour. His demeanor is exceptional and one the MPRA wants to promote." Hank Marcus

the game. Throughout the tournament Mike could be spotted, the ever present smile on his boyish face, talking with various players and getting signatures on his poster of the U.S. National team. Always in his hand was the oversize Spalding racquet that was the subject of much of the conversation.

Mike Ray is one of those guys that puts people at ease immediately. Whether it's kids asking for his signature on a tournament ball

or players asking advice, he is quickly accommodating with an easy going nature that people warm to easily. In short, he is a crowd pleaser. Hank Marcus, MPRA Commissioner says, "Mike carries himself off court as well as he does on court. He is of tremendous value to the tour. His demeanor is exceptional and one the MPRA wants to promote."

As a kid, Ray played all the usual team sports -- baseball, football, and basketball. But as a student at a large school, he was lost in the crowd of athletic hopefuls. What drew him to racquetball? "It was the individuality of it," he says, "I had played all the team sports."

In May of 1977, just after turning fourteen,



Mike Ray signing autographs. Kids seem to warm up quickly to his laid-back, easy going nature.

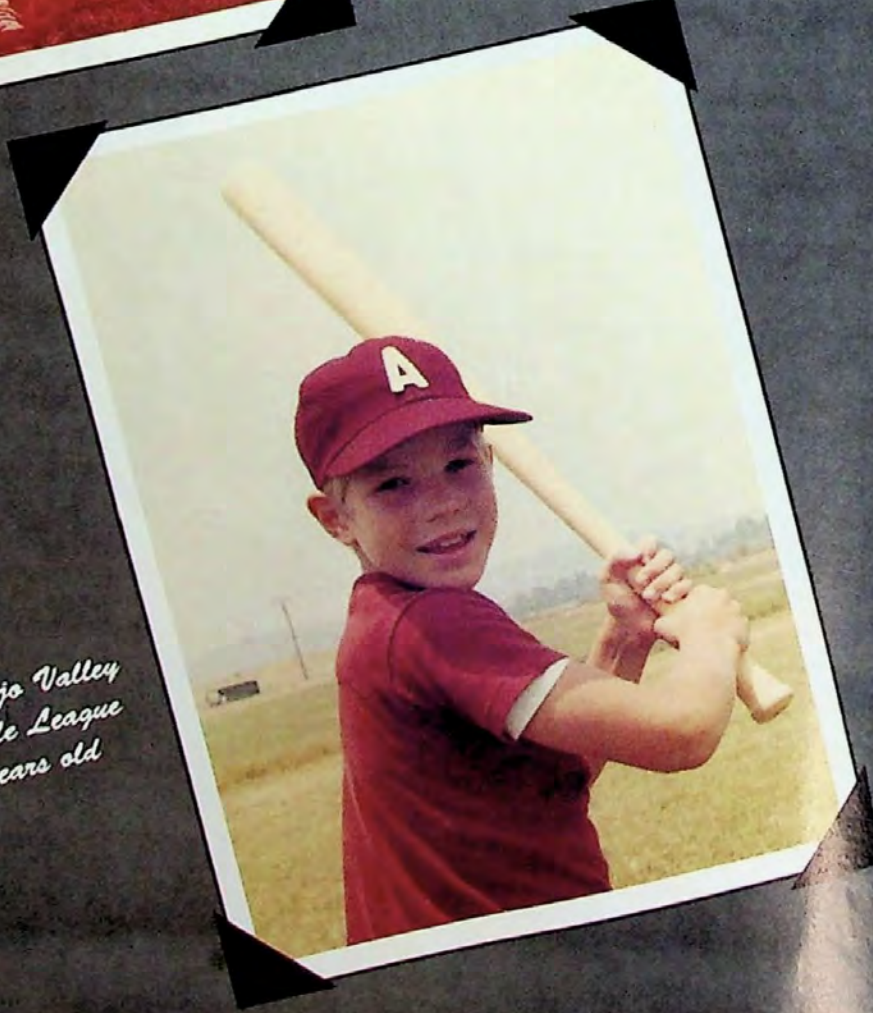


1977
Marietta, Georgia



Summer 79
Tucson, Arizona
with Racquetball gear

Memories



1971
Conejo Valley
Little League
8 years old



Ray's family joined a club in Marietta, Georgia through a corporate membership. By playing and watching other players at the club he improved and developed his own style of play. By the time he was seventeen, Ray had won the Georgia State Racquetball Championship.

His list of tournament victories is impressive and has continued to grow at a steady rate over the years until he joined the MPRA tour.

Watching Mike Ray in action is an educa-

"Anybody can beat you. As soon as you say no one can, that's when you get beat."

tion in itself. The big southpaw is deceptively quick -- covering the whole expanse of the court in a manner that appears effortless, his reflexes seemingly in control of the game. He hits the ball consistently hard but he isn't

known for his incredible power. Hank Marcus describes it this way, "Mike's play is contrary to racquetball's trend of the '80's and '90's power game. Ray defies that style and defeats power players with court position and ceiling balls."

How does Mike Ray describe his style of play? "Control." Control is a good description. When he is on the court, he seems to be in control at all times, mixing a variety of high percentage offensive shots with incredible defensive returns on shots appearing impossible to return.

Ray also attributes his success to a reliance on working on "good basics." He says, "My game style will lead to a long career. I don't rely on diving and foot speed. The big power serve didn't help me to be #1. I love to play. I hate to lose." He also possesses tremendous concentration. Ray's ability to stay focused throughout a tough match keeps him sharp. Following rallies he almost always looks to his racquet strings, testing and touching them, focusing intently as if seeking approval for the last shot.

Intense concentration and determined presence on court give way to the off court Ray. Laid back and personable, he will dis-

Opposite page: Mike's early athletic years. He played all the usual childhood team sports but was drawn to racquetball by the individuality of the sport. Above: Mike on a typical day at work. Below: Getting a hug from wife Holly following a tournament win.





cuss matches and opponents at length, more as an objective observer than one with a definite vested interest. And, when he's talking racquetball, the excitement is evident in his voice as well as on his face. I guess, in the

"There are players I like to play because they are fun, and there are those that aren't fun, because they're jerks."

simplest terms, Mike Ray takes the game of racquetball very seriously, but he doesn't take himself too seriously at all. In fact, one of his trademarks has been a tee-shirt he gives away at clinics that announces "Who's Mike Ray?" He seems to accept his anonymity at the top of

the sport.

Other players on the tour seem to respect his status and admire his court sense, even to the point of asking how he plays certain tough opponents.

Ray also depends on "good stroke mechanics and a consistent stroke" that countless hours on the hardwood have honed to a fine edge. What are his weaknesses? He smiles, "Don't have any."

A controlled game of high percentage shots and intense concentration combined with quickness and good mechanics make Ray a formidable opponent. Who does he fear? "I don't think I fear anybody in the sense of fear of losing. There are players I like to play because they are fun and there are those that aren't fun, because they're jerks. Anybody can beat you. As soon as you say no one can, that's when you get beat. I'm afraid to play everyone."

Ray sees things changing and growing in racquetball today. He says things are becoming "a lot more organized; it's a more credible

sport and it's getting more respect. More people have heard of or even played the game."

What are Mike Ray's plans and objectives for the future? "Mike Ray being #1 forever," he jokes. But when pressed he repeats the statement in a more serious way. "Trying to continue to be number one would be an objective. I'd also like to get very involved with a club. Owning a club is a goal."

Whether he can maintain the #1 spot in the MPRA rankings forever remains to be seen. But it's a certainty that Mike Ray is making a definite impact on the world of racquetball, both as an impressive on court warrior and as an admirable off court spokesman. And, you can be sure that he is going to be around the sport for many years to come, always a positive force and forever a promoter of the game. It won't be long until they quit asking, "Who's Mike Ray?"

Mike Ray's Racquetball Highlights

1977

Began playing racquetball at age 14

1980

Georgia State Champion

1981

Georgia State Champion

1982

United States Racquetball Association
Champion

1984

DP Leach National Amateur Champion

1985

Voted "Most Improved Player" on Pro
Tour

1986

Ranked in Top Ten for the First Time
by Racquet Manufacturers Association

1987

Back Injury, Dropped from #6 to #14 in
Rankings

1989

Won City Fed Grand Nationals
Ranked #4

1990

Ranked #1 for the First Time
Won TransCostal Grand Nationals
Ended Season Ranked #2
Won MPRA National Doubles Title
(with Ruben Gonzalez)
Began 90-91 season ranked #1
Won Riverside Pro Stop

1991

Began Year Ranked #1
Finished Second, Pittsburgh Pro Stop
Finished Second, TransCostal Grand
Nationals
Ended Season Ranked #1

While You Were Out...

A look at what's been happening this past season in the WPR

Beginning nearly four months later than last season, this year's WPR tour opened with a series of five back to back tournaments designed to test each player's physical and intellectual limits. Never in the organization's twelve year touring history has the schedule been so grueling or the play so explosive.

While many questioned the wisdom of beginning play so late in the winter, the benefits became clear from the outset at Ektelon's Winter Classic season opener. With the Autumn months open to train, probably the best conditioned and most well prepared combatants descended upon Santa Ana to wage all out war.

There were few surprises in the draw other

than the absence of #9 ranked Dottie Fischl and #12 ranked Sue MacTaggart. MacTaggart would, in fact, choose to sit out the rest of this year's tour as well. An enthusiastic crowd was rewarded for its patience in awaiting this event with some extremely intense early play by the favorites. Racquetball World's own club pro, Toni Bevelock, was greeted with all the enthusiasm due a home town favorite. As play continued into quarter-final action, a pattern quickly developed that would hold fast throughout this series.

Lynn Adams, Michelle Gilman, and Caryn McKinney, way in front of the field in ranking points, made it with little difficulty. Hot on their heels were Toni Bevelock, Kaye Kuhfeld, and Malia Bailey. Jackie Paraiso made quarter finals as well in each tour stop except Alaska where she did not play. Baltimore's Lynn Coburn finished the field of eight in Santa Ana, however it proved to be a spot she would share in upcoming events with former #3 ranked Marci Drexler.

Battling for top money this time would be crowd pleasing arch-rivals Lynn Adams and Caryn McKinney. But, after dispatching hard hitting Michelle Gilman in the semi's, McKinney was unable to sustain the offensive pressure against Adams. With a brilliant stand in the finals that included a first game win and close losses in the second and third, McKinney fell with only two points in the fourth. She returned to Atlanta with second

place prize money and her best showing for the season.

With only a week to rest, a full field turned out in Atlanta for the Pizza Hut Challenge eager for another shot at the top spots. Again, the seven quarter finalists secured their positions leaving the remaining spot for former tour hot shot, Marci Drexler. Even with knee surgery and a brace, Drexler appeared just as fast, just as strong, and maybe even more intense (is that possible?).

On her way to the finals Adams found Atlanta's favorite, Caryn McKinney hungry for revenge after their previous meeting. In the best match of the tournament Adams came from a two game deficit to take the tie breaker 11-7 but had to work much too hard at the semi's to leave anything for the finals. Gilman showed no mercy the following afternoon. She took the opening event of the Penn Pro Series and the Diet Pepsi Triple Crown in three straight and her easiest victory over Adams to date.

At the second event in the Penn series, St Louis' Olive Garden Pro Am, it was last season's "Most Improved" Lynn Coburn who, for the second time, grabbed the open position in the quarters. Again the WPR's invincible seven held fast to their spots as if defying any upset attempts. Home to the top stars of the men's pro tour throughout the seventies, the Jewish Community Center crowd got their share of excitement at the tour stop. (Yes, that was Marty Hogan's mom at the desk on the way to the courts.) What the crowd got was a battle tested field still very intense, midway through a season that would have crushed anyone less than a 100% pro-



Charlie Palek

Racquetball legend Lynn Adams has finished seven seasons as the WPR #1 player



Last year's "most improved", Lynn Coburn has begun her assault on "Top 8" positioning.

Coburn. In a four game upset of WPRA President, Chris Evon, Chicago's Sandy Robson found herself in her first quarter final this season. But in the end, U.S. National team star Michelle Gilman overpowered Adams for top money in another five game nail biter.

With only one day to travel to Philadelphia, players began arriving at the second jewel of the Diet Pepsi Triple Crown and the fourth event of the Penn Pro series with an amazing level of intensity. It was Drexler over Coburn in five games in their first head-to-head match-up to see who would round out the field of eight for the quarters. Again, the other top seven refused to give any ground. But it was an injury and Drexler's intensity that led to the undoing of #1 seed Michelle Gilman in Philly. Virginia's Malia Bailey took out Drexler for a chance at Adams in the final but fell in four to Adams' unyielding consistency.

With five tour stops behind them, seven players have established themselves as the ones to beat. However, as many of the newer players on the tour gain experience and confidence, they make excellent candidates for

upsets. And, not to be ruled out are last year's quarter final regulars, Molly O'Brien, Dottie Fischl, and Chris Evon, setting the stage for an "anything can happen" tournament in San Francisco.

Consistent top finishes have kept former National champ Caryn McKinney in the top-3.



Charlie Palek

WPRA Pro Stops



Meanwhile, Back at the ranch...

What's been going
on in the MPRA
this season

From the start of the 1990-91 MPRA Tour it was clear that this would be a season of surprises. First, the players were informed they would no longer have the luxury of a second serve. That is, any long, short, or three-wall serve would result in a side out. Stockton, California would host the first stop in a season of upsets. So surprising was the turn of events both on and off the court that one of the most frequently spoken phrases during the rest of the tour was "Remember in Stockton..."

Last season's big shooter and #1 seed, Mike Ray, was stopped cold in the second round of play by #16 Gerry Price. After his four game upset, Price went on to win in the quarters as well, then fell to California's Dave Johnson in the semi's. Price was never to be seen or heard from again for the remainder of the season.

Likewise #2 seed Hawaiian power hitter

Egan Inoue suffered a similar fate at the hands of #15 ranked Texan Drew Kachtik. With sights set on bigger targets, however, Kachtik refused to stop there. The #6 seed, Andy Roberts, and #7 Dan Obremski were excused before the quarters as well. Memphis' Roberts lost a grueling five-game roller coaster to rising star and Ektelon teammate Tim Doyle. Then, in a battle of the gentle giants, the Stockton crowd was treated to a four-game extravaganza of blasting forehands and flexing biceps as Pennsylvania's two time world champ Obremski fell to California's Brian Hawkes.

After getting by Doyle in the quarters in five games of sheer determination, Kachtik would face a fit and ready Ruben Gonzalez in the semi's. In five ultra-close games ending in a 13-11 Super Tie-Breaker, Kachtik out-dived #3 seed Gonzalez, allowing the crowd to settle back from the edge of their seats where they'd spent most of the tournament.

In his fourth five-game match of the tournament, Kachtik was able to leave Johnson with only second place prize money. His determination in this

tournament and first pro win would finally force fans to learn to pronounce his last name.

The second stop of the tour in Salem, Oregon saw the return of racquetball legend Mike Yellen. Though having to bow out after a second round four-game loss to Mr. Fitness Dan Obremski, Yellen showed Oregon fans he was still hot enough to hold his own on the pro tour.

In the quarters, #1 seed Mike Ray couldn't overcome Doyle's amazing speed-of-light serve and lost in four. The season's second Gonzalez-Hawkes match-up proved that Ruben clearly had Brian's number. Kachtik and Johnson replayed the previous event's final, again with Kachtik on top after five. The last quarterfinal looked more like a promo for Muscle & Fitness as current world champ Inoue eliminated Obremski 11-10, 11-10, 11-10.

Inoue and Doyle easily blasted their way past Kachtik and Gonzalez respectively in three games each. OK, everybody knows how to play a power hitter, right? Prepare to skin your knees returning serves, then get them into rallies leaving no time for set-ups and you pray for an extremely slow front wall. But, what do the two hardest hitters/photon servers do when they play each other? Doyle won in five in one of the best matches of the season. If you could follow the ball at hyper speed through the smoke, sweat, and grinding muscle enough to describe exactly what either player did --this space is yours next month. So, began Doyle's assault on the top.

Before we take a look at Chicago's Halloween pro-am, you first have to understand the magic at work here. First, we all know Dave Negrete from his appearances on the pro tour and "America's Most Wanted" camps.



Charlie Palek

Two-time AARA National champ, Tim Doyle, surprised everyone by winning the second stop of the MPRA season.

But, in Chicago, there are more Negrete brothers coming from all directions than I could easily count. In addition, one of them surely must be named Rumpelstiltskin Negrete to have woven enough straw into gold to fund two (count 'em 2) pro stops this year. Combine this with a hometown crowd that makes professional wrestling look wimpy plus the fact that it's All Hallows Eve and you can imagine the feel of this tournament.

Enter Marty Hogan and Cliff Swain. Hogan's first appearance on a tour where "You don't know where I'll be popping up" had fans in a frenzy. Swain, touted by many as the best ever to swing the short racquet, returned for this one time engagement on his way to shake up the tennis world. However, neither had the stuff to get very far this time. Hogan, who had spent far too much time away from the court lately was easily taken-out in three by Ohio super promoter Doug Ganim. Swain, at least, made it to round two before falling to Yellen, 11-10, 11-3, 11-2.

The rest of the quarters read as you might expect: Ray, Gonzalez, Obremski, Inoue, Doyle, Roberts, Sweeney -- Sweeney!? I didn't remember that name but the crowd certainly did. In his first pro stop this year the Chicago homeboy looked very fast on the court. With



a strong season underway at Southwest Missouri State University, Tim Sweeney was ready to slay some dragons in the pro ranks. (Sweeney went on to win this year's Intercollegiate and lead the SMSU team to victory over sixteen-year reigning champs, Memphis State.)

The Chicago fans loved it. They saw their boy go dive-for-dive with the amazing, at any age, Gonzalez and come out on top. After

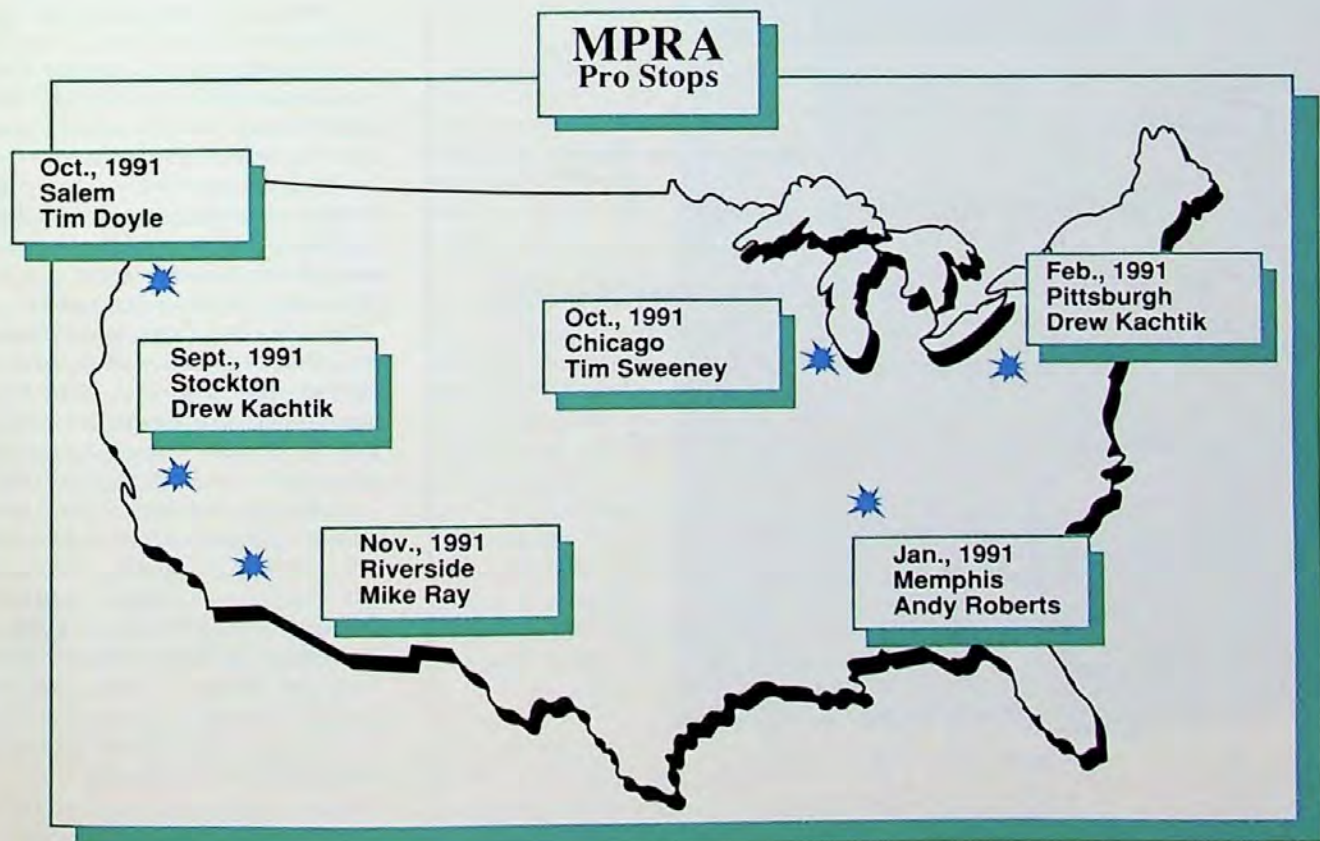
Southwest Missouri State's Tim Sweeney, 1991 Intercollegiate champ, won the third stop on the MPRA tour this season. He is currently ranked #12.

dispatching Roberts in the semi's, Inoue would face Sweeney with confidence, only to walk away shaking his head in disbelief at Sweeney's win in four.

As the players began arriving at Riverside, California, in November, they found a couple of surprises in the draw. For the first time this season, Ray did not hold the #1 position. Egan Inoue's showing in the last two events pushed him past Ray in the standings. The second item of interest was the one time appearance of Bret Harnett.

In a good showing, Harnett defeated Florida's Woody Clouse in the quarters, only to lose to a very hungry Ray in the semi's. Reversing Oregon's results in other quarterfinals play, it was Obremski over Inoue in another of this year's fitness classics. Yellen stopped Chicago's Jack Newman as he made his best effort so far in the season. In the lower bracket, on his way to Harnett, Ray kept Hawkes enough off balance to take the win.

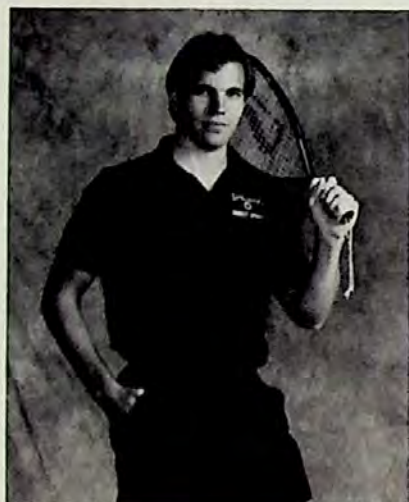
Ray had little trouble from Obremski in



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the final, going 11-2-11-4, 11-2. Riverside was a desperately needed win for Ray, once again allowing him to occupy the #1 spot at the next stop.

Memphis began early in preparing for its first pro stop and it showed. Players found themselves in the midst of a crowd of racquetball-hungry Southerners. On hand for play were all the expected names, plus a returning (and this time ready) Marty Hogan, a handful of Memphis State's best, and the familiar face of Greg Peck. In fact, the Peck-Hogan match-up in the round of 32 was a reminder of days gone by, and a very exciting five-game comeback for Hogan.

In the quarters, Hogan showed what he was made of in a four game win over Ray. Homecourt favorite Roberts took out Gonzalez in five in a crowd thriller. Gonzalez may just be the only player on the tour that every hometown wants to adopt. Fans everywhere think he's a god and are sure to let him know it. Obremski made it past Yellen in five to play Inoue for their third match-up after Inoue (the E in E-Force) got by Dave Johnson in a tough five.

The resulting Roberts-Obremski final went right down to the wire with a 12-10 Roberts win in the Super Tie Breaker. In the second home favorite win of the season, Roberts delighted a very vocal Memphis crowd.

Heading into Pittsburgh, the logical assumption (based on how the season had gone so far) was that home favorite Dan Obremski would take the cash and delight the crowd, right? Wrong. The only trend for this season was that there were no trends.

Obremski lost to Doyle in the quarters. Hogan repeated his previous accomplishment by defeating Inoue to again reach the semi's. Kachtik (We knew we would hear from him again) took out Gonzalez, and Ray defeated Yellen. The Ray-Doyle semi, however, took its toll on both players. Ray would have to recover from a narrow 13-11 Super Tie Breaker win over Doyle to face a red-hot Kachtik. It didn't happen. Kachtik took his second pro stop, 9-11, 11-10, 11-10, 11-10.

So what are we left with? There are no sure things. Anybody can beat anybody. The new one serve rule is here to stay. Power game is best -- wait, no, dive/get-to game is best -- wait, no, control/consistent game is best. Sometimes it's all so confusing. At any rate, watch the names you know -- and some you may not. Watch for upsets when you would never expect them. Watch for the best pro racquetball you've ever seen.

.....
STRANDEMO
ON RACQUETBALL
.....

A Heart to Heart Talk

**Steve Strandemo speaks candidly
about the lessons he's learned
from 20 years of blood, sweat and
tears on the court**

I want to take this opportunity to thank the publishers of **KILLSHOT** magazine for giving me the opportunity to express my views of racquetball instruction. Over the next few months, many readers may find the information presented controversial because its content may differ from what they have heard or been taught. This is a sensitive area to enter because the principles of how this game should be played will be challenged.

As a professional player and an instructor for the last twenty years, I have had the opportunity to work with hundreds of players on their racquetball games. In virtually every teaching situation I encounter, I am faced with the same frustration among the players.

Initially, my role as an instructor is difficult because the information I need to convey to the players is usually opposite to what they feel they need to learn. I spend the first six hours of every camp convincing and explaining the limitations of the principles that every participant comes with. Once the group starts to accept these mental changes and tries to incorporate them into their play, my task becomes much easier and their play becomes much better.

One of the biggest frustrations that the players share is their lack of sound knowledge about racquetball principles. This sport holds certain ideas in respect to how the game is played. But, in reality, these principles don't allow the player to build a solid foundation to improve. Players will then plateau at a certain level and frustration sets in. When the frustration becomes so great, the player either puts his racquet away or seeks professional instruction.

I am met every week with a new group of players that are so frustrated with their lack of improvement and don't know why. And, it is not their fault!

The problem has stemmed from the industry as a whole. This sport, unlike other sports, has let the players go out and fend for them-



selves. The associations that have led racquetball, the playing professionals, the teaching professionals, the club owners, the magazine publishers, and the racquet manufacturers, can share the blame in getting this sport to its current level of inconsistency in racquetball instruction.

I can easily relate to this situation. In 1971 and 1972, the first two years of my racquetball career, I was trying to improve and was experiencing the same frustrations that all players have experienced up to the present time. I would look to the higher level player for advice; I would read instructional articles; I would go to tournaments and watch the better players and try to emulate their game. But, there was never any thorough explanations of how the whole puzzle should fit together. Everyone would explain certain pieces, but no one could tell me how to put the complete game together. Until the total game of serving, returning serve, center court play, left-up shots, ceiling balls, and the strategy of how to play was objectively explained, discussed, analyzed and incorporated, I could never put the puzzle together.

Fortunately, I had a chance to learn from one of the greatest minds that have ever played the game -- Charlie Brumfield. When I was striving to be one of the best players, as others were, we were a bunch of illiterates playing with a genius. Charlie had figured out how to play the game within its basic sound fundamentals. We were still trying to get every shot, kill every ball, serve an ace every time, and hit for the perfect winner. He had figured out the game in its simplest form with diversified serves, playing off of left-up shots, playing off of the percentages, and hitting in an enlarged offensive low zone area.

I first adopted those principles of play and then purchased a video camera. I studied Brumfield and other top players hours-on-end, so that I could understand the complete system in my mind. Honestly, for the last twenty years, I have continued to study the realities of racquetball matches. I have interpreted and conveyed that information to players at camp every year thereafter. As long as I do camps, if it be for one more year or ten more years, I will continue to convey the same realistic fundamentals that are the foun-

dation of any player's game.

In all the years that I have done camps, I have yet to see a player come who has figured out the puzzle. Most of the players who attend my instructional sessions are seeking that one important pointer or shot that will make a significant impact on their game. When, in reality, the only thing their game needs is the incorporation of solid fundamentals.

The structure of this sport has led the player to believe that the important facets of the game are: how low you can hit the ball, how many kill shots you can make, how many aces you can serve, how hard you can hit, how many winners you can dig-up, and how spectacular the gets can be. Racquetball has stressed all of these unrealistic areas for the player to concentrate his efforts.

If you try to improve your game via these facets, it will lead you down an irrational path. It will lead you down a path of frustration. Once you reach your natural playing level you may never be able to make that significant jump to a higher level of play.

Unfortunately, many articles that I have read are written for the sake of exposure with little value given to the credibility of the information given.

It doesn't matter if it is 1971, 1981, or currently, 1991. At all the camps I have taught, I could interchange the players within all these years and it would still be the same problem. I can guarantee that at a camp that is going to happen in the year 2000, the same frustrations, the same misconceptions will still exist and persist unless these players can be reached and explained a solid, consistent way to play racquetball, where you can avoid this immense frustration level.

The reasons why players have not been taught the sound fundamentals is two-fold. One, the top players and instructors have not studied the sport enough to teach it. And two, the club owners have left their racquetball clientele unattended in their facility to fend for themselves.

Just because a player can play well, perhaps have an equipment contract, or a professional contract, or whatever status he or she may have acquired, does not mean that he under-

stands the sport and can convey it to the next person along the line. To instruct properly is very hard work. To teach correctly, you need to know how the puzzle fits together very well. If an instructor doesn't, he will be afraid to teach the complete game, because he, as an instructor, cannot answer all the questions.

The club owner can feel responsible in this also. He was not as interested as he should have been to instruct all these players who flooded the racquetball clubs years ago. The owners left those players completely unattended in the clubs with little or no instruction. They wanted them to improve and enjoy the sport, and continue to play and fill the courts for years to come -- an impossible situation. It is very sad that hundreds of thousands of players have left the game because they have gotten frustrated because no one has helped them along the way to improve.

I can make a comparison to the growth of club aerobics. It would be the same as taking all the people who participate in an aerobics class without an instructor who can motivate, show and correct proper technique so the aerobic clientele will see positive results and continue to participate. But racquetball, right across the hall, has all these players participating, unattended by the club management, and expected to reach a level of competence, enjoyment and contentment with no support help. And, the club owners wonder why their courts are empty!

To be fair, the racquetball manufacturers can also assume their share of blame. With all the equipment players that each company supports, I have yet to find a complete program with consistent and continual instruction sessions for the contract players -- the players who are conducting clinics and exposing their products. I have yet to see any manufacturers pull their equipment players, their leaders in the racquetball community, together to help them to be better instructors.

Since I am casting blame, it is only fair that I assume my share. In 1980 I ran a series of Instructors Programs that averaged forty instructors per program. I stopped running those programs for no apparent good reason. I feel bad that I did. If I had continued those programs, I feel that I could have made a significant impact on many instructors around the country.

I know that I have sat "on the fence" for twenty years, afraid to really express my frustrations. It is time to take a stand and comment on the state of racquetball instruction. I have been consistently bothered by the number of articles that I have read over the last twenty years with misleading informa-

tion heading players down a destructive path. Those articles involve both the strategies of how to play and also the techniques of how to hit. Because we live in a democracy with the freedom of the press, players must be very critical of what they read, what they believe, and what they follow. Unfortunately, many articles that I have read are written for the sake of exposure with little value given to the credibility of the information given.

The information that I will convey in the next months comes from video footage of actual matches. It is not conceptions of how I feel you should play, but rather a realistic evaluation of actual play within the parameters of the player's ability. I welcome any questioning or disputing of these principles. If there is any player that can prove this information incorrect, I welcome his or her

comments. If this sounds strong and egotistical, I apologize. I do not mean to offend anyone in racquetball. I simply want to present the facts of racquetball to the players. They deserve that.

Over the course of the next few months I will be presenting an instructional path that you can realistically follow and conscientiously apply to your game. If you do, I promise you will experience an exciting growth in your game. You will reach a higher level of play and give yourself the opportunity to relieve the anxieties that persist with you now. As you prepare for the information, I recommend that you read with an open mind, be willing to try the ideas conveyed, even if these ideas differ from your principles. (And, they probably will)

I encourage and hope you will look for-

STRANDEMO
ON RACQUETBALL

ward to these articles. Players will come and go, racquets will change, balls will get faster, gloves will vary, but the fundamentals will never change. The best players in all levels and all age brackets will be the ones who consistently use sound fundamentals and base their games on realistic information. These players will then rise to their racquetball potential and truly enjoy their years of competition.

Steve Strandemo

Perhaps no player in the history of racquetball has played at the top-level so consistently as Steve Strandemo. When he retired in 1984, he had maintained a top-10 ranking for nearly every season since the inception of professional racquetball in 1973.

Today, Strandemo is one of the most well known instructors in the country. His famous camps and clinics have already affected thousands of players across the country and his innovative teaching methods have become standards within the sport. He has also written three books and numerous articles.



SHORT SERVES

OW!!!

(or is that WOW?!)



Malia Bailey displays a gift from fellow WPRA tour player. Yes, it is a bruise. No, it is not a target. The bruise changed color daily at the recent pro stop in Baltimore, allowing photographer Charlie Palek to photographically monitor its evolution. Why does Charlie get all the tough assignments?



Look Familiar?

When we saw Idaho's Leticia Bussell in St. Louis, we had a pretty good idea who her coach might be.



Nice Socks, Mar!

Mary Lyons models the latest in tasteful court fashion at a recent WPRF tournament. The fish story goes..., nah.

Handy Andy

Andy Roberts catches a ball as he referees a pro match in Chicago. Or, is it Andy Roberts feeding the dolphins at Sea World? Maybe we got the photos mixed up.



...and returns

"Do you have that power, Ruben?"

-Tim Sweeney, SMSU

"What's the fine to just hit him one time, Hank?"

-Brian Hawkes to Commissioner Hank Marcus

"I keep forgetting you're from the magazine. I'm going to have to watch what I say."

-Kaye Kuhfeld

"This is off the record, but..."

-The list is too long

"Yes, I have that power. I'm the referee."

-Ruben Gonzalez

All Pressed Up And No Place To Go

(or Reiffer Madness)

No, this is not a shot from the Bolshoi Ballet. But it does raise some interesting questions. Who is that brave man clutching the wall for dear life as Memphis State's #1 player, Scott Reiff prepares to return a backhand? Why does Reiff seem more intent on pulverizing his opponent than returning the ball? Send us your ideas on who you think the other player is. We know (and you don't).





STORMIN' NEWMAN!

Chicago is Jack's kind of town.

Jack Newman pleased his hometown crowd as he stormed through the windy city in April and captured the MPRA pro-stop. The tournament was marked by upsets and surprises as Newman, seeded twelfth prior to the event, rolled over fifth-seed Ruben Gonzalez, eighth-seed Marty Hogan, and sixth-seed Tim Doyle in his efforts to seize the Negrete Open.

Number one seed Drew Kachtik fell in the

second round to Doug Ganim and number four seed Dan Obremski suffered a similar fate from another home town player, Tim Sweeney. Canada's Mike Ceresia made it past hard-hitting Egan Inoue in the same round.

The tournament seemed to take on an "anything can happen" air as some of the seeded players fell by the wayside. The players

played the court as well as each other allowing for errant bounces from the backwall glass, the chipped front wall and the court-entrance door. The door was adjusted slightly by the foot of Marty Hogan in the passion of an after-rally expression of frustration. From that point in the tournament whenever a player had difficulty entering or exiting the court or the ball took a bad bounce some of the fans would call out, "Thanks, Marty!"

The Woodfield Racquet Club in suburban Schaumburg hosted the tourney and drew a steady if sometimes unenthusiastic crowd on a cool, breezy weekend. The crowd was truly behind the Chicago area players and encouraged them throughout the competition. The long walk back through the tennis courts to the racquetball section of the club set the atmosphere for the tournament and patience was thinning even early in the matches.

After an appeal in his match against Dan Obremski, Tim Sweeney looked at the line judges and said, "You're all a



Chicago's Jack Newman returns a shot.

Jack Newman

3-11, 9-11, 11-10, 11-7, 11-7

Tim Doyle

SEMIS

Newman d. Hogan

7-11, 11-4, 11-7, 11-3

Doyle d. Ray

11-4, 11-5, 6-11, 2-11, 11-8

QUARTERS

Hogan d. Ganim

11-4, 10-11, 11-0, 5-11, 11-3

Newman d. Sweeney

11-10, 11-6, 11-7

Doyle d. Ceresia

9-11, 9-11, 11-2, 11-9, 11-7

Ray d. Roberts

11-8, 9-11, 11-7, 2-11, 11-2

SIXTEENS

Ganim d. Kachtik

11-3, 8-11, 11-6, 6-11, 11-9

Hogan d. Yellen

11-7, 8-11, 9-11, 11-4, 11-5

Newman d. Gonzalez

11-7, 9-11, 11-6, 11-7

Sweeney d. Obremski

11-10, 11-9, 9-11, 11-7

Ceresia d. Inoue

10-11, 11-10, 11-2, 8-11, 11-3

Doyle d. O'Neil

11-9, 11-10, 11-6

Roberts d. Hawkes

11-6, 11-4, 11-8

Ray d. Sable

11-0, 11-8, 7-11, 11-6



think of that?" He then walked over to opponent Mike Yellen and asked "What did you think of that?" Evidently the crowd liked it better than Yellen did.

When the dust cleared going into the semifinals the racquet manufacturers were well rep-

resented. Mike Ray, playing for Spalding went up against Tim Doyle and his Ektelon racquet; Marty Hogan with his namesake Pro-Kennex equipment faced Jack Newman who was playing with a bigger-than-ever oversized Head racquet.

This should be a good psychological boost for Newman as he prepares for the Nationals in Seattle and an appropriate victory in a season that has smiled on hometown favorites.



Opposite page, clockwise from top: Marty Hogan goes horizontal on a shot down the line against Ohio's Doug Ganim. Californian Tim Doyle sets up for a backhand shot off the back wall. Jack Newman, happy with a rally.

Above, clockwise from top left: Kim Roberts (Mrs. Andy) intently watches quarterfinal action. Newman's match. MPRA #7 Andy Roberts levitates as Mike Ray returns. Mike Ceresia makes a point.



Bay City Rollout

Michelle trollies to the top in San Fran battle

As the WPRA season starts winding down, the tension and excitement is heating up. The women played their sixth event in San Francisco at the What A Racquet Athletic Club in April.

The California Open, in its second year,

played host to the showdown of the season. Lynn Adams and Michelle Gilman paired off once again in the finals with the outcome possibly determining the fate of each player's year end ranking.

Coming into the event, Adams was high

off a win in Philadelphia, while Gilman was nursing the wound of a quarter-finals upset to Marci Drexler. Adams took over the #1 spot, Gilman dropped down to #2. If Adams could win the San Fran tourney, she could lock in the #1 ranking for the season. Gilman had to win if she wanted a shot at the #1 ranking. With the stage set both players dug in their heels, and the match started at an intense level of play.

the three opening points with conviction. She skipped a shot from a great set-up that would have been point 4. That was all the daylight Gilman needed. She controlled the game with a brilliant display of crisp down-the-line kills, powerful serves, and perfect pinches.

Game 4: Gilman 11-0

Gilman took Adams out of the game, keeping the pressure on with spectacular shots. Adams' set ups were either missed or left up for Gilman to capitalize on.

Gilman's win set up the scenario of the two women battling for the #1 position at the WPRA Nationals in Baltimore. The one finishing furthest in the tournament would be #1 in the rankings for the season.

Michelle Gilman

8-11, 11-8, 11-3, 11-0

Lynn Adams

SEMIS

Gilman d. Bailey

11-1, 11-2, 11-2

Adams d. McKinney

11-5, 11-9, 11-4

QUARTERS

Adams d. Bevelock

11-9, 5-11, 7-11, 11-5, 11-1

McKinney d. Paraiso

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

Bailey d. Lynch

11-9, 11-3, 11-7

Gilman d. Drexler

10-11, 11-3, 9-11, 11-1, 11-9

SIXTEENS

Adams d. O'Brien

11-7, 11-0, 11-5

Bevelock d. Risch

11-6, 11-5, 11-1

Paraiso d. Evon

11-1, 11-3, 11-7

McKinney d. Fischl

8-11, 11-9, 11-6, 9-11, 11-1

Bailey d. Levine

11-9, 11-3, 11-7

Lynch d. Dec-Jolly

11-10, 11-4, 1-11, 5-11, 12-10

Drexler d. Robson

11-5, 11-5, 11-7

Gilman d. Marriott

11-2, 11-4, 11-1

Game 1: Adams 11-8

The opening game was close, the scoring point-by-point with no big leads at any time. Gilman played her normal power game, hard drives, low kills, and pinches. Adams used a combination of serve speeds and shots.

Game 2: Gilman 11-8

Again, neither player took control of the game. Each point was fought hard with numerous side-outs.

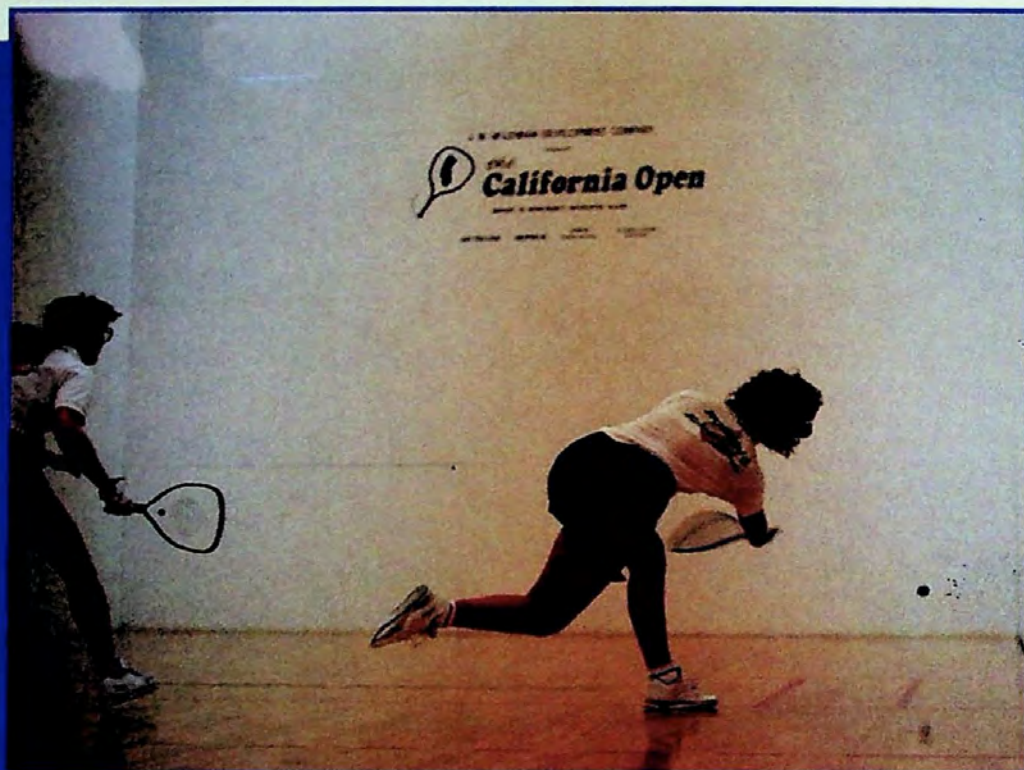
Game 3: Gilman 11-3

Adams started tough, scoring



Deja vu! Gilman and Adams in the finals.

Clinton Soo

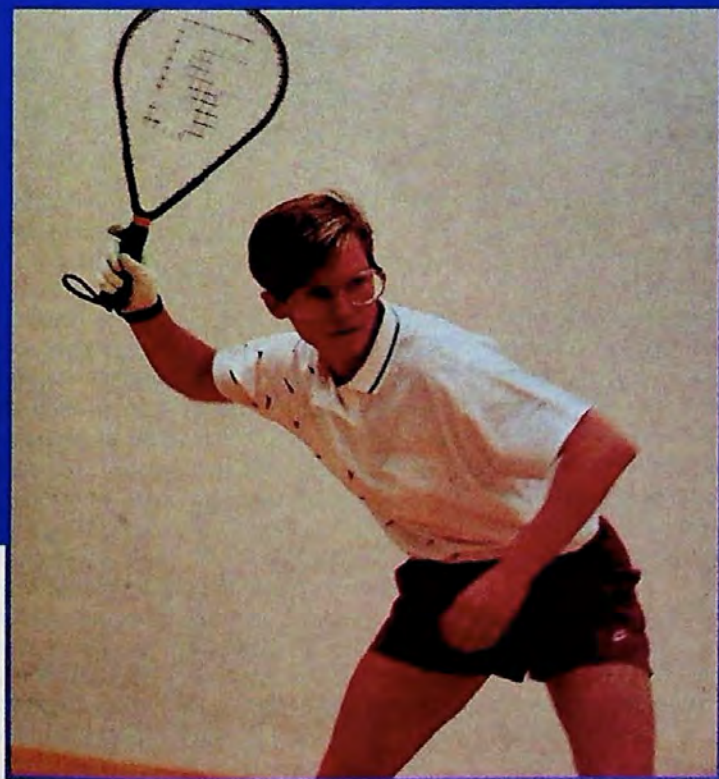


Clinton Soo

Top: Michelle Gilman in tournament form. Bottom:
Lynn Adams comes off the floor in finals action.



The crowd watches the action at the WHAT A RACQUET CLUB in suburban Colma. See any familiar faces?



Pennsylvania's Marcy Lynch made her only quarterfinal appearance of the season.



Becoming a regular in the quarters, San Diego's Marci Drexler proves to be as strong as ever following knee surgery.

1991 Air Force
Round Robin Thriller



AIR BALL!!!

BY RALPH KUSCHE

The 1991 Air Force Racquetball Championships were held at the Pope AFB, North Carolina fitness center from May 6-10. Players arrived from around the globe including locations in Germany, Japan, and Korea as well as throughout the United States. A significant departure from previous years was the selection of players by "resume". Each player had to submit an Air Force form 303 which was reviewed by the respectable commands and then forwarded to the Air Force morale, Welfare and Recreation Center at Randolph AFB, Texas. A total of 27 players were chosen to compete.

The major change from previous years was the absence of a team competition. Prior to this year, players competed for their command as well as themselves. Thus, the Military Airlift Command team was unable to defend last years on point victory over the United States Air Forces in Europe team. This contributed to a decreased intensity of play.

The other change for this year was the use of a round robin play format. This was necessitated by the large decrease in the number of people playing. Last year saw 80 competitors in a double elimination format. One loss did not put a player into a "must" win situation. The round robin format meant that tie-breaker rules would be used. These became important to the men's senior division. The saying "The more things change, the more they stay the same" applied. In 1980, the first year of the competition, three of the four men's open players were again playing this year and competing well.

In the men's open division, the move of five time Air Force and three time Interservice champion Lou Souther of Rhein-Main, Germany to the men's seniors left a gap for players to fill. Ten men competed for four available spots at the Interservice. Defending champion Duane Stevens of Davis-Monthan, Arizona showed some rustiness to this game due to being deployed in support of Desert

Storm. On the second day, he played for the first time in three years, a tie-breaker. His experience, court coverage and ability to kill the ball from all areas of the court provided an easy tie-break victory over Chris Baca of Dyess, Texas. Another player who started slowly was Frank Toney of MacDill, Florida. He won his first match in an 11-10 tie-breaker after being down 8-10. He called a time-out at that point and promptly scored the three points needed to close out the match. He continued to struggle yet won by taking two more tie-breakers. Later rounds proved easier. Fred "Rabbit" Rogers of Kirtland, New Mexico displayed new found confidence and a new racquet. Sponsored by E-Force and playing with the "Hammer", as opposed to his old standard sized frame, he was able to really power the ball. Playing the serve and shoot style produced numerous booming rollouts but also produced errors. Nicknamed "Rabbit" because of his footspeed, he was able to track down nearly everything. Chris

Baca was a newcomer to the Air Force team. Using a controlled power game, he provided the biggest news with his tie-breaker match against Stevens and his decisive victory over Rich Eisemann of Osan, Korea in an 11-10 tie-break to nail down the fourth and final men's open position.

In the men's seniors, Air Force racquetball legend Lou Souther continued his winning ways. He went through the double round robin with only a loss to defending Air Force and Interservice champion Gene Couch of Patrick, Florida. In the double round format everyone played the other twice. After losing the first time to Gene Couch, Al Stock of Ramstein, Germany played an inspired match the second time and won decisively in an 11-2 tie-breaker. This victory created a situation where these three players could

have had a three-way tie for overall match record. Lou Souther removed all doubt by defeating Stock in straight games.

In men's masters, defending Air Force and Interservice champion Ton Kimbrough of Eglin, Florida went without a loss. Newcomer Fred Jenkins of Scott, Illinois finished second.

In women's open play, Barb Faulkenberry proved her usual unstoppable self by going without a loss. Barb has won numerous Air Force and Interservice titles and was not significantly challenged. Second place went to Laura Patterson of Andrews, Maryland. She won a tie-breaker against Tammy Garcia of Osan, Korea to secure her spot on the Air Force team.

In women's senior play Mary Qualls of March, California defended her champion-

ship with relative ease, winning five of six matches. Karen Fiedor of Kirtland, New Mexico finished second, being the one competitor to defeat Mary. The use of the resume system was new. In 1980, players were on a major command team. That was changed in 1982 to a regional format. In 1985, play reverted to command and stayed that way until this year. The Air Force, experiencing the nation-wide budget crunch chose to reduce spending by reducing the field. Also, many personnel were still deployed for Desert Storm and command competition would have been ruined.

Final Results

MENS SENIOR:

1. Souther 5-1
2. Couch 4-2
3. Stock 4-2
4. Heagerty 0-6

WOMENS OPEN

1. Faulkenberry 6-0
2. Patterson 3-3
3. Garcia 2-4
4. Rosecrants 1-5

MENS OPEN:

1. Stevens 9-0
2. Toney 8-1
3. Rogers 6-3
4. Baca 6-3
5. Eiseman 5-4
6. Alcala 4-5
7. Barbeau 2-7
8. Norwood 2-7
9. Hadley 2-7
10. Harless 0-9

MENS MASTER:

1. Kimbrough 4-0
2. Jenkins 3-1
3. Kaseman 2-2
4. Salsana 1-3
5. McKoy 0-4

WOMENS SENIOR:

1. Fiedor 5-1
2. Qualls 5-1
3. Fullerton 1-5
4. Connolly 1-5

The Air Force Team for interservice competition consists of the top four mens open and top two in the other divisions.

MOVING UP

Charlie Palek



Allan Engel shows the competitive spirit that marks all of his matches.

Tomorrow's Stars are coming up through the High School Ranks today

There is nothing subtle or second rate about the level of play. Each rally provides the perfect opportunity for the players to dive, slide across the hardwood then, almost in the same motion, rise to a set position and return the next shot. Enthusiasm is the key word in summing up the performance of the top high school players from across the country. Enthusiasm for the game, enthusiasm for the

chance to compete, enthusiasm for pushing their bodies and talents to the highest level, even enthusiasm for encouraging their opponents, win or lose is evident in the young racquetball players who have elevated to the upper ranks of their age groups. After their own matches the players congregate to cheer on their friends with that same level of enthusiasm they display on the courts.

Charlie Palek



New York's Sudsy Monchick won the AARA High School Nationals in '91. His first racquetball teacher was Ruben Gonzalez.

MOVIN' ON →→ UP

But enthusiasm alone doesn't create a champion. Champions are created with that rare and magical combination of talent, instinct, enthusiasm, drive and determination. And there are a few players in the high school age group whose names constantly appear in the winner's brackets of the tournaments they play. These are the players to watch. These are the ones whose names and faces are destined to grace racquetball for years to come.

Sudsy Monchik and Jason Manino, two sixteen year-old players from New York, eighteen year old Allan Engel and his sixteen year-old sister Britt Engel from Florida, and seventeen year-old Elkova Icenogle of California are taking the racquetball world in a whirlwind in their age groups and beyond.

Sudsy

Staten Island, New York is home to sixteen year-old Sudsy Monchik. From the instant he walks onto the court he displays an exuberance and dash that leaves no question as to who is in control of the match. Sudsy's first racquetball instructor was racquetball legend Ruben Gonzalez who obviously left a mark on the teen's level of play. Picking up the game young, Sudsy began doing extremely well in competitive play as early as 1983 when he won the Eight and Under age group in the Junior Nationals competition. The following year he took fourth in the Boys Ten and Under division; then in 1985 he took first in the Junior Nationals Ten and Under age bracket as well as first place in the doubles division. Moving up to the Twelve and Under bracket in 1986, Sudsy finished fourth, then took top honors in that group the following year. In 1988 he finished fourth in the Fourteen and Under division of the Junior Olympic Nationals and topped that in 1989 by finishing first in that competition. In 1990 Sudsy moved up to the Sixteen and Under age group in the Junior Olympic Nationals where he took first place. Also last year he made a strong showing with a second place finish in the Men's Open Division of the New York State Singles.

At 5'8" Sudsy doesn't present an imposing figure. But his aggressiveness on court combined with his speed and quickness give his game a dominant quality that seems to put most of his opponents on the defensive from the beginning. His years on the court have given Sudsy an amazing sense of anticipation

Any match between Sudsy Monchik and Jason Manino, both of New York, means lots of dives and floor burns.

Charlie Palek





Enthusiasm is the hallmark of the spectators at a high school level tournament.

From all appearances, Elkova is on a roll that makes her a sure bet for great things in the future.

Allan

Sunny Florida is the home of Allan Engel, an eighteen year-old racquetball player who hails from Bradenton. Allan is the embodiment of the proverbial "All American Boy". With boyish good looks and a charming personality his game is played at a feverish pace with well-placed, hard hit returns and a sixth sense that puts him in the path of the ball. One of Allan's strong points is his amazing agility and quickness that keeps him reaching, diving, and jumping, seemingly covering the whole court at once.

Allan also has interests in track, golf, fishing, basketball, and badminton. He has a

and he isn't afraid to give every shot his complete concentration and all out effort. He has a powerful serve and an uncanny range that he seems to cover almost effortlessly.

This year Sudsy finished first in the High School Nationals in St. Louis in March. He is undoubtedly one to watch in the coming years.

Elkova

Elkova Toezi Icenogle is a seventeen year-old from Auburn, California. Her appearances can be deceiving. Her mannerisms and demeanor off court are friendly grace and charm with a generous dose of femininity. On court Elkova is all business with a deceptively powerful serve and return and a court sense that puts her a cut above the competition.

Elkova's resume of tournament play is impressive. In 1988 she was half of the first place Fourteen and Under Doubles team at the AARA Junior Nationals. That same year she finished second in the Fourteen and Under Singles competition. She continued her streak in the IRF World Junior Orange Bowl that same year with a first place finish in the Girls Sixteen and Under division and a second place finish in Doubles. She continued a strong showing in 1989 with a third place finish in Division #1 of the AARA High School Nationals competition and a first place win in the Sixteen and Under division of the IRF World Junior Orange Bowl.

Elkova "steamrolled" the competition in 1990 by taking first place in the AARA/Ektelon U.S. High School Nationals competition, first place in the Girls Eighteen and Under division in the AARA/Ektelon Junior Olympics, a first place in Girls Eighteen and Under Doubles, and she made it to the Quarterfinals of the U.S. Olympic Festival.

With a winning smile, Elkova will modestly

attest to her competitor's prowess then step onto the court and systematically demolish her game with a controlled persistent attack that relies on speed and force. She exhibits a coolness under pressure that attests to a quiet confidence and an ability to take control and force an opponent to play Elkova's game.



Elkova Icenogle plays with a gracefulness that masks the power she can generate when the situation demands.

MOVIN' ON →→ UP

Charlie Palek

lean, athletic appearance topped by blond locks that always seem to be flying as he moves across the court. His list of tournament results is impressive, especially the past few years. In 1988 Allan was IRF World Junior Orange Bowl Champion. He took first place in the AARA National Juniors competition in the Boys Fourteen and Under category, and was part of the AARA National High School Champion Team. He made it to the quarterfinals in 1989 in the IRF World Junior Orange Bowl in the Boys Sixteen and Under division. In 1990, Allan took the Florida State Singles competition by storm winning both the Boys Sixteen and Under division, as well as the Men's Open division. He also placed second in the AARA/Ektelon U.S. National High School competition in 1990 and 1991.

Like Sudsy Monchik, Allan Engel is a crowd pleaser, always drawing a group of onlookers when he plays. His dramatic dives and hard hitting drives promise an explosive and entertaining style of play that should continue to bring him to the forefront of competition.

Britt

Allan Engel's younger sister has her own claim to fame in the world of tournament racquetball. Britt Engel is a seventeen year-old petite blonde that appears every bit the all American girl as her brother appears the all American boy. With an endearing smile that lights up her whole face, Britt doesn't appear to be a fierce competitor. Maybe that's the problem. Maybe her opponents take her too lightly and never expect the determination and well-placed shot selection that are Britt's style. With her blonde tresses pulled back she moves with a gracefulness and ease that mask her court smarts.

When Britt and Allan play mixed doubles their polar styles compliment rather than detract from one another. While Allan has a dramatic, forceful, constantly moving method of play, Britt tends to hold back and methodically chip away and force mistakes from an opponent.

Britt began playing in 1984 and by 1987 was already making a noise in her age group. She finished second in the AARA National Juniors competition for the Girls Twelve and Under age bracket in 1987. In 1988 Britt was part of a doubles team that finished third in the AARA National Juniors for Fourteen and Under Girls, and won in the consolation

bracket of the Singles Fourteen and Under. Topping off 1988 she finished second in the AARA High School Nationals. In 1989 Britt was the Fourteen and Under Girls champion for the IRF World Junior Orange Bowl. Continuing her winning tradition, Britt won the Sixteen and Under division of the Florida State Singles competition in 1990 and finished second in the AARA U.S. Nationals in 1990 and 1991.

Like her brother Allan, Britt should continue to stay ahead of the pack of young players as she persistently and consistently works to keep her game on track.

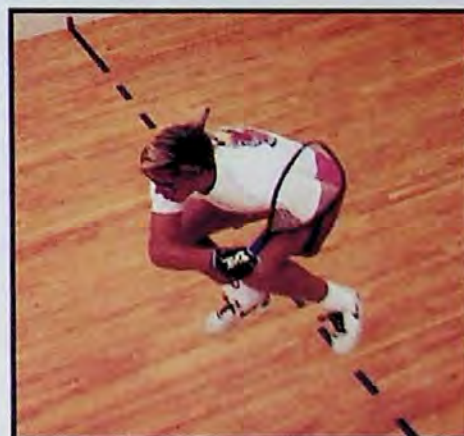
Jason

Staten Island, New York is home to another of the country's leading high school amateurs, Jason Mannino. Sudsy Monchik's neighbor plays a similar style game marked by reckless abandon and a flair for crowd-pleasing dramatics. Jason is all over the court (and many times all over the floor) with a quickness that compliments a compact power.

Jason's coach is his dad, Russell Mannino, who also coaches Sudsy. This might account for certain similarities in style. Because of their matching methods of attack, a match between the two promises to include lots of hard-to-believe shots, flying dives, and floor burns. Though Jason's list of tournament wins might not currently include as many as Allan Engel or Sudsy Monchik, it is nonetheless a list to be proud of. In 1987 Jason was part of the first place doubles team in the Junior Nationals competition for ages Twelve and Under. In 1988 he finished first in the Boys Fourteen and Under division of the Edison Jersey State Open, as well as the Long Island Open. In 1989 Jason finished first in the Junior Olympic Nationals for ages Fourteen and Under.

Quickness, speed, and agility are Jason's strongest points with well placed shot selection and the ability to return shots most players couldn't get. If Jason sticks to the plan of attack that has been so successful for him, his name should continue to appear in winner's brackets for the years ahead.

These high school players with their eyes toward the future represent a diverse group with varying styles and methods but a common thread runs through the games of each.



Allan Engel goes airborne on a regular basis in competition.

Each one plays with a strong determination and drive that is backed by an on-court confidence and a level of poise and maturity. When they play, especially if they are competing

Family Feud. The Engels and Icenogles go head-to-head at the 1991 High School Nationals in St. Louis.

with each other, there is a sense of sportsmanship, an atmosphere of camaraderie, and an air of mutual respect in the others abilities, talents and accomplishments. But, this ends short of awe and intimidation. Each plays to win and each exhibits a belief that the reason to play is to win. The resulting enthusiastic style of play makes each a joy and a pleasure to watch.

Brit Engel's persistent, methodical style complements her brother's more dramatic, explosive play.



Charlie Palek



Get Ready for the NXT Generation!

In a move to show a renewed commitment to quality and today's racquetball player, RichCraft has developed a new line of state-of-the-art racquets, accessories and sportswear that takes "TeamRichCraft" into the "NXT" Generation. This exciting new line features two series of racquets ---the "NXT Pro Series," featuring four new designs, and the "NXT Gold Series," with five new models. All RichCraft racquets are designed from state-of-the-art technology resulting from nearly 20 years of manufacturing experience.

NXT Pro Series

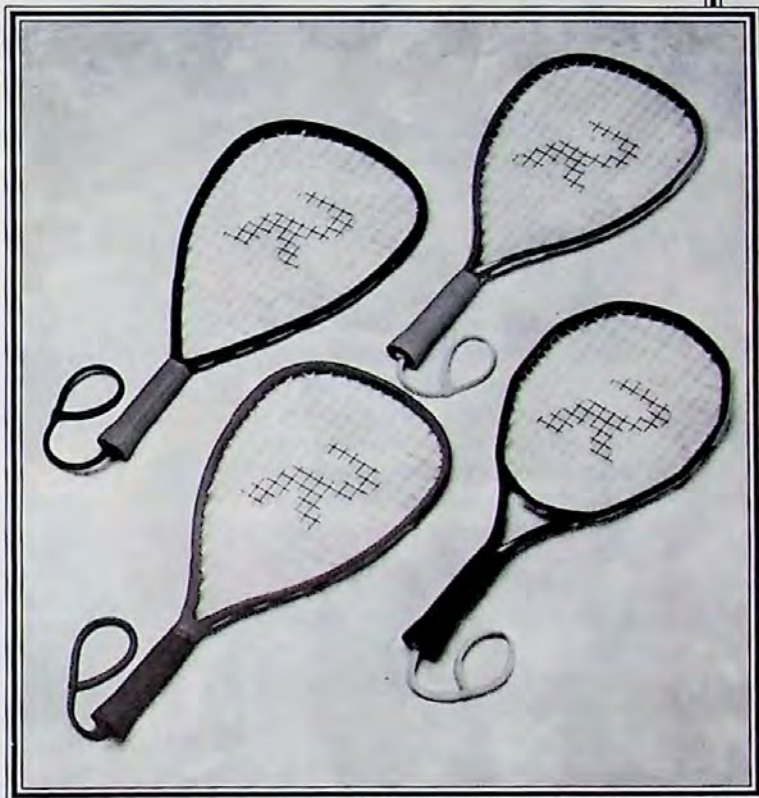
The NXT Pro Series is highlighted by the *Epic T.E.* (Tournament Edition), a superwidebody racquet with an oversized 104 square-inch hitting surface. This racquet promises to lead the field in design, size, and power.

The *Pulsar* (oversize), RichCraft's most popular performance model during the 1990-91 season, continues in the line with improvements in cosmetics and technology. These enhancements contribute to added frame durability and substantially improved power.

The *System 10*, developed by world famous racquet designer, Warren Bosworth, is a revolutionary ten-sided frame model. This unique design provides an "expanded sweet spot," eliminating frame distortion and stabilizing the "sweet spot" area to offer more power and control than ever before.

The *Express S.M.* (super midsize) has a hitting surface of 95 square inches and a shortened handle to create "oversize power with midsize control."

The Pro Series racquets are designed for the serious player. Retail prices range from \$120.00 to \$180.00.



Gold Series

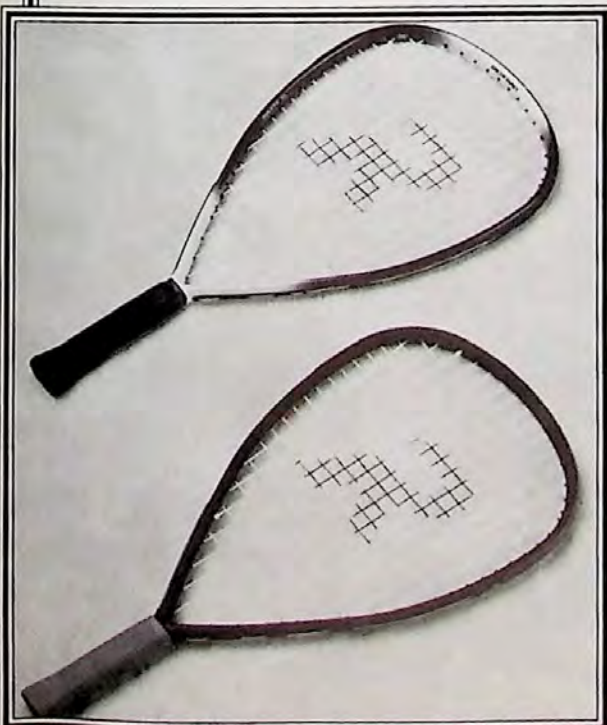
Leading the Gold Series is the *Pirate XL* (extended length) with the same headshape and design as the Pro Series *Epic T.E.* However, the *Pirate XL* is so big and powerful, it's outlawed in AARA sanctioned championship competition.

The Gold Series also includes the *Vision* (oversize widebody), the "NRG" (midsize widebody), the *Galaxy*, (aluminum construction, oversize widebody), and the *MS Laser* (midsize widebody in four ultra-bright colors).

The Gold Series racquets retail from \$29.95 to \$125.00, and are designed for any level player.

Want to be part of the NXT Generation?
Call toll free to find out how. 1-800-521-7596

RICHCRAFT



A full-page photograph of Mike Ceresia, a male racquetball player, in a ready stance on a wooden court. He is wearing a white t-shirt, black shorts, white socks, and white sneakers. He has a pink headband, clear safety glasses, and black wristbands. He is holding a yellow and black racquet with both hands, positioned in front of him. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Mike Ceresia is Canada's Racquetball Nomad. He has averaged twenty to twenty-five tournaments per season for the last eight years. His game is based on determination, a strong side-front game, and a keen knowledge of his opponent's strengths and weaknesses. He has focused his game on the MPRA tour since 1988. Ceresia's best career win was over powerful Egan Inoue at the Negrete Open in Chicago in April of this year. He is currently ranked 13th on the MPRA tour.

Racquetball CANADA

by Mike Ceresia

Our Northern Neighbor's only member of the MPRA tour gives an insider's look at his homeland's racquetball talent.

Sherman Greenfield

Birthday: June 3, 1962

Hometown: Winnipeg, Manitoba

Height: 5' 10"

Weight: 165

Years in Racquetball: 14

Greenfield is Canada's best kept racquetball secret. He has been at the top level of Canadian Racquetball since 1986. He has captured three Canadian singles titles and the Tournament of the Americas in Florida, where he played the match of his life, beating Andy Roberts in the final.

Greenfield's never miss pinches, sixth sense anticipation, and slice backhand serve give him a full bag of racquetball tricks. He supplements his racquetball workouts with three to four squash matches per week. His win over Jim Cascio at the 1988 World Championship helped give Canada the World Team Gold Medal.

Ron Paparanski





Ron Paparanski

Simon Roy

Simon Roy

Birthday: March 4, 1969
Hometown: Quebec City, Quebec
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 155
Years in Racquetball: 10

Roy captured the Canadian Junior title in 1987 and has risen steadily ever since. His unexpected win over Cliff Swain at the 1987 Canadian Pro Nationals was an indication of outstanding things to come. Roy placed second at the Canadian Nationals in 1988 and 1989, and teamed with Roger Harripersad to capture the Canadian doubles title in 1990.

Roy's fluid strokes and impressive reverse pinches produce many flat rollouts. Internationally, he helped the Canadian team to a Gold Medal at the 1988 World Championships and in 1990, he beat highly respected Drew Kachtik on his way to a fourth place finish. Roy is resuming his studies at Southwest Missouri State University in September. His game will continue to improve with a pinch of luck and the everyday top flight competition at school.

Ross Harvey

Birthday: September 14, 1960
Hometown: Montreal, Quebec
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 180
Years in Racquetball: 15

Harvey has been a force in Canadian Racquetball since the age of eighteen. He has placed second at the Canadian Nationals four times. Three of these matches were with his arch rival Lindsay Myers. Harvey also won the Canadian Junior title in 1978 and

the Men's Open Doubles title with partner Brad Kreiger.

Harvey's smooth strokes brought him the 1984 World Singles title with an explosive 11-10 tie breaker win over Andy Roberts. Harvey has had career wins over Mike Yellen and Bret Harnett. In 1990 Harvey teamed with Mike Ceresia to win the Silver Medal at the World Championship. This multitasking individual is a golf pro in Montreal and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

Roger Harripersad

Birthday: November 25, 1964
Hometown: Calgary, Alberta
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 160
Years in Racquetball: 11

Harripersad is the most naturally talented player in Canadian Racquetball today. An ultra smooth backhand and arguably the quickest hands in racquetball make him a threat to beat anyone at any time. He captured the Canadian Junior title (Sixteen and Under) and followed this with the Canadian Doubles title in 1983 with Cliff Hendrickson.

Harripersad has been a National Team member since 1984 and has had many impressive showings. In 1986, and 1988, Roger was a major reason Canada was able to edge the U.S. for the World Team Gold Medal. His most impressive win was a victory over Marty Hogan at the 1986 U.S. Nationals. He has also captured two Canadian singles titles and the NCAA title.



Heather Stupp

Birthday: February 28, 1964
Hometown: Montreal, Quebec
Height: 5' 4"
Weight: 130
Years in Racquetball: 13

Heather Stupp is the reigning two time World Amateur Champion and also Canadian Champion. Heather has dominated Canadian Women's Racquetball since 1987. She has won five Canadian Women's titles and should continue to add to her collection this year.

Stupp's game is based on a powerful drive serve, a superb forehand and an extremely aggressive court demeanor which totally belies her appearance. She captured the 1990 World Championship with a stunning performance against Michelle Gilman. She defeated Toni Bevelock for the 1988 Gold Medal. Stupp is a Chartered Accountant and is currently attending Harvard.

Roger Harripersad



Ron Paparanski





Canadian Athlete Information Bureau

Heather Stupp

Josee Grandmaitre

Birthday: July 28, 1961
Hometown: Longueuil, Quebec
Height: 5' 6"
Weight: 130
Years in Racquetball: 9

Grandmaitre has been a member of the National Team for three years. She has specialized in doubles internationally. She teamed up with Nadia Verilli to win the Silver Medal in Hamburg, Germany, and with Vicki Brown to capture the Silver Medal in the 1990 World Championship. She and Nadia Verilli captured the Canadian title in 1989 and 1990.

Grandmaitre combines an excellent backhand with a strong, well rounded game. She has become a threat to win any tournament she enters, and has been a great contributor to racquetball in Quebec. She has coached, organized tournaments and been involved in the Quebec Racquetball administration.



Carol McFetridge

Birthday: April 8, 1962
Hometown: Don Mills, Ontario
Height: 5' 6"
Weight: 125
Years in Racquetball: 12

A top player in the Province of Ontario for the past ten years, McFetridge is a two-time Canadian Junior Champion (1979-1980). She also captured a gold medal at the 1983 Canada Winter Games.

McFetridge's attributes include a strong forehand and a competitive desire matched by few. Internationally, Carol and Maria Sicotte captured the 1986 World Championship Gold Medal. She followed this with a fourth place finish in the singles competition in Hamburg, West Germany. She finished second to Heather Stupp at the 1990 Canadian Nationals.

Vicki Brown

Sue McTaggart

Birthday: July 8, 1956
Hometown: Sarnia, Ontario
Height: 5' 5"
Weight: 131
Years in Racquetball: 10

McTaggart began playing racquetball while attending McMaster University in Hamilton. Her main rival has been Carol McFetridge, another National Team member. They have battled for virtually every major tournament in Ontario since 1985. McTaggart's breakthrough year was 1987 when she defeated McFetridge for the Ontario Provincial Title. The two teamed up to win a Silver Medal at the 1987 Pan Am Championship.

At the 1990 World Championship in Caraccas, McTaggart had an impressive win over Kaye Kuhfeld. She also played the WPRA tour and attained a career high ranking of 15th.

Vicki Brown

Birthday: February 14, 1965
Hometown: N. Vancouver, British Columbia
Height: 5' 7"
Weight: 130
Years in Racquetball: 12

Brown has been a member of the racquetball community for twelve years. She won the Canadian Nationals doubles title with partner Debbie Ward in 1986 and captured a Silver Medal in the doubles competition at the 1990 World Championships.

Brown is an intense competitor who is not afraid to dive to save a point. The left-handed Brown plays an excellent left side doubles. Her singles game is constantly improving and her best years are still ahead of her. She will complete her teaching degree this summer.



Canadian Athlete Information Bureau





From the President...

by Chris Evon

Long overdue in racquetball is a publication that can help the public witness the excitement of the professional side of the sport, along with informing them about the athletes, new techniques and trends in the game, the most efficient training methods, and the complex operations of the pro organizations. The Women's Professional Racquetball Association recognizes the power behind a professional magazine in assuring the constant growth of the pro tours, and we are proud to endorse **KILLSHOT** as the official publication of the WPRA for the 1991-92 season! We have committed to work closely with the magazine and invite you to work with us, and be a part of their success by subscribing soon.

The Diet Pepsi WPRA National Championships took place at the Merritt Athletic Club in Baltimore this past May and culminated the season with two of the best in the sport, Lynn Adams and Michelle Gilman competing for the National Championship and the number one ranking on the WPRA tour.* In a long tie-breaker match, Gilman captured her second pro National title in two years! The National Championships along with the Pizza Hut Challenge in Atlanta were both televised this season.

The WPRA continues to strive to add new and innovative programs to benefit both professional and amateur players, sponsors, and spectators. Last season both Penn and Pepsi sponsored a series of events which offered a bonus pool for top finishers. The tour also raised thousands of dollars for various charities throughout the season, and worked diligently to introduce racquetball to Junior players by visiting schools through-

out the country. Our continued success is attributed not only to the many dedicated athletes who work and play for the WPRA, but also to the club owners, sponsors, loyal fans, and numerous volunteers who give so much of themselves to assure our continued strength and growth. Our sincere thanks go out to all of you who have been a part of making the women's pro tour a success story for the past twelve years!

Chris

Charlie Palek



*Editor's note: The September issue will be a special All Nationals Issue and will cover the WPRA Baltimore tournament in detail.



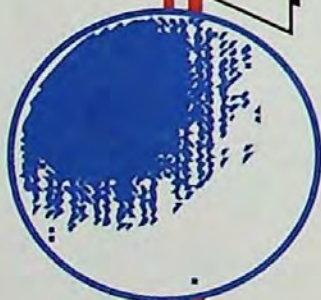
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MPRA



From the Commissioner...

by Hank Marcus

Yes, there is a pro tour! The number of phone calls, letters, and general interest I have received over the last two years is a great indication of the need and future success of **KILLSHOT** magazine. Not only is the Men's Professional Racquetball Association Tour alive and growing in only its second year, but racquetball enthusiasts starved for information on the pros will be able to follow the tour from start to finish in **KILLSHOT**, the official voice of the MPRA tour.

The 1990/91 MPRA Tour has just finished a nine tournament season which concluded with TransCoastal's Grand Nationals and the MPRA Tournament of Champions in May and June.* We are looking forward to next season with great enthusiasm. A 12-14 tournament tour including MPRA events in Canada and Chile plus television broadcasts of a number of those stops has all players and spectators looking forward to next year. As the MPRA Tour grows, the off season seems to get shorter and shorter.

But this is getting ahead of where we are or where you are. Before next year's plans, comes the question of how much you really know about professional racquetball unless you are:

- A. A player/spectator living in Stockton, Salem, Chicago, Riverside, Memphis, Pittsburgh, Seattle, or Portland.
- B. A relative of a MPRA pro.
- C. Someone with my phone number.

Unfortunately, before this magazine came

on the scene you had to be pretty well connected to know what the greatest athletes in the sport were doing. Well, that problem has been solved, so let's get on to other questions.

1. Who is the #1 ranked player on the MPRA tour?

Answer: Mike Ray of Nashville, Tennessee, who finished the 1990/91 season with a 30-10 record and as opposed to current racquetball strategy, he plays control not power.

2. Who is the oldest player on the tour?

Answer: Ruben Gonzalez of Staten Island, New York at 39 years of age. At an age when most players are happy to make it through the seniors, Gonzalez finished the year ranked #6 and considered it a bad season.

3. Who made the quickest rise in the rankings?

Answer: Tim Doyle of Huntington Beach, California went from #14 to #2 in one year and Drew Kachtik of Dallas, Texas went all the way to #1 for part of the season, finishing

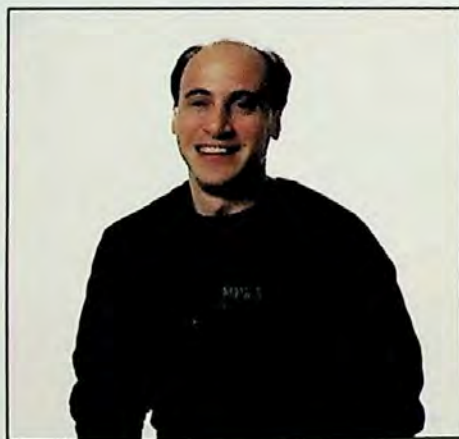
at #5 after an illness forced him to miss the TransCoastal Grand Nationals.

4. Is there a homecourt advantage in pro racquetball?

Answer: There definitely seemed to be as an unbelievable three tour stops were won by players at their home clubs who had never won a professional tournament before. Tim Sweeney: Woodfield Racquet Club, Chicago; Andy Roberts: Racquet Club of Memphis; Jack Newman: Woodfield Racquet Club, Chicago

5. What happened to Marty Hogan and Mike Yellen?

Answer: The last time a magazine was in full swing these two legends were dominating the



*Editor's note: The September issue will be a special All Nationals Issue and will cover these tournaments in detail.

pro game. Now if you see a pro draw you will be surprised to find them seeded 8 and 9. You won't be surprised to know that both can still beat anybody on the tour.

The rules that the pros play by are basically the same as those you play by everyday in your club or local tournament. However, the MPRA has three basic differences in the rules which are intended to make the pro game as enjoyable as possible for the spectators.

A. Scoring: All pro matches are three out of five games to eleven points.

B. Serving: Players receive only one serve. Thus reduces the number of aces and creates longer more exciting rallies.

C. Supertiebreaker: All fifth games must be won by two points which creates some dramatic endings.

All MPRA rule changes are based on continued and improved spectator enjoyment of the professional game and have received great response throughout the year from fans across the country. In addition, try out these pro rules sometime at your club playing a friend. They really can add some excitement to any level of play.

Now that you have caught up on the MPRA tour, watch each month's issue and this column to keep track of the pros. We will keep you updated on the Tour progress, problems, and goals. Next issue we will release the 1991-92 tour schedule and some other exciting news concerning the pro game. Just a hint of things to come, watch for the pros to be playing next season with a ball that isn't blue!

In closing, a number of "thank you's". First, and foremost, to you, the racquetball players and spectators who sold out each stop this past season. But, it is also important to remember that pro stops take much more than \$15,000 in prize money. Secondly, the MPRA would like to thank all the tournament directors who worked so hard to create great events with a special thanks to Dave Negrete and everyone at Woodfield Racquet Club, who hosted two stops last season. Last, but surely not least, if you have not heard the name John Delaney and TransCoastal Mortgage Corp. you will in the future. John has been the largest supporter of professional racquetball for years and his involvement is not only important to the MPRA tour, but all of racquetball.

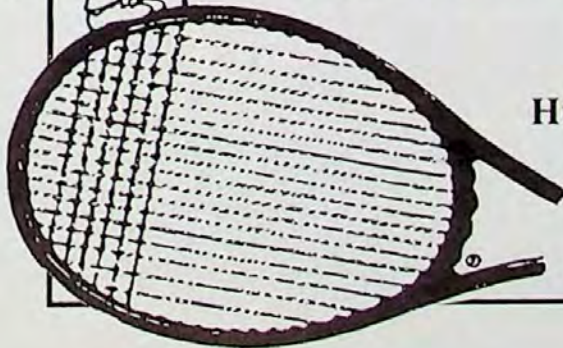
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THE RACQUET STRINGER



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What it all is?

Continued from page 8

The MPRA has adopted a 1-serve rule. New this season, fault serves become side-outs. Screen serves are replayed.

At all levels of play, rules and officiating procedures have become far more standardized in recent years. Matches are called by one referee. Two linesmen observe each match from different vantage points. When players question a call, they appeal to the referee, who repeats the call (or no call) and the nature of the player's appeal. Linesmen then signal agreement or disagreement with the given call or report unable to see. Both linesmen must disagree with the referee to overrule a call. Or, if both players agree, they may overrule the referee. Standardizing this system has done away with many of the player arguments of the past. However, it has not done away with players' colorful expressions or comments.

Thinking concerning hinders has matured as well. As always, an avoidable hinder is called when a player makes no attempt to give his opponent a safe shot. It has also become standard in the professional ranks to call an avoidable when a badly placed ball leaves no escape route and costs the other player a set-up. That is, even if a player makes an attempt to give his opponent a clear shot but is unable to do so because his own returning ball is placed so that this is impossible, the opposing player who is robbed of a clear set-up is awarded the avoidable. This thinking most often comes into play when a player makes a diving get, but his returning ball allows him no space to return to his feet to give a clear shot to his opponent.

Equipment

Catching up on equipment changes over the last few years could fill a magazine in itself. Two of the manufacturers, in fact, annually release just such a publication. Even a subtle change in equipment produces vast diversity on the court.

If your last equipment purchase was during the days of standard size racquets, some re-thinking may be in order. Oversize and midsize racquets are now the standard for a variety of reasons, ranging from increased gets, increased power, and increased control. "Space age" designs and materials used in modern racquet manufacturing have drastically improved the game's entire "feel." Late model, high-end racquets differ noticeably enough from older racquets to justify their

premium price. Even some of the very reasonably priced lower end frames out play the very best racquets of only a few years ago.

Accessories have entered the '90's, also. Many current eye guard designs look as though they were designed by NASA. Bags are super light and can carry as much "stuff" as you could fit into a small station wagon. Court clothing has become both functional and flattering. Shoes are now purchased by selecting the best combination of features. Gloves stay

soft and grips stay responsive. String comes in so many weights, textures, and colors, that by the time it is woven into a frame at "custom tension", it is indeed a work of art.

Club pro shops can usually advise best choices in any equipment purchase. However, if you don't like what you've got, do not despair. Unlike the old days when we used what we could get, (often modifying even that) products are now available for any imag-

Continued on page 60

A Brief History of Racquetball

1949

Joe Sobek invented Racquetball (then Paddle Racquets) by cutting a tennis racket and playing on a handball court.

1950's-1960's

Throughout this period racquetball grew slowly but steadily, especially among handball players. The AARA was organized as the IRA.

1970's

Racquetball made its most drastic growth and became highly visible to the public. Wooden racquets disappeared when aluminum and fiberglass racquets were introduced. First professional tours were organized.

1980's

"Fad" racquetball leveled off, resulting in a steadily growing but stable following. Oversize and midsize racquets changed the face of the game.

1990's

A reported 10 million players in the United States and the possibility of Olympic status for the sport.



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While shoe companies have handed over a Fort Knox of money to celebrities simply to wear their shoes, the sad fact is not one penny has ever improved the quality of those shoes.

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One result is the New Balance CXT770: a cross court shoe more meticulously designed than most rackets.

Its exclusive three-piece midsole unit features a polyurethane rearfoot for maximum stability, and an Evathane® forefoot pad for cushioning where you need it most—at the balls of your feet.

Between them lies the Integrated Counter Reinforcer Footframe System, which delivers steady support by constantly adjusting to your body weight and pressure.

W I D T H S I Z I N G C H A R T					
COURT	2A	B	D	2E	4E
CT700, CT670BL			•	•	•
CXT770W		•	•	•	•
CT670CH, CT320		•	•	•	•
CT540	•	•	•	•	•
CXT750W			•	•	•
CXT750B			•	•	•

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What it all is?

Continued from page 58

inable use to exact specifications.

At least the ball hasn't changed much in the past decade. In the '70's we chose between black, blue, green, and red balls. In those days every different can bore the endorsement of a different organization. We had balls you could "pump" with a syringe, balls to keep in special canisters, and balls that rattled. We even had dimpled balls that hurt very much when they hit you.

Today's ball is drab in comparison, but infinitely superior on the court. Blue has been the standard for quite some time and so has consistency. That is, even the worst balls on today's market have a fairly true and lively bounce. And, everyone likes the liveliest bounce available.

Balls in the '90's may just change again. Because it is now widely believed that the human eye can better track bright red or orange objects traveling quickly, we may soon see regular use of balls of these colors.



Six time outdoor champ, MPRA #11 Brian Hawkes.

Canadian National team coach, Gary Ness reports significant research findings along these lines.

Continued Growth

In 1991, racquetball finally has a solid following. The sport has organization and credibility. Players, promoters, manufacturers, clubs, and organizations are at last coming together with common goals. Trends are extremely positive for the level of play, the attitudes of those involved with the sport, and the industry the game creates.

Now you may be thinking, "How can I help with these continued positive trends in racquetball? Well, Bunky, I'm glad you asked.

Support the organizations! You can do this with membership dues, active participation in their events and input in decision making in the form of letters.

Support the manufacturers! Give special consideration to those companies who show genuine support for racquetball and the ones that encourage the growth in each of its directions. These manufacturers rely on the support of the player, from club level to novice to touring professional, to keep them in a position to continue to produce the best equipment possible.

Support the companies outside the industry who support the game! From soft drink companies to lending institutions, give your patronage to those who sponsor national and local tournaments. Don't forget the ones who support the publications too. From **KILLSHOT** to local newsletters, publications rely on advertising dollars to get the information to you.

Support the players! Attend pro stops, national and international amateur tournaments, and training camps. Better still, host a pro stop or training camp in your area.

Don't be afraid to write letters to let the organizations, publications, and manufacturers know where you stand on issues and trends. You might be surprised how much importance is placed on the opinions of everyday players across the country. And, there is no better way to let your feelings be known than by the written word.

Most importantly, Play Racquetball! Play a lot of racquetball. What better way to support the game than to enjoy it and let everyone know it? So get going, there's a court empty and waiting for you right now.

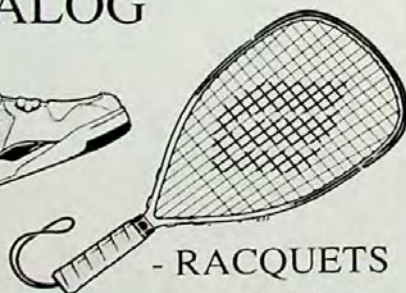
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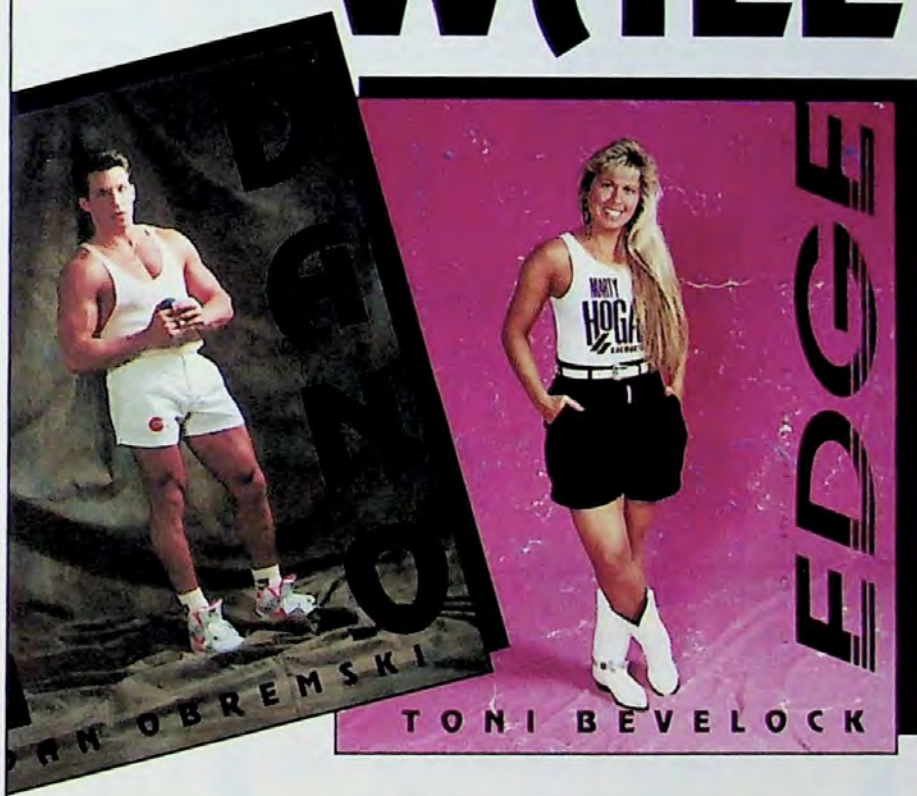
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Toni Bevelock's competitive **EDGE**

You train much harder than usual for an upcoming tournament. You've been playing tougher players to practice getting "set-ups" where you used to barely get to the ball. Your stroke is smoother with better power and accuracy. You've even done extra aerobics to increase your endurance. Tournament weekend arrives, you can't seem to do anything right and lose in the first round.

Maybe you've over trained, right? Well, maybe not. You may have trained perfectly to improve your skill and condition, but are unable to call upon these strengths during the match. The excitement of tourna-

ment play or even just the tension of competition may be keeping you from playing your best. Unable to relax, you choke.

You must relax to win. Relaxation of the mind and body is an essential key to winning at any sport, especially racquetball! Learning how to relax can improve your game by helping you adopt a more positive approach and get rid of the negativity that can defeat you. If you have practiced perfectly, your body will respond perfectly when it is allowed to. The idea is to allow yourself to perform, not to force yourself to perform. Forcing merely causes more tension.

To get the most from your abilities, practice relaxing every time you are on the court and then for five to ten minutes afterward. Relaxation may work for you before a match to improve concentration. However, many players feel relaxation interferes with their warm-up process.

To fully benefit from relaxation it is essential to block out all distractions. I have found two techniques particularly effective.

The first relaxation technique can be used on the court or in any situation. Remaining as focused as possible, fix your eyes on a specific spot, take a deep breath and exhale slowly through your mouth. As you exhale, visualize the word "relax" throughout your body starting high in your head and ending in your toes. Do not force it, just allow the muscles to relax. You will be amazed at your body's response to this technique after only a few times. Soon you will be able to focus on this picture easily for longer periods of time with fewer distractions.

The second relaxation method involves the same initial procedure: Stand comfortably with your eyes focused on a certain point. Take a deep breath and then tense every muscle in your upper body, holding for five to ten seconds, then releasing. You can do this without your opponent noticing. As you release the tension on your muscles, the overall effect will be a sense of calm throughout your entire body.

Both of these methods can be used quickly on the court and will allow you to be completely relaxed and let your body react to each play. In addition, your mental alertness should improve as much as your physical abilities. Experiment with each technique to find out which works better for you.

The more you use these techniques, the more you will benefit from them. Practice every day. You will soon find that these techniques will become a natural part of your game.



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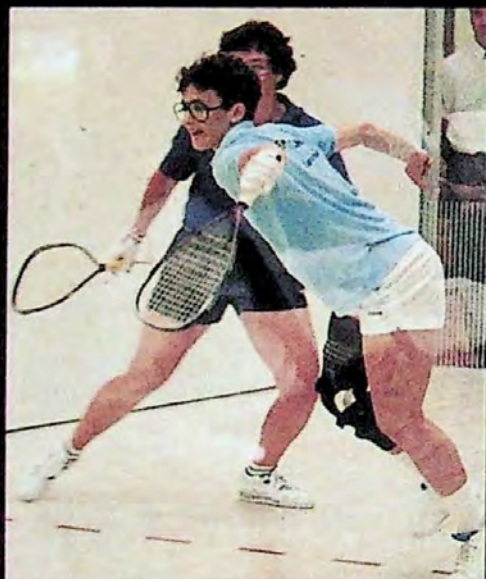
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Next month

THE NATIONALS



MPRA in SEATTLE



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CRA in VANCOUVER



AARA in HOUSTON

KILLSHOT

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THAT IMPACTS THE GAME ITSELF.**

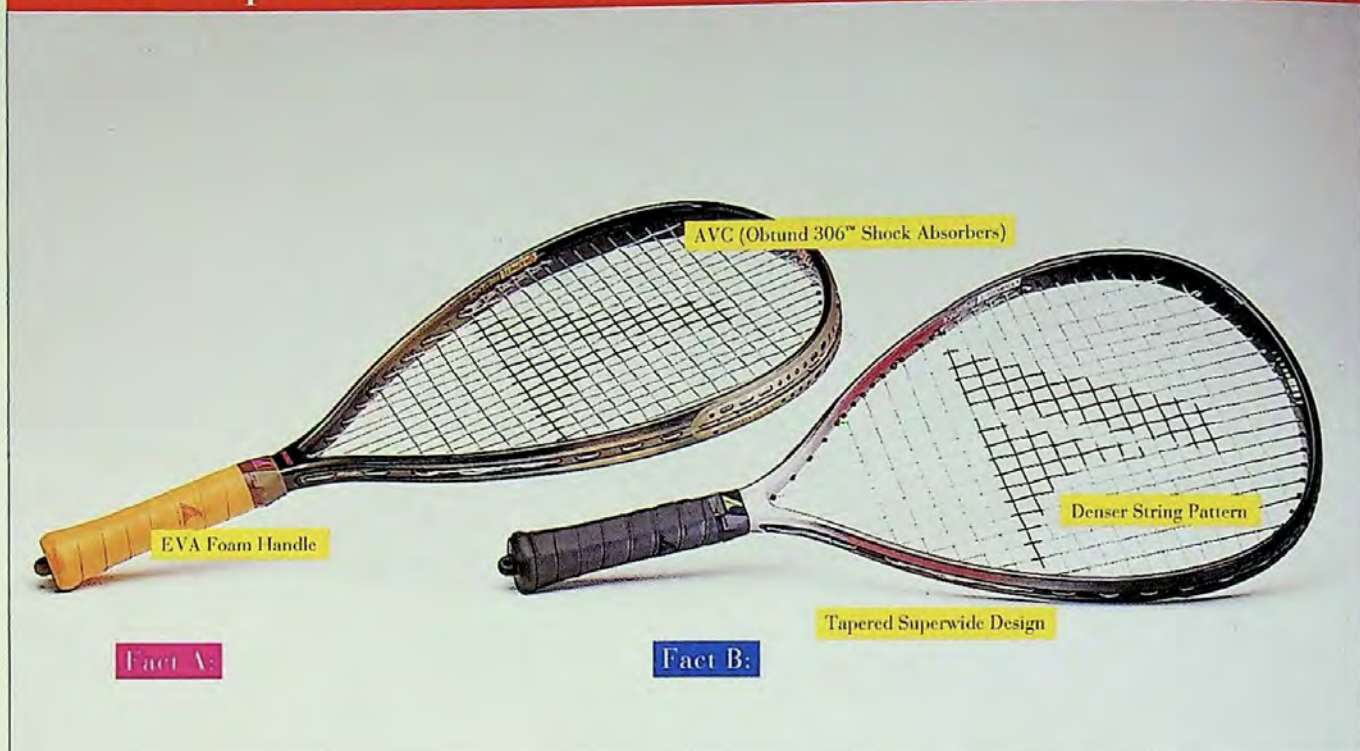


And once you pick up the new Strobe™ Graphite RTS, you'll understand why. Ektelon's unrivaled Racquetball Taper System™ in its most devastating form. Engineered from a radical new fusion of high-modulus graphite fibers and Kevlar, developed and molded exclusively for the Strobe. Racquet design just reached its full potential. Now it's your turn.

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Warning: There is not so much as a trace of compassion in either of our Presence Series racquets from the Marty Hogan Racquetball Division of Pro-Kennex. If your style of play is to show no mercy, these are your tools of total humiliation.

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Fact B: Our Composite Presence 31 bristles with the same ruthless character, but offers more flex — with a relatively forgiving soul of 70% high modulus graphite and 30% fiberglass.

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points of the central string grid, devours vibration and trampolining.

And the EVA foam handle guarantees a comfortable grip that minimizes arm fatigue.

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